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The Clash of Sino-Tibetan Propaganda On-screen

A Case Study of Tibetan Exile Movie Theatre

Abstract

Different self-presentation strategies constantly compete on the battlefield between two propagandas using various media — documentary films and docudramas are among the most used persuasive tools to convey and disseminate a specific worldview through the mediation of selected information and analysis. The target audience of the films is influenced by techniques to maximize the effect of propaganda, including the emphasis on the credibility of the information conveyed, specific truth claims concerning the topic discussed, and, finally, the very nature of the visual message itself, which gives the impression of an authentic depiction of reality. Based on previous research on self-presentation strategies and an analysis of the propaganda of the Tibet Museum in Dharamsala, India (which is under the direct supervision of the Central Tibetan Administration [CTA] and the Dalai Lama), this case study focuses on the movie theatre located in the mentioned institution and the films screened daily. Through a discourse analysis of the documentaries and docudramas that the CTA has selected for their cinema, this paper aims to explore the preferred narrative perspectives on the history of Sino-Tibetan relations and other motives, like oppression and destruction of Tibet, environmental and human rights issues or the role of the 14th Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism.

Keywords

Cinema, documentaries, Central Tibetan Administration, Tibet Museum, propaganda

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Introduction

Tibet is mystical and wise; Tibet is backward and underdeveloped; Tibet is liberated and modernized; Tibet is destroyed and exploited. The Land of Snow has been and still is called by similar adjectives in the various narratives that have emerged and continue to

evolve throughout history. Perhaps the most prolific period in this dynamic process came when the “Tibet question” and the associated official discourses and propaganda strategies of the two still warring parties — the People’s Republic of China and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile — emerged in the 1950s. After the departure of the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, to Indian Exile in 1959, a new phase of propaganda war began over the history of Tibet, the identity of Tibetans inside and outside the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), and the views, consent and support of the world public and political powers. One of the places where such competing discourses and propaganda take shape today, and where people come into personal contact and interaction with it, is a specific type of institution used by both sides of the barricade to distribute their political beliefs and goals: the museum.

In my recently defended dissertation,¹⁾ I explored the dynamics of discourses, practices, and the resulting self-presentation and propaganda strategies employed by the Tibet Museum (TM) in Dharamsala, the only museum in the world under the direct supervision of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (today known as CTA), during its more than two decades of existence. The original research draws on data collected over seven years (2017–2024), primarily during three visits to two Indian sites (the former TM at McLeod Ganj and the new TM at Gangchen Kyishong, Dharamsala); the most recent and up-to-date data have been acquired through communication with museum staff. As a follow-up to the abovementioned research, this paper aims to present, summarise, and enrich the whole endeavour by analyzing another primary source of data: the films that the CTA chose as a representative sample to support its narratives. These documentaries and docudramas are screened daily in the museum’s cinema and thus become another suitable tool in the fight against Chinese propaganda, which has sufficient resources and motivation to fire back.

In the individual chapters of the present article, I first attempt to (1) provide the reader with an adequate portrayal of the context and results of the overall research on the Tibet Museum, (2) introduce the theoretical and methodological background and present a sample of the films that were subjected to the research, and (3) show how the main narratives and self-presentation strategies of CTA propaganda are supported and complemented by the sample of films analyzed.

The Tibet Museum

As outlined in the introduction, the films I have chosen to examine were selected by members of the CTA and have been displayed virtually every day in the interior of the old TM (existing between 2000–2022) and the new one (opened in 2022). This section aims to present and summarise my research on this institution, thus providing the reader with

1) This article draws heavily on a dissertation that was defended in January 2024 at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic. For the full text (in Czech) see Martin Špírk, “‘My jsme Tibetané, a toto je náš příběh’: dynamika diskurzů a propagandistických strategií Tibetického muzea v Dharamsale” [‘We are Tibetan, and this is our story’: the dynamics of discourses and propaganda strategies at the Tibet Museum in Dharamsala] (PhD thesis, Masaryk University, 2024), <https://is.muni.cz/th/q2axc/?lang=en>.

sufficient contextual background and an idea of the surroundings in which the films have been screened to this day to incoming audiences.

The original TM built its visual and textual materials on the rhetorical strategies aptly described by Stephen Hartnett in his study with the term “catastrophic witnessing.”²⁾ The horrors of the Chinese occupation, a national tragedy and hardships of the Tibetan people over the past seventy years, are complemented by themes of self-immolation,³⁾ the abduction of the Panchen Lama,⁴⁾ and reminders of other atrocities perpetrated by the Chinese in their policy towards Tibet. The second central theme that runs through most of the exhibitions and materials produced in and around the old TM is the Dalai Lama’s agenda of a so-called Middle Way Approach, a compromise solution to the Tibetan question.⁵⁾ Underlying all these narratives and political views are cultural myths and stereotypes, especially the image of a naturally and culturally rich, untouched Tibet and its people: a profoundly religious, peaceful, democratically minded and united nation⁶⁾ that seeks to end the Sino-Tibetan dispute and negotiations, primarily through non-violence, at all costs, while adhering to the Dalai Lama’s life commitments, which include applying the principles of compassion, forgiveness, tolerance and self-discipline, promoting interfaith harmony and preserving Buddhist culture. The objectives of the self-presentation strategies

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- 2) Stephen Hartnett, “‘Tibet is Burning’: Competing Rhetorics of Liberation, Occupation, Resistance, and Paralysis on the Roof of the World,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99, no. 3 (2013), 283–316.
 - 3) Self-immolations in Tibet are a relatively new phenomenon, which arouses very ambivalent reactions among Tibetans, Buddhists and academics. It began to appear more massively between 2008 and 2019; most recent CTA data indicate that two more Tibetans, Tsewang Norbu (25 years old) and Taphun (81 years old), were added to the Tibetans burned in 2022, bringing the total number of victims today to 157 (see Anon., “Self-immolation fact sheet,” *Central Tibetan Administration*, 2022, accessed July 18, 2024, <https://tibet.net/important-issues/factsheet-immolation-2011–2012/>).
 - 4) In 1989, the 10th Panchen Lama died suddenly, and both Beijing and Dharamsala were aware that the selection of a new spiritual master would carry with it a very significant political role, not least because in the person of the Panchen Lama, China had been nurturing a counterweight to the authority of the Dalai Lamas since the 18th century. Although China already thought it was in control of the candidate selection situation, to its astonishment, the Dalai Lama announced in 1995 that he would select the Panchen Lama himself. This action infuriated the party, especially since it now looked like the Dalai Lama alone had control over the whole process. The boy selected and confirmed by the 14th Dalai Lama, Gendun Choekyi Nyima (born April 24, 1989), was quickly removed from the public eye, and within a few months, China had already announced the existence of its candidate, Gyaltzen Norbu (born February 13, 1989), who holds the position to this day (for more information see for example Sam Van Schaik, *Tibet: A History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 262–263).
 - 5) In 1988, the Dalai Lama made a public speech (in Strasbourg before the European Parliament) where he surprised many Tibetans by agreeing to the Chinese condition that Tibet give up its claim to independence. China was thus to become responsible for foreign policy, security and defence in return for a promise of full autonomy for the whole of central Tibet, Kham and Amdo. This political strategy, publicly embraced in 1988 by the CTA and the Dalai Lama, became known as the Middle Way Approach (for the full version of the concept see Dalai Lama, “His Holiness’s Middle Way Approach for Resolving the Issue of Tibet,” *The Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama*, 1988, accessed July 18, 2024, <https://www.dalailama.com/messages/tibet/middle-way-approach>).
 - 6) The unity of the Tibetan exile community is a very controversial topic. Three generations have grown up since the Chinese invasion of Tibet. These people have fought against the PRC army in the form of a CIA-backed guerrilla war, often standing by the Dalai Lama’s views and the Middle Way Approach or opting for the aforementioned form of protest by self-immolation and engaging in polemics about more violent solutions to the Tibetan struggle towards independence. To illustrate this issue, see the film *Rituals of Resistance* (Tenzin Phuntsog and Joy Dietrich, 2018).

are then straightforward. In terms of integrative propaganda, it is an information campaign to explain the issues mentioned above to new generations of Tibetan exiles, strengthening relations with host India and clearly defining its position vis-à-vis Chinese narratives. The agitational component, in contrast, mainly targets international democratic society to win the support of individual states and the general public.

The motif of catastrophic witnessing, which still occupies a particular space in the new TM, has been complemented by a much more complex narrative that targets a global audience, including contemporary Tibetans in exile, by presenting the richness and importance of Tibetan nature, culture, history, and the work done by the CTA and the Tibetan exile community during their long-standing efforts to preserve and restore Tibetan culture. During my whole research, I found many shifts in the dynamics of the discourse of the TM institution, such as the transformation of ideology and propaganda strategies from the portrayal of the Tibetans as victims of the policies of the People's Republic of China to Tibetans consciously and heroically (but above all non-violently) fighting with all available means, finding in their renewed and unified identity a weapon against Chinese oppression. The new museum is not only trying to explain to the latest generation of Tibetan exiles the hardships of previous generations, but it is also trying to reach out to them, to rouse them, almost to recruit them to a nonviolent struggle for their own identity and freedom, and thus to ignite in them a sense of pride and support for the CTA's policy. Similarly, the non-Tibetan audience is also approached and, through educational techniques, the CTA's political narrative and calls for engagement with human rights and environmental protection in Tibet, is directed to sympathize with the agenda of the CTA and the Dalai Lama, who, according to the new TM, represents the whole of a "global Tibet" of which the museum visitor can now be a part.

Theoretical and Methodological Background (Objectives and Methodology)

This article adds a new ingredient to the research about the TM and CTA's self-presentation strategies and narratives: documentaries and docudramas that are among the most widely used tools in shaping public opinion and propaganda today. The authors of these works often try to convey and disseminate a specific view of the world through selected information and "analyses," thus developing unique forms of social expression that tell not only about the era of the documentary's creation but also reveal other embedded contexts related to the production of the film itself. Defining this film genre is not easy; the simplest way to treat a film as a documentary is to consider it as such if the producer or the broadcasting company declares it so.⁷⁾ However, it is worth remembering that documentary film has no prescribed topics, techniques, formats, styles or characteristics. On the other hand, if a film strives for credibility and persuasiveness and wants to present itself as a documentary, it must use certain filmmaking tools. The target audience of the films should be influenced by the results of techniques that maximize the effect of the film and its propaganda,

7) For an elaborate discussion on what is or is not a documentary film or how to define it, see for example Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 1–28.

including an emphasis on the credibility of the information conveyed, truthful statements regarding the topic under discussion, and finally, the very nature of the visual message itself, which should give the impression of an authentic representation of reality.⁸⁾

Moreover, the term *propaganda* appears frequently in this article. This expression itself has rather negative connotations today; one imagines it mainly as lies, manipulation of public opinion, brainwashing and fake news. Other definitions speak of propaganda as controlled persuasion, the art of telling people what they want to hear; in a more neutral sense, we can talk purely about the dissemination (promotion) of specific ideas and ideologies. In the background, however, there is always a specific type of control and assertion of power, the aim of which is to transform (or consolidate and preserve) the behaviour and attitudes of the audience to which the propaganda is addressed.⁹⁾ Although it is challenging to define propaganda as such, in this article (and in my dissertation), I agree with Victoria O'Donnell and Garth Jowett, who see propaganda as one of the many forms of communication that have existed in human history since time immemorial. They define it as a “deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.”¹⁰⁾

Regarding the research questions, in this case, the qualitative discourse analysis of the documentaries focuses mainly on the thematic framework of the selected films; essential is:

- What political ideologies are emphasized, what motifs and narratives are used, and what views and values resonate in the documents (especially on Sino-Tibetan relations, Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama)?
- How do the examined documentary films deal with authenticity and credibility or the technical elements of filmmaking to evoke emotions?
- Who are the authors of these materials — who is directly or indirectly responsible for them? What relationship do these people or institutions have with the CTA and Tibet?

The answers to those questions should help me determine the extent to which the Tibet Museum's cinema and the selected films on its screens are consistent with the CTA's overall rhetoric, agenda, and self-presentational (propaganda) strategies employed by the TM institution.

Data Sources

During my research (between 2017 and 2024), I noted the screening of 39 different documentaries and documentaries at the Tibet Museum. In the presented table, it is possible to trace the specific year in which the films were screened and distinguish whether it was in the old TM (2017, 2019) or the new one (2022, 2024). Data include not only the titles of the films, the year they were made, the directors and distribution companies but also a cat-

8) Methodology of this research is based on the theory and principles of discourse analysis of documentary films developed by Alexander Pollak, see “Analyzing TV Documentaries,” in *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences*, eds. Ruth Wodak and Michał Krzyżanowski (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 77–95.

9) Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2019), 2–4.

10) *Ibid.*, 6, 41.

egorization system of analysis (or coding levels) — the reader can then easily associate the films with the most prominent themes and narratives presented below, that the CTA is using in its propaganda campaign. I must add that I could not find or recognize all the movies that appeared in the cinema programmes. Thus, the table contains only those films that I was 100% able to identify and watch and analyze their content (28).

Table 1: **Sample of Films**

Title	Year	Director	Production	Screened in TM	Category
<i>Out of This World: A Journey into Forbidden Tibet</i>	1952	Lowell Thomas Sr./Jr.	T. R. Kupfermann	2024	1
<i>The Lion's Roar</i>	1985	Mark Elliot	A Centre Productions Film	2022/2024	4
<i>Compassion in Exile: HH the 14th Dalai Lama</i>	1992	Mickey Lemle	Lemle Pictures with Central Productions	2017/2019	4
<i>Tibet: The Story of a Tragedy</i>	1995	Ludovic Seggara	France 3 TV	2017/2019/2024	1, 2, 4
<i>A Stranger in My Native Land</i>	1998	Ritu Sarin Tenzin Sonam	White Crane Films	2019/2022/2024	2
<i>Shadow Circus: CIA in Tibet</i>	1998	Ritu Sarin Tenzin Sonam	White Crane Films	2017/2019/2022/2024	1, 3
<i>Tibet's Stolen Child</i>	2000	Robin Garthwait	Garthwait & Griffin Films	2017/2019/2022/2024	2, 4
<i>Tibet: Cry of the Snow Lion</i>	2002	Tom Peosay	Earthworks Films	2019	1, 2, 3, 4
<i>Lost Treasures of Tibet</i>	2003	Liesl Clark	A NOVA Production for WGBH/Boston	2024	2
<i>Mountain Patrol</i>	2004	Lu Chuan	Columbia Pictures with Huayi Brothers	2017	3
<i>What Remains of Us</i>	2004	Francois Prevost Hugo Latulippe	Nomadik Films	2017/2019	2, 4
<i>10 Questions for The Dalai Lama</i>	2006	Rick Ray	Rick Ray Films	2017/2019/2022/2024	4
<i>Art in Exile</i>	2006	Nidhi Tuli Ashraf Abbas	PSBT India	2019/2022/2024	2

<i>Women of Tibet: A Quiet Revolution</i>	2007	Rosemary Rawcliffe	Frame of Mind Films	2017/2019/2022/2024	1, 2, 3, 4
<i>Buddha's Warriors</i>	2008	Christiane Amanpour	CNN Productions	2019	1, 4
<i>Kokonor: An Endangered Lake</i>	2008	Tsering Chenaktsang	Purple Productions	2022/2024	3
<i>Leaving Fear Behind</i>	2008	Dhondup Wangchen	Filming for Tibet	2017/2019/2022/2024	2
<i>The Unwinking Gaze</i>	2008	Joshua Dugdale	World in Vision	2017/2019	4
<i>Tibet: Murder in the Snow</i>	2008	Mark Gould	360 Degree Films for BBC	2019	2
<i>Tibet's Cry for Freedom</i>	2008	Lara Damiani	Lara Damiani & Associates	2017/2019	1, 2, 3, 4
<i>Undercover in Tibet</i>	2008	Jezza Neumann	A True Vision Production	2017/2019	2
<i>Meltdown in Tibet</i>	2009	Michale Buckley	Wild Yak Films	2019/2022/2024	3
<i>The Sun Behind the Clouds</i>	2009	Ritu Sarin Tenzin Sonam	White Crane Films	2017/2019/2022/2024	1, 2, 3, 4
<i>The Dalai Lama: 50 Years after the Fall of Tibet</i>	2009	Ritu Sarin Tenzin Sonam	White Crane Films	2022/2024	1, 2, 3, 4
<i>From Nomad to Nobody</i>	2011	Michael Buckley	Wild Yak Films	2019	3
<i>The Burning Question</i>	2012	Dhundup Gyalpo	DIIR CTA	2022/2024	2
<i>Plundering Tibet</i>	2014	Michael Buckley	Wild Yak Films	2022/2024	3
<i>Umay Lam: Middle Way</i>	2018	Tenzin Kalden	Tibet TV	2019	1

The Official Tibetan Exile Propaganda Cinema: The Main Narratives

The cinema inside TM has undergone several changes during the almost twenty-five years of the institution’s existence. The museum building in McLeod Ganj initially had two floors — the first held the original exhibition entitled *A Long Look Homeward* with the motifs mentioned earlier, and the second contained religious objects (offerings in the

form of butter lamps and a large portrait of the Dalai Lama). As Clare Harris has observed in her research, however, this design decision was rather unfortunate, as Tibetan visitors unfamiliar with the rules of Western museology ignored the exhibitions on the lower floors and immediately ran to the Dalai Lama's altar to pay their respects.¹¹⁾ So, over time, the upper floor ceased to be used as originally intended and began to serve as a cinema and space for temporary exhibitions and other activities organized by the CTA. During my visits to Dharamsala in 2017 and 2019, the cinema took the form of a small cabinet with a projection screen, a presenters' desk, a few chairs and a privacy curtain to prevent the screening from disturbing visitors browsing the nearby exhibition on the same floor. At that time, the cinema was still showing twice daily, with some selected films repeated during the week. In the newly built Tibet Museum, a cinema (and lecture space) was already anticipated; we can now find modern equipment here. Still, it is a relatively small space (about 40 seats), and screenings occur once a day, according to a monthly program. The cinema also hosts lectures and the regular *Tibet Awareness Talk Series*.

I have identified several themes based on previous research regarding TM and other sources (websites, publications, etc.) related to CTA propaganda and political strategies. Let us look at the central narratives the CTA and the Dalai Lama use in their self-presentation/propaganda strategies and some examples of films TM chose to support or complement these main agendas.

1. The Myth and Retold History of Tibet

The images reveal the innocent and easy-going happiness of an isolated [Tibetan] society — poor, dynamic and violence-free. Their religion was Buddhism and the people lived in a feudal structure ruled by monks and several lords.¹²⁾

With a written history of more than 2,000 years, Tibet existed as an independent sovereign state prior to Chinese rule. But having no representation in the United Nations, the world largely stood by and allowed China's occupation and destruction to happen.¹³⁾

One of the fundamental techniques of propaganda disseminated through TM (and the films screened there) is the creation of a specific interpretation of history to represent and legitimize the CTA's position, often serving as a counterpoint to other narratives, especially the Chinese one.¹⁴⁾ The stories of the CTA and the selected documents are intertwined

11) Clare Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World: Art, Politics, and the Representation of Tibet* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 167–168.

12) *Tibet: The Story of a Tragedy* (Ludovic Seggara, 1995).

13) Anon., "Issues facing Tibet today," *Central Tibetan Administration*, 2022, accessed July 22, 2024, <https://tibet.net/important-issues/issues-facing-tibet-today/>.

14) Here it is necessary to point out a certain discrepancy between Chinese and official Tibetan exile propaganda. It is practically not the case that the CTA tells filmmakers exactly what to film and how to film (as the Chinese government and Communist Party do). Filmmakers make films on their terms (or presumably at the behest of a sponsor) and then the CTA picks and chooses the ones that somehow help further their agenda — a fundamental difference in approach compared to China. Thus, not all of the films selected by the

with the claim that Tibetans have lived in peace for over a thousand or more years and have always preferred the path of non-violence. However, studying the factual history of Tibet unravels the myth of a compassionate, pacific Land of Snow imbued with Buddhist ethics. The evolution of the narratives of the Dalai Lama and the CTA (as well as the dissatisfaction of certain Tibetans with this political rhetoric) is demonstrated in an article by former Tibetan freedom fighter, activist, writer and blogger Jamyang Norbu. As he states, one of the leading roles of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was to promote the image of pre-1959 Tibet in a way that makes the Land of Snow appear as a spiritual region of harmony and peace. Such an enterprise entails a lot of hard work, especially rewriting the modern history of Tibet. Unsurprisingly, Norbu criticizes the downplaying of the role of the armed uprising against Chinese occupation from 1956 onwards and the propagation of the fiction that the resistance was largely nonviolent and led in the spirit of Gandhian ideas by the Dalai Lama.¹⁵ It should be added here, however, that this self-presentational strategy has changed, and in the last twenty years, the CTA, even through the institution of TM and its cinema, has been mentioning and devoting more and more space to the issue of the guerrilla war of the Tibetans against China. An example of such a document is *Shadow Circus: CIA in Tibet* (Ritu Sarin and Tenzin Sonam, 1998), which deals with The Tibetan resistance and their considerable support from the US intelligence services at the time — the CIA began recruiting and training Tibetans in the 1950s, but the operations were not very successful. Directors of the movie Ritu Sarin and Tensing Sonam can be labelled as the court directors of the Central Tibetan Administration. They founded White Crane Films production in 1991 and were among the first to be approached by the CTA. Documentaries of these two artists could be seen during the opening of the leading exhibition of the old TM, and today, visitors can watch their videos at the new TM cinema and the leading exhibition. Sarin and Sonam are also directors and founders of the Dharamsala International Film Festival (DIFF), one of India's leading independent film festivals.

Many authors of the selected sample are often engaged activists and filmmakers from the West who sometimes use precisely selected academics and writers¹⁶ to enhance the narratives' credibility. As historian Tsering Shakya points out regarding Western influence on Tibet, throughout the course of history, the West has always reserved the right to interpret events in Tibet primarily according to its interests and to project its desires and wishes into its image. Since Tibet has never been wholly subjugated and colonized, it had to be mythologized and thus become that Shangri-la in Western minds. This one and other myths then had a direct impact on the perception of Tibet's real political problems — the West began to portray Tibetans as victims and members of an endangered species who have no voice of their own, and so must be represented by representatives of more potent

CTA present a completely unified, uncomplicated picture (unlike Chinese propaganda, which is strictly uniform with a unified vocabulary and a single narrative).

15) Jamyang Norbu, "Behind the Lost Horizon: Demystifying Tibet," in *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections, and Fantasies*, eds. Thierry Dodin and Heinz R  ther (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 377.

16) For example, in the film *Tibet: Cry of the Snow Lion* (Tom Peosay, 2002) you can find Tibetanist Robert Thurman, professor of Chinese Studies John Major, professor of History Ton Grunfeld, author Stephen Batchelor, historian John Avedon or former British officer, diplomat and adventurer Robert Ford.

and more advanced nations who, among other things, also provide a wellspring of charity and compassion towards the “backward nation resisting the march of modernity.”¹⁷⁾ This view is echoed by Donald Lopez, who, in his classic work *Prisoners of Shangri-la*, points out not only that idealizing Tibetan history and religion (as the CTA, allied activists and scientists do) can hurt Tibetan aspirations for independence, but he also notes in his research that Tibetans in exile have become both prisoners and guards in their own prisons. What does Lopez mean by this? The myths, lies and modern interpretations of Tibetan culture (or Tibetan Buddhism) that have been fabricated primarily through the Western imagination have left their imprint on Tibetans themselves — especially on those who have gone into diaspora in India, North America or Europe. These people found that the world of imagined Tibet was already taking on a life of its own outside their homeland and had to come to terms with and adapt to the new narratives, often even learning to incorporate them into their own stories and the process of creating a new exile identity.¹⁸⁾

Since 1959, the Dalai Lama and the CTA have been working vehemently to interpret history and convince their audiences of their interpretation of the problem of the status of Tibet. These arguments began to be disseminated from Dharamsala primarily in English (the global language) in highly inconsistent forms. In the 1980s, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile turned to the Belgian lawyer and long-time sympathizer Michael C. van Walt van Praag — the publication *Status of Tibet*¹⁹⁾ emerged, which was subsequently translated into Tibetan and became the official position of the Tibetan exile. From the same author, incidentally, comes the claim that Tibet existed as an independent state for almost two thousand years, long before Chinese communist forces invaded and began to occupy Tibet, which again is a very questionable statement.²⁰⁾ The Middle Way concept has been at the forefront of the CTA’s political rhetoric since the late 1980s. The documentary *Umay Lam: Middle Way* (Tenzin Kalden, 2018), created directly by the CTA (Department of Information and International Relations, DIIR), declares: “Umay Lam, the Middle Way, has been our approach to peaceful resolution of Tibet issue for the last three decades.”²¹⁾ To give some context, I have to add (in the words of the well-known Tibetologist Elliot Sperling) that Umay Lam’s approach can be considered part of the CTA’s policy of “self-delusion.”

The exile leadership’s approach is to bring the broad Tibetan exile community to believe that: a) if they teach China’s leaders what’s in their laws Tibetans can achieve “genuine autonomy” and; b) the exile government is actually seeking “genuine autonomy.” Actually, as described by Lobsang Sangay [former Sikyong, political leader of CTA, in office from 2012–2021] all the Tibetan exile leadership is asking for is a cosmetic change: the placement of Tibetan faces in leading positions within the local Communist Party in Tibet. They are explicitly not seeking the implementation of

17) Tsering Shakya, “Tibet and the Occident: Myth of Shangri-la,” *Tibetan Review* 27, no. 1 (1992), 13–16.

18) Donald Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-la* (London and Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), 10–13, 181–207.

19) Michael van Walt van Praag, *The Status of Tibet: History, Rights and Prospects in International Law* (London: Wisdom, 1987).

20) Elliot Sperling, *The Tibet-China Conflict: History and Polemics* (Washington: East-West Center, 2004), 15–21.

21) *Umay Lam: Middle Way* (Tenzin Kalden, 2018).

democratic practices (which, after all, would be the only way that anything qualified to be called “genuine autonomy” could function).²²⁾

The concept of the Middle Way also divides exiled Tibetans themselves. You won't find much about the split of Tibetan exile in the Tibet Museum and its exhibitions; however, a few documentaries do touch on the issue. For example, in *The Sun Behind the Clouds* (Ritu Sarin and Tenzin Sonam, 2009), one of the Tibetan activists argues with the supporters of CTA's agenda in an emotional debate: “The time has come for Dalai Lama to change his policy! ... Even if Middle Way won and you returned to Tibet, could you take down the Tibetan flag, raise China's flag and live under it?” A very similar personal challenge and struggle is shared by Lhadon Tethong, a member of the activist group *Students for a Free Tibet*, who talks about the difficulty of her decision between devotion to the Dalai Lama and political realism in another documentary *The Dalai Lama: 50 Years after the Fall of Tibet* (Ritu Sarin and Tenzin Sonam, 2009), screened in TM to this day.

2. The Oppression and Rape of Tibet

China's policy of occupation and oppression has resulted in no more or less than the destruction of Tibet's national independence, culture and religion, environment and the universal human rights of its people. Time and time again, the infliction of this destruction sees China break international laws with impunity.²³⁾

You probably know that Tibet was invaded by the Chinese army in 1950. Since then, one million two hundred thousand unarmed Tibetans have disappeared in labour camps and prisons, have been executed, tortured to death or have died of starvation.²⁴⁾

Another essential narrative that can be seen in CTA propaganda and selected documentaries operates with rhetorical figures about a unique and extraordinary Tibet that is threatened, destroyed and abused. Robert Barnett has aptly named this discourse “violated specialness.” The roots of these rhetorical/diplomatic strategies go back to the 1940s;²⁵⁾ in the 1980s, with the support of US senators and Western NGOs, the CTA and the Dalai Lama decided to return to them in their public speeches (especially to the West). The story of the raped Tibet eventually began to spread, with the Land of Snow and its people being presented as untainted but now defiled, abused and tortured by the Chinese authorities, military and individuals. As Barnett argues, however, this strategy portrays the

22) Elliot Sperling, “Self Delusion: The Middle-Way Approach,” *Tibetan Buddhism in the West: Problems of adaptation & cross-cultural confusion*, 2014, accessed July 24, 2024, https://info-buddhism.com/Self-Delusion_Middle-Way-Approach_Dalai-Lama_Exile_CTA_Sperling.html.

23) “Issues facing Tibet today,” *Central Tibetan Administration*, 2022, accessed July 22, 2024, <https://tibtet.net/important-issues/issues-facing-tibet-today/>.

24) *What remains of Us* (Francois Prevost and Hugo Latulippe, 2004).

25) Prior to the Chinese occupation, Tibetan politicians used similar diplomatic strategies. The story of a unique and special Tibet, for example, appears as early as 1946 in letters from the Tibetan government to Chinese President Chiang Kai-shek.

victims as incapable of defending themselves. Thus, it can be counterproductive in politics: Tibet, as an innocent prey (incapable of independent action and resolution), needs rescuing from someone. Closely related to the narrative of violated specialness is another rhetorical strategy of the CTA, which seeks to draw its audience's attention to the issue of human rights violations in Tibet. After realizing that the Western powers had no political or strategic interest in resolving the Tibetan issue, the CTA began to mobilize activists and put pressure on the Western public. According to Barnett, this is no longer an international political debate but rather an effort to achieve its goals through public involvement in creating its image and self-presentation.²⁶⁾

Documentaries dealing with the following topics, namely *Undercover in Tibet* (Jezza Neumann, 2008), *What Remains of Us* (Francois Prevost and Hugo Latulippe, 2004), *A Stranger in My Native Land* (Ritu Sarin and Tenzin Sonam, 1998) or *Leaving Fear Behind* (Dhondup Wangchen, 2008) often work with techniques such as undercover interviews and visits to Tibet. The main narrators or filmmakers themselves, under different identities, visit their original homeland and collect impressions and data on the situation of their relatives or the local population. Themes of cultural genocide, non-freedom of expression, arrests, torture and kidnapping of Tibetans (including the story as mentioned earlier of the so-called world's youngest political prisoner, the 11th Panchen Lama, see *Tibet's Stolen Child* [Robin Garthwait, 2000]), who protest in any way against the control and behaviour of the Chinese government, come to the fore. Another frequently mentioned topic is the issue of self-immolation. A documentary on the subject, *The Burning Question* (Dhundup Gyalpo, 2012), was produced in Dharamshala under the DIIR's banner to answer questions related to the CTA's attitude towards the phenomenon of Tibetan human torches. The reasons behind self-immolations, according to the documentary, stem from political repression against Tibet, the process of economic marginalization, efforts at cultural assimilation, and ongoing environmental destruction.²⁷⁾ The CTA has been trying to discourage all Tibetans from engaging in such acts since 2012, when a massive wave of self-immolations occurred. However, in the words of former Minister of Information and International Relations Dicki Chhoyang, the CTA feels the need to become a spokesperson for these people before an international audience to explain the reasons for such political protests based on China's policy of violating religious freedoms, imposing language, environmental destruction and forced settlement of nomadic tribes.

I have also included documents on preserving and restoring the destroyed Tibetan culture and art in this section. One branch of the CTA, the Department of Religion and Culture, has, as it states, "the responsibility of supervising works aimed at reviving, preserving, and promoting Tibetan religious and cultural heritage that is being led to the

26) Robert Barnett, "'Violated Specialness': Western Political Representations of Tibet," in *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections, and Fantasies*, eds. Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 272–279.

27) Without surprise, the Chinese politicians and academics both paint the self-immolation of Tibetans in a different light. The main arguments are not only that self-immolation is not a noble behavior or religious practice, but that it is fundamentally a crime, religious extremism and an act of terror (see e. g. Decheng Li, "Self-immolations are not noble behavior," *China Daily*, 2011, accessed January 12, 2025, https://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2011-11/30/content_14188153.htm).

verge of extinction in Tibet.”²⁸⁾ Of course, these efforts are reflected in the massive TM project and the several films screened here. For example, the documentary *Art in Exile* (Nidhi Tuli and Ashraf Abbas, 2006), guided by the well-known Tibetan activist and poet Tenzin Tsundue, shows exiled activist workshops or singing, dancing and playing traditional instruments at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (founded by the 14th Dalai Lama on reaching Kalimpong in August 1959). Attention is also paid to *thangka*²⁹⁾ painting, traditional metal sculpting, modern music, and poetry. Artists often believe that their craft is one of the possible tools to retell the tragic Tibetan story and method for preserving and saving Tibetan (and Buddhist) culture. The use and shift of this motif can be seen in TM’s new exhibition, where the practice, preservation and renewal of Tibet’s colourful and rich culture becomes an act of resistance. The documentary also records the dissatisfaction of many exiled Tibetans and artists with the Dalai Lama’s Middle Way policy and a black vision of the Tibetan future. According to activist and writer Jamyang Norbu, the Dalai Lama and CTA have succumbed to pressure from his Western supporters and frustration with frozen talks with Beijing. Instead of continuing the struggle for an independent Tibet, official representatives of the Tibetan exile shifted to other concerns — the preservation of Tibetan Buddhist culture, which matches the Western demand for the secret wisdom of Tibet so necessary to save the self-destructive and materialistic West. Norbu states that it is a swing to strategies imbued with ecological or spiritual tendencies that reflect the needs of the West rather than actually addressing the real problems of Tibet and its people.³⁰⁾

3. Environmentalism and Equal Rights

For thousands of years, despite its cold environment, the Tibetan people occupied this plateau and created cultural landscapes based on the principles of simplicity and non-violence that are in harmony with the environment. Guided by Buddhist beliefs in the interdependence of both living and non-living elements of the earth, Tibetans lived in harmony with nature.³¹⁾

Since 1959, countless Tibetan women have become leaders in the peaceful struggle to rebuild our lives and preserve our cultural identity for future generations.³²⁾

In the mid-1980s, modern self-representational narratives portraying a new, complex Tibetan identity first began to appear in publications, press releases, and other communication channels of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Behind these constructs stand most-

28) Anon., “Department of Religion & Culture,” *Central Tibetan Administration*, 2023, accessed July 25, 2024, <https://tibet.net/department/religion/>.

29) A *thangka* is a scroll painting of various sizes, depicting various deities, Buddhas, mandalas or other scenes with Buddhist themes, created according to precise iconometry on canvas, leather or paper.

30) Jamyang Norbu, “Behind the Lost Horizon: Demystifying Tibet,” in *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections, and Fantasies*, eds. Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 377.

31) Anon., “Environment and Development Issues,” *Central Tibetan Administration*, 2022, accessed July 22, 2024, <https://tibet.net/important-issues/tibets-environment-and-development-issues/>.

32) *Women of Tibet: A Quiet Revolution* (Rosemary Rawcliffe, 2007).

ly Tibetan exile political and intellectual elites, who are often well-educated and have developed a considerable repertoire of self-representational strategies and styles over their relatively long contact with the Western world. However, while similar narratives are propagated in the exile community and globally, they often carry little weight for the remaining 95% of Tibetans living in the PRC.³³⁾ These new concepts and politicized identities have their origins primarily in the growing cooperation of Tibetan elites with international institutions, which often promote world peace and ecological awareness and reflect gender issues. In the narratives of the CTA, a nonviolent and pacifist, environmentally conscious and gender-equal Tibet has thus emerged. These characteristics, which are now commonly presented by any multinational corporation, political party or various movements representing world religions, have become a self-marketing strategy in the case of CTA.³⁴⁾

Although individual themes are intertwined and appear across the selected sample of documentaries and docudramas (see Table 1), only a few films deal directly with the mentioned ecological or environmental topics. For example, one documentary highlights the nomadic Tibetan yak herders' "original, hard and resilient way of life" and their most significant "survival test" because of Chinese politics and approaches to the environment of Tibet. A documentary by traveller and environmental activist Michael Buckley, who has set up his production studio Wild Yak Films, explores this issue head-on (*From Nomad to Nobody* [Michael Buckley, 2011]). Buckley cooperates directly with the CTA and TM (his documents feature representatives of the official Tibetan exile) and does not hesitate to confront Chinese propaganda in his narratives regarding the Tibetan nomads' alleged happiness and rising standard of living. Unsurprisingly, the CTA chose even other films from his production for its cinema, such as *Meltdown in Tibet* (2009) or *Plundering Tibet* (2014), based mainly on criticism of China's environmental policy and actions in Tibet. Michael Buckley also does not refrain from being critical of Western companies that cooperate with China and profit significantly from, for example, mining in Tibet. Another example of a similar document is *Kokonor: An Endangered Lake* (Tsering Chenaktsang, 2008), which is concerned with problems of environmental impacts of tourism, nuclear testing and waste, and the internal migration policy of China that destroys the original Tibetan culture in Qinghai Province. The author of this film and former inhabitant of the area, also known as Jangbu, is one of the most famous and influential Tibetan artists and poets living now in exile (France), so it is no wonder that the CTA still uses his documentary in TM cinema today.

The issues of pacifism, equality, and feminism are represented among the selected films in the documentary *Women of Tibet: A Quiet Revolution* (Rosemary Rawcliffe, 2007), made by a producer, director and activist who focuses on human rights issues and the interpretation of the world from a female perspective. The film not only features themes re-

33) It should be added here that these figures are given in rough estimates by Tibetanist Tony Huber without the support of any statistics or research (which is not strange, since any non-Chinese-influenced research in the Tibet Autonomous Region is practically impossible today).

34) Toni Huber, "Shangri-la in Exile: Representations of Tibetan Identity and Transnational Culture," in *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections, and Fantasies*, eds. Thierry Dodin and Heinz R  ther (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 357–359, 366–367.

lating to the lives and hardships of different generations of Tibetan women and their role in today's reconstruction of Tibetan society in exile. Also, the Dalai Lama speaks within the movie about admiration for those "old women who led that demonstration [today so-called Tibet Women's Uprising against the Chinese occupation in 1959] as if they already know the Feminist movement." Then he laughs, "But of course, they had no idea. But simply out of courage, they organized the women...perhaps I think in Tibetan history may be the first time, Woman's movement!" The documentary also provides an exciting insight into the changing discourse on the role of the Tibetan woman, which came with the migration from traditional Tibetan society to an exile and therefore in some ways Western-influenced environment. On the one hand, the film presents a view of how women's education and empowerment are necessary for community change and growth — mainly because of the need to educate refugee children or women's participation in CTA governance. On the other hand, the documentary emphasizes preserving Tibetan culture through the family. The role of the housewife, who is in charge of running the household, taking care of the children or looking after the family's welfare and happiness, is highlighted.

4. 14th Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the manifestation of Avalokiteshvara in human form, the designated deity of Tibet, is the divine lord of the Three Realms, a champion of world peace, the master of all Buddhist teachings, the protector of all Tibetans, and their supreme leader and guide. He is the objective embodiment of the Tibetan people, the symbol of their unity, and a free spokesperson for all Tibetans.³⁵⁾ Tibetans have a tremendous body of a spiritual knowledge, a spiritual technology if you will, that is an immense gift to human learning. They have preserved in their monastic universities a vast corpus of learning and understanding about a nature consciousness and structure of human mind. The Western science is just beginning to comprehend.³⁶⁾

The religious traditions and institution of the Dalai Lama play a central role in Tibetan politics. As the majority religious system, Buddhism is interwoven in Tibetan history and culture, has permeated the political system, serves as a source of legitimacy, and influences virtually every aspect of Tibetans' daily lives. In contrast to other forms of Mahayana Buddhism, Tibetan traditions are characterized by the over-emphasis on a spiritual teacher — the guru/lama — who often occupied a significant political role and possessed various magical powers; he also provided various forms of assistance to the community in its daily life. Such an influential position of spiritual leader is not common in other traditional Buddhist communities, nor is it typical for monks to enjoy significant political power and not be controlled by secular power structures (there are exceptions, of course, such

35) The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, "Charter of the Tibetans in Exile (chapter 1, article 1)," *Central Tibetan Administration*, 2021, accessed July 26, 2024, <https://tibet.net/about-cta/constitution/>.

36) *Tibet: Cry of the Snow Lion* (Tom Peosay, 2002).

as Sri Lanka). Since the 17th century, the most powerful lama in Tibet has been a monk with the title Dalai Lama. As the personification of Chenrezig (Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion and protector of Tibet), he is part of almost every Tibetan's own culture and, in a way, ensures the continuity of Tibetan history. As Fiona McConnell points out, in exile, especially given the ambiguous political position of the Tibetan diaspora, the Dalai Lama acts as the centre of Tibetan identity and the ultimate formerly political (until 2011), now primarily moral authority. The institution of the Dalai Lama and its symbolic significance has become a power tool in the CTA's political discourse that is applied to a predetermined audience. Through political rhetoric, the Dalai Lama's extraordinary human qualities are highlighted (to reinforce enthusiasm among the target audience); he initiates a democratization process in the Tibetan diaspora that links representative politics with Buddhist values.³⁷⁾ However, as Robert Barnett notes, it is challenging to answer the question of how and who the Dalai Lama really represents. Is it all Tibetans around the world? Or all followers of Tibetan Buddhism? Or those who constitute Tibetan culture? And if so, do Tibetan Christians or Muslims also fall into that category? For the Dalai Lama, meeting politicians is tough — he is aware that he is perceived as a symbol rather than a politician, often in a very romanticized form.³⁸⁾

So, it is no surprise that the Dalai Lama also has played a central role in the old and new TM and a lot of the films shown there (e.g. *10 Questions for The Dalai Lama* [Rick Ray, 2006], *The Unwinking Gaze* [Joshua Dugdale, 2008] or *Compassion in Exile: HH the 14th Dalai Lama* [Mickey Lemle, 1992]). Today, the institution of the most famous *tulku*³⁹⁾ is presented as “the embodiment of our religious and political identity.” The new TM then seeks to portray the 14th Dalai Lama as a man of many faces and interests: the leader of a nation and a people, a simple Buddhist monk, “just another human being,” or as a scientist and philosopher. Here, I would like to mention one of the documentaries used directly in the main exposition of the new TM. Film *The Dalai Lama: Scientist* (made by Dawn Engle and Ivan Suvanjieff in 2019 through their PeaceJam Foundation and screened at the Dharamsala's abovementioned film festival [DIFF] in 2020) shows the 14th Dalai Lama in conversations with various scientists; the visitor is then educated about the similarities between multiple branches of Western science (quantum physics, cosmology, cognitive sciences, molecular biology or genetics) and so-called “Buddhist science.” According to the Dalai Lama, Buddhism and science have the same method of research, namely, discover-

37) Fiona McConnel, *Rehearsing the State: The Political Practices of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 94–96.

38) Robert Barnett, “‘Violated Specialness’: Western Political Representations of Tibet,” in *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections, and Fantasies*, 298–302.

39) The institution of *tulku*, which emerged in Tibet in the 12th century, is generally based on the Buddhist belief in the chain of rebirth. These beings, recognised as embodied emanations of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, are repeatedly reborn in human bodies by their own will and often head Tibetan monasteries and schools as prominent lamas (spiritual masters). Selected individuals are initiated into monastic life upon recognition and undergo the study of Buddhist philosophy and ritual practice. From an early age, they are also expected to participate in and often lead many public events and performances, both for the monastic community and the lay public. The two most famous lineages of *tulkus* in Tibet are the Dalai Lamas (emanations of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara) and the Panchen Lamas (emanations of the Buddha Amitabha). In theory and sometimes in practice, the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas used to have a teacher-disciple relationship with each other and affirmed each other.

ing reality through empirical means. The phenomenon of linking Buddhism and science has a long history, and again, Western ideas and interpretations have played a role here, seeing Buddhism not only as a religion but also as a treasure trove of ancient wisdom and guidance for a better and longer life. The development of this issue is summarised in the book *Buddhism & Science: A Guide for the Perplexed* by Donald Lopez, who also notes the situation surrounding the 14th Dalai Lama. As he points out, it is clear that the understanding of what it means for science to discover reality through empirical means differs significantly from the ideas of Buddhist traditions and the Dalai Lama himself.⁴⁰⁾

As a social anthropologist, Åshild Kolås points out:

In dialogue between Tibetans and Chinese, there is constant return to and manipulation of religious language and idioms. These idioms pervaded discourse in Tibet prior to the Chinese occupation, and now being recreated and used in a new political context. [...] The practice of religion is ultimately a threat to Chinese authority because it represents and enacts an alternative conception of society. From a Tibetan perspective, religion provides a more legitimate set of values than the Communist Party doctrine. [...] New ideas about international law, human rights and democracy are currently being expressed by politically concerned Tibetans, often through the idioms and vocabulary of Tibetan Buddhism. The emphasis on nonviolent protest is one aspect of this political articulation.⁴¹⁾

However, some of the documentaries in the TM cinema confirm that not everyone is on board with the process of democratization. On the contrary, many Tibetans of the younger generation see the problem with the constant mixing of Buddhist doctrines and the Dalai Lama into the politics of exile, as it is said to be an obstacle to the further development of the community. One of the stereotypes that persist not just in the West to this day is also still visible: Buddhism is generally perceived as an ambassador of universal understanding and pacifism and is associated with a diverse range of exotic ideas. However, Buddhist traditions, like any other system of diverse beliefs and practices, are permeated by internal and external forms of violence. It is also true of Buddhism that the ideal norm is not the same as what is lived daily. Historian Ugyan Choedup points out that today's diasporic Tibetan identity is a complex product of exile hardships, various new configurations of external influences, and the deliberate social engineering by Tibetan elites to ritualize, modify, and institutionalize traditional customs and practices to serve new nationalist interests. Although these newly modified practices often have no factual historical basis, they provide a sense of historical continuity to the public, especially to Tibetans born in exile. While indigenous Tibetan society has never had homogeneous mythological or historical narratives, the CTA has ensured in its efforts that children born in exile feel like members of a single and unique community defined by Buddhism and the person of the Dalai Lama. A new pan-Tibetan vision of Tibet has thus emerged: three re-

40) Donald Lopez, *Buddhism & Science: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 131–136.

41) See Åshild Kolås, "Tibetan Nationalism: The Politics of Religion," *Journal of Peace Research* 33, no. 1 (1996), 56.

gions and three regional identities, but one nation united under the banner of the Dalai Lama and Buddhist values.⁴²⁾

Conclusion

The documentaries and docudramas that the CTA has chosen for its agenda more or less replicate and support the narratives that appear not only on the CTA's websites and statements but also in the institution of the Tibet Museum. Among the most salient themes are the retold history of a mystical and culturally and naturally rich Tibet, the catastrophic testimony of the hardships of the Tibetan people under the rule of Communist China, and Tibet and its people as a mindful, ecological, united and egalitarian nation, united more than anything else by a Buddhist identity under the leadership of the Dalai Lama.

The ways in which the films affect the viewer and fight for their cause are many: from the use of carefully chosen and appropriate authorities to appealing to the emotions through depictions of hardship and eyewitness accounts to mystifying the audience about a pristine and untouched Buddhist Tibet that is falling into the abyss. These films are not only made by the CTA and exiled artists but are primarily produced in the USA, UK, Canada or Europe. The directors of these documentaries are mostly independent filmmakers and activists whose work focuses on human rights, environmental issues, modern history and travel. Producers include well-known organizations and broadcasters such as PBS, CNN, BBC, France 3 TV, and small productions such as Wild Yak Films and White Crane Films.

In the unequal power struggle with China, the CTA stands basically alone. It is, therefore, trying to use every means at its disposal in its propaganda battles with an adversary that has finance, resources, time and global influence on its side. Similar independent production to that shown by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile cinema in Chinese Tibet is virtually non-existent today, replaced by official, highly sophisticated propaganda. So, the narrative of peaceful Buddhists living in symbiosis with nature who, even at the cost of compromise, want only peace, freedom and the ability to continue their unique way of life that was disrupted by the colonization and occupation of Communist China seventy years ago, is juxtaposed with the story of the "peaceful liberation" of Tibet, the expulsion of imperialists, the destruction of poverty and the gift of emancipation, security, progress and development to the previously oppressed Tibetan people. In this case, however, "truth" and "falsehood" do not oppose each other, and, as this article was mainly intended to show, everything is a bit more complicated.

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42) Ugyan Choedup, "Historical Trajectory of Tibetan Identity: Some Preliminary Notes on the Roles of Exile Educational Institutions," *The Tibet Journal* 42, no. 2 (2017), 93–110.

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Filmography:

- 10 Questions for The Dalai Lama* (Rick Ray, 2006)
- A Stranger in My Native Land* (Ritu Sarin and Tenzin Sonam, 1998)
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- Leaving Fear Behind* (Dhondup Wangchen, 2008)
- Meltdown in Tibet* (Michael Buckley, 2009)
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- The Burning Question* (Dhondup Gyalpo, 2012)
- The Dalai Lama: 50 Years after the Fall of Tibet* (Ritu Sarin and Tenzin Sonam, 2009)
- The Dalai Lama: Scientist* (Dawn Engle and Ivan Suvanjieff, 2019)
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Biography

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