

Biography, Memory and Modern Tibet: Oral History on the Tibetan Plateau

Lecturer: Robert Barnett (rjb58@columbia.edu)

Seminar: Mondays 410-6pm in Kent Hall #522c

Office Hours: Tuesdays 5.30-6.30pm; Weatherhead East Asian Institute, SIPA #939

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Course level: 4000 - open to all students; Points: 3. Course No: G4618

Course Rationale

This course is about the nation-narrative dyad and the role of memory in the interchange between the two. By looking at the stories that people from Tibet tell them about themselves, it explores questions about the nature of both the nation and the self that emerge at different times and contexts. By examining the roles, perspectives and ways of remembering among different Tibetans – along with the influence of gender and ideology, the interplay of tradition and reconstructed memory, and the capacity of Tibetans to respond as agents and re/writers to state narratives – it aims to build up a relatively nuanced and multi-dimensional view of a cultural-political nexus such as modern Tibetan society. In doing so, it also looks at the tools and principles of oral history, and the critical methods that have evolved in that field.

The seminar will look at the forms that modern Tibetan biography takes in different spheres, regimes and periods, including those generated by religious leaders, officials, resistance leaders, aristocrats and radicals. In addition, it looks at the associated practices of autobiography, life writing, personal testimony, and official accounts of state-anointed heroes, in order to arrive at a critical understanding of both Tibet and of these genres. These modern life-stories by Tibetans draw extensively on traditional Tibetan forms of religious biography in some cases, on Tibetan myth and legend in other cases, and in others on Chinese state conventions about how to write about one's life, so we will look at each of those traditions.

Comparisons will be made with biographies from Inner Mongolia, inland China and other countries, and theoretical issues will be raised from historical, human rights and anthropological discussions of the questions surrounding the recording of individual experience.

The course will be of value to students in the social sciences, in history, religion, literature and regional studies, as well as to those in Chinese and East Asian studies at undergraduate and graduate levels.

Course Description

The course starts by introducing the issues surrounding the role of biography and of recollected individual experience in the study of history. We will then consider some basic tools for studying modern Tibet. The first assignment requires students to present their own life-stories. We then look at different forms of life-story – those which are told about a nation as a single person, those which present model heroes, and accounts by or about religiously inspired women. The ambiguities of stories produced in a foreign language by exiles or by foreign long-term visitors are discussed, and accounts of loyal officials are viewed in terms of state narratives and selective memory. The complexities faced by Tibetans in the super-elite will be analyzed through the texts dramatizing their failures, while for radical intellectuals, death and suicide become the stories through which their projects are given symbolic standing. Throughout the course, we consider the practical and theoretical issues involved in oral history. The course concludes with discussions about the role of tales of resistance to the state, of personal testimonies of oppression, and of the reporting of “ordinary people's lives”.

The course consists of one seminar session a week, each with a student presentation, a discussion, and a lecture. The course will involve students in the preparation of a life-story by carrying out interviews with a person in the local community. Access to the updated syllabus is through courseworks.columbia.edu.

Course Requirements

The course is open to all students. No previous knowledge of Tibetan or Chinese language or history is required. All texts will be available on the Courseworks site in translation in English.

Assignment 1: For the second session each student will prepare a written life-story of her or his own life, of about 500 words. These should be posted on the class Wikispace by Sunday 7pm.

Assignment 2: Each week students will write a diary note commenting on two or more of the week's readings and post it to the class Wikispace by Sunday 7pm. These should be at least one page in length.

Assignment 3: Each student will be asked to give a presentation based on the readings and to lead the discussion for at least one class. In the week before the presentation, the student will meet with me to discuss their plan.

Assignment 4: As a final paper, each student will carry out an interview or interviews with someone from Tibet, China or Mongolia in the local community and produce (a) a protocol for discussion with the instructor (b) a transcript of the interviews, (c) a life-story of at least 2,000 words, and (d) an analysis of the process and the historical issues involved in at least 3,000 words.

Grades will take into consideration your final project/paper (60%), class participation (10%), attendance (10%), weekly dairy notes (10%), and your class presentation (10%).

Optional Recommended Texts

Kurtis Schaeffer, Matthew Kapstein, and Gray Tuttle (eds), *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2013

Tsering Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999

Janet Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self: The Secret Autobiographies of a Tibetan Visionary*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1998

Syllabus and Reading List

Graduate students should read at least one of the optional readings each week, and everyone should try at least to skim read the other readings. One or more of the optional readings will be presented to the class by a student. All readings will be online on the courseworks site or accessible via a link, unless stated otherwise.

Week 1: Introduction - Biographies, Autobiographies, Memoirs: an introduction to the questions surrounding the role of personal narratives in studying and shaping a culture. We look at the Tibetan traditions of biography such as the *nam-thar*, and consider what relevance this might have to the study of modern Tibet. In this session some of the tools for studying modern Tibet are laid out: some contrasting schemes for periodisation, types of sources, forms of literature, terminology, geography, language and transliteration systems, and the academic issues and terms that are politically contested.

Background notes and Briefing Papers

Please read these notes and keep them for reference:

Tibetan History - Periodization and Time-line
 Tibetan and Chinese place-names
 How to Read Tibetan Names
 Administrative Terms
 The terms “Tibet”, “Kham” and “Amdo”
 Glossary

Week 2. Writing a Life Story: Our Lives, Others’ Lives

We present and discuss our own life-stories and examine the issues of memory and framing involved in this process. We look at two basic models of Tibetan life-story – the classical hagiography and the modern resistance hero – and read theoretical writings on memory and narrative by Katherine Nelson, Mieke Bal and Homi Bhabha.

Required Readings

A. Classic Types of Tibetan Life-Story (82pp)

James Burnell Robinson, “The Lives of Indian Buddhist Saints: Biography, Hagiography and Myth” “ in Donald Lopez, ed., *Religions of Tibet in Practice* (Princeton readings in religions), Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1997, pp. 57-69.

“The Life of **Tilopa**”, in Donald Lopez, ed., *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1997, pp. 137-156. (Trans. Nalanda Translation Committee.)

“The Life and Songs of **Milarepa**”, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, pp. 437-45. (From Tsangyon Heruka, *Mi la res pa’i nam thar* Trans. J. W. Andrew Quintman.)

Matthew Kapstein, “The Royal Way of Supreme Compassion”, in Donald Lopez, ed., *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1997, pp. 69-76.

“**Jigme Zangpo** [sJigs Med bZang Po] of the Tanak [sTag sNag, but should be sTag na] family, age 67...” Guchusum, Dharmasala, 1994 Manuscript. Written by Tseso.

Matthew Kapstein, *The Tibetans*, Chapter 7 “Religious Life and Thought”, Blackwell, 2009, pp. 207-243.

B. Modern Theories of Memory and Nation (24pp)

Katherine Nelson, “Narrative and Self, Myth and Memory: Emergence of the Cultural Self”, in Robyn Fivush and Catherine A. Haden, *Autobiographical Memory and the Construction of a Narrative Self: Developmental and Cultural Perspectives*, Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum. 2003, pp. 6-8, 19-24.

Mieke Bal, *Narratology, 3rd edition: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009, pp. 3-13 (“Introduction”)

Homi Bhabha, “Introduction” in Homi Bhabha (ed.), *Nations and Narration*, Abingdon, Oxon, and New York: Routledge, 2008 (1998), pp. 1-7.

Optional Readings & Reference

Georges Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, “Tibetan Buddhism: A Brief Historical Overview”, pp. 17-31.

Matthew Kapstein, *The Tibetans*, Chapter 5 “The Rule of the Dalai Lamas”, Blackwell, 2009, pp. 127-174.

Helen Callaway, “Ethnography and experience”, in J. Okely and H. Callaway (eds.), *Anthropology and Autobiography*, ASA Monographs, Routledge, London, 1992, pp. 29-45.

Paul Spencer, “Automythologies and the reconstruction of ageing” in J. Okely and H. Callaway (eds.), *Anthropology and Autobiography*, ASA Monographs, Routledge, London, 1992, pp. 49-63.

Assignment: Each student will post their own life-story in 500 to 1000 words on the Courseworks site.

Week 3: Classical-Modern Variations of Dynastic Heroes’ Stories: Ancient Epics, Comics and Websites

The recollection of noted individual figures from history or legend has a crucial role in both the formation of a collective identity and in the process by which a dynasty, a nation or a state establishes its legitimacy. These are transmitted in constantly evolving forms, changing their meanings as well as their moral messages. We look at this process in classical textual accounts of the leaders of major Tibetan governmental dynasties, both legendary and actual.

At the same time, we see the different forms in which these stories are conveyed at different times: poetic narratives from the earliest Tibetan histories in the 9th century; transcribed extracts from the famous oral epic about the legendary King Gesar which are still sung today; historical accounts of famous Tibetan leaders; an autobiography by one leader (the Great Fifth); narrative poems by another (the Sixth); a comic book presenting a new type of heroic role model for Tibetan children in the 1960s; and a contemporary electronic biography of the Buddhist *siddha* Padmasambhava, foundational figure of the Nyingma school. For theoretical context, we read Janet Gyatso's formative discussion on the nature of autobiography in Tibet, and, completely different, a chapter from Tsering Shakya to remind us about the key historical moment in the turn towards the contemporary Chinese-Tibetan context.

In the Optional Readings, you'll find texts that show in more detail how biographies and history-writing have evolved in the course of Tibetan history. These show how top Tibetologists, western and Chinese, work on these questions – and especially how they study and translate early texts. Some discuss the earliest forms of Tibetan biography, one shows how a life story was told in the earliest surviving Tibetan history, another is a hugely complex text that shows the earliest form of the Padmasambhava story, while the rest offer background and detail about the Gesar Epic, the Fifth Dalai Lama, and Sixth Dalai Lama. The Tibetological pieces by Hill, Soerensen and Blondeau are strictly for specialists!

Readings

A. Life-Stories of Historic Figures (43pp). Arranged chronologically, according to the lifetime of the subject

“Elaborating the Narratives of Tibetan Antiquity”, “**Avalokitesvara**’s [Chenrezig’s] Mission”, and “The Clear Mirror’s Account of **Srongtsen Gampo**” in Kurtis Schaeffer, Matthew Kapstein, and Gray Tuttle (eds), *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2013, pp. 301-7. (From Srong btsan sgam po (attr.) *Bka’ chems kha khol ma* and Sakyapa Sonam Gyaltzen, *The Clear Mirror*, trans. Per Soerensen.)

Mukhtinath International Foundation, *The Story of Padmasambhava, Part 1*, citing Ngagyur Nyingma Institute, Oasis of Liberation, 1999 at <http://www.mukhtinath.org/buddhism/padmasambhava1.htm> or http://www.palyul.org/about_gururinpoche.html (4pp)

Robin Kornman, “**Gesar of Ling**” in Donald Lopez, ed., *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1997, pp. 39-71 (read pp. 39-42, and from end of 46 to c.54)

“A Life of Learning: **Sakya Pandita**”, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, pp. 384-90. (Trans. Cyrus Stearns.)

“The Biography of a Ruler: Tai Situ **Jangchup Gyaltzen** [Changchub Gyaltzen]”, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, pp. 345-8. (From Sonam Dragpa, *Dep ther dmar po gsar ma* (The New Red Annals), trans. GiuseppeTucci.)

“**The Fifth Dalai Lama’s** Visit to Beijing” (trans. Gray Tuttle) and “The Fifth Dalai and the Ganden Government” in *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, pp. 531-36, 540-42.

“Love Songs of the **Sixth Dalai Lama**” (trans. Nathan Hill and Toby Fee) and introduction, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, pp. 356-59.

Liu Hanzheng (Tib: Li’u han kreg), *le hpheng gi byis pa’i dus rabs* (“Lei Feng’s Time as a Child”), Mi rigs dpe skrun khang (Nationalities Publishing House), Beijing, January 1974.

B. Modern Commentaries on Tibetan Culture (40pp). In order of importance for our course.

Janet Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self: The Secret Autobiographies of a Tibetan Visionary*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1998, pp 101-123.

Tsering Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 33-51 (“China Invades” – the 1950s).

Optional/Further Reading

In order of relevance to our course

Sam van Schaik, “The First Tibetan Buddhist Biographies?”, early Tibet: Notes, thoughts and fragments of research on the history of Tibet, <http://earlytibet.com/2012/01/11/tibetan-buddhist-biographies/>

Nathan W. Hill, “The Old Tibetan Chronicle: Chapter I,” *Révue d’Études Tibétaines*, pp. 89-101. The story of Drigung Tsenpo.

Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger, *dBa’ bzhed - The Royal Narrative concerning the Bringing of Buddha’s Doctrine to Tibet*, Verlag der Oesterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna, 2000, pp.55-57 [no scan available]

Anne Marie Blondeau, “Analysis of Biographies of Padmasambhava according to Tibetan Tradition: Classification of Sources” in Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (eds.), *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, Aris and Phillips, Warminster, 1980, pp. 45-52

Alexander Gardner, “The Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobzang Gyatso b.1617 - d.1682”, *The Treasury of Lives – A Biographical Encyclopaedia of Himalayan Religion*,

<http://www.treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Ngawang-Lobzang-Gyatso/6065>

Michael Aris, *Hidden Treasures and Secret Lives – A Study of Pemalingpa (1450-1521) and the Sixth Dalai Lama (1683-1706)*, Kegan Paul International, London, 1989, pp. 1-11, 149-185, 207-211

Robin Kornman, Lama Chonam, Sangye Khandro (translators), *The Epic of Gesar of Ling: Gesar’s Magical Birth, Early Years, and Coronation as King*, Shambhala Publications, 2013. See extracts at <http://en.calameo.com/read/00003925747f57983d5d2>

Yang Enhong, “On the Study of the Narrative Structure of Tibetan Epic: A Record of King Gesar”, *Oral Tradition*, 16/2 (2001): 294-316.

Roberte Hamayon, “Reconstruction identitaire autour d’une figure imaginaire chez les Bouriates post-soviétiques?” in J. C. Attias, P. Gisel and L. Kaennel (eds.), *Messianismes: Religions et perspectives Nr. 10*, 2000, pp. 229- 252.

Week 4: Modern Spiritual Women and Their Tradition: From Yeshe Tsogyal to “Ani DD”

Is there any gender distinction to be made in the writing of biographies or the telling of experience? Is the fact that women often have marginal or inferior roles in society and culture reflected in accounts of their lives? Do inferior voices have a particular relationship to history that differs from those of more dominant players? Are women’s biographies to be regarded as more “personal” or “insightful” than those of men?

We first look at the life-stories of classical, medieval and early-20th century Tibetan women who were seen as religious or spiritual figures. We then read transcripts of confidential interviews with three contemporary Tibetan women living in Tibet, two of whom are nuns or related to a nun, while the third is the daughter of a female cadre. The optional readings include two contemporary short stories about religious Tibetan women written by Tibetan women in Tibet.

For the theoretical reading, we read a difficult feminist discussion by the American anthropologist and ethnographer, Charlene Makley, about the year she lived in Labrang in Amdo, a north-eastern Tibetan area.

Readings

A. Life-Stories of Historic Figures. Arranged chronologically, according to the date of writing (61 pp)

Keith Dowman and Choepel Namgyel (“revealed” by Taksham Nuden Dorje), *Sky Dancer: The Secret Life and Songs of the Lady Yeshe Tsogyel*, Routledge Kegan Paul, London, 1983 and Snow Lion, New York, 1997, pp. 14-

21, 31-36, 42-3 [or <http://www.keithdowman.net/books/sd.htm#Instruction%20and%20Initiation> 6-9, 39-47, 155-61]

Anon., *Ye shes mkha' 'gro bsod nams 'dren gyi sku skyes gsum pa ...* (The biography of **Choekyi Dronma**, the First Dorje Phagmo). 15th century. Translation: Hildegard Diemberger. Manuscript, 2002, READ pp. 4-17.

“The Suffering of a Himalayan Nun [**Orgyan Chökyi**]”, trans. Kurtis Schaeffer, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, pp. 580-84 (“A Himalayan Nun Biography”).

“The Judgement in Hell of a **Snooty Young Princess**”, trans. Bryan Cuevas, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition* (from ‘*Das log gling bza' chos skyid rnam thar*), pp. 456-8. (“A Delok and a Death Biography”)

“A Female Treasure Revealer: **Sera Khandro**”, trans. Sarah Jacoby, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition* (from Bde ba'i rdo rje, *Dbus mo bde ba'i rdo rje rnam pa thar pa*), pp. 696-99.

“Interview with **Elder Sister** of XX.” 1999. Names withheld. Do not circulate. Manuscript, 1999. 17pp.

“**Ani DD**, Interview.” 1999. Names withheld. Do not circulate. Manuscript. 5pp.

“Interview with Z: **My Mother's** Story.” 2001. Names withheld. Do not circulate. Manuscript. .1p.

B. Modern Commentaries. In order of importance for our course (43pp).

Charlene Makley, *The Violence of Liberation: Gender and Tibetan Buddhist Revival in Post-Mao China*, University of California Press, 2007, pp. 1-6, 76-87, 110-121.

Hildegard Diemberger, *When a woman becomes a religious dynasty: the Samding Dorje Phagmo of Tibet*. Columbia University Press, 2007, pp. xiii-xvii, 1-5, 121-128 [Brief introduction to **Chokyi Dronma** text]

Optional/Further Reading

Hanna Havnevik, “The Life of **Jetsun Lochen** Rinchen (1865 - 1951),” *Journal of Religious Culture*, No. 27-11 (1999). 13pp.

Hannah Havnevik, “On Pilgrimage for Forty years in the Himalaya – The Female Lama **Jetsun Lochen** Rinpoche's (1865-1951) Quest for Sacred Sites” in Alex McKay, ed., *Pilgrimage in Tibet*, Curzon, 1998, pp 85-107

Donatella Rossi, “mKha' 'gro dBang mo' i rNam thar. The Biography of the gTer-stonma bDe chen Chos kyi dBang mo (1868–1927?).” *Révue d'Études Tibétaines* 15 (2008): 371-378.[History of Dechen Choekyi Wangmo, a Tertönma]

Geyang, “An Old Nun Tells Her Story” in Herbert Batt (ed.), *Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Prayer Wheels and Wind Horses*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2001, pp. 163-176. [Short story]

Yangdon, “A God without Gender” in Herbert Batt (ed.), *Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Prayer Wheels and Wind Horses*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2001, pp. 177-188. [Short story]

“**Yeshe Tsogyal**: Notes and Biographies from western Buddhist websites”. Manuscript. 2006. [Compilation from various websites.]

Gail Hershatter, “The gender of memory: rural Chinese women and the 1950s.” *Signs* 28.1 (2002): 43-70.

Week 5: Oral History: Techniques, Theories and Difficulties

The work of historians has always been dominated by reliance on written records, but oral historians argue that their methods are also important tools for understanding and writing history. What is the balance between the spoken and the written record, between the individual experience and the synthesis account? Does the method of transmission change the nature of the product? Can oral records correct errors and misconceptions in written accounts, or is it more likely to be the other way around? And how does one resolve the problems of accuracy and subjective perspectives?

Readings on Oral History Theory and Method (80pp)

Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories – Form and Meaning in Oral History*, SUNY Press, 1991, pp. 1-26

Ronald Grele, “Movement Without Aim: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History”, in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds., *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, London and New York, 1998, pp. 42ff. (originally published in Ronald Grele, ed., *Envelopes of Sound – Six Practitioners Discuss the Method, Theory and Practice of Oral History and Oral Testimony*, Precedent, Chicago, 1975), pp. 126-54.

Luisa Passerini, “Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism”, *History Workshop*, 1979, no. 8, pp. 84-92

Kathryn Anderson, “Interviewing Techniques: Shedding Agendas” in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds., *The oral history reader*, Routledge, London, 1998, pp. 158-64

Dana Jack, “Interview Analyses: Listening for Meaning” in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds., *The oral history reader*, Routledge, London, 1998, pp. 164-171

Uradyn E. Bulag, "Can the subalterns not speak? On the regime of oral history in socialist China." *Inner Asia* 12.1 (2010): 95-111.

Optional & Further Reading

a. Oral History in Central Asia and Inner Asia

Robert Barnett, "Understated legacies: uses of oral history and Tibetan studies." *Inner Asia* 12.1 (2010): 63-93

Timur Dadabaev, "Power, Social Life, and Public Memory in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan." *Inner Asia* 12.1 (2010): 25-48.

Yuki Konagaya, "Socialist Modernisation in Mongolia as Narrated after Socialism." *Inner Asia* 12.1 (2010): 5-23.

Timur Dadabaev, "Trauma and Public Memory in Central Asia: Public responses to political violence of the state policies in Stalinist Era in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan." *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies* 3.1 (2009), pp. 108-138

b. Oral history method and theory

Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, 1955

Michael Frisch, "Oral History and *Hard Times*: A Review Essay", in *Oral History Review* 1979, no. 7, pp. 70-79 or in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds., *The oral history reader*, Routledge, London, 1998, pp. 29-37

Wolf Kansteiner, "Finding meaning in memory: A methodological critique of collective memory studies." *History and theory* 41.2 (2002): 179-197.

Nicola King, *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self*, Edinburgh University Press, 2000, pp. 11-22

Claudio Fogu and Wulf Kansteiner, "The politics of memory and the poetics of history." *The politics of memory in postwar Europe* (2006): 284-310.

Geoffrey M White, "Histories and subjectivities." *Ethos* 28.4 (2000): 493-510.

Week 6: National History as a Personal Life-story: The Metonymic Demoness

Can a nation have a personal biography? How different is this from a history? And why are many of these nation-identifications feminized? We look at versions of the story of Tibet as a demoness, including pictures, and the depictions in legend, opera, books and TV shows of China's encounter with Tibet in the form of the Princess Wencheng.

Readings

a. Ancient and modern accounts of Tibetan foundational stories (57pp)

Per Soerensen (ed.), *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies (Rgyal rab gsal ba'i me long)*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1994, pp. 242-80 [This text includes difficult names. The majority of this text consists of notes that you don't need to read.]

Janet Gyatso, "Down with the demoness: reflections on a feminine ground in Tibet" in *Tibet Journal*, XII-4, Winter 1987, pp. 38-53, also published in Janice Willis (ed.), *Feminine Ground: Essays on Women and Tibet*, Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1989, pp. 33-51

Tinley Chodag (ed.), *Tibet, The Land and the People*, New World Press, Beijing, 1988, pp. 3-21, 281-283

b. Modern Theories of Memory and Nation (41pp)

[**Benedict Anderson.... On novels and nations...?**]

James Wertsch, "The Narrative Organization of Collective Memory", *ETHOS*, Vol. 36, Issue 1, 2008, pp. 120-135

Mieke Bal, *Narratology, 3rd edition: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009, pp. 225-29 ("Afterword: Theses on the Use of Narratology for Cultural Analysis")

Optional

Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: time, narrative and the margins of the nation" in Homi Bhabha (ed.), *Nations and Narration*, Abingdon, Oxon, and New York: Routledge, 2008 (1998), pp. 300-22.

Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992, pp.37-42, 167-77, 182-89

Week 7: Diasporic Dilemmas: the prevalence of biographies in exile literature

For foreigners the dominant sources of knowledge about another place are those produced in English, and in the Tibetan case, that often means those produced by exiles or representatives of their community. What are the dynamics of Tibetan exile literary production and how should we read their products? Do they have recognizable narrative templates? Why are

they often in the form of women's autobiographies? What is the relationship between an exile perspective and that of a person from inside Tibet?

Readings (4, 22, 7, 11, 28, 6, 15, 27, 14 -1 24pp)

Rin-chen Lha-mo, *We Tibetans*, Potala Publications, 1985 (1926), pp. v-ix, 65-9, 89-111, 125-132

Rinchen Dolma Taring, *Daughter of Tibet*, Wisdom Publications, 1987 (first published by John Murray, London, 1970), pp. 14-25, 66-94

Anonymous (Adrian Moon, translator), "A Monk's Story," published in translation in *Background Papers on Tibet - September 1992, Part 2*, London: Tibet Information Network, 1992, p.20-26

K. Dhondup, "The Case for Intellectual Freedom" in Vyvyan Cayley, *Children of Tibet: An Oral History of the First Tibetans to Grow Up in Exile*. Pearlfisher Publications, [226 Darling St, Balmain NSW, 2041 Australia fax 61 2 8106024] 1994, pp. 83-98

Hortsang Jigme, *Under the Blue Sky –An Invisible Small Corner of the World*, translated by Lobsang Dawa and Gussje de Schot, privately printed in typescript, 1989, pp. 1-27

Laurie Hovell McMillin, *English in Tibet, Tibet in English: Self-Presentation in Tibet and the Diaspora*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001 [selected pages]

A. W. Schultheis, "Subjectivity Politics in Sorrow Mountain: Transnational Feminism and Tibetan Autobiography." *Genders* 44, 2006. 14pp.

Optional/Class Presentation

Rato Khyongla, *My Life and Lives: the Story of a Tibetan Incarnation*, Button, New York, 1977, pp. 1-24, 123-33, 181-218.

Chogyam Trungpa, *Born in Tibet*, Shambhala, Boulder, 1977 (first published by Allen and Unwin, London, 1966)

Dorje Yudon Yuthok, *House of the Turquoise Roof*, Snow Lion, New York, 1990

Sunner Carnhan with Lama Kunga Rimpoche, *In the Presence of My Enemies: Memoirs of Tibetan Nobleman, Tsipon Shuguba*, Heartfire, Santa Fe, 1998. [See review by Huber]

Paul Gilroy, *The black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp 186-223

(**Pema Chodron**), "Biography" by Shambhala Publications,

<http://www.shambhala.com/pc/html/bio.cfm/xid.1389043/yid.70711351/userId.9CF2BB82-D953-47FE-93B78ECE00AF0132>

Week 8: Narratives of Resistance

Many of the exile and foreign accounts of recent Tibetan history are variations of a general narrative of resistance. Resistance to the state or to oppression has an important place in foreign perceptions of history, and is closely related to accounts of individual experience. Does this shape people's own accounts of their past? How should we listen to such accounts?

We look at resistance literature, similar to exile accounts we have read earlier, and we look at critics who argue that it is part of outsiders' simplification, or of elite attempts to commandeer discourse. We also take this chance to read Shakya's history of the post-Cultural Revolution period, which has shaped the stories of many people whom we'll meet or read about.

Readings

A. Tibetan exile writers on their lives or those of other exiles (24pp.)

Jamyang Norbu, *Warriors of Tibet: Story of Aten and the Khampas' Fight for the Freedom of Their Country*, Wisdom Publications, 1986 (first published as *Horseman in the Snow* by Tibet Information Office, Dharamsala, India, 1979), pp. 7-20, 143-52

David Patt, *A Strange Liberation: Tibetan Lives in Chinese Hands*, Snow Lion, New York, 1993, pp 133-66

Kalsang Wangdu, "Growing Up Refugee", in Rajiv Mehrotra (ed.), *Voices in exile*, New Delhi: Rupa Publications India, 2013, pp 137-40

B. Historical background and commentary (35pp.)

Tsering Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 384-448

Lila Abu-Lughod, “The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women”, *American Ethnologist* 17(1), 1990, pp. 41-55

Optional/Reference

Nicola King, *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000, pp. 11-22.

John Hartmann, “Power and Resistance in the Later Foucault”, Presented at the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Foucault Circle, John Carroll University, Cleveland, OH, February 28th – March 2nd, 2003.

Gonpo Tashi Andrugtsang, *Four Rivers, Six Ranges: Reminiscences of the Resistance Movement in Tibet*, Information and Publicity Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama, Dharamsala, 1973, pp. 1-31, 95-106

Carol McGranahan, “After Mustang: Contemporary Perspectives on the Tibetan Resistance”. Prepared for “The Cold War and Its Legacy in Tibet: Great-Power Politics and Regional Security” Conference, Harvard University, April 20-21, 2002, pp 1-24

Alak Tsayu Tenzin Palbar, *The Tragedy Of My Homeland*, Dharamsala, manuscript, 1997, pp. 1-4, 26, 46, 60-61, 123-4

Week 9: Informed Foreigners: Kimura, Richardson, Ma and other Working Visitors

Travel writers and explorers can be seen as a breed of people who capitalize on their lack of knowledge – their foreignness – by converting the places and people whom they encounter on their journeys into a form of profit. One could say that, though they usually present themselves as disinterested but gifted observers, there’s a certain added benefit to them displaying a degree of ignorance, since it allows them more easily to invoke tropes about those they write about, such as the exotic, the dangerous, the remote, the backward or the weird. We don’t need to read such writings about Tibet here, since we are all familiar with the kind of ideas that circulate in such literature, and with the use of Saïd’s concept of Orientalism to critique and devalue such approaches.

But the self-loathing of the post-colonial subject may lead us to overgeneralize in our attempts to distance ourselves from the work of colonial and foreign writers, and in particular to assume that all colonial writing and thinking about the foreign is deficient or self-serving. In this week’s selection, we look at a group that is rarely mentioned: the long-term, specialist visitors to Tibet, who learnt the language of their hosts and who went there for purposes other than travel or self-fulfillment. Often they worked for the local administration, as diplomats or spies, or as colonial officers. They wrote about Tibet, but they hadn’t gone there in order to be writers. Are foreign writers such as these only able to write within the confines of their colonial, militarist or exoticising traditions, or are there some ways in which they can escape from those narrative conventions? What differences come from knowledge of a language or involvement in the administration? Does one have to be a native to understand a culture and a place? And do these conventions affect Tibetans too when they come to writing or telling their own stories about their homes? We consider life-stories of British, Chinese and Japanese long-term visitors, officials and agents who lived and worked in Tibet, and as a counterpoint, we look at examples of Tibetans who wrote as foreigners in western lands.

Readings (77pp)

A. Foreign specialists in Tibet

Ekai Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, Bibliotheca Himalayica, Series 1, Volume 22, EMR Publishing House, Kathmandu, Nepal, 1995, (first published in Madras, 1909), pp. 286-343 (but read especially 285-90, 297-303, 328-343)

Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, Cambridge, 1922, PP. 101-123

Hugh Richardson, “The Chapel of the Hat” (from *Tibet Society Newsletter*, London, Summer 1983, pp.14-16)
High Peaks, Pure Earth, Serindia, London, 1998, pp. 726-728, 733.

Hisao Kimura and Scott Berry, *A Japanese Agent In Tibet: My Ten Years Of Travel In Tibet*, Serindia, London, 1990, pp. 171-211 (but read especially 182-206)

Ma Lihua, *Glimpses of Northern Tibet*, Beijing: Panda Books, 1991, pp. 6-11, 106-111, 262-265, 303-313

“**Adrup Gonpo’s** impressions of France” and “**Gurong Tsang** in China”, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, pp. 704-14. (Trans. Jacques Bacot.)

B. Commentary (34pp)

Nicholas B. Dirks, "Colonial Histories and Native Informants: The Biography of an Archive", in Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, eds., *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1993, pp. 279-313.

Optional/Reference

Catriona Bass, *Inside the Treasure House*, Gollancz, London, 1990, pp. 195-217

G. E. O. Knight, *Intimate Glimpses of Mysterious Tibet & Neighbouring Countries*, London, 1930 (reprinted by Pilgrim Books, Delhi), pp. 39-62

Heinrich Harrer, *Seven Years in Tibet*: Bantam Doubleday Dell Audio, 1997 (first published in English by Hart-Davies, London, 1953), pp. 91-108.

Heinrich Harrer, *Return to Tibet: Tibet after the Chinese Occupation*, Penguin, London, 1985

Robert Ford, *Captured in Tibet*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1990 (first published by Harrap, London, 1957 and as *Wind Between The Worlds: The Extraordinary First Person Account Of A Westerner's Life In Tibet As An Official Of The Dalai Lama's Government*, David McKay, New York, 1957), Pp. 3-19, 46-49, 72-73, 128, 178-181

Week 10: Intelligentsia Claims, Death and Suicide: Gendun Choephel, Sherab Gyatso and Dondrup Gyal

Intellectuals generally operate through the spoken and written word, and may be involved in projects to transform their societies. Their biographies are complicated and politicized texts, and their lives and deaths – especially their deaths – can become symbolic drivers within important social movements and concerns. But is this a factor of a manipulative ability to bequeath texts and to create meanings in ways that affect successor-intellectuals more than society as a whole? We look at leading renaissance figures in earlier 20th century Tibet and Mongolia, and in early 1980s Amdo.

Readings (55pp.)

A. Biographies

"An Amdo Boyhood: **Zhabkar Tsogdruk Rangdrol**", *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, pp. 665-68. (Trans. Matthieu Ricard *et al.*)

"The Autobiography of **Jamgon Kongtrul**", *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, pp. 675-86. (Trans. Richard Barron.)
Tsering Shakya, "**The Thirteenth Dalai Lama**, Tubten Gyatso," *The Treasury of Lives: A Biographical Encyclopaedia of Himalayan Religion*, <http://www.treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Thirteenth-Dalai-Lama-Tubten-Gyatso/3307> (16pp).

Heather Stoddard, "The Long Life of **rDo-sbis dGe-bses Ses-rab rGya-mtso** (1184-1968)" in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Fourth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, Munich, pp. 465-71.

Pema Bhum (trans. Luran Hartley), "A Shooting Star that Cleaved the Night Sky and Vanished" in *Lungta*, No.9, Dharamsala, Winter 1995, pp. 17-29.

Gendun Choephel...

B. Histories

Gray Tuttle, *Chinese Support for Modern Monastic Education in the Borderlands of Tibet: Shes rab rgya mtsho's School in Rdo sbis, Qinghai*, Harvard, 2002 (manuscript; subject to permission of the author)

Tsering Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999, p.1-14

Optional and Reference

Heather Stoddard, "Tibet: Transition from Buddhism to Communism" in *Government and Opposition*, Volume 21, No.1, Winter 1986, London School of Economics, London, pp. 75-95

J. Gyatso, "Counting Crow's Teeth: Tibetans and their Diary-Writing Practices" in Samten Karmay and P Sagant (eds.), *Les Habitants du Toit du Monde*, Soci t  d'ethnologie, Paris, 1977, pp. 159-77

Sechin Jagchid, *The Last Mongol Prince - The Life and Times of Demchugdongrob, 1902-1966*, Washington: Centre for Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 1999, pp.18-33, 427-33

Heather Stoddard, "**Don grub rgyal** (1953-1985): Suicide of a Modern Tibetan Writer and Scholar" in Per Kvaerne (ed.), *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, Oslo, 1994, pp. 825-34

Week 11: Individuals Perform the State: Officials in Chinese/Tibetan Revolutionary History

Accounts of meaningful lives are not produced just by writers, religious figures, and national leaders. They are also created and circulated by those who work as functionaries in the state – officials, military officers, party cadres and others. In the

Chinese system, autobiographical accounts by such exemplary figures have a particularly prominent role, much as they had in dynastic times, and today they are heavily promoted in the media. They reflect state rhetoric and its projects, and are always forms of political justification. But that does not mean at all that they are invalid or ineffective.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a kind of mirror opposite of these official justification-narratives appeared in China, one which is still prominent and hugely influential: wound or scar literature (*shanghen wenxue*). This consisted of myriad stories of damaged lives told by educated youths and members of the elite who had been sent to the countryside or imprisoned during the Cultural Revolution, causing huge damage to the lives they had expected to live as officials, intellectuals or businesspeople.

Looking at these two complementary forms of life-stories in the modern Chinese state, we examine accounts of the lives of upstanding officials and of those disallowed from becoming officials, and ask how these might effect other citizens' ideas of a proper life and shape their subjectivity. As we did last week, we begin with a text from an earlier period, before the arrival of the PRC, to keep always open the question as to whether modernity reached Tibet only in 1950.

Readings

A. Memoirs of officials (39 pp)

“**Dokharwa Tsering Wangyel**’s Autobiography: A Life of Government Service” and “A Tibetan Diplomat Reflecting on the Status of Tibet”, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, pp. 563-73. (From Mdo mkhar ba Tshe ring dbang rgyal, *Bka' blon rtogs brjed*, trans. Luran Hartley and Pema Bhumi.)

Chen Jingbo, “The Advance Party to Tibet and the Work of the United Front (Part I)” in *Bulletin of the History of the Tibet Communist Party*, Volume 1, 1988 (General Series No.19), pp. 7. Published 5 January 1988 [TIN Ref: Doc 20(ZY)p7]. Read pp. 1-6, 11-18.

Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, “Facts about the 1959 Rebellion”, in Hu Tan (ed.), *Theses on Tibetology in China*, China Tibetology Publishing House, Beijing, 1991, pp. 439-444 (or Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, “The True Facts of the 10 March 1959 Event”, *China Tibetology*, 2, Beijing, 1988).

“Interview with **Jigme Namgyal**”, Lhasa, August 1997. Published in French as “Postface. Témoignage de Jigmé Namgyèl” {Afterword: Testimony of Jigme Namgyal}, in Katia Buffetrille and Charles Ramble (eds.), *Tibétains: 1959-1999, quarante ans de colonisation*, Editions Autrement No. 108, Paris, 1998, pp.163-9.

Tang Xiaoming, “**Druju**- Herdsman’s Secretary in Northern Tibet,” *China’s Tibet*, Vol. 25, 2014.2, pp. 38-42.

B. Wound Literature (37 pp)

Lu Xinhua, “The Wounded” in *The Wounded: new stories of the Cultural Revolution*, 77-78, Joint Publishing Co., Hongkong, 1979. Skim read pp. 3-5, 9-24.

Nien Cheng, *Life and Death in Shanghai*, Penguin, London, 1987. Skim read, pp. 334-54.

C. Commentaries (30 pp.)

Hildegard Diemberger, “Life histories of forgotten heroes? Transgression of boundaries and the reconstruction of Tibet in the post-Mao Era.” *Inner Asia* 12.1 (2010): 113-125.

Tsering Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 92-101, 122-30.

Optional/Reference

Revan Schendler, “Narratives of State Socialism in the Czech Republic”, ms., 2003, pp 1-15.

Geremie R. Barmé, “History for the Masses” in Jonathan Unger, ed., *Using the Past to Serve the Present*, M.E. Sharpe, Inc., Armonk, NY, 1993. Read pp. 1-9, 14-15. See <http://www.tsquare.tv/themes/Histmasses.html>

Israel Epstein, *Tibet Transformed*, New World Press, Beijing, pp 153-179, 258-64.

Chang Kuo-hua (Zhang Guohua), “Tibet Returns to the Bosom of the Motherland”, *Survey of China Mainland Press*, No.2854 (6th November 1962). Read pp. 1-4, 8-12.

Assignment: Students will give an oral presentation in office hours of a 2-page proposal concerning their research project. This project will involve interviewing a person in the local community who is from the Tibetan cultural area. The proposal will include your initial research question; an initial bibliography or plan for finding relevant research materials; a protocol covering confidentiality issues and interviewee's consent; your basic interview questions; your plan for cultural familiarization and the interview process.

Week 12: The Symbolic Failed Leader - Disputed Heroes of the Revolution and/or the Nation: Phuntsog Wangyal, Ulanfu and the Panchen Lama

We look at three Tibetan and Mongolian figures who were socialist or revolutionary activists and leading officials within the state apparatus, and yet have come to occupy unique symbolic positions: they are seen as patriotic figureheads within China, and sometimes as heroes among exile groups as well. Is this ambiguous position only available to people with access to symbolic power, such as lamas? What can we tell from their published texts and biographies, most of which are written within the limitations of official discourse? Do these texts undermine or support the claims of the regime that these writers have served?

Readings

A. The Tenth Panchen Lama (24 pp)

Dawa Norbu, "Historical Introduction" in R. Barnett (ed.), *A Poisoned Arrow: The Secret Petition of the Tenth Panchen Lama*, London: Tibet Information Network, 1997, pp. xxv-xxxiii.

'Jam dpal rgya mtsho, "Banchan da shi" (Great Master Panchen) in *Zhongguo Redian Wenxiao* (China Popular Literature) Beijing, August 1989, pp. 6-26. Original published in *Zhonghua Erniu* (China's Sons and Daughters) (ms, draft translation), pp.1-13. Read pp.1-3, 12-14, 17-24, skim read 26-30.

B. Phuntsog Wanggyal (35 pp)

Melvyn Goldstein, Dawei Sherab, and William Siebensuh, *A Tibetan Revolutionary: the Political Life and Times of Baba Phuentso Wangye*, pp. 103-25, skim read 311-37.

The Dalai Lama, "Condolence Message from His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Passing Away of Baba Phuntsog Wangyal", Dalailama.com (Dharamsala), March 30, 201 www.dalailama.com/news/post/1102-condolence-message-from-his-holiness-the-dalai-lama-at-the-passing-away-of-baba-phuntsog-wangyal

Jamyang Norbu, "The Arrogance of Treason: Phuntsok Wangyal & his Admiration Society-in-Exile", Phayul.com (Dharamsala), April 06, 2014 <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=34774>

C. Ulanhu and Bulag's commentary (37 pp)

Uradyn E. Bulag, "The Cult of Ulanhu: History, Memory, and the Making of an Ethnic Hero", *The Mongols at China's Edge: History and the Politics of National Unity*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, pp. 207-244 [earlier version published in *Central Asian Survey*, No. 1, 1998, pp. 11-34.]

Optional and Reference

Robert Barnett, "Beyond the Collaborator-Martyr Model: Strategies of Compliance, Opportunism and Opposition within Tibet," in Barry Sautman and June Dreyer (eds), *Contemporary Tibet: Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region*, ME Sharpe 2005: 25-66.

"Daweixirao", "Appendix II: A Brief Biography of Phuntsok Wanggyal Goranangpa", in *Liquid Water Does Exist on the Moon (dla ba'i nang gsher gzugs yod)*, Beijing, Foreign Languages Press, 2002, pp. 434-480 [originally circulated at Zla ba'i shes rab, *Sgor ra nang pa phun tshogs dbang rgyal (phun dbang) gyi mdzad rnam mtor bsdus* ('A Brief Biography of Phuntsog Wanggyal Goranangpa'), Beijing (?), undated ms., c.1999], read pp. 447-57. Note: This is actually a pseudonymous autobiography.

Week 13: Testimony: Life Stories as Human Rights Strategies

In the late 1980s, human rights issues became the dominant mode for western discussions of Tibet and other conflict areas. This approach shifted increasingly from reports by journalists and experts to personal accounts given by those who had

been abused. These are expressed primarily in the form of testimonies, or the victim's story. We look at the role of such statements and at the debate over their significance, and the corresponding question of authenticity, in the cases of Tibet and Guatemala. What is the effect of the western market on this process? What role do translators, interviewers, publishers, editors and campaigners have on these works? More importantly, what effect does the testimony-telling process have on the story-tellers and on the community they come to represent?

Readings (89 pp.)

David Patt, "After the Snowfall: Ama Adhe's Story", in David Patt, *A Strange Liberation: Tibetan Lives in Chinese Hands*, Snow Lion, New York, 1993, pp. 41-63.

A. M. Rosenthal, "On My Mind; You Are Palden Gyatso," *New York Times*, April 11, 1995.

Ngawang Sangdrol, "Statement of Ngawang Sangdrol, Tibetan nun and former political prisoner," Hearing on Human Rights Practices Around the World: A Review of the State Department's 2003 Annual Report, March 10, 2004. House Committee on International Relations, US Congress. <http://www.savetibet.org/ngawang-sangdrol-testifies-on-human-rights-before-us-congress/>.

David Stoll, *Rigoberta Menchu and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1999, pp. 178-97

Paul Gelles, "Testimonio, ethnography, and processes of authorship", *Anthropology Newsletter*, March 1998, pp. 16-17.

Greg Grandin, "It was Heaven that They Burned", *The Nation*, September 8, 2010.

Meg McLagan, "Human Rights, Testimony, and Transnational Publicity," *The Scholar and Feminist Online*, The Barnard Center for Research on Women, www.barnard.edu/sfonline, Issue 2.1 – "Public Sentiments" - Summer 2003.

Tsering Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 431-448 ("Postscript" – the 1990s).

Optional and Reference

Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy, « De l'exil à l'asile : témoignages et authenticité culturelle des candidats tibétains au statut de réfugié politique en Belgique », *Civilisations* [En ligne], 56 | 2007, pp. 121-158.

<http://civilisations.revues.org/157>. (In French.)

Katherine M. Wilson, *Genocide Genres: Reading Atrocity Testimonies*, PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, May 2013. Read pp. 80-104.

Palden Gyatso with Tsering Shakya, *Autobiography of a Tibetan Monk* (also published as *Fire under the Snow: The Testimony of a Tibetan Prisoner*), Harvill Press, London 1998.

Ani Pachen with Adelaide Donnelley, *Sorrow Mountain: The Journey of a Tibetan Warrior Nun*, Kodansha International, 2000.

Adhe Tapotsang and Joy Blakeslee, *Ama Adhe: The Voice that Remembers*, Wisdom, Boston, 2000 (first published 1997).

David Stoll, "Life story as mythopoesis", *Anthropology Newsletter*, April 1998, pp. 9, 11.

Week 14: The Demotic Dream: Ordinary Lives and the Fabulization of Routine.

Almost all of the people whom we will ever meet and talk with will consider themselves "ordinary", and so they will probably see themselves as entirely different from those famous people who publish memoirs or are interviewed by conventional historians. They will almost certainly not consider their lives not to be worth considering as "history". But some writers have persisted in trying to transcribe non-heroic life-stories, which we can call demotic history. Sometimes, these are among the most refreshing areas of this genre. Why? What can we learn from studying these accounts? Are we just entranced by ordinariness, because we think it confirms our specialness, or do ordinary people's lives reveal important ways of understanding a society and its history?

Readings

A. Autobiographies and Biographies of "Ordinary People"

Richardus, Peter, and Alex McKay, eds. *Tibetan lives: Three Himalayan Autobiographies*. RoutledgeCurzon, 1998 [Introduction and 3 random extracts]

G. A. Combe, *A Tibetan on Tibet*, T Fisher Unwin, 1925 (reprinted Delhi: Aryan 1994), pp. 22-34.

Sang Ye and Zhang Xinxin, *Chinese Lives: An Oral History of Contemporary China*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1987 (first published as *Beijingren*, Shanghai, 1984), pp. xv-xvi, xxi-xxviii, 3-13, 135-39, 209-13.

Liu Qizhong and Chen Gengtao (eds.), *Profiles of 50 Tibetans*, Xinhua, Beijing, 1991, pp. 1-2, 6-8, 24-29.

Pema Bhum, trans. Lauren Hartley, *Six Stars and a Crooked Neck*, Bod kyi du babs, Dharamsala, 2001, pp. 87-105.

Kunsang Dolma, *A Hundred Thousand White Stones*, Wisdom 2013, pp. 1-2, 103-120. [Do not copy or distribute!].

B. Commentary

Alice Travers, “How Should we Define Social Status? The Study of “Intermediate Groups” in Central Tibet

(1895–1959)”, from Charles Ramble, Peter Schwieger and Alice Travers (eds), *Tibetans who Escaped the Historian’s Net: Studies in the Social History of Tibetan Societies*, Vajra Books, Kathmandu, 2013, pp. 141-61.

Assignment: Students will present a transcript of their interview with a summary, and a paper discussing the historical and analytical issues involved in the project of at least 2,000 words.
