

in the introductory chapters, the issues are posed with clarity and precision. In prerevolutionary Central Asia, there existed many overlapping ethnic, tribal, and supraethnic identities, as well as a number of political organizations that attempted to mobilize around some of these identities. The Soviet government, like the colonial powers in Africa, demarcated state boundaries in ways that ignored many of these identities, while highlighting others. There emerged, in this way, a number of favored “titular” nations, whose sense of ethnicity was focused and heightened by long association with a territorial entity. The central question explored in chapter 4, on the Soviet period, is the extent to which these new identities provided the basis for the emergence of stable national identities. Did the Soviet government engage in a successful process of “nation-building” in Central Asia? The answer offered in chapter 5, on contemporary Central Asia, is that the process of “nation-building” did not progress far in the Soviet period. Paradoxically, Uzbekistan, the national group least apparent in the prerevolutionary period, seems the most firmly established national entity today. This is partly as a result of the successful myth-making that took place during the Soviet period, including the elevation of the pre-Uzbek ruler, Timur, to the status of a national hero. At the other extreme, in Tadjikistan, internal conflicts have led to a prolonged civil war which threatens to embroil Uzbekistan and Kirghizstan.

The final chapter discusses the prospects for democracy in the region. Given the book’s main themes, the central question is whether democratization will mitigate or intensify internal divisions. Glenn rightly refuses to offer a clear answer.

In conclusion, this book offers a fine introduction to the ethnic and cultural divisions that threaten state stability in contemporary Central Asia. However, readers who want to pursue the subject further should go on to more detailed studies with more space for the subtle nuances of ethnicity in the region. They should also explore the many economic problems that also threaten political stability in Central Asia.

DAVID CHRISTIAN
Macquarie University, Australia

Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet: Religious Revival and Cultural Identity. Edited by MELVYN C. GOLDSTEIN and MATTHEW T. KAPSTEIN. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. x, 207 pp. \$40.00 (cloth); \$15.95 (paper).

This book is based on recent research in Tibetan regions of China, including areas formerly ruled by the Dalai Lama, equivalent to today’s Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), and Amdo and Kham, which now are part of Qinghai and Sichuan provinces. As Orville Schell’s “Foreword” notes, the book refrains from polemic and nostalgia, which characterize much of the popular literature on Tibet. Instead it addresses core issues in understanding the region. One such issue is how Tibetan cultural unity has been engendered and sustained—despite regional, sectarian, and linguistic differences, exacerbated in the past by class divisions, great distances, and poor communications. A second issue concerns why religious revival has been less problematic in Sichuan and Qinghai than in the TAR, where it has become politicized and subject to government restrictions.

The book consists of six chapters: an introduction, a conclusion, and four chapters which present new field materials, plus a brief foreword. Two of the chapters draw

from research in the TAR, one from Sichuan Province, and the other from Qinghai Province. There are chapters on religious activities among clerics and laypeople, on institutions associated with Geluk, Nyingma, and Kagyu sects, and on folk religious traditions. Two were written by authors from departments associated with Religious Studies, two by anthropologists. All the chapters are strong and make a major contribution to the growing scholarly literature on Tibet.

Melvyn C. Goldstein's introduction summarizes Tibet's recent political history, the role of Buddhism in the traditional society, and events following the Dalai Lama's flight to India and during the Cultural Revolution. He also includes a brief history of how Chinese policies toward religion have affected Tibetan Buddhism and failed attempts at rapprochement with the Dalai Lama. This is followed by his chapter, "The Revival of Monastic Life in Drepung Monastery," which details difficulties faced in attempts to rebuild an institution which once held 10,000 monks, but had declined to 306 by 1976. At the heart of these difficulties lay the need to balance sociopolitical correctness and cultural authenticity. There also were problems in establishing new sources of funding in a modern market economy. Attempts to train more monks and produce advanced scholars were threatened when political activism increased in the 1980s; the result was greater restrictions and closer scrutiny by the government. Goldstein notes that this was not entirely new—there had been opposition to the Tibetan government in the past.

David Germano's chapter, "Re-membering the Dismembered Body of Tibet," focuses on Khenpo Jikphun, a charismatic lama who has created a major center of religious instruction in Sichuan Province, which I had the good fortune to visit in 1994 (when it included about 3,000 individuals). Khenpo acquired his authority from inspired revelations of new Buddhist texts, visionary dreams, miraculous events, and reformist ethics. Unlike Drepung, his institution maintained cordial relations with the government and was able to expand unhindered. Germano attributes this difference and the absence of political activism to the ecumenical strand of Buddhism (*vis med*) and the fact that national identity in this region is tied more to Gesar, a timeless culture hero, than the former government in Lhasa.

Matthew T. Kapstein describes a duodecennial religious teaching cum pilgrimage in "A Pilgrimage of Rebirth Reborn." This event, which draws a huge audience of religious and lay practitioners, was not held for thirty-six years. Kapstein argues that such pilgrimages have long been a source of cultural unity for Tibetans and now reinforce a sense of national identity. The village ritual described by Lawrence Epstein and Peng Wenbin in "Ritual, Ethnicity, and Generational Identity" represents a genre of folk performance which links far-flung Tibetan regions. This particular ritual occurs in Qinghai Province; it is believed to strengthen the village's luck and solidarity, to explain its positioning in a frontier region, and to reaffirm ethnic pride in Tibetan culture and history. Such rituals are at risk today, for reasons different from risks faced by Buddhist institutions. First, they are subject to ambiguous government policies which condemn "superstition" but allow ethnic minorities to practice their cultural traditions. Second, educated young people find them embarrassing, because they are exotic and primitive, in contrast to the high level of civilization that orthodox Buddhism represents. The authors suggest that the future of this ritual might lie in sanitized, museumized versions performed for the growing tourist trade.

In his "Concluding Reflections," Kapstein discusses why religious practices and symbols have been so prominent in Tibet in nationalist protests. Religion foregrounds the issue of identity; in addition it informs ideas about history, geography, and traditional education, all of which contribute to a sense of distinctive national identity

and culture. The problem is that, as Chinese citizens, many Tibetans are faced with what they perceive to be competing claims on their loyalties. Some choose to adhere publicly to the official culture while masking their true sentiments, while others may see the only feasible alternative to be resistance.

NANCY E. LEVINE

University of California, Los Angeles

The Struggle for Modern Tibet: The Autobiography of Tashi Tsering. By MELVYN GOLDSTEIN, WILLIAM SIEBENSCHUH, and TASHI TSERING. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1997. xi, 207 pp. \$27.95.

In May 1952, a six-point petition was circulated in Lhasa, claiming to represent “the general voice of the Tibetan people, lay and clerical.” Covering several points, the petition in part voiced discontent with the economic disruptions and hardships that the influx of Chinese troops had created in Tibet. The document caused a tumult in Lhasa and when it reached India its text was published in the newspaper *Yul-phyogs so-so'i gсар-'gyur me-long* on October 1. As a result of all this, the Chinese authorities in Lhasa forced the dismissals of two of the young Dalai Lama's ministers. For some time the affair remained the subject of much talk and speculation in Lhasa.

I bring up this incident at the outset for the simple reason that it gets no mention in Tashi Tsering's autobiography, under review here. Tashi Tsering was in Lhasa and seemingly quite aware of the political currents at the time. Moreover, in the introduction to this book Melvyn Goldstein, his amanuensis, tells how he refused to help Tashi Tsering write a “Pollyanna” book (his term) about Tibet, a point on which both were in agreement. The implication thus is that only books which paint monochromatically positive images about life in pre-PRC Tibet, downplaying its negative aspects, are Pollyanna-like in their outlook. But since the issue of comparative objectivity is raised at the start, it must be noted that Tashi Tsering, who does bring up negative aspects of pre-1950s Tibetan society that many people might prefer to ignore, is at times clearly selective in what he chooses to discuss, and here and there seems to be disingenuous in recalling his attitudes during times gone by (of the Chinese troops in Lhasa in 1952 he notices only their efficiency and self-sufficiency and says—not with much originality—that “they would not even take a needle from the people [p. 40]”). And yet he does indeed have an engaging story to tell, one that makes for a most interesting book, and provides the point of view of a Tibetan who is today attempting to improve conditions in Tibet in cooperation with the powers that be.

Tashi Tsering was born in Tibet in 1929 and experienced life in pre-Communist Tibet, in exile, in China during the Cultural Revolution, and then in Tibet in the decades since. In his youth he was a member of the Dalai Lama's personal dance troupe. In that capacity the mistreatment he received makes for a titillating description on the book jacket (“sex-toy, for a well-connected monk”). Nevertheless it cannot be denied that Tashi Tsering's experiences allow a glimpse into a part of the Tibetan world never before presented in writing. The author is a resourceful person and by the late 1950s had managed to secure the funds that allowed him to travel to India to study. Residing outside of Tibet at the time of the Tibetan Uprising in 1959, he was soon working closely with the exiled Tibetan resistance leaders, particularly Gyalo Thondrup (= Rgyal-lo don-grub), who was intimately involved in securing