IS HOME WHERE THE HEART IS?

LANDSCAPE, MATERIALITY AND AESTHETICS IN TIBETAN EXILE

Imogen Clark
Magdalen College



2015

University of Oxford
Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Abstract

In 2000, Tim Ingold argued: 'people do not import their ideas, plans or mental representations into the world, since that very world … is the homeland of their thoughts. Only because they already dwell therein can they think the thoughts they do' (2000: 186). He thus stressed the importance of place in the construction and reproduction of culture. How does this play out, however, among refugees who by virtue of their *dis*placement *must* 'import' cultural concepts into alien environments? For those outside a 'homeland' how do they make sense of the world? In this thesis I examine the relationship between Tibetan refugees, the landscapes of their exile and their wider material environment. Drawing on theory in material anthropology and thirteen months' ethnographic fieldwork conducted in two contrasting Tibetan refugee settlements in northwest India, I analyse how Tibetan refugees are affected by, and in turn exert agency over their material world.

Through this discussion, I reflect on the multiple and mutable meanings of home for Tibetan refugees, many of whom were born and/or raised in India. Few scholarly discussions of home encompass both its affective and imaginary dimensions; this thesis achieves this by focusing on the material and aesthetic aspects of home. Through this lens, I explore how refugees both work hard to develop a sense of home in exile, yet simultaneously destabilise this by orienting themselves towards an imagined home in a future 'free Tibet'. The discussion unfolds thematically, through chapters focusing on several material categories: landscape, the built environment, dress and objects. I develop my analysis via existing theoretical literature in material anthropology and its sub-disciplines, transnational and migration studies, and area-specialist literature in Tibetology.

Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible but for the kind support and assistance I have been lucky to receive from a great many people. Firstly, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Prof Clare Harris, who has nurtured and guided my intellectual development for the past eight years. Without your critical eye and patient encouragement I could never have achieved so much and so to you I offer my profound and warmest thanks. I would also like to thank the other students in my cohort (particularly my colleagues in the DPhil office) and staff at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology and the Oriental Institute at the University of Oxford for their support. I wish to thank Prof Ulrike Roesler, Tsering Gonkatsang and Mingji Cuomu in particular for their help and guidance in learning the Tibetan language. Thanks are also due to Magdalen College, which has supported my studies both academically and financially since 2007. This research also benefited from funding from the Economic and Social Research Council UK, for which I am very grateful.

Beyond the UK, I wish to thank all those who supported and facilitated my field research, particularly: Prof Kavita Singh at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Tashi Tsering of the Amnye Machen Institute, Dharamshala and Dr Monisha Ahmed of the Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation, Leh, whose kind support and interesting conversations contributed greatly to this thesis. I also wish to extend my very great thanks to my Indian and Tibetan friends in Delhi, Dharamshala and Ladakh: I thank you for your patient forbearance of my endless questions and for your invaluable company, which made what was at times a tricky task enjoyable. I wish to extend my particular thanks to all those who took the time to translate for me (and whom I cannot name here for the sake of preserving their anonymity): without you this research would not have been possible.

Finally, I wish to thank my friends in the UK. Special mention goes to Kate Kennedy who kindly proof read drafts of this thesis, also to Will Hedges whose support during the fieldwork stage was invaluable. I wish to extend my final thanks to my family for their continuing love and support throughout the entire process.

Table of Contents

Abstract ii

Acknowledgements iii

Abbreviations vi

1 Introduction 1
1.1 Tibet and China: fight and flight 2
1.2 Primary exile: the early years in India and Nepal 4
1.3 Secondary exile: 'going to abroad' 8
1.4 The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) 9
1.5 Tibet de-territorialized: scholarship on the exile community 12
1.6 Landscape: remembered, imagined and re-made 18
1.7 Things: mementoes, re-creations and inventions 26
1.8 'Home': interdisciplinary approaches 29

2 Methodology 37
2.1 Defining the field: dual-sited fieldwork 38
2.2 McLeod Ganj (Dharamshala) 41
2.2.1 Being *yin ji* in McLeod Ganj 51
2.3 Ladakh 57
2.3.1 Being *yin ji* in Ladakh 62
2.4 Ethics 63

3 Landscape: the places and spaces of exile 67
3.1 The early years: terra incognita 72
3.2 Dharamshala: home away from home? 75
3.3 Ladakh: 'little Tibet' 87
3.4 Legal identities and their spatial expression 97
3.5 Conclusion 105

4 Built environment: remembering the past, destabilising the present, imagining a future 109
4.1 McLeod Ganj, or 'little Lhasa'? 113
4.1.1 Rented rooms: instability in the vernacular built environment 119
4.1.2 Compromised place-making in Dharamshala 124
Case study 1: The *ma ni lha khang* or *nam gyel stupa* 124
Case study 2: The *tsuk lak khang* 131
Case study 3: *Kora* 137
4.1.3 Exuberant place-making in Dharamshala 150
Case study 4: The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives 151
Case study 5: Dorzong Monastic Institute and Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery 159
Case study 6: The Tibet Museum and the Norbulingka Institute 165
4.1.4 Reflections, refractions and reproductions of Tibetanness: 'little Lhasa' revisited 169
4.2 Ladakh, or 'little Tibet'? 172
4.2.1 Ladakh and Tibet: a long-standing relationship 174
4.2.2 The arrival of Tibetan refugees in Ladakh 176
4.2.3 Vernacular architecture: Choglamsar and Akling 180
4.2.4 Making home? 184
4.2.5 The religious built environment 190
4.3 Conclusion 196

5 Dress: the poetics and politics of clothing in Tibetan Exile 200
5.1 Why dress? 202
5.2 The *chu pa* through time 203
5.3 Creature comforts: wearing home? 214
5.4 Gender and Tibetan dress 216

5.5 Preservation and politics....221
5.5.1 Preservation at the Tibetan Institute for Performing Arts, McLeod Ganj, and the Tibetan Children's Village school, Ladakh....222
5.5.2 'How can I show you Tibet?' Interweaving nationalism and tradition....232
5.6 The *Lhakar* movement....238
5.7 Amdo and Khampa *chu pa*....243
5.8 Updating tradition....248
5.8.1 Phurbu Tsering: contemporary Tibetan fashion designer....252
5.9 Conclusion....259

6 Objects: creating, curating and destabilising the home....261
6.1 Past: objects as heritage, objects as mementoes....265
6.1.1 Jewellery (*gyen cha*)....266
6.1.2 Religious items: icons (*ku*), scroll paintings (*thangka*) and amulets (*gau*)....275
6.2 Present: agency and aesthetics, practising Tibetanness in exile....283
6.2.1 Handicrafts....285
6.2.2 Shrines (*chö shom*)....292
6.3 Future: political objects and the dream of Tibetan freedom....313
6.3.1 The leader and the flag....314
6.3.2 The Tibet Museum: objects as testimony....318
6.4 Conclusion....326

7 Conclusion: permanent impermanence....328

8 Bibliography....338
8.1 Websites....355

9 Appendix I Glossary of Tibetan spellings in Wylie transliteration....357

Abbreviations

CRCT	Central Relief Committee for Tibetans
CRO	Chief Representative Officer (of His Holiness the Dalai Lama), responsible for administering the Tibetan settlements in Ladakh
CTA	Central Tibetan Administration
CUREC	Central University Research Ethics Committee (Oxford)
Est. 22	Establishment 22
FRO	Foreigners Registration Office
IC	Identity Certificate
ICT	International Campaign for Tibet
ITBF	Indo-Tibetan Border (Police) Force
LAHDC	Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council
LTWA	Library of Tibetan Works and Archives
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs (Indian Government)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORI	No Objection to Return to India
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
RA	Research Assistant
RC	Indian Registration Certificate for Tibetans
SEP	Special Entry Permit
SFF	Special Frontier Force
SFT	Students for a Free Tibet
TAR	Tibet Autonomous Region
TCHRD	Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy
TCV	Tibetan Children's Village
TDS 1998	Tibetan Demographic Survey 1998
TDS 2009	Demographic Survey of Tibetans in Exile – 2009 (or Tibetan Demographic Survey 2009)
TIPA	Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts
TRRC	Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre
TWA	Tibetan Women's Association
TYC	Tibetan Youth Congress
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Note on use of Tibetan terms, anonymisation and redactions/blurring of images

Excepting given names and words with established roman spellings, Tibetan terms in this thesis have been rendered phonetically using the system developed by The Tibetan and Himalayan Library.[1] A glossary of spellings in Wylie transliteration can be found in Appendix I.

The only real names included in this thesis are those of public figures and those who preferred not to be anonymised. Otherwise I have followed the common anthropological convention of using pseudonyms in order to preserve the anonymity of my research participants.

Please also note that some images have been redacted from the dissemination copy of this work. The faces of some individuals in some photographs have also been blurred. This has been done for ethical reasons, to protect the identity of those pictured, or in order to comply with copyright regulations.

[1] Available at: www.thlib.org/reference/transliteration/phconverter.php [accessed 12 Dec 2015].

1 Introduction

Tibetan refugees began arriving in India in mid-1959. In choosing exile, they followed their leader, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, who had fled Tibet in March of that year following uprisings in the Tibetan capital, Lhasa. After several years of attempting to work with Tibet's new Maoist Chinese leadership, who had 'liberated' the country in 1951, the Dalai Lama and his government departed in secret for India, arriving in Tezpur, Assam, on 18th April 1959 (Avedon 1984: 67). Since then, Tibetans have continued to make the difficult journey south across the Himalayas, choosing exile out of fear of Chinese persecution, in search of greater opportunities beyond China's borders, and in the hope of enjoying religious and cultural freedom in the company of their spiritual and (until recently) temporal leader. The majority transit via Nepal to reach India, where the Dalai Lama and his government are based in the small town of McLeod Ganj (near to Dharamshala), in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Prior to 2008 around 2,000-3,000 Tibetans crossed the Nepali border each year (Kauffman 2011: 62). From 2008 until 2012 refugees arrived in exile at a much lower rate of c.650 per year[2] and only 171 successfully made the journey in 2013 (Demick 2015). Over the last two years, the flow of refugees has dwindled further as a result of increased security introduced after the uprisings of 2008, and in connection with the rising number of self-immolations staged in Tibetan regions of the People's Republic of China, which intensified in frequency from 2009 onwards.[3] The most recent figures (from 2009) put

[2] Figures obtained from Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre (TRRC), Dharamshala (15 Dec 2012).

[3] The total number of self-immolations is calculated differently by different groups. The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) records 141 self-immolations having taken place in Tibet to date (17 Jul 2015). This list includes the self-immolation of a Tibetan woman in Beijing (http://tibet.net/factsheet-immolation-2011-2012/). The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) records 142 to date (17 Jul 2015) (http://www.savetibet.org/resources/fact-sheets/self-immolations-by-tibetans/). ICT also separately lists seven self-immolations by Tibetans in exile, including the first in recent times, Thubten Ngodrup, who self-immolated on 27 Apr 1998, in New Delhi. The year 2012 (during my fieldwork) was a peak year for immolations; the CTA records 85 having taken place in this year. In 2013 26 Tibetans self-immolated; in

the total number of Tibetans living in exile at 127,935. Of these, 94,203 currently reside in India; 13,514 in Nepal; 1,298 in Bhutan and 18,920 elsewhere, including in European countries and North America (TDS 2009[4]: 13).

This thesis investigates the place-making practices of Tibetan refugees; how they have used material culture to reconstruct a 'home away from home'. It also examines the role of the physical landscape of exile in these processes, asking to what extent its similarity or dissimilarity with the topography of Tibet has affected refugees' sense of comfort. Since India is the country in which the majority of Tibetan refugees have sought exile, I chose to conduct research in two major areas of Tibetan settlement in its northwest, McLeod Ganj (Dharamshala) and Sonamling (Ladakh).

1.1 Tibet and China: fight and flight

In order to understand the current situation it is necessary to outline the background of the Tibet-China conflict. Debates surrounding Tibetan independence turn on the contemporary interpretation of historical, pre-nation state connections between Tibet and China. The PRC dates Tibet's incorporation into China to the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279-1368 AD), the dynasty to which Tibet's religious leaders (at the time the Sakya Buddhist sect) submitted. The nature of the relationship between the Tibetan and the Yuan leaders is contested, however. Tibetans argue that it was not one of imperial conqueror and colonised subject, but was instead a transaction between equals in which religious services were exchanged for protection and patronage (Yeh 2013: 2). Hence they argue that in 1950, when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) crossed onto

2014 11 self-immolated (http://tibet.net/situation-in-tibet/factsheet-immolation-2011-2012/ [accessed 17 Jul 2015]).

[4] *Demographic Survey of Tibetans in Exile – 2009*, published by the Planning Commission, Central Tibetan Administration. Hereafter TDS 2009 (i.e. Tibetan Demographic Survey 2009). Note that these figures are likely an underestimate, both as they apply to South Asia and to Tibetan populations elsewhere in the world.

Tibetan territory, Tibet was in fact an independent country. While the historical situation is complex, scholars have argued that Tibet at least functioned largely independently of China from the mid-nineteenth century onwards (Goldstein 1989a: 44; Shakya and Blondeau 2008: 42) and fully independently from early in 1913, the year in which the 13th Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso, published a proclamation asserting Tibetan political independence (current and historic) from China (Goldstein 1989a: 59-61).

The mid-twentieth century, however, saw the reinstatement of Chinese power in Tibet under the auspices of the communist government, established in Beijing in 1948. On 5th October 1950 the South West Corps of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) crossed the Yangtse River and attacked Tibetan positions in Kham, on the eastern edge of the Tibetan plateau. By 19th October those troops had effectively neutralised the entire Tibetan army (Goldstein 1989a: 696; Schaik 2011: 212) and the Tibetan government was forced to enter into negotiations with their new rulers. On 23rd May 1951 the Seventeen-point Agreement, which officially incorporated Tibet into the PRC, was signed and subsequently ratified by the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso.[5]

In Central Tibetan areas (Ü-Tsang) Chinese rule allowed for some religious and cultural freedom during the 1950s. By contrast, the eastern Tibetan regions of Kham and Amdo suffered to a much greater extent. Unlike Central Tibet, which in 1951 was redefined as a province-level 'autonomous region' (the Tibet Autonomous Region or TAR), Kham and Amdo were fully incorporated into existing PRC states[6] (see Fig. 1 below), and were subjected like the rest of China to hard-line Maoist policies in these years. The 'democratic' reforms enacted across the PRC during the early 1950s occasioned particular unrest in areas of Kham (Shakya 1999: 129; Schaik 2011: 225;

[5] He later denounced the document in exile, stating that it had been signed under duress (Shakya 1999: 209; Dalai Lama 1977: 220).

[6] Amdo, to the northeast of the Tibetan plateau, was incorporated into the provinces of: Qinghai, Gansu and northern Sichuan. Kham, to the southeast, was incorporated into: Sichuan, Gansu, Yunnan and Qinghai.

McGranahan 2010). This developed into widespread revolt, which spread throughout Tibet by 1959. Events came to a head during *lo sar* of that year (Tibetan New Year) and culminated in an uprising in the capital, Lhasa, on 10th March 1959. This precipitated the flight of the 14th Dalai Lama and his entourage, who departed for India on the evening of the 17th March (Shakya 1999: 188-200).

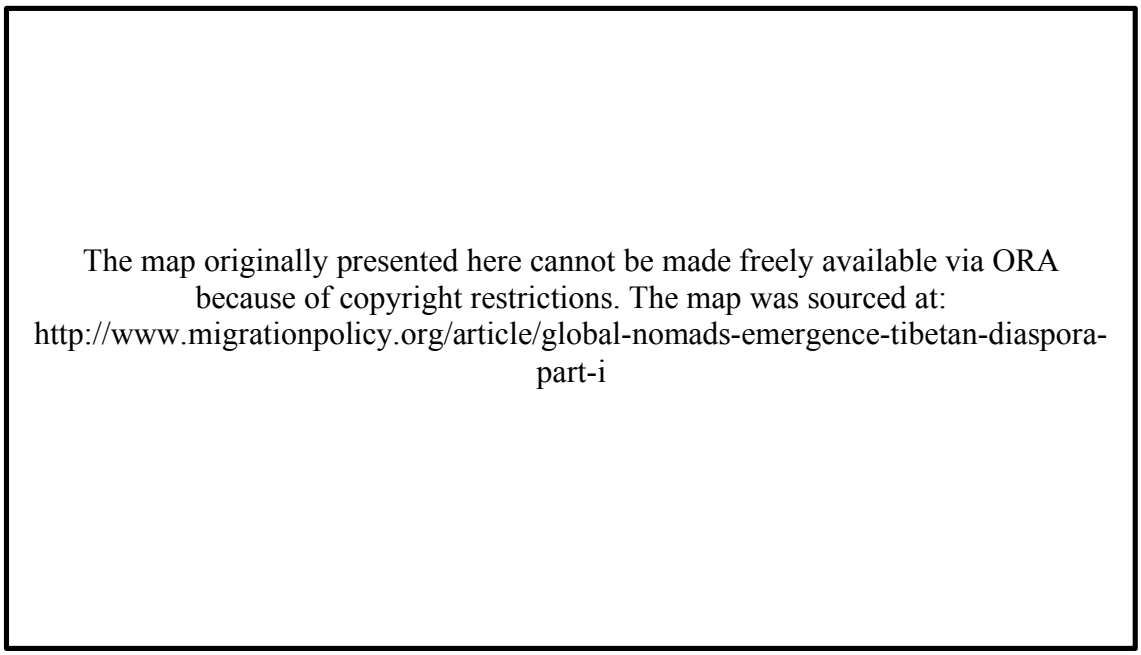


Figure 1 Map of Tibetan regions depicting the incorporation of Kham and Amdo into PRC states. Source: MacPherson et al. 2008.

1.2 Primary exile: the early years in India and Nepal

Thousands of Tibetans followed in the Dalai Lama's wake, reaching temporary refugee camps[7] in northeast India during the hottest months of April and May. It is unclear exactly how many Tibetans successfully made the journey into exile that year. Tibet scholar Hugh Richardson, who had served as Britain's permanent representative in Lhasa prior to 1950, reported that by the end of 1959 around 17,000 Tibetans had been received into the temporary refugee camps established in northeast India

[7] Several camps were established during the early 1960s. Missamari (near Tezpur in Assam) served as a transit camp, holding refugees before they could be settled in other locations. Monks were gathered at Dalhousie (Himachal Pradesh, northwest India) and Buxa Duar (an ex-British internment camp in West Bengal) as part of an initiative by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government to preserve the teachings and practices of Tibetan Buddhism (Avedon 1984: 93; Repo 2011: 147; Anon. 1986: 49).

(Richardson 1962: 235). By contrast, the Dalai Lama stated that around 20,000 Tibetans had arrived into India by June 1959 (Dalai Lama 1992: 163). In Nepal, Tony Hagen estimated that around 30,000 Tibetan refugees were present in the country in 1962 but by the time of Woodcock's visit in 1969 there seem only to have been around 12,000. Numbers had perhaps been reduced by onwards migration to India and a high death rate (Woodcock 1970: 411). This was in large part due to tropical diseases, which strongly affected Tibetan refugees. During the early years of exile Tibetans were placed in temporary camps in a variety of locations, many of which were environmentally and climatically (not to mention socially and culturally) very different to the Tibetan plateau. Refugees lacked appropriate clothing and, unused to the heat, humidity, jungle and diseases of India, suffered greatly. In 1962 Richardson reported very poor conditions at the transit camp of Missamari (near Tezpur in Assam), noting that the 'damp heat of the rainy season, the mosquitoes, and the bad water make it unsuitable for Tibetans' (Richardson 1962: 235). Tuberculosis was also a problem; by 1966 more than two hundred monks had contracted the disease at the monastic camp of Buxa Duar (West Bengal) and eighty subsequently passed away (Anon. 1986: 49).

The Central Relief Committee for Tibetans (CRCT), which was established in April 1959, organised funding and care for the arriving refugees. In the early years of exile, Tibetans also worked in road gangs in the high Himalayas (in the mountainous regions of Kullu, Kangra, Shimla and Chamba especially). The exiled Tibetan government and the Government of India had organised this work in an attempt to move Tibetans out of the tropical refugee camps and into the cooler regions of the Himalayas, and to enable them to begin supporting themselves (Dalai Lama 1992: 163-164; Dalai Lama 1977: 225; Saklani 1984: 225). The work was physically demanding however, wages were low and living conditions poor (Kauffman 2011: 65). This way of life, which continually moved with the progress of the roads, was also temporary and

unreliable. Many struggled to feed their families and the death rate remained high (Dalai Lama 1992: 174).

In the decision to move Tibetans out of a tropical climate into a Himalayan one, and in Richardson's earlier remark (Richardson 1962: 235), we can see how Tibetans are perceived (by Tibetans and non-Tibetans) to be more suited to mountainous environments, and how it was assumed that they would flourish better in such places (cf. Dyke's comments on Swiss empathy for Tibetans, 1997: 179). In his autobiography, the 14th Dalai Lama himself states (in relation to road-work undertaken by Tibetans on the low altitude Indian plains), that 'this is very unhealthy work for mountain people' (Dalai Lama 1977: 225). For this reason, he stated that he and his government attempted to:

> … rehabilitate all our people in districts where the climate is not too different from our own. To this end, we have managed to establish training centers for handicrafts[8] in Darjeeling and Dalhousie, both in the Himalayan foothills [respectively West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh], where about six hundred people are learning useful trades
>
> Dalai Lama 1977: 225-226

At the same time, other settlements were also established for Tibetans at various sites across the Indian Himalayas, and also in Nepal. In the latter, a small number of refugees were able to resettle in northern regions. Given their proximity to the border and the similarity of the environment, these Tibetans were able to drive their herds to the new site and continue a pastoral lifestyle (e.g. Rogers 2008). The same is true of Tibetan nomads from western Tibet who were able to flee to Ladakh with their families and herds and settle in the Jangthang region (see below).

Besides the handicraft centres established in Himalayan regions and the settlements that formed ad hoc in India's major cities (many of which subsequently

[8] The importance of crafts and material culture in the establishment of the exile community and a 'home away from home' in India will be discussed later in this thesis.

gained support from the Central Tibetan Administration), large agricultural settlements were also established for the refugees. During the 1960s, the Indian and exiled Tibetan governments devised a rehabilitation strategy involving the construction of settlements each designed to house 3,000-4,000 Tibetans.[9] At the request of Jawaharlal Nehru, then Prime Minister of India, several south Indian states offered land. The first settlements were constructed at remote sites in Bylakuppe (1961) and Mundgod (1963) in the present day state of Karnataka, Mainpat in Madhya Pradesh (1962) and Chandragiri in Orissa (1963) (Kauffman 2011: 69).[10] Construction of these sites was difficult and required backbreaking work by Tibetans to clear jungle (Avedon 1984: 88). Gradually, however, settlements emerged. Twenty villages were eventually constructed at Bylakuppe and settlers were each given one acre of land to till. In the early years harvests failed repeatedly since Tibetan crops and techniques were ill suited to south Indian conditions. By diversifying and adapting, however, yields began to increase and by 1969 the settlement at Bylakuppe was turning a profit (Avedon 1984: 90; cf. Arakeri 1998 and Goldstein 1975). These large settlements quickly filled to capacity necessitating the founding of others. Still more developed haphazardly as refugees gravitated towards India's metropoles seeking opportunities. Today, the exile Tibetan government lists seventy-one refugee settlements and cluster units operating in India, Nepal and Bhutan (see Fig. 2).[11]

[9] Avedon quotes a conversation with the 14th Dalai Lama: '"At the beginning of our work," related the Dalai Lama, "two factions existed among the community of our responsible people. One thought we Tibetans must concentrate in northern India; the other – including myself – felt that it didn't matter where we lived. The important thing was to find a place and settle properly so that we could preserve the Tibetan identity, culture and race"' (Avedon 1984: 87). Thus it seems that despite his misgivings about the tropical climate (Dalai Lama 1977: 225-226), the 14th Dalai Lama nevertheless advocated the construction of Tibetan settlements in south India.

[10] Houston and Wright (2003: 223) note that placing Tibetan refugees in remote locations was part of a strategy by the Indian government to reduce their contact with international political figures. This allowed the Indian government to maintain cordial relations with China.

[11] http://tibet.net/home/ [accessed 17 Jul 2015].

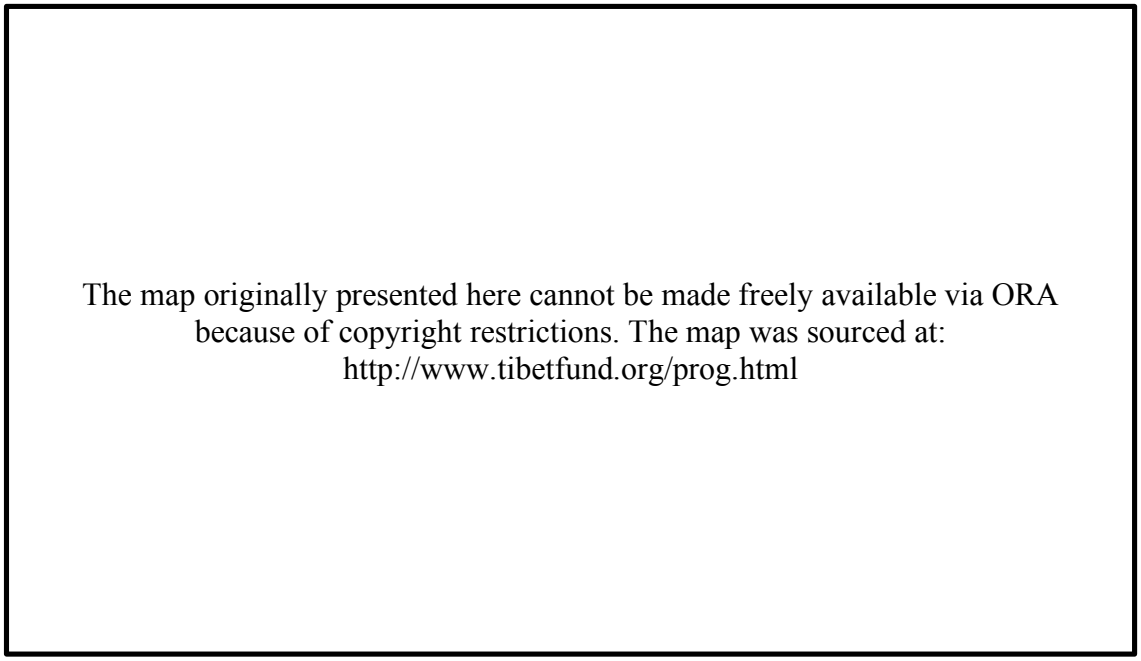


Figure 2 Map depicting major Tibetan settlements in India, Nepal and Bhutan. Source: The Tibet Fund (http://www.tibetfund.org/prog.html [accessed 17 Jul 2015]).

1.3 Secondary exile: 'going to abroad'

Since the 1960s Tibetans have spread beyond the Indian subcontinent to settle in a variety of mainly Western countries. In the 1960s, 800 Tibetans were received by Switzerland in an arrangement made by the Swiss Red Cross.[12] According to Korom, 1,200 had been resettled in the country by 1981 (Korom 1999, cited by Hess 2009: 97). Today, Switzerland's Tibetan population stands at c.2,830 (TDS 2009: 60). In the US, the 1990 Immigration Act provided 1,000 visas for Tibetans living in Nepal and India to immigrate. By the end of the US government's family reunification project in 1998 the US Tibetan population stood at c.5,000 (Hess 2009: 1-3). Today Tibetans living in the US number c.9,135 (TDS 2009: 60).[13] Several other countries also host significant, and growing Tibetan populations: in Europe, Tibetans total 5,712; in Australia 509; in Canada 1,977 (TDS 2009: 60). Notably, the total number of Tibetans living in 'foreign

[12] 1,000 were originally accepted for resettlement but the programme was halted part way through (Hess 2009: 97).

[13] These figures are likely under-representative; the authors of the TDS 2009 estimate that c.25% of exiled Tibetans living 'abroad' (i.e. in countries not including Nepal, India and Bhutan) did not participate in the 2009 census (TDS 2009: 60).

countries' (i.e. not including Nepal, India and Bhutan) has more than doubled since 1998 (rise of 55.6%), highlighting the increase in secondary migration by Tibetans to countries beyond South Asia (TDS 2009: 60).

1.4 The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)

In India, Tibetan settlements are subject to the de facto jurisdiction of the Central Tibetan Administration (cf. McConnell 2009). This organisation (hereafter CTA) has played an important role in exilic Tibetan life since its inception in 1959. It began life as a temporary government or executive cabinet (*ka shak*[14]), established by the Dalai Lama at Lhuntse Dzong, a fortress located in Tibet nearby the border, at which he and his entourage rested en route to India (Shakya 1999: 205). After a short stay in northeast India and longer in Mussoorie (northwest), in April 1960 the Dalai Lama re-established his government in McLeod Ganj, then a small hamlet in the northwest Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, nearby the town of Dharamshala with which it is often associated (McConnell 2009: 343).[15] Since 1960 McLeod Ganj has grown rapidly, serving as the Tibetan capital-in-exile and increasingly a tourist destination. It plays host to the Central Tibetan Administration, the home of the Dalai Lama, headquarters of numerous Tibetan NGOs, many monasteries and several thousand Tibetan refugees. The offices of the Tibetan government and the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA) are located on the hillside directly between McLeod Ganj and Dharamshala in an area

[14] In Tibet the *ka shak* played an important role in the government of the Dalai Lamas, which was housed in the Potala Palace. The *ka shak,* a committee comprising four *zhap pé* (officials) (three lay, one monastic), oversaw secular matters and the day-to-day running of the country, making recommendations to the Dalai Lama which he could then accept or reject as he saw fit (Goldstein 1989a: 13-19). In exile, the *ka shak* is comprised of seven members and is headed by the *Sikyong,* the exile Tibetan political leader who, since 2011, has been directly elected by the exile populace (http://tibet.net/about-cta/executive/ [accessed 24 Mar 2015]).

[15] The town is misleadingly referred to as Dharamshala in international discourse; this is actually the name of the larger Indian town situated directly below and to the south of it on the same hillside.

referred to by Tibetans as Gangchen Kyishong (contracted to Gangkyi), meaning 'happy snow-covered valley' (Diehl 2002: 8) (see Fig. 4, p42).

The Tibetan government has been significantly democratised since the beginning of exile (Frechette 2007). On 10th March 1963 a new Tibetan constitution, or 'Charter of Tibetans in Exile' (marked as a draft pending the affirmation of Tibetans inside Tibet) was inaugurated. Prior to the development of the Charter, the authority of the Dalai Lama as the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet was paramount. The Charter, however, includes a clause that provides for his impeachment (Avedon 1984: 109). Further piecemeal developments since the 1960s have continued to move the CTA closer to a Western understanding of democracy. Notably, 27th April 2011 saw the election of Tibet's first secular and directly elected leader, the *Sikyong,* Dr Lobsang Sangay. The *Sikyong* (often glossed in English as Prime Minister) has overseen the gradual withdrawal of the current Dalai Lama from political life, as he follows his intention of retiring into a purely religious role.

Besides advocating Tibetan autonomy,[16] its raison d'être, the CTA plays a fundamental role in the governance of Tibetans living in exile (McConnell 2009). While India has never officially recognised the CTA as a legitimate government, or the Dalai Lama as a legitimate political leader, the Administration is nevertheless permitted (and in some senses encouraged) to perform a variety of state-like functions by the Indian government (McConnell 2011: 299). For example, it plays an important role in delineating refugee status and Tibetan identity, and provides welfare support for Tibetans living in India.

[16] The official policy of the CTA is not to seek full independence from China but instead greater autonomy for Tibet (including greater religious and cultural freedom) within the PRC. This policy is referred to as the Middle Way Approach (*u mé lam*) and is endorsed by the Dalai Lama and supported by the majority of exiled Tibetans. However, a number of Tibetan NGOs, including most prominently the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) and Students for Free Tibet (SFT), support a policy of full independence (*rangzen*).

India is signatory to neither the United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees nor the 1967 Protocol, and as such follows no specified policy on the treatment of refugees (McConnell 2011: 301). Tibetans living in India are instead classified as 'foreigners' and are administered under the 1946 Foreigners Act. As such, they are required to obtain an Indian Registration Certificate for Tibetans (RC), which must be renewed yearly (for the most part) at their local Foreigners Registration Office (FRO). This document grants Tibetans several rights, including the right to live in the area in which they are registered. Yet, since it is unfamiliar to many employers and institutions (e.g. in higher education, banks), it regularly causes complications for its bearers (McConnell 2011: 302; Houston and Wright 2003; cf. Rolfe 2008; see section 3.4). However, possessing an RC is infinitely preferable to the alternative. Tibetans who arrived in India after 1979 do not qualify for an RC,[17] and hence remain stateless in India, lacking a legal identity and the rights and benefits which it confers. Consequently many attempt to obtain an RC via untruthful and illegal means, for example, by claiming to have been born in India, or by bribing officials (McConnell 2009: 301-303).

Besides the RC exiles can also acquire a second status: 'citizenship' of Tibet. This is embodied in the 'Green Book', a passport-like document issued by the CTA, which can be obtained by any individual living in the diaspora who is of 'biological' Tibetan descent and is registered as having paid their voluntary Tibetan 'tax' or contribution (*cha trel*) to the CTA. Tibetans possessing both an RC and Green Book are able to access facilities such as schools, retirement care-homes, child- and healthcare provided by the CTA in India (McConnell 2011). However, although they are passport-like neither of these documents bestow upon Tibetans the full rights of citizenship. For example, possessing a Registration Certificate entitles Tibetans to apply for an Identity

[17] This change in policy relates to changes in the political climate around this time, namely improvement in Sino-Indian relations (McConnell 2011: 301-303).

Certificate (IC) which can be used to travel abroad (if stamped at their local FRO, the IC permits Tibetans to return to India). But in practice many Tibetans are unable to secure foreign visas using this document and so their ability to travel beyond India's borders, and especially to Tibet, is effectively restricted. The documentation available to Tibetans thus renders them neither citizens nor refugees and fixes them geographically while simultaneously denying them the right to belong, a crucial point which will be discussed further in this thesis in the context of 'home'.

1.5 Tibet de-territorialized: scholarship on the exile community

This thesis draws on scholarship from a variety of disciplines in its examination of home-making by Tibetan refugees, in particular anthropology. Anthropologists and sociologists have long harboured an interest in the Tibetan exile community. The earliest sociological scholarship primarily concerned itself with the survival, adaptation and assimilation of Tibetans and Tibetan culture in the Indian subcontinent. Indian scholars (e.g. Palakshappa 1978, Saklani 1984, Subba 1990, Arakeri 1998, see also Goldstein 1975) discussed the changes they witnessed in the various settlements and the perceptions of refugees themselves about the differences between life as it had been lived on the Tibetan plateau and how it was now being pursued in exile. Besides chronicling economic adaptations, researchers also examined various other factors and social institutions for indications of change, for example: polyandrous marriage (the marriage of several men to a single woman); expressions of social hierarchy; religious practice; the status of women; and Tibetan language usage, comparing all these to refugees' accounts of prior life in the homeland. Although useful in providing a window onto early life in several of the Tibetan settlements this scholarship is limited since it concerns itself with charting and quantifying 'change' from an assumed 'Tibetan'

baseline located geographically in Tibet proper and temporally in the 'traditional' past. Subsequent sociological and anthropological scholarship has concerned itself more with the different and sometimes conflicting narratives of identity that circulate throughout the diaspora.

Since the 1980s anthropologists have approached exilic identity from a number of perspectives, all of which point to a nexus of narratives surrounding nationalism and tradition, religion, culture and politics. These are shaped by the perceived imperative to preserve Tibetan culture based on an assumption of its destruction in the homeland (C. Harris 1999: 43). Of particular relevance to this thesis are debates surrounding 'tradition', 'modernity' and contemporary Tibetan identity. Tibetans living in exile express a strongly conscious relationship with their culture and 'traditions', making important efforts to practise these on a daily basis (C. Harris 1999: 43; cf. Diehl 2002). Definitions of what is and what is not Tibetan, and thus *who is* and *who is not* Tibetan thus become crucial, and cause great controversy. In his article 'Whither the Tsampa Eaters?' Tibetan scholar Tsering Shakya (1993) explores a number of different ways in which Tibetans have delimited their identity. Shakya takes his title from a letter that appeared in the Tibetan-language newspaper *The Tibet Mirror* in 1959. In an attempt to encourage unity among his fellow countrymen the writer opted to address them as '*tsampa* eaters'. The consumption of roasted barley flour, as Shakya points out, is a practice that transcends dialect, sect, gender and regionalism. While today the Tibetan term *bö pa* is commonly translated into English as 'Tibetan', and is applied by exiles to those originating from all three Tibetan regions, in 1959 it was commonly used by Khampas and Amdowas to refer to Tibetans from Central Tibet (Ü-Tsang), and by nomads from the Jangthang region in western Tibet to denote the inhabitants of the Lhasa valley (Shakya 1993: 9). Beyond foodstuffs, Shakya also identifies Buddhism as a unifying feature. He argues that the shared sense of being *nang pa,* or an 'insider' of

the Tibetan Buddhist religion, was historically significant to Tibetans living on the plateau. Tibetan Buddhism is not only indigenous to Tibet, however, it has deep historical roots in Ladakh, Bhutan, Sikkim, northeast India and Nepal, the areas into which the Tibetan empire (7-9th century AD) once extended. Since 1959 another important signifier of identity has also gained ground. Shakya identifies a trend towards secular nationalism in the exile community, arguing that Tibetan identity today is 'founded more on anti-Chinese ideology than on faith' (Shakya 1993: 11). He suggests that this more political sense of Tibetanness has been 'fostered in exile through the manipulation of symbols and the deliberate invention of tradition' (Shakya 1993: 11; cf. Nowak 1984, Fürer-Haimendorf 1990, C. Harris 1999). Thus the period predating the 1950-1951 Chinese takeover has become both the primary resource for exilic Tibetan cultural identity and a barometer for measuring the 'authenticity' of contemporary culture (cf. C. Harris 1999: 73).

Hobsbawm and Ranger's concept of 'invented traditions' is useful in this context (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). The authors define 'invented traditions' as:

> … a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past … However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of 'invented' traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition.
>
> Hobsbawm 1983: 1-2

Notably, exilic narratives set great store by 'authentic' tradition, but what is perceived as authentically Tibetan is often 'factitious' or 'invented' in the sense that it bears only partial similarity to historic fact, and may betray exilic bias in its framing (cf. C. Harris 1999).

Concern over 'authenticity', and defining what is and what is not 'Tibetan' play out in a variety of ways in the communities under discussion. Carole McGranahan has described the selective way in which Tibetan history has been written by the Dharamshala elite to emphasise a uniform Tibetan identity focusing on positive characteristics such as non-violence. She argues that histories of violent national resistance, such as those of the Chushi Gangdrug (a guerrilla resistance movement named for the four rivers and six ranges of Kham, southeastern Tibet) are therefore silenced, or 'arrested', to be unearthed at a later, more appropriate time (McGranahan 2010). McGranahan's work highlights the power of dominant narratives to shape exiled Tibetans' accounts of their own history and cultural identity. Partly because Tibetans born in central areas of Tibet (Ü-Tsang) dominated the early exile population, and Tibetans from aristocratic families dominated the early exile government, exilic identity has thus far emphasised the politics and history of Central Tibet, the Gelugpa Buddhist sect, and its head, the Dalai Lama. For this reason, additionally historic east-west antagonism, recent debates over what is 'authentically' Tibetan turn on contestations over central versus eastern Tibetan cultural habits. This points up a larger tension within the exile community between the old regions of Tibet, which were only loosely connected to one-another prior to the Chinese takeover, and the current rhetoric of neo-national unity incorporating central Tibet (Ü-Tsang), and the eastern areas of Kham and Amdo (cf. C. Harris 1999: 42-43).

After more than fifty years of 'exilic Tibet', regional divisions still form a problematic part of the fabric of exile life, particularly in McLeod Ganj, and have recently become key topics of scholarly discussion (e.g. Yeh 2007, Swank 2011, Diehl 2002, Chen 2009). Particularly important to this thesis is the way these tensions shape debates about cultural authenticity and identity. As Yeh has shown, tensions between long-term Tibetan exiles and their children (who often originate in central Tibetan

areas) and recently arrived Tibetans (who often originate in eastern Tibetan areas) stem from exilic narratives which view Tibet as having undergone 'cultural genocide' at the hands of the Chinese (Yeh 2013: ix; Dalai Lama 30 Oct 1996 interview in *Le Monde,* cited in Lopez 1998: 198). According to this narrative, Tibetans who entered exile in the early 1960s and their children are the *only* bearers of 'authentic' Tibetan culture; the different habits of Tibetans born in Tibet under Chinese rule are considered Sinified (Yeh 2002, 2007). As Yeh argues:

> Boundaries around what is considered 'Tibetan' tend to get drawn too tightly around what is familiar from the context of exile not only on physical bases [i.e. phenotype, facial features], but also on cultural markers such as dress, behaviour, and mannerisms, such that something as simple as seeing a young woman wear glasses becomes weighed as evidence in favour of Chinese rather than Tibetan categorisation. Of course, nobody thinks it is inappropriate for young women to wear glasses; rather, because it is unfamiliar, it seems to be un-Tibetan.
>
> Yeh 2002: 235

The uneasy dynamic between Tibetans who have lived for many years in exile and those who arrived more recently from Tibet permeates a number of other ethnographic works by, for example, Keila Diehl (2002) and Clare Harris (1999, 2006). In her ethnography of contemporary Tibetan music, Diehl recounts an incident that occurred during Tibetan New Year (*lo sar*) at the *tsuk lak khang* (main temple) in McLeod Ganj. A group of female pilgrims who had recently arrived from Lhasa began singing and dancing to patriotic Tibetan songs. They performed these in a Chinese-influenced style unlike that employed by Tibetans living in India, and attracted scorn from onlookers (Diehl 2002: 92-94). Likewise, Harris describes the career of Gonkar Gyatso, a Tibetan artist raised and trained in Tibet and China, who fled to Dharamshala in 1992. As she puts it, Gyatso's contemporary artworks, which he had produced in Lhasa with the Tibetan-run Sweet Tea artists organisation, 'did not find favour with the

guardians of Tibetan cultural identity in exile' (Harris 2006: 704). In particular, the exile community deemed Gyatso's modernist images of the Buddha 'sacrilegious' since they exposed their underlying iconometry to viewers. This led him to retrain in the more 'traditional', central Tibetan *thangka* style practised by exiles in India (Harris 2006: 704-705).

These ethnographies highlight fundamental aspects of exilic identity and explore the competing definitions of Tibetanness that circulate among refugees in India. For example, those raised in Tibet are able to draw their identity from their birth in the geographical homeland. Those who have spent many years in exile, and more especially their children, however, cannot. Having lived for so long outside the territory of Tibet, and having been raised in an ethnically mixed environment with strong influences from Indian and Western cultures, Tibetans born in exile look to other sources for self-definition. One result of this has been an emphasis on traditionalism in both material and less tangible aspects of culture (e.g. dress, religion, language), and the reification of aspects of Tibetan culture that are thought to pre-date the 1950s (C. Harris 1999, Diehl 2002, McGranahan 2010, Klieger ed. 2002, Korom ed. 1997). Many youth born in exile contest this conservative approach to Tibetan identity, however, and advocate for a flexible, contemporary definition of Tibetanness. This project is also pursued by youth born in Tibet who have recently arrived in exile. Weary of being labelled *gya mi* (Chinese) by long-term exiles, these youth assert their own cultural authenticity via their birth and via new, bi-cultural definitions of Tibetanness (cf. C. Harris 2012: 254-255). Together with youth born in exile, these young men and women seek to diversify definitions of Tibetanness and create a space in which Tibetans of different social, geographical and cultural experience can experiment with multiple modes of being 'modern'. That said, conservative attitudes persist and are not confined to the older generation. Stringent definitions of Tibetanness are advocated by a diverse segment of

exilic society in India. They can be discerned in the practice of *Lhakar,* a social movement that originated in Tibet and which, among exiles in India, has come to emphasise the weekly practice of a prescribed number of 'Tibetan' activities. For example, in McLeod Ganj and Ladakh Tibetans made special efforts to wear Tibetan dress, to eat Tibetan dishes and to speak in 'pure' Tibetan language (i.e. omitting loan words) on Wednesdays each week. Some of these practices were effectively made compulsory by some exile institutions and employers during the period of my fieldwork in 2012-2013. Because of its focus on material expressions of identity *Lhakar,* its origins, evolution in exile and conflicting Tibetan opinions of it form a crucial part of the discussion in this thesis.

1.6 Landscape: remembered, imagined and re-made

This thesis explores exile Tibetan identity and practices of place- and home-making from the perspective of material culture, beginning with the physical environment. Social science engagements with the cultural landscape might be dated to the seminal work of American geographer, Carl Sauer. In 'The Morphology of Landscape', Sauer defined 'cultural landscape' as: 'fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result' (Sauer 1963[1925]: 343). Sauer's equation of: nature + culture = cultural landscape, has since been expanded and critiqued. Geographical approaches of the 1970s, echoing those of processual archaeology, emphasised a positivist approach to the landscape and focused on recording and classifying it, and mapping cultural artefacts (e.g. houses, fences) in order to trace paths of cultural transmission (Duncan and Ley 1993: 11). Subsequent scholars of what came to be known as new cultural geography took an expanded view, problematizing the landscape in terms of social,

economic, political and cultural factors. This step-change related to wider shifts in the social sciences towards recognition of intersubjectivity and the idea of 'thick description', developed by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) (Duncan and Ley 1993: 11). Thus landscape in the 1980s and 1990s was increasingly mined for its iconographic and representational significance; often likened to text in recognition of its symbolic capacity (e.g. Cosgrove 1984, 1985; Daniels and Cosgrove 1988; Wylie 2007). Research also emphasised its political and economic dimensions (e.g. Duncan and Ley 1993, Gupta and Ferguson 1997). These scholars were careful to distinguish themselves from Sauer's approach, arguing that 'culture' was not simply layered atop a 'natural' landscape but produced through it. Landscape came to be seen as not just an objectification of social relations but also as a result of them (Mitchell 2002: 385).

The 1990s saw further developments in this literature. Within anthropology, scholarship focused on investigating indigenous perspectives on landscape, which were employed to demonstrate how it is culturally constructed and locally perceived (e.g. Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995). This later research, both in geography and anthropology was strongly influenced by the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger (1971) (Feld and Basso 1996: 3) and Merleau-Ponty (1989). Heidegger's theorisation of 'dwelling' (e.g. Ingold 2000) inspired academic interest in the processual nature of landscapes: the idea that places are constructed over time and through interaction with their inhabitants, both human and non-human (Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995: 5; Ingold 2000). This work has emphasised how cultures, places and people are mutually constituted, evolving together and influencing each other's development.

Historically, Tibetans have enjoyed a highly culturally specific relationship with the topography of Tibet. Key aspects of Tibetan culture are tied to the land and its features in very explicit ways. For example, specific places in the landscape such as lakes and mountains bear significance as sacred sites or power places (Dowman 1988)

believed to be the abodes of deities (Buddhist, Bön and 'folk'/*mi chö*) or otherwise connected with the past lives and actions of Buddhist and Bönpo saints (e.g. Ramble 1995, Dyke 1997, J. Gyatso 1987, S. Karmay 1994). Anthropologist Toni Huber has written extensively about the Tibetan landscape, and religious and ritual relationships with it (e.g. Huber 2008, 2006, 1997, 1994). In his essay, 'Putting the *gnas* back into *gnas-kor*', Huber describes the intimate, physical and material quality of Tibetans' relationships with sacred places (*gnas* or *né*[18]), enacted for example through *kora* or *né kor* (*gnas-kor*; circumambulation). Huber argues that in Tibetan thinking there has never been a sharp division between human beings and other 'forces living in the world' (Huber 1994: 25). This idea has strong implications for the study of landscape and material culture and its relationship to the self (and by extension, group). Huber describes the Tibetan notion of *la* (loosely translatable as 'life force' or 'vitality'). *La* is thought to reside in particular places (*la né*), trees (*la shing*), animals (*la sem chen*), stones (*la to* or *la yu*), lakes (*la tso*) and mountains (*la ri*). As Huber puts it, the 'bla-gnas [*la né*] concept holds that persons and places are involved in some degree of mutually determinate relationship' (1994: 26). For example, Huber was told that if a family lineage died out their *la tso* (the lake associated with the lineage's life force) would dry up. Vice versa, if a person's *la né* were harmed this would have a negative impact on their health. Tibetan ritual practices are built around such sacred environments as mountains (e.g. Mount Kailash, *ti se* in Tibetan) and lakes, which are circumambulated (*né kor*). Other Tibetan interactions with 'place' also emphasise direct physical and sensory contact through seeing, touching, consuming (literally ingesting the earth), vocalizing (addressing prayers to the place or reciting specific formulae), listening (for sounds produced by the place) and positioning the body in relationship to

[18] I have rendered Tibetan terms phonetically in this thesis, hence Huber's *gnas* (which can be loosely translated as 'place', though see discussion above) appears as *né* elsewhere. See Appendix I for Wylie transliteration.

the site (e.g. keeping religious objects on the right-hand side, completing circumambulations in a clockwise direction) (Huber 1994: 38). Full physical contact with the site is regarded as most efficacious and beneficial to the person in gaining merit and increasing health and in cleansing the self from pollution (*drip*). For this reason, the current Dalai Lama has advocated the practice of full body prostration in relation to sacred sites already present or developed in exile (Huber 1994: 35), for example Tibetan monasteries and temples, sites associated with the life of the Buddha and pre-existing sacred places in the Indian Himalayas.

Huber describes a strong, material relationship between the Tibetan self and the Tibetan landscape, negotiated through physical practice. But if Tibetan cultural practice, and particularly religious practice, was conducted in relation to the physical landscape of the homeland, what happens when the land and its power places are no longer available to its practitioners? This is the original question that inspired this research. Tibetans have been forced to leave behind not only their homes and livelihoods, but also their sacred sites; this thesis discusses what happens in their absence. It analyses how Tibetan cultural and religious identity has adapted, how other elements of material culture have grown in significance by comparison, and how meaningful landscapes have been developed in exile.

Landscape anthropology has emphasised the agentive qualities of the landscape, in particular its influence over cultural identity and the worldview of its inhabitants. In this respect, Tibetan religious and ritual approaches to landscape accord well with anthropological theory: both attribute agency to the physical environment. Scholars have recently suggested that the landscape (including objects and other material culture) derives its force from its materiality, its aesthetic qualities or 'thingness' (Miller 2005, Howes 2006, Dudley 2010). Such studies draw on earlier approaches in anthropology, which reject Cartesian dualism in favour of emphasising the embodied nature of human

experience (e.g. Mauss 1979: 97-105), and scholarship in the field of phenomenology (e.g. Merleau-Ponty 1989), which describes how individuals interact with the world somatically (cf. Csordas 1993), i.e. via their senses. For example, we are trained in movement by the clothes we wear, the houses we live in and the activities we pursue (e.g. Mauss 1979: 97-105, Bourdieu 1990a and 1990b, Tarlo 1996). It is with regard to this kind of scholarship that I employ the term 'aesthetics'. Debated in anthropology in relation to its ethnocentricity and Kantian connotations (e.g. Coote 1992, Morphy et al. 1994, Gell 1995, Pinney and Thomas 2001), I use the term in a cross-cultural sense to refer to the material and sensory qualities of objects, including landscape and the built environment. Jeremy Coote has argued that it is possible to talk of 'aesthetics' without 'art'; he consequently proposes an aesthetics of the everyday (Coote 1992: 245). Similarly in *The Comfort of Things* Miller discusses the 'styles' and 'patterns' exhibited by individual Londoners in their relationships with their possessions, how they care for, order and display them. He suggests that such traits might collectively be termed an 'aesthetic' (Miller 2008: 294). For example, a child might express his 'aesthetic' in the way he chooses to display his soft toys; an adult might express hers in the piercings she chooses to make to her body. Although Miller concentrates on individuals' aesthetic worlds, he notes that an aesthetic can also work at a societal level – for example, a religious aesthetic displayed in the arrangement of a personal or family shrine (Miller 2008: 294). (I analyse the content, aesthetic and religious effects of Tibetan shrines in Chapter Six of this thesis.) The point of aesthetics for Miller is comfort: he argues, 'In many cases, this aesthetic, with its repetitions and familiarities, provides a comfort to people on a par with the comfort that Durkheim associated with religion and society' (Miller 2008: 295). I suggest that things – the built environment, physical landscape, dress and possessions – play a similar aesthetic role for Tibetan refugees as personal possessions did for Miller's Londoners. Indeed, perhaps they are even more important:

refugees wrenched traumatically from their homeland and thrust into an alien environment are in very great need of the comfort which can be provided by familiar things. In a refugee context then, material culture, including the physical environment, has a crucial role to play.

Recently, social scientists have approached this topic through the lens of affect, emphasising the perceptual impact of the environment in shaping human experience, action and understanding. Drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (e.g. Deleuze and Guattari 1994) and borrowing from experimental psychology (Leys 2011), some theorists distinguish affect from feeling and emotion. These theorists (e.g. Massumi 2002, Anderson 2006, Thrift 2008, Latour 1993) approach affect as excess or pre-cognitive, somatic, autonomic processes acting upon and within the body. As Rachel Leys notes, this standpoint characterises affect as 'independent of, and in an important sense prior to, ideology – that is, prior to intentions, meanings, reasons, and beliefs' (Leys 2011: 437), in other words as pre-social and pre-cultural. As she goes on to discuss (Leys 2011: 457), while the arguments of the above authors purport to focus on *corporeal* experience – placing the actor in a sensual and affective environment (cf. Heidegger's 1971 'Being-in-the-World') – they actually invoke the very Cartesian divide thinkers have been at pains to critique (Mauss 1979, Merleau-Ponty 1989, Bourdieu 1990a and 1990b, cf. Csordas 1993: 137). In arguing that affect is pre-cultural (pre-'mind'), authors assert a division between mind and body. This is anthropologically problematic since it fails to reflect how the senses are experienced and expressed in culturally constructed ways (cf. Svašek 2012: 8). Is it really possible to describe/feel your reaction to something without this being filtered through cultural experience (cf. Csordas 1993: 139; Martin 2013)? Secondly, how is the ethnographer to access these 'pre-cognitive' (even pre-linguistic) perceptions? Participant-observation allows ethnographers to approximate (literally, by using their own bodies as proxies)

their informants' experiences, but it cannot give insight into another individual's body/perceptual experience. For these reasons, this thesis does not engage with this debate.

Instead, it speaks more to work on affect by Navaro-Yashin (2006, 2012), Stoler (2007), Adey (2010) and Aretxaga (2013), for example. In the introduction to her book, *The Make-Believe Space,* which focuses on the affective qualities of the political-material landscapes of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Navaro-Yashin states that she is taking a '"both-and" approach, arguing that the human-centred perspective must not be eradicated but complemented with an object-centred one' (Navaro-Yashin 2012: 18). Rather than negating social-constructionist arguments, she suggests that these should be supplemented by a focus on the affective or material. Her argument is that 'the environment exerts a force on human beings in its own right, or that there is something in space, in material objects, or in the environment that exceeds, or goes further and beyond the human imagination, but that produces an affect that may be experienced by human beings, all the same' (Navaro-Yashin 2012: 18). This position is more greatly aligned with landscape and material anthropology perspectives, which attribute a degree of agency to objects (including the physical environment) but theorise this as predominantly culturally perceived, constructed and understood. Thus I suggest that while material culture may exert agency through its materiality or sensuality (cf. Miller 2005, Howes 2006, Dudley 2010, Burrell 2012), human reactions to it are largely shaped by experience (social, cultural, political, personal etc.). This thesis, then, might be read as a response to Martin's call for 'robust ethnographic accounts that are specific about how humans' perceptions are social all the way down' (Martin 2013). Through chapters on some of the different material components of exilic life I discuss Tibetans' responses to their affective qualities and how these are situated and understood in social, cultural and political terms. My focus on materiality enables me to shed light on

precisely how it is, practically-speaking, that objects exert affective force, and how this is coopted by refugees in home-making endeavours. As Kathy Burrell has argued, the ability of objects to affect individuals is what enables them to 'transform places and place-specific contexts' (Burrell 2012: 58):

> The emotional dimension of migration, then, can be best understood through the material contexts which surround it. People do not move in a material vacuum, but furnish their post-migration lives partly with objects ... from their original homelands. The analysis of this practice, and of migrants' interactions with their material worlds more generally, allows a deeper appreciation of what international migration really feels like.
>
> Burrell 2012: 71

Thus it is that I am able to contribute to an emergent interdisciplinary literature that draws together the emotional, ideological and physical dimensions of home: home as an idea, an emotive concept and as a lived space (cf. Walsh 2006, Tolia-Kelly 2004, Dudley 2010, Svašek 2012, Burrell 2012).

Returning to landscape anthropology, it is noticeable that academic work in this sphere has tended to focus on stable populations, which have inhabited their landscapes continuously for long periods of time (e.g. Basso 1988, Morphy 1995, Tilley 1994). For these populations, anthropologists are able to demonstrate embedded, reflexive relationships between culture and the environment but can the same be said for mobile populations such as refugees? More attention has been paid to landscape in the context of movement in migration studies than in anthropology (e.g. Bisharat 1997, Leonard 1997, Bender and Winer 2001). Yet, such studies tend not to privilege the sensory aspects of place and material culture to the same extent. It is argued here that the process of becoming a refugee is a profoundly sensory one: it involves being uprooted from one highly familiar environment and entering, often traumatically, into a new one. It is also an 'intrinsically cultural experience' (Dudley 2010: 1). As Dudley observes, 'Becoming displaced by definition changes one's relationships with the material world

… the world of places, things and other people' (Dudley 2010: 1). If, following the authors above, self-identity and landscape are indeed mutually constituted, we would expect displacement to have a serious impact upon refugees' and migrants' sense of self and cultural identity. This ethnography investigates this issue, asking how Tibetans living in exile have attempted to construct their identities and define themselves as individuals in relation to an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991) in the absence of the geographical territory of Tibet. We must also consider how different generations of exiles conceptualise and relate both to the land they left behind and the land where many are now born and raised: India.

1.7 Things: mementoes, re-creations and inventions

Since Tibetans living outside the homeland, and especially those raised in exile, cannot draw on the terrain of Tibet as a source of identity in any direct sense, it may be argued that they are forced to turn to other cultural markers to authenticate themselves. In this thesis I examine these markers, showing how refugees, forced to leave the physical territory of Tibet behind, have turned instead to other items of material culture. These are more portable and have the advantage that they can be re-made, circulated, adapted and co-opted into narratives of identity and exile.

Objects have a special role to play in the context of forced migration, as Parkin points out (Parkin 1999). Drawing on psychoanalytic theory concerning 'transitional objects' (Winnicott 1991) – the objects used especially by small children to engender a sense of security and comfort in upsetting, unfamiliar situations – Parkin argues that items brought by refugees into exile function as important supports in situations of displacement. As tangible reminders of life in the homeland these objects represent an essential connection back to that past and that identity. They also act as repositories for

sentiment, nostalgia and cultural knowledge which can be extrapolated in the new setting and employed to recreate community and a sense of home. Like a toddler's 'comfort blanket', these mementoes (e.g. photographs, clothing, small objects) provide comfort to the displaced; their continuing presence in conditions of rupture is reassuring. As Parkin points out, often refugees are not able to transport many such 'sentimental' items and must focus out of necessity on the practical items, which they need to sustain themselves during the anticipated journey and in the months and years to come (Parkin 1999: 313). In the Tibetan case there is considerable variability in what refugees were able to transport. Some who originally lived in border areas were able to bring their herds of yak, goat and sheep with them into exile, as well as carrying precious possessions. Many, however, fled in a state of disarray and have since been forced to sell the few objects they managed to bring with them in order to fund their continued survival.

This thesis examines these few remaining objects in the light of literature on material culture and memory. Moving beyond conventional scholarship on this, Tolia-Kelly's concept of 're-memory' allows for multiple authorship and embodiment in objects. She defines 're-memory' as 'memory that is encountered in the everyday, but is not always a recall or reflection of actual experience'. For example, 'the memories of others as told to you by parents, friends … absorbed through day-to-day living … inscription[s] [objects] of time in place … touched, accessed or mediated through sensory stimuli' (Tolia-Kelly 2004: 316). Similarly Hirsch offers the idea of 'post-memory': the second-hand 'remembering' of the Holocaust by children of survivors, actualised through photographs and other mementoes (Hirsch 1997: 22). The authors suggest a variety of different ways in which objects can become receptacles for different kinds of memories, can prompt and act as foils for them.

This thesis also investigates the objects produced by refugees in exile. In the absence of material culture from the homeland, Tibetans in India have had to recreate it from scratch. Not only do refugees produce portable Tibetan 'things', they also create clothing – 'traditional' dress (*chu pa*) – and construct buildings, temples and monasteries. This thesis thus analyses 'things' at a variety of different scales: from personal possessions, to dress, to architecture, to mountain peaks. Material anthropology has tended to treat landscape and objects as different things. This is perhaps the result of an ethnocentric dichotomisation of the supposedly 'natural' and the 'man-made'. Yet as anthropologists have argued since the 1990s 'landscape', like other aspects of material culture, is culturally constructed. By failing to include 'culture' (i.e. man-made objects) in analyses of landscape anthropologists have inadvertently supported a division between the 'natural' and the 'cultural', or 'man-made'. This ethnography steps beyond these boundaries, considering landscape, the built environment and portable objects simultaneously. This theoretical approach is important in the context of Tibetan culture. That mountains, lakes, monasteries, rocks, trees, people and objects (e.g. religious icons) can all be seen as sacred and deserving of respect and reverence points to the absence of binary approaches to these 'things' in Tibetan thought. With this in mind, this thesis analyses exilic relationships to the built environment in connection with the new landscape of exile. Focusing on bodily and environmental practices such as circumambulation (*kora*) provides a focus for looking not only at the landscape and practices in it, but also the foci for circumambulation built in exile: for example, monasteries, sacred monuments and *ma ni* stones (stones carved with prayers). This thesis also looks at secular architecture – the flip side of the sacred story. This dual focus gives rise to themes such as liminality (cf. Turner 1967: 93-111; Gennep 1960), permanence and more particularly impermanence (cf. Dudley 2010: 61-65; Malkki 1995). The Tibetan exile community expends great effort and money on

building grand and beautiful monasteries, yet in many (though not all) cases private individuals are unwilling or unable to invest in good quality housing. The architecture of monastic institutions tends to exhibit a strong Tibetan style, yet secular 'homes' often go unadorned (at least externally). This thesis investigates these patterns in relation to refugees' narratives of home and exile, belonging and alienation.

1.8 'Home': interdisciplinary approaches

The concepts of 'home' and 'homeland' have been explored in refugee and migration studies in relation to theories of movement, deterritorialization and diaspora. These themes dominated migration studies literature in the 1990s, which foregrounded the 'globalized' nature of modern existence in which people, things and ideas are able to move faster and further than ever before.[19] In the context of forced migration, this academic trend was expressed as a critique of earlier assumptions, often derived from anthropology, of the 'rootedness' of culture (e.g. Malkki 1995, Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Appadurai 2002, cf. Chatty 2014). Transnationalism (e.g. Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1995 and Vertovec 2003) and diasporas (e.g. Hall 1990) were instead to be celebrated for their 'empowering, democratic and liberating' qualities (Mahler 1998: 92) and for their cultural 'fertility' in encouraging heterogeneity and diversity. Hall for example, in his article, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', proposed the concept of a 'diaspora aesthetic', which he characterised positively as one of 'cross-overs' and 'cut-and-mix' (Hall 1990: 28). Subsequent scholarship has since critiqued this literature for its celebratory tone (Tölölyan 1996, Mahler 1998, Olwig 2003) and for its failure to take into account how power inequality shapes people's experience of transnational movement (Ong 1999). These are important critiques, especially for

[19] See Appadurai's partition of the global economy according to cultural flows: 'ethnoscapes', 'technoscapes', 'mediascapes', 'ideoscapes' and 'financescapes' (Appadurai 2002).

refugee studies. In a parallel move 'diaspora', as a theoretical device, has also lost traction, with scholars arguing that it is a descriptive term which covers such a diverse array of cases and contexts that it has lost much of its analytical utility (e.g. Dufoix 2008, Brubaker 2005, Safran 1991 and 1999, Tölölyan 1991). It is in this context that place, characterised as a cultural process (i.e. emplacement, place-making) rather than a static location, has been rehabilitated. To date, however, there has been surprisingly little cross-fertilisation between this turn and anthropological scholarship on landscape (with the exception of Turton 2005 and Dudley 2010). In addressing material culture within an ethnography of refugees this thesis seeks to make an important contribution to this literature.

The concept of home has also enjoyed a resurgence of academic interest, especially among geographers and scholars in migration and transnational studies (e.g. Al-Rasheed 1994; Brah 1996; Ahmed 1999; Axel 2002; Blunt 2003, 2005, 2007; Tolia-Kelly 2004; K. Walsh 2006; Christou 2006). Avtar Brah, for example, has proposed the concept of 'homing desire' as an alternative to home and as a way of '*critiquing discourses of fixed origins'* (Brah 1996: 193, emphasis in the original; cf. Malkki 1992, 1995). Relatedly, Sara Ahmed has argued that home is not a place but a narrative tool that, through its creation and embellishment, develops communities and connections. She has noted: 'it is the uncommon estrangement of migration that allows migrant subjects to remake what it is they might yet have in common' (Ahmed 1999: 29). Indeed, the concept of a homeland features strongly in academic definitions of diasporas (e.g. Safran 1991 and 1999, Cohen 2007, Blunt 2007).

Brah's and Ahmed's definitions of home do not fully express its complexities, however. While it may be true, academically speaking, that the diasporic experience questions discourses about fixed origins, the views of migrants and especially forced migrants often contradict this. As Dudley remarks, 'most displaced people … hold

strongly embedded assumptions about the rootedness – indeed, the emplacement – of culture … forced migrants … feel the loss of – and yearn for – a sense of emplacement' (2010: 9). As I also found in my research, many Tibetan exiles in India have a very clear sense of home, which they locate in Tibet. Also absent from Brah's and Ahmed's accounts 'is the sense in which the meaning of home, as it is used in everyday life, describes both a space of imagined belonging and a lived space' (K. Walsh 2006: 125). In other words, theorists have tended to pay more attention to the conceptual dimensions of the home (how it is imagined and discursively constructed), than to its affective, emotional and material dimensions. Geographers Katie Walsh (2006) and Divya Tolia-Kelly (2004) achieve this with greater success by focusing on material culture in the home-space. In order to address both aspects of home, Walsh makes the critical decision to focus on belonging(s), arguing that:

> … thinking about belonging through belongings is productive because it is empirically and theoretically attentive to the way in which the home is experienced simultaneously as both a material and immaterial, lived and imagined, localized and (trans)national space of belonging.
>
> K. Walsh 2006: 123

In her ethnography of British expatriates living in Dubai, she discusses three objects found in the homes of her informants: a painting, a cooking bowl and a DVD of a British comedy series. Walsh shows how each of their owners uses these objects to create a 'home away from home', to connect their current selves to their past selves (and specific locations experienced in the past), and thereby to enable themselves to picture potential futures (K. Walsh 2006: 137-138). Objects, Walsh argues, have a way of representing stability in a context of movement: 'Belonging is challenged by mobility, so belongings are often carried with expatriates in anticipation of a desire for mnemonics in a situation of disorientation' (K. Walsh 2006: 138; cf. Svašek 2012: 2).

Thus 'the very objects that suggest dwelling are primarily used for imaginative traveling to other space-times' (K. Walsh 2006: 138), for example, to imagine past homes and the homeland. Walsh thus stresses the highly dynamic, processual elements of home-making and the possibilities for possessions to provide a sense of stability and continuity in a context of movement (K. Walsh 2006: 126-127; cf. Al-Ali and Koser 2002, Ahmed et al. 2003; Svašek 2012; Burrell 2012). Similarly, Rachel Hurdley examines home and home-making through the lens of Cardiff residents' mantelpieces. Her research challenges the idea of home simply as a 'comfortable idea', reframing it as 'a constant process of home-making, in which participation is neither universally equal nor simple' (Hurdley 2013: 7). Hurdley's research draws out the compromises and contradictions implicit in home-making projects and the tensions between: belonging and exclusion, permanence and displacement, iconic and trivial. She discusses how these are played out materially, through belongings, from ephemera to prized possessions.

Within anthropology, recent explorations of home have also taken an explicitly material turn, for example in the numerous works by Daniel Miller (e.g. Miller 2010, Miller 2008, Miller 2001), and in contributions to the journal *Home Cultures* (e.g. Ureta 2007, Savaş 2010, Motasim and Heynen 2011, Reynolds 2012, Read 2014, cf. Blunt 2005). In *The Comfort of Things* Miller argues:

> An anthropologist does not start from individuals who create their worlds. We start from the historical processes and material order which create those characteristic individuals and their expectations. In short, material culture matters because objects create subjects much more than the other way around. It is the order of relationship to objects and between objects that creates people through socialisation whom we then take to exemplify social categories, such as Catalan or Bengali, but also working class, male, or young.
>
> Miller 2008: 287

Miller's emphasis on the material world's ability to 'create subjects' reflects the approaches of Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) and assemblage thinking (see Chapter 6). ANT or material semiotics proposes viewing 'everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located. It assumes that nothing has reality or form outside the enactment of those relations' (Law 2009: 141). Like affect theorists, ANT (and to a lesser extent assemblage thinking, which shares similarities with ANT) proposes a strong role for non-human agency (sentient non-human animals besides more 'inert' material culture) in affecting and shaping the world (e.g. Latour 1993, Haraway 1991). As Müller notes: for ANT, 'all entities – whether it is atoms or governments – stand on equal ontological footing to begin with. The associations established between them make the difference of whether one becomes more powerful than the other' (Müller 2015: 30). Interestingly, ANT's argument for the recognition of non-human agency reflects Ingold's use of Jakob von Uexküll's text, *A Stroll through the Worlds of Animals and Men,* to illustrate the influence or agency of animals and other organisms in the environment (Ingold 2000: 172-188). While this argument, ANT's proposition and Miller's (that 'objects create subjects much more than the other way around,' Miller 2008: 287) are useful to think with, I argue that it is important to emphasise that the object-subject relationship is a two-way process. This, I suggest, is especially important in an ethnography of the material worlds of refugees.

Refugees have often been characterised in popular and academic writing and also in international policy as passive victims (Malkki 1995: 10-12; Dudley 2010: 8-9; Sigona 2014). As Malkki and Dudley argue, however, such a narrative misrepresents refugees, characterising them as powerless to influence the world around them. Rather, these authors prefer to see refugees as 'active agent[s] busily engaged in daily life and in making sense and the best of the world as it is' (Dudley 2010: 1). Following Sandra

Dudley's work on Karenni refugees, who fled Burma (Myanmar) and today live in camps in northern Thailand, I argue that one of the ways in which Tibetan exiles attempt to make sense of displacement and thereby give their present existence meaning is to try to make the environments they inhabit more 'home-like' (Dudley 2010: 9). Refugees use objects, including dress and architecture for example, to recreate a familiar physical and aesthetic (affective) environment, which supports the continuation of their cultural practice, decreases their sense of disorientation and promotes their comfort. Many Tibetans arrived in India with little other than the clothes on their backs; they had to recreate their material culture from the bottom up, in the knowledge that their cultural heritage – monasteries, sacred icons, even their villages - was being destroyed in their homeland (cf. Navaro-Yashin 2012; Svašek 2012). This thesis looks at how Tibetans have gone about this, asking what adaptations have been necessary in exile, how these are viewed and how the results impact articulations of identity. Only a handful of authors within material culture studies have chosen to focus their research on migrant populations (e.g. Basu and Coleman 2008, Basu 2011, Read 2014 and Savaş 2010, Svašek 2012), and even fewer on refugees (e.g. Parkin 1999, Turan 2010, Dudley 2010, Motasim and Heynen 2011). This thesis contributes to this emerging field of scholarship.

In her ethnography of Karenni refugees, Dudley examines different categories of material culture including food, dress and landscape to show her readers what it *feels* like to be a refugee. Borrowing from Gosden, she argues that feeling 'at home' entails a sense of 'rightness' or familiarity (Dudley 2010: 121; Gosden 1999: 203). Becoming displaced, by contrast, is an experience that often involves massive sensory disruption (Dudley 2010: 1-2). Dudley shows how Karenni refugees attempt to mitigate this by recreating their material culture in exile. As Maruška Svašek argues, 'Familiar sensorial experiences ... can trigger a strong sense of home, and these experiences may be

produced in new places' (Svašek 2012: 11). Creating a sense of home in the context of a refugee movement, especially one of political exile, is difficult however, as Liisa Malkki demonstrates in her ethnography of Hutu refugees, who fled Burundi for Tanzania in 1972. Malkki draws attention to the liminal status of refugees, who live within the borders of another nation but are not assimilated to that nationality or identity, hence exist betwixt-and-between (Malkki 1995: 4-8, drawing on Turner 1967: 93-111; Gennep 1960). The theme of liminality comes through strongly in my research also. Like the Hutu refugees living in Tanzania, Tibetan refugees living in India are structurally marginal in relation to their host state. Their unclear legal status has real-life consequences, which affect their ability to forge a stable and comfortable life. Refugees' orientation towards return to the homeland and onwards migration to 'foreign' countries has an additional destabilising and marginalising effect, which bleeds out into the material environment. Tibetans subscribe to an idea of home that is spatially and temporally distant. Shaping the materiality of the exile settlements in the present to make them *feel* more like home (constructed as part of the past) is part of the imaginative work that exiles do to strengthen their relationship with their homeland and to give meaning to their existence in exile.

This thesis offers an aesthetically–engaged account of Tibetan exile life. It explores refugees' material worlds – the physical landscape and the built environment of the settlements, the dress worn for different occasions by refugees, and the objects commonly found in refugees' houses – to analyse their role in home-making practices. Following Malkki and Dudley, I emphasise refugees' agency, paying close attention to how Tibetan exiles have co-opted 'things' and appropriated the landscape and built environment of their host country to construct a 'home away from home'. I also discuss the challenges posed by the physical but also the social, legal and political environments that limit Tibetans' ability to make home. In spite of these, exiles have succeeded in

appropriating and developing new landscapes in exile; portable things have also risen in prominence. This thesis thus provides a counter argument to Ingold (2000): Tibetan refugees have been highly successful in importing their 'ideas, plans [and] mental representations' (Ingold 2000: 186) into their host country, India. The Tibetan case thus suggests that it is predominantly through people that landscape and objects are able to influence their world.

2 Methodology

As Clifford has argued, anthropology has historically tended to 'privilege relations of dwelling over relations of travel' (1992: 99). Traditional 'fields' of inquiry emphasised 'rooted' populations; the remote, rural village, which could be studied as a spatially, and hence socially, bounded entity (Clifford 1992: 98). Ethnographers, through long-term immersion, learning the language and participant observation, aimed to become intimately acquainted with their specific field, the people and the culture inhabiting it. Since the late twentieth century, however, ethnographers have shifted their attention from rural and remote 'native' groups to new locations, for example: 'hospitals, labs, urban neighbourhoods, tourist hotels, [and] the Getty Center' (Clifford 1992: 98). In recent years international migration has also become a key topic for ethnographic investigation, not only by anthropologists but also by geographers and other social researchers. These new, transnational 'sites' of inquiry have required an adaptation of the traditional methodology, so too an ethnography of Tibetan refugees.

Tibetans are dispersed throughout the world: while the majority live in settlements in the Indian subcontinent, small but influential Tibetan communities also exist in Jackson Heights and Berkeley in the US, Toronto in Canada, London in the UK and elsewhere in Europe and Australia, for example. Individuals in these communities are connected to each other in a number ways: Tibetans living abroad often spend several weeks of the year visiting relatives in India and Nepal. Tibetans living in India visit other settlements in the subcontinent to renew friendships and connect with family, to pursue business opportunities in India's cities and to attend religious teachings, which are often held at historical sites associated with the life of the Buddha in India. I even met some Tibetans living in India who in the past had successfully visited friends and family in Tibet. Such journeys had become impossible for Tibetans holding the RC/IC in recent years, however, due to Chinese restrictions. By comparison, Tibetans

possessing foreign passports tended to have more luck. Aside from personal visits, Tibetans living throughout the diaspora also stay in contact via the web – sharing photographs of family meals, political protests and cultural events on Facebook, making Skype calls, posting political videos on YouTube, and sending voice-messages via apps such as WeChat. Digital products are not the only things to circulate throughout the Tibetan diaspora, however: packages of clothing, Tibetan medicine, Western (allopathic) medicine and technology, for example, are also exchanged between friends and family, either by international mail or more often entrusted to a traveling friend or acquaintance to deliver in person.

What is the best way to study such a dispersed but interconnected population? In this chapter, I describe how I approached my research, defined my field(s) and gathered information. I also reflect upon the challenges I experienced in the field, and how my own subjectivity as a female, a Westerner and a researcher affected my experience, access and data. Lastly, I reflect upon the ethical issues I negotiated during fieldwork; both the challenges I anticipated and those I had to react to on-the-ground. I have organised this chapter chronologically and geographically to reflect my own temporal and spatial experience of fieldwork as it unfolded between August 2012 and September 2013. This structure allows me to reflect on how the differences between my two field sites shaped my research and its results.

2.1 Defining the field: dual-sited fieldwork

Ethnographic research requires time investment in order to build relationships and understanding. In order to preserve ethnographic depth but simultaneously reflect the connectivity and mobility of my research participants I opted to conduct research at two sites within a single country, India. In his 1995 article, Marcus offers six analytical categories that could be 'followed' through multi-sited research: people; things;

metaphors; a plot, story or allegory; a life or biography and conflict. I decided to focus on ‘things’: landscape, built environment, dress and home possessions.



Figure 3 Map of India depicting location of field sites, McLeod Ganj (Dharamshala) and Sonamling (Ladakh, district capital Leh). Imagery ©2015 TerraMetrics, Map data ©2015 AutoNavi, Google.

The two sites I worked in were both situated in northwest India: McLeod Ganj and Ladakh. Several factors, theoretical and pragmatic, came together in this selection. Firstly, I considered it important to spend time in the Tibetan ‘capital-in-exile’, McLeod Ganj, which functions as a hub for Tibetan politics, culture and identity in the diaspora. Having visited the area before, I was aware that making connections here would likely enable me to set up research at other sites. It would thus be important to establish my

credentials as a researcher within this community before heading elsewhere. In selecting my second field site, I was concerned to choose one with a contrasting physical landscape, since then I would be able to evaluate the impact of differing physical environments upon exilic identity and culture. Within the Indian subcontinent, Tibetan refugees inhabit a variety of landscapes, from the high Himalayas in Ladakh, northern Nepal and Bhutan, through the Himalayan foothills (e.g. Darjeeling, McLeod Ganj, Shimla, Musoorie) to the Indian plains (e.g. the large settlements of Mundgod and Bylakuppe in Karnataka State). Prior to beginning fieldwork, I had hoped to conduct fieldwork in one of the larger southern settlements. In the event, however, it proved impossible to obtain the necessary permits within the available time frame and so I opted to head further north to Ladakh instead. Unable to access the southern settlements, I missed the opportunity to investigate some of the most populous Tibetan communities established in exile, some of the largest (and wealthiest) monasteries and perhaps some the most unfamiliar climates and landscapes. However, conducting research in Ladakh (which, nonetheless, has a significant Tibetan refugee population of its own), afforded me other opportunities. Although both Himalayan, the physical landscapes (and climates) of McLeod Ganj and Ladakh differ markedly. More importantly, these differences were clearly recognised and emphasised by Tibetans I spoke with (see Chapter Three). I was thus still able to conduct comparative research into the role of the physical landscape. Working in Ladakh also enabled me to compare the impact of host cultures on refugee identity and Tibetan home-making. While the surrounding Indian culture for Tibetans living in McLeod Ganj is unfamiliar (likewise in the southern settlements), Ladakhi culture strongly supports a Tibetan way of life. Researching in these two locations thus enabled me to evaluate the role and importance of Mata-Codesal's 'transnational net' (2010) - the cultural and practical support

available for a refugee culture in a new host country, i.e. availability of familiar material culture and cultural practices - for Tibetan refugees.

While it might be argued that these two sites are exceptional by exilic standards, and therefore that research conducted within them cannot be generalised for the diaspora as a whole, I would counter that each exile Tibetan settlement, from India to Switzerland to the US, is exceptional in its own way. Furthermore, I believe that the strong contrasts or 'exceptionalities' of these sites lend them analytical utility in the context of this thesis. I characterise my field sites in the following pages in order to situate my research reflexively. I hope, by the conclusion of this thesis, to have illustrated how such exceptional sites can, in fact, point towards important, generalizable themes in Tibetan exile in India.

2.2 McLeod Ganj (Dharamshala)

McLeod Ganj is a small hill-town situated approximately three hundred miles north of Delhi in the northwest Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. It has a complex colonial history: the town's imperial British heritage lingers in the environment, physically in its crumbling bungalows and conceptually in its place names. Today it is home to different kinds of outsiders. Besides the Tibetan refugees who flocked to the town following the arrival of the Dalai Lama in 1960, McLeod Ganj also hosts European, North American and Antipodean long-term residents and tourists, whose numbers peak during the summer months and between the monsoon and winter seasons. Domestic tourists from other parts of India also visit in substantial and increasing numbers, attracted by the cool climate and exotic Tibetan culture on view. Alongside indigenous Gaddi pastoralists, north Indian migrants seeking work have also made the town their home. In international discourse and much academic work, McLeod Ganj is

often conflated with the larger Indian town of Dharamshala, which is located at a lower altitude on the same hillside. The Tibetan population is resident almost exclusively in McLeod Ganj, the upper town, however. In this thesis, I refer mostly to McLeod Ganj, reserving the term Dharamshala for the lower (predominantly Indian) town, and to denote the wider administrative region.[20]

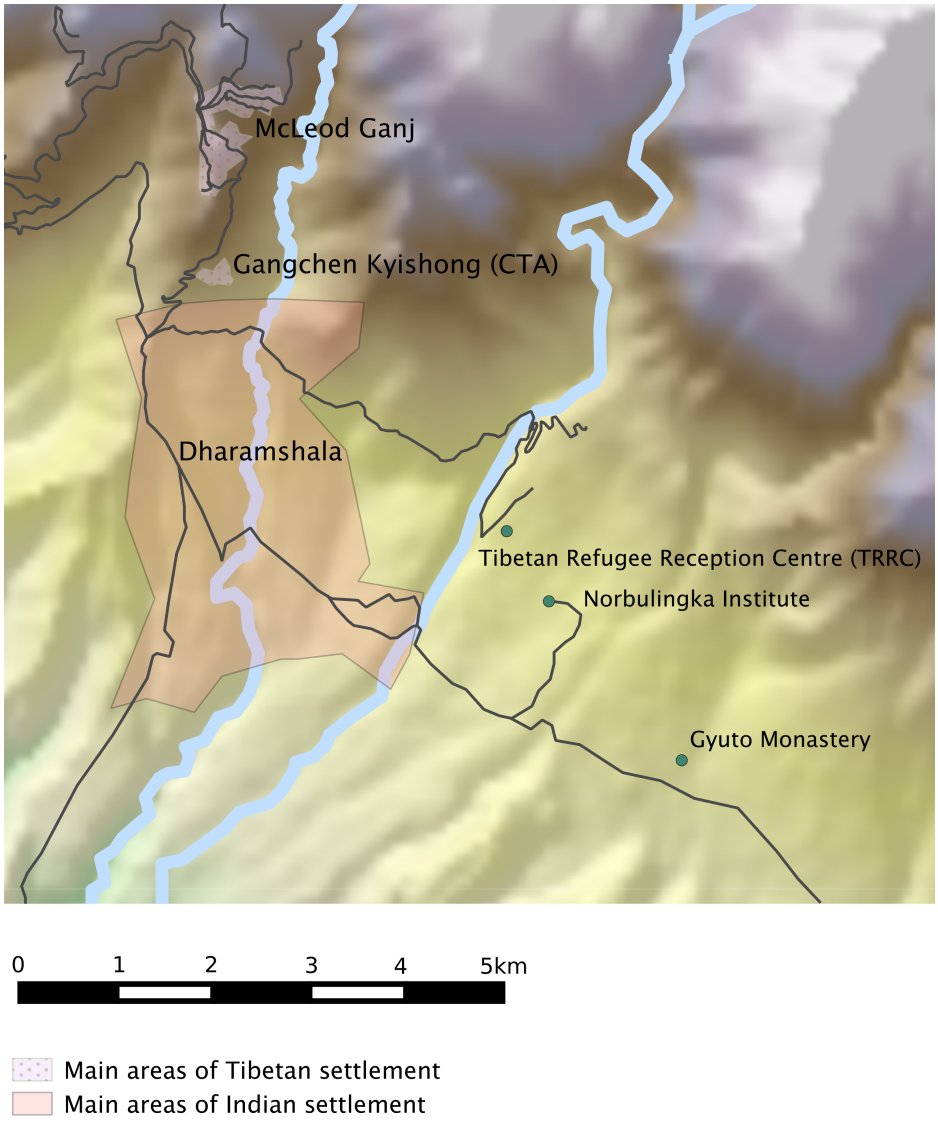


Figure 4 Map of Dharamshala area depicting the locations of Dharamshala, McLeod Ganj and significant Tibetan sites.

[20] For example, statistics produced by the CTA's Planning Commission refer to Dharamshala (not McLeod Ganj), since they include Tibetans resident in the wider administrative region. While the majority of Tibetans are concentrated in McLeod Ganj, there are significant pockets of Tibetan settlement in the Kangra valley below, in villages, large residential schools, monasteries and nunneries.

Since 1960, the local Tibetan population has grown to number 13,701 (TDS 2009: 66).[21] The demographic composition of this population is unusual by exilic Tibetan standards. In the early years of exile (1960s) the majority of Tibetan refugees arriving in the town originated in central Tibetan areas, especially the regions of Tö, Ü and Tsang. In some cases the inhabitants of whole villages arrived in exile en masse and reconstituted themselves as small communities within larger exile settlements. For example, the area in which I lived for several months in McLeod Ganj, on the hillside immediately above and to the north of the town's Main Square (see Fig. 16, p115), was known for its Töba residents (from the region of Tö, southern Tibet). The Töba community hall, located in this area of town, still hosts weddings and other local community events today, although the area as a whole has become more mixed over the years. More recently arrived refugees, who predominantly originate in eastern Tibetan regions, have also pursued similar strategies of living in close proximity where possible (Swank 2014: 152-156).

Regional origin and migration trajectory play an important, inter-locking role in characterising Tibetans' experiences of life before and after exile, and consequently of social life in McLeod Ganj. As Swank remarks, these factors have contributed towards the development of regional and temporal cohort identities (Swank 2014: 33). The Tibetan exodus to India can be characterised in three phases. The first began c.1959 with the flight of the Dalai Lama[22] and lasted until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution (c.1966) when increasing Chinese control in the region led to the borders between Tibet, Nepal and India effectively being sealed (Diehl 2002: 34). Between 60,000 and 85,000 Tibetans entered India during this period, the majority from central

[21] The figure 13,701 is slightly inflated. According to the Planning Commission (CTA), this figure includes the large residential schools run by the Tibetan government in the Kangra valley below McLeod Ganj (pupils in these schools number c.4,000 combined). This figure also includes several hundred Tibetans living in the wider Dharamshala area.

[22] Some Tibetans left Tibet prior to 1959. Since conditions at the time were more favourable, many of these were able to bring their wealth and possessions to India with them (Swank 2014: 15).

Tibetan regions. The second wave of migration was heralded by the passing of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the subsequent ascent to power of Deng Xiaoping (1978). Under Deng's liberalising policies Tibet's borders were reopened in the 1980s and Tibetans began, again, to make the journey from their homeland into India. As Swank remarks, this second wave of exiles originates in a wider range of locations from across the Tibetan plateau, although contemporary exilic narratives characterise this wave of refugees as dominated by Tibetans from Kham and Amdo (Swank 2014: 15-16; cf. Diehl 2002: 34).[23] Like the second wave, the third wave[24] (post-2008) also comprises Tibetans from eastern regions. This wave is distinguished by its much-reduced scale owing to changing political circumstances. The 2008 Beijing Olympics sparked protests by Tibetans inside Tibet (especially in the capital, Lhasa), which were violently suppressed by the Chinese authorities.[25] The conflict led to further tightening of border security such that the rate of migration dropped sharply from c.2,500 per year, to c.650 per year after this date.[26] The years 2011 to 2012 have been marked by further border tightening in response to increasing numbers of self-immolations in Tibetan regions. When I visited the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre (nearby Dharamshala) in January 2013, I was informed that 2012 had recorded the smallest influx of refugees in recent years. Increased security on the Tibetan plateau, at its strongest in central Tibetan areas and especially Lhasa, is also likely to be responsible for the regional trend in refugees arriving in India. Eastern areas, large parts of which are nomadic, tend to be less tightly

[23] Both first-wave and second-wave refugees noted that most recently arrived refugees originate in eastern areas of Tibet. Unfortunately, neither the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre (TRRC) nor the CTA keep data on regional origin, so this cannot be substantiated statistically.

[24] I have designated three waves of migration: 1959 - mid-1960s; c.1980-2008; 2008-the present. Diehl distinguishes between Tibetans who arrived in India during the 1980s (this cohort includes individuals who had been imprisoned in Tibet during the preceding decades), and those who began arriving in the 1990s. It is this latter cohort that she describes as originating predominantly in Amdo, northeast Tibet (Diehl 2002: 34). I have chosen to elide these two groups since in exile terminology both are referred to as newcomers (*sar jor*). The year 2008, however, is seen as a watershed year by exiles (e.g. Tsundue 2012); hence I have preserved this distinction in my categorisation.

[25] http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2009/china [accessed 25 Mar 2015]; http://www.hrw.org/news/2008/03/13/china-india-nepal-free-tibetan-protesters [accessed 25 Mar 2015]; see C. Harris (2012: 2).

[26] Figures obtained from Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre (TRRC), Dharamshala [21 Mar 2013].

controlled by the Chinese authorities; hence it may be that Tibetans from these areas find it easier to escape into exile. The different life experiences of these cohorts shape their interactions in India (cf. Swank 2014, Yeh 2007, Diehl 2002); I expand upon these later in the thesis.

The terms 'new arrival' or 'newcomer' (*sar jor*[27]) are used by exiles to designate those who left Tibet from the 1980s onwards. Tibetans today flee Tibet for a number of reasons: some are activists who fear capture and worse at Chinese hands; many leave in search of greater cultural and religious freedom beyond the PRC's borders; and youth come seeking opportunities for an education in their own language and culture. The chance to meet their beloved religious leader, the Dalai Lama, is also a highly significant lure: for some this is their sole purpose in visiting India and McLeod Ganj specifically (many hope to return to Tibet afterwards, having taken visas for 'pilgrimage' only), for others it is one motive among many.

Lack of space in other settlements, among other factors, has encouraged many newcomers to settle in McLeod Ganj.[28] Courtesy of its high turnover of tourists, and semi-permanent population of Western ex-pats and volunteers, the town provides opportunities both for employment and free education. Foreigners offer free classes in languages, IT, photography and film etc.; they also represent important sources of sponsorship (cf. Klieger 1991). Hence, in the last decade new arrivals have built a community within a community in McLeod Ganj, in both a socio-economic and a geographic sense. Many have congregated in what has become known as Amdo Village

[27] Although this term has developed pejorative connotations in exile (see Chapter Five for further discussion, cf. Yeh 2002: 243), I have opted to use it, and its English translations ('new arrival' and 'newcomer'), in this thesis. The term continues to be part of the official lexicon (it appears in CTA statements and publications) and is used by other academics (with similar caveats); hence I have adopted it here, partly because alternative terms are unsatisfactory. My usage of the term does not indicate my agreement with the negative connotations the term has acquired.

[28] Younger newcomers are accommodated in residential Tibetan schools, including the Tibetan Transit School, which provides minimal education (focusing on languages) to older Tibetans recently arrived from Tibet. This is aimed at helping them settle and support themselves in India. Monks and nuns are often accommodated in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and nunneries established in India.

(Amdo *drong sep*), a cluster of houses and flats on the hillside below and to the south of the Bhagsu Road (see Fig. 16, p115).

The demographic make-up of the newcomer cohort significantly shapes society in McLeod Ganj. Besides a disproportionate number of Tibetans from eastern regions of the plateau, this cohort is also notable for being male-dominated (TDS 2009: 13, 66; see Fig. 5 and Table 1, below).[29] This imbalance contributes to frictions between this community and Dharamshala's other Tibetan residents. Upon arrival in McLeod Ganj I was warned by Tibetans from the established exile community that Amdo Village (where I had rented a room) was an unsafe place, and that newcomer Tibetan men could be violent and often harassed women. However, this area proved to be no less safe than any other. Rather, the wariness of exiles who arrived in India during the 1960s (and their children) stems from misconceptions about recently arrived Tibetans and can be related to competing definitions of Tibetanness held by each cohort (see section 5.7; cf. Yeh 2007, 2002; Swank 2014; Diehl 2002).

[29] The most recent demographic survey records an extremely low sex ratio for Tibetans living in exile: 798 females per 1000 males (TDS 2009: 13). The same survey records a high ratio of males to females in Dharamshala (125 males per 100 females; or 800 females per 1000 males). By contrast, in my second field site, Ladakh, the ratio of males to females is more equal (102 males per 100 females, or c. 980 females per 1000 males). The authors of the TDS 2009 infer that this is due to a pattern of male dominated migration from Tibet (TDS 2009: 13). Given that a large proportion of Dharamshala's Tibetan population (c.93%) is non-monastic, the fact that the town's sex ratio approaches the Indian exile average is significant. The highest male to female sex ratios among Tibetans in India are recorded by settlements with large monastic communities, e.g. Doeguling settlement in Mundgod, Karnataka State, recorded a sex ratio of 243 men per 100 women in 2009 i.e. c.412 women per 1000 men (TDS 2009: 66). This settlement incorporates seven monasteries (http://www.centraltibetanreliefcommittee.org/settlements/india/south/doeguling.html; [accessed 8 Dec 2014]).

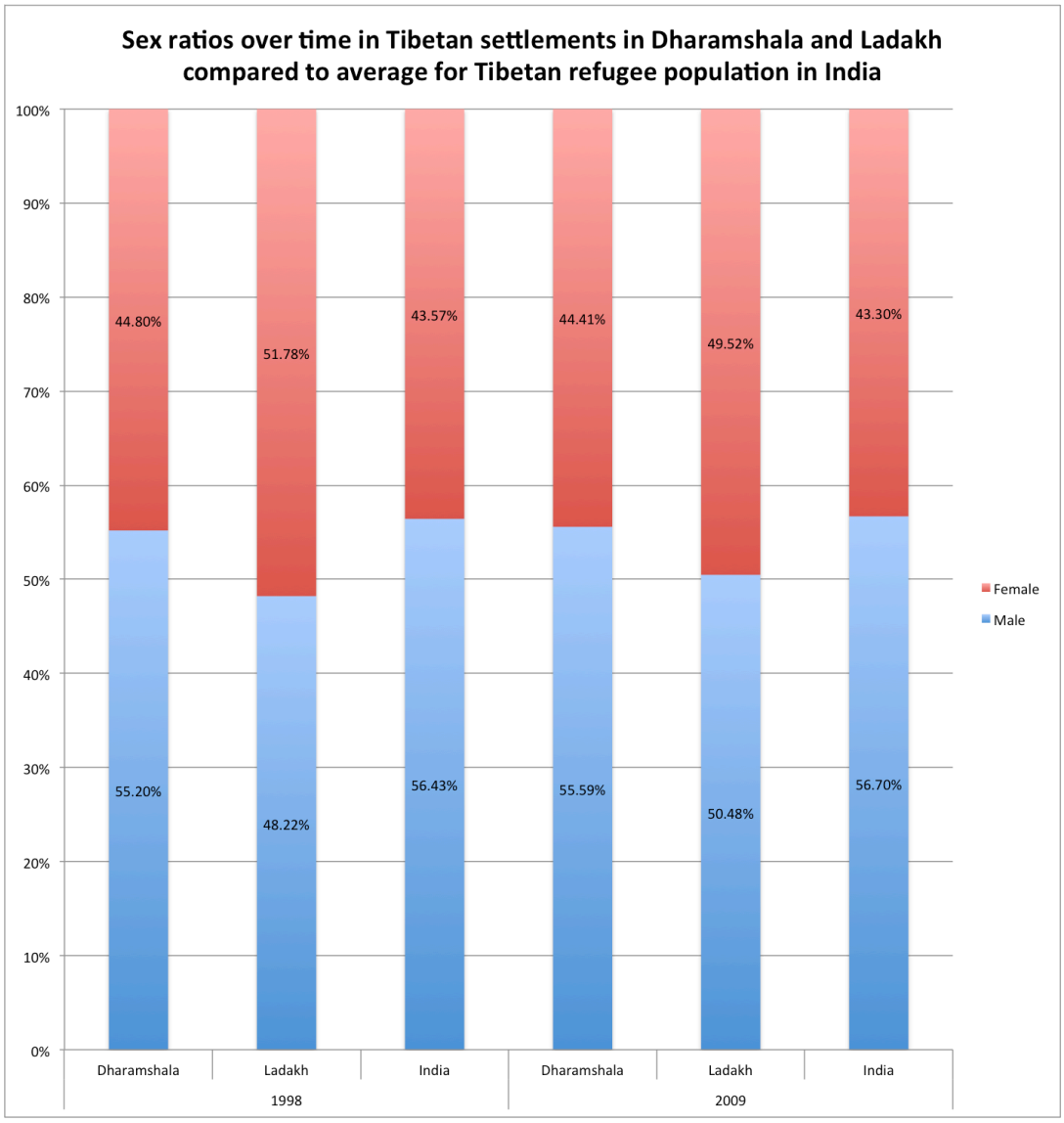


Figure 5 Sex ratios over time for Tibetan settlements of Dharamshala and Ladakh compared to average for total Tibetan refugee population of India (expressed as percentages of respective populations). Data from TDS 2009: 66.

	1998 census			2009 census		
	Dharamshala	Ladakh	India	Dharamshala	Ladakh	India
Male	55.20%	48.22%	56.43%	55.59%	50.48%	56.70%
Female	44.80%	51.78%	43.57%	44.41%	49.52%	43.30%

Table 1 Sex ratio data for Tibetan populations of Dharamshala and Ladakh, compared to total Tibetan population in India (data pertaining to Fig. 5).

Besides attracting large numbers of newcomers, McLeod Ganj also attracts Tibetan youth from the wider diaspora due to the opportunities for prestigious employment available in the town. Service to the Tibetan community (*zhap zhu*) plays an important role in exilic discourse on appropriate behaviour. From a young age,

Tibetan youth are taught that they should use the education they receive in India for the betterment of their community (Swank 2014: 75-90). Employment in the exile government is regarded as particularly appropriate 'high-service' work. Likewise, working at a Tibetan NGO is highly regarded. McLeod Ganj, which hosts headquarters of the CTA and numerous NGOs, thus attracts a large number of often highly educated (to Masters level) Tibetan youth. The town is also a base for Tibetan intellectuals, poets, academics, artists and politicians. This mixture of residents (newcomers, early escapees, highly educated and politically-motivated youth, conservative elders, radicals and intellectuals) makes McLeod Ganj perhaps *the* place in the exile diaspora in which Tibetan identity is most overtly negotiated. Consequently, the town represents a fascinating and important, but also problematic location for research.

Besides its diverse Tibetan population, McLeod Ganj is also home to a large, fluctuating population of non-Tibetans. Each year thousands of tourists (foreign and domestic) flock to McLeod Ganj. Attracted by the 'exotic' Tibetan population, and that most intriguing and mysterious of religious figures, the Dalai Lama, these visitors bring important business to the town. Tibetans and local Indians capitalise upon this ready market; construction, particularly of hotels, continues apace; restaurants and cafes also crowd the town. If anything, the pace of development has quickened over the last few years as domestic tourism has boomed, a result of Dharamshala gaining an international cricket stadium.

While Tibetans publicly avow their gratitude towards their Indian hosts, and although many I spoke with enjoyed good personal relationships with Indian friends, they also privately expressed mistrust. Lau comments on Tibetan stereotyping of Indians as 'bad' people (Lau 2009: 83; cf. Swank 2014: 18-22). Such views play out in a variety of ways in the community, sometimes (though rarely) violently. The most recent episode of serious violence occurred in 1994, during which the Dalai Lama

offered to move away from McLeod Ganj in order to ease friction between the communities. Eventually, an alliance of local businessmen requested that he remain. Diehl remarks that these men had good motives for making the request: they knew 'full well that McLeod Ganj (and their bank accounts) would empty out soon after his departure' (Diehl 2002: 45). Though terse, her comment makes clear the uneasy relationship that exists in the town between the two groups. While Indian businessmen have benefited from the tourism and trade Tibetan refugees have brought to the area, the apparent prosperity of Tibetans, who have been very successful at attracting international charity and starting small businesses, engenders considerable envy and even anger. One Tibetan friend explained, half-jokingly, that part of the problem lay in deceptive appearances. Tibetans appear wealthy to Indians, she noted, because of the way they choose to spend their money - on portable goods such as clothes and mobile phones. By contrast, Indians save money and invest it in land and property. Tibetans do not save money from their wages nor do they invest it in housing since they believe their future to be too uncertain to make long-term commitments.[30] So Tibetans might have the newest iPhone, but they live in a single, dingy and mouldy room, and regularly run their bank balance down to zero.[31]

Resentment of the Tibetan population has, in recent years, led to attempts by local Indians to reclaim space within the town and beyond (see Chapter Four). It also manifests in more complex ways. Early on during my fieldwork I received an SMS from a Tibetan friend, which had begun circulating among the local Tibetan population. It described the mistreatment of two 'very young Tibetan boys' by the Indian owners of several businesses in the town. The SMS read:

[30] These points are germane to the argument of this thesis and are discussed in detail in Chapter Six.
[31] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 25 Oct 2012.

> Dear immy this is to inform all our Tibetan brothers and sisters that very recently two very young Tibetan boys were beaten very badly by the owner and the workers of Himalayan Snow[32] restaurant in meclod Dharamsala. They have crossed the limit of tolerance by making them naked and took away all their belongings and they even urinate on their heads and later threw them in the jungle in the midnight. Such kind of inhuman act clearly shows that they totally dislike Tibetans. So if you are planing to visit that place then this is my sincere request as a Tibetan to boycott that restaurant and please show some unity in exile to show reaction for their unbearable misdeed.ok dear Immy [sic]
>
> 9 Oct 2012

Other narratives of the event emerged over time: some Tibetans later told me that the two boys in question were newcomers in their mid-/late teens; that they had been drunk, and in throwing away a bottle of beer had managed to damage one of the owner's cars. The owners had reacted violently, beating the boys, stripping them naked and dumping them in the nearby forest. Others simply said that the boys had been drunk and misbehaving. The truth never became widely known even though the local Indian authorities conducted an investigation.[33] Tibetans, including those who were sceptical of the version of events laid out in the SMS, nonetheless studiously boycotted the business throughout my entire nine-month stay, an act which although non-violent did little to improve relations between the communities. Incidents such as these and responses to them are not uncommon in McLeod Ganj and aggravate an already fragile co-existence.

[32] Name changed.
[33] The Indian police are regarded with suspicion by Tibetans living in McLeod Ganj and in other settlements, and are reputed to be corrupt. It was perhaps for this reason that no 'official' version of this story was ever credited with being the 'truth' by the Tibetan community.

2.2.1 Being *yin ji* in McLeod Ganj

Besides difficult relationships with local Indians and domestic tourists, many of my Tibetan friends and respondents were also ambivalent about their relationship with Westerners. This group, who in McLeod Ganj are predominantly white and usually speak English (at least as a second language), are referred to in Tibetan as *yin ji* (from the Tibetan word for 'English'). *Yin jis* (pluralised according to English grammar by adding an 's' when used in English language conversations) have inhabited McLeod Ganj in a variety of ways since the early 1960s-1970s when the town, courtesy of its newly arrived exotic population, first became a calling point on the spiritual tourist trail of India. Today, Westerners in McLeod Ganj come in many guises. Firstly, there are the tourists: backpackers, for whom McLeod Ganj is a stop on a South Asian tour which takes in other destinations such as Goa, Rishikesh, Varanasi and Kathmandu. Attracted by the spiritual possibilities of the town, its advertised peace and tranquillity, and the presence of the Dalai Lama, some stay for only a few days. Others remain for longer, extending their trip to participate in yoga classes and courses on Buddhism, or to attend religious teachings given by the Dalai Lama. In this way, these individuals blend into the cohort of Westerners who come specifically to avail themselves of the town's religious and cultural resources. These include those committed, to varying degrees, to studying Buddhism or the Tibetan language, including scholars (like myself) but also other non-Tibetans who have taken vows and enrolled in Tibetan monasteries and nunneries in India and elsewhere. Many come to take courses in these topics, and to use print resources available at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA). In addition, American study-abroad students arrive in large groups in the summer months to conduct short research projects. The town also attracts filmmakers, photographers and journalists who conduct and record their own interviews, images and films. Lastly, McLeod Ganj attracts a substantial number of volunteers and aid-workers. These

include teachers (e.g. of languages and IT), as well as nurses and other medical professionals.[34]

The behaviour of visiting Westerners has created a difficult stereotype, which I struggled to overcome. Westerners and especially Western women are widely judged by Tibetans to be morally lax for their habit of drinking alcohol, for example, or for dressing inappropriately (in low-cut tops, displaying bare legs). In an attempt to differentiate myself from these women I behaved very conservatively during the first few months of my fieldwork: I became extremely deferential and quiet, I dressed demurely (sometimes in Tibetan dress, see below) and abstained from drinking or purchasing alcohol in public. More problematic were the sexual expectations surrounding Western women. In recent decades, it has become common to see Western women accompanying their Tibetan boyfriends in the public spaces of McLeod Ganj. As Dawa Lokyitsang, a blogger for the Tibetan website *Lhakar Diaries,* comments, the majority of the visible partnerships are between men (mostly newcomers, born in Tibet) and white women.[35] While some of these partnerships certainly are founded on love, as Lokyitsang writes, they are difficult to evaluate neutrally since more is at stake in them than mutual love and affection.[36] For Tibetan refugees, especially those who left Tibet during the 1980s and afterwards, many of whom do not hold Indian registration certificates,[37] marriage with a foreign national represents an opportunity to exist on the bureaucratic grid, to say nothing of opportunities to make a new life overseas and to

[34] My own introduction to the Tibetan community of Dharamshala was as a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) teacher. In 2007, aged seventeen, I spent four months teaching English at a nearby nunnery.
[35] There are romantic partnerships between white men and Tibetan women also. A local advocate who conducts legal work for the Tibetan community, which includes organising marriages between Tibetans and foreigners, informed me that he conducts an equal number of marriages between Western men and Tibetan women as Tibetan men and Western women. However, since the Tibetan community attaches greater stigma to Tibetan women dating foreigners than vice versa, these relationships tend to be conducted more covertly, and hence are less visible at street level. See Chapter Five for further discussion.
[36] http://lhakardiaries.com/2013/10/02/non-refugee-refugees-tibetans-struggles-for-visibility-in-bureaucratic-india/ [accessed 2 Oct 2013].
[37] See section 3.4.

return to visit relatives in Tibet safely. Such marriages are the outcome of a few of these partnerships; many, however, are fleeting assignations, ranging from romances of several months ended when the Western half of the couple returns home, to one-night stands. The willingness of foreign women to enter into these relationships (short and long, loving and less so) has created an unfortunate reputation for this group of women for being romantically and sexually available.

Since few Tibetan women spend their leisure time socialising in public spaces, of necessity many of my first fieldwork contacts were men whom I met and talked with in McLeod Ganj's many cafes, at protest marches, or out walking. While some became good friends I was conscious that others saw me as a resource, if not for a passport, then at least for sex or for money. I was also aware that by keeping such company I was generating gossip about myself within the town. On the other hand I was frequently forced to curtail social relations in order to preserve my own safety. Practically, this meant that I was unable to return for repeat interviews with a number of people, including some men in positions of authority who possessed important information relevant to my research, hence I had to make the most of the time they granted to me in the initial instant. Further contact on my part was often viewed as an invitation to intimacy that was by no means my intention. This situation led me to change my research strategy. I had set out from Oxford hoping to visit and interview people in the spaces of their own homes, intending to conduct object-elicitation exercises using the possessions they kept around them. While I was eventually able to complete interviews in these places, for my own safety I had to begin by conducting them in more public spaces such as restaurants and coffee shops, at religious buildings and on the *kora* route

(circumambulation path) surrounding the main temple, and in the offices of NGOs, for example, though these sites too were not without their risks.[38]

In an effort to mark myself out as different from foreign tourists I also decided to wear *chu pa* (Tibetan female dress). I hoped that by wearing the dress I would be received more positively by local Tibetans, and initially this seemed to be the case. I received fewer lewd comments from men (both Tibetan and Indian) when wearing *chu pa*, and I also enjoyed more positive interactions with middle-aged and older Tibetan women. It was not until the fourth month of my fieldwork that I became aware that my behaviour had caused offence, in this case to a group of educated, young Tibetan women (see Chapter Five). In attempting to differentiate myself from Western tourists intent on pursuing exotic, spiritual experiences in the Himalayan foothills I had inadvertently fallen into a second exotic trap, this time of cultural appropriation. I was not the only Western woman wearing Tibetan dress: other women tended to be students (of Tibetan Buddhism, philosophy or language, for example), and many had Tibetan partners. Like me, they sought to integrate into the community and were long-term residents, returning repeatedly to the settlement and staying for several months at a time. While these women tended to be better received than others they nonetheless attracted criticism from those who later became my friends for appropriating a threatened Tibetan identity, as I will discuss further in Chapter Five (cf. Kleisath 2014). As a result I ceased to wear *chu pa* on all occasions aside from those I was specifically requested to wear it for (for example, at weddings and celebrations for Tibetan New Year). Although certainly embarrassing for me, this incident proved to be enlightening. Exploring the issue afforded me an opportunity to build friendships. It also gave me insight into some of the debates surrounding Tibetan dress and gender in exile,

[38] I have explored these issues further in Clark and Grant 2015.

specifically into the kind of intersectional Tibetan feminism practised and promoted by some individuals in the community.

A third significant challenge to my position came from the presence of other researchers. Diehl comments that life in McLeod Ganj is lived 'in a fishbowl' (Diehl 2002: 50): Tibetans are continually subject to the gaze and judgement of a variety of Others. This is also true for the visiting anthropologist (cf. Clifford 1992: 98). I was consistently observed and stereotyped throughout my stay. To the Tibetan community, there was little to distinguish my research from that being carried out by TV crews and journalists on the political situation, study-abroad students working on cultural topics for short dissertations, and amateur and professional photographers attempting to capture the perfect shot of Tibetan exotica. Such 'over exposure' for McLeod Ganj's Tibetan residents has resulted in widespread 'interview fatigue' (Chen 2012: 265), an unfortunate condition that shaped my research in several ways (including in an ethical dimension, see section 2.4). As a result, engaging participants for interviews proved challenging: few saw much point in giving their time to yet another project for which they would receive little or no feedback, or worse, which would misrepresent what they had said. Chen responded to this situation by becoming 'methodologically casual' (Chen 2012: 265), de-emphasising the role of interviews in her research and focusing on participant observation. Since the topics of my research rarely surfaced in everyday conversation I had to take a different approach, and so interviewing became a crucial part of my methodological practice. I found that employing Tibetan research assistants (RAs) of my own age and slightly older greatly enhanced my reception by potential respondents, who were often more comfortable answering my questions when mediated by a Tibetan assistant/translator.[39] Asking for consent for an interview via an RA

[39] Prior to departing for the field I studied the central Tibetan dialect/language for two years. I worked on this in the field, and while my linguistic ability never developed to the point where I could conduct

became a primary tool for facilitating my research: it gave me a chance to explain my project (and how it differed from other *yin ji* projects), which led to an improvement in my reputation locally. Employing RAs also yielded another benefit. I attempted to 'give back' in many ways throughout my research by giving free English tuition, assisting with paperwork, proof-reading etc., but I found providing paid employment to be one of the most useful ways I could be of service. Employing RAs, furthermore, increased my own personal safety and enabled me to conduct interviews in the more intimate spaces of peoples' homes. Besides conducting interviews I was also able, after a few months, to participate in community life more fully. Initially, I found it difficult to build relationships and networks; at the time I felt this was due to negative perceptions of Westerners. After about four months, however, I had formed several solid friendships, and went on to share a flat with one such friend. The greater participation in the life of McLeod Ganj's Tibetan residents that such friendships afforded me proved crucial in balancing the data I gathered in interviews. Indeed I employed some of these friends as my research assistants (six in all), and my research benefited greatly from being able to discuss, debate and clarify issues that came up in interviews with these friends honestly and openly.

Throughout my stay, I was able to talk with a variety of individuals of different ages and backgrounds, in proportions that reflected the demography and regional backgrounds of those living in my two field sites. It was naturally easiest to form relationships with those of my own age group, however, through casual meetings in cafes, rooms, and volunteer work, for example. In McLeod Ganj, I was able to do this both within the community of newcomers and with those born in exile. Through the latter, I was gradually able to meet and talk with older exiles, most of whom lived

---

interviews on my own in Tibetan (which is spoken in a variety of different accents/dialects by refugees living in the Indian subcontinent) I became proficient enough to be able to make simple conversation and to comprehend translators' phrasing and interviewees' responses.

largely private lives, rising to visit the temple and complete *kora,* but otherwise remaining at home.

2.3 Ladakh

Ladakh is a high altitude region in the northwest Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Unlike the Muslim-dominated regions of the state to its west, Ladakh itself is predominantly Buddhist, and borders Tibet (PRC) to the east. Tibetan refugees in Ladakh mostly arrived between 1959 and the early 1970s. Movement across this border, which was historically porous, has since been minimal due to increased security after the Chinese takeover. Very few Tibetans currently living in Ladakh came from the eastern regions of the plateau, instead the majority originate from western Tibetan areas, especially the regions of Tö and Ngari, and the Tibetan areas of Jangthang, a nomadic region that extends across the border between Tibet and Ladakh.[40] In the early years after the flight of the Dalai Lama, these men and women entered Ladakh directly from western Tibet, bringing their herds and belongings with them. Around 1,539[41] continue to live a semi-nomadic lifestyle in the Jangthang region on the Ladakhi side of the border, the majority residing for large portions of the year in the nine settlements of: Samedh, Kharnak, Sumdho, Puga, Nyoma, Hanle, Chumur, Kakshung and Goyul. The majority of Tibetans in Ladakh are settled in the vicinity of the district capital, Leh, in

[40] I have opted to use the spelling Jangthang instead of a common alternative, Changthang, since the former is used by the CTA in its official publications.
[41] http://www.centraltibetanreliefcommittee.org/settlements/india/north/sonamling.html [accessed 31 Mar 2015].

the settlements of Akling and Choglamsar, however (see Fig. 6).[42] In 2012, the total Tibetan population in Ladakh numbered 7,123.[43]

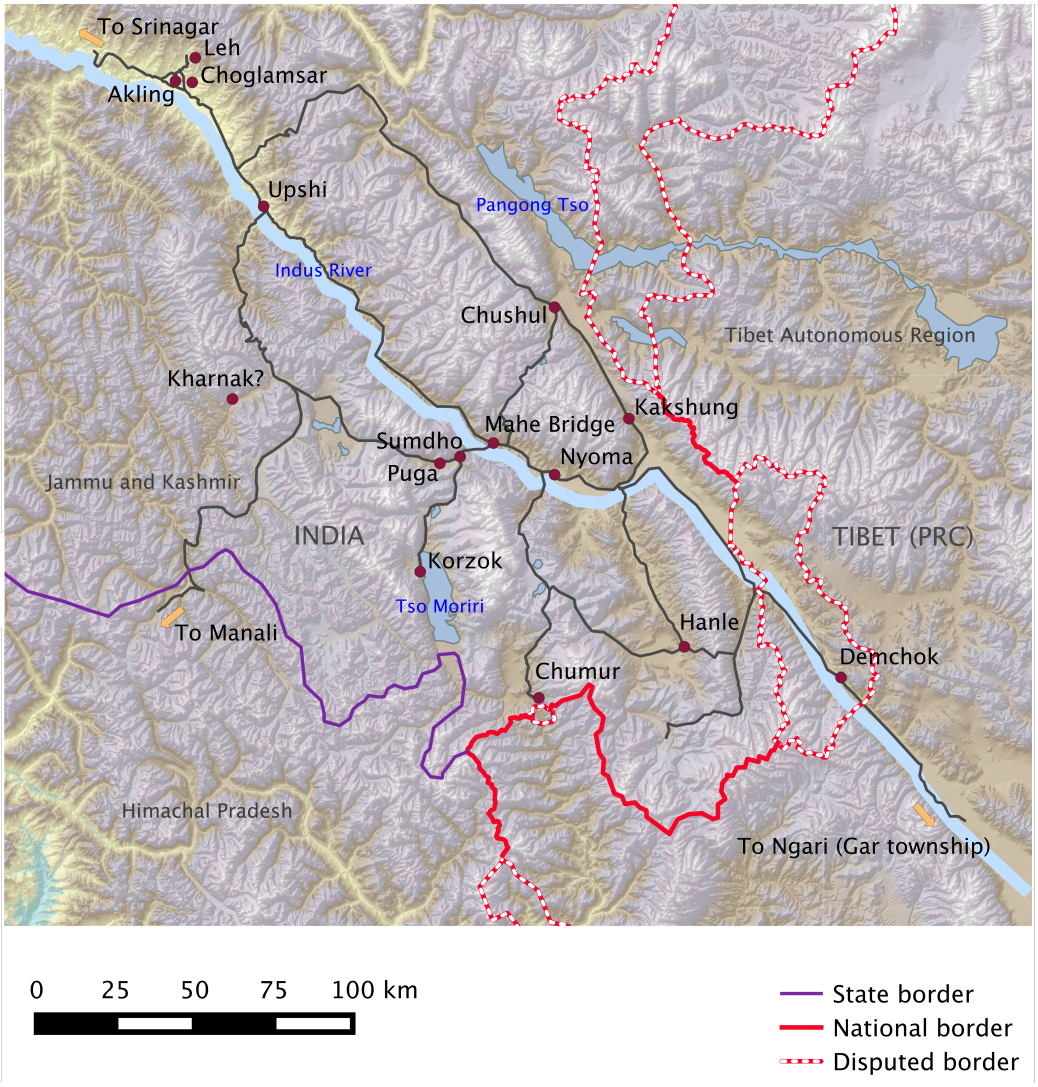


Figure 6 Map depicting location of Tibetan settlements in Ladakh (Akling, Choglamsar, Sumdho, Puga, Nyoma, Kakshung, Hanle, Chumur and Kharnak) in relation to state and international borders. These settlements are collectively designated Sonamling by the CTA, and administered by the Central Representative Officer (CRO) of H.H. Dalai Lama from his office in Choglamsar. The region of Jangthang (meaning 'northern plain') extends east of Upshi across the border into Tibet (PRC).

[42] According to CTA data, Tibetans resident in the settlements surrounding Leh number 5,584; those in Jangthang number 1,539. http://www.centraltibetanreliefcommittee.org/settlements/india/north/sonamling.html [accessed 12 Dec 2014, last updated 2012].

[43] http://www.centraltibetanreliefcommittee.org/settlements/india/north/sonamling.html [accessed 12 Dec 2014, last updated 2012].

The demographic composition of the Tibetan community in Ladakh differs strikingly to that of McLeod Ganj. Since it is a hub for new exiles (who tend to be younger in age and often enter India alone), and for those engaged in political activity (often born-in-exile youth), McLeod Ganj has a high proportion of youth living singly or with friends. However, if McLeod Ganj draws these youth to itself, Ladakh expels them. Few young Tibetans I spoke with who grew up in Ladakh intended to remain in the area. Those who were successful at school intended to sit for College degrees and enter the job market in either McLeod Ganj or the larger Indian cities if they were unable to emigrate abroad. Moreover, few new refugees choose to settle in Ladakh (likewise, few established refugees choose to move there), it being thought of as exceedingly remote, with a harsh climate and basic in terms of facilities compared with elsewhere in the South Asian diaspora. Those who remained tended either to have a strong commitment towards their community or family, or to have been less successful at school. The latter returned to their families to help out with running small businesses, or to work with the family's herds. However, despite the exodus of later high school and college-age children, there remains a distinct family atmosphere in the Ladakhi settlements when contrasted to McLeod Ganj. Families continue to live together in three or sometimes more generations, leading to larger household sizes compared with other settlements in the Indian diaspora.[44] Wives in Ladakh also tend to continue patrilocal patterns of marriage, which leads to the development of larger households.[45] The Ladakh-based Tibetan community is also notable for its high proportion of elderly people. Tibetans living in the Ladakh settlements over the age of forty-four significantly outnumber (as a percentage of total settlement population) those living in the

[44] Compare an average household size of 5.2 in Ladakh to 2.4 in Dharamshala. Average household size for Tibetan settlements in India as a whole is 3.8 (TDS 2009: 62).
[45] There is still stigma attached to being *mak pa* i.e. moving into your wife's family's home; hence Tibetan men try to avoid this where possible, by neo-locating or asking their wives to move in with their family.

Dharamshala area, exceeding the average for the entire population of Tibetans living in India in each age category between the ages of forty-five and sixty-nine (inclusive, see figure below). The presence of more elderly refugees in Ladakh compared (as a proportion of total population) with Dharamshala is significant, and is reflected in the data I gathered (see Fig. 7 and Table 2 below).

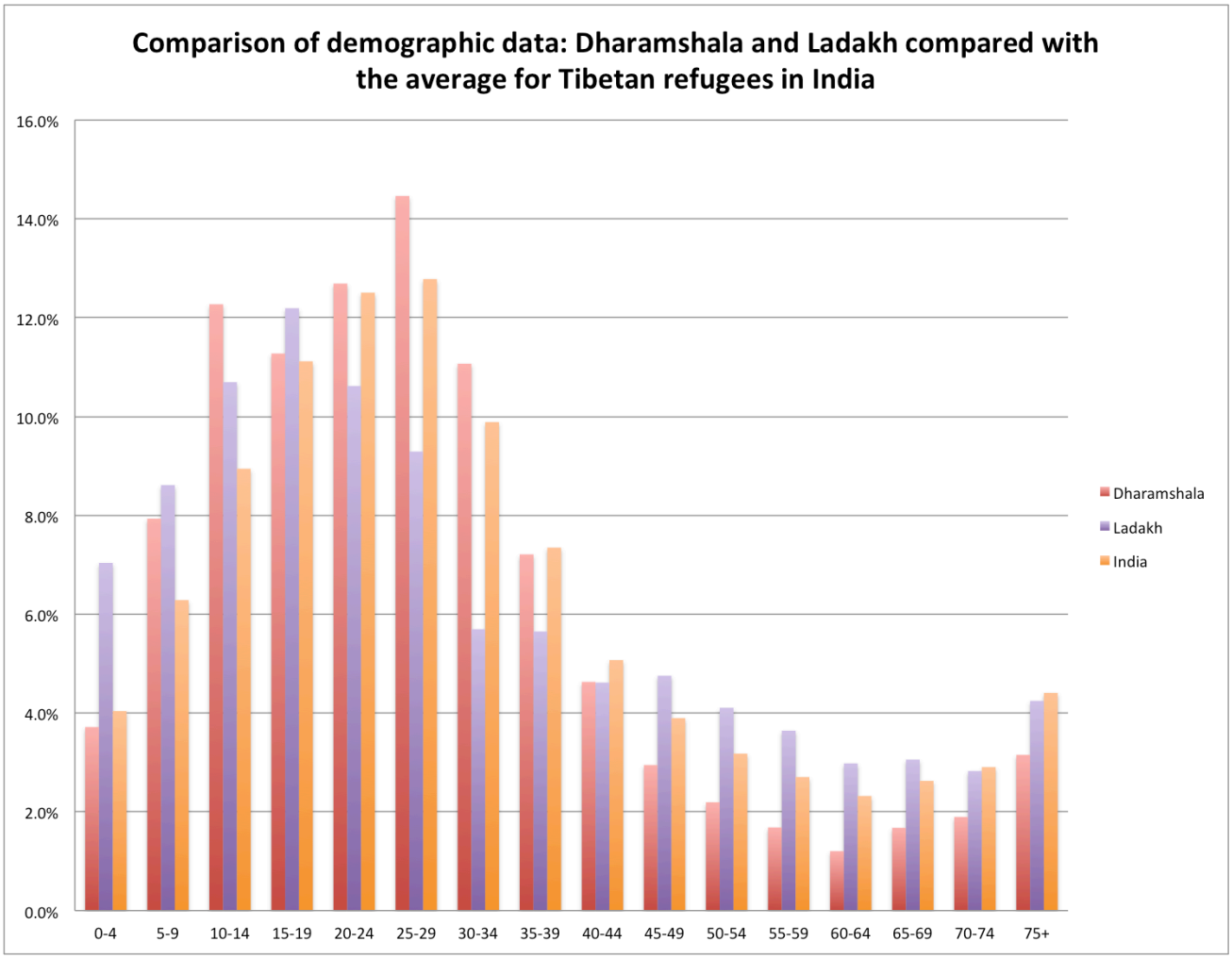


Figure 7 Age structure for Tibetan populations living in Dharamshala and Ladakh compared with the average for the total Tibetan population resident in India (given as percentages of population). Graph created from data harvested from the TDS 2009: 67.

Comparison of demographic data: Dharamshala and Ladakh compared with average for Tibetans in India			
Age range	Dharamshala	Ladakh	India
0-4	3.7%	7.0%	4.0%
5-9	7.9%	8.6%	6.3%
10-14	12.3%	10.7%	8.9%
15-19	11.3%	12.2%	11.1%
20-24	12.7%	10.6%	12.5%
25-29	14.5%	9.3%	12.8%
30-34	11.1%	5.7%	9.9%
35-39	7.2%	5.6%	7.3%
40-44	4.6%	4.6%	5.1%
45-49	2.9%	4.8%	3.9%
50-54	2.2%	4.1%	3.2%
55-59	1.7%	3.6%	2.7%
60-64	1.2%	3.0%	2.3%
65-69	1.7%	3.1%	2.6%
70-74	1.9%	2.8%	2.9%
75+	3.2%	4.2%	4.4%

Table 2 Data pertaining to Figure 3. Data taken from TDS 2009: 67.

Having experienced the value of RAs in McLeod Ganj, I began searching for assistants immediately on arrival in Ladakh. I was very lucky to be able to employ two full-time assistants within days of arriving. With Khenrab's and Tse's[46] help, I conducted interviews within the settlements of Choglamsar and Akling, predominantly with elderly individuals who tended to stay home during the day. Unlike in McLeod Ganj, I was able to conduct interviews inside individuals' houses from the beginning of my research in Ladakh. Indeed there were few other convenient public locations in which it was possible to meet in the settlements of Choglamsar and Akling. Khenrab and Tse were also able to introduce me to some of the younger generation, who worked in the stores and markets of Leh, the nearby capital of Ladakh, during the day. There I completed interviews in tailors' shops, at *chai* stalls, on the *kora* routes and in Tibetan restaurants. Besides conducting interviews, I was also able to participate in community

[46] Names changed.

life to a considerable extent. I attended three Choglamsar weddings and other communal social events, which included celebrations of the Dalai Lama's birthday (*trung kar*) held in the grounds of his pavilion or palace (*po drang*) nearby Choglamsar. I attended protest marches organized by the regional branches of Tibetan NGOs (e.g. regional Tibetan Youth Congress, rTYC), and made pilgrimages to local temples, both on my own and with families and couples. I was also able to travel with Khenrab and a friend to Tibetan settlements on the Ladakhi side of the border in Jangthang. We spent several days in the village of Sumdho and the nomadic camp at Puga during which I was able to conduct further interviews. I also visited Tibetan friends and their relatives (unaccompanied by RAs) in Leh and the settlements, and spent several hours at a time drinking tea and chatting while they manned stores and Internet cafes.

In both McLeod Ganj and Ladakh I concentrated my research among the lay community, though I took opportunities to talk with monks and nuns when they arose. Practically, it would have been difficult to gain access to monastic communities. Moreover, given the prevalence of literature concerning religion in Tibetology,[47] I was keen to contribute to a comparatively small but growing body of scholarship that discusses contemporary lay Tibetan culture.

2.3.1 Being *yin ji* in Ladakh

Ladakh, like McLeod Ganj, is a significant stop on India's tourist route. However, it attracts Westerners and increasingly Indians with different orientations

[47] See Lopez (1998: 156-180), for example, on the history of Tibetan Buddhist Studies in North American academia (particularly in the wake of the Tibetan exodus in 1959) (cf. Almond 1988). Hansen also comments on the 'institutional location of Tibetan studies in Oriental philosophy or religious studies' faculties (P. Hansen 2003: 9; cf. C. Harris 2012: 8-9). Relatedly, Harris comments on the bias of the Western art academy towards items of Tibetan Buddhist material culture, noting 'the things the West deems examples of Tibetan art are almost without exception the material manifestation of religion: that is, the painting, sculpture, and ritual implements that the term encompasses are described in Tibetan as supports (*rten*) for the practice of Tibetan Buddhism' (C. Harris 2012: 18).

compared to those who congregate in McLeod Ganj. Firstly, it tends to attract more trekkers than spiritualists. Unlike the latter, the former stay for shorter periods and spend large portions of their time outside Leh taking part in treks, which generate significant revenue for the local economy. Ladakh also attracts fewer students, journalists and film crews compared to the Tibetan capital-in-exile, perhaps because of its greater isolation. This is bureaucratic and political as much as it is geographic. Since it is part of the border state of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh is subject to more stringent security policies compared to other states; hence travelling and working in the region is made more complex by permit requirements. Most importantly, however, the major Tibetan areas of settlement are located outside the capital, Leh, which is where most tourists congregate. Choglamsar and Akling attract only a handful of foreign visitors (mostly sponsors of children at the Tibetan school) and, furthermore, require permits to reside in overnight.[48] Thus, save for a few Ladakhi families renting properties in the area, the camps are almost entirely devoid of non-Tibetans. These factors mean that Tibetans living in the area suffer much less from the inquisitiveness of outsiders compared to Tibetans in McLeod Ganj. Combined with invaluable introductions from Khenrab and Tse, this meant I was able to establish a much more positive reputation for myself within the local community from the outset and was consequently able to advance my research at a faster pace.

2.4 Ethics

The last issue I wish to explore in relation to my methodology is that of my research ethics, and how they came to inflect my fieldwork in unexpected ways. Prior to departing for the field, I submitted my research proposal for ethical review by Oxford's

[48] For this reason I stayed in a Ladakhi-run guesthouse in Leh for the duration of my research in Ladakh. I was able to commute to Choglamsar and Leh (only a fifteen minute taxi-ride) to conduct research in the settlements during the daytime.

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC). As part of this process I had considered how I would approach the issue of my participants' security. I anticipated that refugees might be unwilling to speak to me for fear of possible repercussions for their families remaining in Tibet if they disclosed (and especially if I published) sensitive information. I made a commitment to anonymise participants, to avoid recording any obviously sensitive information, and to seek only verbal consent, anticipating that refugees would be unhappy signing written consent forms (and thereby relinquishing deniability). While I was right to anticipate the latter, and while most respondents clearly expected to be anonymised in any research I subsequently published,[49] I had not fully anticipated the way in which refugees' desire to give testimony would impact my ethical commitments.

Following international ethical guidelines[50] I committed to a process of informed consent. I made the purpose of my stay generally known in both communities and disclosed my identity as a researcher swiftly whenever I met someone new. As Boyden notes, however, consent 'is not a free value but one that is bound up in a highly complex web of expectations, norms and meanings, and as such can be hard to achieve in practice' (Boyden 2004: 243; cf. Sigona 2014: 378). Informed consent is especially difficult to achieve in refugee contexts, since it is premised upon an assumption of power equality between researcher and researched in which both parties are able to act autonomously (Mackenzie et al. 2007: 302). The power and autonomy of many refugees, including many I spoke with, is compromised, however. Many are vulnerable due to their lack of legal status, and in their lack of access to money, employment, and opportunities. This vulnerability, however, is combined in Tibetan exile with a desire

[49] Respondents (especially in McLeod Ganj) were familiar with the practice of using pseudonyms since they are commonly used by TV and print journalists in their work on Tibetan topics. There were exceptions, however. See note on page vi for further clarification.
[50] I drafted my ethical proposal with reference to guidelines developed by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and the Association of Social Anthropologists, UK (ASA).

and sense of moral obligation to generate awareness in the world about the plight of Tibetans living in Tibet. I quickly became aware that many of those who agreed to participate in my research understood it to be an avenue through which they would be able to raise awareness about, for example, human rights abuses committed on the Tibetan plateau, the self-immolations being staged in increasing numbers by Tibetans in Tibet, or Tibetan independence prior to the Chinese takeover in 1950-1951. Such expectations have an impact upon practices of informed consent, and posed an ethical conundrum for me since I wished to be sensitive to my participants' expectations and political concerns. While my thesis would ultimately be available in the public domain, will it do as much as participants seemed to hope to raise awareness about the political situation in Tibet?

My perceived status as a researcher who would be able in some way to disseminate information to the world about the Tibetan plight certainly coloured the data I collected. Interviewees were keen to talk politics (many assumed this was the topic of my research), and to give testimony (e.g. to have their stories of escape, torture, and other experiences under Chinese rule recorded for posterity) (cf. Eastmond 2007: 259). Indeed, testimony is an important mode of address that is directed at foreign visitors in the communities in which I worked. It is expressed, for example, in the voices of Tibetan 'curators' at the Tibet Museum in McLeod Ganj (see section 6.3.2; also C. Harris 2012: 165-176; Singh 2015: 49-51) as well as in interpersonal interactions. In the beginning, I felt frustrated with respondents who repeatedly sidestepped my questions about material culture and seemed determined to talk instead about the political situation. As my research progressed, however, I began to see that the two realms, distinct to me, were interwoven in the exilic imaginary. During interviews I began to tease out the connections between objects, identity and politics. These narratives now form a crucial part of this thesis.

Overall, I spent thirteen months in the field, split between the two sites.[51] I chose to begin research in McLeod Ganj, the more complex and varied site, since it offered opportunities for building the networks necessary to set up further research elsewhere. To make up for a slow start, and in order to ensure I represented the varied population in the town equally, I spent more than eight months in the area. Thanks to connections forged in McLeod Ganj, and the experience I gained there, I was able to establish myself much more quickly in Ladakh and research proceeded rapidly. After four months I felt I had gathered sufficient data and returned for a few weeks to McLeod Ganj before leaving finally for the UK. Throughout the entire period I recorded 51 interviews and completed a further 135 for which I took notes by hand[52] (61 in Ladakh, 72 in McLeod Ganj, and several in Delhi). I also took just under 12,000 photographs, and participated in daily life within both communities as far as possible. This thesis represents my attempt to shape the stories, images, impressions, hurried-conversations and long winter's afternoon discussions I accumulated into a narrative which reflects something of the lives of those who were kind enough to suffer the endless questions of an impertinent *yin ji* anthropologist.

[51] I spent August 2012-March 2013 and August 2013 in McLeod Ganj. I spent April 2013-July 2013 in Ladakh.
[52] Primarily this was because individuals were unhappy for me to use a tape recorder.

3 Landscape: the places and spaces of exile

A Personal Reconnaissance[53]
By Tenzin Tsundue

From Ladakh
Tibet is just a gaze away.
They said:
from that black knoll
at Dumtse it's Tibet.
For the first time, I saw
my country Tibet.

In a hurried hidden trip
I was there at the mound.

I sniffed the soil,
scratched the ground,
listened to the dry wind
and the wild old cranes.

I didn't see the border,
I swear there wasn't anything
different, there.

I didn't know
if I was there or here,
I didn't know
if I was here or there.

They say the kyang[54]
come here every winter.
They say the kyang
go there every summer.

The Tibetan poet and activist Tenzin Tsundue[55] was born in a roadside camp in India. His parents like many others who fled Tibet, laboured in the road-gangs of the high Himalayas in the early 1970s and struggled to make enough money to feed their families and survive. Brought up on stories of Tibet, Tsundue did not lay eyes upon his

[53] From *Kora*, Tsundue's collection of poetry written in English (Tsundue 2002: 11).
[54] *Kyang* are wild ass which roam in herds in Jangthang, the plains of western Tibet and the Tibet-Ladakh border.
[55] As noted on page vi, the majority of individuals mentioned in this thesis have been anonymised. I have preserved real names in the text for public figures and those who did not wish to be anonymised.

homeland until 1997 when, after graduating from university in Chennai, he crossed the border from Ladakh and entered it illegally on foot. The Chinese border police arrested and jailed him, finally pushing him back to India (Tsundue 2002: 54). Today he is based in Dharamshala where he continues his work as an activist and poet.

Tenzin Tsundue has little personal experience of Tibet. For him, like many others born in exile, Tibet is an imaginary place, pieced together from the stories and memories of others, a place central in its very absence to his sense of identity. In this poem, Tsundue finds himself standing on the border, unable to distinguish between the land of his home and that of his host, India. Crossing the forbidden, invisible line is anticlimactic and confusing. Unlike the wild *kyang* who are unhampered by national borders, he cannot freely cross. Though a child of Tibet he is sundered from it; his homeland must remain a product of 'post memory' (Hirsch 1997) and imagination only.

Tsundue's experience points towards the many different versions of Tibet that exist in the minds of Tibetans. There is the Tibet of second generation exiles like Tsundue who, being born outside its borders, must imagine their homeland based on the retellings of others. There is the Tibet of those who fled Chinese rule during the 1960s and who still speak fondly of the villages they were raised in, of the pastures they roamed with their family's herds and of the *ku* (sacred deity figures) housed in their local monasteries (see section 6.1.2). Many dream of returning to this Tibet, although they know from family remaining there, from media reports and (for some) from short visits that over fifty years of Chinese rule has wrought changes, and this Tibet no longer exists. There is also the Tibet of the present, the Tibet incorporated into the PRC. This Tibet is bi-cultural (C. Harris 2012: 254); brought up with Chinese classmates, in Chinese-run schools, raised speaking a mixture of Mandarin and their local Tibetan dialect and eating Tibetan foods such as *tsampa* (roasted barley flour) and yak meat alongside Chinese grown vegetables (Yeh 2013), young Tibetans born and brought up

in Tibet embody a new kind of Tibetanness. Their Tibet includes *nang ma* (Tibetan music and dance clubs) and Lhasa beer alongside the more iconic and 'traditional' yak, horse, grasslands (*pang*) and snow-capped mountains (*gang ri*). The reality of contemporary Tibet and Tibetanness pursued on the plateau differs strongly to the narratives about identity and the homeland which circulate in exile, however, leading to friction between long-term exiles and newcomers (e.g. Swank 2014, Yeh 2007, Diehl 2002; see section 5.7). Lastly, there is the future Tibet, a blend of re-told stories and ideals, realism, hope and despondency. While many elderly Tibetans living in exile seem to imagine a triumphant return to the villages of their childhood, and activists like Tsundue envisage an independent, unified free Tibet in the future, others are generally more realistic. Although some seem to dream of evicting all Chinese from the plateau, many others recognise that if Tibet achieves either her autonomy or independence,[56] returning Tibetans and those who choose to remain on the plateau will have to accept and live with the Chinese currently settled there.

Unlike embedded and rooted communities refugees, who are victims of *dis*placement*,* have received comparatively little academic attention in scholarly work on cultural landscape (cf. Turton 2005: 260; Dudley 2010: 8-11). For the former group, anthropologists and geographers have theorised a strong link with the environment. For example, Tim Ingold invokes Heidegger's essay, 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' (Heidegger 1971: 145-161) to argue that the environment (including non-human animals) plays a key role in how individuals perceive and understand themselves (Ingold 2000: 173). He extends the point to argue that the environment possesses agency, which it exerts over humans (cf. Miller 2008: 287). His argument finds precedent in scholarship on embodiment and phenomenology produced, for example, by Mauss (1979: 97-105) and Merleau-Ponty (1989), respectively. This scholarship argues

[56] See footnote 16 on the debate between Tibetan supporters of independence (*rangzen*) versus the middle way approach (*u mé lam*).

against a dualistic perspective, which separates the mind and body, suggesting instead that the world around us is perceived and understood through embodied cultural engagement.[57] Scholarship on the related topic of the built environment has drawn on the work of these authors. For example, Bourdieu's (1990a, 1990b) theory of *habitus* ascribes an important role to the physical environment in inculcating cultural and social norms into its inhabitants (1990a, see Chapter Four). Embodied perspectives have been taken up in different ways, by researchers theorising the senses (e.g. Howes 2005, Edwards et al. 2006, Seremetakis 1994, Classen 1993) and those focusing upon materiality - the aesthetic qualities of 'things' - and the physical environment (e.g. Coote and Shelton 1992, Morphy 1992, Miller 2005, Pinney and Thomas 2001, cf. Navaro-Yashin 2012, Stoler 2007).

It is easy to see why such approaches have not often been applied to refugees: if followed to their logical conclusion such arguments suggest that refugees, who are traumatically wrenched from their home landscape and forced to abandon their material possessions, must suffer greatly both in a cultural and personal sense. Furthermore, this perspective would seem to suggest that refugees are unlikely to enjoy strong relationships with the environment they are displaced into. However, such an assumption ignores two important factors: firstly, any pre-existing familiarity refugees might have with the place to which they flee, and secondly, refugees' agency and ability to build relationships with that place after flight.

In this chapter, I examine the physical environments of my two field sites, McLeod Ganj and Ladakh, looking at how Tibetan refugees perceive the landscape in which they find themselves. If home can be defined as a place which *feels* right (see section 1.8; Gosden 1999: 203; cf. Dudley 2010: 164-166), it becomes important to ask

[57] Contra the arguments of some affect theorists (e.g. Massumi 2002, Anderson 2006, Thrift 2008, cf. Leys 2011) this somatic engagement is not theorised as pre- or a-cultural. Csordas notes: Merleau-Ponty 'recognized that perception was always embedded in a cultural world, such that the pre-objective in no way implies a "pre-cultural"' (Csordas 1993: 137).

about the role of the existing exilic landscape in either supporting or challenging refugees' home- or place-making practices. This chapter thus sets the stage for the rest of the thesis: it examines the 'raw material' of the land, the base level from which culture operates. It explores the physical environments Tibetan refugees encountered in the early years of exile in India, and the role physical landscape has since played in Tibetan endeavours to recreate a familiar, 'home-like' environment.

A brief word on terminology. Throughout the thesis I use the terms environment and landscape interchangeably. As Cosgrove (1985) and Wylie (2007) among others have noted, the English word 'landscape' (and its German and Dutch translations, respectively *landschäft* and *landskab*) possess complex histories and might be regarded as culturally specific to Western contexts. The terms have multiple connotations, for example: as a bourgeois, Renaissance 'way of seeing' bound up with issues of property and land ownership, measurement, and mapping; as a scientific way of thinking about the world; and as a form of artistic or aesthetic representation in painting (Cosgrove 1985, cf. Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995: 2). My usage of the term 'landscape' does not reflect these meanings, which are largely irrelevant in the Tibetan context. Rather, I have chosen to persist with it since it better reflects the cultural aspect of the environment. I found 'environment' on its own to be unsatisfactory, since in current Western usage it implies a scientific or ecological approach, which is not the approach taken here. Instead, my use of both landscape and environment reflects the meaning of the Tibetan term *khor yuk*, which respondents and translators predominantly used in conversation with me. Although strongly marked and meaningful terms do exist in the Tibetan language to refer to the environment (for example, *pa yül,* see p79), the term *khor yuk* is less semiotically dense. Translations include: 'environment', 'surroundings' or 'neighbourhood'; the first syllable (*khor*) translates as circle or circulation and the

second (*yuk*) as entire or all encompassing.[58] The English phrase 'surroundings' thus renders the term quite well. My respondents used it in an unmarked fashion to refer to both the 'natural' and 'man-made' environment; hence I have opted to approximate this in English by using the terms landscape and environment.

3.1 The early years: terra incognita

Many elderly Tibetans remember the early years of the 1960s and especially the first few months of exile with horror. The shock of the humid summer heat, the density and unfamiliarity of the northeast Indian jungle, and the high death rates from communicable diseases such as tuberculosis (Anon. 1986: 49) all made their mark. The refugee camps of Missamari (Assam) and Buxa Duar (West Bengal) are remembered especially unfavourably. The latter was a former British internment camp in which Indian independence fighters were detained prior to 1947. It was here that the Dalai Lama gathered together some seven thousand monks who had successfully escaped into exile. Concerned for the preservation of the Tibetan Buddhist religion and way of life, these monks were charged with continuing to pursue their religious studies and passing on their knowledge to the succeeding generation.[59] The conditions at the camp were unpleasant, however. Monks recalled the barbed wire fences that surrounded it, how leeches dropped from trees to land upon them, and how skin and intestinal ailments combined with deadly tuberculosis ran rife (Anon. 1986: 49).

In his memoirs, the Dalai Lama wrote that while Tibetans were grateful for the charitable assistance they received from various groups and governments, 'we do not

[58] I am grateful to Tsering Gonkatsang for clarifying this translation.
[59] Tibetan Buddhism emphasises the importance of lineage, i.e. the direct passage of knowledge from teacher to student in an unbroken line. The establishment of lineage and being able to trace the path of inherited knowledge is important in determining the authenticity of particular teachings. Because of this, it was essential for religious practice to continue in exile, since if the lineage were broken the Tibetan Buddhist religion would become severely endangered.

want to live on charity longer than we must; we want to stand on our own feet as soon as we can' (Dalai Lama 1977: 225). One way of achieving this was through employment in India's road-building gangs, which was arranged for Tibetans by the Indian government (Dalai Lama 1977: 225). Many, like Tenzin Tsundue's parents, were employed building roads, especially in the high Himalayas on India's northern borders. In part this venture was designed to relocate Tibetans from the tropical, low altitude plains of India into its cool, higher altitudes, but the work was backbreaking, and the way of life equally temporary since camps moved with the progress of the roads.



Figure 8 'Refugees at roadwork in Kullu Manali' c. mid-1960s © Photographic Archive, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala.

A longer-term solution was developed in the form of settlements of around three to four thousand inhabitants. The earliest of these was developed in south India on land secured at Prime Minister Nehru's behest. In early December 1960, around six hundred and fifty Tibetans left the camps in the north to pioneer the settlement of virgin jungle in what is now Karnataka state. Clearing the jungle was dangerous and difficult work;

the environment was far from benign, being hot, humid, and home to elephants, tigers and wild boar. Chonzin, who was interviewed by Avedon, recalled:

> We forced ourselves to eat … but we all felt so frightened and forlorn that no one could speak. Many people sat helplessly on the ground crying to themselves. We could hear the calls of wild animals in the jungle and, unlike Tibet, you couldn't see a thing. Wherever you looked there was nothing but trees.
>
> Avedon 1984: 88

Settlement progressed, however, and by early 1962 the first group of pioneers were able to move out of their tents and into brick-walled and tile-roofed homes. This camp became Camp Number One at the settlement of Bylakuppe. By 1969, thirty-eight settlements harbouring around sixty thousand refugees had been constructed throughout India, Nepal and Bhutan. However, some three thousand Tibetans remained in road gangs into the early 1980s (Avedon 1984: 90).

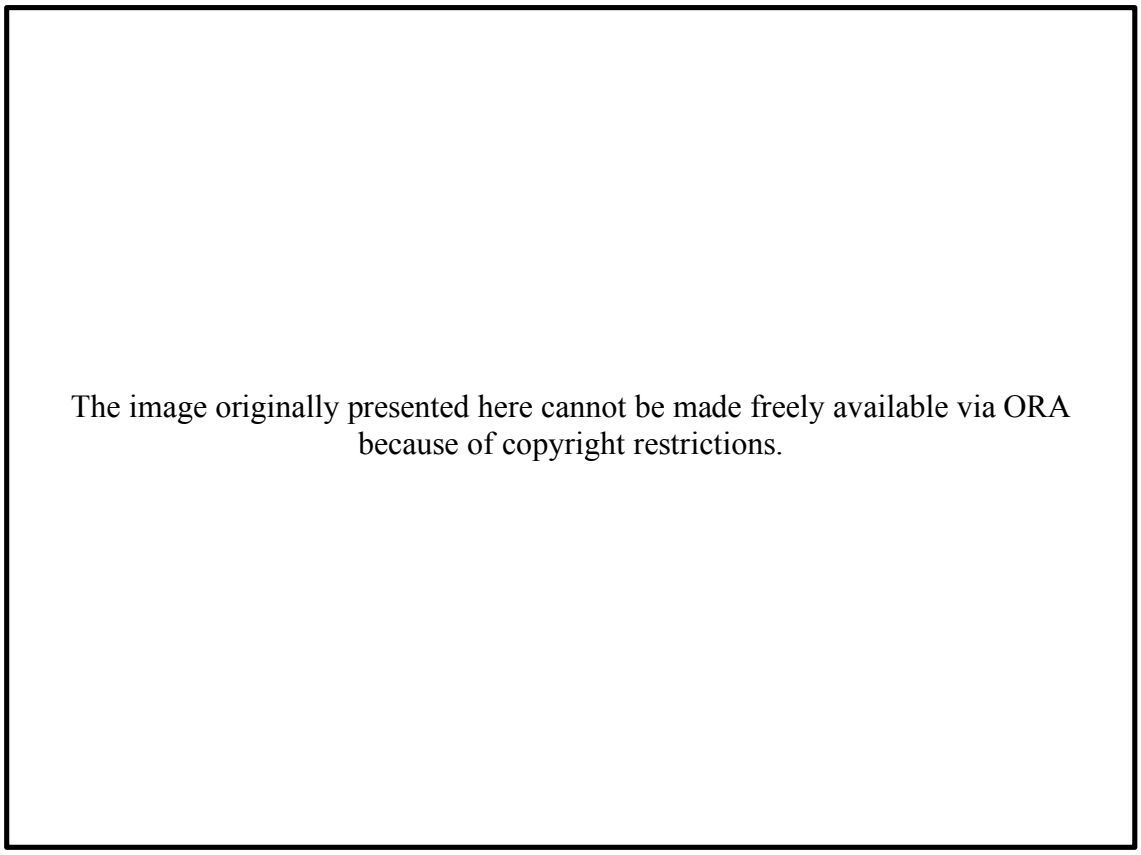


Figure 9 Mundgod Tibetan Settlement c.1960s © The Tibet Museum Photographic Archive, Dharamshala

Alongside the larger settlements, smaller communities were also established. Although at one time an advocate of settlement in the south,[60] in his memoirs the Dalai Lama later noted his preference for rehabilitating Tibetans in northern, high altitude areas. He wrote that the 'hot plains of India' were a very unhealthy place for 'mountain people' like Tibetans; hence he and his government, in conjunction with the Indian government, made efforts to 'rehabilitate people in districts where the climate is not too different from our own' (Dalai Lama 1977: 225-226; compares favourably with the attitude of the Swiss government described by Dyke, 1997: 179). This initially resulted in the establishment of training centres for six hundred people to learn handicraft production in Darjeeling and Dalhousie (see section 6.2.1). More centres were subsequently established in other settlements in India and Nepal, including in McLeod Ganj. Overall, life in the early years of exile was difficult, precarious and dangerous. Since the 1960s, however, Tibetans have successfully built a relatively stable network of settlements, administered locally and regionally by a de-facto government of their own (McConnell 2009). However, the return to Tibet, expected so imminently by many, has not yet materialised.

3.2 Dharamshala: home away from home?

> I still remember well my first arrival here in the spring of 1960. We drove up by road from Pathankot station, through beautiful countryside, the lush green fields filled with trees and colourful flowers. After about an hour we caught our first glimpse of the gleaming white mountains of the Dhauladhar range towering in the distance. These peaks were also the first sight to greet my eyes when I awoke for the first time in my new home the following morning, and of course their presence remains the dominating feature of the landscape … Those early days were marked by a new kind of freedom, for although there was a lot of work to do ensuring the welfare of our ever increasing community of refugees, I finally had time and leisure to give more attention to my

[60] See footnote 9.

> studies and my spiritual practice. In addition, I was physically freer and enjoyed walking and trekking into the nearby woods and hills. Dharamsala then was very much an abandoned British hill station, a quiet and sleepy backwater of the Punjab, not the bustling Himachali town that it is today … One of the great personal pleasures of moving to my present residence in 1968 was that it gave me the opportunity to work in my garden … However this pleasure is also related to one of my few disappointments with life here. For much of the year, the summer and autumn especially, we enjoy a comfortable, pleasant climate, but this all changes in the humidity of monsoon. Dharamsala suffers from over-abundant rainfall, which, besides creating havoc in the garden, is causing increasingly severe damage to the local hillsides and the environment in general. It is then in particular that I miss the drier weather of Tibet.[61]
>
> 14th Dalai Lama, 28 Jan 1999.

In his preface to Jeremy Russell's book about the refugee 'capital-in-exile' *Dharamsala: Tibetan Refuge* (2000), the 14th Dalai Lama reminisces fondly about his arrival to McLeod Ganj in April 1960. He describes the fields and flowers of the plains, the rising mountains that form the backdrop to the town (these often remain snow-clad until March-April), walking in the woods and working in his garden. His comments, like those of my respondents, highlight both the similarities and differences between Dharamshala's environment and that of Tibet: the town might be set at (relatively) high altitude, might be overlooked by snow-capped peaks, and might enjoy relatively cool summer temperatures, but it remains on the 'wrong' side of the Himalayas, both the conceptual 'wrong side' (the Indian side, as opposed to the Tibetan side) and the climatic 'wrong side' (catching the Indian monsoon). McLeod Ganj, despite its epithet – 'little Lhasa'[62], a reference to the capital of old Tibet - is thus revealed as a town of contradictions. How do these material, physical and conceptual contradictions play out in the context of the environment? How Tibetan is 'little Lhasa', really?

[61] Foreword by Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, to Russell's volume *Dharamsala: Tibetan Refuge* (2000: 7-8). Foreword penned on January 28th 1999.
[62] Both foreigners and Tibetans describe McLeod Ganj as 'little Lhasa'. See for example, Tsering Namgyal's volume, *Little Lhasa: Reflections on Exiled Tibet* (2006).

As noted above, Dharamshala proper is a large Indian town in the Kangra valley, in the northwest Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. At an elevation of around 1,500m it is not a major area of Tibetan settlement, but is populated mostly by north Indians. Tibetan dwellings are concentrated higher up the hillside in the town of McLeod Ganj, and in the area in between here and Dharamshala that hosts the offices of the exile government, Gangkyi (a contraction of the Tibetan place-name Gangchen Kyishong). Above, forested McLeod Ganj clings to the hillside at an altitude of around 2,000m; beyond, the bare peaks of the Dhauladhar range rise to elevations of over 4,500m locally and 6,000m to the north. On the plains below Dharamshala lie terraced fields and pasture. Several routes, used by both foreign trekkers and locals, criss-cross the upper reaches of the mountains; the route through the Indrahar pass (c.4,300m) is frequented by both tourists and local Gaddi pastoralists who drive their herds of goat up and down the mountainside with the changing seasons. The highest local peak, Mun Peak, which marks out the skyline above McLeod Ganj, rises to a height of c.4,500m. Due to its altitude, temperatures in McLeod Ganj do not reach the highs experienced in the Indian plains: in the summer months temperatures can reach 38°C (April - June), in winter they frequently drop to below freezing. Snowfall is common between December and March, although residents remarked to me that the winters have recently become less harsh. Between July and September the Dharamshala area experiences a heavy monsoon. Annual rainfall averages between 290cm and 380cm, making it the second wettest region in the country.[63]

[63] http://himachaltourism.gov.in/post/dharamshala.aspx [accessed 4 May 2015].



Figure 10 McLeod Ganj, looking across the valley towards Amdo Village and Mun Peak (Jan 2013)

Tibet, both internationally and among Tibetans, is known for being 'remote' and 'inaccessible' (Snellgrove and Richardson 2003: 19). For example, Snellgrove and Richardson began their seminal volume, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (first published 1968), with a description of the 'physical scene':

> …the most inaccessible country in the world … [Tibet] … is surrounded to the south, the west and the north by massive mountain ranges, ranging from six to eight thousand metres above sea-level along the Himalaya and Karakoram, and from five to seven thousand metres along the Kun-lun Range. The general level of western and central Tibet is from four to five thousand metres above sea-level, and the whole country is traversed by subsidiary mountain ranges that reach to six thousand metres and more.
>
> Snellgrove and Richardson 2003: 19

In English, the region is often described as the 'roof of the world' (C. Harris 2012). In Tibetan, the plateau is also referred to in a number of poetic ways that evoke the physical environment, for example: *bö gang ri ra bé korwé zhing kham,* or 'the realm of Tibet, surrounded by a rampart of snow mountains'.[64] Exiles frequently spoke with me about their *pa yül* (literally 'fatherland'). This term is significant in the Tibetan exilic context: historically in Tibet, one's *pa yül* or valley was an important source of local identity. In exile, the term connotes the homeland more generally, and appears in various different contexts, for example as the name of an online Tibetan news outlet (Phayul).[65] In conversation with me, respondents emphasised the beauty of the peaks (*ri*), grassland (*pang*), forests (*shing*), clear waters (*chu*) and clean air (*lung,* more accurately wind) of their *pa yül*. In McLeod Ganj this image is not only offered to outsiders, but also to second and subsequent generation Tibetans who have never seen the places their parents and grandparents speak of. Some, like the Dharamshala-based author and poet, Bhuchung D. Sonam[66], however, are critical of the romantic picture that is so often painted:

[64] Rinzin, whom I interviewed in McLeod Ganj (7 Feb 2013) told me of this expression. The phrase is of some antiquity, however, since it features in a verse composed in praise of the 7th Dalai Lama, Kelsang Gyatso, by the lay Tibetan ruler, Pho lha nas in 1745/6 (Tashi Tsering 2001: 54). Jamyang Norbu describes this verse as an early Tibetan 'national anthem' (http://www.jamyangnorbu.com/blog/2015/02/12/freedom-wind-freedom-song-1/ [accessed 6 May 2015]). I am grateful to Tsering Gonkatsang of the Oriental Institute (University of Oxford) for his kind assistance with translating this phrase and others in this thesis.

[65] www.phayul.com [accessed 22 Jul 2015].

[66] See page vi for note on anonymisation in this thesis.

> [There is a] danger of coming to romanticise … you have to be really careful creating this image of Tibet based upon what it is not. Tibet is harsh. It's not grassland throughout, it's not snow-mountains throughout. Some parts are beautiful but then some parts are harsh … it's cold and nothing much grows. I was born [in Tibet] and … I realise this aspect of Tibet. But for others who do not have this intimate connection, and [who base] what they know on green grass and snow-mountains I think that's a danger, too much nostalgia, too far away from reality.
>
> Bhuchung D. Sonam[67]

Nonetheless, this image is repeatedly conjured by Tibetans living in exile. It is reproduced by children arriving from Tibet, housed temporarily in the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre (TRRC) nearby Dharamshala. Of the many drawings shown to me by the Tibetan staff member who oversaw the art facilities (provided by a British charity, Art Refuge UK), images of mountains, pasture and rivers dominated (see Fig. 11). I also saw young adults and older schoolchildren doodling this image in moments of boredom. Its frequency even became the subject of an Internet meme, seen and commented upon by Tibetans living throughout the diaspora in as far-flung places as North America and Europe (see Fig. 12).

As I noted in the introduction, the idea that Tibetans would naturally thrive best in mountainous environments has shaped settlement patterns both within India and beyond. But to what extent do residents agree with this assumption? As we read above, the Dalai Lama has described the pleasure he personally felt upon arriving in McLeod Ganj in the early 1960s and the enjoyment he derived from exploring the surrounding landscape. He appears not to have felt that the physical environment of McLeod Ganj resembled that of his home in Lhasa, however, given the displeasure he also expressed in relation to the heavy monsoon Dharamshala experiences.

[67] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 15 Feb 2013.



Figure 11 Drawing created by a recently arrived young Tibetan refugee at Dharamshala Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre (TRRC) as part of a programme run by Art Refuge UK (photographed 25 Jan 2013).

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The image was sourced at: https://www.facebook.com/185214558255468/photos/pb.185214558255468.-2207520000.1410359165./245577182219205/?type=3&theatre

Figure 12 Internet meme posted in the Facebook group *Tibetan Memes* on 20 Jun 2012.[68] The group is followed by younger generation Tibetans living throughout the diaspora. Second generation refugees I showed this image to in McLeod Ganj related strongly to it and enjoyed the joke.

[68] https://www.facebook.com/185214558255468/photos/pb.185214558255468.-2207520000.1410359165./245577182219205/?type=3&theatre [accessed 1 Apr 2015].

For most people I spoke with the physical environment of McLeod Ganj represented a compromise. Newly arrived refugees[69] recalled how, upon arriving in India for the first time and to Delhi specifically,[70] they had been shocked, not by the heat or the unfamiliar landscape, but by the squalor, poverty and pollution (especially of the air and water) and the profusion of rubbish. Prepared for the heat, few had expected to encounter these other problems. In Tibet, India had been characterised as a land of refuge, freedom and opportunity (particularly for education), and was known for being the birthplace of the Buddha, marked by monuments and sacred sites associated with his life and death (cf. Huber 2008). In comparison to Delhi, McLeod Ganj, cooler, quieter, smaller and elevated above the plains, was infinitely preferable. Many I spoke with recalled the relief they had felt upon seeing the town for the first time, revealed to them as their bus ground its way slowly up the final ascent. Nonetheless, as they also noted, for all the rhetoric of the guidebooks the town is no 'little Lhasa'. Its landscape, while beautiful, is not like that of Tibet, or rather the landscape of Tibet is much more diverse than the myth allows (and this is to say nothing of the wider socio-cultural context). As virtually all interviewees explained, their *pa yül* were physically and climatically different to McLeod Ganj. Whereas Himachal Pradesh suffers a very heavy annual monsoon, the majority of Tibet does not experience this. Moreover, since most parts of Tibet lie at a higher altitude, the climate tends to be both colder and drier. The physical landscape in general is thus quite different.[71] For example, Rinzin explained to me that unlike in McLeod Ganj, the mountains in his *pa yül* in Kham are permanently snow-capped (*gang ri*). Dharamshala also lacks the grasslands (*pang*) of his native place and

[69] Interviewed at the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre (TRRC) near Dharamshala, 18 and 21 Jan 2013.
[70] Those who register in Nepal with the UNHCR refugee reception centre transit through Delhi, travelling direct by bus from Kathmandu. After a few days in the capital, refugees are then transferred to the reception centre nearby Dharamshala, again by bus. When I asked refugees about their first impressions of India most spoke about their experience of Delhi.
[71] Some areas of Tibet, for example those bordering the Himalayas to the south, do resemble Himachal Pradesh more, in a physical and climatic sense.

the rolling, grassy hills (*pang ri*).[72] Of course as another exile, this time from Amdo (northeast Tibet), who had spent half his life in Tibet and half in India, explained, individuals' perception of the environment depends upon their experience and perspective: to Tibetans arriving from Tibet McLeod Ganj seems 'Indian'. To foreigners with no experience of Tibet and perhaps also to refugees who have spent a long time in the area, it seems more 'Tibetan'.[73] In truth it is neither, or perhaps both simultaneously.

From the point of view of the physical or 'natural' environment, then, McLeod Ganj represents a compromise: while exiles appreciated its more favourable climate and its mountainous locale to an extent, it is clear that it was not perceived as a good substitute for the Tibetan landscape and the homeland they had had to leave. Moreover, the physical environment, while preferable to other places in India, also did not figure prominently in individuals' narratives about place-making. When asked whether the physical qualities of the landscape helped them 'feel at home' many, like Lobsang (a young man, from central Tibet), replied that it was the Tibetan community, the opportunities for education and, overwhelmingly, the presence of the Dalai Lama and his monastery that made this place preferable:

> [Dharamshala is a] very good place. Not only just the environment but also in Dharamshala you can have a Tibetan community here, His Holiness lives here and then you meet many different interesting people not just making some money, or working up for saving some money … you will learn small, small things here and there. Even though I cannot go to school, in the day I'm learning a little bit here and there, and that opens up my heart, you know, my mind.
>
> Lobsang[74]

[72] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 7 Feb 2013.
[73] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 12 Nov 2012.
[74] Lobsang is from central Tibet, and arrived relatively recently in India where he and his family are now based. Like many recently arrived refugees, he emphasises the opportunities for learning (especially language learning) available to Tibetans in McLeod Ganj. Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 14 Mar 2013.

Lobsang's comments highlight the importance of Tibetan refugees' agency and community in transforming McLeod Ganj into a more (though not completely) Tibetan place. Contra Ingold (2000) the physical landscape itself, climate and topography, although appreciated, play a secondary role in refugees' comfort and sense of being 'at home'. Rather, it is the ritual and religious practice enacted by Tibetans in that environment which renders it more comfortable, homely and familiar. This includes, for example, the creation of sacred places through the construction of temples, the practice of circumambulation (*kora*) and the effect of the authenticating presence of the Dalai Lama that is the subject of Chapter Four. Before moving on to discuss these issues, however, it is necessary to address another aspect of religion in relation to the landscape. In my introduction to this thesis I described the very particular ritual relationship Tibetans possessed with the topography of Tibet prior to exile (e.g. Huber 1994), and asked how this relationship has been translated into the exile context. Below, I consider two intertwined Tibetan religious approaches to the environment: 'folk religion' (*mi chö,* Tucci 1980: 163-212) and Tibetan Buddhism and explore how these mediate Tibetan relationships with the topography of contemporary McLeod Ganj.

Tibetan 'folk religion' involves belief in deities (*lha*)[75] closely associated with the land of Tibet. Various different classes of *lha* are thought to exist in Tibet and imbue aspects of the landscape with their presence (Samuel 1993: 162-163, Huber 1994).[76] These are worldly gods, non-Buddhist, which must be regularly propitiated in order to

[75] 'Worldly' *lha* need to be distinguished from other *lha,* which include 'gods' of the Buddhist heaven and tantric deities of Buddhist meditation. Although these three are conceptually distinct, they are part of the same scheme: the 'worldly gods' (local deities, place-based) have the potential to move upwards to the heavens and become Buddhist gods by acquiring good karma and rebirths over time (Samuel 1993: 163).

[76] Samuel lists the ten classes of *lha* described by Philippe Cornu:
Lu are aquatic deities; *nyen* are spirits which live in the atmosphere or on the earth's surface on plains or in forests; *sa dak* are 'lords of the soil'; *tsen* are red, male spirits who live in rocks; *gyel po* are the spirits of evil kings or high lamas who failed their vows; *dü* are openly malevolent spirits who were violently opposed to the *dharma* (Tibetan Buddhist teachings) in a previous life; *ma mo* constitute a numerous class of ferocious female deities; *za* are malevolent planetary deities; *nö jin* are guardian deities of the natural riches of the soil; the *lha* proper are a class of white deities who are well-disposed towards humankind (Cornu 1990: 226-229; Samuel 1993: 162-163).

ensure their goodwill and hence the health and prosperity of the local community (Samuel 1993: 161). Local gods are often associated with a particular place, for example, a mountain or a high pass, referred to in Tibetan as *né* (Huber 1994). Many ritual activities involve *la tsé,* the highest point of a mountain pass or peak, and *lha to,* which are stone cairns built at these points to mark the residence of a deity. Offerings of new stones for the cairn, *sang* (juniper smoke) and prayer-flags are made to propitiate deities, bring good luck, and perhaps also as protection against the deities themselves (Samuel 1993: 183). Stein argues that the concept of local deities (*lha*) is closely linked to the concept of *la* I described previously (section 1.6) (Stein 1972: 227-228; Huber 1994: 26-27). *La* is a kind of animism and refers to the 'spirit-essence' or 'life-principle' of a person, which can reside elsewhere in the environment for example in trees (*la shing*), stones (*la to*), lakes (*la tso*), animals (*la sem chen*) etc. (cf. Huber 1994: 26; see section 1.6). Stein proposes that *la* and *lha* were once compounded in Tibetan thought, given that *lha* (such as the personal protective gods, *go bai lha*, which include *po lha, mo lha,* gods of men and women), deities of the inside or household (*puk lha*) and 'gods of the country' (*yül lha*) are, like *la*, considered to dwell both within the body and externally, in the natural environment and dwellings (e.g. the house and the tent) (Huber 1994: 26). In short, the entire landscape, buildings and people of Tibet are animated by *la* and *lha*. The material world and its inhabitants can be considered mutually constituted according to this principle.

Huber draws our attention to the relationships with the physical environment that these ideas imply. *Né*, which is often translated into English simply as 'place', is more active than this translation suggests; the English translation also misses the ontological value which the Tibetan term invokes, and the associated sense of existence or abiding associated with places at which deities (*lha*) reside (Huber 1994: 25). *Né* in Tibet are considered to have power, which can be transferred to the individual through

physical practices such as prostration and circumambulation (*kora* or *né kor*). Tibetan interactions with places are thus active in the sense that pilgrim and place exert agency over one-another; visiting a power place (Dowman 1988) is an encounter (*né jel*, literally 'meeting' a place) (Huber 1994: 30, 35).

While in Tibet *yül lha* (local deities) belonging to specific places featured prominently in ritual practice (Samuel 1993, Huber 1994; my interviewees confirmed this), in McLeod Ganj they rarely do. This is due partly to displacement: of those I spoke to, an elderly *a ni* (nun) belonging to one of McLeod Ganj's nunneries, suggested that perhaps the *yül lha* of her natal village in Tibet had travelled to India with her. However many were unsure whether or not *yül lha* were resident in the hills surrounding McLeod Ganj. For example Tenzin Gyaser,[77] who was born in India, explained to me that since the mountains and hills around McLeod Ganj do not belong to Tibetans they are not populated by Tibetan gods. A local ritual specialist or *ngak pa*[78] confirmed this, noting that the area surrounding McLeod Ganj was considered sacred to Shiva by Hindus and therefore could not be inhabited (in his opinion) by Tibetan deities. Logically, he continued, this would mean that Tibetan children born in the area come under the protection of Shiva instead of a Tibetan deity.[79] However, he noted that the Dalai Lama had decreed that Tibetan children could adopt Palden Lhamo, one of Tibet's national protector deities and the Dalai Lama's personal protector, as their

[77] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 16 Jan 2013.

[78] *Ngak pa* are lay tantric practitioners affiliated to the Nyingma school. The role is hereditary; *ngak pa* often marry and live with their families in the community. Lay men and women often seek out local *ngak pa* to service their ritual needs (e.g. for the rituals of marriage, in case of ill-health or occurrence of other obstacles, in order to conduct divination (*mo*), for rituals to ensure good health and luck) in preference to seeking assistance from monks at a nearby monastery, since *ngak pa* are often considered more skilled in such matters (cf. Pirie 2007: 99-100). Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 29 Mar 2013.

[79] This deity, he said, is assigned at birth and referred to as *kyé lha* in Tibetan. As Samuel notes, however, lists of Tibetan *go bai lha* (local deities which have a personal protective role) are not consistent. *Go bai lha* comprise five *lha* that are 'born at the same time' as a child, or rather, become associated with the child at its birth. These include *yül lha* as well as *mo lha* (female god) and *po lha* (male god) (the former is also referred to as *puk lha,* or the house deity). My interviewees used multiple, differing terms for these deities depending on their own regional origins, hence it is possible that for example *kyé lha* in fact has the same identity as another of the *lha* listed by Samuel (Samuel 1993: 187; see also Nebesky Wojkovitz 1956: 264, 327 - 328).

protective deity instead. While Tibetan *yül lha* (place-deities) were largely not thought to exist in the hills around McLeod Ganj, other deities (e.g. of the household, *puk lha*) were thought by some to have followed families and individuals abroad. Although I never personally encountered a family living in McLeod Ganj who made offerings to such deities, I heard second-hand reports of individuals who did. It is possible, however, that Tibetans I met did not wish to admit their practice of 'folk religion' and rituals to me, since they are widely denigrated as foolish and superstitious, especially by Tibetan youth.[80]

Overall, the Tibetan relationship with the physical geography of McLeod Ganj can be described as ambivalent. While the cooler climate and mountainous setting are certainly appreciated by refugees, they are not the main source of their comfort in the town. Rather, opportunities for Tibetan social life are considered more important; these have been generated through Tibetan agency. Likewise, beliefs about place-based deities have only partially been imported from Tibet into exile; the landscape surrounding McLeod Ganj is not considered pre-populated by Tibetan gods. Instead, as I discuss in the next chapter, refugees have fashioned the religious geography of McLeod Ganj by laying out circumambulation routes and constructing religious buildings. This reiterates the primary importance of Tibetan agency in shaping the exilic environment.

3.3 Ladakh: 'little Tibet'

The Ladakh region lies at the western extreme of the Indian Himalayas in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This state borders Pakistan to the west and Tibet (PRC) to

[80] Many Tibetan youth described ritual and religious practices such as *kora*, making offerings to local deities, the wearing of amulets, and divination, which are popular among older Tibetans, as 'superstitious' practices, pursued by 'green minded' (*lé pa jang khu*) people or stemming from 'blind faith' (*mong dé*). (See e.g. Norbu 2005.) Many instead explained that they followed '21st century Buddhism' (cf. Lopez 1998: 184-186, on 'Buddhist modernism'); that their personal practice of Buddhism entailed taming the mind and undertaking compassionate acts. The Dalai Lama himself espouses such views in his English language publications e.g. Dalai Lama 2011 (cf. Lopez 1998: 185). See discussion p132-133.

the east. Ladakh lies adjacent to this eastern border and the higher altitude area known as Jangthang[81] extends east into Tibet itself. To the west, Ladakh encompasses the town of Kargil and the Zoji-la pass; to the south and southwest it takes in the mountains and valleys of Zanskar and Suru; and to the north, the valley of Nubra. The region is exceptionally mountainous: Ladakh's capital, Leh, lies at an altitude of over 3,500m; to its south, dominating the horizon lie the summits of the Zanskar range, which rise to between 5,500m and 6,400m, and include the prominent peak of Stok Kangri, which lies on the southern side of the Indus (known locally, and in Tibet, as the Sengge Khambab) (Rizvi 1996: 28, 31). In historical and geographical terms, the Indus river valley forms the 'backbone' of Ladakh (Rizvi 1996: 31). This massive valley, which runs in a south-east/north-west direction, connects Ladakhi villages sited both on the river and in adjacent valleys (see Fig. 6, p58).

Ladakh's situation beyond the Greater Himalaya Range ensures that it does not suffer from the annual monsoon that strikes the rest of India.[82] Instead, the major sources of water for inhabitants are the rivers and the glaciers that feed them. In the settlements in the valleys fields are irrigated by a complex system of channels. Aside from these agricultural areas and the village oases the land is a barren desert, exceptionally cold in the winter with deep snowfall and hot at the height of summer, during which temperatures reach into the high thirties (Celsius). Ladakh is cut off by land from the rest of India between November/December and May/June. The two major roads that serve the region, the south-north Leh to Manali road, and the east-west Leh to Srinagar road, are blocked by snowfall between these months. During this time, the only

[81] *Byang thang* (Tibetan, Wylie transliteration) literally translates as 'northern plain'. This may seem an incongruous name for a southeastern region of Ladakh, but the name actually refers to a region which continues on the Tibetan side of the border and is known by the same name.
[82] Occasionally Ladakh suffers dramatic flooding caused by cloud bursts (sudden, heavy downpours). The most recent occurred in August 2010 and caused widespread destruction, particularly to the village of Choglamsar (which includes the Tibetan settlement of the same name).

way to reach Ladakh is by air therefore during the winter vegetables and other supplies are brought by merchants from Delhi and loaded onto planes bound for Leh.



Figure 13 View eastwards along the Indus valley, Leh, Ladakh (25 Apr 2013).

Ladakh is often referred to in English as 'little Tibet'. Connected via several passes to Tibet, and sharing a geographically contiguous borderland, the region does indeed share strong topographical and climatic similarities especially with more arid western Tibet, which includes the regions of Ngari and Tö. Perhaps more importantly, however, Ladakh and Tibet share the same religious heritage: both areas have historically followed the Tibetan Buddhist religion.[83] The Ladakhi landscape contains numerous significant sites, the most visible being monasteries (dating to the 12th century AD and later) and *chö ten,* religious monuments which take their form from the earliest

[83] There is also a small Muslim community present in Ladakh. Many Kashmiri Muslims also spend the summer in Ladakh, making the most of the opportunities for trade brought by tourists.

reliquaries built to house the remains of the Buddha. These are widely used by Tibetan exiles for religious practice (e.g. pilgrimage, making offerings). I discuss these further in the next chapter on the exilic built environment (see Case Study 1, section 4.1.2). In the following section, I focus my discussion on Tibetan perceptions of the physical landscape of Ladakh although, as will become evident, the 'built' and the 'physical' are strongly intertwined.

Refugees I spoke with in Ladakh had a mixed perception of the region. Many elderly men and women who were born and raised in western Tibet close to the Ladakhi border viewed the region favourably, especially when compared with other sites of Tibetan settlement in India. One individual I spoke with recalled how he had declined an opportunity to re-settle in Bylakuppe (south India) in the early years of exile on the grounds that he preferred the Ladakhi climate.[84] To him Ladakh, with its mountains and historic monasteries (*gon pa*), felt more like home. Those who originated in places such as Ruthok and Rawang in the Ngari region of western Tibet and especially those who had been miners, merchants and herders (or *sa ma drok*, meaning they pursued a life which was half nomadic, half agricultural) already had some familiarity with Ladakh before they decided to flee their country. Prior to the Chinese takeover, Ladakh represented an important market for Tibetan products and an important source of barley, rice and lentils. Many of the elderly men and women I spoke with recalled that their families had known the region and routes into it prior to leaving, hence the transition had not been as difficult for them as for those Tibetans who settled in other parts of India. An elderly man who continued to live a nomadic life in Sumdho, Jangthang, went as far as to say that if it were not for the fact of his being exiled he would feel exactly at home,[85] thus highlighting how although the similarity of the physical environment to his homeland increased his comfort, ultimately it did not bestow upon him the feeling of

[84] Interviewed in Akling, Leh, 19 Apr 2013.
[85] Interviewed in Sumdho, Jangthang, 14 Jun 2013.

being at home. Rather, being at home entailed a sense of belonging that comes with nationhood and political rights (see below, section 3.4).

Not all viewed the region so positively. As well as being populated by Tibetans from western regions, the Leh camps of Akling and Choglamsar also include Tibetans from Kham (southeast Tibet). The Khampas I spoke with had served with the Chushi Gangdrug,[86] the Tibetan guerrilla force that was active in fighting against Chinese forces in eastern Tibet and especially Kham. Upon arriving in India, these men had joined armed forces set up by the Indian government following the 1962 Sino-Indian War. These included the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force (ITBF) and the all-Tibetan 'Establishment 22' (Est. 22), later known as the Special Frontier Force (SFF) (McGranahan 2010: 139).[87] After several years of service they had taken retirement in Ladakh and settled with the Tibetan community there. Of those who had come from Kham, few spoke positively about the Ladakhi landscape. Used to rolling, green hills and pasture, the Ladakhi landscape by comparison was stark and barren, dry and infertile. Exiles commonly used the descriptor 'naked' for Ladakh's mountains; in contrast, they recalled the fertile valleys and pastures in which their families had grazed their herds of goat, sheep, yak and *dri*[88] in Tibet.

In Ladakh unlike McLeod Ganj it seemed that more residents either continued to venerate local deities or knew of a neighbour who did. Most, when talking to me about their *yül lha* or *puk lha,* did so sceptically, however, and took care to explain when and

[86] The Chushi Gangdrug resistance force was formed during the mid-1950s from volunteer fighters from southeast Tibet (Kham). This force engaged Chinese troops, fighting a guerrilla war from around the mid-1950s until 1974, when the Dalai Lama persuaded them to lay down their arms. Chushi Gangdrug itself is an ancient name for Kham, and refers to the region's four rivers and six ranges (McGranahan 2010: 1-2).
[87] The ITBF was established on 24 Oct 1962 under the auspices of the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs MHA); the Est. 22/SFF, a regiment within the Indian army, was inaugurated on 24 Nov 1962 (McGranahan 2010: 139). McGranahan comments that Est. 22/SFF was considered a sister organization to the Chushi Gangdrug by Mustang soldiers (a number of Chushi Gangdrug fighters received CIA training in guerilla tactics in the US between 1958 and 1964; after their training, these men went on to run operations in Tibet from a base in Mustang, Nepal until 1974). McGranahan notes that these men believed that Est.22/SFF was created in order 'to restore independence to Tibet' (McGranahan 2010: 132-141).
[88] In Tibetan, *yak* refers to the male of the species only; *dri* is used to refer to females.

why they still maintained their practices. A number of people noted that they continued to make offerings to their *puk lha*, the deity of the house. *Puk lha*, they said, moved with individuals when they moved place; moreover, they are 'inherited' by children in the family line. Geography, in that sense, matters little; these deities are mobile, children born in Ladakh to a Tibetan family naturally inherit the family's *puk lha*. In the case of *yül lha*, opinions varied more. Many explained that Tibetans living in Ladakh do not have *yül lha* and that Tibetan children who are born in Ladakh do not belong to a specific god in the way they would have done had they been born in Tibet. Like in Dharamshala, and according to the decree of the Dalai Lama, such children come under the protection of Tibet's protector deities, Palden Lhamo and Nechung, and the Buddhist saint Guru Rinpoche. However, in conversation with me, some did declare a strong relationship with their Tibetan *yül lha.* Chonjor,[89] who lived with his wife in the settlement of Akling, described the *yül lha* from his *pa yül* (home valley) in Kham. Named Kawa Karpo for its white peaks, he believes this mountain/*yül lha* (names of *yül lha* and the mountains where they dwell are often the same) remains with him in Ladakh. He has always made offerings to this *yül lha* since, as he explained, he does not know if the deity would punish him if he stopped (a chance he does not wish to take). Having heard of my interest in *lha,* a friend took me to visit another Akling resident[90] who is considered a local expert on *lha*. Indeed, his expertise has earned him the title of *ku zhap* in the community*,* which means 'monk', though he is not one. In point of fact, as a friend explained, few monks these days are knowledgeable about *lha* (cf. Pirie 2007: 99-100). This is a result of the 'modernisation' of the monastic curriculum since 1959, which has been driven by the Dalai Lama, especially in his (the Gelug) sect (Lopez 1998: 184-186, see discussion p132-133 and footnote 80, p87). *Ku zhap* Choeying described his own personal relationship with his *yül lha,* which is named

[89] Interviewed in Akling, 18 Apr 2013.
[90] Interviewed in Akling, 23 Jul 2013.

Machen Pomra after a mountain in Derge, Kham. Ladakhi *yül lha* (i.e. those based in the Ladakhi landscape), he argued, do not really affect Tibetans, since they are not of this country. However, he conceded that he was drawing from his own personal experience and that it was possible that he personally does not suffer their anger since his *yül lha,* Machen Pomra, is particularly powerful and well able to protect him from the anger of the weaker Ladakhi *yül lha*. It was his understanding that *yül lha* pass from father to son, irrespective of birthplace, hence he believes his son, who was born in Ladakh, also has a relationship with Machen Pomra and that this relationship will continue in his family line.

While I did not discover any Tibetans living in the Leh area who venerated local (Ladakhi) *yül lha*, I did come to hear about Tibetans living in Jangthang who shared relationships with Ladakhi *yül lha* with their nomadic Ladakhi neighbours. Mentok Yangdrol and Tashi Norbu,[91] an elderly couple living in the village of Sumdho (originating from Changba and Rawang in western Tibet), explained that some local Tibetans considered the Taglang-la, a nearby pass, to be the home of a *lha*. They also described another *lha* who could be found on the road to lake Tsomoriri. In the main, however, it was Ladakhis who made offerings to these *lha*. Tibetans, they argued, have only been in the region for forty to sixty years, and so have not had sufficient time to build up relationships with these deities.

[91] Interviewed in Sumdho, Jangthang, 14 Jun 2013.



Figure 14 *Lha to* of the *lha* who resides at this pass, which is en route to Tsomoriri, Jangthang (Ladakh) (image taken 16 Jun 2013). Note how the road diverges to either side of the *lha to* in order that Tibetan and Ladakhi road-users can pass by on the left-hand side (or complete *kora* of the *lha to* in their vehicles).

What do changing ritual practices surrounding local deities indicate about Tibetan attitudes towards the land they now inhabit? At the outset of my research I anticipated that examining exile Tibetan relationships with place deities might reveal something about Tibetans' relationships with the landscapes of exile. To an extent this is true - a significant number of individuals commented that Tibetans were relative newcomers, foreigners to the landscapes they occupy; hence they did not share relationships with deities in the environment. Tibetans' abandonment of local deities also relates to trends in the practice of contemporary Tibetan Buddhism, however (see footnote 80, p87 and discussion on p132-133). In all my conversations surrounding *lha*, interviewees expressed that such practices are regarded as antiquated and increasingly irrelevant today. Indeed, few could understand why I was interested in such 'superstitions'. Many told me that the Dalai Lama, himself a proponent of '21st century

Buddhism' (e.g. Dalai Lama 2011), had instructed Tibetans that since *lha* (such as *yül lha* and *puk lha*) are not enlightened beings it is not necessary to make offerings to them. Rather Palden Lhamo and Nechung, who are protectors of both Buddhism and the Tibetan nation, are sufficient. While the word of the Dalai Lama carries considerable weight for Tibetans living in exile,[92] it appears to carry less for Ladakhis, who nonetheless possess a great deal of affection and respect for the religious leader. This is perhaps due to the different political situation of Ladakh as part of India, and perhaps also because of the greater historical significance in the region of the Drukpa Kagyu sect and its head, the Gyalwang Drukpa. Perhaps it is for these reasons that Ladakhis continue to believe in and propitiate local deities while Tibetans living in exile have mostly abandoned them.

Thus far I have mainly discussed the views of older generation Tibetans and newcomers, whose experience of exile is framed by their memories of Tibet, and whom we might consequently expect to be affected by the presence or absence of a familiar physical and sensory environment. But to what extent does the landscape play a role for younger generation exiles born in India? While some expressed affiliation for the place they grew up, or for India's cosmopolitan cities or the mountainous environments I have been describing, few evaluated these in relation to their image of Tibet. Those who commented that they particularly enjoyed the surrounding environment of McLeod

[92] The recent Shugden controversy highlights the weight Tibetans attribute to the Dalai Lama's comments. Dorje Shugden is a potent protector deity of the Gelugpa sect. Due to the deity's reputation for violence against (including assassination of) Gelug teachers who engage with the texts and traditions of other Tibetan Buddhist sects (which goes against the inclusive spirit of the current Dalai Lama's non-sectarian religious politics), the Dalai Lama has advised against the propitiation of this protector; he began voicing his concerns as early as the 1970s. He has since deemed the protector to be a dangerous demon masquerading as a benign deity, and has prohibited those who have ritual commitments to him from attending his teachings. The Dalai Lama's pronouncements on Shugden have been interpreted and enacted diversely across the Tibetan diaspora, but were strongly enforced by the Tibetan government in exile which, according to Tibetan author, Jamyang Norbu (2005), 'produced and distributed literature and videos demonizing Shugden worshippers'. While a few Tibetan lamas continue their ritual relationship with the deity, most have abided by the Dalai Lama's instruction. Lay Tibetans I spoke with expressed deep concern about, even disgust for, those who resisted the Dalai Lama's edict (Shugden supporters include many Western converts to Buddhism, based in Europe and associated with the New Kadampa Tradition founded by Tibetan Geshe, Kelsang Gyatso), and the issue remains highly divisive and contentious (see Joffe 2015; Norbu 2005, 2014).

Ganj and Ladakh took care to explain that it was the general beauty of the scenery which they valued, the clean air, and the cooler, less humid climate. Since they had no personal experience of Tibet, they did not and could not evaluate it in relation to their homeland. For example, for Youdon, who was born in south India, the environment of McLeod Ganj did not signify Tibet, rather it reminded her of the Himalayan landscapes of Hindi film:

> I have this huge attraction over mountain, and tall trees. We don't have tall trees in south; we have fat trees … not very disciplined ones. But here, when I walk to Dharamkot, I feel like I'm walking in a movie … like Hindi [movies] with mountains and beautiful view. I'm two years been here, and still I'm not over with the beauty, it's still everyday when I walk, it's still fresh.
>
> Youdon[93]

While those of the older generation, especially in Ladakh, cited environmental continuity as a contributing factor in their feeling 'at home', this was strongly tempered by the political and legal situation in which they found themselves, in short: their statelessness. As scholars in the social sciences have shown, states, like landscapes, exert affective force on their subjects. Indeed, affective force is an important way in which states and institutions are able to extend their control and govern (Aretxaga 2003, Navaro-Yashin 2012, Stoler 2007, cf. Foucault e.g. 1979). State practices are experienced phenomenologically at the level of the individual. As Aretxaga has argued:

> ... the state ... is produced through discourse and practices of power, produced in local encounters at the everyday level, and produced through the discourses of public culture, rituals of mourning and celebration, and encounters with bureaucracies, monuments, organization of space, etc.
>
> Aretxaga 2003: 398

Further, these encounters are 'often experienced in an intimate way where power is experienced close to the skin, embodied in well-known local officials, through the

[93] Youdon is in her mid-twenties, and was born in south India. Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 27 Jan 2013.

practices of everyday life' (Aretxaga 2003: 396, cf. Das and Poole 2004). It is as much *through* landscapes, then, through restrictions on certain kinds of movement and encouragement of others, that states are experienced. This is what Tibetan refugees expressed to me in interviews: their experiences of the landscapes, the places and spaces of exile, were inextricably bound up with their legal status. Thus, as they explained, it was statelessness and its attendant lack of rights that stopped them feeling 'at home'. For them, the landscape was not so much significant as a locus of practice for tradition and religion as it was a contested, political entity. In the following section, then, I move on from the issue of the tangible landscape to discuss the legal status of Tibetans in India and how this compromises their mobility within the Indian subcontinent and abroad. As I have just suggested, legal status is not merely bureaucratic; it has real-life geographic consequences and hence informs Tibetans' experience of the Indian landscape. It also has an affective dimension, which impacts Tibetans' sense of self-identity and belonging in India. I discuss exiles' perceptions of their pseudo-refugee status, and their thoughts on how taking Indian and foreign citizenships impacts their 'Tibetanness'. Tibetans' legal status in India also affects their ability to own property and land and to pursue certain kinds of employment. This discussion thus sets the stage for other issues raised later in the thesis.

3.4 Legal identities and their spatial expression

The state of India retains a highly ambiguous attitude towards refugees, which is in part a legacy of the massive refugee movements occasioned by Partition of the country at Independence (1947) (Houssain 1997: 78; Rolfe 2008: 256). Today India is one of the world's the most significant receivers of refugees, especially from neighbouring nations (Oberi 2006: 1). This history, in part, explains why India is

signatory to neither the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees nor the subsequent 1967 Protocol, but has instead developed its own approach (Rolfe 2008: 254; McConnell 2011: 301; Banerjee 2014: 613-614). Lack of international regulation lends India considerable power to deal selectively with different groups of refugees (for example, prioritising more 'desirable' refugees and migrants over others); it also renders the position of refugees within the country precarious, given that government policy towards them is constantly subject to change.

The Indian state's reception of Tibetan refugees in 1959 and immediately afterwards was welcoming. From the very beginning, Tibetan presence within India has been framed through the idiom of welcome guest and hospitable host; the Dalai Lama remains a popular figure among the Indian population and Tibetans have been described as 'model' refugees (Subba 2002: 136; Fürer-Haimendorf 1990). Although it does not officially recognise the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in Dharamshala as the government of Tibet, or the Dalai Lama as the temporal leader of Tibet, India has nevertheless permitted, and in some senses encouraged, the CTA to operate upon its soil and carry out state-like functions (McConnell 2009).

India's attitude towards its Tibetan 'guests', which was largely positive in the early years, has fluctuated over time, however. In the years after 1959, Tibetans arriving into India were granted a form of pseudo 'refugee status' which affords them certain rights as foreign nationals residing on Indian soil. In the absence of official refugee status Tibetans are dealt with like other foreigners, under the 1946 Foreigners Act (and the subsequent 1948 Foreigners Order which was issued under it). Under this act, Tibetans are permitted to remain in India as foreign nationals on the condition that they obtain an Indian Registration Certificate for Tibetans (abbreviated to RC or Registration Certificate). This document permits Tibetans to move freely about India, and grants them the right to reside in the area in which it is registered (moving to a different area of

India requires re-registration of the RC). Most Tibetans renew their RCs yearly at their local Foreigners Registration Office (FRO). A recent change to the regulations has meant that since 2012 Tibetans born in India and those who have resided in the country for over twenty years are now able to renew their RCs for a period of five years.[94]

Not all Tibetans currently living in India are eligible to apply for an RC, however. While those who entered India in the first wave of refugees and their children are eligible for this status, Tibetans who arrived after 1979 are not.[95] As a result, recent arrivals have sought to regularise their status in India in other ways. Tibetans who arrived in Nepal after 2003 were (and are currently) able to obtain a Special Entry Permit (SEP) from the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu (McConnell 2013: 972). Applying for this permit requires them to state their purpose in India, for example: education, pilgrimage or visiting relatives. Based on their answer, permits are granted for different lengths of time, ranging from a single month up to a period of several years. However, gaining an SEP to India does not entitle refugees to an RC upon arrival. Therefore Tibetans wishing to obtain an RC in India are encouraged to claim their country of birth as 'India' in official documentation (cf. McConnell 2011: 303). For this reason, many of the Tibetans born in Tibet who were brought to India by their parents at a young age during the 1980s and 1990s are actually registered as having been born in India.[96] More recently arrived adults often do not succeed in obtaining an RC and remain stateless and illegal in India. This impedes their access to paid employment and university education, and with few connections in India to assist them,

[94] http://tibet.net/2012/04/19/india-nod-to-extension-of-rc-for-5-years/ [accessed 2 Apr 2015]. Special rules apply to Tibetans residing in Ladakh. Ladakh is part of India's sensitive northern border state of Jammu and Kashmir. Restrictions on foreigners are greater in this area and Tibetan refugees living here are required to renew their RCs every six months.

[95] United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services 2003, http://www.refworld.org/docid/3f51f90821.html [accessed 2 Apr 2015].

[96] Many children now in their mid-late twenties were brought by parents and other relatives from Tibet at a young age and enrolled in residential Tibetan schools in India. In many cases parents returned to Tibet having entrusted their children 'to the Dalai Lama', or more specifically the school system established by his sister, Jetsun Pema, in conjunction with the CTA and the Indian government.

these individuals live a precarious life, attempting as far as possible to avoid the attention of the state.[97]

Possession of an RC entitles Tibetans to all the rights applicable to non-citizen aliens living in India, these include the right to work, to access Indian health and education facilities, and the freedom to practise their own religion (McConnell 2011: 302). Many Tibetans, however, are under the impression that their so-called 'refugee status' affords them few rights and few fully exercise those they do possess, preferring to avoid involvement with state agencies altogether.[98] Many recounted difficulties they experienced due to their 'foreign' status to me. Although the entire private sector job market is open to Tibetans, many noted that they were ineligible for the state and government jobs that are highly prized in India. Others described how their lack of citizenship disadvantaged them in competition for high-level private sector jobs, since prominent companies are unwilling to hire Tibetans whose only form of identification is the RC (cf. Lokyitsang 2013). Others lamented that, as legal foreigners, they were ineligible for reservation or quota places granted to Scheduled Castes and Tribes (the official designation of historically disadvantaged groups in India) at Indian universities, meaning that it was difficult for them to gain admittance (cf. McConnell 2011: 302). As a result, they argued, there were few opportunities for Tibetans living in India to

[97] Tibetan researcher and blogger Dawa Lokyitsang (2013) suggests that many newly arrived Tibetans seek marriage with Westerners as alternative route to legal visibility. These individuals, through marriage, seek passage abroad to what is envisaged as a more secure, prosperous life in Europe and North America. Certainly, many new arrivals with whom I spoke either struggled to support themselves in India, or were forced to live on subsidies from parents remaining in Tibet. Feeling trapped, unable to get employment, and unable to travel back to Tibet since the 2008 crackdown, these (predominantly) men were active in searching for opportunities to emigrate westwards. Many were saving up money to purchase visas illegally, and devoted considerable time and effort to improving their English. Being able to speak good English enabled these men to converse with the many foreigners passing through McLeod Ganj and to attempt to gain their assistance (financial or otherwise). As one individual confessed to me, having good English was also considered helpful in picking up potential foreign spouses.

[98] For example, a local advocate based in McLeod Ganj who provides legal services for the Tibetan community told me that he is repeatedly surprised by how unaware Tibetans are of the rights they do possess in India. In order to raise legal awareness among Tibetans in the Indian settlements, he regularly conducts workshops on Tibetan rights and obligations according to Indian law (interviewed 1 Feb 2013, McLeod Ganj).

develop stable, high-earning careers. As a result, many pursue unstable, seasonal work, for example selling sweaters or working in the tourist industry.

Beyond this, the bureaucratic processes entailed in holding an RC reinforce a sense of being unwelcome. Jamchoe, who helps to run one of McLeod Ganj's pizza restaurants, explained how his yearly 'pilgrimage' to the Foreigners Registration Office (FRO) in lower Dharamshala to renew his RC always reinforced his sense of not belonging. Like many other Tibetans in McLeod Ganj, he found the process arduous: the atmosphere in the office was always unpleasant, and he felt the Indian officers treated him badly. Jamchoe grew up in India; in some ways, he said, he was more Indian than the officers employed at the FRO - he enjoys Indian food, he speaks Hindi, he listens to Hindi music - and yet each year he is made to feel like an outsider.[99]

For others, it was the travel restrictions imposed upon them by their refugee status that made them feel like they did not belong. Although the RC confers the right to dwell and travel within India upon Tibetans it cannot be used for travel abroad. If Tibetans wish to travel abroad they must obtain an IC (Identity Certificate) from the Regional Passport Office in Delhi. The IC enables foreign travel, but it does not bestow all the rights and advantages of a passport. For example, possession of an IC does not in itself grant bearers the right to return to India. Prior to departing the country, bearers must apply at their local Foreigners Registration Office for leave to return to India (NORI – No Objection to Return to India). Because this document is not a full passport, however, Tibetans are in practice restricted from visiting many places, since European and North American countries are wary of granting visas to refugees.

In spite of these disadvantages, retaining this 'refugee identity' was considered vital by many of those that I spoke to.[100] Firstly, the RC confers several benefits upon

[99] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 12 Nov 2012.
[100] Besides gaining foreign citizenship by emigrating (e.g. via marriage with foreign nationals or emigration through CTA 'lottery') it is also becoming more common for Tibetans to seek Indian

Tibetans. For example, only Tibetans possessing RCs and Green Books (the Tibetan 'passport' issued by the CTA[101]) are permitted to use the facilities provided by the Central Tibetan Administration. These include: access to the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) schools free of charge, grants for university education and welfare support in the form of subsidised and free healthcare and retirement homes for the elderly. Tibetan students with RCs are also eligible for scholarships for overseas study. Many respondents stressed the benefit of these facilities; indeed in Ladakh I heard of non-Tibetans (often Nepalis) who had attempted to acquire Tibetan documentation (RCs and Green Book) in order to access Tibetan schools for their children.

Beyond this, many Tibetans I spoke with argued that it was essential that they remain legal refugees (this is how Tibetans mostly describe their 'foreigner' status) in order to keep the Tibetan cause alive. The CTA has actively encouraged this stance in the past (McConnell 2011: 303). For example, the Tibetan Settlement Officer (TSO) for McLeod Ganj, Sonam Dorje, told me that he personally had decided against taking Indian citizenship since he felt that doing so would be tantamount to denying the Tibetan cause. From his perspective, remaining a 'refugee' in the eyes of the law is essential since the daily difficulties Tibetans encounter because of their 'foreigner status' remind them what they are fighting for.[102] Others I interviewed argued that taking foreign citizenships (including Indian) made you less Tibetan. These views are not restricted to the elderly, or to CTA staff: youth, and especially those with strong

---

citizenship. The legal context is complex, but in essence Tibetans born in India between 26th January 1950 and 1st July 1987 are eligible for Indian citizenship. In December 2010, Namgyal Dolker Lhagyari won her case against the Ministry of Home Affairs, which had denied her request for a passport on the grounds that she was a Tibetan national. Since then, there has been much talk about (although seemingly relatively few applications for) Indian citizenship by Tibetans. Several respondents were intrigued by the possibility of citizenship, although I knew of only a handful that had either secured it or were in the process of applying. *Sikyong* Dr Lobsang Sangay noted in August 2013 that the CTA had received and facilitated only fourteen citizenship applications to date (http://tibet.net/2013/08/24/ten-questions-for-sikyong-dr-lobsang-sangay/ [accessed 2 Apr 2015]).

[101] The Green Book is administered by the CTA, and is issued upon payment of *cha trel*, or voluntary tax. Only individuals of biological Tibetan descent are eligible for this document (see section 1.4) (cf. McConnell 2011: 303).

[102] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 4 Sept 2012.

political conviction, often spoke proudly of their refugee status, regarding it as an important aspect of their personal politics (cf. McConnell 2011: 303). Nonetheless, acquiring both foreign, and to a lesser extent Indian, citizenship seems to be becoming more popular.[103]

Tibetan legal status, or rather lack thereof, has a spatial element that is felt and experienced. It is this legal identity, and its practical and physical consequences, which Tibetans brought up in conversations about landscape, suggesting that it strongly inflects their experience and sense of belonging in India. In the next chapter, I discuss how Tibetans' status impacts their ability to buy and own land and property in both McLeod Ganj and Ladakh and hence how it has affected engagement with the built environment. In addition to the restrictions mentioned above, which apply to Tibetan RC-bearers right across India, Tibetans in Ladakh also identified several further issues arising from their status that shaped their engagement with the state and the Indian (Ladakhi) landscape. Specifically, Tibetans, unlike local Ladakhis, are required to obtain movement permits if they wish to visit communities in the Jangthang region. Parts of this region are designated Protected Areas (these include Sumdho and Puga, and all the region between Upshi and Mahe Bridge); others which lie closer to the PRC/Tibetan border are designated Restricted Areas due to their strategic sensitivity. Legally all 'foreigners', including Tibetans, are required to obtain permits to travel in both zones. I was told in 2013 that officials had previously overlooked Tibetans travelling without permits, however recently this law had been enforced. This had occasioned anger and resentment among Tibetans, many of whom were born in

[103] A comparison of the data gathered in the 1998 and 2009 *Tibetan Demographic Surveys* indicates a significant rise in the number of Tibetans living outside South Asia, for example in countries in North America and Europe. In 1998-1999, around 9.96% of Tibetans living outside the PRC were living in countries other than Bhutan, Nepal and India (i.e. beyond South Asia) (Tibetan Demographic Survey 1998: 38). By 2009 that figure had increased to around 14.79% (TDS 2009: 13). The authors of the 2009 survey estimate that over 9 309 Tibetans moved to Western countries between 1998 and 2009. To put that in perspective, that figure equals c.7.28% of the total 2009 exile population (TDS 2009: 15). Living in these countries usually requires taking up foreign citizenship.

Jangthang and Ladakh and regularly visit family living in the border regions. As a friend explained, enforcing this legal requirement only strengthened Tibetan perceptions that they were not welcome.



Figure 15 Tsakshang camp occupied by Tibetan nomads. En-route between Sumdho and Tsomoriri Lake, Jangthang (Ladakh, 16 Jun 2013). It was noticeable that the grazing utilised by Tibetan nomads living in the areas of Sumdho, Puga, Trasant Lake and Tsakshang was meagre in comparison to that enjoyed by Ladakhi nomads at, for example, Tsomoriri Lake.

Relatedly, elderly interviewees frequently spoke of the freedom of movement they had enjoyed in Tibet prior to exile, recalling particularly how they had roamed freely with their herds. By contrast, Tibetan nomads living in Jangthang described how conflicts arose with Ladakhi neighbours over the apportioning of grazing land (Ladakhis, by and large, enjoy the use of the more fertile areas). Those living in Leh regretted that they were no longer able to live such a spatially free life and were

restricted, largely for financial and structural reasons, to living in the designated settlements.

As these comments show, Tibetan refugees' engagement with India's landscape is mediated in a variety of ways: by legal and political status, by religious praxis, and by Tibetans' own prior experiences of either living in Tibet or being raised in India. Interestingly, the belonging refugees do or do not feel seems to correlate more strongly with the resources available to them (e.g. political and religious) than with aesthetic considerations (i.e. the physical and sensory qualities of the landscape). While these aspects were certainly appreciated by refugees, legal experience and religious praxis were considered more important in engendering a sense of belonging. This, I contend, supports my argument that landscape in and of itself wields comparatively little agency, rather agency is located in human interactions with it.

3.5 Conclusion

> I'm not trying to be cynical about it but generally you know my understanding is that once this culture and tradition or habit that you have for generations left the place where this was born originally, then no matter how hard you try this authenticity, essence of it, is going to change or lose somehow.
>
> Sonam[104]

Sonam was born in central Tibet, he entered exile in the late 1990s and spent some years studying English at TCV Suja, a school run by the Tibetan administration which caters specifically to older refugees who have recently arrived in India. Sonam is an excellent linguist (he speaks English, Tibetan and Mandarin Chinese) and a successful businessman in McLeod Ganj, yet when we spoke he intended to move abroad, and so we began discussing his plans for bringing up his children in a Tibetan

[104] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 2 Mar 2013.

manner. For Sonam, McLeod Ganj is not a Tibetan place; it is an ambiguous, hybrid place. Narratives developed in the exile community over the last fifty years characterise Tibetan refugees who left Tibet prior to the Cultural Revolution as the only remaining bearers of authentic Tibetan culture. But according to Sonam, and also to a number of other newly arrived Tibetan refugees I spoke with, authentic Tibetan culture can now only be found in Tibet. Consequently, Sonam hopes to send his children to spend time with his relatives in his homeland when they are young. He hopes that by spending time there they will develop a stronger connection to their cultural roots. Sonam was the only one of my respondents to argue that the essence of Tibetan culture is strongly linked to the Tibetan landscape – the original premise of this research. But who is correct? Sonam, who was born in Tibet and for whom the primary locus of the living culture is paramount, or those who have lived in exile for many years whose very self-identity and purpose is rooted in the notion that they are the true bearers of unsullied Tibetan traditions?

In her ethnography of Karenni refugees Dudley suggests that feeling 'at home' entails feeling 'rightness' (Dudley 2010: 121; cf. Gosden 1999: 203), which in turn is created through the presence of familiar, comforting smells, sights, textures and sounds. She thus emphasises the physical and aesthetic qualities of 'home', arguing that refugees attempt to increase their own comfort in conditions of rupture by striving to recreate familiar aesthetic experiences in exile. She dubs such sensory work 'refugee aesthetics' (Dudley 2010: 165). In this chapter, I have evaluated the physical qualities of the Indian landscapes encountered by refugees in my two field sites in order to explore how such qualities inform and potentially promote Tibetan refugees' sense of being 'at home'.

The landscapes of the Leh area and especially Jangthang bear strong resemblance to those of western Tibet. For those from these regions, landscape and climate figured in their preference for Ladakh over other parts of India. For those originating in other areas of Tibet, however, the qualities of the physical landscape in Ladakh were less significant. Both groups, though, strongly valued the facilities for religious and ritual practice available in Ladakh (see section 4.2.5). In McLeod Ganj, while many appreciated the climate and natural beauty of the surrounding environment, it seemed that few felt it was similar to their homelands, and thus its significance by comparison appears quite small. When speaking about McLeod Ganj, interviewees cited other aspects of the community such as employment opportunities, presence of NGOs and the exile government, and especially the Dalai Lama as being more important than the 'natural' environment in making McLeod Ganj *feel* like a Tibetan place. Although, as Anand has noted:

> … the physical location of Dharamsala in the hills of Himachal Pradesh too has facilitated its projection and promotion as Little Lhasa. It is difficult to imagine some other place in the plains of India being promoted as the same.
>
> Anand 2002: 16

Thus while interviewees may not have highlighted the physical qualities of the environment, the topography and climate of McLeod Ganj has probably played at least a minor role in encouraging its conceptualisation as the exile 'capital', in addition to other factors, including most importantly the presence of the Dalai Lama and exile government.

Tibetan refugees do not bear the same attachment to their environments as populations with a long history of residence; this is not surprising. But the converse is

equally untrue: it would be overly simplistic to argue that Tibetans living in India have no relationship with the landscapes of exile. As Huber has shown, prior to the 1950s Tibetans held a wide variety of ideas about India, both positive and negative, in particular characterising it as the 'Holy Land' of the Buddha (Huber 2008: 352-355). While some cultural approaches towards landscape have not made the transition into exile (e.g. the local deities discussed above), other attitudes have. Tibetan environmental practices such as circumambulation of Buddhist sites (discussed further in the next chapter) should be considered strategic acts of 'place-making' (Huber 2008: 369); it is through such practices that Tibetans appropriate the landscape of India and develop relationships with it. By contrast, we might see the 'natural' environment as a canvas or set of resources with a comparatively limited role to play. In short, Tibetan relationships with the environment of India bear the hallmark of Tibetan agency. In contrast to Ingold's argument, which asserts the agency of the (non-human) environment, it is the agency of refugees that has been more significant.

4 Built environment: remembering the past, destabilising the present, imagining a future

> In many ways buildings are about thinking and working through things that cannot be adequately cognized and presenced in the here and now: the past, the future, ancestors, resolutions of social conflict, and contradiction. Buildings in many ways are about what is not there or what cannot possibly be physically or conceptually realised as being there: the cosmos, communist utopia, the ideal nuclear family, the 'primitive hut,' the hero/ancestor's home, the totality of ancestors and descendants.
>
> Buchli 2013: 167

In this extract Victor Buchli highlights the power of architecture to transcend the here and now, to evoke and depict what is absent and to envisage different times and places. For exiled Tibetans architecture thus presents a number of cognitive as well as physical possibilities. Tibetan refugees use architecture to 'presence' their homeland: to remember a Tibet which did not undergo invasion by the People's Liberation Army (PLA), to re-create past homes in exile and thereby engender feelings of familiarity and comfort, and lastly to imagine a future, 'free' and modern Tibet.

In this chapter I analyse the built environment of the Tibetan refugee settlements of Dharamshala and Ladakh. I take a holistic approach, including religious and 'vernacular' (or secular) architecture as well as less formally 'built' aspects of my field sites such as circumambulation routes in my analysis. I thus weave together man-made and more 'natural' aspects of the environment in my discussion. I utilise three inter-linked perspectives, which feature strongly in existing anthropological work on the built environment: embodiment, agency and aesthetics. Much of this work has evolved from Bourdieu's structuralist account of the relationship between architecture and society in North Africa. 'The Kabyle House or the World Reversed' (Bourdieu 1990b: 271-283) provides an important example of how the physical environment interacts at an embodied level with individuals. In it, Bourdieu demonstrates how houses in Kabylia

play an important role in inculcating cultural norms into their residents. In *The Logic of Practice* he then proposed the term *habitus* to refer to embodied habits, for example, ways of walking, speaking and sitting, which are culturally and physically learned from childhood. Through his study of Kabyle houses he shows how the architectural features of the house instil these and other cultural norms into inhabitants and how inhabitants ensure, by replicating their dwellings, that these are passed on to subsequent generations. The house for Bourdieu is thus a 'structured structure' (1990a: 53) in which and by which social and cultural life is materially produced, expressed, consumed and replicated.

Bourdieu's contribution echoes Henri Lefebvre's concept of the production of space, specifically its social production through political, social, physical, economic and other factors. For Lefebvre, like Bourdieu, space is both produced and producing. Institutions such as the state 'call for spaces – but spaces which they can then organize according to their specific requirements; so there is no sense in which space can be treated solely as an *a priori* condition of these institutions' (emphasis as in the original; Lefebvre 1991[1974]: 85). Lefebvre makes a clear distinction, however, between urban and rural, natural and cultural 'space', arguing: 'Nature doesn't produce [social space]. It simply IS, it creates but in an unintentional fashion; it puts forth but doesn't exert a conscious agency ... Humanity, which is to say social practice, creates works and produces things' (emphasis as in the original; Lefebvre 1991[1974]: 70-71). While, as I have argued, it is important to pay attention to the agency exerted by refugees over their environment, I suggest that in the context of this ethnography such a firm division between the 'natural' and the 'cultural' or man-made landscape is not sustainable. For this reason I have chosen to emphasise the theoretical contributions of Bourdieu and Certeau in this chapter, since their emphasis on practice allows us to appreciate 'urban' and 'natural' environments in a more contiguous way.

Certeau's description of a 'tactic' is a useful way of understanding how the idea of a structuring environment might apply to migrants and perhaps by extension Tibetan refugees. A 'tactic', in Certeau's definition, 'insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance' (Certeau 1984: xix). For example, a North African migrant living in Paris:

> …insinuates *into* the system imposed on him by the construction of a low-income housing development or of the French language the ways of 'dwelling' (in a house or a language) peculiar to his native Kabylia. He super-imposes them and, by that combination, creates for himself a space in which he can *find ways of using* the constraining order of the place or of the language. Without leaving the place where he has no choice but to live and which lays down its law for him, he establishes within it a degree of *plurality* and creativity. By an art of being in between, he draws unexpected results from his situation.
>
> Certeau 1984: 30 (emphasis in the original)

Certeau suggests that it is possible for outsiders to exist within the material confines of another culture without conforming entirely to it. Not only that, it is also possible for incomers to modify the unknown environment, if not physically at least conceptually so that it reflects their own social and cultural experience to a greater extent. Thus while Certeau recognises the agency of the physical environment he emphasises the agency of its inhabitants, including those originating elsewhere who introduce new ways of being to it. His work on tactics highlights the kinds of material compromises made by migrants seeking to establish themselves in new and unfamiliar places.

Certeau's approach to agency is reflected in Alfred Gell's distinction between primary and secondary agents. Gell expands the concept of agency and applies it to art, arguing that artworks should be defined according to their capacity to act as agents rather than through criteria of aesthetic discernment (Gell 1998: 6). According to Gell,

people are the 'primary agents', 'intentional beings … categorically distinguished from "mere" things or artefacts' (Gell 1998: 20). The objects and 'artefacts' themselves are only secondary agents (Gell 1998: 20) or indices of individuals' 'distributed personhood' (Gell 1998: 21, 232). This approach is significant in the context of Tibetan architecture: if an 'artist's' 'oeuvre' (Gell 1998: 232-251) can be considered the artist's 'distributed personhood' it follows that architecture, which is more often (though not always) a collective product, can point to the collective mind (cf. Buchli 2013: 167). In the Tibetan case, this suggests that exilic architecture might reveal wider truths about the Tibetan community living in India. This is the argument Gell advances in relation to the Maori meeting house:

> The Maori meeting house (in its totalized form) is an object which we are able to trace as a movement of thought, a movement of memory reaching down into the past and a movement of aspiration, probing towards an unrealized, and perhaps unrealizable futurity. Through the study of these artefacts, we are able to grasp 'mind' as an external (and eternal) disposition of public acts of objectification, and simultaneously as the evolving consciousness of a collectivity, transcending the individual cogito and the coordinates of any particular here and now.
>
> Gell 1998: 258

Gell thus suggests that buildings can embody the aspirations, memories and 'mind' of a group, can objectify that group in material form, and can encompass changes and developments over time. Architecture thus presents a number of possibilities for Tibetan refugees to create, depict and affirm their collective Tibetan identity outside their homeland. Architectural creations are aesthetic as much as they are structural, which brings me to my final point. Embodied and aesthetic perspectives in material anthropology speak strongly to one another: the embodied person encounters the physical world through the senses, in other words, aesthetically.[105] In objectifying

[105] I use the term 'aesthetics' in its original definition to refer to sensory perception, as described by Coote 1992, Morphy 1992, and Morphy and Coote in Morphy et al. 1994 (see discussion in section 1.6).

oneself materially through constructing a building or making an object one makes aesthetic choices that are culturally inflected. The finished result thus objectifies the self or group in aesthetic terms, in effect constituting a cultural style (cf. Coote 1992, Miller 2008: 294-295). In this chapter, I explore the aesthetic selections made by Tibetans to ask whether it is possible to physically construct a 'home' in exile that *feels* right (cf. Dudley 2010).

4.1 McLeod Ganj, or 'little Lhasa'?

Exile House[106]
By Tenzin Tsundue

Our tiled roof dripped
and the four walls threatened to fall apart
but we were to go home soon.

We grew papayas
in front of our house
chillies in our garden
and changmas for our fences,
then pumpkins rolled down the cowshed thatch
calves trotted out of the manger.

Grass on the roof,
beans sprouted and
climbed the vines,
money plants crept in through the window,
our house seems to have grown roots.

The fences have grown into a jungle,
now how can I tell my children
where we came from?

Many elderly Tibetans I spoke with in McLeod Ganj described how in the early years of exile they had not expected to remain long in India. They had come fleeing the PLA advance, fearing tales of wanton destruction, shootings and violence. Some had been involved in fighting against Chinese forces in Kham and had protected the Dalai

[106] From his English language poetry collection, *Kora* (Tsundue 2002: 25).

Lama as he fled over the border to safety. Others had followed him to India out of 'blind faith'.[107] Expecting a quick resolution, few planned for a long-term future outside their homeland. In his poem, McLeod Ganj-based poet-activist, Tenzin Tsundue (see above, p67) charts the slow creep of time that has marked exiles' lives since 1959. He describes a mentality oriented towards the temporary: although his roof leaks, there is no sense in rebuilding it since he will abandon it soon when he returns to Tibet. But slowly his plans are overtaken by the environment around him. Ironically, although the house appears to have 'taken root' in India, he has not. In the following pages I explore how this mentality is common among refugees and has shaped the built environment of McLeod Ganj over time; how its walls speak to public narratives of return and increasingly to onwards migration.

At first glance McLeod Ganj, with its snow-capped peaks, colourful prayer flags, monasteries and temples, looks 'Tibetan'. Look closer, however, and its built environment belies a cosmopolitan history. Accounts link Dharamshala's hills to the kings of Kangra, who are said to have built a residence in the area incorporating a *dharamshala* (Hindi, meaning a hostel or resting place) for travellers awaiting an audience with the king (Russell 2000: 21). Annexed by the British in 1846, the region became a military cantonment. Civilians followed the army, and the area developed into a hill station akin to other high altitude summer retreats established throughout India by the British. The upper town was later named after a senior Scottish soldier, Sir Donald Friell McLeod.[108] Bungalows were constructed in the hills and a church, St John's in the Wilderness, was founded in 1852. Although it gained fame through the personage of Lord Elgin of Kincardine (Viceroy of India 1860-1863), who spent time in the area and passed away there in 1863 (Russell 2000: 21), McLeod Ganj never became the 'summer

[107] See footnote 80, p87.
[108] *The Imperial Gazetteer of India,* Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1908-1931. New edition, published under the authority of His Majesty's secretary of state for India in council. Vol. 11, 301-302. (http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/gazetteer/ [accessed 13 May 2015]).

capital' it had promised to be. Disaster struck the Kangra valley on 4th April 1905 in the form of a severe earthquake, which destroyed many buildings with great loss of life.

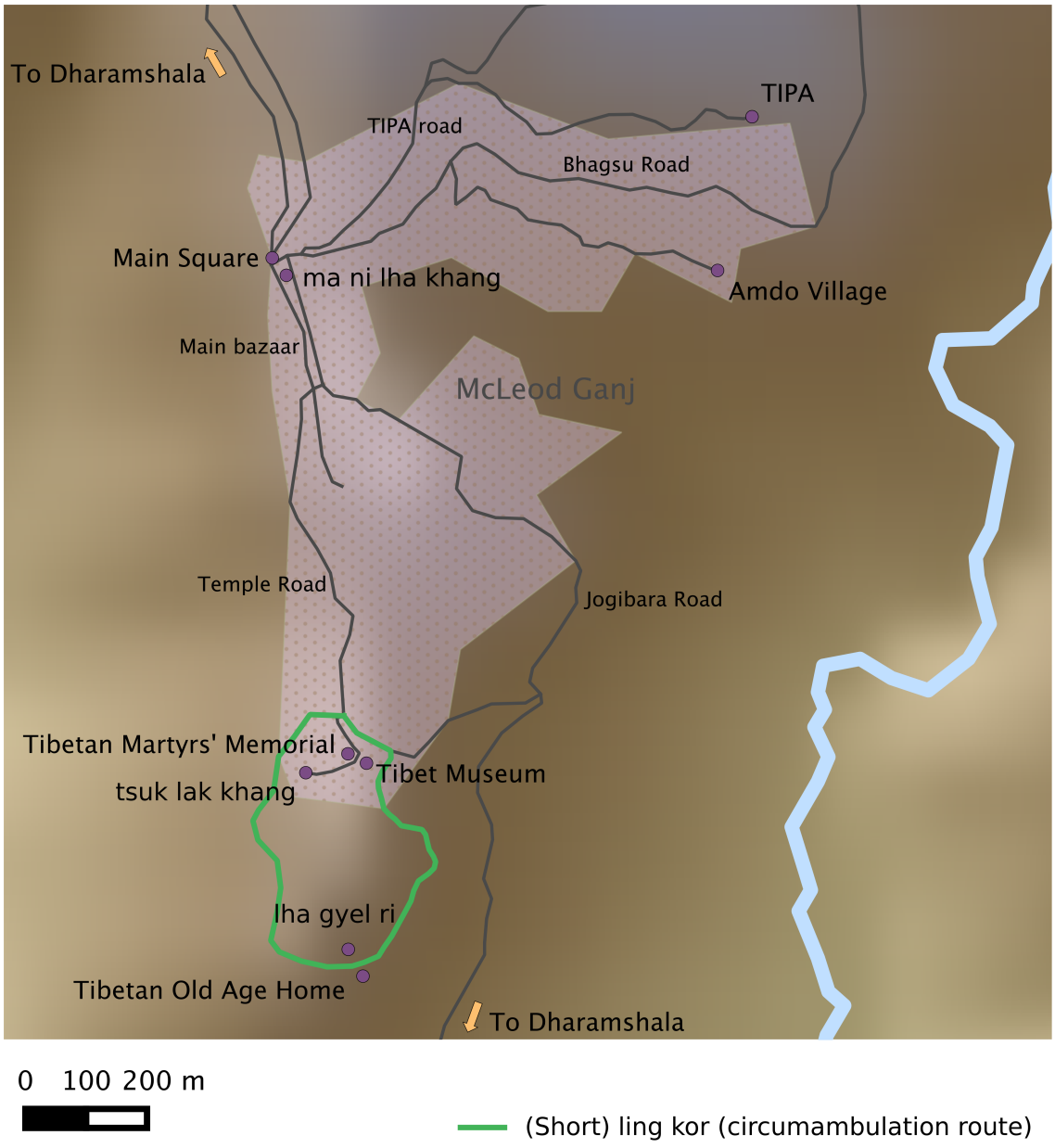


Figure 16 Map of McLeod Ganj showing significant Tibetan landmarks and *ling kor* route around the Dalai Lama's temple, the *tsuk lak khang* or Thekchen Chöling.

While the church survived, much of the rest of the town had to be rebuilt and in the process several amenities (the courts, police station, and various offices) were re-located further down the hillside and private bungalows were rebuilt at higher altitudes, giving the area its present structure of upper (McLeod Ganj) and lower (Dharamshala) towns

(Russell 2000: 22; see Fig. 4, p42). With the coming of Independence and Partition in 1947, the face of the Dharamshala area was changed again. The town's Muslim population departed for Pakistan and Hindu refugees from Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Punjab arrived. At this time of upheaval many British, who had intended to remain in India, also opted to leave. Thus when Tibetan refugees began arriving in 1960, aside from the local Gaddi pastoralists, the Nowrojee family and their famous shop (established in 1860), the town was largely vacant (Russell 2000: 21-24).



Figure 17 British bungalow on Jogibara Road. Today this building is divided into living quarters and several shops, and includes a Primary Care facility. Like many colonial era buildings in the area, the decaying structure has been patched using found and free materials, including flattened gasoline cans and plastic sheeting (Nov 2012).

In the early years of the 1960s, good quality accommodation for the arriving Tibetan refugees was scarce. The Dalai Lama and his government, which had shifted to McLeod Ganj from Mussoorie, took up residence in Swarg Ashram, a bungalow in the forest above today's Main Square (it has since become the local Mountaineering

Institute). Refugees, some of whom had arrived in advance of the Dalai Lama, were left to find what shelter they could in the surrounding area. Most lived in temporary tents, plastic sheeting strung between the branches of trees, or sheltered in the porches of other houses. Topden, who had come as a young man from the Tö region of western Tibet recalled the first 'room' he and his family occupied in McLeod Ganj. While he was able to board at his school in the Upper Tibetan Children's Village, he described how his parents had lived in a shelter of their own making, under a tarpaulin 'roof'.[109] Gradually, however, Tibetans were able to move out of these makeshift shelters. After the tents, Topden recalled, Tibetans began to build small wooden 'houses' of one or two rooms roofed with corrugated iron. Some of these are still occupied by Tibetans today. Stone, brick and then concrete succeeded these wooden constructions. Houses were expanded piecemeal, one room at a time, as families grew larger and more prosperous and as exiles realised that they might remain in India for a considerable length of time.

Topden's family was one of the first to invest in better quality housing. He recalled how neighbours, looking at his family's well-built stone and concrete house, used to question their commitment to returning to Tibet. Speaking with him in 2013, however, there was no doubt in his mind that he would leave McLeod Ganj if a return became possible. This orientation still infuses his construction projects today. When we spoke, he was planning to move away from McLeod Ganj to the nearby Tibetan colony at Norbulingka, where he planned to build a new house from baked bricks and concrete. Although, he told me, he preferred to build in mud-brick as his family had done in Tibet, he feared that Indian buyers would not be interested in purchasing such a property. For Indians, he noted, mud houses denote backwardness and poverty whereas concrete housing represents modernity and development. If he were ever able to return

[109] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 16 Feb 2013.

to Tibet he would need to sell his house in India, hence his new house needed to appeal to Indian buyers.

Topden is wealthy by local standards. His family invested in land and property during the early years of exile when both were affordable and it was legally possible for refugees to purchase land. Hence, he is now in the fortunate position of owning and leasing a number of houses and other buildings. Topden's family are unusual, however; few Tibetans in McLeod Ganj own their homes and instead rent rooms and apartments from (mostly) Indian landlords.



Figure 18 One of the many wooden shelters built by refugees using scrap materials in the early years after their arrival in McLeod Ganj (1960 onwards). Many of these are still inhabited; most can be found on the hillside above and to the north of McLeod Ganj's main square (see Fig. 16, p115). These houses do not have running water (although many have electricity) and so occupants use local standpipes. Over time Tibetans have built up concrete houses of several floors in and around these buildings (these can be seen in the background) (Nov 2012).

4.1.1 Rented rooms: instability in the vernacular built environment

Banishment [110]

By Bhuchung D. Sonam

Away from home
I live in my thirty-sixth rented room
With a trapped bee and a three-legged spider
Spider crawls on the wall and I on the floor
Bee bangs at the window and I on the table
Often we stare at each other
Sharing our pool of loneliness
They paint the wall with droppings and webs
I give them isolated words
net, maze, tangle
wings, buzz, flutter

Away from home
My minutes are hours
Spider travels from the window to the ceiling
Bee flies from the window to the bin
I stare out of the window
Neither speaks each other's tongue

I wish
You would go deaf
Before my silence

Bhuchung D. Sonam was born in Tibet; he came to India as a young boy, and was raised in residential Tibetan schools. He then spent some time studying in the US, and is now based in Dharamshala with his family, where he composes poetry. In *Banishment* he raises an issue which many refugees spoke about with me: their lack of ownership over property. Specifically, interviewees spoke of the difficulty of finding rooms to rent, dealing with Indian landlords, and the expense of the rooms available. High and increasing demand for rooms by comparatively wealthy tourists, combined with lack of space for development, have contributed to this problem. Most importantly, it was their inability to own land and hence to put down roots that Tibetan interviewees identified as the reason they could not create a 'home' in India and the reason they felt

[110] From his collection of poems, *Songs from a Distance* (Sonam 2012: 7) written and published in English.

they could not 'belong'. The kind of transience enforced by being unable to purchase land and invest, and being subject to the whim of Indian landlords, further reinforced their sense that this was not their place.

Laws governing land ownership in India are specific to each state. In Himachal Pradesh the law in 2012-2013 was especially stringent: it was not only Tibetans' foreigner status which prevented them from buying land, the only individuals permitted to purchase land in Himachal were those who had either been born or dwelt in Himachal for over fifteen years, and furthermore who were registered as Himachali agriculturalists.[111] Thus not only Tibetans but also the majority of Indian citizens, including many Himachalis, were unable to own land in the state. In practice individuals, including some Tibetans, evaded these restrictions by seeking partnerships with Himachalis in whose name they purchased land. Such practices bring their own legal difficulties, however, and merely enhanced the precariousness of the situation for those who attempted this route.

These structural constraints are materially expressed. Since the majority of McLeod Ganj's Tibetan residents live in Indian-built rental accommodation (and often have to shift rooms) few choose to expend what little income they have on Tibetanising these buildings in a permanent way, opting instead for temporary adaptations. This can include what some interviewees called (in English) 'Tibetan make-up', or painting Tibetan designs and motifs on the exteriors of houses and rooms. For most, this took the form of painting black frames around existing windows in order to mimic the darker, reinforced earth 'frames' necessitated by the mud-brick and rammed-earth[112] architecture commonly constructed in Tibet. The technique of rammed-earth

[111] Local advocate, interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 1 Feb 2013.
[112] This method involves shovelling a wet mud mixture between shuttering along the length of a planned wall. The mud is then stamped down and left to dry. After a period of time, the shuttering is removed and moved forward (and upward) in sections of approximately a foot at a time (Khosla 1979: 118). This method of construction is used across the Himalaya, within Tibet and also Ladakh, Spiti, and Zanskar.

construction also results in wide-based, tapering walls, giving structures (including windows) a trapezoidal appearance (Semple 1992: 109, 112). Some Tibetan residents in McLeod Ganj mimicked this by painting dark frames in a trapezoidal shape around rectangular windows.



Figure 19 Tibetan 'make-up' applied to hostel housing at the Upper Tibetan Children's Village School in McLeod Ganj. Note the black-painted, trapezoidal window frames added to the building (26 Aug 2012).

Another popular temporary Tibetanisation is the use of a *go yöl*, or door curtain, hung on the threshold of the house. These are widely available in shops in McLeod Ganj and throughout the Tibetan communities in India, and feature different designs often incorporating the *tra shi tak gyé*, or auspicious symbols. Thresholds are important liminal zones or borders, and it could be argued that *go yöl,* with their auspicious symbols, play an important role in delimiting and safeguarding the interior of the Tibetan home against the exterior environment of the un- or less Tibetan elements of the refugee settlement.



Figure 20 Tibetan *go yöl* (door curtain) used at the entrance to a wooden house on the hillside above and to the north of McLeod Ganj's Main Square. In this case, the *go yöl* is the only external indication that this house is lived in by Tibetans (Nov 2012).

For some refugees lack of ownership has meant living in increasingly poor conditions. Tibetans who occupy the buildings vacated by Muslim residents at the time of Partition (1947) do not own these properties. As they explained, since they have occupied them for many decades they cannot be evicted, but neither are they legally permitted to make improvements. Instead, they live in increasingly unsound and dangerous accommodation, patching leaks and cracks using found and cheap materials, for example, flattened gasoline cans, cloth and corrugated iron.

The precarious situation of Tibetan refugees was highlighted by eviction orders issued by the Himachal Pradesh High Court at Shimla, on 3rd August 2012. The High Court found 1,090 cases of 'encroachment' (illegal dwelling or squatting, cf. Read 2014) of protected forest land in the state, 210 by Tibetans. When we spoke in 2012 the

Tibetan Settlement Officer, Sonam Dorje, was hopeful that the authorities would look kindly upon his appeal to have the dwellings regularised. By the time I left McLeod Ganj for Ladakh however (April 2013), there had been no official resolution as to whether Tibetans would be permitted to remain or would be evicted in the future. It is this kind of uncertainty, the constant fear of eviction, which reinforces refugees' conviction that this is not their land, and can never truly be their 'home'.[113]



Figure 21 This image gives a sense of the variation in the housing occupied by Tibetans in McLeod Ganj; it also makes visible the piecemeal physical development of accommodation over time. In the foreground are the houses abandoned by Muslim residents at the time of Partition (1947); behind one can see more recent brick-built houses roofed with corrugated iron; furthest back are new builds in concrete with flat roofs and balconies (25 Jan 2013).

[113]http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=31994&article=Tibetans+on+'encroached'+land+in+Dharamshala+to+be+evicted+by+March+31 [accessed 6 Apr 2015]; order sheet of High Court of Himachal Pradesh, dated 3 Aug 2012.

4.1.2 Compromised place-making in Dharamshala

If Tibetans living in McLeod Ganj have been unable, for structural and financial reasons, to Tibetanise the exteriors of their personal houses, this is not true to the same extent of the wider built environment, and most especially religious architecture. Although transience remains an important theme, other considerations such as the preservation of the Tibetan Buddhist religion and the generation of religious merit through sponsorship also come into play. Through three case studies I show how attitudes towards the built environment have developed in McLeod Ganj as the Tibetan community has become more permanent, and how Tibetans have approached place-making in a climate of scarce resources and structural constraints.

Case study 1: The ma ni lha khang*, or* nam gyel stupa

One of the first Tibetan constructions in McLeod Ganj was a *stupa*[114] (Sanskrit) or *chö ten* (Tibetan), erected in the main bazaar. Taking the form of a *nam gyel stupa*,[115] it was constructed through the benefaction of Trijiang Rinpoche, one of the Dalai Lama's teachers. Tibetan Buddhists build *stupa* or *chö ten* for a variety of reasons, for example to commemorate the dead. They are filled with sacred materials and devotees circumambulate them in order to accrue merit (*sö nam*) and blessing (*jin lap*). Anand (2002: 24, 26) records that this particular *stupa* was erected during the 1960s to commemorate the Tibetans who had lost their lives fighting against Chinese forces inside Tibet. Exiles explained to me that today this *stupa* had come to commemorate the

[114] The form of the *stupa* represents the enlightened mind of the Buddha, one of the three 'receptacles' of his body, speech and mind. Beer writes that the *stupa* is 'essentially the earliest form of the Buddha image, built to commemorate the major events in his life and to mark the sacred places where these events occurred, and to house his relics' and those of his disciples (Beer 1999: 127).

[115] Of the eight types of *stupa* that commemorate the major life events of the Buddha Shakyamuni (historical Buddha), the *nam gyel stupa* (trans. *stupa* of complete victory) commemorates the Buddha's successful prolonging of his life by three months (Beer 1999: 134-135).

lives of all Tibetans (including the recent self-immolators) who have perished as a result of Chinese rule.



Figure 22 ***Nam gyel stupa*** **erected in McLeod Ganj's Main Bazaar during the early 1960s (sponsored by Trijang Rinpoche). This photograph was probably taken some time during the 1970s. The image is taken looking westwards, from Jogibara Road onto Temple Road. ©Photographic Archive, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.**

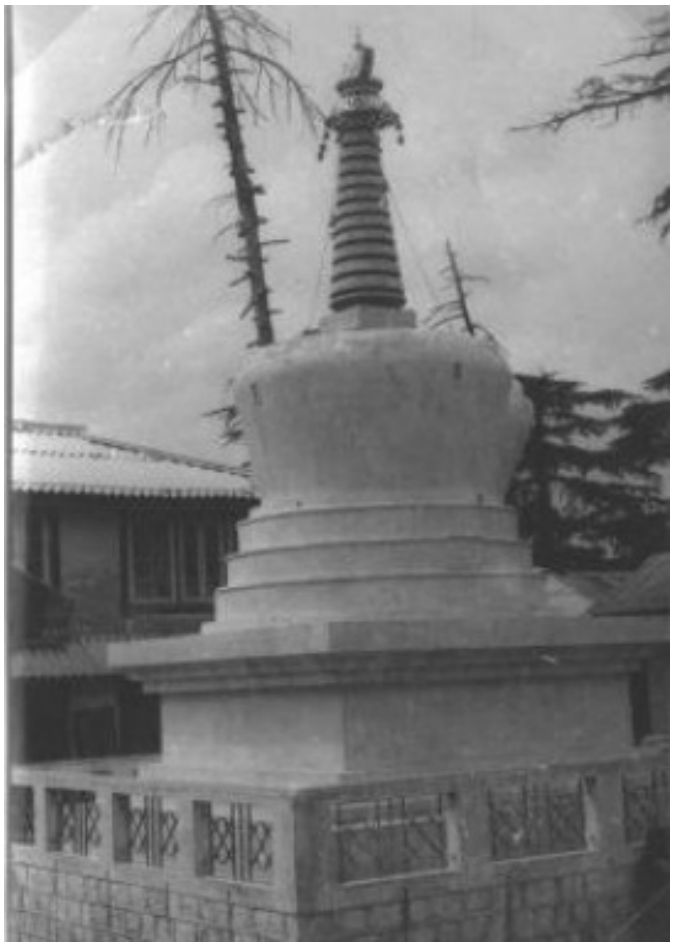


Figure 23 ***Nam gyel stupa*****, Main Bazaar, McLeod Ganj. This photograph was probably taken some time during the 1970s. The image is taken looking southeast from Temple Road down onto Jogibara Road. ©Photographic Archive, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.**



Figure 24 The exterior of the *ma ni lha khang*, between Jogibara and Temple Roads, McLeod Ganj (30 Oct 2012).

Ser zo Tsewang Kelsang,[116] a local Tibetan goldsmith, has been involved in the construction of a shrine around the *stupa* since the 1970s. He embarked on the project out of a sense of concern for how the *stupa* was being treated. Soon after its completion, the *stupa* became an important focus for religious practice (*kora* or circumambulation, see below) and also, given its location in the main bazaar, economic activity. As he explained, people began to use it as a place to deposit their belongings and lay out their

[116] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 24 Aug 2013.

goods, both disrespectful activities. Consequently, Kelsang felt it was necessary to protect the *stupa*. Ever since, he has worked on the construction of a large, multi-storeyed building which encloses both it and the large prayer wheel that was erected around the same time in the early 1960s. Construction work is still ongoing; Kelsang receives donations from private individuals, including foreign tourists. He has also contributed his own money to the project.

The *ma ni lha khang* or shrine of the prayer wheel, as it has come to be known by Tibetans, is visually striking since, unlike the majority of Tibetan houses and shops nearby, it has been elaborately Tibetanised. *Ser zo* Kelsang, himself a goldsmith, has some expertise in religious symbolism and has been behind most of the aesthetic decisions.



Figure 25 Printed deity tiles designed by *ser zo* Kelsang depicting Guru Padma Vajra and other deities. These tiles decorate many of the walls inside and outside the *ma ni lha khang* (31 Oct 2012).

The structure incorporates many elements of traditional temple design including painted designs based on the auspicious symbols, pillars, a golden roof or *gya pip*[117] but is made in modern materials, including the bright, synthetic paints widely used in India. Kelsang has also made extensive use of the replicability of modern production methods. Before, he noted, it would take an artist months to produce a *thangka*, which are hand-painted using mineral colours. However, now they can be printed quickly.[118] Kelsang commissioned tiles and wallpaper for the *ma ni lha khang* decorated with Tibetan Buddhist deities. Tiles like these are widely available on the Indian market. Printed with images of deities (Christian, Buddhist and Hindu among other religions) these tiles are deployed in public locations in India, including traditional sacred sites such as temples and also more 'profane' public places. For example, Madheshiya and Abraham (n.d.) write of their being used on Mumbai's streets to discourage urination. Kelsang, who was motivated to build up the *ma ni lha khang* in order to discourage disrespectful activity in the vicinity of the *nam gyel stupa*, has thus been able to draw on contemporary Indian products and solutions to do so.

While the lower levels sport 'tiled gods' (Madheshiya and Abraham n.d.), the upper-most room, which is the most sacred and incorporates the main altar of the building, possesses painted murals. Here Kelsang has also used traditional techniques of replication extensively. For example, he showed me the hundreds of *tsa tsa* ('stamped' clay images of deities) he had purchased and which he intends to seal into all the walls of the temple. He had already begun this process on the upper floors (see Fig. 26 below). When finished, the entire building will contain thousands of images of deities. This practice compares with the Tibetan Buddhist ritual of *rap né,* which involves

[117] Repo 2011: 60; see Repo 2011, especially pages 45-94 for discussion of traditional Tibetan architecture.
[118] See C. Harris 2001 and Bentor 1993 on mechanically produced photo-icons and the contemporary *thangka* industry in Kathmandu, respectively. See section 6.2.2 for further discussion.

sealing precious items (e.g. jewels, relics, written prayers) inside an icon in order to consecrate it (Bentor 1996, see below).

When I asked him about the importance of Tibetan-style architecture, design and making a beautiful temple, Kelsang countered that he had been motivated to build up the *ma ni lha khang* by political and religious concerns, not aesthetic ones. He began the project as a means of protecting the sacred *stupa* from disrespect. Today, he said, he focuses on the blessings (*jin lap*) and merit that he (as a patron) and others who circumambulate the *stupa* accrue. He also views the project as a component of his personal political praxis as a Tibetan exile:

> The main reason for putting up all the *ku* [statues of deities] is that people are dying inside Tibet for their freedom in the struggle so the best thing I can do is to make offerings for them. I'm not educated, so this is the best thing I can do for them. This is my main reason now … My main reason for building this building is that although I will pass away, this building will stay for thousands of years and for thousands of years people will come to get a blessing etc. My activities here will help many people to get blessings. When you came here to interview me you also got blessings and good *karma*, so it happens like that.
>
> Tsewang Kelsang[119]

Kelsang reveals how politics and religion are strongly intertwined in daily life in McLeod Ganj. In the case of the *ma ni lha khang,* a religious form has been appropriated to serve political ends, i.e. commemorating those who have died as a result of the Chinese takeover in Tibet. Other examples include the co-option of *kora* (circumambulation) for political protest (see below). The *ma ni lha khang* also exemplifies how attitudes towards exile have changed since Tibetans first arrived. Originally a simply built monument intended to serve the religious and ritual needs of a temporary community, the *stupa* has gradually been elaborated over time to become a large and visually striking structure which now, like the *tsuk lak khang* (see below),

[119] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 24 Aug 2013.

holds significance for not just Tibetans, but also other communities in McLeod Ganj, especially domestic and foreign tourists. As the monument has grown, so the exile community has become more permanent.



Figure 26 One of the many cavities in the walls which Kelsang intends to fill with sacred material. In this cavity Kelsang has placed: *tsa tsa* (contained in the plastic tub to the left of the image), a religious text wrapped in orange cloth (*pé cha*) and other religious books bound in a western format (31 Oct 2012).



Figure 27 ***Tsa tsa*****, commissioned by Kelsang, which will be used to fill the wall cavities in the** ***ma ni lha khang*** **(31 Oct 2012).**

Case study 2: The tsuk lak khang

The *tsuk lak khang,* meaning main temple, or temple of learning, is the temple of the Dalai Lama (otherwise known as the Thekchen Chöling), and the most important site in McLeod Ganj. It is located at the tip of the mountain ridge on which McLeod Ganj perches, adjacent to the residence of the Dalai Lama, and comprises part of the complex of the exile Namgyal Monastery, the monastery of the Dalai Lamas, which was previously housed inside the Potala Palace in Lhasa. Built using Tibetan and Indian labour, and funded in the main by donations from Tibetan refugees, it opened to the public in 1969. It has since become iconic, both for the Tibetan community in exile and also for domestic and foreign tourists, who flock to see the seat of the exiled spiritual leader. It was built in a modernist idiom at the instigation of the 14th Dalai Lama, from cast concrete painted in a pale yellow colour (C. Harris 1999: 48). The complex has

been expanded over the years and today includes two shrines: the main shrine with the central deities (see below) and a Kalachakra temple, which was added in 1992. Walkways with prayer wheels encircle both temples, enabling devotees to complete circumambulations (Tibetans refer to this route as the *nang kor*, or inner circle; see below).

Unlike the *ma ni lha khang* described above, the visual appearance of the *tsuk lak khang* is comparatively un-Tibetan. It has been constructed out of concrete and is plainly painted and displays few traditional Tibetan motifs or structural elements (cf. C. Harris 1999: 48-49; Repo 2011: 189). This preference for a lack of decoration appears to have arisen from directions given by the Dalai Lama. At the entrance to the temple several panels bearing text composed by the 14th Dalai Lama present information about it. On one of the panels the Dalai Lama writes that 'Avoiding grand designs, the architectural structure of the Temple was patterned on a basis of down to earth simplicity'.[120] Many times, while asking about the importance of Tibetan architectural design, I was told that the Dalai Lama considered decoration unimportant (cf. Repo 2011: 189-192). Indeed, during the inauguration ceremony that was held for its new assembly hall in 2001, he publicly censured Ganden Jangtse monastery (in south India) for spending too much money on elaborate decoration (Repo 2011: 243). Kazuhiro Nakahara,[121] a Japanese architect who is responsible for much of the Tibetan-style architecture visible in McLeod Ganj today,[122] also told me that the Dalai Lama had asked him to remove all the decorative Tibetan elements from his design for improvements to his residence, saying that they were unnecessary. Refugees told me that in his teachings the Dalai Lama emphasised the importance of the mind, which in

[120] Text taken from panels mounted at the entrance to the *tsuk lak khang* in McLeod Ganj; text dated 15 October 1970.
[121] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 19 Nov 2012.
[122] Nakahara is also responsible for the extension to the *tsuk lak khang* (added in 1992, this includes the addition of the Kalachakra temple), the Norbulingka Institute and the Tibet Museum in McLeod Ganj (see section 4.1.3).

the context of a monastery is expressed in the quality of its monks, not its buildings. This point of view is concordant with views the Dalai Lama has expressed elsewhere. He is a primary proponent of Buddhist modernism (cf. Lopez 1998: 187; Huber 2008: 338),[123] which emphasises the development of the mind and compassionate acts over ritual practices (e.g. Dalai Lama 2011). The Dalai Lama frequently expresses that he is only 'a simple monk', and therefore eschews the elaborate religious robes worn by previous Dalai Lamas. His views, for example his promotion of vegetarianism (Buffetrille 2015: 118) and his advice to Tibetans to cease wearing furs and skin (see Chapter Five, p253), have led to adaptations in Tibetan life in exile but also to an extent in Tibet itself. For example, in *My Land and my People* he comments:

> For me and for all the refugees, the pursuit of our religion remains just as important as the struggle to make our way materially in an unfamiliar world. We observe our ceremonies just as we did in Tibet, except, of course, that we cannot give them their ancient colour and splendour. But perhaps, after all, they were too ornate in the old days, and it may not be a bad thing to observe them more austerely.
>
> Dalai Lama 1977: 227

Similarly, many of my respondents expressed the importance of humility, noting that Tibetans are refugees in India hence it would be inappropriate for them to live grandly in 'smart' buildings since doing so would risk alienating the local Indian population. Abstaining from the appearance of luxury is also an important component of exiles' political praxis. As Klieger has argued, Tibetan refugees make an effort to position themselves as attractive recipients for Western sponsorship and support. This entails maintaining the appearance expected of refugees by foreign visitors to McLeod

[123] John Avedon quotes from an interview in which the Dalai Lama expressed his approach to preserving Tibetan culture: '"We divided our culture into two types," he explained. "In the first category we placed that which, we determined, needed to be retained only in books as past history. The second category included whatever could bring actual benefit in the present. These things, we resolved, must be kept alive. Therefore, many of our old ceremonial traditions I discarded – no matter, I decided, let them go. However, our performing arts, our literature, science and religion as well as those crafts from which we could earn a livelihood – painting, metalcraft, architecture, woodworking and carpetmaking – these, we took special pains to safeguard. To achieve this we employed modern methods although they were altogether new to us and posed many difficulties"' (Avedon 1984: 92).

Ganj, including the international media. Klieger suggests that this practice displays continuities with historical Tibetan approaches to relationships of political and social exchange including *chö yön* (the exchange of religious services for political protection) and *jin dak* (sponsorship) (Klieger 1991: 104, 16).

Yet how do Tibetans feel about this unadorned, aesthetically alien structure, which is the temple of their religious (and sometime temporal) leader? Two monks at Namgyal Monastery told me that monks who have recently arrived from Tibet are often confused when they visit the temple and monastery for the first time. They often have to ask where the monastery is, not recognising it due to its simple, utilitarian design that is very different from the highly decorative monasteries they are accustomed to in Tibet. The significance of this temple lies not in its architectural or aesthetic merit, however, but in its head: the 14th Dalai Lama. His divine presence and religious practices (e.g. the teachings and empowerments he has given in the temple) have sanctified the building. As Thaye, a newly arrived monk from Tibet, explained to me in 2013:

> One of my main reasons for coming to India was always to see the Dalai Lama and receive his blessing, so there is a unique sense of achievement when you go for a *ling kor* [circumambulation around the temple], as the focal point of your life sits atop the hill that you're able to circumambulate. Hence comes a feeling of fulfilment, peace and achievement, of the humblest and most meaningful sort.[124]

Recognising the role of the Dalai Lama helps us understand exilic practices of re-naming exile institutions and places after those inside Tibet. For example, on 22nd June 2015, in honour of the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday, the stretch of road between McLeod Ganj and lower Dharamshala was renamed 'Potala Road' by the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Shri. Virbhadra Singh. An article published on the CTA website explicitly drew a link between the renaming of this road and the Dalai Lama's hoped-for return to Tibet, noting:

[124] Interviewed in Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre, 21 Jan 2013.

> The new Potala Road has a powerful symbolism of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's return to the Potala Palace in Tibet from this Potala Road in Dharamshala, reflecting the fervent prayers of all the Tibetan people residing inside and outside Tibet to see His Holiness the Dalai Lama return to Tibet with dignity.[125]

This road links the Dalai Lama's residence in McLeod Ganj with the offices of the Central Tibetan Administration at Gangchen Kyishong, suggesting that his residence, which sits adjacent to the exile Namgyal Monastery, and the Potala Palace in Lhasa might be considered synonymous.

Tibetans also draw an analogy between the Thekchen Chöling temple, which is referred to by Tibetans as the *tsuk lak khang* meaning 'main temple', and the central temple in Lhasa, the Jokhang (literally 'room of the Jo', referring to the Jo Shakyamuni Buddha figure housed inside). This temple, which is regarded as the holiest place in Tibet, is also referred to as the *ra sa trül nang gi tsuk lak khang*. Not only was this temple strongly associated with the Dalai Lamas and the Gelugpa sect, it also contained some of the most important religious objects in Tibet. Specifically, the Jokhang/*tsuk lak khang* in Lhasa contained a highly sacred image of Avalokiteshvara (*Chenrezig*), of whom the Dalai Lama is an incarnation, which was reputedly commissioned by the seventh century Tibetan '*Dharma'* King, Songtsen Gampo. In 1966-1976 during the Cultural Revolution, which resulted in widespread destruction across China, including thousands of monasteries in Tibet, this image was severely damaged. Tibetans were able to salvage some of its remains and succeeded in smuggling them to McLeod Ganj in 1967. Their arrival was what prompted the construction of the Thekchen Chöling temple, which was needed to house them. The sacred contents sealed inside the original image (which were rescued and brought to Dharamshala inside the statue's remains) were incorporated into a new image of Avalokiteshvara (completed in 1970), which

[125] http://tibet.net/2015/06/dharamshala-road-named-potala-road-by-chief-minister/ [accessed 23 Jun 2015]

today resides in the temple in McLeod Ganj. Intended to create 'meritorious conditions for the realisation of the present and future wishes of the Tibetan people'[126] (perhaps implying a return to a free Tibet, as a sign in the *tsuk lak khang* states), much like 'Potala Road', this image faces east towards its spiritual home in Tibet to 'augur well for the image to be returned to Tibet later on'[127] (cf. Singh 2010). Both the boards outside the temple, and the temple leaflet go on to state:

> There is no difference between the statue, which was housed in the central cathedral in Lhasa and the new one built in India. Therefore, faithful devotees can pay homage and make offerings to it, for it is one and the same as the image of the previous Avalokitesvara.[128]

For Tibetan Buddhists, the material continuity between the images, i.e. the incorporation of the sacred contents of the old image into the new, ensures that the power of the image, and the blessing (*jin lap*) it bestows upon those who view it, is unchanged. The Avalokiteshvara from Lhasa has simply been reincarnated: an old, damaged body exchanged for a new one (cf. C. Harris 2004). Analogously, it is not the beauty of the architecture at the Thekchen Chöling temple that confers blessing, but the physical presence of its supreme head, the Dalai Lama. Donald Lopez comments, 'for many Tibetans and non-Tibetans, where the Dalai Lama is, there is Tibet: the soul of Tibet need not stand on the soil of Tibet' (1998: 184; cf. Bishop 1989: 185). Likewise, the presence of both the Dalai Lama and the sacred objects from Tibet in the temple sanctify it and make it a Tibetan space. Thus in a very real sense Dharamshala, or 'Dhasa', is a 'little Lhasa' and the *tsuk lak khang* is a modern Jokhang at its heart. The presence of the Dalai Lama in McLeod Ganj, historically both the temporal and spiritual

[126] Dalai Lama, 15 October 1970 (text printed on information boards placed at the entrance to the Thekchen Chöling in McLeod Ganj).
[127] From page 5 of a bilingual (English and Hindi) booklet entitled, 'The Tibetan Temple Thekchen Chöling, Dharamsala (Himachal Pradesh)'. Much of the text in this leaflet is duplicated on the text panels situated at the entrance to the temple.
[128] Taken from booklet 'The Tibetan Temple Thekchen Chöling, Dharamsala (Himachal Pradesh)', p5.

head of the central Tibetan government, confers supreme significance upon the town. Not only this, but his presence has shaped its physical geography, rendering it physically and conceptually closer to the holy city of his homeland. Thus, in the case of the *tsuk lak khang*, it is not aesthetic continuity, precisely, which brings McLeod Ganj and Lhasa, or the Jokhang and the exile *tsuk lak khang*, into the same conceptual frame. Rather it is embodied continuity in the personage of the Dalai Lama, reinforced by relics from the Jokhang temple, which connect the two places in the minds of Tibetans.

Case study 3: **Kora**

> Even in exile, the Tibetans have reconstituted this kind of sacred geography. Wherever Tibetans have lived for some years, the visitor will find that the landscape has been gradually sacralised and brought under control by a gossamer net of rock-carvings, small wayside shrines, prayer-flags (lungta), laptsé, mani-wheels, and ch'orten, as well as through the gompa themselves.
>
> Samuel 1993: 159

Samuel lists several of the place-making practices I have been discussing in the context of the Tibetan exile community in McLeod Ganj, for example: the construction of *stupa* (*chö ten*), the hanging of *go yöl* across thresholds, and the construction of temples (*gon pa*). Even though they do not have total control over the environment of the town since it is inhabited by many different actors and is ultimately subject to the Indian state, Tibetans have nonetheless successfully brought it into their cultural and religious purview by making interventions in the built environment and through landscape-based practices. Perhaps the most significant of these practices is *kora* (cf. Huber 1994).

Kora is the Tibetan Buddhist practice of circumambulation. It is usually conducted in a clockwise direction focusing on a sacred place, building, geographical feature (such as a mountain or lake), object (such as an image of a deity) or person (e.g.

the Dalai Lama). Doing *kora* (*kora gyap*) accrues merit (*sö nam*) to the individual and blessing (*jin lap*) from the sacred object that is its focus. This merit materially improves the individual's chances of a superior rebirth, hence elderly Tibetan Buddhists tend to be its most prominent practitioners.

The practice has links with Tibetan Tantra and ideas about the cosmos and specifically the *mandala,* which Brauen has described as:

> … a strongly symmetrical diagram, concentrated about a centre and generally divided into four quadrants of equal size; it is built up of concentric circles … and squares possessing the same centre.
>
> Brauen 1997: 11

As an idea the *mandala* exists at different scales and takes many forms: it can be conceptual, painted on *thangka* and represented in coloured sand, for example. At one extreme it is a cosmological diagram, which has Mount Meru at its centre and the continent inhabited by human beings, Jambudvipa, on its southern side. The *mandala* also represents the palace or residence of Buddhist tantric deities, which are symbolised in the centre of the diagram, for example, by their seed syllables (Brauen 1997: 13). The *mandala* also exists within the human body and on a different level represents the mind (Dyke 1997: 183). As a programmatic representation it thus works in both macrocosm and microcosm and establishes homologies between the mind, body and universe (Dyke 1997: 183-184). Brauen discusses the symbolism of the *stupa* as a three dimensional representation of the *mandala,* a representation of the cosmos. He notes Angarika Govinda's suggestion that the first *mandala* may have been created by Buddhist devotees who added a circumambulation path around the various *stupa* that held the historical Buddha's remains (Brauen 1997: 29). Furthermore, as Dyke notes Tibetan Buddhist temples are also conceptualised according to the *mandala,* this being most obvious in the original designs for the Tibetan monastery of Samye (southeast of

Lhasa), which was built on a *mandala* plan (Brauen 1997: 30). The Tibetan practice of circumambulation, especially around temples, thus implies the *mandala:* beginning at the outside Tibetan pilgrims draw the largest line around the sacred object at the centre. Moving inwards, devotees re-create the concentric circles of the *mandala* recalling the step-wise progression of the meditator, who visualises each level of the *mandala* from the outside in as he moves gradually towards the deity that is the focus of his practice (Brauen 1997: 29).

The concentric circles of the *mandala* are reflected in *kora* routes developed by Tibetans. In Lhasa, the most sacred site in Tibet, three nested *kora* routes exist: one inside the Jokhang temple known as the *nang kor*; the *bar kor*, which runs around the outside of the Jokhang and is the site of a major bazaar; and the *ling kor*, the longest path which incorporates the Potala Palace and much of the old city of Lhasa (Barnett 2006: xxxiv). In Dharamshala three *kora* routes have also been developed, these encircle the *tsuk lak khang*. Tibetan residents refer to a *nang kor* inside the temple, which encompasses the two shrines and a set of prayer wheels; a short *ling kor* marked by small shrines, *ma ni* (prayer) stones and prayer flags which contours around the hillside on which the temple is perched; and an extended *ling kor* which incorporates this path and an additional loop through the upper town (see Fig. 28, below).

The main path of the (short) *ling kor,* which spurs off Temple Road as it passes sharply downhill to the left of the temple, has been constructed in piecemeal fashion since the 1960s through the devotion and sponsorship of many individuals. Groups and individuals have also sponsored the installation of prayer wheels (*ma ni kor*) along the route. Until recently, a painter also occupied a small cabin on the path from which he sold *tsa tsa,* small, stamped clay images of Buddhas, and *ma ni* stones, rocks carved and painted with mantras, for devotees to give as offerings. Tibetans also bring prayer flags

to hang in the trees (for example, in order to secure blessings and good luck for a journey, for examinations, or for a sick relative etc.).

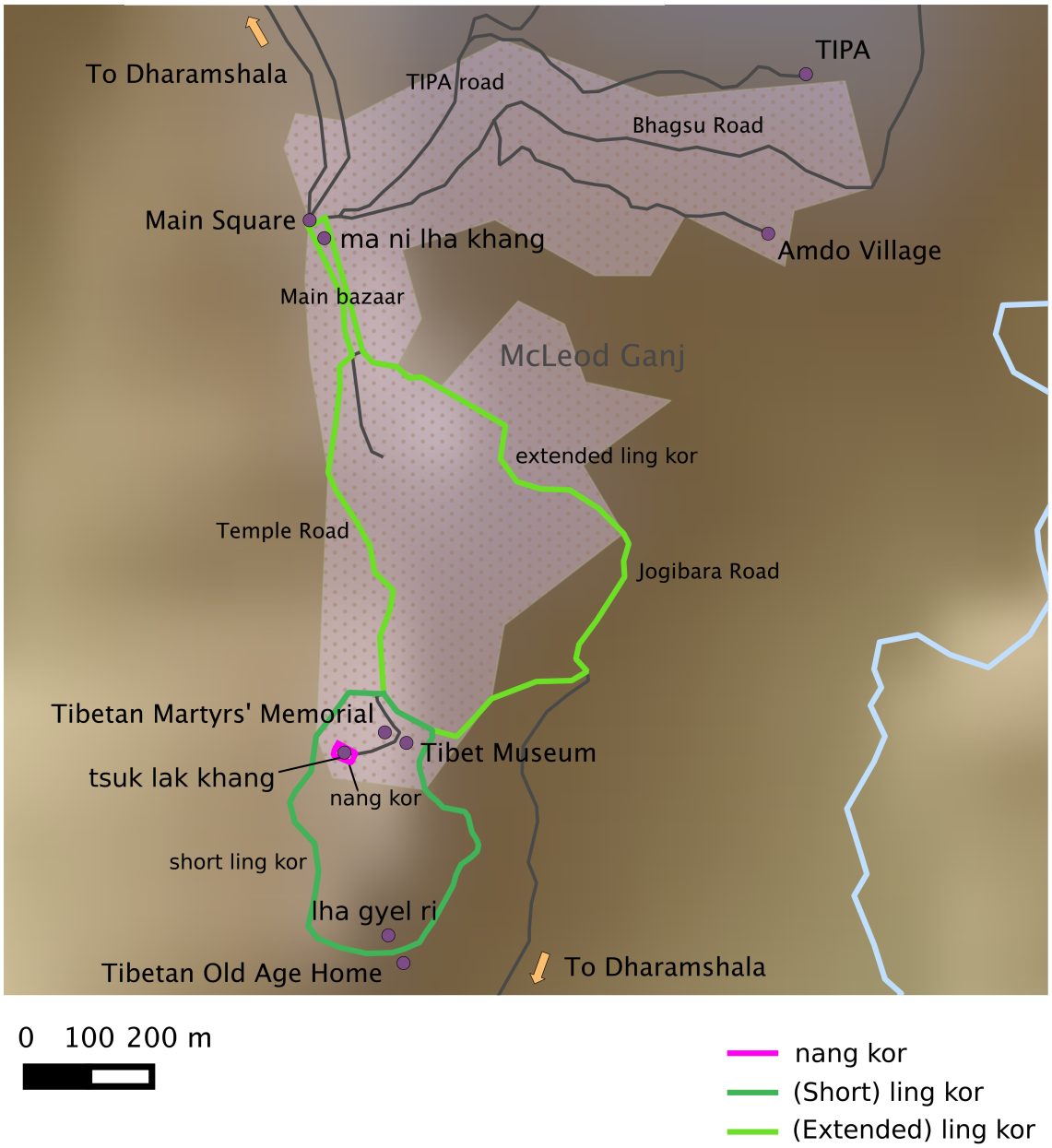


Figure 28 Map of McLeod Ganj depicting *kora* circuits used by Tibetan residents



Figure 29 Painted and carved *ma ni* stones deposited on the *kora* route behind the *tsuk lak khang*, McLeod Ganj. Some stones contain longer sections of scripture but most (e.g. the painted ones to the left of the image) are carved with the mantra of Avalokiteshvara of whom the Dalai Lama is an incarnation: *om ma ni padme hum*. This image was taken as stones and mantras began to be removed from the *kora* path in early September (see below) (5 Sep 2012).



Figure 30 Prayer flags and mantras on the *kora* path. This image was taken as stones and mantras began to be removed in early September (see below) (5 Sep 2012).

Immediately before sunrise, and particularly on Wednesday mornings (the auspicious day or 'soul day' of the Dalai Lama (see section 5.6 on the *Lhakar* movement) many refugees complete circuits of this path. Some, especially elderly Tibetans, spend all day walking loops around and around the temple, aiming to complete an auspicious number of circumambulations (e.g. three, eight or one hundred and eight). On Wednesdays, prayers are said and offerings of juniper smoke and black tea are made at the site known as *lha gyel ri* (mountain of the gods), which is located directly behind and below the Dalai Lama's residence and is cared for by Nechung Monastery. The site comprises a number of *stupa*, a small temple, courtyard and figures of the protector deities of the Tibetan nation, including Nechung and Palden Lhamo.



Figure 31 This area on the *kora* route lies directly behind and below the *tsuk lak khang* and is known as *lha gyel ri*. The site is under the care of Nechung Monastery and includes: several *stupa*, two large structures for offering juniper smoke (*sang*) and three images (statues) of Tibet's main protector deities (hidden behind curtains in the three structures in the centre of the image). In the above image one can also see posters depicting the faces of those who, by October 2012, had self-immolated in Tibet and in exile. In the same area (out of shot to the left) Thupten Ngodup (1998) and Jamphel Yeshi (26 Mar 2012), two Tibetans who self-immolated in Delhi, are commemorated in a monument erected by the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC). Thupten Ngodup was the first Tibetan to self immolate. This area performs an important commemorative, religious and political function in the community (30 Oct 12).

Kora, which is usually conducted in a clockwise direction in order to keep the sacred object on the right-hand side of the body (cf. Hertz 1960 on the symbolism of left and right),[129] plays an important role in structuring movement throughout McLeod Ganj. Tibetans heading south tend to use the Jogibara road, which passes to the left-hand side of the *ma ni lha khang* (another sacred site on the route) before heading onwards downhill. Those doing *kora* circuits take the path around and below the temple and then return uphill via Temple Road to the Main Square. Tibetans going about their daily business, meeting friends, shopping for example, tend also to follow this pattern. Eckvall comments that the practice of *kora* in the *bar kor* in Lhasa has the effect of distinguishing Tibetans from Chinese (Eckvall quoted in Schwartz 1994: 27). Correspondingly in McLeod Ganj, *kora* and the pattern of movement necessitated by the sacred geography of the town, has the effect of distinguishing Tibetans from its other inhabitants: tourists, Indians and other 'outsiders' (*chi pa*, cf. Shakya 1993) to the Tibetan Buddhist religion, who often unwittingly walk and drive in the 'wrong' direction.

Since 1987 *kora* has been adopted into the Tibetan political canon. Spurred on by Chinese condemnation of the Dalai Lama's visit to the US on 21st September of that year, where he delivered a five-point plan for peace in Tibet to members of Congress, protestors gathered on the *bar kor* in Lhasa. The twenty-one monks from Drepung monastery who had decided to stage the demonstration completed three circuits of the Jokhang along the *bar kor* route, where they were quickly joined by other Tibetans. Carrying a home-made Tibetan flag and shouting independence slogans the group then walked towards the offices of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) government, where the monks and five lay Tibetans were arrested and the remainder of the crowd dispersed

[129] As Huber (1994: 31) notes, there are occasions and places which demand *kora* in the opposite direction (anti-clockwise), and where different cohorts (e.g. women) complete different forms of *kora* to others (e.g. men, followers of *Bönpo*). The cliché that Buddhists complete *kora* in a clockwise direction and *Bönpo* complete it in an anti-clockwise direction is not always true.

without violence. This protest marked the first in a series of protests in Lhasa in 1987, which increased in scale and were met with escalating violence by the Chinese police. As Schwartz writes, since the initial protest of 27th September 1987 almost all demonstrations for five years in Lhasa followed the same pattern (Schwartz 1994: 20-27).

Schwartz analyses Tibetans' appropriation of *kora* for protest as a ritual of the type described by Victor Turner (1995, 1967). He argues that demonstrating is akin to ritual (particularly in its liminal stage), in that it involves the expression of something forbidden and results in the achievement of 'communitas' - the affirmation of collective identity among those involved. Furthermore, like ritual, the drama and symbolism of Tibetan protests also acts to resolve problems 'that admit to no real solution' (Schwartz 1994: 20-21). In the Tibetan case, while the likelihood of achieving actual change is slim, by protesting Tibetans are able to imagine and prefigure a desirable future in which they once again control affairs in Tibet. *Kora* was also an obvious target for appropriation for other reasons. Prohibited in Tibet during the Cultural Revolution and only beginning to be practised in public again in the 1980s (cf. S. Karmay 1994), circumambulation around a sacred site such as the Jokhang was in a sense already synonymous with defiance directed towards an unwanted Chinese government. The practice of *kora* was also already familiar to Tibetans as a habitual action and as a means of generating religious merit in order to obtain a good rebirth. Thus as Schwartz puts it, by co-opting *kora* for political purposes the Drepung monks 'forged a link between the powerful motivation that underlies religious ritual and the national consciousness that divides Tibetans from the Chinese' (1994: 28), in effect transforming protest into a moral activity.

Like their counterparts in Tibet, Tibetans living in India have also adopted *kora* as a form of political protest. For example, during my fieldwork in McLeod Ganj the

extended *kora* route and variations upon it was followed by the many candlelit processions (protests) staged in response to the rising number of self-immolations taking place in Tibet in the autumn and winter of 2012-2013. Most protests involved several foreshortened circumnavigations of the main bazaar of the town in a clockwise direction and ended with speeches at the Tibetan National Martyrs' Memorial erected by the entrance to the *tsuk lak khang* (see Chapter Six). On the 8th November, a group of Tibetan political NGOs (including Students for Free Tibet and the Tibetan Youth Congress) coordinated an extended protest march to mark the occurrence in Tibet of a sixth self-immolation in two-days. This brought the total on 8th November to c.69.[130] November itself saw a peak in self-immolations with 28[131] individuals self-immolating in this month. In order to mark the magnitude of events in the homeland, the organisers extended the usual route of the march to encompass almost all areas of Tibetan settlement in the town: the houses lining Bhagsu Road and areas of settlement between Temple and Jogibara Roads ending at the *tsuk lak khang* (route shown in pale blue in Fig. 32 below).

Schwartz has suggested that one of the reasons *kora* has been so successfully adopted into the Tibetan political canon is because it builds on a familiar, habitual, religious practice (1994: 28). Indeed we see a similar process at work in the *Lhakar* movement, which has appropriated the 'soul day' of the Dalai Lama as the day on which Tibetans living in Tibet and throughout the diaspora make special efforts to, for example, wear Tibetan dress, speak the pure Tibetan language, eat Tibetan dishes or refrain from eating meat (see section 5.6). Schwartz also suggests that by building on *kora*, which he argues is directed towards generating beneficial effects not only for

[130] According to the NGOs International Tibet Network, Students for Free Tibet and Tibetan Youth Congress. Organisations/individuals count the number of self-immolations differently (some include the self-immolation of non-Tibetans for the Tibetan cause, for example, others do not, see footnote 2, p1-2). Accurate figures are also difficult to obtain given the frequent bans on reporting in the region.
[131] International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) http://www.savetibet.org/resources/fact-sheets/self-immolations-by-tibetans/ [accessed 30 Sep 2014].

oneself but for 'all sentient beings', circumambulating protestors transform protesting and expressions of nationalism into a moral activity (Schwartz 1994: 28). Indeed Tibetans living in exile feel a strong obligation to participate in protests, linked to a perceived ethical imperative to raise the profile of the Tibetan cause through political action (cf. Hess 2009). As I discuss further in Chapter Six, we might argue that, for the younger generation in particular, protest has become an important component of their *habitus* and sense of identity as Tibetans living in exile (see section 6.3).

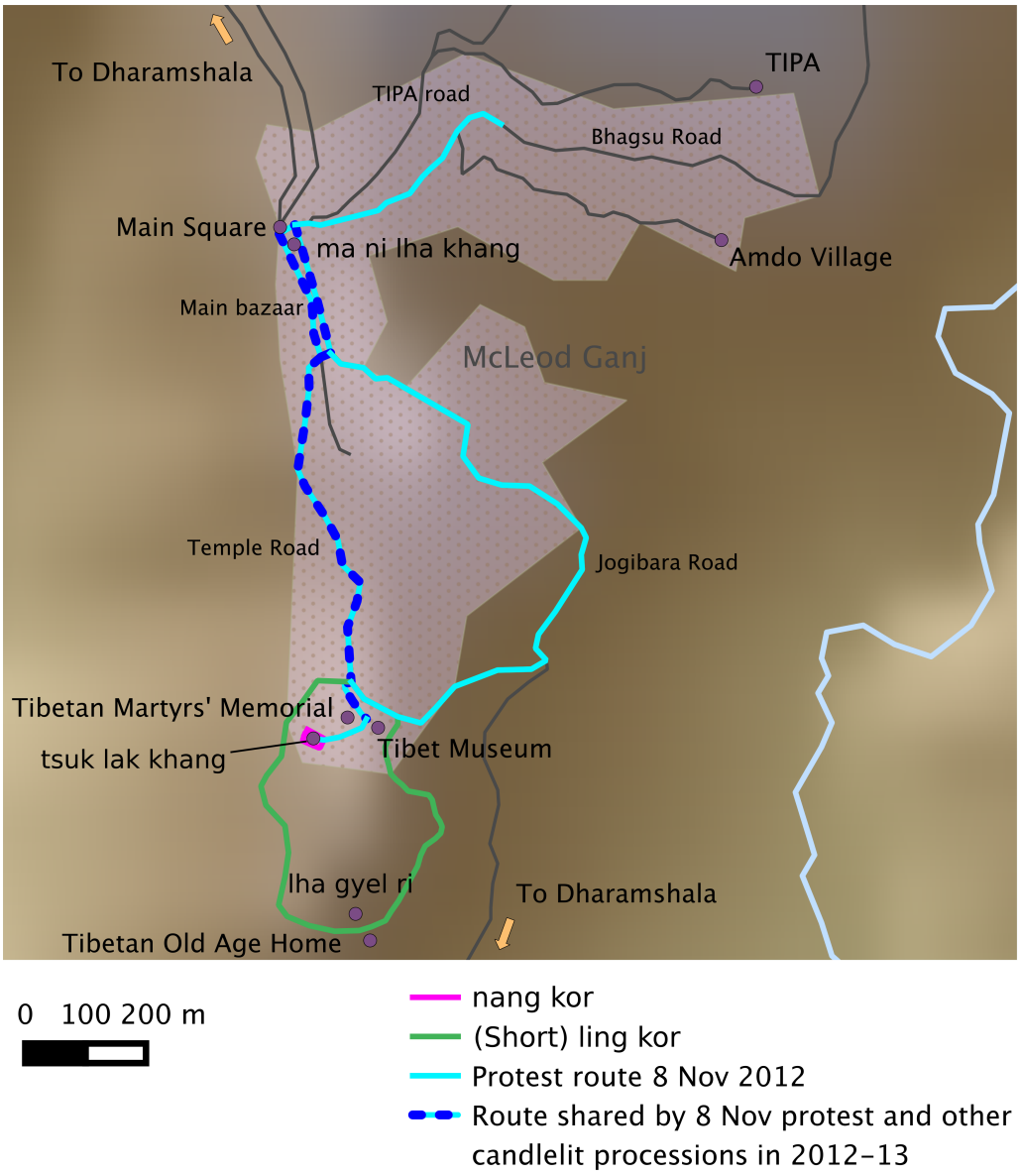


Figure 32 Map of McLeod Ganj depicting *kora* routes and the route of the 8th November protest.



Figure 33 Protest in McLeod Ganj (8 Nov 2012)

Whether done for religious reasons or in the context of a protest, however, *kora* is not only a religious or political practice but also an embodied exercise in place-making. It is possible that this quality is what lends it political and religious force. As the previous example showed, *kora* 'literally draws the largest possible circle around Tibetans as a people and a community' (Schwartz 1994: 27). Practising *kora* results in political, material, aesthetic and conceptual alterations to the landscape and built environment, for example in the lining of the route with offerings of *ma ni* stones and prayer flags. It also has the effect of marking out and claiming Tibetan territory and rendering it more familiar and home-like. For example Norbu, a man in his late-

thirties/early-forties, who was born on the Tibet-Nepal border to parents who passed away shortly after his birth, commented to me that he:

> … never feel Dharamshala or India a home … always feeling like … just a foreigner living here … only place I feel at home is *kora.*[132]

He went on to describe how unlike other parts of McLeod Ganj the *kora* route, with its *ma ni* stones, prayer wheels and flags, looked and felt Tibetan to him. It was as much the materiality of the place as the practice conducted within it which made it Tibetan and hence more homely for him. In this sense, Tibetan exiles' practice of *kora* compares favourably with Certeau's description of a 'tactic' (Certeau 1984: 37). Doing *kora* in Dharamshala enables Tibetans to replicate 'ways of operating' previously followed in Tibet and to 'insinuate' Tibetanness into the environment, bringing it within the realm of Tibetan cultural understanding, and appropriating it as their own place (cf. Certeau 1984: 30).

The *kora* route in McLeod Ganj has recently come under threat. Since their arrival in 1960 Tibetans have placed painted *ma ni* stones and strung prayer flags in the trees and bushes all along this route (as well as at other sites across town) as part of their religious practice. August 2012 saw the prohibition of these activities by the Himachal government. During this month, the Tibetan Settlement Officer in McLeod Ganj, Sonam Dorje, received notification from the Himachal Pradesh High Court in Shimla that Tibetans' carving and painting of rocks constituted 'defacement' in the eyes of state law; likewise, the hanging of prayer flags on public land was to be prohibited.[133] The High Court directed the Deputy Commissioners at Mandi, Kangra and Dharamshala (all places with Tibetan communities) to remove the existing

[132] Norbu, interviewed in Dharamshala, 11 Dec 2012.
[133] http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=31994&article=Tibetans+on+'encroached'+land+in+Dharamshala+to+be+evicted+by+March+31 [accessed 6 Apr 2015]; order sheet of High Court of Himachal Pradesh, dated 3 Aug 2012.

'defacements' and to file affidavits stating the steps they had taken to prevent further infringement. Painted stones and prayer flags were to be removed from all areas, except surrounding monasteries and atop buildings which were exempt in recognition of the religious sensitivity of these areas.

On the 4th September 2012 many of the *ma ni* stones placed in front of the *tsuk lak khang* in McLeod Ganj had been reversed so that their brightly painted mantras were hidden from view. Over the succeeding weeks and months these stones were then gradually removed. One morning I noticed Indian[134] workers chipping mantras from the boulders on the western side of the *tsuk lak khang*. Later on, I noticed that other stones had also been whitewashed to mask their Buddhist text. It was unclear as to why this court order had been made at this time. A local advocate subsequently told me that the original law prohibiting defacement of rocks had been created to prevent companies from painting boulders with advertisements for their products. Sonam Dorje generously and diplomatically interpreted the order as an attempt to protect the natural environment. To those Tibetans I spoke with while walking the *kora* route however, these acts constituted yet another example of India 'getting-tough' on Tibetans. It highlighted their powerlessness as refugees to contest what was to them the desecration of a sacred place and served to remind them that India was somewhere they could never truly belong.

[134] The Tibetan Settlement Officer at the time, Mr Sonam Dorje, commented that since the directive from the state High Court at Shimla had been issued to the (Indian) District Commissioners at Mandi, Kangra and Dharamshala, the burden of removing the *ma ni* stones and mantras did not fall on him. He had, however, agreed with the local District Commissioner that he would educate Tibetans about the ruling so that they would cease the practice (interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 4 Sep 2012).



Figure 34 Stone on the *kora* path at the rear of the *tsuk lak khang*. Note how the mantra (of Avalokiteshvara, *om ma ni padme hum*) previously carved in relief onto the stone has been chipped off. This was as a result of the August 2012 Himachal Pradesh High Court judgement (30 Oct 2012).

4.1.3 Exuberant place-making in Dharamshala

So far I have focused on pressures within the community of McLeod Ganj that have resulted in strategies of minimal or compromised architectural Tibetanisation. I have described the structural, legal and financial constraints that restrict the opportunities available to Tibetans and disincline them to invest in the built environment. I have also explained how refugees' intentions to return to Tibet have made them reluctant to invest in property in India, especially in the early years of exile. While this orientation still pervades the community and built environment of McLeod Ganj, there are important exceptions, especially for buildings with religious significance. The following case studies illustrate how religious architecture is approached differently compared to secular architecture in the exile community today.

Using a few prominent architectural projects as examples, I illustrate the different motives, sacred and secular, behind Tibetan-style construction as it has developed in Dharamshala.

Case study 4: The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives

A plaque mounted on the wall at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (hereafter LTWA) records that the first stone of this building was laid in 1970, making it one of the oldest buildings built specifically for the Tibetan community in McLeod Ganj. Although it was constructed at a similar time and also at the behest of the Dalai Lama, unlike the *tsuk lak khang* the LTWA was constructed in an overtly Tibetan style. In the absence of Tibetan architects the exile community has sought out foreigners familiar with Tibetan architecture to design many of their buildings. Japanese architect, Kazuhiro Nakahara, was invited by the Dalai Lama to create plans for several buildings for the Central Tibetan Administration, and to design an extension for the *tsuk lak khang* (he has since been responsible for creating designs for the Norbulingka Institute, the Tibet Museum and Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery, this chapter). Nakahara, although he had not travelled to Tibet at the time of the Dalai Lama's first request, had researched Tibetan architecture in Ladakh for his PhD dissertation. However, in the event, it was an Indian architect whom the Dalai Lama invited to McLeod Ganj to take on the Library project. Romi Khosla,[135] at the time still a student, had also conducted research into Ladakhi architecture (Khosla 1979). It was on the strength of this research, Khosla believes, that the Dalai Lama hired him. In the 1960s, Tibetans continued to arrive in India in relatively large numbers. Many brought sacred texts and objects with them, hoping to preserve them from the destruction that was occurring inside Tibet, especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Upon arriving in McLeod Ganj

[135] Interviewed in Delhi, 8 Apr 2013.

many refugees surrendered these objects into the care of the Dalai Lama as an act of merit making as well as a means of protecting and archiving their cultural and religious heritage. As a result, a large collection of texts and objects amassed and it was decided that a library incorporating a museum should be built to house these objects, and thus the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives was founded (cf. C. Harris 2012: 163; cf. Singh 2010).

When I interviewed him in Delhi in 2013, Khosla explained that the Dalai Lama had asked him to design a building that evoked the Tibetan style. Khosla felt that His Holiness wanted to 'anchor the Tibetan sense of insecurity by creating a building that felt familiar'. Hence he embarked upon a plan that evoked a Tibetan aesthetic by using modern materials. Khosla was assisted by Jigme and Mary Taring, the husband and wife team who established the Tibetan Homes Foundation in Mussoorie, which was one of the first schools for Tibetan children set up in exile. Jigme Taring was a member of the Dalai Lama's government (in Tibet and later in India), and had produced maps of Lhasa drawn from his memory as well as a model of the Potala, which is now housed in the LTWA museum. He had also been involved in the construction of a small Tibetan temple in Mussoorie, which was one of the first to be constructed in exile in recent times.[136] At this temple a new approach had been taken to Tibetan construction. The temple had been made using contemporary building techniques and materials such as concrete[137] and steel, and a Tibetan artist named Amdo Jamyang[138] had been employed to paint the structure in a Tibetan style. Khosla decided to take a similar approach at the

[136] Repo identifies this temple as Shedup Choepelling, which is situated adjacent to the Tibetan Homes Foundation (Repo 2011: 149). See also C. Harris (1999: 44) on the architecture of the Tibetan Homes Foundation.

[137] Mud is rarely used in construction in McLeod Ganj. All bar one of the architects I spoke with argued that the material was unsuitable given the area's heavy monsoon. The exception, an architect known locally as 'Didi Contractor' (*didi* from the Hindi for sister), has gained a reputation for successfully constructing houses using adobe bricks (bricks made using a mud-based mixture, which includes cow dung) in the Sidhbari area, a few kilometres southeast of Dharamshala. In an interview with me, she explained that she uses mud in combination with concrete in her architecture (a technique her masons refer to as 'cement *masala'*) [interviewed in Sidhbari, Kangra 25 Mar 2013].

[138] C. Harris *pers. comm.*

LTWA. Since the Library was to house religious objects, he selected motifs and elements of monastic architecture for inspiration, incorporating into his design a portico, decorative columns and large doors with the elaborate handles often seen in Tibetan temples. Khosla also designed the building to emulate the sloping walls common to traditional, rammed-earth Tibetan architecture. He based his designs upon the architectural styles of Central Tibet, in particular he described to me how he was 'strongly guided by the Potala'. This inspiration was appropriate in his view since the Library was to act as a temporary sanctuary for the sacred objects and texts that would accompany the Dalai Lama back to the Potala Palace on his expected return to the homeland. Khosla also crafted a Tibetan 'skin' for the exterior of the building. This included detailing around the windows and on the parapet. Whereas in Tibetan architecture these embellished elements would have been structural (cf. Semple 1992: 106), in Khosla's design they became purely decorative (i.e. skeuomorphic). For example, the elaborate wooden beam ends which jut out at the roof rim and the wooden reinforcements employed to frame windows in buildings in Tibet are required to add extra support for openings in earth walls and for the roof. Khosla incorporated allusions to these elements as motifs into the Library design. For example, he chose to replicate wooden window frames in concrete (cf. Repo 2011: 166). He also employed a dot motif on the parapet, which alludes to the outward-jutting beam-ends of traditional architecture. In some way Khosla's design for the Library has become a blueprint for Tibetan building projects in India, many of which also employ contemporary building materials to evoke a Tibetan aesthetic.[139] This includes sculpting stylistic features in cement and painting them to mimic traditional woodwork.

[139] I am grateful to Didi Contractor for this insight (interviewed in Sidhbari, Kangra 25 Mar 2013).



Figure 35 Side view of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA). Note the sloping walls, parapet with a dot motif, and black-painted, trapezoidal window frames. Eight *stupa (chö ten)* encircling the building were under construction at the time the photograph was taken. Note also the imitation 'beam ends' incorporated into the window frames. These recall the wooden reinforcements necessary in mud-brick architecture (but which are not necessary in concrete architecture). In traditional Tibetan architecture these beam-ends are often decorated (20 Nov 2012).

The current director of the Library, Geshe Lhakdor, who previously served as translator to the Dalai Lama, has undertaken several renovations which extend Khosla's original plan for the LTWA building and elaborate its Tibetan Buddhist aesthetic. When I arrived in the field much of the paintwork on the facade was being renewed. This included the repainting of murals in the portico depicting the Buddhist stories and deities commonly featured at the entrances to monasteries, for example, the Wheel of Life (*si pé khor lo*) and images of the four kings who guard the directions (Gyatsho 1979: 52). During my fieldwork, eight *stupa* (*chö ten*) were also added to the perimeter of the building, further increasing its Buddhist appearance and expanding its significance as a focus for *kora* (see below).



Figure 36 Portico of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. The layout and decoration of the portico strongly resembles that of Tibetan monasteries. In particular, the portico (renovated in recent years) includes murals depicting Buddhist stories and famous Buddhist scholars. Each colour (and some of the patterns) has symbolic meaning (e.g. references the elements, the realms of life etc.) (Semple 1992: 111-116) (20 Nov 2012).

Religion is a prominent theme in both Khosla's original design and the recent improvements implemented by Geshe Lhakdor; this is because this 'library' has a sacred purpose. The LTWA was founded in 1970 with the express aim of preserving Tibetan 'culture' by facilitating scholarly study. Scholarship and 'culture', however, are not defined in secular terms as in the West; rather, they are conceptualised in relation to Tibetan Buddhism. In a speech made during the ceremony for laying the foundation stone of the Library building the Dalai Lama commented that, 'The main characteristics of our culture are based on Buddhism'.[140] His efforts to preserve Buddhist practice and scholarship should thus be understood as part of a broader project to preserve Tibetan culture as a whole. Since it was intended to house sacred texts and objects, the LTWA

[140] Inauguration speech by 14th Dalai Lama, 11 Jun 1971 http://www.ltwa.net/library/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49:inauguration&catid=20:default [accessed 7 Apr 2015].

building was founded with similar ceremonies and rituals to those used for Tibetan Buddhist monasteries.[141] These include rituals to bless the ground and to take possession of it from the local 'soil owner', a place deity or *sa dak,* before the commencement of building (cf. Dyke 1997, Gyatsho 1979: 28-33, see p84-85). Another important aspect of 'taming' the land (cf. Ramble 1997: 133) is the remedying of any natural defects[142] it possesses by completing rituals and building *stupa* (Gyatsho 1979: 28-33).

In conversation with me, Khosla suggested that these ritual procedures were more important in constructing the building as a fully 'authentic', sacred space from a Tibetan perspective than the architectural embellishments I have thus far discussed. This is an important point that is also brought out by Mary Van Dyke in her discussion of the building of the Tibet-Institut, which was founded in Rikon, Switzerland, on 29th July 1967. The Institute was the brainchild of Peter Lindegger who, with his wife, had adopted two Tibetan children in the early 1960s and subsequently became active in helping Tibetan refugees to settle there. His concern for the spiritual and cultural well being of the newly arrived refugees led Lindegger and two local industrialists, Henri and Jacques Kuhn, to initiate the construction of a Tibetan cultural institute, the first of its kind to be erected in Europe (Dyke 1997: 210). The centre would accommodate a monastic community to serve the religious needs of the Tibetans living nearby and would also provide facilities for monks to teach Tibetan children about their religion, language and art, as well as providing a forum for academic research and discussion. The team employed a non-Tibetan architect, Ulrich Flück, to draw up plans. As with the construction of the *tsuk lak khang* in McLeod Ganj, at the time both the Tibetans and the Swiss agreed that the building's design should emphasise functionality and thereby

[141] Khosla, interviewed in Delhi 8 Apr 2013.
[142] Certain topological features (e.g. a 'ravine in the shape of a spear's point', a 'window-like natural tunnel') are considered inauspicious and must be suppressed before building can take place safely (Gyatsho 1979: 28-33).

reflect the unconventional nature of the Institute as a cultural (rather than purely monastic) organisation built to serve the needs of a refugee community.[143] Dyke quotes Lindegger who noted that: 'with the full agreement of the Tibetan advisers, it was acknowledged that a reconstruction of a Tibetan monastic building was barely justifiable and a functional Western architecture was preferable' (Lindegger 1988: 15; Dyke 1997: 181). If architecturally-speaking the Institute in Rikon does not resemble a traditional Tibetan monastery, from a ritual and religious perspective it does to a greater extent. In her essay, Dyke describes the ritual procedures followed by a group of five Tibetan monks sent by the Dalai Lama from India to prepare the site for construction. After the building was completed it was also consecrated by the Trijang and Ling Rinpoches in 1968, and has since been visited by the Dalai Lama. These ritual procedures and visits from high lamas sanctified the building and created it as a Tibetan (Buddhist) space. Dyke suggests that it was 'no coincidence' that the Tibet-Institut in Switzerland had undergone the most 'comprehensive re-enactment of foundation and consecration rituals' of any Tibetan centre in Europe (Dyke 1997: 201). She further argues that the rituals themselves, e.g. the pacification of the soil owner (*sa dak*) and the laying of a foundation stone, are 'directly analogous to an immigrant community attempting to create their own identity by establishing spatiotemporal boundaries within the context of another society and territory'. This symbolism, she notes, was not lost on Tibetans, neither on the Swiss public nor the Chinese critics of the project (Dyke 1997: 210). Like the LTWA, the purpose of the Tibet-Institut was to facilitate Tibetan

[143] Dyke comments on the influence of the Swiss-French architect Corbusier's ideas among European architects at the time, particularly his preference for spatially economic cubic designs. She notes that the architects working on the Tibet-Institut had also observed that Tibetan architecture was based on cubic shapes. She thus suggests that the final design for the Institute, a flat-roofed, white-rendered cubic form, reflected both Tibetan and contemporary Swiss architectural design. Harris also notes the influence of Corbusian principles in the design for the *tsuk lak khang* in McLeod Ganj (C. Harris 1999: 48). Corbusier was also responsible for the master plan of the nearby Indian city of Chandigarh, which was the first planned city to be built in India after Independence. The influence of Corbusian aesthetics must therefore also be credited in evaluations of exilic Tibetan architecture, most especially buildings constructed in the 1960s and 1970s.

refugees' practice and preservation of their traditional, Buddhist culture in a foreign environment, hence it was logical that it should also be founded according to Buddhist rituals which involve appropriating the physical landscape. Thus much like the *tsuk lak khang*, perhaps, it was the Institute's ritual foundation and the activities that have since taken place within its walls, such as visits from high lamas, which have created it as a Tibetan sacred space, not its aesthetic appearance.



Figure 37 *Pé cha* (religious texts, or block books in traditional palm leaf format, wrapped in cloth) held at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. The presence of these texts sanctifies the building in the eyes of Tibetans who circumambulate it. Note the presence of a small shrine and image of the Buddha within the room (5 Nov 2012).

Returning to the LTWA, today the Library contains over 110 000 books,[144] many of which are religious texts and therefore holy objects demanding reverence and respect. It also incorporates a museum, which houses numerous *ku* (deity statues), *thangka* (religious scroll paintings) and other important sacred objects held in trust for the Tibetan people to be returned, literally repatriated, to the homeland when it regains its freedom (Singh 2010; cf. Harris 2012: 175-177). Altogether, the religious contents, foundation rituals and Buddhist aesthetic of the LTWA building construct it as a sacred place from a Tibetan perspective. This is evinced by local residents' practice of *kora* around it (C. Harris 1999: 60).

Case study 5: Dorzong Monastic Institute and Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery

In general, Tibetan religious buildings in India tend to exhibit embellishment with Tibetan motifs. The *tsuk lak khang* is abnormal in its lack of decoration; indeed the minimalism of the 1970s was soon abandoned. For example, the Nechung Monastery temple (also of the Gelugpa sect, the sect of the Dalai Lamas), which was completed in 1984 and is situated adjacent to the Library in McLeod Ganj, is elaborately decorated in a contemporary exilic style (significant for its use of concrete, moulded cement decoration and bright, synthetic colours). Other monasteries both older and newer in the Dharamshala and Kangra regions also possess elaborately decorated prayer halls. For example, the Dorzong Monastic Institute of Jangchub Jong, inaugurated in June 2010 for the Drukpa Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism, includes not only an elaborate prayer hall but also a large *stupa*, inside which monks from the monastery conduct rituals. The monastery complex, like others in Himachal Pradesh and elsewhere in India, is predominantly constructed in cast and painted concrete which has been

[144]http://www.ltwa.net/library/index.php?option=com_multicategories&view=categories&cid=15&Itemid=7 [accessed 7 Apr 2015].

elaborately decorated. Dongyu Gatsal Ling is a new nunnery which is being developed under the guidance of Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo, a British nun of the Drukpa Kagyu sect. Affiliated with Tashi Jong monastery in the Kangra Valley (these two institutions are also linked with the Dorzong Monastic Institute), the main temple of this nunnery exhibits a similar level of ornamentation. At Dongyu Gatsal Ling, as elsewhere, a Nepali team has been employed to create moulded cement designs for the interior and exterior of the structure (cf. Repo 2011: 166). A team of Tibetans born in Tibet have also been engaged to work on the exterior painting, and a Bhutanese team are making the clay figures (*ku*) for the temple.



Figure 38 View of the main temple at Jangchub Jong (also known as Dorzong Monastic Institute), nearby Gopalpur Village in the Kangra Valley (c. 20km from Dharamshala). Jangchub Jong was officially founded in 2003 (7 Nov 2012).



Figure 39 *Stupa* at Jangchub Jong, consecrated in 2009 (7 Nov 2012).



Figure 40 Main temple of Dongyu Gatsal Ling nunnery. Building began at the above site in 2000 although it had to be suspended for two years before it could be continued. The nuns were able to move onto the site in 2005. The temple (above) was nearing completion at the time of my visit (21 Feb 2013) and was due for inauguration in the following months.



Figure 41 Dragon pillars (made from sculpted, painted cement) inside the main temple at Dongyu Gatsal Ling nunnery. These pillars were designed according to the wishes of Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo, a Tibetan Buddhist nun of the Drukpa Kagyu sect. Dragons (*druk*) play an important role in the origin story of the sect (hence the sect's name) (interview with Tenzin Palmo 21 Feb 2013; image taken 21 Feb 2013).

This leads us to ask: why is monastic architecture often much more elaborate when compared with vernacular, 'secular' architecture? First and foremost, sponsoring elaborate and costly decoration is an act of merit-making that, according to Tibetan Buddhist thought, improves one's chances of obtaining a better rebirth. Secondly, creating a beautiful environment for images of deities is itself a means of showing respect to them. Beautifying places such as monasteries is also an important means of encouraging and inspiring faith among the laity. A Ladakhi monk from Hemis Monastery, Stanzin Dhondup, explained to me that the same rationale is applied to altars (*chö shom*) as religious buildings. If the sacred object (e.g. *thangka, ku* or scripture) is presented in a way that awes the viewer and indicates its importance, it is more likely that the viewer will treat it with appropriate reverence and thus derive spiritual benefit from it.[145] We might describe this logic as a cultural aesthetic (cf. Miller 2008: 245), specifically a Tibetan Buddhist aesthetic. Lastly, both traditionally inside Tibet and now in exile there exists a competitive element to religious building. The effects of competition are perhaps most visible today in the large monasteries of south India, especially at Bylakuppe and Mundgod Tibetan settlements (Repo 2011: 164-165).

Other reasons relate to more practical, structural and financial, concerns. Since sponsorship is an important means of generating merit many Tibetans, but also East Asian (including Chinese and Taiwanese) and to a lesser extent Western Buddhists, give generously to such projects (Repo 2011: 176). Monastic building projects are thus comparatively well funded, and can afford the extra cost of decoration.[146] Another major factor contributing to the difference between vernacular and monastic building

[145] Interviewed in Leh, Ladakh, 22 Jun 2013.
[146] Tibetan architect Dorjee Wangdi Dewatshang (co-founder of architectural firm Dewatshang Sarangal, DESA) suggested that it was cost that prevented many lay Tibetans decorating their houses externally in a Tibetan style. He estimated that adding even minimal Tibetan-style decorative elements increased build cost by between 15-20%. Interviewed in Delhi, 19 Dec 2012.

style relates back to the question of land ownership. Whereas individual Tibetans are unable, legally, to own land in Himachal Pradesh, it is possible for institutions to purchase land. Many of the monasteries in the Dharamshala area are built upon land that has been acquired in this way. Ownership gives the institution security and control, and hence lends it greater stability, rendering architectural investment more worthwhile. Greater expenditure on monastic institutions also reflects the greater permanence of the exile community in India. As Repo notes, the most elaborate Tibetan Buddhist structures constructed in the south Indian settlements of Bylakuppe and Mundgod have all been constructed within the last fifteen years (Repo 2011: 244). I suggest that as the years spent living in exile have slowly lengthened so have Tibetans realised that their sojourn outside their homeland may be of considerable length. Investing in more permanent, higher quality facilities to support their religious practice has been the logical outcome (cf. Repo 2011: 182).

This leads me to perhaps the most important factor underlying exilic attitudes towards monastic architecture: the imperative to preserve. As I have already noted, Tibetan 'culture' is often defined by exiles in relation to Tibetan Buddhism. During a conversation about the building projects he was overseeing at the Library, Geshe Lhakdor[147] explained that from his perspective continuing to create buildings in a Tibetan style was important for the preservation of Tibetan culture, not only in terms of encouraging Buddhist scholars in their endeavours, but also in terms of perpetuating craft skills. Specifically, Geshe Lhakdor cited the importance of preserving the skills involved in Tibetan architecture, such as Tibetan painting (e.g. painting of murals) and woodcarving (e.g. on window and door lintels, pillars etc.), although with the advent of cement there is decreasing demand for elaborate woodwork in new Tibetan

[147] Interviewed at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala, 21 Nov 2012.

monasteries.[148] From his perspective, the best way to preserve these skills in exile is through their continued practice (cf. C. Harris 1999: 43). As Repo has discussed, in spite of innovations in the materials used for construction and in design and layout, contemporary Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in India continue to be conceptualised by Tibetans as 'traditional' in style. The variation between monasteries constructed today and those in Tibet is merely seen as pragmatic adaptation within an acceptable range. Building monasteries that evoke a Tibetan style through the use of new materials thus comes to be viewed as an important aspect of the preservation of Tibetan culture.

Case study 6: The Tibet Museum and the Norbulingka Institute

The efforts that, for example, Geshe Lhakdor has exerted to preserve Tibetan architecture are predominantly directed at a Tibetan audience: they are designed to encourage Tibetan exiles to practise traditional architecture, thereby ensuring that craft skills are not lost. Tibetan-style architecture is also intended for the consumption of foreigners, however: to attract international visitors, their sympathy and support. This is particularly true of two buildings, The Tibet Museum and the Norbulingka Institute, both of which were commissioned from Japanese architect, Kazuhiro Nakahara who is resident in Dharamshala.

The Tibet Museum,[149] which adjoins the *tsuk lak khang* temple at the southernmost tip of McLeod Ganj, was inaugurated on 30th April 2000. It presents a narrative of Tibetan exile beginning in the 1950s, and gradually brings visitors through time to the current day. Although trilingual in Tibetan, Hindi and English, since the content of the museum is familiar to most Tibetans, few of them visit. Instead, the

[148] In Tibet of the early twentieth century, woodcarvers played the most important role in construction design; the head-carpenter served as the 'architect, and had responsibility for planning and supervising construction (Semple 1992: 106).
[149] See C. Harris 2012 (165-176) and Singh 2010 and 2015 for further discussion of this museum.

museum's visitors are predominantly tourists, both domestic and foreign[150] (cf. C. Harris 2012: 175). Since it is an important site at which potential Tibet-supporters are able to learn the 'truth' about Tibet, it was considered important to make it externally appealing and visibly 'Tibetan', hence Nakahara's use of Tibetan motifs: for example, trapezoidal black-framed windows, and a maroon-painted parapet incorporating the dot motif which evokes the beam-ends of a wooden roof (cf. C. Harris 2012: 171).



Figure 42 The Tibet Museum, McLeod Ganj, inaugurated 30th April 2000. Building designed by Japanese architect, Kazuhiro Nakahara. Note Nakahara's use of the dot-motif, false beam-ends and black-painted, trapezoidal window frames (Nov 2012).

Nakahara also employed Tibetan motifs, although in a different way, in another major architectural project he completed for the exile community, the Norbulingka Institute. Named after the summer palace of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, the Norbulingka Institute was founded through the work of Kim and Kalsang Yeshi under the aegis of

[150] As part of their introduction to the exile community, and their nation's 'real' history, newly arrived Tibetans are brought on a tour of the museum during their stay at the Reception Centre.

the CTA's Department of Religion and Culture (the land was initially purchased for the project in 1984, though the Institute was not finally inaugurated until 1995).



Figure 43 Front view of the Norbulingka Institute, in Sidhpur nearby Dharamshala. The Norbulingka Institute was also designed by Kazuhiro Nakahara (5 Oct 2012).

Kim Yeshi, in a volume published to mark the ten year anniversary of the Institute, recalls that she and her husband Kalsang (then CTA Cabinet Minister for Religion and Culture), had originally imagined constructing a:

> … Centre where interested people [foreigners, non-Tibetans] could become acquainted with Tibetan culture in a conducive environment, a place where dialogue could occur. We imagined a pleasant location with Tibetan style buildings set amidst attractive gardens.
>
> Kim Yeshi 2006: 13

It was on this basis that Nakahara drew up plans for the Institute; he generated a novel design based upon the iconographic outline of Avalokiteshvara (the Bodhisattva

of Compassion, of whom the Dalai Lama is an incarnation). While his design references Tibetan features, many elements (such as the curving walls and overall concept) are non-traditional. Although the Yeshis' plans for the Centre subsequently shifted to emphasise the preservation of Tibetan craft and artistic traditions (Kim Yeshi 2006: 14), Nakahara's designs were retained.



Figure 44 The Norbulingka Institute. Note Nakahara's novel use of curving walls in the Institute's design. At the same time Nakahara evokes traditional style in his design for the windows, which include a decorative lintel, false beam-ends and a black-painted, trapezoidal frame (5 Oct 2012).

Today the Institute is a self-supporting craft community dedicated to fostering the preservation of Tibetan arts and crafts such as *thangka* painting, woodcarving and sculpture. It has also become an important tourist attraction. Besides *thangka* (both paint and appliqué), woodwork items and *ku* (deity figures), the Norbulingka shop also sells a variety of home furnishings and clothing aimed at and priced for the Western market (these items are becoming popular among wealthy East Asian and Indian

visitors also). Sales provide crucial revenue for the centre, helping to sustain it as a craft community. The architecture at Norbulingka thus serves a dual purpose: to attract foreign visitors (their patronage and political sympathy), and simultaneously provide a stimulating setting for the preservation work enacted within its walls.

4.1.4 Reflections, refractions and reproductions of Tibetanness: 'little Lhasa' revisited

In his article 'A Guide to Little Lhasa in India', Dibyesh Anand discusses the symbolic geography of McLeod Ganj, arguing that the materiality of the town both expresses and in turn produces exilic narratives of refugee-hood. He comments:

> … I chose Dharamsala since it plays a very crucial role in acting as a symbolic nerve centre from which articulations of Tibetan-ness emerge. Not only do these articulations affect international media's perception [sic]. More importantly, they are reabsorbed into the exile community's self-perception. Thus, instead of representation being merely reflective of identity, they are constitutive of the very entity they seek to represent.
>
> Anand 2002: 14

Anand demonstrates how the physical environment of McLeod Ganj, its Tibetan-style buildings, Tibetan shop names, political stickers and posters, and even its mountainous setting evoke an idealised Tibet, more akin to Shangri-La than a specific place. At the same time, specific times and places are invoked strongly through the practice of re-naming, for example, of the 'Norbulingka Institute' for the Dalai Lama's summer palace. The symbolic geography of McLeod Ganj, in short, both shapes and expresses exilic Tibetan identity; the town as a whole is a 'public [act] of objectification' (Gell 1998: 258). This 'objectification' is internalised by Tibetan refugees but also, importantly, by the international media.

But is McLeod Ganj really a 'little Lhasa'? As I have shown, the town's built environment, the prayer flags hung from rooftops, Tibetan language sign-posts and shop

names, play an important role in marking space as Tibetan, hiving it off from the surrounding Indian town and other nearby settlements. Religious practices such as *kora*, prostration, making offerings and their associated material culture (e.g. *ma ni* stones, prayer wheels) play an even more important role in making and demarcating Tibetan space, since they enable refugees to reconstitute pre-exile patterns of movement, and thereby establish embodied continuity between life before exile and life as a refugee. The presence of the Dalai Lama and his government in the town further promotes this sense of continuity, contributing to the 'authenticity' of McLeod Ganj as a Tibetan capital.

Considerable forces are also arrayed against Tibetan place-making practices, however. While the practice of *kora* might be regarded as a Tibetan form of claiming territory, this claim is strongly contested by state-level edicts against laying *ma ni* stones and hanging prayer flags. Likewise, Himachal state law also prevents many Tibetans from purchasing land and property, and thus from truly claiming a 'home' in Himachal Pradesh. I have also argued that Tibetans themselves are complicit in producing this liminality, being reluctant to invest in property in India since they envisage either returning to Tibet or moving overseas. Rhetoric emanating from the Dalai Lama, who has consistently emphasised the importance of living 'simply' as befits refugees, reinforces this perspective (he himself embodies this perspective, choosing to present himself as a 'simple monk').

The built environment presents Tibetan refugees with the opportunity to imagine their homeland and bring it into being in exile, thereby rendering their stay more comfortable and its locations more homely. Harris notes that 'Tibetan style is … a statement of resilience and resistance' (C. Harris 1999: 44); this is certainly the case, especially for buildings with religious significance. Elaborate temples and monasteries affirm the determined persistence of Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhism, which is seen by

many in the exile community, and especially its leader the Dalai Lama, as the font of Tibetan culture itself. If a community's buildings can be considered 'public acts of objectification' (Gell 1998: 258), however, secular and vernacular Tibetan constructions must also be considered into the bargain. If religious buildings indicate the permanence of Tibetan Buddhist culture, vernacular architecture proclaims the opposite. The houses of Tibetan refugees in McLeod Ganj trumpet the population's impermanence: not only are refugees chary of investing in the built environment of India, since they hope either to return to their homeland or to migrate onwards to Western countries, they actually cannot, subject as they are to financial and legal constraints arising from their refugee status. The built environment of McLeod Ganj, as a whole, thus 'objectifies' the situation very well: it points up the tension in the community between permanence and impermanence, the definitive liminality of a displaced people determined to preserve their culture, and also determined to preserve their attachment to their homeland. The latter can only be achieved by maintaining a sense of instability and un-belonging. In contrast to the religious built environment, the secular built environment of McLeod Ganj thus embodies more of Anand's 'temporary home'[151] (Anand 2002: 19), in some respects Tibetanised, but in others hybrid, and always highly mobile.

[151] In Hindi *dharamshala* can be translated as rest house, refuge or, Anand suggests, temporary home (Anand 2002: 19).

4.2 Ladakh, or 'little Tibet'?



Figure 45 View of tents erected for the celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday (6th July) in the parkland surrounding his palace (*po drang*) in Choglamsar, Leh, Ladakh. Note the Tibetan flags flying from tent poles – these differentiate Tibetan and Ladakhi tents (these are made from ex-army parachutes) (6 Jul 2013).

It was around the sixth of July, the birthday of the Dalai Lama, when my research assistant Khenrab and I were walking through the parkland surrounding the Dalai Lama's palace (*po drang*) in Choglamsar. The entire space had been transformed by a sea of white tents made from ex-army parachutes. Only the Tibetan national flag, with its two snow lions standing proudly in front of a snow-covered peak, distinguished the Ladakhi and Tibetan tents. On our way back to his house, Khenrab turned to me and commented: did I know that there had been a plan to resettle one or two thousand Tibetans living in Ladakh abroad? Samdhong Rinpoche [152] had cancelled the

[152] Erstwhile *Kalon Tripa* (Tibetan Prime Minister).

programme, he continued. Usually, he said, the CTA tries to give these opportunities[153] to Tibetans who are struggling the most, so that's why in recent years many Tibetans living in Nepal have been given the chance to settle overseas.[154] Tibetans living in Ladakh are some of the poorest in exile, he went on, yet Samdhong Rinpoche had still called a halt to the project to resettle them overseas. Why was this? I asked. Apparently, he had thought that of all the Tibetans living in the diaspora, the Tibetans in Ladakh were preserving Tibetan culture most successfully. Hence he wanted to avoid dispersing these communities abroad. Instead he promised that whatever aid Tibetans in Ladakh needed, the CTA would give it, and so the programme had been cancelled.



Figure 46 Indian and Tibetan flags flank the pavilion upon which local Tibetan and Ladakhi dignitaries were seated during the celebrations for the Dalai Lama's birthday (6 Jul 2013).

[153] For example, in 1990 the US government provided 1,000 visas for Tibetans living in India and Nepal to resettle (Hess 2009: 1, 3).

[154] Life has become increasingly difficult for Tibetans living in Nepal as the Nepali government (seemingly at the behest of the PRC) has cracked down upon public activities promoting Tibetan culture and religion, including a de facto ban on (peaceful) political protests (http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/01/nepal-increased-pressure-china-threatens-tibetans [accessed 6 Aug 2015]; cf. Demick 2015]).

When I told friends in McLeod Ganj that I planned to be in Ladakh during July they commented approvingly, noting that I would be able to attend the celebrations held in Choglamsar for the Dalai Lama's birthday (*trung kar*). Tibetans in Ladakh, they noted, were more 'traditional' ('rustic' to use one friend's phrase) – I would get a chance to see what Tibetan culture had truly looked like before the Chinese takeover. But why have Tibetans in Ladakh retained a more 'traditional' Tibetan lifestyle? How is this lifestyle perceived and evaluated by the Tibetans living it? Does living this lifestyle equate to feeling more at home? In the following section, I discuss the recent history of Tibetan settlement in Ladakh, and how the physical and socio-cultural situation has impacted the built environment. Fully understanding the socio-cultural background of contemporary Tibetan settlement in the region requires some historical context. Thus I begin with a brief review of the historical and cultural connections between Ladakh and Tibet.

4.2.1 Ladakh and Tibet: a long-standing relationship

Unlike the Dharamshala area, the region of Ladakh has long shared a history with Tibet. Beginning in the late seventh or early eighth centuries until some time after the assassination of the Tibetan King Langdarma in 842 AD, Ladakh was part of the Tibetan empire, ruled by the Yarlung dynasty of central Tibet (Bray 2005: 1). Subsequently, the region gained greater independence under the rule of Langdarma's descendants, who settled in the area. It grew so much in power and influence that in 1630 King Sengge Namgyal annexed western Tibet (including the districts of Ruthok, Guge and Purang). However, Ladakh's political fortunes declined thereafter. King Deden Namgyal was forced to cede these districts to Lhasa in 1684. Later in 1842 Dogra king, Gulab Singh, who was later installed as Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir

by the British, annexed the region. His rule brought Ladakh squarely into the purview of British and subsequently independent India.

Throughout this history, Tibetan Buddhism played an important role in the region, especially in underscoring political and social links between Ladakh and Tibet. Bray notes that the Ladakhi kings' legitimacy was based upon their role as protectors of the Buddhist *dharma*; hence they were generous patrons of the monasteries in Ladakh and western Tibet (Bray 2005: 10). There was also a long-standing tradition of sending monks from Ladakh for advanced tuition in Tibet's great monasteries. This seems to have begun in earnest during the 13th century, although some travelled between the regions prior to this date also (Bray 2005: 9).[155] These religious exchanges continued in spite of increasing Mughal influence in the region from the 17th century onwards, and even after the Dogra annexation in 1842. The final years of the Dogra regime saw Buddhist reform in Ladakh, including the establishment of both the Ladakh Buddhist Education Society (1933) and the Young Men's Buddhist Association (a precursor of today's Ladakh Buddhist Association) (Bray 2005: 21-22).

Historically intertwined, Ladakhi and Tibetan culture bear considerable resemblance to one another. While the languages are not mutually intelligible they are strongly related and share the same script. Ladakhis today, like Tibetan refugees, are predominantly Tibetan Buddhist (Muslims form a significant minority), and both communities make use of the historic monasteries dotted throughout the region. Not only this, but secular culture and lifestyle are also to a large extent shared. Traditionally, Ladakhis living in the villages of the Indus valley supported themselves through small-scale arable farming and animal husbandry; others lived nomadically, caring for their herds of sheep, goat and yak in the highlands near the Tibetan border. Many continue

[155] For example, the great scholar Rinchen Zangpo, who founded monasteries across Purang, Spiti, Kinnaur and Ladakh, was one of twenty-one men sent by the king of Purang to Kashmir for training as a translator of Buddhist scriptures (Bray 2005: 9).

this lifestyle today, although they often supplement their income with small business. Tourism is also a significant earner in the region. Given these similarities, we might argue that the Ladakhi context fits Mata-Codesal's (2010) description of a 'transnational net', wherein the host culture is similar enough to migrants' culture that the cultural and social (in the Tibetan case, religious, gustatory, economic, sartorial, and to an extent linguistic) practices of the homeland can be pursued without difficulty in the new place. While today McLeod Ganj functions as a 'transnational net' for newcomers, in the 1960s it lacked these facilities (and even today, as I have outlined above, Tibetan culture continues to be challenged by local Indian norms). Ladakh and Ladakhi culture, by contrast, have provided Tibetans with opportunities to continue their cultural and religious life with less disruption.

4.2.2 The arrival of Tibetan refugees in Ladakh

It took some time for the full force of the Chinese takeover (1950-1951) to be felt in western Tibet. Many hundreds of miles from Lhasa, it was not until much later that Chinese cadres and the People's Liberation Army arrived in significant numbers in these remote areas. For the semi-nomadic Tibetans who lived in this region, life continued much the way it had. By the early 1960s, however, Chinese rule had become onerous, and for some intolerable, and so many began to flee. From western Tibet, Ladakh is only a few days travel away; the route through the pass at Demchok (see Fig. 6, p58) was known by many and had long been an important historical trading route. Thousands of Tibetans from predominantly western areas of Tibet came through this pass, bringing with them as many possessions as could be loaded onto their yak, goat and sheep. Many families stayed nomadically for several months in the Demchok area, however an unusually cold winter during the early sixties resulted in the death of

significant numbers of livestock, putting these refugees' livelihoods at risk. As a result, they were relocated to the Leh area, beginning a system of settlement that continues today.

Kelsang Jigme[156] fled Tibet in the early 1960s. His family was from Tashigang in western Tibet, a place more or less like Ladakh, he recalled, but greener and more fertile. In Tashigang, it was possible to grow more crops; the land was also more open and less hemmed in by mountains. Kelsang and his family settled in the Spituk area, around seven kilometres from Leh, in 1963. With the other Tibetan refugee families, Kelsang's family pitched their tents on the banks of the Indus river beneath the eleventh century *gon pa* (monastery). There was hardly anything there, he recalled, no grass, nothing, just rocks, wolves and wild animals. During this time, Tibetan refugees were provided with food rations from the Jammu and Kashmir government. Another elderly refugee, Ngawang Rinzin,[157] who had fled Rawang in western Tibet with his family in 1959, recalled that around 120 families were encamped at Spituk c.1963. Some sheltered in their own tents, which they had brought through the pass with them, others used tents provided by the local government. Rinzin's family had been quite wealthy in Tibet, possessing around a thousand sheep and between two and three hundred *yak* and *dri*. They lost virtually all these livestock to the winter while encamped at Hanle, though.

In April-May of 1964, a number of Tibetan refugee families, including Kelsang and Rinzin were moved to a new location, locally known as Menla (from Shey Menla, nearby Shey village), the site of what is now Camp One in today's Choglamsar (c.5km south of Leh). Rations continued to be provided for the refugees; Kelsang also remembers how many began to take up 'coolie' work (construction work, e.g. road building, working on the Leh airport runway) in order to bring in extra money. It was

[156] Interviewed in Akling Tibetan camp, 16 Apr 2013.
[157] Interviewed in Akling Tibetan camp, 19 Apr 2013.

not until around 1974, interviewees noted, that land was officially assigned to Tibetan families by the local government.[158] Today, Tibetans living nearby Leh are organised into two settlements (see Fig. 47, below). Akling, the smaller settlement, comprises four 'camps' (Camps 6-9) and is located between Spituk and Choglamsar, near the Leh airport. Choglamsar, the larger settlement, comprises seven camps (Camps 1-5 and 10-12) and straddles the Leh road, to the east of Akling. Camps One, Two and Three are the oldest and are situated to the east of the road. To the west of the road lie Camps Four and Five. These were founded in the seventies. Flash flooding in August 2010 washed away what remained of Camp Ten, the old settlement at Spituk (it had also been subject to severe flooding in 2000-2001), leading to its relocation to a new site in Choglamsar (to the west of the road). Also located in this area is Camp Twelve, which was established in the year 2000 for Tibetan refugees from the nomadic camp of Jangthang Chumur. Camp Eleven is scattered and comprises dwellings to both sides of the road in Choglamsar (it is a camp more in an administrative sense than a territorial one).

Besides the camps in the Leh area, nine further camps or 'clusters' were founded in the Jangthang region, nearby the Tibetan border. These villages (Samedh, Kharnak, Sumdho, Puga, Nyoma, Hanle, Chumur, Kakshung and Goyul) lie at an average elevation of 4,700m and take between one and two days to reach by jeep from Leh (average distance of 300km; see Fig. 6, p58).[159] Tibetan residents in these camps are semi-nomadic, and spend large portions of the year encamped in the surrounding valleys and mountains, following their grazing herds according to the season. These camps, together with those in the Leh area, are referred to jointly as Sonamling. In charge of administering the area is the Chief Representative Officer (CRO) of the Dalai

[158] Although the Tibetan refugee settlement Sonamling (see below) was officially founded in 1969, interviewees reported that land was not distributed to them until 1974.
[159] http://www.centraltibetanreliefcommittee.org/settlements/india/north/jangthang.html [accessed 11 Sep 2014].

Lama, whose office is located in Camp Three, Choglamsar. In spite of its remoteness, Sonamling is one of the most populous Tibetan settlements in India. The most recent figures from the CTA Department of Home record the Tibetan population of Sonamling as 7,123 (1,539 of whom live in the Jangthang region).[160]



Figure 47 Map of Leh area depicting location of Tibetan settlements, Akling and Choglamsar.

[160] These figures date to 2012 (http://www.centraltibetanreliefcommittee.org/settlements/india/north/sonamling.html [accessed 7 Apr 2015]). The TDS (2009: 66) quotes a figure of 6,769 for the Sonamling population.

Compared to Tibetans in McLeod Ganj, Tibetans living in the above camps have greater control over the land they occupy.[161] The land of the settlements is permanently leased to Tibetan refugees by the state government (via the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, LAHDC), and although Tibetans may not sell the land, they are within their rights to construct buildings, farm and sub-let the plots.[162] Moreover, those Tibetan settlements that were officially founded, such as Choglamsar and Akling, are considered Protected Areas under Indian law. Because of this, Tibetans resident in these settlements enjoy greater autonomy over the territory within the settlement. This has tended to mean that, unlike in McLeod Ganj where the population is very mixed (Indian and Tibetan with large numbers of foreign and domestic visitors), the populations of Choglamsar and Akling are dominated by Tibetans.[163]

4.2.3 Vernacular architecture: Choglamsar and Akling

The topography of the Leh settlements differs significantly to McLeod Ganj and impacts housing. Situated in a gently sloping valley, the settlements offer much greater space to Tibetan residents, and consequently family houses tend to be much larger in size. Statistics produced in the 2009 census are particularly revealing. For example, 65% of Tibetan households in Dharamshala comprised a single room (25% possessed two); in Ladakh only 12% of households comprised a single room, 34% possessed two, 27% possessed three (TDS 2009: 63). Most of those I interviewed in Akling and

[161] In this respect, McLeod Ganj is exceptional by exilic standards. Many of the largest Tibetan settlements in India were officially founded upon land permanently leased to Tibetans by the local state government. These settlements, for example, include the very large and populous Bylakuppe and Mundgod, in Karnataka State.

[162] The land of Choglamsar and Akling is leased to Tibetans for a period of 96 years (Dhondup Tashi, Chief Representative Officer for H.H. Dalai Lama; interviewed in Choglamsar, 6 Jun 2013). In some camps Ladakhi families have sub-let properties from Tibetans. Notably, some Ladakhi children also attend the local Tibetan school, the SOS Tibetan Children's Village School, situated in Camp Three, Choglamsar.

[163] To remain overnight in a Protected Area as a foreigner requires obtaining a Protected Area Permit from the Ministry of Home Affairs in Delhi. Permits such as these are required for all officially founded Tibetan settlements where land has been leased to refugees by state governments.

Choglamsar settlements occupied two or more rooms. Large families frequently possessed more rooms (four to six), having built them piecemeal within their allotted compound as the family grew and finances improved; elderly individuals whose children had left the family home often occupied one or two rooms, maximally three. The greater availability of space in the settlements facilitates conjoined family living in a manner similar to that previously enjoyed in Tibet. This is borne out by census data on household size: of all the Indian refugee settlements, Ladakh features the highest average household size (5.2 individuals); Dharamshala, by contrast, features the lowest (2.4 individuals; TDS 2009: 62).[164] In the Tibetan camps surrounding Leh, it was common for three, sometimes four, generations to live together, likewise in Jangthang.

The materiality of the houses constructed also differs markedly. Unlike in Dharamshala, mud-brick remains a key material for construction, both in Leh and Jangthang (although today it is combined with concrete beams so that larger openings for windows can be created). The material is cheap as well as suitable for the climate, providing important protection from the winter cold as well as cool shade during the summer months. The majority of dwellings in the Tibetan camps of Sonamling are made with mud-brick. They bear strong similarities to Ladakhi dwellings, which are also constructed in the same manner although they are often more elaborate, incorporating decorative woodwork around windows and doors (cf. Khosla 1979: 101-122). Tibetan dwellings in the camps remain very simple in style by comparison (those in Jangthang are even more so), although owners make an effort to Tibetanise their properties to a degree. Kelsang Jigme[165] explained to me that Tibetan and Ladakhi construction techniques and decorative-style have converged in recent years. In 1974, when Tibetans began to move out of tents and into permanent housing, the local Indian government provided materials for simply built mud-brick houses of one to three rooms

[164] Average household size for the Tibetan settlements of India is 3.8 (TDS 2009: 62).
[165] Interviewed in Akling settlement, 16 Apr 2013.

(depending on family size). Tibetans themselves provided the labour, and also went to the added effort of elaborating the exterior of their houses in a Tibetan style. Houses were mostly whitewashed; some went to the extent of painting a *pen bé* (parapet) around the upper rim of the house in order to make it more homely. Tibetans also constructed wooden *la tsuk* (small towers) at each corner of the house to hang prayer flags. Today, these tend to be constructed in concrete. In light of the dry climate and greater availability, wood (especially locally grown poplar) features strongly in local Tibetan and Ladakhi architecture. Poplar trunks and branches are extensively used for roof and ceiling beams (hence there is no need for the 'dot' motif commonly used elsewhere in the diaspora to evoke beam ends, since beams in Ladakh are physically present).



Figure 48 Recently completed housing in Camp Twelve, Choglamsar (Leh, Ladakh) (Camp Twelve was founded in 2000). Note the use of concrete in combination with mud-brick and the construction of a parapet and *la tsuk* to hoist prayer flags (May 2013).



Figure 49 House in Akling settlement nearby Leh (Ladakh). Note the use of hybrid materials (mud-brick and concrete), additionally the incorporation of a parapet and use of wood in the roof structure (note the ends of beams below the parapet). Tibetans in Ladakh habitually incorporate a layer of metal sheeting into the flat roof structure of their houses. This is supported by wooden rafters also visible in the image (May 2013).



Figure 50 Housing in Sumdho settlement, Jangthang (Ladakh). Houses in Jangthang were built in a similar manner to those in Choglamsar and Akling using the same materials and approach (15 Jun 2013).



Figure 51 Newer and older housing in Sumdho settlement, Jangthang (Ladakh). While similar in quality to the Tibetan settlements nearby Leh, facilities were poorer in this remote location. Only a handful of houses were provided with electricity (solar only). Drinking water was available only from the local stream (14 Jun 2013).

In Kelsang's opinion, there is little to differentiate between Tibetan and Ladakhi architecture, because of pre-existing similarities (he was aware of the longstanding historical connection between Ladakh and Tibet), but also because of more recent developments. Kelsang said that he had heard local Ladakhis wanted to make Ladakh look more 'traditional' and more exotic in order to appeal to the burgeoning tourist market. Hence, they had recently begun to emphasise Tibetan-ethnic style in their architecture, such that Tibetan and Ladakhi buildings were quickly becoming indistinguishable.

4.2.4 Making home?

Objectively, Tibetan construction in Ladakh, compared to Tibetan construction elsewhere in the Indian diaspora, demonstrates strong physical and material continuity

with construction in Tibet. But how is this subjectively perceived? How do Tibetans living in Ladakh evaluate their housing? Is it perceived as being 'Tibetan' in style? Does building in this style help Tibetans to feel at home, or are other factors more important?

Those I spoke to who resided in the Ladakh settlements (including in Jangthang) had mixed opinions about their housing. While it was clear that many had spent effort and money on Tibetanising their dwellings, many still felt that the houses in which they lived were not fully 'Tibetan', but an amalgamation of contemporary Indian, Ladakhi and Tibetan-style architecture. In this context, it was clear that 'Tibetan-style' meant being 'old' and basic (lack of running water, lack of a bathroom, lack of electricity etc.). Consequently, hybridity was often rated positively. Jigme,[166] who was born in Kharag in Tibet and came to Ladakh soon after 1959, described to me the differences between the Tibetan houses he had left behind as a boy and those built in exile. In his *pa yül* (homeland/valley) he said, Tibetan houses were generally two-storey (cf. Dollfus 1989: 98-103; and Khosla 1979: 101-112). The animals inhabited the lower level, humans the upper. One particular house, he remembered, was very large and had an entire separate building to accommodate guests and another for fuel (this belonged to a more wealthy family). Compared with modern Tibetan houses in India the Tibetan houses of his childhood were very roughly built using rammed-earth (see p120).[167] Here in India, he noted, the materials are better quality (Jigme was referring to concrete and cement) so Tibetan houses can be more elaborate. For Jigme, it was clear that having a 'Tibetan-style' house meant having an un-modern house built in poorer quality materials with fewer modern amenities. Jigme had spent time in Tibet as a young man and then the

[166] Interviewed in Choglamsar, 5 May 2013.
[167] Khosla enumerates four building techniques used in the Western Himalaya. These include use of: sun-dried mud-bricks, rammed-earth, rubble combined with mud mortar and stud walls with timber framing and mud or stone infill (1979: 117). Tibetans I spoke with in McLeod Ganj and Ladakh described the use of two of these techniques (mud-brick and rammed-earth) in the buildings of their childhood in Tibet.

intervening years between the early 1960s and 2000 in Jangthang Chumur, a semi-nomadic Tibetan settlement on the Ladakhi side of the border. Nomadic life was hard work, he explained. In Leh, by comparison, you could work for a day and then rest for a day; sell some things in a shop, purchase vegetables and not worry about where your food was coming from. For Jigme, his life in Choglamsar was one of comparative luxury. Speaking to me about the design of his house, he emphasised its sturdy, high quality structure. While he looks forward to returning to Tibet, since it is his homeland, he expressed no nostalgia for the hard way of life he had endured there and subsequently in Jangthang. Perhaps, he said, when Tibetans return to Tibet they will be able to build good quality houses there like we do here, today. For himself, he feels quite at home in his house and community in Choglamsar.



Figure 52 Tibetan nomadic camp in Puga, Jangthang (Ladakh). Interviewees living in the camp valued this way of life although they expressed little affection for it, describing it as hard and difficult. Many hoped that their children, through access to education, would be able to escape it by gaining skilled work elsewhere in India or abroad (15 Jun 2013).



Figure 53 Tent at Puga, Jangthang (Ladakh) (15 Jun 2013).

Many of those I spoke to who had led a nomadic existence in Tibet and later in Jangthang took a similar view to Jigme. Moving to the Leh area, and living in the accommodation available in the settlements of Choglamsar and Akling represented a transition to comparative luxury. To other Tibetans, raised outside Ladakh, the conditions in the Choglamsar and Akling settlements were unpalatable. Only 13% of Tibetan houses in Ladakh receive running water by tap, this compares to 98% in Dharamshala (figures from other Tibetan settlements in India range between 63% and 100%). Mostly, Tibetans living in Choglamsar and Akling have to carry water into their houses from a hand-pump outside their compound (only 7% have access to water on their premises). Ladakh also scores lowest in terms of electricity connection, with only 79% of Tibetan households being connected (this compares to 100% in Dharamshala). Ladakh also scores second lowest among the Indian settlements for sanitary facilities, with only 62% of households possessing a toilet. These toilets, moreover, are external,

earth toilets, not the internal, Indian-style, water-flush toilets common to other Tibetan settlements (TDS 2009: 63). Lack of water connection also means that few Tibetans in Ladakh possess internal bathrooms with washing facilities. Consequently, most wash outside using water carried in from the pump.

However, it was not the lack of such facilities that Tibetans in Ladakh bemoaned. Rather, they commented on (perceived) restrictions they faced due to their refugee status. Talking about building houses and the feeling of being at home, most Tibetans I spoke with raised the complaint that, as refugees, they were not permitted to construct houses of more than one storey. Indeed, this is one of the features of Tibetan houses that distinguish them from nearby Ladakhi homes: the lack of a second storey. Many of those I spoke with felt that this 'ruling' singled them out unfairly and was yet another example of the difficulties they faced as refugees living in a country which was not their own. This 'ruling' proved to be no more than a rumour, however. In conversation with me, the CRO for the Sonamling settlements, Dhondup Tashi,[168] explained that in fact there was no rule to prevent Tibetans from building two-storey houses (he himself had investigated this rumour when he entered office several years ago – he now lives in a house with two storeys). He suspects that this rumour was born out of a comment made in a meeting between settlement officers. It was common, he explained, for Tibetans to argue that in the view of the fact that they would be returning to Tibet soon, building elaborate houses in exile was unnecessary. Hence, he guesses that a settlement officer may have recommended that Tibetans only build single-storey housing and that this comment has since been interpreted as a 'ruling' by residents. When I conveyed this to my research participants many were surprised but gratified. Khenrab, my assistant, noted that this would enable him to build a *cho khang* (shrine room) on top of his house (at present he, like many Tibetans, has set aside a room on the

[168] Interviewed in Choglamsar settlement, 6 Jun 2013.

ground floor for this). Having the *cho khang* on the upper floor, he explained, is more respectful to the *ku* (deity figures) and scriptures since it keeps them elevated above more mundane and polluting aspects of daily life (cf. Dollfus 1989: 98-103; Semple 1992: 107). Building an upper room for these would improve his family's religious practice and accrue them merit.

The aesthetic modifications Tibetans have been able to make to their housing in Ladakh have broader significance: they are indicative of the greater 'permanence' of the Ladakh-based Tibetan population compared to the highly mobile population of Dharamshala. Conversely, the greater housing security afforded by settlement-living makes it more worthwhile for Tibetans to invest in their built environment. In this sense, Tibetan-style not only helps Tibetans feel at home in the settlements, as many expressed, it also indicates the greater permanence of the population, and residents' greater sense of security. In short, it indicates that residents feel more at home in these settlements in the first place. This is not to say that residents consider themselves unambiguously 'at home' in Ladakh - far from it. The fact that many did not question the rumour that, as refugees, it was illegal for them to build two-storey houses suggests Tibetans living in the region feel at least partially unwelcome. This was confirmed in the many interviews I conducted in which participants often expressed how, if they were in their own country, they would be able to build larger houses and would have access to better quality and more extensive farmland and grazing (the land provided for Tibetans in the Leh area is mostly un-irrigable, making it suitable only for growing fodder and grazing a few animals). This is in addition to the structural grievances I discussed in the preceding chapter. In sum, vernacular architecture, and participants' expressions concerning it still indicate an ambiguous relationship with India and Ladakh as a 'temporary home', though perhaps a less temporary one than McLeod Ganj.

One of the important factors that made this 'home' more appealing for many Tibetan refugees was the pre-existing material and cultural context into which they emerged in 1959-1960, in particular, the religious context. The next section focuses on the religious built environment, and its role in fostering a sense of 'home' in exile. My research participants unanimously cited the presence of *gon pa* (Tibetan monasteries) and their ability to practise their religion as an important factor in their feeling 'at home' in Ladakh. Thus, moving on from the vernacular built environment, the next section focuses upon the religious built environment to analyse how this plays a role in exiles' sense of being at home.

4.2.5 The religious built environment

Unlike Dharamshala, the Ladakhi built environment from the very beginning of exile has provided Tibetan refugees with opportunities to pursue their religious practice. In Dharamshala, Tibetans created several *kora* routes (circumambulation paths) around the Dalai Lama's temple in order that they might complete circuits of it and thereby accrue religious merit. Tibetans living in the settlements of Choglamsar and Akling have also created their own, local routes around newly built monasteries and around *ma ni* stones and memorials to the dead (*menthang*). Many, especially elderly individuals who were sometimes too frail to make longer journeys to important monasteries or other *kora* sites (see below), explained to me that completing *kora* locally was an important part of what made them feel at home.



Figure 54 Tseten Tashi carves *ma ni* stones for the *menthang* (monuments to the dead, see Fig. 55, below) in Akling and Choglamsar settlements. In this image Tseten Tashi is lifting a *tong khor lo*. He explained that a stone carved like this is placed on a *menthang* to signify that one thousand (*tong*) *ma ni* stones have been offered (interviewed in Akling settlement, 20 Apr 2013).



Figure 55 *Menthang* built by Tibetan locals in Akling settlement. *Menthang* is a corruption of the Tibetan *ma ni tri* (lit. throne for prayer stones). On the occasion of someone's death, relatives and friends offer *ma ni* stones on a raised platform. Gradually, these have built up into a larger monument. Over the years individuals and groups have made further offerings, sponsoring the erection of *chö ten*, prayer flags and prayer wheels of various sizes. This site, on the northern edge of Akling settlement, has become an important site for *kora*, especially by less mobile, elderly locals who visit frequently throughout the day. Religious and ritual practices have sanctified it over time (May 2013).



Figure 56 Leh Chokhang Vihara, central Buddhist temple of Leh, Ladakh. This temple is located in the middle of Leh. The one-way traffic system around the roads surrounding the temple follows a clockwise route (the same as *kora*); there are other opportunities for *kora* in the courtyard above also. The temple is frequented by Ladakhis and Tibetans working in Leh and also plays a prominent role in protests and public events in the town. Walking protests began at Leh gates, proceeded up the main road into town, circumambulated the temple and finished in the temple courtyard (Jun 2013). It is notable that in Ladakh, which is a predominantly Buddhist region, road routes are laid out with respect to Buddhist monuments (e.g. taking care to pass them on the left-hand side). This was particularly noticeable on the route out of town towards Choglamsar, which passes *chö ten* standing outside several army compounds. Ladakhi and Tibetan Buddhist drivers took care to make detours to pass these by on the left.

In Ladakh, unlike in Dharamshala, the armature for these religious practices already existed when Tibetans arrived in exile: *kora* routes are ubiquitous in the environment since they have been constructed and followed by Ladakhi Tibetan Buddhists. In Leh itself, the relatively newly built central temple includes prayer wheels and a *kora* route. Other sites are both older and younger: behind and above Leh Palace is the 15th century Namgyal Tsemo Monastery, in which a three-storey, golden Maitreya (*Jampa*) Buddha image resides; to the west at the extremes of the town is the popular 'Shanti *Stupa*', which was sponsored by a Japanese Buddhist and built in 1991. Beyond Leh there are many historic monasteries situated both to the east and west of the capital

along the Indus valley. Tibetans living in the Leh settlements make extensive use of these, especially on significant religious days, for example, on the auspicious 15th of the (Tibetan) month (*tsé pa cho nga*). Often whole families will make a pilgrimage, e.g. by jeep, rising early in the morning and beginning with a long-drive to the furthest *gon pa*, working their way back along the valley making offerings and completing *kora* and prostrations at each monastery in turn to gain religious merit.

Many Tibetans I spoke with valued the historic monasteries in particular, and there are many locally. For example, to the east of Leh lie 15th century Thikse monastery (of the Gelugpa sect), 15th century Matho monastery (Sakya sect), 16th century Stakna monastery and 17th century Hemis and Chemrey monasteries, the latter three of the Drukpa Kagyu sect. To the west of Leh lie a number of historic monasteries, including relatively nearby Phyang and Likir (of the Drikung Kagyu and Gelugpa sects respectively). In particular, Thikse monastery (east of Leh) was highly valued by Tibetans for its visual similarity to the Potala Palace in Tibet.[169] Several young Tibetans were keen to show me photographs of themselves standing in front of this 'little Potala'. Indeed, I accompanied two young Tibetan school teachers (on vacation from their jobs in Bir Tibetan settlement, nearby Dharamshala) on a short motorbike tour, which was touristic as well as devotional, around several of the monasteries to the east of Leh. We included a stop at Thikse to take some photographs. Like others I spoke to, this couple were also keen to imagine themselves photographically in Lhasa, standing in front of one of the most iconic emblems of the Tibetan state, the palace of its spiritual and temporal leader (see section 6.2).

[169] I was told a story about the building of Thikse monastery by two Tibetans. According to the story, a monk from Ladakh was sent to Tibet to study. He was so taken by the beauty of the Potala that he decided that he would build one in Ladakh. So he carved an image of the building onto a potato, which he brought back. Unfortunately, the potato had shrivelled by the time the monk reached home, compressing the image of the Potala. Hence, this is why Thikse monastery is much smaller in size, only a miniature Potala.



Figure 57 Thikse *gon pa* (monastery). Note its visual similarity to the Potala Palace in Tibet. It was this view of the *gon pa* that Tibetan participants sought, and which featured in photographs they took of themselves (2 Jun 2013).

While in the case of Thikse it was its visual similarity to the Potala Palace that appealed, in the main it was neither aesthetic nor architectural merit for which older monasteries were valued by Tibetans.[170] Architecturally speaking, the monasteries of Ladakh strongly recall monastic architecture inside Tibet, for example, in terms of materials, structure and design (Sharma 2003, Khosla 1979), yet it was not the appearance, physical and material, of the monasteries which my respondents identified

[170] Only two of those I spoke to, both of whom had been born in Central Tibet, spoke about the aesthetic environment of the older *gon pa* as being special and significant. Referring to temples in PRC-controlled Tibet, Sonam commented: 'Once you are in there you feel this inner energy, this mysterious feeling there. It's dirty in the corner, even the curtain, you know, thick curtain with grease … that's more interesting than a really clean monastery … plus of course it's been there centuries right … feeling is different.' (Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 2 Mar 2013). For him, the older monasteries had more presence, and felt more sacred (although note his comment about age). Only one other made a similar comment to me; most seemed to appreciate the bright, clean colours of contemporary architecture and to value the religious aspect over the aesthetic one (see below).

as helping them to feel 'at home', but the practices they facilitated. For many elderly interviewees, the physical appearance of the monasteries was only important insofar as it indexed their age. Age was significant, they noted, since it indicated longevity of practice, and it is through repeated religious practice (e.g. prayer, giving of teachings, blessings and empowerments) that sites such as monasteries gain in power. Similarly, the older a *ku* (deity figure), and the more consecrations it has received, the more powerful and precious interviewees considered it (older monasteries tended to possess older *ku*, hence their corresponding high value).

More highly educated individuals, for example monks and younger Tibetans, refer to such ways of thinking as *mongdé* (often translated as 'blind faith'; see footnote 80, p87). Many of the older generation focus their religious practice on the accrual of *jin lap*, or blessings, which contribute to one's store of merit through practices such as *kora*, prostration, repetition of mantras and pilgrimage. By contrast, more educated and younger Tibetans tended to cite the importance of training the mind and good motivation, arguing that the age of the monastery, or the quality of *ku* are irrelevant. As Khen Rinpoche Jampa Gyatso[171] of the newly built Ruthok *gonpa* in Choglamsar explained to me, the same *jin lap* can be gained from an old monastery as a new one, the benefit gained rather depends on one's motivation. In fact, Khen Rinpoche himself felt that newly built monasteries, with their fresh colours and high quality materials were more beautiful and more attractive than older monasteries; people will always be attracted towards the new, he noted. However it was important to take history and lineage into account, since these indicate the inner beauty of a monastery; external qualities are immaterial. For this reason, we might consider older monasteries, such as the Potala, with their history of religious scholarship and activity, to be more important

[171] Interviewed in Ruthok Monastery, Choglamsar, 6 Jun 2013.

and more precious (note the difference in Khen Rinpoche's line of reasoning, and the more direct equation less educated individuals made regarding age and *jin lap*).

4.3 Conclusion

If we follow Bourdieu's concept of habitus, change to the built environment should engender change at the social level also. But is this really observable in the Tibetan case? Conversely, have Tibetan construction projects and adaptations of their environment played an important role in sustaining their culture in a foreign environment? While there is no doubt that exile has necessitated adaptation, including in building styles, it was interesting that refugees in both my field sites expressed relatively little interest in the built environment, especially vernacular structures, rating their importance low in comparison to other aspects of their material culture. Structural and financial factors have played an important role in this. In Dharamshala, the complexity of the law surrounding land ownership in Himachal Pradesh is an important factor in why Tibetan residents are unable and unwilling to spend money on improving their housing. In Ladakh, where Tibetans living in the Sonamling settlements possess greater rights regarding their land and properties but the population as a whole is poorer, financial factors play a greater role. Also important are community attitudes towards residence in India. In both places, though to a lesser extent in Ladakh, community attitudes towards transience (stemming from an intention to return to Tibet, or an intention to move abroad) also permeate the secular architectural environment, and have discouraged long-term investment in it. Indeed, this orientation is reinforced by local discourse: Tibetans who have invested in good quality housing are often criticised within the community, and their intention to return to Tibet and hence their devotion to the cause are called into question. This point of view finds support among the views

expressed by the Dalai Lama that Tibetans, as refugees, should live simply in India. In contrast to vernacular structures, religious ones in the main receive substantial patronage and are often elaborately decorated and correspondingly more highly valued. Besides enjoying more favourable legal and financial conditions, monasteries and temples are seen as a good investment for several other reasons. Most importantly, religion is seen by many exiles, including the Dalai Lama, as the defining feature of Tibetan culture, and is hence prioritised for protection and preservation. Expenditure on religious facilities in exile thus has multiple justifications. Many, though not all, of my participants saw investing in monasteries and thus the preservation of Tibetan religion as an important way in which Tibetan culture as a whole is preserved.

Other Tibetan modifications to the environment, such as the laying out of *kora* routes, also speak to the importance of religious practice. While in Ladakh foci for *kora* and routes around Leh are long established and available for refugees to use, in Dharamshala routes had to be created. It was clear from discussions with many Tibetan refugees, and especially but not exclusively the elderly, that the practice of *kora* played an important role in their being able to feel at home; it gave a rhythm and significance to their day, and provided opportunities for socialising. *Kora* can thus be viewed as a 'tactic' in the sense deployed by Certeau (1984: xix): Tibetan refugees use this practice to appropriate the landscape, to make it knowable and familiar, and thereby bring it within their cultural purview.

The practice of *kora* brings me to the aesthetic aspect of Tibetan construction, for it is not only the embodied practice, the physical walking or prostration, involved in *kora* which has created it as a Tibetan domain, it is also the physical adaptations devotees have made to the environment, such as stringing prayer flags in the trees and laying painted and carved *ma ni* stones along the route. Exiles' apparent disinterest in the historic architecture of Tibet (cf. Repo 2011: 301) at least partly, I suggest, stems

from the feeling that in exile Tibetan architecture is already well-preserved (cf. Repo 2011: 299), in the sense that it is currently 'practised' (cf. C. Harris 1999: 43), i.e. Tibetan-style monasteries and temples are being built in exile today. Few interviewees seemed either to notice or mind that these buildings differ markedly in architectural terms to the rammed-earth/mud-brick and wood constructions inside Tibet (and which can be seen in Ladakh). If anything, the modern construction methods and materials (concrete and acrylic paint) were preferred to 'old' methods, for both practical and aesthetic reasons. It was these new buildings, which (at least to a non-Tibetan eye) both look and feel different to Tibetan buildings from the period before exile, which gave refugees a sense of being at home.

Tibetans are not all-powerful agents in their environments; they are constrained by their legal status and (for many) by their poverty. Neither are they passive dwellers in an alien landscape, however. In both places, Ladakh and Dharamshala, Tibetans have made efforts to construct a built environment which references their homeland, and which renders the alien environment of India more knowable and familiar. Does this constitute home? Not exactly: efforts made by Tibetans to exert control over the environments of the settlements are strongly compromised by, for example, legal factors but more importantly, by the majority of Tibetans' political preference for remaining 'refugees', i.e. legal aliens, on Indian soil (see section 3.4). This orientation towards impermanence in India, either awaiting return to Tibet, or hoping for a chance to immigrate elsewhere, plays a crucial role in shaping the exilic built environment as transient.

This chapter has shown that the built environment does not straightforwardly signal the physical and cultural preservation of 'Tibet' in exile. Rather, it belies a complex series of interactions and compromises between Tibetan exiles, local state law, the physical environment and financial wherewithal. In this sense, it reflects exilic life

with even greater accuracy, physically embodying, for example, exiles' emphasis on religious preservation as a function of cultural preservation, and the orientation, especially apparent in Dharamshala, towards impermanence.

5 Dress: the poetics and politics of clothing in Tibetan Exile

> … all you western women who tend to wear chupa (traditional tibetan dress) [sic] just for the heck of looking dainty, to be more acceptable by Tibetan men, for exoticism, to feel your tibetan experience or to look cool. please dont. I am not okay with it and not [sic] are the elderly Tibetan women also. My chupa is not for exhibitionism. If you are offended with my remark, just take off my chupa. as simple as that. Respect.
>
> Tenzin Gyaser, McLeod Ganj[172]

> Hey I like wearing T shirts! And jeans and sneakers. I'd like to keep my underwear too please. Just because my own people didn't come up with these doesn't make me less entitled to wear them ... So hey take it easy I don't feel bad about eating momos that we got from the Chinese and wearing chupas that we copied from the Mongols and praying in Tibetans [sic] to a Buddha from Nepal. Makes my heritage rich if anything, you know.
>
> Tenzin Dorje, North America[173]

Having spent a few months in McLeod Ganj, like a number of Westerners (especially those studying the Tibetan language or Buddhism) I had begun to wear *chu pa,* the robe-like garment which is a key element of Tibetan dress.[174] I had thought that as an anthropologist it would be interesting and important to experience wearing Tibetan dress, an appropriate part of my role as a participant-observer. I also privately hoped that it might help me avoid the unwanted attention I had been receiving from Tibetan men, since it would mark me out as a long-term resident and a respectable female in Tibetan terms. Perhaps, I thought, it would also render me more approachable to Tibetan women.

[172] Facebook status update. Female, late twenties/early thirties, McLeod Ganj, 22 Nov 2012.
[173] Facebook comment in response to Gyaser's update. Male, thirties/early forties, North America, 22 Nov 2012.
[174] I use the term *chu pa* to refer to the robe worn by Tibetans (men and women) in contemporary Tibet and in exile; this is the term used most frequently by Tibetans living in Dharamshala and Ladakh. Tibetans in Dharamshala and Ladakh also use the word *chu pa* as shorthand for full Tibetan dress, i.e. for a married woman in exile Tibetan dress comprises: *chu pa* (robe)*, ok juk* (shirt) and *pang den* (apron). The term *chu pa* comes from the Central Tibetan dialect (*Ü ké* or *Lhasa ké*). Other terms from different Tibetan areas also exist and are widely used inside Tibet, however they are more rarely used in exile.

After a few weeks of wearing *chu pa*, it seemed that my hopes would be borne out. When I had worn *chu pa* I had received what I thought were approving looks from older Tibetan women. Tibetan men had also become less overt and insistent in their advances. So it was with a little surprise, and a large measure of shame and embarrassment, that I read my friend Tenzin Gyaser's Facebook post in November 2012. Her comment ignited pages and days of debate between young Tibetans living in exile, and not just in India but also beyond, in Canada and the US; between young Tibetan men and women; and between young Westerners. In total sixty-seven comments were posted in four days. The debate raged across many different topics: Tibetan feminism and 'white' feminism; the relationship between identity and clothing; the exoticisation and appropriation of Tibetan culture; and the importance of tradition and the place of modernity in contemporary diasporic Tibetan culture.

Gyaser and her friends, with whom I spent much time in Dharamshala, are perhaps unusual compared to other Tibetan women in India. As self-identifying Tibetan feminists (a small movement which is currently gaining ground across the Tibetan diaspora[175]), these women are highly educated, outspoken and active in the community. They are also in touch with like-minded Tibetans living across the diaspora, for example, in North America and Europe, and are aware of wider feminist and post-colonial discourse. While they may be unusual for Dharamshala, the issues they spoke

[175] The Tibetan Women's Association (TWA), an exile NGO which advocates for Tibetan women's rights inside Tibet and in exile, symbolically dates its foundation to the 12th March 1959, on which day thousands of women in Lhasa gathered to protest Chinese rule. This day has since become known as Women's Uprising Day - its anniversary is marked in exile by TWA and other NGOs. After a period of transition into exile, this group was reinstated in 1984 at the instigation of the Dalai Lama, and now has 55 branches worldwide (Butler 2003). Besides TWA, Tibetan women's rights are taken up by the CTA's Women's Empowerment Desk which, among other things, conducts research into the status of Tibetan women in exile and organises workshops to promote women's welfare and empowerment. Recent years have also seen the establishment across the diaspora of women's self-help/feminist groups, for example ACHA Himalayan Sisterhood (est. 2011, Berkeley, US; from *a chak* meaning elder sister in Tibetan), and the Tibetan Feminist Collective (blog est. 2015). During my fieldwork in 2013, my close friends in McLeod Ganj, whom I discuss in this chapter, also started meeting informally to discuss issues pertinent to Tibetan women under the collective name Drongmo (meaning 'female friend'). Other Tibetan blogs also frequently comment on issues pertinent to Tibetan women e.g. http://angrytibetangirl.tumblr.com, http://lhakardiaries.com and https://dechenpemba.wordpress.com/page/2/ [accessed 8 Apr 2015].

to me about have wider significance and relevance for Tibetans across the diaspora, including in the Indian settlements. This chapter addresses these issues in the context of the Tibetan communities of McLeod Ganj and Ladakh, exploring its different uses (e.g. practical, sensory and political) in creating, maintaining and challenging self- and group identities. I look at how dress is approached by exiles from different generations and backgrounds, focusing on Tibetan 'traditional' dress, given that this topic inspired most of my conversations.[176]

5.1 Why dress?

'[C]lothes are among our most personal possessions' (K. Hansen 2004: 373). Of all the various categories of object, they play one of the largest roles in the creation and manipulation of self-hood and identity. They are highly intimate. Sitting close to the skin, clothes move with the wearer and take on the wearer's shape and smell. They also constrict the wearer, restraining some forms of movement and encouraging others; they are simultaneously covering and exposing. We might liken clothing to a second skin (e.g. Horn 1975), immensely personal and experiential (Moors and Tarlo 2013: 7-8). Clothing links 'the biological body to the social being … [the] public to private' (Wilson 2003: 2). It blurs boundaries between the self and the not-self: it touches the body, moves with it, but at the same time is also external to it. It is also extremely visual and more so to another person than to the wearer. Moreover, unlike the skin, it is also easily shed. Visuality combined with removability (and hence changeability) makes clothing an ideal medium for communication, representation, self-expression and self-

[176] I do not investigate sweater selling or sock production by Tibetans as part of this thesis (see Lau 2012 for a discussion of the former). This decision was taken to limit the field of my inquiry and thereby retain ethnographic depth in the reseach conducted for this project. I did this in part by restricting research to my two field sites, McLeod Ganj and Ladakh. Sweater business predominantly takes place in the major cities of India; hence it fell outside the scope of this research. Likewise, limitations of time and space also determined that sock production could not be researched. Instead, I chose to reflect my respondents' interest in 'traditional' Tibetan dress.

creation (cf. Woodward 2005; Küchler and Miller eds. 2005; Eicher ed. 1995). As Emma Tarlo has put it, clothes are not merely 'defining' but can also be 'self-consciously *used* to define, to present, to deceive, to enjoy, to communicate, to reveal and conceal' (Tarlo 1996: 8).

For all these reasons, I chose to examine dress as a substantial facet of Tibetan material culture in exile and to ask questions such as: what role does dress play for Tibetans living in exile? Is it considered important to wear Tibetan dress? What adaptations has Tibetan dress undergone, for example, to suit the physical and cultural climate of India? How do exiles endeavour to present themselves through what they wear? Since all things in exile are affected by notions of the past, this chapter begins by describing historic Tibetan dress and then moves on to discuss current sartorial practice. It looks at dress from the perspective of making 'home', asking whether exiles who arrived in India during the early 1960s seek comfort through wearing Tibetans dress. The chapter then moves on to discuss the politics of dress, specifically the role of dress in narratives about 'tradition', the gendered aspects of clothing, and the role of dress more widely in Tibetan politics, and especially the practice of *Lhakar* in exile, which developed strongly during my fieldwork. It concludes by describing new fashions emerging from Tibet, and their reception within the exile community.

5.2 The *chu pa* through time

Tibetan dress is highly stylistically diverse, both historically and at present. During the first half of the twentieth century, dress styles across the Tibetan plateau varied substantially according to region, occupation, gender, class and wealth, and were also influenced by fashion. Variation was partly the result of environmental factors: nomads living in northern regions tended to favour thicker materials such as hide and

wool, While those dwelling in southern regions favoured thinner more loosely woven fabrics (Ahmed and Vickery 2010: 194). In Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, dress was delimited according to occupation and position in the social hierarchy. Aristocrats and government officials wore styles specific to their station, likewise the other professional classes. Monastic dress differed again, and was also coded according status. The central component of Tibetan dress, the *chu pa,* was common to almost all forms of secular dress, however, and is the focus of this chapter.

The *chu pa* is a long robe, usually woollen, which is worn wrapped around the body in an overlapping fashion. Robes like this probably date to the seventh century, perhaps earlier. The earliest representation of a Tibetan wearing such a robe is in a Chinese scroll painting by Yen Liben (627-673 AD), now held at the Palace Museum, Beijing (H. Karmay 1977: 65; Ahmed and Vickery 2010: 194-195). The men's robe was worn wrapped around the body, tied at the waist with a sash or belt (*ké rak*). The fabric was often pulled up, through the waistband to sag over the top of it, leaving the hem around knee length. Some formal types of men's *chu pa*, for example those worn by Tibetan government officials in Lhasa prior to the Chinese invasion, were worn at full-length (these were also often made of silk). The women's robe (also *chu pa*) was also worn at full length. The length of the sleeves, the fabric used and the manner of gathering the robe and tying the *ké rak* appear to have varied from region to region, and even between villages both before and after the Chinese invasion. Ornaments and headwear also varied significantly between regions. Shirts were commonly worn under the *chu pa* by both men and women. Men's shirts fell roughly into two styles, centre fastening and asymmetrically fastening, and tended to be made from silk or cotton (Ahmed and Vickery 2010: 195). Women's *chu pa* in some regions (especially Central Tibet) included the option of being sleeveless (*pu mé*). Blouses would have been worn underneath these, sometimes in multiple layers. Women's blouses tended to be square-

cut and without fastenings. Instead the blouse was folded and pinned into position inside the *chu pa* (Ahmed and Vickery 2010: 195). There appears to have been a great variety of different woollen fabrics (*nam bu*) produced in different locations across the plateau, each with a different regional name according to their thickness, quality, colour, use etc., (e.g. *nam bu pu ruk, nam bu ting ma*).[177] Imported cloth was also widely available in pre-1950s Tibet, via trans-Himalayan trade routes. Available fabrics included silk textiles, which came at first from China but after the mid-1800s from India also, where they were produced in Varanasi (Ahmed 2006: 12-13). Wild silks from India, e.g. *mutka* and *bu ré*, were also used (Ahmed and Vickery 2010: 196), especially in making shirts.

Today in exile, *chu pa* is worn slightly differently. There are continuities, for example in the cut of the men's *chu pa* and the basic overall shape and structure of the garments for both men and women, yet there have been many small alterations and innovations. Notably, *chu pa* is now worn in combination with Western garments: jeans, trousers and shirts for men; leggings, turtleneck sweaters and T-shirts for women.

There have also been major changes in the fabrics used to make *chu pa*. Many older generation Tibetans living in Dharamshala and Ladakh fondly recalled the *nam bu* fabrics they wore as children. These refugees clearly thought highly of this fabric, and commented on its good qualities, especially its warmth and sturdiness. Dechen, who had recently come to India from Central Tibet, now lives in McLeod Ganj. She had been given two *nam bu chu pa* by her parents as a parting gift. These she keeps safely stowed, unable to wear them in the heat and the damp of the Indian summer and

[177] master tailor (*nam za chen mo*) to the Dalai Lama, Phuntsok Tsering, described several woollen fabrics to me e.g. *nam bu shé ma* (made from the best wool from the Tsang region; a thin fabric but well matted); *nam bu pu ruk* (woollen fabric from the Lhoka/Tsang area); *tsé ter ma* (woollen fabric from Lhoka region, woven on a very narrow loom and worn by aristocrats and monks); *Kham la nam bu* (woollen fabric from Kham); and *nam bu ting ma* (patterned woollen fabric made nearby Lhasa but popularly used in Amdo to trim clothes; referred to in Amdo as *truk*). Interview conducted in McLeod Ganj, 30 Mar 2013. See also Anon. 1969: 103; Anon. 1981: 76.

monsoon. Similarly, an elderly couple from western Tibet, now living in Akling settlement in Ladakh, keep their two *nam bu chu pa* carefully preserved using mothballs and plastic packaging. Kelsang Jigme's two *nam bu chu pa* are made from different varieties of the fabric. One had belonged to his father, who had brought it out of Tibet in 1962. He wore neither regularly, though, reserving them for weddings, *lo sar* (Tibetan new year) and religious events.



Figure 58 Kelsang Jigme wearing his *chu pa* made from *nam bu* (woollen fabric), which he brought into exile from his home in western Tibet (Akling, Ladakh, 16 Apr 2013).

Many of the elderly Tibetans I spoke with recalled with distaste their first experience of the Indian climate. Those who left Tibet shortly after the Dalai Lama arrived in India during the summer months, the hottest part of the year. Having endured the cold of the mountain passes, they still wore their thick woollen clothing. Unused to the heat, however, disease ran rife. Phuntsok Tsering, master tailor to the Dalai Lama, described how he was drafted into service at the age of twenty-five to help create new clothing for His Holiness which would suit the new climate. Familiar with Tibetan designs, he created monastic robes according to the existing pattern but using lightweight Indian fabrics (poplin and terry cotton). He was also responsible for inventing the *ngu len* ('sweat remover'); a vest worn under monastic robes. He designed this garment for the Dalai Lama to wear during the inauguration of Tibet House in Delhi, in 1965. It was subsequently adopted into monastic dress by Tibetans living in India, spreading first to the monks' refugee camp at Buxa Duar (West Bengal), and subsequently beyond.

Chu pa made in India are now mostly made in lightweight materials, natural and synthetic. This change is part of a literal acclimatisation process necessitated by the move to the Indian subcontinent, but it is also a function of financial factors. In McLeod Ganj and Ladakh winter temperatures reach lows which necessitate warm, woollen clothing, yet in both places *nam bu* is rarely worn. In McLeod Ganj, relatively few seemed to own *nam bu chu pa*. I was told that it was difficult to obtain *nam bu*, and also that it was a difficult fabric to work with,[178] hence expensive to commission a *chu pa* in. I was more surprised at this lack in Ladakh, however, where *nam bu* is still made and worn by the local Ladakhi population, and where the winter temperatures are certainly

[178] *Nam bu* is hand-woven on a narrow loom in thin panels that must be stitched together before the fabric can be sewn into clothing. Stitching must also be done by hand since the fabric is too thick to use a machine.

cold and dry enough to warrant its use. While more Tibetans living in Ladakh owned *nam bu* clothing, these items were mostly very old, having been brought from Tibet during the 1960s and 1970s. Few had commissioned new clothing in the fabric despite the local availability of the cloth, (but perhaps this was due more to expense than absence of desire). The items of clothing made in *nam bu* that (mostly older) exiles owned tended either to be very worn or virtually pristine. Elderly Tibetans continued to wear the former on a daily basis but the latter they kept for best, sometimes with the intention of taking them back to Tibet once freedom had been achieved.

It is clear that comfort plays an important role in the evaluation of *nam bu* by the older generation. Older women in Ladakh, who sometimes wore Tibetan-style shoes made with *nam bu*, often commented to me that they wore them for comfort. In particular, these articles of clothing were deemed good for keeping the ankles and legs warm. In exile, however, such items have largely fallen out of production. The more 'traditional' items of clothing such as woollen boots, fleece shawls (*lok pa*) and fox-fur hats (*tsé ring kyinkhor)*[179] seem only to be made and worn on a daily basis by a small number of Tibetan refugees, mostly older Tibetans living in Jangthang. Younger Tibetans (in Leh and Jangthang) tend to opt for more contemporary styles. While *lok pa* made from sheepskins are worn in Jangthang, they are very rarely worn in the Leh area, only being taken out for special occasions (e.g. weddings, festivals, cultural shows etc.). New *lok pa*, made with synthetic fur and wool, are also produced for these occasions.[180]

[179] The Dalai Lama spoke out against the killing of animals for their fur in 2006 (see below). While families still possess items of clothing which feature fur, new clothing, such as *tsé ring kyinkhor* (hats), is generally made using synthetic fur as a substitute.

[180] New *lok pa* (sheep fleece clothing, in this case shawls) are often made with genuine sheep/lamb-fleece as well as synthetic fur in Ladakh. Sheepskins are readily available in Ladakh since animals belonging to nomadic Tibetans and Ladakhis in the Jangthang region are regularly slaughtered for meat, and also die as a result of harsh weather and environmental conditions during the winter.



Figure 59 Party of girls welcoming guests at a wedding in Choglamsar. Notice the girls' sheepskin shawls (*lok pa*) and fur hats (*tsé ring kyinkhor*). Although their shawls are made from genuine sheep (or lamb) skin, the girls' hats are made using synthetic fur (Choglamsar, Ladakh, 2 May 2013).

It is not just fabric, however, which engenders feelings of familiarity and comfort but also cut. Older women who left Tibet in the 1960s often wear a baggier style of *chu pa* compared to younger women. *A ma* Lhamo, an elderly lady, born in Tibet but who had come to Jangthang in the 1960s and 1970s (only moving to Leh in 2000), commented that she wore this style of *chu pa* because she felt 'wrong' otherwise. She often wore her *chu pa* over other types of clothing, Western and Indian, including *shalwar kameez.*[181]

[181] Tunic, trousers and scarf worn widely by women in the Indian subcontinent.



Figure 60 *A ma* Lhamo wears an exile-made female *chu pa* in the older, looser, wrap-around style over the top of a red tracksuit. She is weaving a striped fabric called *gya ré* using a backstrap loom (see p288) with wool she herself spun and dyed (Choglamsar, Ladakh, 28 May 2013).

A ma Lhamo's preferences highlight the changes that the female *chu pa* has undergone in exile, reminding us that what 'are presented as ethnic or national styles are often reinventions' (Moors and Tarlo 2013: 23). This is especially noticeable in the development of 'fashion *chu pa*' (see below). Unlike the male *chu pa,* the design of which has changed comparatively little, the basic female *chu pa* has been altered substantially, especially in terms of fit and structure. Prior to 1950, the design of the female *chu pa* was closer to the male *chu pa*: both were wrapped around the body and secured with a belt (*ké rak*). Contemporary female *chu pa* tailored in India do not take this form, however. They are sewn in a tubular shape, and must be pulled on over the head. Excess fabric is incorporated into the skirt; this is wrapped around the waist and tied using inbuilt cords to form two simple 'pleats'. The end result resembles earlier

designs, but is much more figure hugging. Recently, young women enhance this by commissioning *chu pa* with fitted, dropped waists.



Figure 61 Pema wears her contemporary exile-style *chu pa* with a shirt (*ok juk*) and apron (*pang den*) (Choglamsar, Ladakh, Jun 2013).

It is unclear when and where exactly this contemporary style of *chu pa* developed, but it appears to have been an exilic innovation that emerged during the 1960s. The master tailor suggested to me that it may first have been developed during the mid-1960s by *kha tsa ra*, a community of inter-married Tibetans and Nepalis who

worked as muleteers trading goods between Tibet, Nepal and India. The style has since become popular among Tibetans in India and is also worn by other communities of Himalayan Buddhists (e.g. the Sherpa community of Nepal, and Buddhists from Sikkim; in Nepali the dress is referred to as *ba ku*) (Ahmed and Vickery 2010: 196). The new design has also since made its way back to Tibet; contemporary Lhasan women's *chu pa,* which is now worn across the plateau, is tailored in the same way.[182]



Figure 62 Young women wear the modern cut contemporary *chu pa*. Those on the far right and left of the photograph and third from the right wear *chu pa* in regular everyday fabrics (thin wool, cotton and synthetic blends). Those in the centre wear the same style of *chu pa* but in silk brocade (silk polyester blend). This fabric is worn only for special occasions. The man second from the left wears a Tibetan shirt in the contemporary style (cotton/linen blend with silk brocade trimming); the man second from the right wears an Amdo *chu pa* (eastern Tibetan-style). The men and women pictured are staff of Esukhia Tibetan language school in McLeod Ganj. This photograph was taken immediately before they left to meet the Dalai Lama at his residence in McLeod Ganj. Photo credit: Samuel Leigh (McLeod Ganj, 26 Feb 2013).

The *pang den* has taken a similar path in exile to the *chu pa*. The *pang den* is an apron worn by women over the top of the *chu pa*. It is made from brightly coloured, striped fabric sewn together in three, non-aligned panels. Historically, *pang den* were produced in the Lhoka region of Central Tibet from *nam bu shé ma*, goat-hair wool, and

[182] Women living in eastern areas of the Tibetan plateau wear a very similar garment for formal occasions, e.g. as office-wear (Lama Jabb *pers. comm.*). It is also common to see female Tibetan television presenters in the PRC and the US (e.g. on Voice of America's Voice of Tibet television channel) wearing *chu pa* in this style, which perhaps accounts for its popularity across the plateau. Ahmed and Vickery (2010: 196) note that inside Tibet the garment is referred to as 'Indian *chu pa'*.

were transported to Lhasa for sale (T. Harris 2013: 57). In exile *pang den* are worn by women, irrespective of their regional origin, to signify their married status. This also appears to be an exilic innovation. I was often told by men and women from different regions in Tibet that wearing *pang den* to signify marriage was not a practice common throughout the Tibetan plateau, nor even throughout Central Tibet. Instead, many claimed the practice came specifically from Lhasa.[183]

A point of wider significance arises out of these patterns. The contemporary exilic female *chu pa* I have been describing (but also the male *chu pa*) bears strongest resemblance to *chu pa* worn in Central Tibet prior to the 1950s. Furthermore, it appears that the custom of donning *pang den* after marriage is specifically Lhasan in origin. Yet, today in exile these customs and styles are referred to in an unmarked way as simply 'Tibetan'. By contrast, other *chu pa* designs from different regions are referred to by regional terms i.e. Amdo *chu pa* or Khampa *chu pa* (see below).

The history of the *chu pa* reveals how Tibetan identity has been elided with central Tibetan (Ü-Tsang) identity in exile (cf. Ahmed and Vickery 2010: 196). Various historical processes account for this. Partly, it is a result of historical patterns of flight. As mentioned above, the majority of Tibetans who entered exile in the early years (1959 – mid-1960s) and settled in towns like McLeod Ganj originated in central Tibetan areas, especially Lhasa and southern border areas (Diehl 2002: 34). From the middle of the 1960s until the 1980s, during the worst years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), few Tibetans reached exile; hence several decades elapsed before refugees (this time mostly from eastern areas of the Tibetan plateau, see section 2.2) began to arrive. Until the 1980s, then, Central Tibetan customs and culture dominated the exile settlements and was largely uncontested by that of other regions.

[183] My data contrast with those of Ahmed and Vickery (2010: 195) who do not make a distinction between urban and rural central Tibetans when they assert that historically central Tibetans wore *pang den* only after marriage.

Political motives are also at work, however. Houston and Wright argue that regional variation in Tibetan culture has been subsumed in exile in an attempt to create a pan-Tibetan culture and foster unity within the Tibetan community (2003: 222). Thus central Tibetan customs have come to stand for 'Tibetan culture' as a whole (cf. C. Harris 1999: 49-69 in the context of visual culture). In the case of the central-style *chu pa,* it may have benefited from official 'patronage' as it extended its reach. The central-style *chu pa* is the specified dress for women working at the Central Tibetan Administration (see below) and other offices in McLeod Ganj, for example.

5.3 Creature comforts: wearing home?

> The wearing of the familiar skirt-cloth is at once deeply physical, performative and habitual … [its wearing permits] … the performance of something that was also fundamental to quotidian life in the pre-exile past. The temporally extended familiarity of this style of dress, and its physical intimacy with the wearer, thus make it central to a body-memory in which the material interactions between cloth and corpus now continue a longstanding pattern with a past that extends back to well before the moment of forced displacement.
>
> Dudley 2010: 95

Dudley argues that wearing skirt-cloths enables Karenni refugees (from Burma/Myanmar) to make an embodied connection between their pre-exile past and exiled present, remembering and reproducing both that past and themselves, forging and re-forging it in embodied 'habit-memory' (Connerton 1989) and making it relevant in the present. In this sense it might be argued that Karenni practise a mnemonic system of remembrance, one that is both performative and incorporative (cf. Connerton 1989: 4-5; Dudley 2010: 95-96).

Do Tibetan exiles experience the same embodied and emotional relationship with their *chu pa*? Early on in this chapter I discussed older Tibetans' thoughts about

chu pa. Those who had been raised in Tibet, and who had worn *chu pa* on a daily basis spoke about how comfortable they felt wearing it; they spoke of the warmth of *nam bu* and its high quality; a number, like *a ma* Lhamo, expressed how other clothes simply felt 'wrong' and incomplete. The same was true for Tibetan women who had recently arrived in exile. Deckyi, who worked in one of McLeod Ganj's restaurants, much preferred her *chu pa* to her leggings. Although she wore leggings regularly, since they were more convenient for kitchen work, she did not like the feeling. For her, wearing only leggings was akin to having bare legs. She found it uncomfortable and annoying to have to sit with her legs together in the presence of a lama; this would not be necessary if she were wearing *chu pa* since the skirt would cover her. Others commented that *chu pa* encouraged a particular way of walking for women which required taking small steps. Deckyi's husband, Lobsang, commented to me, laughing, that Western women who wore *chu pa* walked all wrong:

> Sometimes I feel very strange when foreign girls they wear *chu pa* and, you know, when you wear *chu pa* you have to walk certain way, when you move, body move, have to be a little different … smaller steps, and then you move a little differently. When you wear *chu pa* and you goes like this [striding out] you know it looks a little strange!
>
> Lobsang, McLeod Ganj[184]

Some though not all young Tibetan women born in exile also acknowledged the same feeling. Gyaser, who was born and brought up in India, and who now lives in McLeod Ganj, commented to me one afternoon:

> …when you wear *chu pa* it's not just about showing you as a Tibetan, it's about something that comforts you and makes you feel at home also … [I feel] more myself [when I wear *chu pa*] … the comfort of being back at home …
>
> Tenzin Gyaser, McLeod Ganj[185]

[184] Male from Lhasa, thirties/early forties, interview conducted in McLeod Ganj, 14 Mar 2013.
[185] Female, born in India, late twenties/early thirties, interview conducted in McLeod Ganj, 22 Nov 2012. When Tenzin Gyaser speaks about the comfort of 'being back at home' she refers to the Tibetan settlements she was born and raised in in India. Within these settlements *chu pa* is regularly worn by women; the surrounding culture is also predominantly Tibetan. These settlements contrast to the various

These women express their own aesthetic, embodied relationship to *chu pa*, specifically to the *chu pa* they are familiar with. For *a ma* Lhamo this is the loose, wrap-around *chu pa* she wore as a child; for Tenzin Gyaser this is the central-style, exilic *chu pa* she was raised wearing in India, and which she continues to wear to the office each day, cinched tightly at the waist and bunched in a fist or tucked up into the *ké rak* (belt) to enable her to scuttle quickly downhill to Gangkyi in time for work to begin. Like the Kabyles of Bourdieu's essay (Bourdieu 1990b), 'taught' how to walk and stand by moving around their houses, Tibetan women are 'taught' how to walk by their clothing: elegantly with small steps or scuttling quickly holding up the robe but never brazenly striding out like a *yin ji* (white foreigner).

Did men have the same habitual, embodied relationship with their *chu pa* as women? With a few important exceptions it seemed that this was not the case. Tibetan men living in exile do not wear *chu pa* as regularly as Tibetan women, hence many complained of discomfort when they had to don it for formal occasions. The following section looks at gendered practices in the context of wearing *chu pa.*[186]

5.4 Gender and Tibetan dress

In both McLeod Ganj and Ladakh it was rare to see Tibetan men wearing *chu pa*. Old and young alike seemed not to be interested in the garment; only among a small group of Amdo Tibetans in McLeod Ganj did the *chu pa* seem to play an important role. Why, when almost all married Tibetan women wore *chu pa* on a daily basis, did Tibetan men refrain?

Indian cities in which she has since studied and worked and in which she has lived surrounded by non-Tibetans.

[186] See Makley (e.g. 2007) for discussion of gendered practices in Tibetan communities, particularly in relation to Tibetan Buddhism.



Figure 63 Men wearing *chu pa* on 10 Dec 2012, the anniversary of the day on which the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. The three men on the right of the image wear *chu pa* in the exilic style. The man on the far left of the image wears a contemporary Tibetan shirt with jeans. Photograph taken in the square outside the courts of Lower Dharamshala (Kacheri), which was the final destination for a pro-Tibet protest march held to mark the occasion. Note how a number of the men use the folds in their *chu pa* to carry items.

The most common complaints from men focused on how uncomfortable the *chu pa* was. It was baggy and unwieldy, it was too hot to wear in the summer, it was difficult to tie and it made visiting the bathroom a hassle. The female *chu pa,* by comparison, was said to be more comfortable and easier to wear. It was slim-fitting and easy to tie with its inbuilt *ké rak,* and it wasn't so bulky. However, it was only all of these things because it had been re-designed in exile. Why had men's *chu pa* not?

As I found out, attempts to modify male *chu pa* to make it easier to wear had been made, but the resulting design had not been popular. The master tailor described the design, which was developed during the 1960s, to me: it came in two parts; a pleated 'skirt' and a baggy top made in the same fabric which, when worn together, resembled a regular *chu pa*. Only one tailor in McLeod Ganj continued to make this

design (although not regularly) however (see Fig. 64); none I spoke with were familiar with this design in Ladakh.[187]



Figure 64 The men's 'short-cut' *chu pa* made and modelled by Tibetan designer, Phurbu Tsering (McLeod Ganj, 24 Nov 2012).

While many women explained the situation practically, as a decision about comfort, there were those in McLeod Ganj who perceived gender-based discrimination and felt social pressure to wear *chu pa*. As they explained, Tibetan women, and not men, are expected to dress in *chu pa* when they attend work, be this in an office or on a street-stall. For example, it is the expectation (though seemingly not a written rule) that women who work in the offices at the Central Tibetan Administration wear *chu pa*; similarly, women who work at the Tibetan Children's Village schools are also expected

[187] In order to research dress, as well as interviewing wearers of Tibetan (and non-Tibetan) dress I also interviewed several tailors (Indian and Tibetan) in McLeod Ganj, Ladakh and Delhi. I also spoke with the master tailor to the Dalai Lama, Phuntsok Tsering, and with vendors of Tibetan and non-Tibetan dress in all three locations.

to wear *chu pa* to work. Men are not required to do so and most opt for a Western-style suit.[188]

The pressure to wear Tibetan dress seems to be linked with ideals about Tibetan womanhood in the exile community, which women are expected to conform to (cf. Tarlo 2010: 98). Young women felt that wearing *chu pa* was incompatible with certain types of behaviour. Youdon, who is in her mid-twenties, explained:

> In our society *chu pa* plays an important role in judging people, good and bad or that girl is better because she's wearing *chu pa* and acceptable and more kind of well-mannered … traditional Tibetan girls … often, when I wear *chu pa*, I'm very uncomfortable smoking … I feel like [it's an] insult [to the dress and more widely Tibetan culture] … it bothers me like specially when I wear *chu pa*, when I wear *chu pa* I feel like I don't like to [i.e. should not] go to party [wearing it], like loud music party … because I feel like it's not appropriate … for the dress … even if you like it, sometimes when you are wearing it you feel restricted and limited.
>
> Youdon, McLeod Ganj[189]

The wearing or not wearing of *chu pa* by Tibetan women in exile is strongly linked to political circumstance. The exile process creates pressure to mark out ethnic difference from host populations and thus encourages strong enactments of identity.[190] The political situation in Tibet adds further pressure, also. Exile narratives describe Tibetan culture as uniquely threatened inside the PRC.[191] Refugees living in the diaspora thus feel very strongly that it is their duty to practise and thereby preserve their culture (cf. C. Harris 1999: 43, 2012; Diehl 2002; McGranahan 2010). This orientation is expressed at the very highest levels within the refugee community; exiles are

[188] Tibetan men's and women's clothing practices reflect wider trends in India in which women predominantly continue to wear traditional clothing, while men have rapidly discarded this in favour of Western-style clothing (cf. Tarlo 1996; cf. Klieger 2002a: 147). Further, while men from all classes have adopted Western-style formal clothing (suit and shirt), Western-style female formal clothing (female skirt/trouser suit with shirt) has not been widely adopted by Indian women, although it is worn by some of the upper and middle classes in the major metropolitan cities.
[189] Female, mid-twenties, born in India. Interview conducted in McLeod Ganj, 10 Dec 2012.
[190] See Eicher ed. 1995 on the relationship between ethnicity and dress.
[191] See p16.

explicitly encouraged to practise their traditions, including wearing their 'traditional dress', by the Dalai Lama and the exile government.

However, preserving culture necessitates maintaining a significant population size, and thus the burden of tradition falls most heavily upon women (cf. Tarlo 2010: 3). On 10th February 2013 it was reported that Tibetan *Sikyong* Dr Lobsang Sangay (head of the Central Tibetan Administration) and his government were considering introducing financial incentives to encourage Tibetans in exile to have larger families. He is reported to have said: 'it is important to have Tibetans in numbers', and that it was common practice for Tibetans to marry within the community (the implication being that this practice ensured the propagation of Tibetan children).[192]

> So it comes to identity, right, *bö pa tsang ma* [literally 'clean' Tibetan; glossed as 'pure Tibetan'], whatever it is … I've been thinking about what's really Tibetan, what makes you Tibetan, so there's a saying, like, there's two characteristics which actually makes you Tibetan, right? 1) Obviously blood. Yeah, blood will make you one Tibetan; you need blood, like, to be a Tibetan. But more than blood, like, it's your thinking, that's the really important thing. If you think you are Tibetan, right, then you are Tibetan [you know] … so the blood counts one …
>
> Paljor, McLeod Ganj[193]

> Tibetans mostly think that if you want to be a pure Tibetan you have to be born to Tibetan parents. So that is the main thing. Nowadays it's hard because there are lots of interracial marriages and now the world is more connected so race, [it] is about racism actually.
>
> Tsewang, McLeod Ganj[194]

While many interviewees, such as Paljor, included other characteristics in their descriptions of Tibetanness (for example, doing something for the Tibetan cause, feeling Tibetan, wearing, cooking and speaking Tibetan, see below on *Lhakar*) having

[192] http://www.daijiworld.com/news/news_disp.asp?n_id=163606 [accessed 8 Apr 2015].
[193] Male, late twenties/early thirties. Born in Tibet, raised in exile from a young age. Interview conducted in McLeod Ganj, 8 Mar 2013.
[194] Male, born in Amdo, Tibet. Interview conducted in McLeod Ganj, 2 Mar 2013.

Tibetan blood was regarded as a necessity. In this sense, Tibetan exilic identity is not an ascriptive identity, but is strongly linked to biological descent (cf. Klieger 2002a: 145). Although some, such as Tsewang, found this distasteful, few were able to provide alternative concepts they found satisfying.

From the point of view of Tibetan identity as currently formulated, it thus becomes ideologically impossible to detach ethnicity, the cultural aspect, from biological descent. I suggest that the pressure exerted on Tibetan women to wear *chu pa*, pressure not exerted on Tibetan men to the same degree, is linked to their procreative capacity: women are placed under pressure to produce biologically and culturally Tibetan children (cf. Dudley 2010: 96), and forced to shoulder more of the burden of tradition than men (cf. Tarlo 1996).[195]

5.5 Preservation and politics

Overwhelmingly, when talking with me about Tibetan dress Tibetans in Dharamshala and Ladakh raised the issue of cultural preservation. Narratives of the Central Tibetan Administration and especially long-term Tibetan exiles emphasise the processes of cultural loss and assimilation that have taken place in the Tibetan regions incorporated into China since the 1950s. Consequently, one of the prime motivations and driving forces behind the exile community has been the 'preservation' of that culture and its re-creation in exile (cf. C. Harris 1999: 42; Diehl 2002; Yeh 2007; Klieger 1997; Calkowski 1991). Silverman writes that Jewish 'rabbis of old pinned the

[195] Since my fieldwork, there has been increasing interest in the concept of 'T+', put forward by *Lhakar Diaries* blogger Kunsang Kelden (whose parents are Tibetan and Kalmyk-Mongolian). Kelden proposed the 'T+' concept to emphasise that Tibetans of mixed parentage should not be considered less Tibetan than children of two Tibetan parents, but rather fully Tibetan *plus* another ethnicity. In the summer of 2014, Kelden organised a meeting of 'T+' Tibetans in the UK (http://lhakardiaries.com/2014/01/15/are-you-a-t-please-take-our-survey/; http://lhakardiaries.com/2011/09/28/identities-large-and-small-2/ [accessed 8 Apr 2015]). See also the essay by T. Dhardon Sharling, member of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile: 'Hysteria: Reproductive Governance in the Tibetan Community in Exile – Discrepancies and Digressions'.

survival of Judaism on an impermeable "fence", which included clothing, that would cloister the community' (2013: 184). Likewise, dress has become an important arena in which Tibetan culture, often defined in religious terms by the Dalai Lama and exile government, is delimited and preserved. Both the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration have encouraged Tibetans to wear their ethnic dress, particularly for public and religious functions and on festival days (Ahmed and Vickery 2010: 198). This section outlines some initiatives designed by the Central Tibetan Administration and Dalai Lama to promote Tibetan 'traditional' dress at an official level. It also reflects upon individuals' attitudes towards their ethnic dress, and the role dress has come to play in Tibetan nationalism (cf. Anand 2000).

5.5.1 Preservation at the Tibetan Institute for Performing Arts, McLeod Ganj, and the Tibetan Children's Village school, Ladakh

The first secular exile institution to be founded by the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (hereafter TIPA) was established out of concern for the destruction and decay of Tibetan performing arts inside Tibet (Topden Tsering 1999: 13). Founded in 1959 on the Indo-Tibetan border in northeastern India, the TIPA moved to McLeod Ganj shortly after the Dalai Lama and his entourage in 1960. The TIPA practises a variety of arts including Tibetan opera, *a ché lha mo* (Josayma 1986, Calkowski 1991), Tibetan folk songs and dances from the various regions, as well as providing tuition in Tibetan musical instruments. Beginning life under the leadership of Norbu Tsering, a member of the Kyormolungpa troupe from Lhasa (Ross 1995: 6), the TIPA trains students, who enter the institute at around high-school leaving age. Students are housed on-site, and advance in their studies gradually, eventually attaining the rank of Senior Artist. The students perform throughout the year on different

occasions including festivals, such as the annual *Shoton* festival (Great Yoghurt Festival), which in exile falls just after Tibetan New Year[196], and *Yarkyi*, the Summer Festival, which falls each year in August. They also perform on state occasions such as at the celebrations for the Dalai Lama's birthday.

The TIPA emphasises its commitment to 'authenticity' strongly in its work, something its students have internalised. For example, a senior student explained that he'd joined the TIPA not just because he enjoyed the performing arts but also because:

> …this culture [has been] almost destroyed in Tibet so this is our duty, because our elders are almost gone, so this needs to be passed … generation to generation … this is really … rich culture … [and a key part of] Tibetan [culture], we must preserve [this], so this is why I really love Tibetan music.
>
> Tsetop, McLeod Ganj[197]

The TIPA's commitment to 'authentic' Tibetan performances is expressed in its wardrobe. As the TIPA's tailor, Kunsang Dolker, explained to me, care is taken over the company's costumes to ensure that they 'accurately' depict dress from different Tibetan regions as it was worn prior to 1959. Although adaptations in fabric are made, for example clothing is produced in brighter, synthetic material for the stage, 'authentic' cut and form are preserved, she argued. Each year, artists from the two houses at TIPA complete an assignment to research new folk songs, dances and dress from the same region through interviews with elderly members of the local community. Artists then adapt the steps and song they have been taught, choreographing and producing it for the proscenium-arch stage on the TIPA campus. The finished piece is performed in

[196] Traditionally, the *Shoton* opera Festival fell during the seventh Tibetan month (i.e. the seventh month after New Year). In India, this date falls during the monsoon season, hence it has been shifted, with the blessing of the Dalai Lama, to around the fifteenth day after Tibetan New Year (*lo sar*) i.e. late February/early March, which coincides with an annual series of teachings given by the Dalai Lama in McLeod Ganj. The TIPA performs *Shoton* alternately in McLeod Ganj and other Indian settlements (Artistic Director at the TIPA, interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 30 Jan 2013).
[197] TIPA artist, male, late twenties, interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 22 Aug 2013.

competition with the opposing house at the annual *Yarkyi* festival in McLeod Ganj. In this way, the Institute has amassed a large wardrobe of different regional costumes.



Figure 65 'Mock' *gau* (amulet box) used in performances by TIPA artists. Note the plastic beads and gems that substitute for semi-precious stones (McLeod Ganj, 24 Jan 2013.)

The TIPA has also made efforts to document and display Tibetan dress as worn prior to the Chinese invasion, and has published a volume on the dress styles of Amdo (L. L. Gyatso 2004). The Institute also houses a small museum, which contains life-sized mannequins wearing outfits from different Tibetan regions and occupational backgrounds (e.g. nomadic dress) as well as theatrical costumes from Tibetan operas. Interestingly, although some of the cabinets display pre-exile items, most of the clothing is newly made to *represent* pre-exile dress. This includes displays of ornaments that

would have been worn with regional outfits. In this case, some are not simply newly made according to an older pattern, but are 'mocked-up'. For example, a *gau* (amulet case, commonly made from precious metal) fabricated in plastic and other materials to mimic one made of metal has been inserted into one of the table cabinets containing metal ornaments.[198]

A similar approach of 'authentic representation' is also taken at Tibetan schools. At the Tibetan Children's Village School (TCV) in Choglamsar (Ladakh) many of the children come from families from western Tibet, who escaped during the 1960s via mountain passes in Jangthang. Because of this, the majority of the school's cultural costumes come from this area. As the Director of the Cultural Society explained, TCV Choglamsar source their own western Tibetan costumes. Children bring items of traditional dress loaned from their parents and grandparents to perform in and the school keeps a small stock of these also.

The school orders other regional costumes from exile institutions, including the TIPA. Like the TIPA, the children are careful to represent all three regions of Tibet as claimed by the Tibetan government (Ü-Tsang, Kham and Amdo, together referred to as *chöl kha sum*) and so obtaining the costumes from these regions is important. Costumes, like those at the TIPA, are made in contemporary fabrics. Hairpieces and wigs are also worn to represent traditional hairstyles (e.g. the braids worn by Amdo women, and the long hair tied with red braid worn by Tibetan men, *tra zhü*). Ornaments are used in performances as well. Some of these are heirlooms, brought from Tibet. Others are copied in exile by local metalworkers. Like at TIPA, some are mock-ups created in wood and paper using sequins and beads to mimic metal ornaments for effect on-stage.

[198] 'Real' *gau* (amulet boxes) contain sacred substances such as blessing threads (strings blessed by high Buddhist lamas), prayers printed on papers, photo-icons etc. The *gau* themselves are often blessed by high lamas. The 'mock' *gau* (pictured) used in performances by the TIPA did not contain sacred substances, however; neither had they been blessed (see section 6.1.2).



Figure 66 Students from TCV Choglamsar wear some of the 'costumes' belonging to their cultural society. Left to right in couples, the dress of: Kharag Pargyok, Gertse Gerge and Rawang Ruthok (all in western Tibet) (TCV Choglamsar, Ladakh 30 Jul 2013).



Figure 67 Female student from TCV Choglamsar wearing a 'costume' from Kharag Pargyok performing at celebrations for the Dalai Lama's birthday (Choglamsar, Ladakh, 6 Jul 2013).



Figure 68 Male student from TCV Choglamsar wearing a 'costume' from Kharag Pargyok performing at celebrations for the Dalai Lama's birthday (Choglamsar, Ladakh, 6 Jul 2013).

The TIPA and TCV costumes raise important questions about how Tibetan dress is conceptualised in exile. As shown most clearly by the 'mocked-up' ornaments, Tibetan dress in the TIPA's and TCV's performances was no longer everyday clothing, but had instead become 'costume', i.e. it was being used to deliberately and consciously create a particular image and character for the purpose of performance. What is the significance of this? I have begun arguing in this chapter that Tibetan refugees use Tibetan dress situationally, to signify different things about themselves as individuals in relation to the Tibetan cause and the wider community. We might see the TIPA's and TCV's use of 'costume' as only an extreme form of this. By participating in performances of regional dance and music, children enact their 'traditions' in a highly embodied way, preserving their culture through 'practice' (cf. C. Harris 1999: 43). Yet how do students conceptualise this performance of 'tradition'? Is it 'just' a performance, an 'inauthentic' experience, or something else?



Figure 69 'Mock' ornaments: two *gau* (amulet boxes), *gyen cha* (jewellery), and an ornamental *ké rak* (belt), worn as part of a costume from Kharag Pargyok by a female student at TCV Choglamsar (TCV Choglamsar, Ladakh 30 Jul 2013).

In pre-exile history, many folk songs were working songs; they were sung while threshing barley, building, or undertaking other agricultural work. Their steps are often very simple – a combination of stamps and kicks – and are not particularly visually striking. TIPA artists turn these steps into a dance, choreographing additional steps, dancing in formation under a proscenium-arch and using props (e.g. agricultural equipment). As Tsetop, the artist quoted above, explained: you have to 'make some *masala* you know… [make it] more beautiful'.[199] By using the Hindi word for spice blend (*masala*) Tsetop draws attention to the mixed nature of the final product, and the process through which it is produced. Just as different spices are cut and mixed (cf. Hall 1990 on diaspora aesthetics), so are Tibetan dance steps and singing techniques. Thus the 'original' song and dance is elaborated and 'flavoured' with other steps, altered to make it more aesthetically interesting and more viewable (i.e. altered to be viewed rather than participated in; and moreover viewed from a non-traditional perspective – proscenium arch rather than in the round). For Tsetop, however, it is clear that such alterations do not adversely affect the authenticity of the final product: for him, the performance remains wholly, traditionally Tibetan. Likewise, although the TIPA and TCV costumes are adapted, i.e. they are newly produced, made in new colours and fabrics, and are used in non-traditional ways (e.g. dancers are uniform, each wearing the same 'costume'), they are nonetheless seen as 'authentic' by performers.

Thus like everyday Tibetan dress, the TIPA's performances and costumes have also become targets for preservation, and *because of this* have undergone change (cf. McLagan 2002, 1997). Like the TIPA costumes, everyday Tibetan dress is also conceptualised as 'authentic' and 'traditional', although unlike the TIPA costumes, it is worn on a semi-regular basis. Both types of dress play important roles in Tibetan refugees' 'mythico-history', their *ex post facto* construction of their pre-exile past

[199] TIPA artist, male, late twenties, interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 22 Aug 2013.

(Malkki 1995: 52-104; cf. McGranahan 2010, cf. Ahmed 1999). Crucially, whereas the central-style exilic *chu pa* is a part of contemporary life, these performance outfits are conceptualised as objects of the past and have been 'museumized' in two senses (cf. C. Harris 2012). Firstly, these outfits have been taken out of context and given a mnemonic function (on-stage and in museums); they are employed as signifiers of a traditional Tibetan identity (e.g. Kratz 2011: 22-23; Appadurai and Breckenridge 1992: 36-37; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1990: 386-388). Secondly, they have been 'museumized' according to a more local understanding, namely, they are no longer lived, at least by Tibetans in exile, hence they have become thing of the past, suitable for taking out of context and putting on display in a performance, or in a museum.

Perhaps a more useful way to think about the costumes of TIPA and TCV is as 'authentic' copies. Here, I refer to the way in which newly made costumes and artefacts are conceptualised as 'authentic', 'traditional' objects. These costumes are not 'authentic' in the Benjaminian sense of being 'auratic' originals, however (Benjamin 1982); rather, they are 'authentic representations'. They do the trick of standing in for an absent 'original', of 'accurately' representing that 'original'. Hence there is no contradiction implied in inserting a 'replica' *gau* made from wood and plastic into a case of historic objects, or in dancing a 'traditional' dance in a costume made from polyester. This approach is probably a product of the exile context, in which 'originals' are rare and so substitutes must suffice. Hence, for Tibetans living in exile, *reproductions* of 'traditional', 'authentic' costume become 'traditional' and 'authentic' in themselves. In this sense, the TIPA and TCV costumes, like Hobsbawm's and Ranger's examples, are 'invented traditions' (see below), 'factitious' in their continuity with the past but central to the imagination of Tibetan geographic and cultural unity, and the replication of Tibet outside the homeland (Hobsbawm 1983: 2; cf. C. Harris 1999: 76-77).

5.5.2 'How can I show you Tibet?'[200] Interweaving nationalism and tradition

Beyond the institutions, exiles themselves make individual efforts to 'preserve' their Tibetan dress. Refugees are highly aware that it is through every day practice that cultural 'traditions' such as dress are maintained, and that the onus is on them themselves to wear it and set an example to the younger generation (cf. C. Harris 1999). This perspective is not restricted to the older generation, but is popular among many exiles of all ages and origins. As Yangdol, a Tibetan woman in her mid-thirties explained:

> Tradition is very important to keep alive, normally the older generations can't teach them [the traditions] properly and [so] the younger ones can't follow and so all the traditions are disappearing … we should keep [traditions] alive; it will be helpful in future also. Like that, wearing our traditional dress, even the younger generation does not like to wear, but this is our tradition so we must keep [it alive].
>
> Yangdol, Leh[201]

Linked to the attitude towards practice, is also an awareness of visibility. In South Asia generally, and India specifically, dress is widely acknowledged as an important way in which ethnic background is made visible (Klieger 2002a: 147[202]; Tarlo 1996: 24; cf. Tarlo 2010, Tarlo and Moors 2013). Tibetans in exile take a similar view: old and young, newly arrived and long-established, all recognise the importance of the visibility of 'tradition', and use the visuality of clothing to display Tibetanness internally i.e. to a Tibetan audience and also externally to an Indian and international

[200] Tenzin Gyaser, interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 20 Jan 2013.
[201] Female, thirties, interviewed in Leh, Ladakh, 1 Jul 2013.
[202] In a statistical study conducted in the two Tibetan enclaves of Delhi, Majnu-ka-Tilla (the main Tibetan enclave) and Rohini (enclave mainly occupied by Tibetan students studying at the Delhi universities), Klieger reported that 68% of female respondents in the former stated that wearing *chu pa* was the most important way of displaying Tibetanness; 31% of females in the latter also stated this (2002a: 148). Klieger does not explain why the discrepancy between the two figures exists, however I suggest that this may be a function of the age of his informants in both places. Rohini is an area predominantly occupied by Tibetan students who, although they certainly regard Tibetan dress as an important way of displaying identity, tend to de-emphasise the importance of wearing Tibetan dress compared to the older generation (of whom more are present in Majnu-ka-Tilla). Unfortunately, Klieger does not provide statistical breakdown by age for each site (Klieger 2002a).

one (cf. Klieger 2002a: 147). In this sense, the decision to wear Tibetan dress, and what kind of Tibetan dress to wear is a relational decision, made with regard to circumstance, and importantly, audience.

The visuality of Tibetan dress is an important factor in its strategic use by exiles. During my fieldwork, most Tibetan youth did not wear *chu pa* on a daily basis within the settlements. Outside the settlements, in Indian cities, Tibetan dress was worn very rarely indeed. Youth especially spoke about the need to adjust and to fit in with their surroundings, to be seen as 'modern' by their Indian peers rather than traditional or 'backward' (*léba jangku*, lit. green minded[203]). For example, Tenzin Kyinzom had spent many years working in Indian cities, outside the Tibetan community, living a very 'un-Tibetan' style of life. She had recently moved to Dharamshala, and explained to me the effect the shift was having on her:

> I started wearing *chu pa* on a more regular basis only after coming to Dharamshala, 'cos living in Bangalore there was no [need]… The yearning to wear my traditional attire and feel more connected to my community only came after I came to Dharamshala.
>
> Tenzin Kyinzom, McLeod Ganj[204]

But although Tibetans living outside the settlements did not wear their Tibetan dress regularly they continued to wear it for special occasions, such as festivals, religious events, political events, weddings etc. Tibetans living in the settlements also made a special effort to wear *chu pa* on these days. Such occasions functioned as large-scale affirmations of Tibetanness (cf. Klieger 1991: 60-63) since they provided an opportunity for the whole community to gather and celebrate Tibetan festivals. On the more secular occasions, such as New Year (*lo sar*)[205] and the Dalai Lama's birthday

[203] See footnote 80, p87.
[204] Female, late twenties, interview conducted in McLeod Ganj, 10 Dec 2012.
[205] During my fieldwork in 2013 *lo sar* was 'cancelled'. It had been cancelled each year since 2008, when celebrations were called off as a mark of solidarity with Tibetans living in Tibet, whose protests that year (connected with the Beijing Olympic Games) had been violently suppressed by the Chinese army. In 2013, the celebration was called off as a mark of respect for and solidarity with Tibetans in Tibet who had

(*trung kar*) and also at weddings, bright, vivid Tibetan dress is worn (cf. Renne 2012: 88).

Such occasions highlight how Tibetan dress, which is usually spoken about in terms of preservation, is simultaneously infused with Tibetan politics and nationalism (cf. Anand 2000). This is most obvious at public political functions, such as the commemoration of 10th December, the day the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, or 10th March, the commemoration of the 1959 uprising in Lhasa which precipitated the Dalai Lama's flight to India. At such occasions both officials and audience-members, men and women, commonly attend wearing *chu pa* (cf. Renne 2012: 89).



Figure 70 Women wearing silk brocade *chu pa,* dancing (*gor zhé,* a circle dance) on the occasion of the Dalai Lama's birthday (the *po drang* picnic ground, or Dalai Lama's Palace in Choglamsar, Ladakh, 6 Jul 2013).

self-immolated. In practice this meant that many Tibetans marked the occasion by donning Tibetan dress in more sombre colours instead of the usual bright, festive colours.

The wearing of Tibetan dress is also regarded as a form of respect. For example, it is expected in many families that Tibetan women will wear *chu pa* when meeting dignitaries or visiting a monastery (by contrast, men often opt for Western formal attire on these occasions). This reflects the greater proscription that often surrounds dress in religious contexts in other cultures (e.g. that it be 'modest' and must cover certain areas of the body; Tarlo 2010, Moor and Tarlo 2013, Silverman 2013: 86-111). As Youdon, a young Tibetan woman living in McLeod Ganj put it:

> It's like a rule in my family, that my father would never like [it] if I don't wear *chu pa* [to the monastery], he always makes sure I will wear *chu pa*. He's a very strict person, even to go to meeting or to go to meet someone, or going out. Here [in McLeod Ganj], if I go out, I just wear sometimes loose pants and very informal clothes but he will make sure that we [her and her siblings] wear formal clothes. It's all like discipline …
>
> Youdon, McLeod Ganj[206]

In short, Tibetan events demanded Tibetan dress. Festivals especially, but also prominent meetings and other events functioned as affirmations of identity and cultural and political unity, hence Tibetan dress was required. Dudley comments that Karenni refugees' festivals functioned to bring the community together, uniting it in the practise of familiar traditions, which effectively made the past present (2010: 128-129). Similarly, Moors and Tarlo note that Islamic fashion is 'less about clothing a pre-existing global Islamic community than about bringing such a community into being through shared religious and aesthetic ideals and material solutions' (2013: 22). Tibetan commemorations, religious and more secular, function in a similar way, with an identity-affirming 'communitas' (Turner 1995: 96-97) emerging among the refugees in attendance (cf. Klieger 1991: 60-63; cf. C. Harris 1999). The wearing of Tibetan dress at these events played an important role in creating this aesthetic sense of belonging.

[206] Female, mid-twenties, interview conducted in McLeod Ganj, 27 Jan 2013.

A number of refugee women commented to me that putting on Tibetan dress also made them feel more Tibetan, more beautiful, stronger and more feminine.

> In college [Indian university] … Tibetan new year, sometimes it would fall on our semester examination or our internal test and I would wear a *chu pa* on an exam day … I would always look for days and opportunities to wear *chu pa* and sometimes it would be festivals and sometimes I just wanted to wear *chu pa*, I'd just feel like it. In Dharamshala, you can wear anytime. Also when I was a journalist [working in Indian cities, and] I wanted to be more serious … sometimes presentation … [is] very important, and in *chu pa* I would feel good … And in a way, you know, I tend to feel more Tibetan sometimes.
>
> Tenzin Gyaser, McLeod Ganj[207]

> Traditional clothes are always more, much more … more elegant, more exotic, more valuable I think … You feel the value of something when you wear it.
>
> Youdon, McLeod Ganj[208]

Chu pa is used in exile to project Tibetanness externally as well as internally, however; this is highlighted by Youdon's use of the word 'exotic'.[209] Many Tibetans, women and men, resident in Dharamshala, Delhi and Ladakh commented that wearing *chu pa* was an important part of their personal politics. By wearing *chu pa* they made the Tibetan cause visible and created opportunities for non-Tibetans to approach them and ask questions and for them to thus reach out and tell the Tibetan story.

> I think this is the only thing you can claim and show, whether it's tangible or not. You cannot show your land, you cannot show my home in that region, but what you wear, what you eat … the speech, the literature, is something tangible and is something you can show and [that I can] represent [to] you as a Tibetan, otherwise how can I show you Tibet?
>
> Tenzin Gyaser, McLeod Ganj[210]

---

[207] Female, late twenties/early thirties, interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 20 Jan 2013.
[208] Female, mid-twenties, interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 20 Jan 2013.
[209] Cf. Magnusson 2002 on 'reverse orientalism'. Magnusson has argued that Tibetans living in exile have politicized the Shangri-La myth of Tibet and use it as a soft power resource to promote their cause (especially to the West). Compare with Lopez (1998) who argues that the Shangri-La myth is ultimately restrictive rather than empowering.
[210] Female, late twenties/early thirties, born in India. Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 20 Jan 2013.

Such use of Tibetan dress finds a correlate in indigenous movements, which draw heavily upon the 'symbolic capital' of cultural identity (Bourdieu 1990a: 112-121, Conklin 1997: 711, cf. Conklin 2007, Markowitz 2004, Lee 2006). Conklin describes how Brazilian Indians and other native Amazonian groups employ dress in their campaigns for rights and status, including control over their ancestral lands (cf. Ewart 2007: 46). As she points out, since language barriers often impede direct communication with foreign journalists, visual imagery becomes critical. Traditional dress, with its feathers, piercings and body paint (all of which pander to Western exotic stereotypes about 'Indians'), becomes visual proof of cultural integrity. In the Amazon, where activists have successfully positioned themselves according to 'green' agenda – as, for example, Kent Redford's (1990) 'Ecologically Noble Savage' – traditional clothing becomes an index for cultural purity and hence respect for the environment. Such a stance has been effective in eliciting international support and winning rights for indigenous communities.

A similar phenomenon can be identified in the exilic Tibetan context, particularly in McLeod Ganj (Diehl 2002: 50), which attracts large numbers of foreign journalists, filmmakers and photographers. Such image-makers are especially active at protests and on political anniversaries, for which Tibetans construct themselves for the camera, in *chu pa* or wearing other clothing which signifies their Tibetanness and support for the Tibetan cause. Tibetan flags, for example, feature prominently: on clothing or painted on faces, for example (see Fig. 71 and section 6.3).

We might argue that Tibetans, like indigenous groups, pursue 'strategic essentialism' (Lee 2006: 455)[211] when they articulate their culture on the world stage,

[211] See footnote 209, p236 and discussion p331. Gayatri Spivak coined this term during her engagement with the work of the Subaltern Studies group – a collective of historians rewriting the history of colonial India from the point of view of the peasant insurgency (Spivak 1996[1985]: 214).

promoting an idealised and stereotyped, 'exotic' version of themselves and their culture in order to win international political support. 'Preservation' is thus also tactical: being able to claim cultural 'authenticity' lends Tibetans power in international discourses which positively value 'difference' and 'Otherness' as grounds for asserting rights and claiming territory. Material culture, customs and traditions are hence co-opted into political projects. This process is at its most overt in exiles' practice of *Lhakar*.



Figure 71 Protest march from McLeod Ganj to lower Dharamshala to mark the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama on 10th December 1989 (10 Dec 2012). The Tibetan flag was prominently displayed by protestors, worn as a cape, worked into clothing designs and painted on faces.

5.6 The *Lhakar* movement

In recent years, the wearing of Tibetan dress has been strongly developed as a nationalist practice by the *Lhakar* movement. The origins of the *Lhakar* movement are difficult to pin down. An article by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and

Democracy (TCHRD) relates the emergence of the movement tentatively to a series of incidents surrounding the awarding of the Congressional Gold Award to the Dalai Lama in 2007 (McConnell and Tsering 2013). However, the vast majority of Tibetans I spoke to, including Students for Free Tibet's National Director for India, Dorjee Tseten, dated the emergence of the movement to the aftermath of the 2008 uprisings.[212] All sources agreed, however, that *Lhakar* had begun in Tibet at some point between 2007 and 2009.

Lhakar translates as 'white Wednesday' (it is a contraction of *lhak pa kar po*) and refers to the auspicious day, or 'soul day' of the Dalai Lama. Consequently, it is a significant day for Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhists.[213] Prior to the advent of the *Lhakar* movement Tibetans marked this day by offering *sang* (juniper smoke) and completing long-life prayers for the Dalai Lama. This practice was strongly in evidence during my fieldwork in McLeod Ganj. Each Wednesday morning, Tibetans made their way to a special site on the *ling kor* route (the larger path around the Dalai Lama's temple) to make offerings and complete prayers.

The *Lhakar* movement built on these religious foundations. News of the movement first emerged into exile c.2008 via Kirti monastery in McLeod Ganj (this monastery is a branch of Kirti monastery in Ngaba, Tibet). Ngaba Tibetans had begun to make pledges on Wednesdays, for example: to speak only in 'pure' Tibetan language; to patronise only Tibetan shops; or to wear Tibetan dress. Tibetans were also reportedly imposing small fines (e.g. of one *yuan* per word) on each other for using Chinese words. Practices such as these were widespread, although they appear not to have been

[212] See p44for further information on the events of 2008.

[213] In his *Portrait of the Dalai Lama* Charles Bell notes that according to Tibetan astrology each person has two lucky days and one unlucky day per week (Bell 1946: 338). The two lucky days are the life day (*sok za*) and the soul day (*la za*). The 14th Dalai Lama's *la za* falls on a Wednesday, hence that day is marked by Tibetans. NB. the *lha* of *Lhakar* (Wylie *lhag dkar*) is generally said to be derived from *za lhak pa* (Wylie *gza' lhag pa*) meaning 'Wednesday' rather than *la* (Wylie *bla*) meaning soul. Rather than translating *kar* from *kar po* (Wylie *dkar po*) meaning 'white', Buffetrille suggests it might be traced to *kar kyong* (Wylie *dkar skyong*) meaning 'vegetarianism', which is an important aspect of *Lhakar* in the Golok region of eastern Tibet. However, vegetarianism does not feature heavily in exilic *Lhakar*. All of my respondents linked the *kar* of *Lhakar* to *kar po* (white), although they were unable to explain to me the significance of this colour for the day/practice (Buffetrille 2012: 3).

conceptualised as an organised 'movement'. By 2010, however, such practices had become more formalised. In June of that year a formal '*Lhakar* pledge' was posted on a Tibetan blog published on the Internet from within the PRC. The writer promised to speak pure Tibetan within his family and to other Tibetans, to remind himself daily that he is a Tibetan, to wear Tibetan dress every Wednesday, to speak only Tibetan every Wednesday, to learn more of the Tibetan language and to refrain from eating meat on a Wednesday in order to accrue more religious merit (McConnell and Tsering 2013).[214]

In February 2009 these practices and ideas began to filter into the exile community in a significant way. Publicised under the name *Lhakar* by the Tibetan NGO, Students for Free Tibet (SFT), the movement has since spread throughout the diaspora and is practised in a variety of different countries by Tibetans in different ways. At the time of my research in India the most common way for Tibetans to involve themselves was through wearing Tibetan dress. Indeed, the wearing of Tibetan dress on Wednesdays had just become mandatory for Central Tibetan Administration staff when I arrived in the field in August 2012. This meant that men, who unlike women do not generally wear *chu pa* to work each day, began to wear *chu pa* more often, although some opted to wear a Tibetan shirt with suit trousers instead – a more comfortable option than full *chu pa* (see Fig. 62, p212; the man second from left wears a Tibetan shirt). Likewise, staff at the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) schools in Dharamshala and Ladakh (CTA-funded) were also expected to wear *chu pa* on Wednesdays. School children also became involved: in December 2011, TCV school children in Dharamshala were asked to wear a *chu pa* on Wednesdays. In February 2013, the start of the new school year, a uniform *chu pa* for boys (in grey and blue) and girls (in dark green and white) who attend the Dharamshala schools of Upper and

[214] The blogpost has since been removed (McConnell and Tsering 2013).

Lower TCV was instituted. At TCV Choglamsar, children were encouraged to wear *chu pa* every second Wednesday (which is when *Lhakar* is celebrated in Sonamling).

Within the India-based Tibetan community, *Lhakar* is approached in a variety of different ways. Young activists, particularly those involved with Students for Free Tibet, tended to approach the movement from a more intellectual perspective. Dorjee Tseten, Asia Director and India National Director of SFT at the time of my research, was involved in promoting the movement in exile. He saw *Lhakar* as a diversified form of cultural resistance, which derives its strength from its flexibility. He argued that this flexibility, i.e. the freedom to choose how to participate or what to pledge,[215] has enabled Tibetans living all over the world to participate equally, and has thus facilitated the movement's spread throughout the diaspora. In this way *Lhakar* promotes Tibetan unity while making allowance for diversity. He also saw *Lhakar* as a 'renaissance' movement,[216] since it encourages Tibetans around the globe to pay attention to their cultural roots.[217]

In both of my field sites, however, the majority of Tibetans interpreted *Lhakar* much more conservatively. Among the elderly community, the religious significance of the day superseded other concerns: many agreed that it was important to wear Tibetan dress, but they did so out of respect for the Dalai Lama not in order to participate in *Lhakar*. In Ladakh elderly Tibetans interpreted the wearing of Tibetan dress every

[215] *Lhakar* pledges made by Tibetans vary widely throughout the diaspora and include: wearing Tibetan dress, learning new Tibetan words, speaking only in Tibetan, political activities such as writing to your political representative (e.g. in UK, US) to notify them about oppressive Chinese policies and human rights infringements in Tibet, posting on a Tibetan blog etc.

[216] Cf. Fürer-Haimendorf's *The Renaissance of Tibetan Civilization* in which he describes how Tibetans living in exile have, in his view, successfully preserved and extended the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism by enrolling in and revitalizing existing monasteries in Buddhist areas of India and Nepal, and by building new ones, both there and in other locations (Fürer-Haimendorf 1990). See also C. Harris, however, who argues that the metaphor of 'Renaissance' is misapplied. As she points out Tibetans, unlike 15th century Italians, are unable to physically 'unearth the past in order to give birth to the present' (i.e. via archaeological excavation) given their location outside the homeland. Thus exilic cultural forms come closer to Hobsbawm's 'invented traditions' (Hobsbawm 1983: 1-14). Moreover, unlike in fifteenth-century Italy, the majority of exiled Tibetans (certainly the Dharamshala establishment) are indisposed to the kind of innovation which Renaissance archaeological exploits inspired; rather, the preservationist stance within the community encourages replication and conservation (C. Harris 1999: 76-77).

[217] Interview conducted in McLeod Ganj, 30 Nov 2012.

second Wednesday as an 'order' from the *Sikyong* (CTA elected leader, or 'Prime Minister' in exile) since news of the movement had arrived in the region via the Dalai Lama's Chief Representative Officer (CRO), who administers the settlements of Sonamling on behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration.[218] These attitudes show how *Lhakar* is fitted into pre-existing orientations towards the 'preservation' of culture, including top-down measures such as advice from senior politicians and public figures. These can amount to rulings in Tibetan eyes, especially when endorsed by the Dalai Lama (cf. Misra 2003: 191; see footnote 92, p95). Indeed, a number of Tibetan youth commented to me that they disliked the way in which *Lhakar* had taken on a coercive edge in India, with participation being all but legislated by those in authority rather than individuals choosing if and what they wanted to pledge.

Thus although the vast majority of my respondents were positive about the movement, others (especially in more intellectual McLeod Ganj) were more critical.[219] For example, Dhondup, a Tibetan in his mid-forties who was born in India, described how he felt that *Lhakar* implied that he was not 'Tibetan' enough. Why should he be 'more Tibetan' on one day of the week? Why take pride in his identity only on that day? Did wearing a down jacket instead of *chu pa* make him less Tibetan? Among the most negative were several individuals who had been born and brought up in Tibet (though other Tibet-born were more positive). For some, the practice of *Lhakar* in exile was a distortion of the practice in Tibet, which they characterised as a non-cooperation movement aimed at driving Chinese out of Tibetan regions. Others argued that the

[218] News is distributed throughout the Tibetan settlements in India via the CTA's network of staff. In each major settlement the CTA is represented by a Tibetan Settlement Officer (TSO); in Ladakh, the settlement officer is known as the Chief Representative Officer (CRO) of the Dalai Lama. The Ladakh posting is a significant one since it includes the governance of nine camps in the Jangthang region in addition to Akling and Choglamsar settlements in the Leh area; the CRO also plays an important role as a link between Ladakhi Tibetan Buddhists and the Dalai Lama.

[219] None I met in Ladakh expressed a negative view of *Lhakar* to me. Most regarded it as a good opportunity to practise and thereby preserve their culture, and to encourage their children in learning about and practising their culture too.

exilic version was pointless (at least for them), even insulting, since it made a mockery of Tibetan culture. Tsewang, who arrived in India around the year 2000, argued:

> For me, at the beginning I was quite angry at what they [India-born Tibetans, the CTA] were doing. They were treating Tibetan culture as a dead culture. They are observing that day. If it's your culture you live it … if you're observing it, it's in the past. It's like an event … culture is a part of life. If you don't live it then you're finished. If you're observing it in a day in a week … try to live it. If you can't live it, stop observing! Observing and living are totally different things. So I was quite angry, really. For me, I think in Tibetan, I speak Tibetan, I act like a Tibetan and I talk about Tibetan culture everyday. So, I live my culture. And so I don't have to observe a day for Tibet. I am Tibetan. If you're observing a day for Tibetan [culture/identity] then Tibet is finished. In a way it's naïve. In the West, probably the culture [as practised by Tibetans who have migrated westwards] is dead so it's right to observe it, make a day for it, remember it … For us genuine Tibetans [born in Tibet] it's a kind of childish, naïve thing to do. On purpose I don't wear a *chu pa* on Wednesdays. I usually wear *chu pa*. When it's cold, when I'm comfortable to wear it I usually wear it … Here, everything is politics … Tibetans in Tibet are doing this blah blah blah [so we should do it too, this is how activists think].
>
> Tsewang, McLeod Ganj[220]

For Tsewang, exilic *Lhakar* was symptomatic of wider problems with the Dharamshala-establishment's approach to Tibetan culture, i.e. as a bounded object to be protected and preserved, and its treatment of recently arrived Tibetans. His point of view was not restricted to newcomers only, however, but was also articulated by India-born youth, although with a different nuance.

5.7 Amdo and Khampa *chu pa*

Tsewang is from Amdo, eastern Tibet. His relationship with his Tibetanness and his *chu pa,* like other Tibetans born in Tibet, differed significantly from those from central Tibetan regions and those born in exile. For some newcomers wearing *chu pa* is a

[220] Tibetan man born in Amdo in his late twenties. Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 3 Feb 2013.

political activity in the sense outlined above (i.e. raising awareness about the Tibetan cause). For many, however, it is political in another sense: it is a statement of locality, of origin, of their birth in Tibet and specifically in eastern Tibet and the regions of Kham and Amdo. The Amdo *chu pa* (men's and women's) is distinctive. Firstly, it is much baggier than the *chu pa* worn by the majority of Tibetans living in exile, which as I described above is based upon central Tibetan garments. Furthermore, it differs in the way it is tied: less precision is employed in creating folds and pleats at the sides and the rear of the garment, for example. Many eastern-style *chu pa* worn in McLeod Ganj were also more decorative than central-style *chu pa*, for example being trimmed with brocade or the fabric known as *nam bu ting ma*, which is popular in Amdo[221] (cf. Graham 2006).

In conversation with me, Tsewang noted:

> For me, in winter I always wear chu pa. For me it's a statement. Not only a Tibetan statement, for me it's an Amdo statement … I am proud to be Amdo. In this community … we [Amdowas] are treated differently. Let's leave the discrimination aside - we are treated differently. In a sense we are different, and that's why we're treated differently, maybe, but it's a statement, you know, we are proud to be different.
>
> Tsewang, McLeod Ganj

As I alluded to above (see pp.16-17), young Tibetan men such as Tsewang, who arrived relatively recently in India, describe discrimination they suffer at the hands of long-term refugees. Newcomers are often stereotyped by long-term exiles as backward, Sinicized and violent, in short: un-Tibetan (Hess 2009; Swank 2011; Yeh 2007; Diehl 2002: 64). Partly the result of pre-existing regional stereotypes (Yeh 2007: 655; Klieger 2002a: 152; Cf. McGranahan 2010), this is also the result of linguistic differences. Amdo and Khampa dialects are sufficiently different from central Tibetan to be almost mutually

[221] This fabric is produced in the Lhoka region of central Tibet and sold in the Lhasa markets (T. Harris 2013: 58) where it is purchased by Amdowas while on pilgrimage in Lhasa (Tashi Tsering *pers. comm.*). Amdowas in McLeod Ganj referred to this fabric as *truk* (Phuntsok Tsering, *nam za chen mo* or master tailor *pers. comm.).*

unintelligible, rendering communication difficult. Unlike in exile, in Tibet the central dialect or Lhasa Tibetan (*Ü ké* or *Lhasa ké*) has not been promoted to the same extent as a lingua franca. Thus Tibetans within Tibet coming from different regions habitually resort to speaking Chinese in order to communicate with one another. Doing so in exile contributes to long-term refugees' impressions that these Tibetans are Sinified (Yeh 2007: 656). Such prejudices are not helped by mistrust engendered by reports and accusations of spying by newcomers (Yeh 2007: 654).



Figure 72 Staff from Esukhia Tibetan language school prior to their meeting with the Dalai Lama (26 Feb 2013). The man on the left wears an Amdo *chu pa* trimmed with *nam bu ting ma.* The man to his left and the man on the far right of the image wear the central style men's *chu pa* commonly worn in exile. The man second from the right wears everyday Western clothing popular in McLeod Ganj (he did not attend the meeting).

While long-term exiles perceive newcomers as less Tibetan for the above reasons, the opposite is true of newcomers themselves. While Tibetans who have lived many years in exile derive their status and identity from their role as bearers of authentic Tibetan culture, Tibetans born in Tibet derive it from place, i.e. their upbringing in Tibet (cf. Yeh 2007: 648).



Figure 73 Tsedor from Amdo wearing Amdo *chu pa* with jeans on Tibetan 'Independence Day', 13 Feb 2013.

Yeh employs Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* to explain how newcomers legitimise their Tibetan identity, arguing that Tibetans born in Tibet route their claim to authenticity through their bodies (Yeh 2007: 648; Bourdieu 1990a). Sartorial selections made by newcomers are part of this practice. If we use *habitus*, as Yeh suggests, it allows us to bring the felt as well as the more overtly political aspects of dress choice into frame simultaneously.

As Tsewang explained, wearing his Amdo *chu pa* was not something he did only for political reasons. It was also the clothing he was most comfortable in and so he wore it around McLeod Ganj when the weather permitted. Newcomers endeavoured to source their *chu pa* and other items of clothing, such as *tsa ru* (clothing made from lamb skin e.g. jackets and *chu pa*,) from Tibet through family and friends to make sure they felt 'right' (cf. Gosden 1999: 203). Relatively few Dharamshala tailors are able to make Amdo or Khampa *chu pa* to newcomers' satisfaction; they also charged a lot for these styles of *chu pa*.

While in recent years a negative relationship has persisted between recent arrivals, long-term refugees and those born in India this may be changing. There are signs that new links are being forged, especially between India-born and Tibet-born youth. These links have coalesced around contemporary Tibetan music in particular, which is produced in the main by artists living in eastern Tibet, Amdo and Kham (cf. Warner 2013). Music videos by these artists, shared via platforms such as YouTube, have played a large role in promoting both contemporary Amdo and new 'fashion' *chu pa* in exile (see below). I argue that the improving relationship between India-born and Tibet-born youth has also contributed to this process. Many India-born Tibetans expressed how good-looking and fashionable they thought Amdo and Khampa *chu pa* were. The 'fashion *chu pas'*, many of which are inspired by eastern Tibetan designs,

were also similarly admired and women enjoyed opportunities to model them (see Fig. 77, p258).

5.8 Updating tradition

This discussion brings me back to the debate about tradition and modernity as they relate to contemporary fashion in my field sites (cf. Tarlo and Moors 2013, Tarlo 2010). In the final chapter to his volume on Jewish dress, Eric Silverman describes how young Jews in the US have taken up new identities and fashions as Hipster Jews, Heebsters or New Jews. Rejecting conventional Jewishness (and dress) as parochial, and wanting at the same time to wear clothing which makes their ethnicity visible, these young people are working hard to develop contemporary Jewish fashions. Silverman describes their efforts as part of a broader project to make Jewishness relevant in the modern world, both to young Jews and to others (Silverman 2013: 184-204).

These goals resonate strongly with those of young, diasporic Tibetans – caught between an imperative to preserve their culture and make it visible, and a desire to participate in Indian and global fashion. Thus far I have discussed 'Tibetan' dress in a traditionalist sense, as a marker of identity. On a daily basis, however, the majority of Tibetans living in exile in India do not wear this style of dress. Instead they choose to wear international or 'Western' clothing, for example jeans, leggings, sweaters and leather jackets, all of which are available in Dharamshala, McLeod Ganj and Leh (although they are available at cheaper prices in India's big cities). During monsoon season in 2013 a number of new clothes shops opened in McLeod Ganj. These were stocked mainly with American styles, including baseball caps, India-made versions of branded trainers, jeans and so on. Many young Tibetan men and women I knew were highly fashion conscious, following Indian, American and Korean fashion trends.

Familiarity with American and European fashions came via friends and family who had moved abroad and periodically brought and sent back clothes (and electronics) (cf. Renne 2012: 86); the Internet and television also played an important role. Most of the clothes stocked in the new shops were sourced from Thailand, Delhi and Hong Kong and were duplicates of American styles and brands. Another major source of style inspiration, especially for recently arrived Tibetans and school children, was Korea. Korean films are very popular in Tibet and the exile community and are readily available on DVD. They are also shown (sometimes dubbed) on Tibetan television broadcasts within the PRC (these channels are also available in exile). Lhakpa, who had himself recently arrived from Tibet, once joked with me that it was always easy to spot who was born in Tibet because they'd be sporting an asymmetrical, spiky Korean hairstyle, wearing skinny Korean jeans and could often be found sitting at chai stalls or cafes drinking tea (cf. Swank 2011: 54-55).

Young Tibetan men and women face a difficult challenge. While highly patriotic, they sometimes struggle to connect with the traditions by which Tibetan culture is defined in exile. Many I asked described 'pure' Tibetan culture as a 'traditional' culture. Thus they were faced with the problem of how to make such traditions relevant to themselves: a highly technologically literate, educated, 'modern' and young population. While many felt guilty that they did not know enough about their 'traditional' culture, they also expressed the need to move forward, to become modern and to 'get educated'.[222]

Conversations about Tibetan dress frequently got stuck in a paradox: the need to be Tibetan, which seemingly meant practising your 'traditional' culture, and the wish to be modern and to move with the times. Dolker, a young student studying at a

[222] As Misra notes, many Tibetan youth living in exile blame the loss of their country on a lack of education and over-commitment to tradition by the ruling Tibetan hierarchy of the early twentieth century. Hence they argue vigorously that Tibet and Tibetans must modernise in exile and invest in modern, secular education (Misra 2003: 192). See also Goldstein (1989a: 364-366).

prestigious college in Delhi, expressed her own views on tradition, drawing an analogy with food tastes:

> I go for modernisation, but that doesn't mean I totally go for the Western notion, Western food and all. But then, preservation is one part which is very important, but then at the same time I feel it should also change according to the time and according to the taste of people … I was born in Tibet, so I can eat lots of *tsampa* [roasted barley flour] and lots of meat and all, but when my child, he or she, is born definitely I can't force him to eat all the foods that I eat because he or she has a different taste and a different environment. So in that case, it will go according to people's need and environment and their taste also. But there won't be one set of Tibetan food. It will change according to the time and according to the people's circumstances.
>
> Dolker[223]

For many, being 'modern' in a sartorial sense was achieved by switching between *chu pa*, jeans and T-shirts depending on occasion. Sometimes it involved combining the two, for example, pairing a Tibetan shirt with jeans (cf. Tarlo 2010: 93; Moors and Tarlo 2013: 21). *Lhakar* also appears to have encouraged more experimentation with Tibetan dress in exile. During the winter of 2012-2013 synthetic versions of Tibetan *tsa ru* jackets (made from lamb fleece), became very popular items of clothing in McLeod Ganj, especially among young adults.

[223] Interviewed in Delhi, 30 Aug 2013.



Figure 74 Centenary celebrations for Tibetan 'Independence Day' hosted by Students for Free Tibet (SFT).[224] Dorjee Tseten, SFT India (left), hosts a panel discussion on Tibetan independence. He wears a new style, synthetic Tibetan jacket. The man seated in the middle wears a Tibetan shirt with trousers. Either side of him men wear *chu pa* in contemporary exilic styles (McLeod Ganj, 13 Feb 2013).[225]

Others, especially women, experimented with *chu pa* design. Some women opted for *chu pa* with in-built sleeves and lapels, others branched out into new fabrics. One-piece 'summer *chu pa'* made from lightweight, floral Indian fabric were also popular in McLeod Ganj and Delhi during 2013. New *chu pa* designs worn in northwest India are mostly produced in 'Panjabasti',[226] a market that has grown up opposite the Tibetan camp of Majnu-ka-Tilla in Delhi and today services Tibetan clothing needs. Tibetans I spoke with preferred Indian tailors in this colony to Tibetan tailors, remarking especially on their skill, speed and cheap prices, also their willingness to create new designs (cf. Ahmed and Vickery 2010: 197).

[224] Tibetan Independence Day, celebrated annually in McLeod Ganj, marks the anniversary of the 13th Dalai Lama's proclamation of Tibet's Independence from China on 13th February 1913 (see p3). In the proclamation, the Dalai Lama dates Tibet's independence to before 1913 (Goldstein 1989a: 59-61).
[225] See page vi for note on anonymisation in this thesis.
[226] This is the Tibetan name for the area. It is derived from *Punjabi basti*, meaning Punjabi settlement/colony. The area is known for its Punjabi community, which came to this part of Delhi during Partition (1947).

New fashions emerging from Tibet are also becoming increasingly popular in exile due to the publicity they receive via Tibetan television and Tibetan music videos (shared via YouTube, WeChat, Weibo, and Facebook for example, see Warner 2013). These are commonly referred to as 'fashion *chu pa'* (in English) and are characterised by extensive use of brocade. Within my two field sites these kinds of *chu pa* were more popular in McLeod Ganj. News from Tibet (including fashions) often reached McLeod Ganj first given the town's large population of newcomers who are in regular contact with family members in Tibet. I saw none of these *chu pa* during my time in Ladakh, which is perhaps not surprising given that very few in Ladakh are newly arrived from Tibet, most are long-term residents originating in western areas. It is also likely that the expense of these *chu pa* put them beyond the means of most Ladakh-based Tibetans. I turn next to discuss the work of Phurbu Tsering, a fashion designer whom I met in McLeod Ganj.

5.8.1 Phurbu Tsering: contemporary Tibetan fashion designer

Phurbu Tsering was born in Kham (eastern Tibet) and came to Dharamshala in 2007. Having worked for some time before in Mumbai in modern international fashion (jeans, T-shirts etc.) he decided he wanted to develop a contemporary Tibetan line of his own, and with this aim started up his business in McLeod Ganj. In 2012-2013 he was running his business out of an upstairs room, large by local standards, opposite the *tsuk lak khang* and Namgyal Monastery in McLeod Ganj. His designs are based upon the basic silhouette of the *chu pa*, but are put together in innovative ways using new shapes and a variety of fabrics not usually seen in Tibetan dress. For example, he takes inspiration from traditional Tibetan ornaments, especially those worn on the belt by Khampa women, incorporating motifs that reference them into his designs. He also

creates split designs, two-piece women's *chu pa*, separating them into shirt and skirt, so that they can be worn separately with jeans and T-shirts. He has also taken the traditional design of men's shirts and created womenswear based upon them. He follows the current Tibet-based fashion of trimming *chu pa* with large quantities of brocade, which developed as a result of the Dalai Lama's statement denouncing the fur trade. Historically in Tibet, and especially in eastern areas, fur and skins (e.g. sea otter, leopard and tiger) were used to trim garments. In the late 1990s and early 2000s this fashion spread across the plateau, resulting in increased demand for furs. The Chinese authorities encouraged this trend since it gave the appearance of Tibetan prosperity under their government; the Western media also lauded the trend as evidence of cultural revival. However in 2006, amidst growing concerns for the survival of endangered species, the 14th Dalai Lama spoke out against the trade of furs and skins and asked Tibetans to cease wearing them. Tibetans inside Tibet responded by burning their skins and fur-trimmed *chu pa* in mass bonfires (Ahmed and Vickery 2010: 197) and pledging never to use them again.[227] Since 2006 a new fashion has emerged, for *chu pa* trimmed in thick, highly decorative brocade (*nam bu* woollen trimmings also remain popular). This fashion for silk brocade is something Phurbu Tsering incorporates into his designs. The brocade he uses is mostly imported from China via Hong Kong, and is sold in the markets in Calcutta.[228]

[227] This was such a major event that a commemorative pillar inscribed with details of the Dalai Lama's edict and subsequent events was installed at *lha gyel ri*, the main site on the *ling kor* (large circumambulation path around the Dalai Lama's temple) in McLeod Ganj on 6th July 2007.
[228] Brocade produced in India, which is higher in quality, is prohibitively expensive for many Tibetans (it is hand-woven on a pitloom and hence labour intensive and costlier) (Ahmed 2005). This brocade is mostly used by monasteries for religious purposes, e.g. ceremonial robes, framing *thangka*.

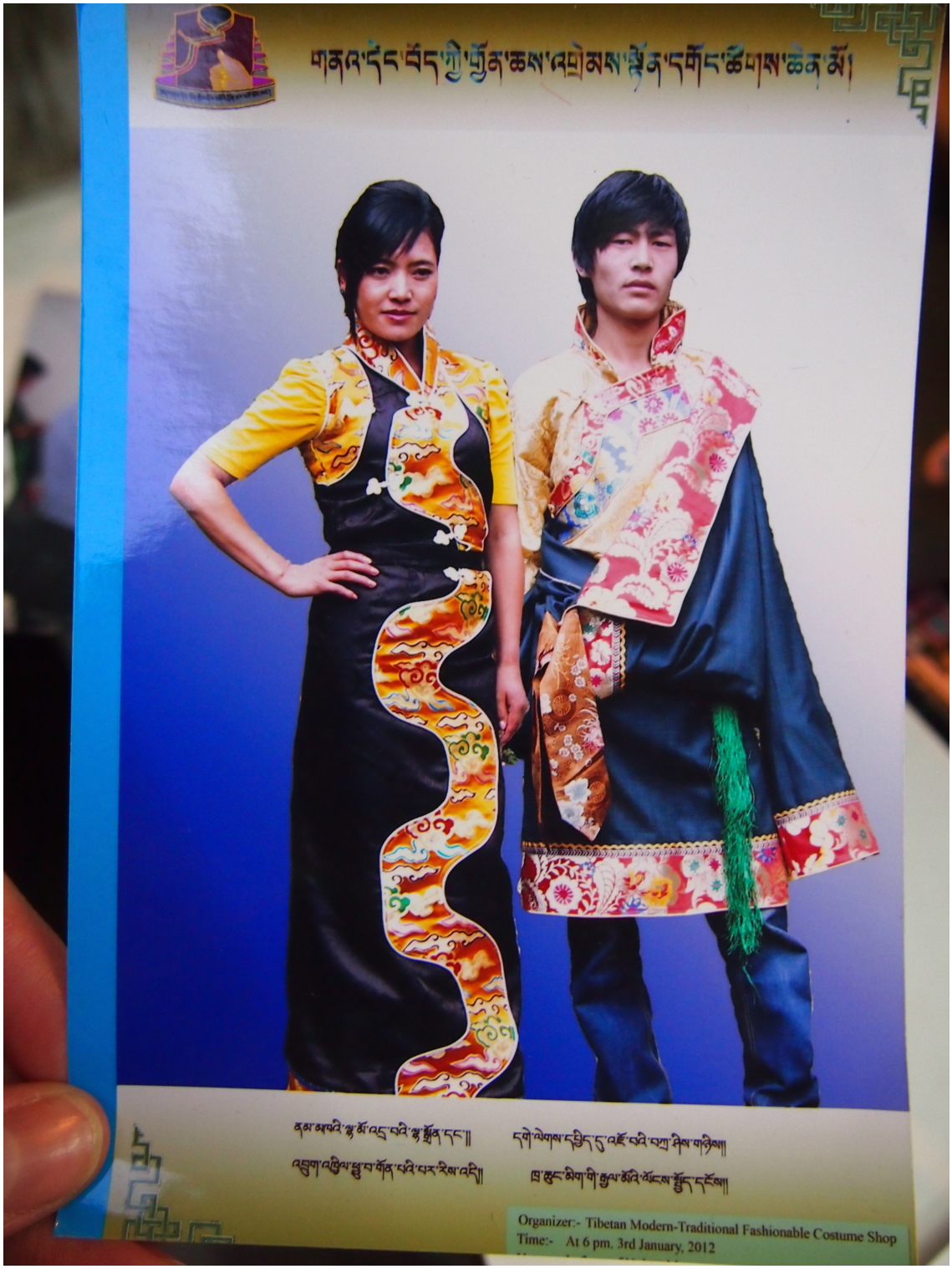


Figure 75 'Fashion *chu pa'* designed by Phurbu Tsering (image re-photographed from promotional material developed by Phurbu Tsering for his Tibetan fashion show held on 3 Jan 2012) (©Phurbu Tsering; re-photographed 24 Nov 2012).



Figure 76 'Fashion *chu pa'* by various designers for sale in a McLeod Ganj shop on Temple Road (Nov 2012).

Phurbu Tsering strongly believes in the importance of Tibetan dress. His personal mission, as he describes it, is to popularise Tibetan dress by re-designing it and making it fashionable for the younger generation. He is also a strong supporter of *Lhakar*, and won an award for his clothing at a *Lhakar* rally organised by the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) prior to my arrival in the field. To promote his work, he has produced DVDs and organises a fashion show each year in McLeod Ganj. He sells most of his stock to young Tibetans living in Western countries or to young Tibetans arriving from Tibet, however. His designs are expensive for the Indian market (at around USD $250 for one *chu pa*), which partly explains why they are rarely seen around McLeod Ganj (I witnessed a few girls wearing them during *lo sar* in 2013, however).

It is not only expense that prevents Tibetans living in McLeod Ganj from purchasing Phurbu's products, however. This chapter has described how Tibetan dress has become a target for 'preservation' in the exile community. Phurbu's new designs

have attracted criticism, especially from older generation Tibetans living in McLeod Ganj, for being inauthentic and 'un-Tibetan' because they do not follow 'traditional' styles (cf. Tarlo 2010: 7). Articulating their 'traditional' heritage with an orientation towards modernity is something that many young Tibetans, especially those born in exile, struggle with on an almost daily basis. As Tsering Shakya has written, Tibetan identity is defined in exile less by what it is, and more by what it is not, i.e. Chinese (but also Western or Indian) (Shakya 1993: 11). Thus, young Tibetans must work hard to find ways to express their own modernity that do not also leave them open to critique for being un-Tibetan (cf. C. Harris 1999, Diehl 2002, cf. Tarlo 2010: 189-228). This project is littered with potential pitfalls, and arguments over how to balance competing demands can be fraught, as the following excerpt from a conversation shows:

> Youdon (F): I feel that tradition is something that people has made … according to the situation, according to the time, according to [comfort] … So I don't think it, it's not necessary that we should keep tradition or culture like even if it's helping or not helping, like stuck in it. We can be flexible, change.
>
> Metok (F): Culture is important.
>
> Dawa (M): At least now, since we are here as like an exile we should keep our culture or whatever we had before, but like afterwards, when we are having our own country maybe we can [start making changes then].
>
> Youdon (F): No I think [that is] a very wrong notion.
>
> Dawa (M): [No] I [don't] think so … history [and traditional culture] is the [only] thing … we can show to the world wide, like what we are, where we are from … what we used to be … what we were, where we belong.
>
> Youdon (F): But we are not saying that we don't follow the culture or tradition, we value our culture, we value our tradition until or unless it's restricting us. In Tibet we had a tradition where …[butchers]… were considered low caste. You think we should keep the tradition just because it's in our culture?
>
> Dawa (M): But lots of other cultures have this high/low caste thing, England, India, Tibet …
>
> Kyinzom (F): But that doesn't mean we shouldn't change it.[229]

[229] Excerpt from a conversation I recorded between several young Tibetans, male and female (M/F, see above), all of whom were born in India. I arranged for the group to gather in the evening at the house I

Tibetans have appealed to the world for political support on the basis that Tibetan culture, as characterised by Buddhism, is worth saving (cf. Magnusson 2002, C. Harris 1999, Lopez 1998; see pp. 330-331). Preserving this culture thus becomes an essential burden and one of the ways in which Tibetans lay claim to the territory of Tibet. Preservation consequently becomes crucial to the cause, underpinning the exile community's very framework of existence (cf. Conklin 1997, 2007; Lee 2006; Markowitz 2004).

Tibetan dress, I argue, has been invented as 'tradition' in the sense Hobsbawm and Ranger advanced in 1983. As these authors noted, one of the peculiarities of 'invented traditions' is that 'insofar as there is such reference to a historic past … continuity with it is largely factitious' (Hobsbawm 1983: 2). Although, as I have shown, the exilic *chu pa* is derived from central Tibetan styles of the 1950s, it has undergone significant stylistic change in exile. Yet these changes are not generally seen as a cause for concern. Rather, these *chu pa* designs are considered unproblematically 'Tibetan' and an unquestionable part of 'traditional' Tibetan culture. By contrast, contemporary designs such as those developed by Phurbu Tsering are censured for their departure from 'tradition' and their consequent 'inauthenticity'.

As Emily Yeh (2007, 2002) and others (C. Harris 1999; Diehl 2002; Calkowski 1991: 648) have commented, the boundaries of Tibetanness are drawn particularly tightly within the Tibetan exile community. Fearing Sinification of Tibetans inside Tibet, long-term exiles are suspicious of new cultural innovations developed there; hence unfamiliar traits are often denigrated as 'Chinese' (Yeh 2007: 653). This includes the new 'fashion' *chu pas*, like those designed by Phurbu Tsering. In particular, older generation Tibetans voice their dislike of them. The master tailor (*nam za chen mo*), Phuntsok Tsering, expressed great sadness over Phurbu's designs. He told me that he

shared with Youdon and asked if they would discuss some of the issues surrounding dress (McLeod Ganj, 10 Dec 2012).

believed them to be Chinese in origin, deliberately designed by Han Chinese to deceive Tibetans and thereby dilute and destroy Tibetan culture.

The attitudes of the younger generation (born in India and Tibet) differ, however. 'Tradition' is still seen as important, as Youdon and Dawa highlight, yet 'traditions' are also seen as restrictive and in need of updating. Later in the conversation I quoted above, Youdon went on to explain her attitude towards 'tradition' more fully:

> When it [was] first made it [,the *chu pa*, was] made … according to the environment … according to the time, but the time has changed now. Even if we keep it as a *chu pa* we can redecorate [it] according to time. Tradition is what? Culture is what? It's all people-made, you know. Our ancestors made it according to their own convenience and it becomes culture and tradition for us, and we can [change] it according to [the] time.
>
> Youdon, McLeod Ganj



Figure 77 *Lhakar* fashion show. Tibetan women born in India model 'fashion' *chu pa* by Tibetan designer Tashi as part of an 'arts fusion' event. This was organised by the Dharamshala chapter of the Tibetan Youth Congress (rTYC) in McLeod Ganj to promote *Lhakar* and the preservation of Tibetan 'traditional' culture.[230] ©Artgonpo Kyab (McLeod Ganj, 6 Nov 2013).

For Youdon and other Tibetan youth living in exile, re-fashioning *chu pa* offered them the opportunity to dress in a modern way while retaining their distinctive Tibetanness. Beyond this, by framing 'tradition' in this way Youdon allowed herself to

[230] http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=34198&t=0 [accessed 10 Apr 2015].

experiment, not only with her wardrobe but with many different areas of Tibetan custom and culture, pushing the boundaries of 'tradition' and developing her own version of 'Tibetanness'.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter began by discussing the broad changes Tibetan dress has undergone as it travelled into exile. It has examined processes of homogenisation which affect Tibetan dress within the exile community: how regional variation in dress style has been obscured in order to emphasise a unified pan-Tibetan identity, and how Tibetan dress has been reinvented in exile as 'tradition' (cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). I have described how long-term exiles derive their own sense of identity from this project and how certain types of Tibetan dress and its wearers are consequently evaluated as more or less 'traditional' and concomitantly more or less Tibetan. Besides homogenisation, this chapter has also examined processes of diversification in dress styles: how Western and Korean garments and styles are used by Tibetan refugee youth in their practise of 'modernity' and how Tibetan dress itself is modernised and adapted by Tibetan and Indian tailors in different ways.

Dress plays an important role in exilic Tibetan identity discourse. The popularity of the *Lhakar* movement in its sartorial aspect highlights the significance of dress as a highly flexible tool used by exiles to craft a sense of self-identity in relation to a broader Tibetan one. *Lhakar* has built upon already present sartorial practices, elaborating existing uses of dress in political praxis and self-expression. These take advantage of the visuality of dress, which enables it to communicate. At the same time, the embodied aspect of dress encourages the internalisation of identity constructs at a sensory and emotional level, i.e. at the level of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990a, cf. Yeh 2007).

This capability of clothing was explicitly recognised by exiles who commented on their own dress habits and comfort regarding different types of Tibetan and non-Tibetan dress. It will be interesting to see what direction *Lhakar* takes in the future. As a kind of cultural call-to-arms, *Lhakar* appears to have facilitated and encouraged sartorial communication between Tibetans living in Tibet and those living in exile. Whereas many youth currently opt for Western contemporary clothing on a daily basis, it will be interesting to see if emerging Tibetan fashions are able to disrupt this. Will these new *chu pa* remain occasion-wear, or will they be adopted into exiles' daily wardrobe? Moreover, as the younger generation begins to build bridges between the Tibetan-, Indian- and perhaps even Euro-American-born Tibetans (cf. Warner 2013), it will be interesting to see how Tibetan fashion develops once freed, as it is beginning to be, from the constraints of conservatism.

6 Objects: creating, curating and destabilising the home

> A house encompasses an array of different materials, from furniture and fixtures to ornaments and decor, collectively creating a dwelling experience that is greater than the sum of its parts. For these are more than mere 'things', they are a collection of appropriated materials, invested with meaning and memory, a material testament of who we are, where we have been, and perhaps even where we are heading. They are what transforms our house into our *home*, a private cosmos that houses our memories of bygone times, as well as our hopes for what is yet to come. They bind our past with our present and our possible futures, thereby framing and reflecting our sense of self. To lose a home is to lose a private museum of memory, identity and creative appropriation.
>
> Hecht 2001: 123 (emphasis in the original)

Hecht describes the role objects play in turning a house into a home, and the role that home has in framing a sense of self and identity. Tibetans who entered exile in the early 1960s and more recent newcomers have lost their original homes in Tibet, and thus their 'private museum[s] of memory, identity and creative appropriation' (cf. Hurdley 2013: 5 and Figueiredo 2015). Despite or perhaps because of this loss, refugees have made efforts to create homely spaces in exile by 'curating' objects within their houses which connote both their pre-exilic past and hoped-for future and in the process make the present and their current dwellings more bearable and 'homely'. This homing process (cf. Brah 1996: 193), and the role objects play in it, is the subject of this chapter.

Anthropological literature on the house and home (e.g. Lévi-Strauss 1982, Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995, Oliver 1987, Bourdieu 1990b) has largely featured stable homes, inhabited by sedentary populations. In such literature, house and home are generally coterminous, i.e. the physical location of dwelling and the locus of felt affiliation are one and the same. The house as a structure also incorporates the family as a social unit (e.g. Lévi-Strauss 1982 on house societies). However, this perspective has

been critiqued as 'anachronistic' since it 'provides little conceptual purchase on a world of contemporary movement' (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 7). In a world of migrants who inhabit multiple places and spaces what is needed instead, Rapport and Dawson argue, is a 'broader understanding … concerned less with the routinisation of space and time than with their fluidity and with individuals' continuous movement through them' (1998: 7). Citing Berger (1984: 64), they propose that 'for a world of travellers … home comes to be found in a routine set of practices, a repetition of habitual interactions, in styles of dress and address, in memories and myths, in stories carried around in one's head' (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 7). In their definition, the authors thus detach home from house, freeing the former for use in the context of mobile populations.

Following Rapport and Dawson, this chapter looks at the homes Tibetan refugees have developed in India and how refugees, who are still caught up in an on-going political struggle and hence remain strongly oriented towards the homeland, conceptualise these homes in exile. I argue that the affective force of the home is derived, at least in part, from its materiality; that engaging with objects in habitual practices is an important way in which homes are created and affirmed. To this end, this chapter looks at objects, their aesthetic qualities (cf. Savaş 2010) and the narratives and meanings surrounding them, to assess how Tibetan exiles employ them to create homely environments.

My approach reflects increasing interdisciplinary interest in the materiality of the home, which has emerged since the early 2000s. Miller's edited collection *Home Possessions* (2001) marks an early stage in this trend in anthropological writing. This volume has been followed by other work by Miller and his doctoral students, for example *The Comfort of Things* (2008), and *Stuff* (2010). In 2004, the launch of the journal *Home Cultures* also created space for scholars from various disciplines to present their research. Authors publishing in this journal bring together a variety of

approaches to the home as a 'material and an affective space, shaped by everyday practices, lived experiences, social relations, memories and emotions' (Blunt 2005: 506). Recent work (e.g. Svašek ed. 2012) has also investigated objects' agency and affectivity to reflect on their role in identity projects.

The constellation of different factors (objects, practices, people etc.) that Blunt identifies as describing 'home' above speaks strongly to the idea of home as an 'assemblage' (cf. Müller 2015, Figueiredo 2015). I touched on Actor-Network-Theory in my introduction to the thesis; assemblage thinking shares the same orientation towards networks and interrelationship. The term 'assemblage' is derived from Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *agencement* (Müller 2015: 28). For these two thinkers, an *agencement* (translated as 'assemblage' in English) 'consists of multiple, heterogeneous parts linked together to form a whole' (Müller 2015: 28). An *agencement* is thus relational, in the sense that meaning is created through the juxtaposition (physical and conceptual) of elements; it is also agentive.[231] Characterised as inconsistent, unstable, fluctuating and heterogeneous, assemblage thinking is a useful way to capture the material and conceptual elements of Tibetan homes, and the objects that *constitute* them. In particular, it positions home-making as activity, reconfiguring it as 'managing resources' with greater or lesser degrees of success 'to create a sense of home and stability' (Figueiredo 2015). I return to this idea in the conclusion. This chapter thus joins academic conversations about the processual nature of home-making (Figueiredo 2015). It also speaks to an emerging body of literature on home-making in adversity, for example the endeavours and practices of refugees and the financially and socially disadvantaged (e.g. Ureta 2007, Motasim and Heynen 2011, Turan 2010, Clarke 2001, Dudley 2010).

[231] As Müller (2015: 28) notes, the English translation, 'assemblage' risks losing this sense of agency, hence my use of the French, here.

Dudley has argued that feeling at home for Karenni refugees entails striving to connect their pre-exilic experiences and their present life. Making the connection helps to 'make sense of the removal from a familiar place and to make the present "here" more bearable' (2010: 9). There is also another temporal dimension at work here – the future. I argue that one of the ways Tibetan refugees, like Karenni refugees, attempt to connect their past, present and potential future - to bridge spatial and temporal distance - is by using objects. As Maruška Svašek has argued, 'Diasporic groups often use material culture to create sites of affective engagement that create and emphasize shared identities and highlight ongoing connections with the homeland' (Svašek 2012: 19). My argument here reflects Susan Stewart's discussion of souvenirs and collections. In *On Longing,* Stewart notes that souvenirs or 'traces of authentic experience' (1993: 135) work with an individual's sense of nostalgia to 'collapse distance into proximity … [contracting] the world in order to expand the personal' (1993: xii). Unlike souvenirs, which Stewart argues are past-oriented, collections presage the future – they are works 'not of nostalgia but of anticipation' (Stewart 1993: 152). As I demonstrate, in the Tibetan refugee context it is not possible to draw so firm a line between souvenirs and collections as Stewart does in the Western context. Singular 'souvenirs' for Tibetan refugees often have significance for the future as well as the past. Moreover, since they are situated firmly in a narrative of collective suffering, they have significance beyond the individual.

Reflecting the capacity of things to 'offer a tangible continuity with a time and place' (Burrell 2012: 64), this chapter is organised according to the headings past, present and future. In each section I discuss the different roles of objects as (respectively) heritage and mementoes; in maintaining cultural practice in the present and in imagining and attempting to bring about a future return to the homeland.

6.1 Past: objects as heritage, objects as mementoes

In his article 'Mementoes as Transitional Objects in Human Displacement' David Parkin (1999) puts forward a theory of objects and the role they play for refugees in flight. He draws upon childhood psychologist Donald Winnicott's theory of transitional objects. For Winnicott (1991), the classic transitional object is a 'comforter', for example a blanket or soft toy. These are items that provide a sense of security to a child as she begins to become independent from her mother. Parkin makes an analogy with refugees, arguing that the possessions carried by refugees during flight become temporary vessels for their owners' traumatised personhood (Parkin 1999). On arrival in the new place, he argues, refugees are able to revive, or extrapolate, their sense of self from these objects, which then become an important conceptual link between their pre-flight past, present state of refugee-hood and potential future (Parkin 1999: 315). In this sense they act in the present as mementoes, reminders of past history and experience in the homeland.

In conversations with me recent arrivals emphasised the practical nature of the belongings they had brought into exile: food for the journey (*tsampa*), money rolled up and sewn into the seams of their clothing, good boots and specialist hiking gear purchased in Lhasa before heading for the border with their guide. Aware of the high chance that they might be intercepted and detained by Chinese border police, they avoided bringing any identifying items or any items of great value, relying for the most part on relatives being able to wire money to them once they reached the safety of Kathmandu. Few of the articles they described seemed to me to fit Parkin's delineation of a 'transitional object'. None of the recently arrived refugees I spoke to were particularly attached to the objects they had brought - they were simply a means to an end. Compared with new arrivals, earlier refugees who entered India in the 1960s had

been more successful in bringing valuables and other meaningful objects with them into exile, however. These fell into two categories: jewellery and religious items.

6.1.1 Jewellery (*gyen cha*)

Jewellery such as necklaces, earrings and hair ornaments made from turquoise, amber, coral, silver and gold, featured prominently among the possessions early arrivals brought into exile. In McLeod Ganj today, however, few refugees still possess these items. Interviewees explained that they had brought these objects with them hoping to keep them, but in the knowledge that they would also be able to exchange them for shelter and provisions, if necessary. While in some cases these items were old, and had considerable significance for their owners as heirlooms, their immediate value for refugees with as yet few sources of support was monetary. Many were forced to sell their jewellery piece by piece, bead by bead, in order to purchase the necessities for survival. McLeod Ganj is situated a considerable distance from the Tibetan border, and most refugees who settled here in the 1960s had migrated from Tibet via northeast India and had spent an initial several months in the reception camps there. Unable to transport much of their wealth over the mountain passes which lead from Tibet into northeast India, by the time they reached McLeod Ganj these refugees had already been forced to sell many of their valuables to sustain themselves. Over the next fifty years of exile, more and more items were sold, hence by the time of my fieldwork, few refugees in McLeod Ganj possessed anything other than memories of the *gyen cha* they had carried out of their homeland.[232]

Unlike Tibetans living in McLeod Ganj, Tibetans living in Ladakh were more able to bring personal items with them when they fled. Most living in Ladakh come

[232] See below on the religious objects refugees brought out of Tibet and subsequently gave into the Dalai Lama's safekeeping. These form the basis of the collection at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala.

from a nomadic background in western Tibet. On deciding to flee the plateau, their families had packed their belongings onto the backs of their yak and sheep and brought them across the nearby border at Demchok (see Fig. 6, p58). Compared to those who fled central Tibet via Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal, who had to support themselves travelling long distances across India before settling, Tibetans living in Ladakh were able to settle more swiftly. Although conditions were difficult, and many were subsequently forced to sell their valuables in order to survive, overall more were able to retain their belongings.

My research assistant Khenrab's family possessed a number of items of jewellery, which had originally been brought from Tibet. These included a number of items specific to their native Kharag (western Tibet). Khenrab's mother[233] had been born in Tibet but married in exile. She recalled how in her village the eldest daughter was given the family jewellery at around the age of fifteen or sixteen, when she became a woman. She herself had been given jewellery around this age and when she later married her Tibetan husband in Ladakh she wore this jewellery for her wedding. In the early years of exile in Ladakh, she commented, women wore their jewellery much more often than they do now. Today, such items are reserved for weddings, for meeting high lamas and for wearing at cultural shows, since they are considered too showy, too heavy and too uncomfortable to wear on a daily basis.

[233] Interviewed 6 May 2013, Choglamsar, Ladakh.



Figure 78 Khenrab's aunt models her Kharag-style *pé rak*. Notice the square front, this differs to contemporary Ladakhi *pé rak* which are peaked (Ahmed 2010; Choglamsar, 11 Jun 2013).



Figure 79 Rear view of *pé rak.* The density of silver and turquoise is indicative of a family's prosperity. Ornaments are added and removed (i.e. exchanged for cash) according to need. Note how on this *pé rak* stones in the lower portion of the headdress are missing. At some point in this *pé rak's* history, these stones were removed and sold (Choglamsar, 11 Jun 2013).

Likewise, Khenrab's aunt [234] also possessed a Kharag-style *pé rak,* [235] a headpiece made from turquoise and silver (Figs. 78 and 79 above). Like Khenrab's mother, she rarely wears this ornament, although sometimes she loans it to the local Tibetan school for their cultural performances.

Besides hair ornaments and headpieces, other women and men had saved earrings and necklaces. *A ma* Chime Dolker,[236] an elderly woman who lived with her husband in Akling settlement, showed me a necklace (she gave a colloquial term for it, *ba su*), which is worn across the chest and fastened onto clothing at both shoulders (see Figs. 80 and 81 below). Her *ba su* is made from silver, coral, turquoise and amber beads, and George VI rupees (most dated to c.1940s, some older). She explained that in her home region (*pa yül*) of Tashigang, which lies close to the border with Ladakh, she wore the *ba su* with her *pé rak* and *gau* (amulet box). Although in Tibet she had worn the *gau* every day, the *ba su* and *pé rak* had been reserved for special occasions. She also lamented that in exile Tibetans no longer wear their *gau* every day. The younger generation are embarrassed, she explained, because they are not sure whether to have faith in *gau* or not; they also fear they will be seen as 'backward' and 'superstitious' if they wear them.[237]

[234] Interviewed 11 Jun 2013, Choglamsar, Ladakh.
[235] Ladakhi women also wear *pé rak* as part of their traditional dress. Contemporary Ladakhi *pé rak* differ in shape to the Tibetan *pé rak* worn in Kharag, as shown to me by women from this region now living in exile. Whereas contemporary Ladakhi *pé rak* are peaked, Kharag *pé rak* are flat-fronted (like older Ladakhi *pé rak*), and are embellished at the front with pendant silver ornaments (often coins). See Ahmed (2010: 190-1; 2002: 29, 95-96) for further information on Ladakhi *pé rak.*
[236] Interviewed 18 Apr 2013, Akling, Ladakh.
[237] See footnote 80, p87.



Figure 80 *Ba su* belonging to *a ma* Chime Dolker. This ornament is missing its lower segment, which Chime Dolker donated to monks completing rituals in Mussoorie (Akling, 18 Apr 2013).



Figure 81 The *ba su* is made from coral, silver and turquoise beads, and is fringed with Indian rupees (Akling, 18 Apr 2013).

Chime Dolker's *ba su* is precious to her; she told me that she would never sell it. She fears that no *ba su* remain in Tibet, and so she is holding hers in trust for when her country regains its independence. Like Chime Dolker, many of the women I spoke to about their jewellery declared it to be precious, and not only in a monetary sense. Besides envisaging its future return to their homeland, a hope which speaks to the role Tibetan material culture plays in political discourse on Tibetan heritage and nation-building (see below), refugees also imagined passing their jewellery on to their children, as their parents had passed it on to them. Remarking that few young Tibetan girls seem to enjoy wearing 'old-style' jewellery today, Khenrab's mother suggested that she might dismantle and reassemble some of her old jewellery in a more contemporary style to give to her children and grandchildren. Many of those without children planned to donate their items to a monastery upon their death, a traditional final destination for valuables. Such objects, I was told, would be incorporated into *stupa* (*chö ten*) (cf. Bentor 1996), generating merit for their owners in their next life. Religious donation occurred prior to death also, for example, Chime Dolker's *ba su* is incomplete. Some years before I spoke with her she had sold the lower strand of the necklace and donated the proceeds to a group of Tibetan Buddhist monks living in Mussoorie, thereby gaining merit and *jin lap* (blessing) for herself.

These items of jewellery were important to the women I spoke with. They signified more than simple wealth (although they had been transacted for cash in times of need) and connected them to memories of life in Tibet, for example, occasions on which they had been worn (coming of age, marriages). They linked these women to a past they had known and people who had passed away. As one woman put it, her necklace contained the blessing of her deceased father and mother (*pa mé jin lap*). They also connected these women to experiences they had had in India, for example, marriages contracted in exile and meetings with high lamas. For those with children,

they hoped that these items would continue to have a future after their death, being worn by succeeding generations of Tibetans and perhaps eventually returning to Tibet itself.

These items function as 'transitional objects' less in Parkin's sense of being vessels for traumatised personhood and more in his alternative sense of a memento, which links refugees' past losses and future social potential (Parkin 1999: 315). Accompanying refugees through the transition into exile, these objects act as referents to a pre-exilic past, reminding refugees of previous occasions on which they wore their jewellery. In this sense, they also function like Stewart's souvenirs – partial, material traces of 'authentic experience' (Stewart 1993: 135). As she writes, souvenirs do not merely recall the past, their 'function is to envelop the present within the past' (Stewart 1993: 151). Objects from Tibet also act in this way, especially when they are used, for example, in cultural performances. Moreover, this wrapping of the past in the present is not only relevant for first-generation refugees. The original owners of these objects imagine passing them onto their children, second and third generations, who may eventually (it is hoped) return them to Tibet. To these children who are born in exile these items act as touchstones to a shared past: precipitates of 're-memory' in Tolia-Kelly's terminology (2004), or 'post-memory' in Hirsch's (1997). Alternatively, they also bear resemblance to Turan's 'objects of legacy' (Turan 2010). These authors describe vicarious forms of remembering, wherein objects belonging to older generations with direct experiences of past homes become vehicles for passing on memories and a sense of identity to younger generations. For example, Tolia-Kelly (2004) describes how sensual encounters with possessions in British Asian homes can trigger the telling of narratives, which are then incorporated into younger generations' sense of self. Likewise, Hirsch describes a process whereby the descendants of Holocaust victims use objects, including photographs, to imagine and remember a

history of trauma which has deeply affected their lives even though they themselves did not directly experience it (Hirsch 1997, cf. C. Harris 2012: 175). In the Palestinian context described by Turan (2010), contemporary objects – the flag, a collection of house keys, a new, embroidered Palestinian dress – are part of the same scheme, and come to stand for a connection with the homeland which is increasingly ideological and attenuated for younger generations living in the diaspora.

Like Stewart's souvenirs, the magic of objects from Tibet lies in the way they are able to link narratives of a shared past and hoped-for future. Stewart argues: 'The souvenir displaces the point of authenticity as it itself becomes the point of origin for narrative' (1993: 136; cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). While for Stewart, the narratives pertaining to personal souvenirs are not generalizable to others (Stewart 1993: 136), the Tibetan case differs. In a sense, the souvenirs of Tibetan refugees rarely belong solely to their owners. I described above how Chime Dolker is holding her *ba su* in trust for future generations of Tibetans since she fears no *ba su* remain in Tibet. In this context, as well as functioning as a personal memento and heirloom for her family, her *ba su* also takes on the role of heritage for the Tibetan people as a whole. Stewart writes: 'We cannot be proud of someone else's souvenir unless the narrative is extended to include our relationship with the object's owner or unless …we transform the souvenir into the collection' (1993: 137). In the Tibetan case we see precisely this: for Chime Dolker, her *ba su* speaks to her personal experience; simultaneously, it also speaks to all Tibetan refugees' experiences of loss, and conversely, their remaining material heritage, however small that might be. These objects, salvaged by refugees from Tibet and cared for in exile, become one of Stewart's 'collections'; although not physically co-present they are conceptually so, and point collectively towards a future in the Tibetan homeland.

6.1.2 Religious items: icons *(ku)*, scroll paintings *(thangka)* and amulets *(gau)*

Religious objects are also significant among the small number of objects brought into exile by refugees. Tibetans, particularly during the onslaught of the Cultural Revolution during which thousands of Buddhist monasteries were destroyed by the Red Army, sought to save precious religious items – icons, *thangka*. Upon arriving in McLeod Ganj, many gave these objects into the Dalai Lama's care (Singh 2010: 138). They were motivated to do this for practical and religious reasons. As one interviewee described, her way of life during the early stages of exile was of necessity itinerant. She and her family were engaged in road-building for a number of years and hence were unable to keep her family's *ku* (icons) in a good way, given that they lived in tents that moved with the progress of the road. Images of deities (*ku*) and *thangka* must be kept in a particular manner, which is respectful to the deity (see below). This includes, at minimum, keeping the image in a high place, clean from dirt both in the literal sense of dust and away from 'dirty' activities (such as eating meat or sexual intercourse). Encamped on a grubby roadside, it was difficult to maintain such respectful practices hence her family gave their *ku* into the keeping of the Dalai Lama. Objects and images given by families who experienced similar difficulties now make up the collection of the museum of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, which was founded in 1970 to house these objects and the Buddhist texts that many refugees also brought with them (see section 4.1.3).

Not all families and individuals gave their precious items into the Dalai Lama's care; some were able to keep them themselves, others kept them in their emerging exile communities. Prior to exile, Tseten Dorje's[238] family lived in Kharag in western Tibet. In the early 1960s, he and his family along with others in his village decided that they must leave and so they packed their belongings onto their few yak and horses, taking as

[238] Interviewed 7 May 2013, Choglamsar, Ladakh.

many valuables and possessions as they could. Tseten Dorje's family and the others in the town prioritised the precious religious and ritual things kept in Kharag *gon pa* (monastery). They had witnessed the destruction wrought on the monasteries in other villages by the advancing Chinese, and sought to save as many of their valuable religious objects as possible before the PLA vanguard reached their own. Together, the families from Kharag succeeded in bringing two Buddha figures into India; both of these now reside in a *gon pa* in Jangthang Nyoma, a nomadic settlement in the borderlands of Ladakh. They also succeeded in rescuing a *ku* of the Lama Chatang, a revered Buddhist teacher from Ronjung in western Tibet. This statue now resides in the community hall of Camp Twelve in Choglamsar. Tseten Dorje considers this *ku* to be particularly precious and powerful. He told me that when it was brought from Jangthang to Camp Twelve in 2001 it was transported on a truck with a hydraulic lift. On arriving in the camp the Tibetans attempted to unload the statue using the lift. This failed repeatedly - only once the *ku* had been removed by hand did the hydraulics begin to work once more. For Tseten Dorje this incident proved the power of the Lama Chatang *ku* – in his view, it was the *ku* that had prevented the lift from working. In general, he continued, *ku* and other items from Tibet (e.g. texts, *thangka*) are highly sacred, much more so than those produced in exile. Those from Tibet do not require the same number of blessings and consecrations (*rap né*, see below) as the latter since, he said, they are much older and have been sanctified through many years of practice and reverence by high lamas and pure-hearted Buddhists. He claimed that Tibetans living in Tibet prior to the arrival of the Chinese were better Buddhists than exiles are today: they were not materialistic and truly respected religious objects. Hence, over their long lifetimes these *ku* accrued much *jin lap* (blessing), which they bestow upon devotees who enter their presence to completed prostrations and make offerings.

Besides bringing *ku* and texts into exile, another common item often brought by refugees were *gau* or amulet boxes (see Fig. 82). These were common possessions in Tibet where, because of their protective function, most individuals wore them daily. In both McLeod Ganj and Ladakh I was shown *gau* that families had brought into exile and cared for ever since. Retired cook (*ma chen*), Palden Tsering, who had worked for many years in Namgyal Monastery in McLeod Ganj, had brought two *gau* into exile. Though he had been forced to sell one he had managed to retain the other, which had special significance to him. He showed me this *gau,* which had belonged to his *a zhang* (maternal uncle), a monk at Namgyal *gon pa* in the Potala Palace in Tibet. Palden explained that at the major Lhasa monasteries of Sera, Drepung, Ganden and Namgyal, which was the monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, high lamas often distributed *gau* to the monks. Since his uncle was a monk in Namgyal Monastery he believes that this *gau,* which contains *tsa tsa* (pressed clay images) of Jigje (the protector deity Yamantaka), may have been given by the Dalai Lama himself. True or not (Palden could not be sure) this ascription nevertheless rendered the *gau* highly sacred and exceptionally powerful in his eyes.

Gau are protective amulets that take the form of a box, often highly decorative, containing sacred substances. Unlike *tsön sung,* which are tubular amulets that also contain sacred substances, most *gau* incorporate a window-like feature through which an image of a deity (e.g. a *tsa tsa* or photo-icon) can be viewed. Both *tsön sung* and *gau* are worn on the body: *gau* hanging from the belt or around the neck, *tsön sung* across the body, underneath clothing. In Tibet prior to the exodus, most Tibetans wore *gau* on a daily basis. Because of their protective function, *gau* were popular among soldiers serving in the Tibetan army, and among the Chushi Gangdrug forces, which engaged the Chinese People's Liberation Army in Kham in 1950-1951 (McGranahan 2010: 123). They are said to be able divert bullets, either away from the body entirely or at least

away from vital organs so that they do not cause serious injury. Palden described to me how Gonpo Tashi Andrugtsang (a.k.a. Andrug Gompo Tashi, McGranahan 2010: 97), leader of the Chushi Gangdrug, survived being shot with thirty bullets because of the *gau* he was wearing. Tibetan soldiers serving in the Indian army today wear *tsön sung* blessed by the Dalai Lama. I was shown one of these but asked to refrain from touching it, since the touch of a woman is thought to negate its protective powers.[239]



Figure 82 Two *gau* belonging to a 78-year old Tibetan man living in Choglamsar, Ladakh. He keeps both on his altar. Inside the *gau* on the left it is possible to discern an image of a high lama (probably the 16th Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, head of the Karma Kagyu sect). The *gau* on the right of the image has been worn on the body – notice the cord looped through the hinges on either side of the object (8 May 2013).

Palden clearly believed in the protective properties of his *gau,* which he considered especially powerful and precious since the Dalai Lama himself had blessed it. Consequently he kept it in a safe, clean and respectful place on his altar. Many

[239] McGranahan notes that the Chushi Gangdrug veterans she talked to claimed that bullets dipped in menstrual blood or tipped with gold negated the protective powers of *tsön sung.* She also describes how soldiers tested their *tsön sung* by putting them around the necks of yak and sheep and firing at them from a distance. Her respondents claimed that although the bullets struck home no animals died. Like Palden, McGranahan's respondents also argued that their *tsön sung* required faith as well as consecration in order to work (McGranahan 2010: 123).

younger generation Tibetans, he noted, did not believe in the power of *gau* and other amulets, however. According to Palden, in order for a *gau* or another amulet to be effective, one needed to believe in it. Interestingly, while as Palden said many younger generation Tibetans publicly avow their disbelief in such 'superstitious' practices (see footnote 80, p87), it is noticeable that they continue to wear *tsön sung* and other small amulets, for example lockets containing images of the Dalai Lama, threads blessed by lamas acquired at teachings and brocade pouches containing written prayers and blessings (see p314-315). In dangerous situations, for example, on long journeys, flights, or in advance of predicted earthquakes and tremors, my young Tibetan friends made especially sure to wear such items and would hold them and pray during the moment of crisis itself.

Superficially, *gau* may appear to play a similar role in exile society to the items of jewellery I discussed above: they are highly decorative, even ornamental, are often handed down in families and have been exchanged by refugees in the years since their flight to fund their survival. However in practice they are valued much more for their religious efficacy than their heirloom status. This is also true for other religious objects such as *thangka* (religious scroll paintings) and *ku* (deity statues). While *gau* are generally blessed, the latter (*thangka* and *ku*) tend to undergo the full ritual of consecration (*rap né*), in which the deity depicted is invited to inhabit its image (Bentor 1996: 292). In the process the image is transformed, effectively becoming a deity, and thence requiring special treatment and respect (Panchen Ötrul Rinpoche 1987; Bentor 1996). Images and other ritual objects can also become sacred through use. Their ritual history (i.e. heritage) of blessings, empowerments, practice and devotion gives them significance and power (e.g. blessing, *jin lap*). Making devotions to such objects, for example, making offerings and doing prostrations, generates merit for the practitioner.

Merit-based practices are particularly popular with elderly Tibetan refugees, many of whom lack education, whether of a monastic or secular/modern variety. More highly educated Tibetans, including monks and nuns, explain that the concept of *jin lap* is a misunderstanding on the part of the older generation, or rather a useful fallacy used to help the less educated gain religious merit. Objects such as these, they explained, are only supports for learning (*ten*) and should in fact be discarded once understanding is achieved. They argue that consecration is actually only a process designed to assist less accomplished Buddhist practitioners in accessing the teachings of the Buddha. It is not necessary for objects to be consecrated in order to derive merit from them, individuals' motivation is more important:

> When done with the proper motivation, the merit acquired from making an offering to a Buddha or a Buddha's statue is the same. Likewise, there is no difference in the merit obtained in making offering and paying respects to a statue made of gold or clay. Consecrating a statue through this ritual has no effect on its preciousness and its status as a source of merit is the same.
>
> Panchen Ötrul Rinpoche 1987: 54

The ritual function of these objects brings them much closer to Gell's definition of agentive 'art works' (Gell 1992, 1998) than it does the mementoes described by, for example, Parkin (1999), Tolia-Kelly (2004), K. Walsh (2006) and Turan (2010). Like Gell's agents, these objects have the power to act upon human beings and the world in general, as in the examples above of the Lama Chatang *ku* in Tseten Dorje's story and the *gau* in Palden Tsering's. The process of their production also involves 'enchantment' (cf. Gell 1992). Like Gell's Trobriand canoe prow, *gau, thangka* and *ku* are products of both technical expertise and 'magic'; they gain their religious force, their 'enchantment', through the intervention of revered lamas who confer power and blessings upon them, thereby raising their aesthetic qualities above the mundane to take on sacred meaning. While the artistry of such objects may be of interest at one level

(and perhaps especially to a Western audience), it is the religious efficacy of such objects which was of greater significance to the Tibetan refugees I spoke with. Empowered by high lamas, such objects are considered to possess and exert the agency of their deity within the world, and hence deserve respect.

In this context, it was their ritual 'heritage' or religious biography and not their mnemonic qualities that made these objects precious. Gell takes the example of kula valuables (Munn 1983), arguing that a Trobriand islander's kula arm-shell or necklace does not:

> …'stand for' someone important, in a symbolic way; to all intents and purposes it *is* an important person in that age, influence, and something like 'wisdom' inheres in its physical substance, in its smooth and patinated surfaces, just as they do in the mind and body of the man of renown to whom it was attached, and from whom it has flown away as an idol of distributed personhood.
>
> Gell 1998: 231 (emphasis in original)

Likewise, Tibetan refugees value old religious objects not for their age or their looks, but for their association with important religious figures. Like the monasteries of Ladakh discussed in Chapter Four, the darkened colour of old *thangka* and the soot accrued on them from the burning of devotional butter lamps, are not valued aesthetically or as indicators of antiquity *per se*. Rather, such signs index the devotional practice and respect shown to them by countless believers down the ages. Since objects are considered to accrue power through practice, such signs indicate the quality and number of blessings that can be derived from them.

The objects brought by Tibetans from Tibet have several interlocking roles to play. As mementoes, these objects link first generation refugees directly to past experiences in Tibet. For second-generation Tibetan refugees, these objects play the role of 'heritage'. Thus for Tibetans born in India, they signify not specific instances in the past, but rather a collective history of dispossession; indeed, their scarcity is the source

of their potency (cf. Stewart 1993: 135-136). Tibetan material culture has undergone a series of traumas and dislocations. Firstly in the 1950s and later during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), personal wealth (including jewellery) and the wealth and objects of faith belonging to monasteries were seized and destroyed by the invading Chinese PLA and later the Red Guard. The CTA's Department of Information and International Relations records that 90% of the region's 6,000 monasteries were destroyed (Singh 2010: 135). Following this period of massive, nationwide destruction, Tibetan artefacts have been removed from the homeland in a slower process of attrition through, for example, the illicit international art trade, with Chinese officials rumoured to be complicit in the process (Singh 2010: 135, 145). These objects have since entered private collections and museums across the world, including in Europe and North America (Harris 2012: 186). Even in exile, objects salvaged by refugees have gradually been sold as exiles are forced to sacrifice their material heritage in order to fund their continued survival. Those few items that remain either with their owners or in the care of the LTWA museum, for example, thus index the absence of thousands of others. This ever-shrinking heritage bears an increasing burden of significance. As remnants of an independent nation and unique culture, these objects are politically important. Gifted to the Dalai Lama, 'these artefacts do not just find physical safety; they find their correct location in the world' (Singh 2010: 138). As the 'embodiment' of the Tibetan nation, its erstwhile temporal and spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama is the logical guardian for Tibet's material and spiritual heritage: 'By leaving Chinese-occupied Tibet, by coming into the care of the Dalai Lama, these objects are leaving an inauthentic homeland for an authentic *lack* of one' (Singh 2010: 138, emphasis in original). The construction of a museum (a novel invention in the Tibetan context since museums in the contemporary sense did not exist on the Tibetan plateau prior to the Chinese takeover) speaks not only to an 'indigenous' desire to provide safe and respectful storage for precious religious

relics, but also to current Tibetan political goals. Museum-building might be described as a 'rite of nationhood' (Singh 2010: 138, see below); the LTWA museum, especially after its recent renovation (it re-opened in 2014), speaks much more to an external, international audience in its style of display and representation of Tibetan material culture than to an internal Tibetan one. Aimed at drawing in foreign visitors, this museum represents the Tibetan nation through its culture, which the Dalai Lama has consistently asserted is part of 'the common heritage of mankind'.[240] This museum, like the Tibet Museum discussed later in this chapter, thus co-opts Tibetan material culture into political praxis, using its links to the past to imagine and agitate for a better future for Tibetans in the homeland. The Library museum makes its point eloquently, in paradox: it is a museum in and of exile. While the objects in its collection may be under the protection of the current Dalai Lama, the 'embodiment' of the Tibetan nation (Singh 2010: 138), they nonetheless remain on Indian soil. Like the Tibetan people, the museum's artefacts are suspended between the lost homeland and a future return or repatriation to a Tibet that does not yet exist (Singh 2010).

6.2 Present: agency and aesthetics, practising Tibetanness in exile

In her analysis of objects belonging to diasporic Palestinians Turan discusses Parkin's (1999) use of Winnicott's theory of 'transitional objects' (Winnicott 1991), arguing that objects have an important role to play in easing displaced people's transition between locations (Turan 2010: 46). Turan goes further than Parkin however, and applies Winnicott's idea of a 'facilitating environment' (Winnicott 2001), in which she describes how objects handed down over generations become 'symbols of one's collective group' and 'provide a sheltering and nurturing environment' which promotes

[240] Dalai Lama 1971, speech made at the founding ceremony of the LTWA; http://www.ltwa.net/library/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49:inauguration&catid=20:default [accessed 24 Jun 2015].

the ‘continuity of personal experience’ (Turan 2010: 46). Turan’s description of a ‘facilitating environment’ bears strong resemblance to the material-focused concept of home that I develop in this thesis (cf. Miller 2008). It is not only heirlooms or objects originating prior to the exodus that play this role, however. Tibetan refugees, who possess only a few objects that predate their exile, have had to recreate their material culture from scratch. This section looks at how these objects are used by refugees in home-making practices - how they can be used to turn a house into a home.

For most of the refugees I spoke with, feeling ‘at home’, with its connotations of belonging, ownership and control, was not something they considered fully achievable in exile. Nonetheless many attempted to make their living spaces more ‘homely’, recognisable and comfortable (cf. Dudley 2010: 9). It is this dilemma which lies at the heart of Tibetan refugees’ experience of exile in the Indian subcontinent and which is expressed in their interactions with material culture. India is *not* home by definition; it can *never be* home. Rather, it is a place of (not so) temporary rest (cf. Anand 2002: 19); both a locus and an emotional state of perpetual awaiting. This tension, between permanence and impermanence, is played out in the material culture of the home.

In their work with internally displaced Sudanese refugees (IDPs), Motasim and Heynen (2011) emphasise the importance of portable material culture for their subjects, arguing that:

> ‘Home’ in such a case might no longer be the stable stationary physical manifestation that is rooted concretely to a specific ‘place’ but rather the ‘mobile symbolic habitat’ that can be taken to the next place on the next journey.
>
> Motasim and Heynen 2011: 44

This insight is highly applicable to Tibetan refugees. I argue that ‘home’ in India is more a process than a place for Tibetan refugees who, like Sudanese IDPs, are continually engaged in creating and negotiating their material environment, making

improvements to it, shaping it into somewhere which is recognisable, bearable and liveable but at the same time avoiding permanent settlement (see Chapter Four). 'Home possessions' (Miller 2001) play an important role in this: as a 'mobile symbolic habitat' (Motasim and Heynen 2011: 44), they are used by Tibetan refugees to ameliorate the environments in which they find themselves. Their portability is key; as I discussed in Chapter Four, most refugees do not (cannot or prefer not to) invest in permanent housing in India and instead live an itinerant lifestyle moving between rented rooms and different Tibetan settlements following relatives and job opportunities. For many today, moreover, the ultimate goal is to move abroad. In this context of extreme mobility and flux, portable possessions play an important role in shaping each new place as familiar and recognisable and in helping refugees maintain a more stable sense of self and identity.

6.2.1 Handicrafts

One important way in which refugees Tibetanise their 'homes' is through soft-furnishings such as carpets and wall hangings. Since the early years of exile, the production of 'handicrafts', including carpets but also tailoring (of clothing and wall hangings e.g. *go yöl* and *sham bu*), woodcarving, metalwork, and *thangka*-painting, has been emphasised in the Tibetan communities of the Indian subcontinent. Refugees in the emerging settlements established the first handicraft centres independently of the exiled government.[241] By 1969, ten years after the initial exodus, seven centres had been established in: Darjeeling, Dalhousie, Kalimpong, Shimla, Dehra Dun and Dharamshala (Anon. 1969). By 1980, a government publication counts almost a dozen centres, excluding smaller branch centres (Anon. 1981). The CTA publications give two reasons

[241] The exiled Tibetan government and the Dalai Lama also gave encouragement, however. The handicraft centre in Dalhousie was established at the behest of the Indian government. See section 1.2 and comments by the Dalai Lama on p6.

for the establishment of the centres: providing income for refugees, and perpetuating traditional craft traditions threatened with extinction inside Tibet (Anon. 1969: 103, Anon. 1981: 77). They might have added a third reason, for the creation of carpets, wall hangings, clothing, *ku* (figurines), *go yöl* etc. has proved to be important in facilitating the Tibetanisation of refugees' houses.

The handicraft centre in McLeod Ganj was an early initiative of the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA).[242] This centre was established in 1963 under the name 'Tibetan Women's Co-operative Association' with the aim of providing work and assistance to Tibetan women, especially those who were poor, elderly and infirm. By 1968, the centre had grown to form a small, residential community of fifty-three workers, forty-six of whom worked on carpet manufacture. The remainder were (cloth) weavers, a single tailor and a single carpenter. Today, the centre operates under the name: 'Tibetan Handicraft Production-cum-Sales Co-operative Society', and produces a variety of different goods, although carpet weaving continues to be its most prominent activity.

The carpet industry is an important source of revenue and employment for Tibetan refugees in India and especially in Nepal. In the late 1990s, the Tibetan carpet industry employed around 10,000 workers in India and 300,000 in Nepal (in Nepal, the majority are non-Tibetans, however). Since carpet weaving is a secular art, it is not subject to the same restrictions that surround *thangka* painting, for example. As such, Tibetan carpet manufacturers have been more able to respond to market demand by scaling up production and modifying designs and materials. Thus although Tibetan carpets are marketed to tourists and others under the exotic 'brand' of Tibet and are included within discourse about the preservation of 'authentic' Tibetan crafts, like other

[242] Tashi Tsering *pers. comm.*; cf. http://tibetanwomen.org/history/ [accessed 19 Apr 2015]. McGuckin reports that it was established with a grant from the Dalai Lama and a loan from the CTA (McGuckin 1997: 297).

aspects of Tibetan material culture discussed in this thesis they have also undergone change and adaptation in exile.

There is little documentation available for the early history of Tibetan carpet making. McGuckin writes that the earliest photographs of Tibetan carpets, which date to the beginning of the 20th century, show simple, woven rugs with abstract designs; medallion designs are also visible in early samples of Tibetan carpets. During the later 20th century there is a trend towards depicting animal motifs, for example, snow lions, garudas, phoenixes and dragons. Chemical dyes, which became available in Tibet in the early-mid 20th century, grew in popularity among Tibetans (and remain popular in exile), although a contradictory trend for vegetable dyes has also emerged since the exodus in response to foreign consumers' desire for 'authentic', 'natural' products (McGuckin 1997: 302-303).

As McGuckin notes, the incentive to preserve Tibetan craft traditions in the face of 'onslaughts' from the Chinese state has permeated the 'analysis – and marketing – of Tibetan arts in academic and popular discourse' (McGuckin 1997: 292). He refers to a series of exchanges in the early 1980s in the *Tibetan Review* on the derivation of Tibetan carpet patterns and designs and the 'authenticity' of the carpets produced in exile (cf. Spooner 1986). Were patterns and designs, such as the medallion (*khor lo*), innovated by Tibetans? Do such designs indicate Central Asian, even Chinese influence? What about the carpets produced in exile today, can they be considered 'authentically' Tibetan?

Like McGuckin, I am not interested in attempting to pick apart the so-called 'authentic' from the 'spurious' (cf. Spooner 1986); Tibetan carpet design, like other elements of exilic material culture discussed elsewhere in this thesis, can be more usefully be analysed as an 'invented tradition' which emerged in a climate of political and social precarity (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, McGuckin 1997: 307). I am more

interested, here, in Tibetan perceptions and uses of carpets in the refugee settlements of India.

In Ladakh, it was common for Tibetan women to hand-weave carpets in their homes using a backstrap loom, (cf. Ahmed 2002: 83-86; see Fig. 60, p203). Women sourced un-dyed yak wool from family and friends living in the Jangthang region, which they then spun and wove into three narrow panels, stitching them together to form rugs. They combined yak wool in greys, browns and beiges with brightly coloured, acrylic yarn bought from the market in Leh to create designs around the edges and in the centre of rugs. Because of its comparative thinness, acrylic yarns must be woven doubled. Women weavers I spoke with pointed out popular patterns including: *gya nak chak ri*, which can be translated as 'Chinese chain' or the 'Great Wall of China', a chain or key pattern often produced around the edges of carpets; and *khor lo*, or 'circle', a knotted medallion design usually used singly or in threes in the centre of rugs (cf. Ahmed 2002: 67-68, 78).



Figure 83 Carpets made and used by a Tibetan family living in Akling settlement. Notice the use of acrylic yarns, particularly the chain pattern in pink; this pattern is referred to as *gya nak chak ri* or Chinese chain/Great Wall of China. The circular patterns in the centre of the carpet are referred to as *khor lo* meaning circle (Akling, 24 Apr 2013).



Figure 84 Another carpet in use in the same family. Notice the use of un-dyed (white) yak wool in combination with coloured, acrylic wool (Akling, 24 Apr 2013).

The carpets produced by the McLeod Ganj *nyam lé* (cooperative, literally 'to work together') are very different in design, materials and quality to those made by women on backstrap looms in their homes in Ladakh. Firstly, they are larger (a standard carpet is 3ft by 6ft); this is made possible by the upright loom on which weavers work. They are also made using a wider variety of colours and designs, and from 100% wool yarns (often with imported New Zealand wool). These carpets are also more expensive (a 3ft by 6ft carpet costs 8,000rs or c. £85), and are hence beyond the means of many refugees, though not all – they featured in a significant number of Tibetan homes in McLeod Ganj. Those who could not afford such fine quality carpets substituted Tibetan-made ones for thinner, machine-made, acrylic 'Kashmiri' carpets, which conform to a similar aesthetic but are significantly cheaper. Refugees used these on the floor but also, especially, atop beds, which doubled as couches during the day.



Figure 85 Carpets similar to those made in the McLeod Ganj *nyam lé* used for seating in a Tibetan home in McLeod Ganj (16 Feb 2013).

Whether or not carpet designs, materials and production techniques can be historically substantiated is largely immaterial to my point, which is that, for refugees, the sensory and aesthetic qualities of carpets and the uses they are put to play a more important role. Refugees I spoke with regarded the carpets produced by the *nyam lé* (cooperative) as uncomplicatedly Tibetan in origin and style. Moreover, refugees continued to use these in exile has they had previously in Tibet. As the author of a 1969 CTA publication states, carpets:

> …were owned by practically all Tibetan families. Even the poorest families owned at least one carpet. Most families had carpets of different qualities for different occasions. These came in various shapes and sizes – chair rugs, floor carpets, bed rugs etc. They were produced in homes in all parts of Tibet, the main producing centre, however, being at Gyantse, aobut [sic] 130 miles west of Lhasa. These carpets were sold in various parts of Tibet where carpet weaving was less wiespread [sic], and in India.
>
> Anon. 1969: 104

Refugees, in the main, used carpets to cover the mattresses and Indian bedsteads ubiquitous in the refugee settlements. Used for sleep at night, during the day beds were covered and used for seating; indeed the 3ft by 6ft carpet size is designed specifically to fit this bed frame (McGuckin 1997: 294). Carpet production in exile thus furthers the continuation of Tibetan cultural practices and *habitus* outside the homeland. Further innovations have also been made: the McLeod Ganj *nyam lé,* besides selling bed-sized carpets also sells bed sheets bearing the same designs and patterns as Tibetan carpets. These sheets can be seen in refugees' houses all over McLeod Ganj, including in tourist hotels and hostels. A young female friend of mine also purchased some during my stay as a gift for her boyfriend who had recently departed India for New York to take up a scholarship to a US university. As she put it, she wanted to give him something he could use to remind him of home.

The *nyam lé* also produced a number of other items, which refugees used extensively to Tibetanise the interiors of their homes. These include, for example, the *go yöl* (door hangings), which I discussed in Chapter Four, also *sham bu* that are hung around the eaves of the house, usually outside, though some have also begun to hang them inside in an attempt to protect them from McLeod Ganj's heavy monsoon. In some cases, refugees have chosen simply to paint these on to house interiors and exteriors.

The strong aesthetic modification of house interiors was notable, especially in contrast to the lack of attention paid to the exteriors of Tibetan houses (see Chapter Four). Notably, such modifications are portable; they can be removed and re-hung/re-placed in each house refugees move to, they can even be shipped abroad and potentially taken back to Tibet. It is the portability of these objects that makes them attractive to refugees, I argue, and hence has resulted in the greater Tibetanisation of interiors as opposed to immoveable exteriors (cf. Motasim and Heynen 2011). In an uncertain

world, in which permanent housing can be difficult to acquire and retain, and in which opportunities to emigrate westwards or to take up a job in another Tibetan community can arise at a moment's notice, refugees must remain flexible and able to shift locations quickly. Objects such as carpets, bed sheets, *go yöl* and *sham bu* can be transported easily. Carpets especially promote the continuation of embodied, aesthetic practices, *habitus,* and hence the feeling of being 'at home'.

6.2.2 Shrines (*chö shom*)

Besides room furnishings, shrines were also important aesthetic elements of the houses refugees lived in. Almost every Tibetan house I visited throughout the course of my fieldwork possessed a shrine. These varied in size, from a single *gau* set on a table behind a single butter lamp (*chö mé*) to elaborately carved and painted altars complete with brass, silver and even gold *ku* and painted *thangka*. Most, however, occupied a middle-ground between these extremes, containing posters and photographs of *thangka*, photo-icons of the Dalai Lama, Karmapa and other important lamas, prayer books printed and bound in the Western typographic style, plastic flowers, electric lights and so forth. However, it is not only the aesthetic qualities of shrines that render them crucial in Tibetans' home-making projects. The religious and ritual practices Tibetan refugees conduct in relation to their shrines play an important role in recreating a familiar, 'homely' environment. Writing about the mantelpieces of Cardiff residents, Rachel Hurdley argues that 'Thinking closely about the materialisation of [mantelpieces], through, for example, the display of photographs, gifts or souvenirs, is a way of understanding culture – and memory – as small repeated actions....' (Hurdley 2013: 12). Hurdley thus highlights the importance of practice, or *habitus,* in shaping material expressions (mantelpiece displays) of culture and memory (Bourdieu 1990a).

Burrell's ethnography of Polish migrants' Christmases in the UK elaborates the point from the perpective of ritual and tradition, showing that such 'repeated actions' have an important role to play in creating a sense of continuity for migrants (cf. Dudley 2010: 142-143). She argues, 'Through the regular upholding of Christmas traditions, societies are able to continually form and reform strong collective bonds, rooted in usable recognized pasts' (Burrell 2012: 55). Likewise, I suggest the creation of shrines and the religious and ritual practice carried out in them plays a significant role in Tibetan refugees' home-making. In what follows, I examine several of the altars I encountered in my field research, showing how residents' creation and curation of them helped them to establish a sense of 'homeliness'.

Jangchub[243] lives with his cousin-brother[244] in 'Amdo Village' in McLeod Ganj. They share a minute two-room apartment with a small indoor bathroom and a cupboard-kitchen. The front room is taken up with Jangchub's brother's electrical gear, odds and ends of defunct televisions, cables and plugs, ready to be cannibalised to mend broken objects. They both live and sleep in the second room, which contains two single beds, shelves for their clothing and other belongings, a stereo and a small shrine. Used for sleep at night these beds (as in most exile Tibetan houses) are covered with carpets and

[243] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 10 Nov 2012.

[244] The English phrase 'cousin-brother' is widely used in my field sites to denote blood relations of roughly of the same age/generation as the speaker (I knew some individuals who referred to non-blood relations as 'cousin-brothers' also, however). It is used to translate the Tibetan term *pün jar,* which is linked to terms for sibling relationships in polygamous marriages described by anthropologists of other ethnic Tibetan communities in the Himalayas. E.g. Levine (1988), writing about the Nyinba, an ethnically Tibetan group resident in northwest Nepal, records the term *pün*, which is used to denote all the children of a single, polygamous marriage irrespective of who their biological parents were. At the time of Levine's research polygamous marriages were common in Nyinba communities. These emphasised the marriage of a group of brothers to either a single woman or several women (often sisters) (fraternal polyandry, or fraternal/sororal polygynandry). The children of a single marriage, regardless of who their birth/genetic parents were, were regarded as equal *pün,* or siblings (Levine 1988: 7, 147). Polygamous marriage (most often fraternal polyandry – marriage of several brothers to one woman) was common in Tibet prior to the Chinese takeover (Goldstein 1986, 1988, 1989b). It is rarely practised in exile, however. Instead of being used for siblings of a single marriage, in my field sites the term *pün jar* is used for the close (often blood) relatives one was raised with (or knowing of, in the case of families split between Tibet and India) - in English terminology, sisters, brothers and cousins. Interestingly, Levine uses the English phrase 'household siblings' (Levine 1988: 7) as a shorthand translation for *pün* in the Nyinba context; this appears to be the literal contemporary usage among Tibetans in my field sites, in that *pün jar* today is used as a generic term for similar-age blood relations raised in the same household.

used as couches during the day. A curtain separates the bed/sitting-room from the kitchen, and there is a wooden door that leads from this room to the bathroom.

Jangchub was one of my neighbours; we met through his aunt, a nun at one of the nearby nunneries, who approached me as a potential English teacher for her nephew. Jangchub himself was born in Kham, Tibet, and only arrived in exile around a decade ago. In Tibet he had been a monk, and he was enrolled for some time in a Tibetan monastery in South India before he disrobed and came to McLeod Ganj. Jangchub's small shrine is quite typical of recent refugees', though as a former monk he was embarrassed by its simplicity. It is comprised of an assortment of objects, collected from pilgrimages, purchased at Indian roadside stalls or received as gifts. In the small apartment, which is stuffed with electrical goods, Jangchub had commandeered the flat surface on top of an old, defunct stereo for his altar. Atop this he had placed: an image of the 10th Panchen Lama (part of an award for a quiz held on the Panchen Lama's birthday); a common poster image of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, which is often to be found dangling from the rear-view mirrors of McLeod Ganj's taxi drivers; and a photograph of a statue of the same Buddha from the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhgaya, in the state of Bihar (India), the site of the Buddha's enlightenment. The last image is especially common in new arrivals' shrines since the Dalai Lama gives this image to newcomers when they receive their audience with him after arriving in India; this is how Jangchub acquired the image. Behind this image (just visible in the photograph below) was a photograph of Jangchub's relative's teacher standing in front of the Potala Palace in Lhasa. In front of the stereo Jangchub had placed a printed image of the goddess Dolma (Green Tara), a small statue of the Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya that he purchased while on pilgrimage there, and a book of prayers, the front cover of which is adorned with a photograph of the Dalai Lama. Inside the prayer book, and in another book placed on the right hand side of the altar, Jangchub kept images of his teachers in

Tibet and at his monastery in South India, which he viewed every morning while completing prayers. Other items, offerings of plastic flowers and a saffron-coloured *kha tak* (blessing scarf), as well as less sacred ephemera of everyday life (pills, face cream, stationery) had also made their way into the display. As an obvious focal point in a cluttered room Jangchub's altar, like those of other refugees, doubled as a convenient location for storing easily overlooked items (cf. Hurdley 2013: 102).

Jangchub's slightly haphazard approach to his altar exemplifies the attitudes and practices of many other refugees in McLeod Ganj and elsewhere in India. He cannot afford to purchase expensive *ku*, *thangka* or other religious objects, and cannot afford to commission a carved wooden altar, which, anyway, he has no space for. Instead he makes do with the sacred images which readily come his way: those available on market stalls, photographs of teachers and gifts from teachings and audiences given by high lamas. None of the objects on his altar have been consecrated, yet he respects them with body, mind and soul and uses them in his religious practice. For example, most mornings he rises and fills seven small bowls with water and places them atop the adjacent (and also defunct) television, which serves as a second altar. He completes prayers, and views the photographs of his teachers, which he bought in the small shop belonging to his monastery in South India. These he keeps safely inside his prayer book, touching the image of each to his forehead. In this way, he demonstrates respect for them and their learning and generates merit for himself.



Figure 86 Jangchub's shrine (McLeod Ganj, 10 Nov 2012).

In art historical literature, shrines are rarely discussed as wholes: rather they tend to be dissected to highlight a few significant pieces of 'art'. In Jangchub's shrine, there are no 'artworks', yet the shrine has meaning greater than the sum of its parts. As Melissa Kerin (2013) has noted, mass produced imagery, photo-icons and other devotional items such as *kha tak,* cash and plastic flowers, work together 'to creat[e] both a haptic and optic experience' (2013: 287; cf. Hurdley 2013:103 on the importance of the overall effect or 'look' of a mantelpiece to her respondents in Cardiff). Discussing a Tibetan Buddhist shrine in Nako village, Kinnaur (Himachal Pradesh, India), she notes:

> The devotee enters the dark, cave-like environment and is immediately enveloped by layers of imagery that work together, not to express a clear iconographic scheme, but rather to create a sacred space, one that is rich with imagery and offerings from the community. Consequently, the uniqueness of a single piece is tempered when seen in relation to the whole shrine space.
>
> Kerin 2013: 287

Kerin's paper raises several important points in relation to my discussion. Firstly, the shrines of Tibetan Buddhists should be treated as processual assemblages (cf. Hurdley 2013: 7, 103; Müller 2015; Figueiredo 2015). As Jangchub's example highlights, shrines are compiled serendipitously, from 'found objects', gifts and other sacra (and non-sacra) encountered and used in daily life. Individually, some objects have significance, but it is the relationships created between juxtaposed objects that create meaning and value. Collectively these render the shrine more significant than the sum of its parts. For example, in exile photographs of the Karmapa (head of the Karma Kagyu sect) were often placed adjacent to those of the Dalai Lama (Gelugpa sect). Images which showed them in the same frame were particularly popular, reflecting Pinney's concept of 'proximal empowerment' in which devotees place images of themselves or family in the same 'frame' (either literally in the same picture frame, i.e. inserted in or behind the glass; or in the same visual field i.e. by taking photographs in front of backdrops painted with images of deities) in order to gain value by association (Pinney 1997: 170-171). In this case, selecting an image in which the Dalai Lama and Karmapa appear together doubles the blessings that can be received from the image (Harris 2004: 143), and moreover asserts an important link between the two as the supreme heads of two major Buddhist sects (cf. Harris 2012: 140). Likewise, shrines are organised devotionally, not according to a concept of 'art'. In other words, special prominence is not given to objects such as *thangka* or *ku* on the grounds of their 'artistry' (cf. Kerin 2013: 290; cf. Harris 2012), rather they are elevated (literally)

because they have undergone consecration (*rap né*) and become the abode of gods. In the main, however, the different media, *thangka, ku,* photo-icons (*ku par*) and *kha tak,* are happily intermixed; the overall effect is of radiating 'blessings'.

Many refugees in McLeod Ganj possess makeshift altars like Jangchub's, with most constructing them in the concrete recesses ubiquitous to the town's houses. Refugees who have resided in McLeod Ganj for longer periods of time tend to possess more elaborate shrines (though these are still amassed in the same, piecemeal way). Topden is a goldsmith and local businessman. As I discussed above (see p117-118), he and his family arrived in McLeod Ganj during the early 1960s; they have since prospered and now own several properties. His family's shrine, when I visited in early 2013, was housed in a separate room on the upper levels. Compared to many refugees' it was highly elaborate and contained *ku* and *thangka.* At the time it was also arrayed with offerings for *lo sar,*[245] Tibetan New Year (11th Feb 2013, in the Western calendar that year). Recently, Topden had employed two Ladakhi wood carvers to create a new, more elaborate altar from Burmese teak. As a goldsmith (*ser zo/ser zowa*), he possesses advanced knowledge of religious motifs and symbols, which are common to both Tibetan metal- and woodwork. He has used this knowledge to work with the Ladakhi duo he hired, producing a highly elaborate carved shrine. His motivations for this project are multiple: as a Buddhist, such an act of sponsorship will accrue merit, hence the project is an act of devotion. He also hopes that the project will serve the future of Tibetan culture. He explained to me that he is concerned that Tibetan crafts skills are dying out, both in exile and on the Tibetan plateau and so he hopes that this shrine can act as an example to future carvers of fine Tibetan work (notably he employed Ladakhi

[245] *Lo sar* offerings include dried and fresh fruits, rice, nuts, salt, butter, tea and alcohol (in McLeod Ganj I saw sealed bottles of whisky and Kingfisher beer wrapped in *kha tak* placed on altars). The *dro so ché mar*, a wooden dish divided in two contains offerings of barley grains on one side (I also saw rice) and *ché mar,* a mixture of ground *tsampa*, butter and sugar, on the other. There is also a pot of living wheatgrass and the *der kha*, a stacked offering of *kha zé,* deep-fried dough biscuits.

not Tibetan carvers, however; in Ladakh Tibetan Buddhist woodworking traditions remain strong). To this end, he is considering donating it to the Dalai Lama to ensure it is held in trust for future generations of Tibetans.[246]

Traditionally, shrines in Tibetan houses would be located on the upper (often uppermost) floor, in a separate room. This relates to Buddhist vertical logic, in which the head is considered sacred and the lower body parts polluting - a logic that is applied equally to the house as it is the body (Dollfus 1989: 98-103). However, most Tibetans living in McLeod Ganj were forced, by spatial constraints, to construct their shrines within their main living space, where cooking, eating, sitting and sleeping are often combined, on the same level as other rooms (if they possessed them). As several people explained to me, it is considered deeply disrespectful, and even dangerous to do certain (polluting) activities in the presence of a shrine - for example, eating meat, drinking alcohol, smoking, sexual acts, etc. (Harris 2004: 143-144). Those who kept their shrines in their main living space explained they had no choice given the cramped living conditions, and justified their actions according to the Buddhist concept of motivation (i.e. although the situation was far from ideal, it was their motivation - their devotion - which mattered, as long as this was pure they would not suffer for their actions). Nonetheless, many remained uncomfortable about the compromise, installing curtains and using the covers on their *thangka* to shield deities (and thus protect themselves) when disrespectful activities could not be avoided. Dispensing with their shrine altogether, however, was not a step any I met had taken.

[246] Interviewed 16 Dec 2013, McLeod Ganj.



Figure 87 The new shrine that Topden has commissioned. Notice the pattern of recessed squares. This design is known by the name *chö tsek*, meaning *dharma* stack (referring to stacks of religious scriptures, block books or *pé cha*, which it resembles) (Gyatsho 1979: 37). Indeed, Topden referred to this pattern as the *pé cha* design. Within this pattern is a repeating lotus design or *pé ma* (McLeod Ganj, 16 Feb 2013).



Figure 88 Highly decorative surrounds are being carved separately and will be added to the basic structure of the shrine. This panel, which depicts lotus flowers and a black-necked crane, will be added to the top of the shrine. To the left of the image part of the Buddhist symbol of deer and *dharmachakra* is visible. This symbol refers to the first teaching of the Buddha (known as the first turning of the wheel of *dharma,* or wheel of law) at the deer park in Sarnath (Varanasi, India). In Tibetan the *dharmachakra* is translated *chö kyi khor lo* (McLeod Ganj, 16 Feb 2013).

Tibetans living in Ladakh were luckier in this respect. On the flat land in the Leh settlements of Choglamsar and Akling families are generally allocated ample space, and hence are able to construct several 'rooms' (see section 2.3). Since most I spoke with were under the impression that Tibetans are not permitted to build two-storey houses (see p188-189), most had constructed a shrine at ground level (some raised the floor using wooden planking in a compromise). Although given over to a whole separate room, the shrines of Ladakh-based Tibetans nonetheless bore strong similarities to those constructed by Tibetans in McLeod Ganj.

Kelsang Jigme and his wife (see above p206) live in Akling settlement nearby Leh. Their compound comprises a handful of rooms, and a small plot in which they grow vegetables under plastic sheeting. Their shrine takes up one entire room, on average slightly larger than most Ladakh-based Tibetans'. In pride of place, in the centre of the display, is an elaborately carved and painted altar cabinet. Inside Kelsang had placed several *ku,* including one of Je Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelugpa school of Buddhism (top centre). On the lower level (left to right) Kelsang had placed icons of Guru Rinpoche, the Buddha Shakyamuni, Chenrezig (Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokiteshvara), and a *nam gyel chö ten*. These figures were all acquired in exile, purchased while on pilgrimage in Nepal and Bodhgaya and while travelling through Delhi. Also prominent on Kelsang's altar are images of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Several are tucked into the front of the glass cabinets in the centre and to the left; more feature on the walls to the left and right of the altar. Most prominent is a large, framed colour image, hung on the right hand side of the altar. According to those I spoke to, this image is favoured among exiles for its clarity, colour and frontal perspective. The Dalai Lama's image is used in a variety of different ways by exiles, for example, in personal shrines, on monastic thrones (in lieu of or awaiting his physical presence), as protection in vehicles, on political marches and at rallies (C. Harris 2001,

2004). These images or photo-icons (C. Harris 2001) are widely available and can be purchased from Indian stalls, Tibetan newsagents and monasteries. They are also regularly distributed during teachings given by high lamas, as well as exchanged between individuals - a practice that accrues merit for both donor and recipient (C. Harris 2004: 142-143). As my research assistant, Khenrab, explained to me, the best images of His Holiness enable one to see both of his eyes clearly; colour is also considered 'more attractive', he added.

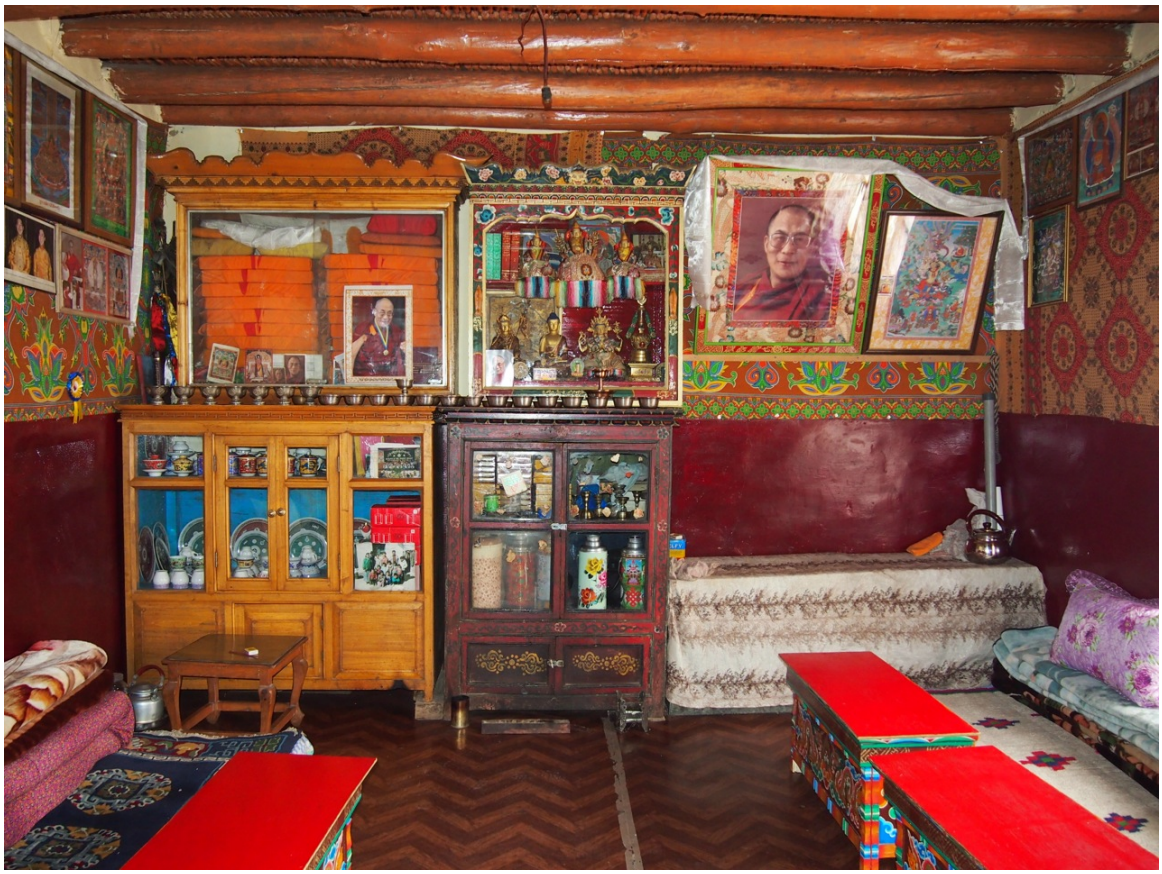


Figure 89 Kelsang's *cho khang*. Notice the large, framed, colour image of the Dalai Lama to the right of the central cabinet containing *ku* (deity figurines). Also visible are three carved and brightly painted tables that were made locally by Ladakhi woodcarvers. Ladakhi and Tibetan styles of woodcarving are very similar. This kind of furniture is comparatively easy to acquire in Ladakh compared to McLeod Ganj, and many Tibetan homes in Ladakh possess similar items (Akling, 16 Apr 2013).

The image of the Dalai Lama carries a 'heavy burden of representation' (C. Harris 2010: 185; 2004). First and foremost, as a *tulku*, a reincarnation of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, the Dalai Lama and his image are sources of great blessing.

Possessing, caring for and displaying devotion towards such images generates merit. While any photograph of the Dalai Lama (or other religious leaders) is considered precious, some are considered better photographs than others. Harris argues that photo-icons of religious leaders are considered suitable substitutes for scroll-paintings, *thangka* (e.g. of the deities they incarnate), because their method of production shares similarities with traditional methods. In *thangka* painting and the creation of *ku* (figures), great importance is placed upon the accuracy of representation, since using a misshapen image in religious practices is considered harmful. Correctness of form is achieved by adhering closely to iconometric rules. A photograph, like carefully reproduced iconometry, or pressed clay (stamped) images of the Buddha (*tsa tsa*), is indexical, hence there is no risk that an 'incorrect' image will be produced (C. Harris 2001: 188-189). Even so, some photo-icons are more highly valued than others. As Khenrab explained, the 'best' images of His Holiness the Dalai Lama are those in which his facial features are clear, particularly in which both eyes can be seen (i.e. not in profile). This is related to the importance of the eyes in conferring blessing. As Babb (1981) and Gell (1998) have written, blessing in the Hindu context is conferred in the exchange of 'glances' between guru and devotee; likewise in the Tibetan Buddhist context. Here, visual exchange and bestowal of blessing would be best achieved through images in which the eyes are clearly visible. Besides clarity of features, Khenrab also noted that the 'best' images were recent, and printed in colour (e.g. the image which Kelsang chose to enlarge, frame and garland with a *kha tak* at the centre-right of his shrine). The importance of colour, perhaps, speaks back the importance of indexicality; colour also fits with the Tibetan Buddhist religious aesthetic (cf. Sutherland 2011), which uses bright, primary colours in murals, *thangka* and particle mandalas. My interviewees expressed a visual preference for brightly painted, new monasteries rather

than older, darker-coloured ones, though the latter were considered more 'precious' from a religious perspective (see section 4.2.5).

As the sometime temporal leader of Tibet, and the leader of the Tibetan people in exile,[247] displaying and venerating the image of the Dalai Lama also becomes politically significant. Considered a dangerous 'splittist' by the Chinese authorities, the Dalai Lama's image has been banned, repeatedly, within Tibetan regions of the PRC, and most especially the highly monitored Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) (C. Harris 2004: 150-152). Beyond the TAR, his image appears to be subject to fewer restrictions. In a 2014 field trip to Tibet, Kerin (Kerin et al. 2014: 115) witnessed images of the Dalai Lama displayed in shrines in Tibetan homes and shops in Kham, eastern Tibet. Moreover, in what appears to have been a political move, a Tibetan monastery in Ngaba, Amdo (now Sichuan) displayed a large cardboard cut-out of the Dalai Lama wearing ceremonial robes 'seated' on the throne in the monastery's prayer hall during *lo sar* 2015.[248] Others were more circumspect, however (or had been in earlier times). Exiles frequently told me that the only way they were able to show devotion to his image while in Tibet, especially during the Cultural Revolution, had been to insert it behind the images of Mao they had been forced to display. Indeed, memories of those times combined with an awareness of current restrictions in Tibet is partly what prompts Tibetans to display photographs of the Dalai Lama so prominently in exile.

In Kelsang's shrine, the image of the Dalai Lama likewise serves a dual purpose: as a source of blessing and a political icon. To the far left, he has framed a double image of the 14th Dalai Lama and the 10th Panchen Lama, both high lamas of the Gelugpa

[247] In 2011 the Dalai Lama handed over full political responsibility to directly elected *Sikyong* (CTA Prime Minister), Dr Lobsang Sangay. The Dalai Lama now remains in charge of religious matters only, though his word continues to carry significant weight among exiles and on the international stage (see p10).

[248] Reports do not state the name of the monastery (it may be unknown, or it may be an attempt to protect the monastery). This year is significant in the Tibetan calendar since it is the year in which the 80th birthday (a significant birthday in the Amdo area) of the Dalai Lama falls. Signs at the monastery welcomed visitors to the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday year (https://www.savetibet.org/images-from-tibet-on-the-first-day-of-losar/ [accessed 16 Apr 2015]).

lineage, wearing formal golden robes. To the right of this image three photographs of the 14th Dalai Lama appear: two 'action' shots inserted in front of a formal, seated image of His Holiness (a duplicate of that discussed above). These three images are placed adjacent, in the same pale wooden frame, to a printed image (a reproduced *thangka*) of one thousand-armed Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion. To the right of this, is another framed image of the Dalai Lama, this time seated on a throne (*tri*) in front of a mural of the Buddha Shakyamuni (the historical Buddha).



Figure 90 Photo-icons of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas in addition to prints of several *thangka* on the left wall of Kelsang's *cho khang* (Akling, 16 Apr 2013).



Figure 91 Grouped images of the 14th Dalai Lama on the left wall of Kelsang's *cho khang* (Akling, 16 Apr 2013).

This 'triptych' belies a religious logic. The three images of the Dalai Lama on the left relate to the image (actually a photograph of a *thangka,* widely available in Tibetan markets) of Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, of whom he is a reincarnation. To the right, the Dalai Lama is combined with another iconographic image, this time of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni. Again, we see the working of Pinney's 'proximal empowerment' (Pinney 1997: 170-171; cf. C. Harris 2012: 140). The image on the far right, which unites the Dalai Lama and the historical Buddha in a single frame, effectively draws a conceptual link between the two beings, reinforcing each's religious role, importance and legitimacy. Their co-presence, like that of the Panchen and Dalai Lamas to the left, also doubles the blessing (*jin lap*) onlookers can receive. Images of high lamas and their incarnations (e.g. the Dalai Lama and Chenrezig) also speak to the importance of unbroken lineage in the Tibetan Buddhist context for the accurate transmission of religious teachings between generations of practitioners. As Harris has written, the power of photography to collapse time and space is put to good use in the exile community. By displaying images of lamas and their previous incarnations side by side, Tibetans affirm the unbroken continuation of

the ‘reincarnatory sequence’ despite Chinese attempts to disrupt it (C. Harris 2012: 141; 2004: 152). In this ‘triptych’, Kelsang asserts an incontrovertible link between Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, and his earthly incarnation, the 14th Dalai Lama, thereby affirming the Dalai Lama’s legitimacy and status as a living deity.

The images in Kelsang’s shrine also function as links between his experience of exile (the present), and past and future Tibets (cf. Harris 2004: 154). On the left-hand wall, Kelsang has displayed an image of the Potala Palace in Lhasa, seat of the Dalai Lamas and home of the monks of Namgyal Monastery. He has also hung an image of the Jo Shakyamuni on this wall. The Jo Shakyamuni (or ‘Lhasa Jowo’), from which the Jokhang temple in Lhasa (where it resides) takes its name, is the most sacred *ku* in Tibet (see p135-136). These two images, the Jowo and Potala, are of primary religious significance: the Potala Palace is highly significant for Tibetan Buddhists, as it has been sanctified by centuries of residence and religious practice by the Dalai Lamas, heads of the Gelugpa order, temporal and spiritual leaders of (central) Tibet; likewise, the Lhasa Jowo is considered highly sacred. This image is said to have been brought from China by Tibetan king Songsten Gampo’s Chinese bride in the seventh century AD. According to the tale, Songsten Gampo’s two wives, Chinese and Nepali, converted him to Buddhism, which he subsequently introduced to Tibet earning him the title of ‘*Dharma* king’ in subsequent Tibetan histories (Snellgrove and Richardson 2003: 50, 73; E. Walsh 1938: 536). While, as Snellgrove and Richardson write, the Jowo image ‘is now so encrusted with gold leaf and jewels that no one, however qualified, would hazard a guess at its actual age’ (Snellgrove and Richardson 2003: 73), that it is of considerable antiquity is plain. From a Tibetan Buddhist perspective, such antiquity is indicative of the devotion the image has received over time, and hence the power of the blessings one can receive from it. Photographs of the Potala, like those of the Dalai Lama, bear more than religious significance, however. The image of the Potala Palace is

ubiquitous among refugees and frequently appears in exiles' shrines. As the historic seat of power, the palace speaks to the political aspirations of Tibetans to self-determination,[249] and like photo-icons of the Dalai Lama it has become a key symbol of Tibetanness. For youth born in exile, the Potala is the image through which they picture their homeland (see p193-194). Likewise, many Tibetans dream of returning to Lhasa to gain the blessing of the Lhasa Jowo before they pass away. These images position Kelsang between a past Tibet's proud history, and a dream of a future return (cf. Harris 2004: 154). In this sense, these objects function to some degree like Stewart's 'collection', in that one of their functions is to anticipate a new context, or a 'free' Tibet (Stewart 1993: 152).



Figure 92 Images of the Potala Palace (far left) and the Lhasa Jowo (second from right) hung on the left wall of Kelsang's *cho khang*. Notice how all images are garlanded with a *kha tak* (white blessing scarf) and hung as high as possible on the wall as a form of respect (Akling, 16 Apr 2013).

Besides photographs, Kelsang also possesses a number of *thangka.* While many refugees possess photographic reproductions of *thangka*, painted *thangka* are more rare. Since they are comparatively expensive, it is mainly those who are more settled (and are wealthier) who possess them. Mostly, these are commissioned from local artists upon

[249] See footnote 16, p10 on the debate between those who seek Tibetan independence (*rangzen*) versus supporters of the Middle Way Approach of the Dalai Lama and current exile government (*u mé lam*).

the death of a family member. Such a commission generates merit for the deceased and eases their passing through *bar do*[250] into a good rebirth (C. Harris 2001: 185). On the death of her mother, Yangchen Lhaze[251] commissioned a *thangka* of Chanak Dorje (the deity commissioned is decided by astrological consultation, cf. Kerin 2013: 293). Likewise, on the death of her father she commissioned a small *ku,* although she no longer possesses this, having donated it to the *tsuk lak khang* in McLeod Ganj for safekeeping while she travelled for work. Besides *thangka,* religious texts (*pé cha*) also feature on some exiles' *chö shom.* These are visible in Kelsang's *cho khang*, to the left of the central cabinet of *ku.* Iconic of the Buddha's speech, texts are considered the most sacred by Tibetan Buddhists; hence they are placed highest, above other icons or images, by exiles in their shrines. Kelsang, who has the luxury of greater space, is able to store his texts in a purpose-built cabinet, as they would be in a shrine in a monastery. Behind glass, like his framed *thangka,* they are protected from dust and damp.

Kerin highlights the 'haptic' and 'optic' elements of shrines (2013: 287), discussing how the objects contained within them generate aesthetic affect (cf. Navaro-Yashin 2012, Stoler 2007). I argue that it is the affective and sensory aspects of shrines that make them particularly potent material assemblages (cf. Müller 2015, Figueiredo 2015) and hence that make them significant in home-making endeavours. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition respect is expressed bodily, hence religious objects demand certain physical practices from devotees, for example, prostration, touching the object to the head, prayers, mantras and offerings. As numerous refugees reminded me while showing me around their shrines, *having* a shrine and *possessing* precious objects is not important; what is important is religious practice. One should practice one's religion

[250] *Bar do* is the 'intermediate state' between death and rebirth through which the consciousness of the deceased must pass during the first forty-nine days after a person's death. During this period the living complete special rituals to help guide the consciousness to a good rebirth (Snellgrove and Richardson 2003: 110).
[251] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 15 Nov 2012.

daily; for example, one should rise early in the morning, complete prostrations, should fill (and later empty) the water bowls offered on the shrine for deities to drink from, and should burn incense. It was this sensory and bodily engagement with the shrine through quotidian ritual practice that many identified as making them feel 'at home'.

For example, my landlady *a chak* Dolma[252] explained that for her the smell of burning juniper (*sang*) brings back memories of her home in Tibet and hence makes her house in India feel more 'homely'. Each morning she rises to attend first to her family's shrine - cleaning it carefully to remove dust (sacred objects must be kept clean), setting out the bowls of water, saying prayers, making other offerings and then cleaning the rest of the house. After finishing the cleaning she burns *sang* as a final act of purification.[253] For others, the shrine represented a starting point or reminder that recalled them to their conceptual practice - purifying and taming their minds and thoughts, being compassionate, striving to live life ethically. For example, Lobsang was born and raised in central Tibet, where he served as a monk in a monastery for some years before disrobing in exile. He now lives in McLeod Ganj with his family. I asked him if he did anything in particular to make himself feel at home in India. He responded:

> I do, yeah, in my home I try to decorate as much to make it feel in Tibetan style, but … it's not easy. You have to buy the right furniture like you'd use in Tibet … you know carpenters [carved and painted furniture]… you know and it gets very expensive… It's cheaper to buy like this you know [knocking on a low table, roughly made out of chipboard] … and then like doing a little prayer in the morning and the evening and doing prostration … but I always forget. You know, if I could do this it makes me feel better. Not just simply doing some prostration with some kind of meaning. Not just buying a Buddha, or appreciating or acknowledging Buddha's teaching but trying to examine one's own mind… Before I go to bed I should remember what happened

[252] Interviewed 28 Feb 2013.

[253] *Sang*, meaning 'purification', is a Tibetan practice in which fragrant smoke (especially of burning juniper) is offered to the gods and spirits of the land (e.g. including the various local deities discussed in Chapter Three). Kapstein writes: '*Sang* as fumigation … offers a cleansing fragrance to the spirits, purifying the taints of the environment that they find distasteful' (emphasis original, Kapstein 2013: 8). Offering *sang* is thus a means of pacifying offended spirits. Like many practices surrounding indigenous deities, this practice has been absorbed into Tibetan Buddhism and *Bön* (Kapstein 2013: 9; cf. Samuel 1993).

> during the day and how much positive thing I have done and how much negative things I have done … not just saying purification mantra, but trying to commit myself, trying not to do such a negative thing I have done, trying to improve that area… that is very important, which I don't do all the time [sic].[254]

Lobsang was a monk in Tibet before he came to India; he now runs a café with his family in McLeod Ganj. For him, his sense of 'home' is expressed materially and aesthetically, in the way he decorates his family's home, the shrine he has constructed, the *sham bu* (eave hangings) he plans to purchase, even the bed sheets he has bought, which are printed with Tibetan designs. Home is also ritual and religious, however: it is expressed in the practices he follows (and wishes to follow), some of which he carries out in his *cho khang*, for example, saying mantras and completing prostrations. Home is also expressed and created in his orientation towards Tibetan and Tibetan Buddhist values as he sees them: compassion, taming the mind and acting ethically in the world.[255] All these aesthetic, embodied and mindful elements come together, *assembling* (Müller 2015, Canniford and Bajde 2015), to create a powerful link for him between his sense of identity and homes past and present.

In *Materialising Exile*, Dudley talks about the power of Karenni annual rituals to mark out territory and to create place, continuity and identity in the refugee camps in northern Thailand (cf. Burrell 2012). Dudley argues:

> The particular significance of annual ritual in displacement … is in part due to its social characteristics and its role in maintaining a feeling of continuity with the past. But it is also fundamentally about living in the present. The on-going, cyclical nature of annual festivals such as ka-thow-bòw is part of living in and being part of a particular place … Dynamic, embodied and emplaced action ties people and their environment together, even when the environment is not their familiar or chosen one. This kind of action is, for refugees particularly, especially important in ritual practice. It is clear both that the

[254] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 14 Mar 2013.
[255] See footnote 80, p87 and pp.132-133 for further discussion of Buddhist modernism.

> activity is performative and that it is through the performance that people and place are not only intertwined but also mutually constitutive.
>
> Dudley 2010: 142-143

A similar process takes place on a smaller scale inside Tibetan refugees' homes. Using material culture - sacred objects, images, offerings - and through repeated sensory and embodied practice (e.g. prostration, prayer, burning of *sang*) refugees create sacred place and forge a relationship between themselves and the new environment in the present. By constructing a shrine refugees also enable the continuation of *habitus* or past ways of being (Bourdieu 1990a): they are able to pursue the same everyday rituals and routines they followed previously in Tibet. The material culture of the shrine and the practices enacted within it thus link past and present and generate continuity in conditions of rupture. Borrowing from Miller (2008), in the Tibetan context we might speak of the comfort of *religious* things. Tibetan Buddhism is a key determinant of Tibetan culture; as I have commented elsewhere (see section 4.1.3), the Dalai Lama frequently describes Tibetan culture in purely religious terms. My respondents also named Tibetan Buddhism as a fundamental aspect of their own Tibetan identity, although their personal relationships to its ideology and practices varied.[256] Significantly for this thesis, however, quotidian Tibetan Buddhist practice is strongly embodied and engages with the physical environment in a number of ways, for example, through landscape-based practices such as *kora*, or through the construction of monasteries (see Chapter Four). In this way, on a smaller scale, Buddhist practice shapes the interiors of Tibetan refugees' homes. Tibetan shrines thus bear a strong resemblance to Winnicott's 'facilitating environments' (Turan 2010, Winnicott 2001). By 'facilitating' the maintenance and practice of familiar aesthetic and embodied ways of being they promote a sense of continuity between the pre-exilic past and the exile

[256] See footnote 80, p87 and discussion pp.132-133 on Buddhist modernism and '21st century Buddhism'.

present. In conjunction with soft furnishings – wall hangings, carpets – shrines, photo-icons and incense (*sang*) come together in Tibetan rooms and houses to create a familiar sense-scape, enfolding dwellers in the comforting embrace of 'home'.

6.3 Future: political objects and the dream of Tibetan freedom

In 1993 Tibetan historian, Tsering Shakya, argued:

> Today, if the Tibetan émigré community in the Subcontinent has achieved some measure of uniform identity, it has been founded more on anti-Chinese ideology than on faith. The unity has been fostered in exile though [sic] the manipulation of symbols and the deliberate invention of tradition. The prerequisite paraphernalia of nationalism, such as the flag and the national anthem, have been introduced. Most Tibetans in exile are now socialised into thinking of themselves as a homogenous group through schooling and group rituals such as the celebration of the 10th March Uprising, or the Dalai Lama's birthday in July. Both rituals are recent devices, primarily designed to raise political consciousness … There is strong evidence that the symbols invented in exile are being adopted by the people inside Tibet as well … The shift of focus from the faith to the flag is meaningful, as it shows the changing nature of the core of Tibetan identity. The move from the purely religious-based identification to a more secular notion of Tibetanness is clear.
>
> Shakya 1993: 11

In seeming contrast to my last point, Shakya argues that Tibetans in exile are increasingly adopting a secular approach to Tibetan identity. He argues that prior to 1950, shared identity on the Tibetan plateau was framed through religion – the shared sense of being *nang pa,* literally an 'insider' to the religion, as opposed to an 'outsider', *chi pa* (Shakya 1993: 9). However since 1959, a more secular aspiration to 'nationhood' has emerged, both in Tibet but especially in exile. This is based on the idea of a 'Greater Tibet', which unites the three regions of Ü-Tsang (central Tibet), Kham (southeast Tibet) and Amdo (northeast Tibet), known collectively as *chöl kha sum*. This more secular nationalism, he argues, has been developed most strongly in exile as a result of

the Chinese takeover, which forced Tibetans, who were previously divided along sectarian, regional and linguistic lines, to unite (Shakya 1993: 9-11).

In this section I look at how this shift is played out in the material world. The last section examined household shrines, but shrines are not the only significant (assemblages of) objects in Tibetan houses. Young, educated Tibetans, especially those raised in the exile school system, tend not to emphasise religious objects such as *ku, ku par* (photo-icons) and *thangka* for example, among their belongings. Instead they give preference to the image of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan flag, a combination that, I argue, speaks to the younger generation's more greatly politicised sense of identity. In this section I discuss how objects are co-opted by Tibetans into political narratives and how they are made to 'speak' and to give testimony (cf. Daston 2004). I argue that such material culture activism represents an orientation towards the 'future' of Tibet and the Tibetan people. Through these objects, Tibetans attempt to defend their claim to sovereignty prior to 1950, to galvanise support for the Tibetan cause and hence to bring about change in the current political situation.

6.3.1 The leader and the flag

In August 2013, I asked three, young, female Tibetan students[257] studying at a prestigious college in Delhi what important items they carried with them. They identified two:

> Clark: Is there something that you take with you that makes you feel comfortable? Is there an important object?
> Lhamo: Yes. A picture of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
> Dolker: And a Tibetan flag.
> Lhamo: And a Tibetan flag.
> …

[257] 30 Aug 2013, New Delhi.

Lhamo: Every Tibetan has [this].

Wangmo: Yes every Tibetan has [this].

Lhamo: … It's like every Tibetan has a kind of a medallion, where there's a picture of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. And whenever we travel we kind of have this kind of confidence, or a safe [feeling].

Wangmo: Yeah, we feel more secure.

Lhamo: A feeling of safe[ty]. Airplane, or a train or everything, whenever something happens we are so scared but we'll hold on to it [the medallion] and we'll pray something. So it's kind of soothing for us also.

Dolker: Ya ya. And talking about the Tibetan flag, you know, I recently put up my flag on our wall, and … one thing … made me think. We talk about autonomy and all that, right, and right now people are so much associated with the Tibetan flag and suppose if we get our autonomy in Tibet and so … we can't use the national flag because one country … cannot have a two flag[s] right? So what happens to the Tibetan flag? Are we really ready, you know, to leave that flag? … When I was putting [it up], so that made me think. Even though our Tibetan flag is very complicated, I can't draw [it], but you know I just like to put [it] up over there. I like seeing [it], you know? What happens when we get our autonomy, and what happens when China says okay you can get some autonomy but okay no flag, no national[ist] [things]…?

In this brief excerpt, the speakers highlight two key 'summarising symbols' (Klieger 1991: 76, Ortner 1973, Nowak 1984) of Tibetan exilic identity: the Dalai Lama, and the Tibetan national flag. As I have discussed, images of the Dalai Lama have multiple significances in exile (C. Harris 2001). In this conversation, Lhamo highlights the religious aspects of the Dalai Lama's image, how it is worn by refugees (of all ages) in a locket as a form of protection (cf. *gau* and *tsön sung* above, section 6.1.2). In this context, his image also serves as a power object - a support (*ten*) for religious practice and understanding. Even young Tibetans who claimed to be sceptical of traditional religious beliefs (e.g. the importance of *kora*, the sanctity of religious objects), deeming them 'superstitious',[258] believed to an extent in the efficacy of the Dalai Lama's image. Those I spoke to who self-identified as atheists also treated his

[258] See footnote 80, p87.

image with respect, explaining that they respected the Dalai Lama for his compassion, generosity and hard work undertaken on behalf of the Tibetan people, rather than for being a living Buddha.

Thus the Dalai Lama's image carries a 'heavy burden of representation' (C. Harris 2001: 185). As a reincarnation of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokiteshvara (*Chenrezig*), he and images of him constitute an important source of blessing; as the exiled Tibetan leader, however, his image also makes a political statement. Above, Dolker described her thoughts as she tacked her Tibetan flag up onto the wall of her hostel room. In the rooms inhabited by Tibetan youth, flags were ubiquitous and commonly shared wall space with images of the Dalai Lama. While his image certainly continues to have religious significance, I argue that the juxtaposition of the two, image and flag, speaks more strongly to the political views and activities of Tibetan youth, and to the increasing emergence of secular nationalism. In McLeod Ganj especially, a town which attracts foreign journalists and hosts the headquarters of the CTA and many Tibetan political NGOs, political activism is a part of daily life, *habitus* even, and a central element of many young Tibetans' sense of self identity (cf. Swank 2014, Hess 2009, Diehl 2002). As Dolker commented above, the Tibetan national flag has come to play a crucial role in Tibetan exile and exilic identity, and consequently features strongly among refugees' most treasured possessions.

A publication by the Central Tibetan Administration traces the antecedents of the Tibetan flag to Tibetan military flags of the 7th century AD (Tibetan year 820, the reign of King Songsten Gampo), which featured snow lions in different stances (Anon. 2000: 13-14; cf. Norbu 2015a). The current flag appears to have been re-designed on the basis of the existing military flags by the 13th Dalai Lama in the early 20th century (Norbu 2015a, Anon. 2000: 14). While it is unclear whether this new flag was conceptualised as a military flag or a national flag in the contemporary sense at the time

(see Norbu 2015a and 2015b, Goldstein et al. 2009: 209, Anon. 2000: 14), it is certainly fair to say that the significance and visibility of this flag has increased exponentially since the beginning of the Dalai Lama's exile in 1959. Much like the image of the Dalai Lama, one of the reasons the flag is so popular among exiles is because its display in Tibet itself is prohibited. Present in both of my field sites, the flag is especially prominent in McLeod Ganj since it is a hub for political activity. Besides being strung up on young Tibetans' bedroom walls, it features on bumper stickers and on political posters; during protests, activists paint it on their faces and drape it around their shoulders. I also saw Royal Enfield motorcycles and helmets emblazoned with the emblem; some also worked it into tattoos and clothing designs (see Fig. 71, p238).

Significantly, the flag is also one of several objects used by Tibetan exiles to argue that Tibet was an independent nation prior to the Chinese takeover. For example, the CTA's publication states that:

> History attests to the fact that Tibet is one of the most ancient nations of the world. Therefore, in all three regions of Tibet, irrespective of caste and creed, this national flag inherited from our ancestors is universally accepted as a common, peerless treasure and even today continues to be as highly respected and esteemed as in the past.
>
> Anon. 2000: 15

Like Hobsbawm and Ranger's invented traditions, a long history is claimed for the Tibetan flag. Moreover, this history is claimed to be national, to follow the contours of the Greater Tibetan nation, hence the flag is used to support Tibetan claims for independence prior to the Chinese takeover. The flag is not the only 'object' to be employed by exiles in a testimonial mode, however; other objects, many of which are displayed at the Tibet Museum in McLeod Ganj, are likewise made to 'speak' (cf. Daston 2004).

6.3.2 The Tibet Museum: objects as testimony

The Tibet Museum, which is located adjacent to the *tsuk lak khang*, the temple of the Dalai Lama in McLeod Ganj, opened to the public in April 2000. The initial idea for the museum was first conceived by the Dalai Lama on his 1994 visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's memorial museum for the victims of the Holocaust, during which he expressed a desire for a similar museum to be built to commemorate Tibetan suffering (Singh 2015: 51). A Tibetan management board including members of the exile government was set up to oversee the construction of the proposed museum, though in practice three non-Tibetans, all Israelis, one of whom had worked at Yad Vashem, executed the majority of the project planning and design (C. Harris 2012: 168, 174).

The Israeli team brought a strong holocaust museum sensibility to the Tibetan project. Like other museums in this genre, the Tibet Museum's displays were designed to have a strong emotional impact and to generate empathy among visitors. In this case, the displays were designed to call for change in the status of the Tibetan homeland but stop short of demanding full independence, since the current policy of the CTA and Dalai Lama is to seek increased autonomy for Tibetan regions within the PRC. Having decided against including objects in the displays (out of respect for the sacred nature of much Tibetan material culture, and also given its scarcity in exile), emphasis was instead placed on individuals' testimony. The management board approached eleven Tibetan 'curators' whose personal experiences of Tibet, of life under the Chinese, of the traumatic journey into exile and life in India, would form the basis of the museum's displays (C. Harris 2012: 168-169).

Since the museum opened, however, several changes have been made to the displays. Particularly noticeable is the addition of objects on the upper floor. These are very much in keeping with the existing testimonial approach and narratives of trauma that occupy the museum. They include displays of manacles and torture equipment, and

objects made by Tibetan prisoners. One of the most striking objects displayed is the bloodstained shirt of a prisoner, which is encased above a *kha tak* (blessing scarf).



Figure 93 Case containing the blood-spattered shirt of a Tibetan political prisoner in the Tibet Museum, McLeod Ganj (30 Aug 2012).

The adjacent plaque reads:

> Shirt worn by a political prisoner.
> The marks on the shirt are bloodstains.
> A short sleeved T-shirt and trousers were also worn. The T-shirt that accompanies this shirt is in extremely poor condition, as are the trousers, and so could not be exhibited.
> The scarf would have been an item of concern for the Chinese, as it is an important part of the Tibetan lifestyle. That it survived the prison, and can be shown here is testament to the strength of faith of its owner.

Alongside these objects, which stand as testimonies of maltreatment at Chinese hands, are another group of objects that are employed to testify to Tibet's independence prior to 1951. These include: Tibetan bank notes in denominations of ten and twenty-five *sang,* and Tibetan coins; a scanned copy of the passport belonging to Tsepon Shakabpa issued by the Dalai Lama's cabinet (*ka shak*), which bears visas and stamps of several countries including the UK, France, Switzerland, Italy, the US and India; the cover of the September 1934 issue of National Geographic magazine which bears the Tibetan flag 'looking exactly as it does these days' (object label); and a display of Tibetan stamps. Case labelling indicates that these objects 'are a testament to Tibet's independent status prior to 1959, and serve as tangible reminder of Tibetan material culture'.[259] The same objects also appeared on a poster displayed at the McLeod Ganj headquarters of the Tibetan Youth Congress' (TYC). The poster entitled 'Evidences of Independent Tibet' included images of Tibetan stamps, currency and Tsepon Shakabpa's passport. The TYC, unlike the exile government, advocates for full Tibetan independence (*rangzen*). The year 2013 was significant for the organisation, which

[259] From the bank note label, but this applies to all objects in this cabinet (i.e. all those listed in the text aside from the shirt and scarf). The full text of the label reads: 'Paper currency was only introduced into Tibet in the early 20th century, and yet Tibetan banknotes are arguably the most attractive among world currencies. The designs on the banknotes include both religious and national symbols; such as the snow lion and the lung rta (wind horse) and most are printed in vivid colours. Tibetan money was called *Sang* or *Tam* and came in denominations of 1, 5, 15, 50 and 100. After the communist takeover of Tibet, most of it was destroyed and replaced with Chinese money. Those banknotes, which survive, are a testament to Tibet's independent status prior to 1959, and serve as tangible reminder of Tibetan material culture.' [Visited 30 Aug 2012.]

declared it 'International Year of Tibetan Independence' in recognition of the centenary of the 13th Dalai Lama's proclamation of Tibet's independence from China, on 13th February 1913 (see Goldstein 1989a: 59-61, see above p3).



Figure 94 Poster displayed at the McLeod Ganj headquarters of the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) entitled 'Evidences of Independent Tibet'. The poster includes images of: Tibetan money (coins and bills), the passport of Tsepon Shakabpa (top left) who was the Chief of the Tibetan government's Finance Department. This passport was issued on 10th October 1947 by the Tibetan cabinet (*ka shak*). The poster also includes a page from the September 1934 issue of National Geographic magazine, depicting the Tibetan flag alongside other national flags in an article entitled 'Flags of the World' (top right). The general secretary of TYC informed me that Jamyang Norbu, who has served on the TYC 'centrex' on multiple occasions, procured many of the images for the poster (28 Mar 2013).

As Singh argues, while couched in the guise of a memorial to events of the past, the holocaust museum genre actually looks more to the future. Specifically, museums such as Yad Vashem and the Tibet Museum mobilise the past for use in contemporary political projects aimed at securing a particular future, in this case a change in Tibet's status within the PRC (Singh 2015: 31). For example, the museum displays include a specially commissioned memorial by the Tibetan artist Pekar, which commemorates the

Tibetans who have died since 1950 as a result of the Chinese takeover (C. Harris 2012: 173). This memorial, which is executed in a contemporary style, stands in sharp contrast to the *stupa* now enclosed by the *ma ni lha khang* (see section 4.1.2), which also commemorates the Tibetans who have suffered and died as a result of Chinese rule. While the latter is a memorial in a traditional Tibetan style, the Israeli design team decided to commission a monument in a contemporary, secular style for the museum's gallery. Harris comments that this was in deference to the idea that sacred material should not be included in the (secular) gallery space (C. Harris 2012: 173). It is also likely that the design team wanted to ensure it would be legible to the museum's Indian and international audience. This concern was also at the forefront of the minds of the selection committee for the design of the Tibetan Martyrs' Memorial (*bö kyi pawo pa mö dren ten do ring*), which is situated opposite the entrance to the Tibet Museum and adjacent to the *tsuk lak khang*. This memorial was inaugurated on 10th March 2010 and commemorates the hundreds of Tibetans who suffered during the 2008 uprisings inside Tibet. It takes the form of a plain black stone pillar inscribed in Hindi, Tibetan and English. The wall behind was sculpted and painted by a former monk from Kham, Lobsang Dhoyou (Singh 2015: 55), and depicts Tibetan protestors filling a map of Tibet, wearing *chu pa* and punching the air in a sign described to me by Tibetan refugees as a '*rangzen* fist'. The fist, which is sometimes shown with a Tibetan 'nine eyes' lucky bracelet around the wrist, appears frequently on social media and elsewhere and may be derived from the iconic photograph of the Tibetan monk, Jampa Tenzin, which was captured during the October 1987 protests in Lhasa. This photograph, which shows Jampa Tenzin with his fist raised, hoisted on the shoulders of a crowd of Tibetan protestors, went viral in media coverage at the time and remains well known (cf. Harris 2012: 143). For example Tamding, a Tibetan artist and musician who during my fieldwork lived in McLeod Ganj, designed a monument in the shape of the '*rangzen*

fist' to commemorate the over one hundred Tibetans who have self-immolated in Tibet. This monument was constructed in the Tibetan camp of Bylakuppe in south India using the proceedings of a contemporary Tibetan music gig held in McLeod Ganj in October 2012, at which Tamding and a number of other musicians performed. The commemorative pillar was inaugurated in February 2015.



Figure 95 Poster designed by artist, musician and activist, Tamding, to advertise a contemporary Tibetan music concert he and other Tibetan musicians performed at. The proceedings of the concert were used to build a pillar to commemorate those who had self-immolated in Tibet. The design of the pillar (Tamding's design) is shown on the left-hand side of the poster and takes the form of a '*rangzen* fist' (20 Oct 2012).

Like the displays within the Tibet museum, although described as memorials these commemorative pillars are clearly intended for political use in the Tibetan struggle today. Besides raising awareness of the political situation inside Tibet, the museum and the Tibetan Martyrs' Memorial function in exilic political praxis in other ways. The Tibet Museum, which is a wing of the CTA's Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), hosts weekly political talks; it sponsors touring exhibitions designed to raise awareness about the Tibetan plight; and in 2013 it opened

a new exhibition on the self-immolations which were occurring in Tibet. The nearby Tibetan Martyrs' Memorial is an important site for protests and hunger strikes, and is the final destination for the many circumambulatory candle-lit protests that took place during my fieldwork each time news of an immolation reached the exile capital (see p144-147).



Figure 96 Tibetan Martyrs' Memorial, situated adjacent to the *tsuk lak khang* and The Tibet Museum in McLeod Ganj. The wall behind the memorial has been sculpted and painted with Tibetan figures raising their hands in the '*rangzen*' fist (15 Aug 2012).

Since the breakdown of talks with China in the mid-1980s, the Dalai Lama has shifted from emphasising human rights abuses in Tibet to a narrative of 'cultural genocide', in which Tibetan culture is defined both as fundamentally Tibetan Buddhist (cf. Huber 2001: 360) and fundamentally threatened by repressive Chinese politics (Singh 2015: 47, Barnett 2001: 273, Lopez 1998: 198). This move, which draws on exotic stereotypes of Tibetan culture, represents a conscious attempt to garner sympathy

from the international community (Barnett 2001, cf. Dodin and Räther 2001, Lopez 1998). This line of argument, while appreciated, has not been adopted wholesale by Tibetan youth, however, who in conversation with me emphasised the 'modernity' of their approach to Tibetan culture (including Buddhism), and the importance of the modern, secular Tibetan education system established in exile. For young Tibetans, protest and activism has become a way of life, and their engagement with their (traditional) material culture is framed through this lens. 'Traditional' and 'historic' objects are used to legitimate their identity, and are mobilised for political action. In this sense, protest and activism have themselves become *habitus* for Tibetan youth, part of their *raison d'être*. Youdon, my roommate, described to me how her activism permeates every aspect of her life:

> I think that I'm a[n] … activist, whatever you do there's kind of a reason, trying to promote, or you're against it, or you're trying to raise awareness… because my tattoo says 'resistance' [in Tibetan] though I say this is not only political resistance, resistance is to resist everything in life that's against you and that's forced …[260]

For Youdon, this means that although she respects and values many aspects of traditional Tibetan culture she resists them if they are forced upon her. Indeed resistance in all its guises, but most importantly political resistance against the Chinese regime in Tibet, is such a part of who she is that she has this phrase tattooed onto her body. She gave the example of wearing *chu pa,* saying that when she chooses to wear this (as she does these days) she is proud; but when she is forced to wear it she resists (see pp.219, 235, 256).

Thus I argue that young Tibetans' engagement with material culture, particularly their 'traditional' material culture, differs somewhat from the 'preservation in practice' (C. Harris 1999: 43) model I have discussed elsewhere in this thesis. While many

[260] Interviewed in McLeod Ganj, 27 Jan 2013.

refugees see 'traditional' culture as a target for preservation (a project which has political significance in the context of cultural repression on the Tibetan plateau), young Tibetans go one step further, mobilising items of traditional material culture in political activism in order to effect change. Thus objects are valued not only for their 'traditional', past-facing qualities, but also for their testimonial and political potential – their future-facing qualities. In this respect, the objects in the Tibet Museum, but also the memorials to Tibetan dead, the Tibetan flag and images of the Dalai Lama, function most clearly as one of Stewart's 'collections'. Individually, some might act as 'souvenirs' of a distant past: the manacles, Tibetan coinage, passport and other 'Evidences of Independent Tibet', for example, have very important roles to play as 'traces of authentic experience' (Stewart 1993: 135). Collectively, however, they mount a political and ethical argument for Tibetan self-determination; in this they anticipate a Tibetan future (cf. Stewart 1993: 152).

6.4 Conclusion

In an article about the possessions of residents living in a medium secure psychiatric ward, Fiona Parrott describes how patients expended more money and attention on their personal appearance - fashionable clothing - than on decorating their living quarters (Parrott 2005). Parrott argues that residents' greater attention to fashion reflects their conviction that their residence on the ward is only temporary, and hence that it makes no sense to spend time and money decorating their living quarters. Instead, patients oriented themselves towards a future beyond the confines of the ward; by spending money on their appearance they linked themselves to current fashions in the wider community to which they hoped they would shortly return. Parrott terms this orientation a 'material culture of hope' (Parrott 2005). The material culture practices of

Tibetan refugees follow a similar logic. While little architectural attention is paid to secular dwellings (see Chapter Four), more attention is given to interiors, particularly those of long-term family homes. Using objects, refugees domesticate their interiors, doing what they can within financial and practical constraints to try and make them 'feel' more homely and more Tibetan, to create familiar 'affective' spaces. Exiles achieve this by using portable material culture, for example: carpets and religious and political 'icons'. Depending on how mobile they are, and how wealthy, an individual will possess more or fewer objects: highly mobile students, especially those who have lived much of their lives in school and university hostels, often possess the fewest items and emphasise those that can easily be packed into a suitcase. In this sense, like Parrott's respondents, Tibetan refugees also participate in a 'material culture of hope' – deliberately avoiding 'putting down roots', in anticipation of either an eventual return to Tibet or moving abroad. Portable material culture thus becomes important in lending meaning to refugees' mobile lives: it bridges the temporal and geographical distance between a past in Tibet, a present in India and an imagined future, either in the homeland or a third country.

7 Conclusion: permanent impermanence

I began this research with a question about landscape. Specifically, I asked whether Tim Ingold's proposition that 'people do not import their ideas, plans or mental representations into the world, since that very world … is the homeland of their thoughts' (2000: 186) is valid in the Tibetan refugee context? Ingold argues that people are strongly embedded in the landscapes in which they live, and that these landscapes shape their worldview in fundamental ways. He emphasises the agency of landscape in shaping people and culture, reflecting Miller's argument that 'objects create subjects much more than the other way around' (2008: 287) and also the arguments of Actor Network theorists who emphasise the role of non-human agency in shaping culture and the world (e.g. Latour 1993, Law 2009). The research conducted for this thesis challenges these positions, however. While it supports the idea that the material world has an important role to play in the articulation and negotiation of culture and identity, including at the level of 'affect' and materiality, it nonetheless emphasises the agentive role played by refugees in creating and shaping their milieu.

Chapter Three explored the contrasting physical landscapes of McLeod Ganj and Ladakh, looking at the impact these have had upon exiles' sense of being 'at home'. Notably, while the physical landscape of Ladakh bears a strong resemblance to that of western Tibet (unlike the landscape of McLeod Ganj), refugees from this region and who live in Ladakh today do not necessarily feel more at home there. Rather, all the refugees I spoke with expressed a sense of dislocation. For the elderly, who remembered the places and villages of their childhood in Tibet, this often took the form of nostalgia for specific places. Youth born in exile commented more frequently on their legal status. As holders of a 'Registration Certificate', most Tibetan refugees in India are subject to restrictions, for example on purchasing land, and find it difficult to

gain entry to higher professions. These experiences lead them to feel disempowered, disenfranchised and fundamentally as though they do not belong in India.

The built environment of both field sites, discussed in Chapter Four, proved more significant than the physical landscape in helping refugees feel at home. Tibetans living in Ladakh highlighted the importance of the historic Tibetan Buddhist monasteries located in the region. Specifically, refugees explained that they felt more at home in Ladakh compared with other locations in the diaspora since they were easily able to continue practising the Tibetan Buddhist religion, which they share with Ladakhis. Whereas in McLeod Ganj, which is a predominantly Hindu area, Tibetans have had to invest capital and effort to establish sites for religious practice (e.g. monasteries, temples, circumambulation routes), in Ladakh these facilities already exist.

As I have discussed, exilic identity discourse gives particular emphasis to Tibetan Buddhism as a central component and distinctive marker of Tibetan culture. I have evaluated this from an aesthetic perspective. For example, in the context of monastic architecture it can be seen that Buddhist monasteries are often elaborately decorated. By comparison, secular buildings tend to be simply designed. Notably, the only non-religious buildings that are richly Tibetanised (in an architectural sense) are those that attract significant tourist footfall: the Tibet Museum and the Norbulingka Institute. Both these institutions play an important role in raising awareness about the Tibetan cause: the Tibet Museum uses displays to educate visitors about the Tibetan exile community and the current political situation in Tibet; the Norbulingka Institute promotes Tibet to outsiders by preserving and displaying 'authentic' and 'traditional' Tibetan crafts. Thus besides being important in re-creating a sense of home, architecture also plays a role in Tibetan political practice.

The themes of 'authenticity', 'tradition' and 'modernity' permeate this thesis, but are made especially overt in the discourse on dress. As Chapter Five reveals, Tibetan

dress has evolved in different ways in India and Tibet over the past fifty years; styles of dress also vary by region. Consequently, dress has become a key arena in which discussions about regionality, 'tradition' and 'modernity' take place. Like other aspects of 'traditional' Tibetan culture, dress has become a contested domain since it is deemed threatened in Tibet. As a result, wearing Tibetan dress has become an important way in which exiles display their own Tibetan identity and preserve Tibetan culture.

The preservation of Tibetan cultural 'traditions' is pursued at both an institutional level (e.g. by the CTA) and independently by individuals. This is most evident in the *Lhakar* movement of recent years. *Lhakar* is performative and provides opportunities for exiles to display their Tibetan identity, to one another and to individuals outside their community. Hence, it has become an important forum through which individuals living in the Tibetan diaspora articulate their identity politics. As also discussed in Chapter Five, discourse about dress and identity is complicated by the different life experiences of Tibetans who left Tibet during the 1960s, their children and those who arrived more recently in India. Narratives about identity and culture loss are challenged by new arrivals who contest long-term exiles' characterisation of them as Sinified (Yeh 2007, Diehl 2002, C. Harris 1999). During my fieldwork in McLeod Ganj newcomers, mostly from eastern regions of Tibet, wore their Amdo and Khampa *chu pa* proudly. By wearing eastern styles of *chu pa,* they marked themselves out as different from the predominantly central Tibetan long-term exile community, and asserted an embodied Tibetan authenticity derived from their birth and upbringing in the homeland (Yeh 2007).

Beyond debates about preservation and regionalism, the visuality of dress also inclines it towards political co-option. In the Tibetan context, displays of Tibetanness, including wearing Tibetan dress but also the use of the Tibetan flag and Tibetan-style architecture, for instance, have a political role to play. Exiled Tibetans have appealed to

the world on the basis of their unique culture. Displaying that culture, in the form of Buddhist temples and traditional dress, for example, has become a form of political activism (cf. Conklin 1997, 2007). Scholars have argued that exiles pursue a policy of strategic essentialism in an attempt to garner international support for the Tibetan cause (e.g. Lopez 1998, Barnett 2001, Dodin and Räther 2001, Magnusson 2002). This strategy is risky however, since it rests on Tibetans' continued ability and desire to conform (at least publicly) to this set of stereotypes. In the words of Donald Lopez, exiles are 'prisoners of Shangri-La' (1998), trapped into reproducing themselves and their culture according to an imagined 'traditional' past. This leaves little scope for adaptation and modernisation since abandoning or modifying 'traditional' practices would potentially invite critiques of assimilation and risk the loss of international support. Consequently, the boundaries of 'traditional' Tibetan culture are fiercely policed within the exile community. This has not entirely deterred innovation, however, as Chapter Five showed. New Tibetan fashions are being created and worn, especially in McLeod Ganj where contemporary Tibetan designs from the Tibetan plateau are becoming increasingly influential.

In the final chapter, Chapter Six, I discussed how Tibetan refugees living in McLeod Ganj and Ladakh use objects to create a comforting mobile socio-cultural habitat (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 27). Familiar objects have an important role to play in ameliorating the sense of dislocation refugees experience living in an alien environment. In particular, they are able to bridge the psychological distance between the here and now of exile and the homeland left behind. In the Tibetan context portable objects, like the other aspects of the material world discussed in this thesis, can act as mementoes which link refugees to past events, places and people. Objects also facilitate cultural practice and hence the continuation of practical, sensory and social experiences from Tibet in exile. Furthermore, they can be used to imagine a future in which Tibetans

are able to enjoy cultural and political freedom from within the borders of their homeland.

Being a refugee means being suspended geographically and temporally 'betwixt-and-between' (Dudley 2010: 61-65, Malkki 1995: 6-8; cf. Turner 1967: 93). Caught between a remembered home and an imagined future, Tibetan refugees living in India exist in a state of permanent liminality. The liminal quality of Tibetan life, especially in India, is a recurrent theme in this thesis as it permeates Tibetan relationships with the material world. For example, it is evident in the contrasting approaches taken to the vernacular built environment (architecture) and the interior environment of the 'home'. Anticipating a swift return to Tibet in the 1960s, few refugees invested in property in India. Today many hope for an opportunity to emigrate westwards to 'foreign' countries, hence they are likewise disinclined to tie themselves to the Indian subcontinent. Combined with the legal and financial constraints that limit refugees' ability to modify their environment, this attitude towards impermanence, always looking beyond the present location to the homeland or locations in the wider diaspora, sustains an ephemeral existence (cf. Parrott 2005, Motasim and Heynen 2011).

Yet, although Tibetan refugees living in India certainly do make a conscious effort to avoid rooting themselves too firmly in the country, at the same time they also strive to ameliorate and improve their living conditions – to make the places of their settlement more 'homely'. This is the paradox, the tension which lies at the heart of Tibetan refugees' engagement with the physical and material world: the impetus towards transience which disinclines refugees to invest in the built environment is precisely what encourages them to engage more extensively with portable goods – clothing, technology and other objects - which can be transported between locations in the diaspora. Thus, while refugees' houses may not appear very 'homely' (or very 'Tibetan') on the outside, the inside tells a different story. Familiar objects, both

brought from Tibet and re-created in exile, help construct a recognisable and distinctly Tibetan aesthetic environment. Such objects also facilitate the continuation of embodied practices from the homeland and thereby help to reconstitute a sense of home.

By focusing on materiality, this thesis has highlighted the processual, aesthetic and affective aspects of home. While home certainly has a strong conceptual dimension in the Tibetan refugee context – there is the remembered and idealised home of Tibet past, and the imagined home in Tibet of the future – home, as I have shown, is also about the more mundane aspects of day-to-day living, for example, lighting incense, making offerings, wearing *chu pa* and doing *kora.* In this sense, moving away from static and ideological definitions, home in the Tibetan exile context might best be theorised as an assemblage (cf. Figueiredo 2015), comprising diverse elements (human, material, ideological, nostalgic, affective, political). Tibetans in this view are cast as actors attempting to manage, even corral, these various resources (Figeuiredo 2015) and thereby bring together a sense of homeliness. Their efforts, however, are mediated by other agents: politics, identity, finance and their own disinclination to 'root' themselves in a country that is not theirs. It is for these reasons that 'home is always in process, in a state of becoming, and never complete' (Figeuiredo 2015).

Werbner and Fumanti argue that appropriation, 'laying claims to "ownership"' through performative, sensory action (2014: 153), is a significant theme within 'diaspora aesthetics'. They argue:

> Through diasporic investment in the creation of aesthetic spaces, members of diaspora transform ugly concrete structures, school halls in London or Tel Aviv, into pleasurable, homely places. Through performance, diasporic groups enact narratives of diaspora subjectivity.
>
> Werbner and Fumanti 2014: 155

Dudley takes this argument one stage further in her proposal for 'refugee aesthetics' (Dudley 2010: 165). Compared to other migrants, refugees occupy an even

more structurally marginal position within their host countries; hence they have fewer resources to draw upon as they attempt to transform the alien environment surrounding them into something more recognisable. Nonetheless, like other migrants they expend considerable effort on the same aesthetic work. I have evaluated this in this thesis in terms of place-making, or home-making. This includes any activity in the environment which appropriates and modifies that environment either conceptually or physically, for example: the physical construction of buildings, the practice of *kora* and circular protest (cf. Schwartz 1994, Huber 1994), the weaving of Tibetan carpets or the celebration of Tibetan festivals such as the Dalai Lama's birthday (*trung kar*). Place-making is a material, embodied, aesthetic process executed by refugees seeking to make their surrounding environment more familiar and knowable, more 'right' (Dudley 2010: 165-66; Gosden 1999: 203; cf. Woodward 2005). In attempting to re-create pre-exilic aesthetic/affective conditions, place-making thus works against liminality and against the unfamiliarity of the alien landscape refugees find themselves in. In this sense, home-making is a specific kind of place-making. In attempting to align the material and sensory environment with their own cultural experience and tastes, Tibetan refugees create an environment that, to some degree, resembles their lost homeland. Thus for example, while no 'little Lhasa' in an exact sense, after decades of material and aesthetic investment by refugees McLeod Ganj bears enough sensory and socio-political resemblance to the Tibetan capital to sustain the epithet. In the Tibetan case, and perhaps in other cases of political exile also, however, refugees' efforts to make 'place' and belong are not only tempered by structural factors but also by community rhetoric prescribing 'rootlessness' as a moral condition, since 'rooting' in the new context is seen as tantamount to resigning the political struggle. This brings us back to the theme of liminality: as long as exiles continue to hope for a return to Tibet, India and other locations in the diaspora can never truly become home. Refugees linger in a state of

permanent impermanence, caught between a desire to belong in the places and spaces of exile and the knowledge that allowing themselves to do so would require them to relinquish their dreams of returning to their 'homeland'.

This research has brought together a number of different disciplinary perspectives. Most significantly, it joins a small body of literature that focuses on the material dimensions of refugee movements. Vice versa, this thesis is also novel within material anthropology for its focus on refugees, a neglected group in scholarship to date. In choosing this focus, it has demonstrated that refugees can be significant players in home- and place-making practices; that refugees are far from powerless; and that refugees can enact that power (agency) in a material setting. This thesis also joins an expanding body of ethnographic literature on the Tibetan diaspora. It adds to and updates literature about McLeod Ganj, making especially novel contributions in the fields of dress and contemporary architecture. As far as I am aware, it also represents the only ethnographic account of the lives of Tibetan refugees in Ladakh.

Research into the themes addressed by this thesis could usefully be extended into new field sites. In selecting McLeod Ganj and Ladakh for research, I sought contrasting landscapes in order to better identify the effect of the physical landscape on refugees' sense of feeling 'at home'. However, it would be especially interesting to conduct further research on these topics in other areas of the diaspora, specifically the large agricultural and monastic Tibetan settlements in Karnataka state, and in the Tibetan communities residing in major Indian cities. Beyond India, further research is also needed into the secondary diaspora. The authors of the 2009 Tibetan Demographic Survey noted that 68% of the adult refugee population intended to migrate to 'foreign' countries, i.e. beyond South Asia, mainly North American and European countries. Significantly, between the 1998 and 2009 surveys 9,309 Tibetans moved 'West' (TDS 2009: 15). Since leaving the field in mid-2013, a significant number of my Tibetan

friends and acquaintances have also successfully moved westwards, some on temporary student visas, others more permanently. Research into the Tibetan communities forming in global cities, for example, Jackson Heights in New York; the Bay Area in San Francisco; Toronto, London, Paris and Amsterdam, is urgently needed. Tibetans living in these areas experience very different conditions to those dwelling in India. Relatives of those living 'abroad' whom I met in India argued that while their relatives living in 'foreign countries' enjoyed greater financial stability and a higher standard of living, they lacked the time and facilities to pursue religious activities and to connect with Tibetan friends and family. They also missed being surrounded by *their* people and *their* culture in the way that they would have been had they remained in the Tibetan settlements of India. Tibetan children raised in Western countries, they added, tended to grow up speaking poor Tibetan. Such comments suggest that home- and place-making is pursued differently and curtailed in different ways in the sites of the secondary diaspora, and that the material categories discussed here (landscape, built environment, dress, objects) may behave differently in these contexts.

Over half a century has passed since the first Tibetans entered exile. Children of that first generation now have children of their own and there are few indications that Chinese attitudes towards Tibet will change in the near future. Meanwhile the Dalai Lama grows older, he celebrated his eightieth birthday in July of this year (6th July 2015), and the question remains: what will happen to Tibetan refugees and the Tibetan cause when he passes? Will the elected *Sikyong* take on the mantle of the charismatic leader, or will this position be assumed by a different senior religious figure? Will the role, created and shaped so much by the 14th Dalai Lama, cease to exist altogether, as he has recently suggested?[261] Whatever occurs, it is likely to represent a sea-change for

[261] In an interview with BBC Newsnight in December 2014, the 14th Dalai Lama discussed the possibility that he will be the last Dalai Lama, arguing that it would be better that the institution should cease to exist altogether than run the risk of his reincarnation being incompetent. In a statement (originally in Tibetan)

exilic politics and identity discourse, and will have ramifications for Tibetans living in Tibet and throughout the diaspora. What will happen to the exile community? Will they ever return to the place that most still think of as home?

made on 24th September 2011, he raised this possibility, noting that he intends to consult with senior lamas and the Tibetan public when he reaches the age of ninety on whether there is a need for a 15th Dalai Lama to be recognized (as mentioned above, he already transferred full temporal power to elected *Sikyong*, Dr Lobsang Sangay, in 2011). Reincarnating runs the risk of interference by the PRC, as in the case of the 11th Panchen Lama, which argues that it has the right to choose the next Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama has, elsewhere, said that he will not reincarnate within Tibet if it is not free (Dearden 2014; http://www.dalailama.com/messages/statement-of-his-holiness-the-fourteenth-dalai-lama-tenzin-gyatso-on-the-issue-of-his-reincarnation [accessed 17 May 2015]).

8 Bibliography

Adey, P. (2010) *Aerial Life: Spaces, Mobilities, Affects.* Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.

Ahmed, M. (2006) Brocade for the Buddhists: The Textile Trade between Benaras and Tibet. In *Textiles from India: The Global Trade*, ed. R. Crill, Calcutta & London: Seagull Books, pp. 9 – 26.

----- (2002) *Living Fabric: Weaving among the Nomads of Ladakh Himalaya.* Bangkok: Orchid Press.

Ahmed, M. and Vickery, S. (2010) Dress of the Exile: Tibetan. In *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion. Vol. 4.*, ed. J. Dhamija. New York: Berg, pp. 194 - 200.

Ahmed, S. (1999) Home and Away: Narratives of Migration and Estrangement. *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* 2 (3), pp. 329 - 47.

Ahmed, S., Castaneda, C., Fortier, A. and Sheller, M. (2003). *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration.* Oxford: Berg.

Al-Ali, N. and Koser, K. eds (2002) *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home.* London: Routledge.

Almond, P. (1988) *The British Discovery of Buddhism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Al-Rasheed, M. (1994) The Myth of Return: Iraqi Arab and Assyrian Refugees in London. *Journal of Refugee Studies,* 7 (2/3), pp. 119-219.

Anand, D. (2002) A Guide to Little Lhasa in India: The Role of Symbolic Geography of Dharamsala in Constituting Tibetan Diasporic Identity. In *Voices of Difference. PIATS 2000. Proceedings of the 9th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies. Vol. 8.*, ed. P.C. Klieger. Leiden, Boston & Köln: Brill, pp. 11-36.

----- (2000) (Re)imagining Nationalism: Identity and Representation in the Tibetan Diaspora of South Asia. *Contemporary South Asia,* 9 (3), pp. 271-287.

Anderson, Ben (2006) Becoming and Being Hopeful: Towards a Theory of Affect. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* 24, pp. 733-752.

Anderson, Benedict (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso.

Anon. (2000[1980]) *Tibetan National Flag and Anthem.* Dharamshala & New Delhi: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

Anon. (1986) The Re-establishment of the Tibetan Monasteries in Exile. *Choeyang,* 1 (1), pp. 49-65.

Anon. (1981) *Tibetans in Exile 1959 - 1980.* Dharamshala, India: Information Office, Central Tibetan Secretariat.

Anon. (1969) *Tibetans in Exile 1959 – 1969: Report on Ten Years of Rehabilitation in India.* New Delhi: Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Appadurai, A. (2002) Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy. In *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader,* eds. J. Xavier Inda and R. Rosaldo. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 46-64.

----- ed. (1986) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Appadurai, A. and Breckenridge, C. (1992) Museums are Good to Think: Heritage on View in India. In *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, eds. I. Karp, C. Mullen and S. Lavine. Washington & London: Smithsonian Institute, pp. 34-55.
Arakeri, A.V. (1998) *Tibetans in India: The Uprooted People and their Cultural Transplantation.* New Delhi: Reliance.
Aretxaga, B. (2003) Maddening States. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32, pp. 393-410.
Avedon, J.F. (1984) *In Exile from the Land of Snows.* London: Joseph.
Axel, B.K. (2002) The Diasporic Imaginary. *Public Culture,* 14 (2), pp. 411 - 428.
Babb, L.A. (1981) Glancing: Visual Interaction in Hinduism. *Journal of Anthropological Research,* 37 (4), pp. 387 - 401.
Banerjee, P. (2014) Forced Migration in South Asia. In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, eds. E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh G. Loescher K. Long and N. Sigona. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 613-625.
Barnett, R. (2006) *Lhasa: Streets with Memories.* New York: Columbia University Press.
----- (2001) Violated Specialness: Western Political Representations of Tibet. In *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections and Fantasies*, eds. T. Dodin and H. Räther. Boston: Wisdom Publications, pp. 269-316.
Basch, L.G., Glick Schiller, N. and Szanton Blanc, C. (1994) *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-states.* Langhorne, Pennsylvania: Gordon and Breach.
Basso, K. (1988) 'Speaking with Names': Language and Landscape among the Western Apache. *Cultural Anthropology,* 3 (2), pp. 99-130.
Basu, P. (2011) Object Diasporas, Resourcing Communities: Sierra Leonean Collections in the Global Museumscape. *Museum Anthropology,* 34 (1), pp. 28 - 42.
Basu, P. and Coleman, S. (2008) Introduction: Migrant Worlds, Material Cultures. *Mobilities,* 3 (3), pp. 313 - 330.
Beer, R. (1999) *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs.* London: Serindia.
Bell, C. (1946) *Portrait of the Dalai Lama.* London: Collins.
Bender, B. and Winer, M. eds. (2001) *Contested Landscapes: Movement, Exile and Place.* Oxford: Berg.
Benjamin, W. (1982) *Illuminations.* Suffolk: Fontana & Collins.
Bentor, Y. (1996) Literature on Consecration (rab gnas). In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre. In Honour of Geshe Lhundup Sopa*, eds. J.I. Cabézon and R.R. Jackson. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion, pp. 290-311.
----- (1993) Tibetan Tourist Thangkas in the Kathmandu Valley. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 20, pp. 107-137.
Berger, J. (1984) *And our Faces, my Heart, Brief as Photos.* London: Writers & Readers.

Bisharat, G. E. (1997) Exile to Compatriot: Transformations in the Social Identity of Palestinian Refugees in the West Bank. In *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, eds. A. Gupta and J. Ferguson. Durham & London: Duke University Press, pp. 203-233.

Bishop, P. (1989) *The Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape.* London: Athlone.

Blunt, A. (2007) Cultural Geographies of Migration: Mobility, Transnationality and Diaspora. *Progress in Human Geography,* 31 (5), pp. 684-694.

----- (2005) Cultural Geography: Cultural Geographies of Home. *Progress in Human Geography,* 29 (4), pp. 505-515.

----- (2003) Collective Memory and Productive Nostalgia: Anglo-Indian Homemaking at McCluskieganj. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* 21 (6), pp. 717-738.

Bourdieu, P. (1990a) *Outline of a Theory of Practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

----- (1990b) The Kabyle House or the World Reversed. In *The Logic of Practice*, ed. P. Bourdieu. Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press & Blackwell Publishers Ltd., pp. 271-283.

Boyden, J. (2004) Anthropology under Fire: Ethics, Researchers and Children in War. In *Children and Youth on the Front Line: Ethnography, Armed Conflict and Displacement,* eds. J. Boyden and J. de Berry. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 237-261.

Brah, A. (1996) *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities.* London: Routledge.

Brauen, M. (1997) *The Mandala: Sacred Circle in Tibetan Buddhism,* trans. Martin Willson. Boston: Shambhala.

Bray, J. (2005) Introduction: Locating Ladakhi History. In *Ladakhi Histories: Local and Regional Perspectives*, ed. J. Bray. Leiden & Boston: Brill, pp. 1-30.

Brubaker, R. (2005) The 'Diaspora' Diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 28 (1), pp. 1 - 19.

Buchli, V. (2013) *An Anthropology of Architecture.* London, New Delhi, New York & Sydney: Bloomsbury.

Buffetrille, K. (2015) A Controversy on Vegetarianism. *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines,* 31, pp. 113 – 127.

----- (2012) Self-immolation in Tibet: Some Reflections on an Unfolding History. *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines,* 25, pp. 1-17.

Burrell, K. (2012) The Objects of Christmas: The Poligics of Festive Materiality in the Lives of Polish Immigrants. In *Moving Subjects, Moving Objects: Transnationalism, Cultural Production and Emotions,* ed. M. Svašek. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 55-74.

Butler, A. (2003) *Feminism, Nationalism and Exiled Tibetan Women.* New Delhi: Kali for Women.

Calkowski, M. (1991) A Day at the Tibetan Opera: Actualised Performance and Spectacular Discourse. *American Ethnologist,* 28 (4), pp. 643 - 657.

Canniford, R. and Bajde, D. (2015) Assembling Consumption. In *Assembling Consumption: Researching Actors, Networks and Markets,* eds. R. Canniford and D. Bajde. London & New York: Routledge. [Online]. Available at: http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/OXVU1:oxfaleph020433094 [accessed 8 Dec 2015].

Carsten, J. and Hugh-Jones, S. eds. (1995) *About the House: Lévi-Strauss and Beyond.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Certeau, M. de (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Berkeley & London: University of California Press.

Chatty, D. (2014) Anthropology and Forced Migration. In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, eds. E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh G. Loescher K. Long and N. Sigona. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 74-85.

Chen, S. (2012) When 'Exile' becomes Sedentary: On the Quotidian Experiences of 'India-born' Tibetans in Dharamsala, North India. *Asian Ethnicity,* 13 (3), pp. 263-286.

----- (2009) Living with 'Tibet': The Local, the Translocal, and the Cultural Geography of Dharamsala*.* PhD. Emory University.

Christou, A. (2006) Deciphering Diaspora - Translating Transnationalism: Family Dynamics, Identity Constructions and the Legacy of 'Home' in Second-Generation Greek-American Return Migration. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 29 (6), pp. 1040-1056.

Clark, I. and Grant, A. (2015) Sexuality and Danger in the Field: Starting an Uncomfortable Conversation. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford,* 7 (1), pp. 1-14.

Clarke, A. (2001) The Aesthetics of Social Aspiration. In *Home Possessions. Material Culture Behind Closed Doors*, ed. D. Miller. Oxford & New York: Berg, pp. 23-46.

Classen, C. (1993) *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures.* London: Routledge.

Clifford, J. (1992) Traveling Cultures. In *Cultural Studies*, eds. L. Grossberg C. Nelson and P. Treichler. London: Routledge, pp. 96 - 116.

Cohen, R. (2007) *Solid, Ductile and Liquid: Changing Notions of Homeland and Home in Diaspora Studies.* QEH Working Paper Series, 1 - 17.

Conklin, B. (2007) Ski Masks, Veils, Nose-rings and Feathers: Identity on the Frontlines of Modernity. *Body Arts and Modernity,* eds. E. Ewart and M. O'Hanlon. Wantage: Sean Kingston Publishing, pp. 18 - 35.

----- (1997) Body Paint, Feathers and VCRs: Aesthetics and Authenticity in Amazonian Activism. *American Ethnologist,* 24 (4), pp. 711-737.

Connerton, P. (1989) *How Societies Remember.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coote, J. (1992) Marvels of Everyday Vision: The Anthropology of Aesthetics and Cattle-keeping Nilotes. In *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, eds. J. Coote and A. Shelton. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 245 - 273.

Coote, J. and Shelton, A. eds. (1992) *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Cornu, P. (1990) *L'Astrologie Tibétaine.* Collection Présences.
Cosgrove, D. (1985) Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 10 (1), pp. 45-62.
----- (1984) *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape.* London: Croon Helm.
Cosgrove, D. and S. Daniels eds. (1988) *The Iconography of Landscape. Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Csordas, T. (1993) Somatic Modes of Attention. *Cultural Anthropology,* 8 (2), pp. 135-156.
Dalai Lama (2011) *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World.* London, Sydney, Auckland & Johannesburg: Rider.
----- (1992) *Freedom in Exile. The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama of Tibet. Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.* London: Abacus.
----- (1977[1962]) *My Land and my People. Memoirs of the Dalai Lama of Tibet.* 4th ed. New York & Dharamsala, India: Potala Corp.
-----(1971) *Inauguration Speech* (made at the foundation-stone laying for the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 11 Jun 1971). Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. [Online]. Available from: http://www.ltwa.net/library/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49:inauguration&catid=20:default [accessed 1 Jun 2015].
Daniels, S. and Cosgrove, D. (1988) Introduction: Iconography and Landscape. In *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments,* eds. D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-10.
Das, V. and Poole, D. eds. (2004) *Anthropology in the Margins of the State.* Santa Fe & Oxford: School of American Research Press & James Currey.
Daston, L. ed. (2004) *Things That Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science.* New York: Zone Books.
Dearden, L. (2014) Dalai Lama: 'I would rather be the last Dalai Lama than see a stupid person take my place', 17 Dec. [Online]. Available from: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/dalai-lama-i-would-rather-be-the-last-dalai-lama-than-see-a-stupid-person-take-my-place-9929988.html [accessed 6 Aug 2015].
Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1994) *What is Philosophy?* Trans. G. Burchell and H. Tomlinson. London: Verso.
Demick, B. (2015) Tibet's Road Ahead: Tibetans Lose a Haven in Nepal under Chinese Pressure. *Los Angeles Times,* 6 Aug. [Online]. Available from: http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/01/nepal-increased-pressure-china-threatens-tibetans [accessed 6 Aug 2015].
Diehl, K. (2002) *Echoes from Dharamsala: Music in the Life of a Tibetan Refugee Community.* Berkeley, Calif. & London: University of California Press.
Dodin, T. and Räther, H. eds. (2001) *Imagining Tibet: Projections, Perceptions and Fantasies.* Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Dollfus, P. (1989) *Lieu de Neige et de Genévriers. Organisation Sociale et Religieuse des Communautés Bouddhistes du Ladakh.* Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

Dowman, K. (1988) *The Power-places of Central Tibet: The Pilgrim's Guide.* London: Routledge.

Dudley, S. (2010) *Materialising Exile: Material Culture and Embodied Experience among Karenni Refugees in Thailand.* New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Dufoix, S. (2008) *Diasporas.* Berkeley & London: University of California Press.

Duncan, J. and Ley, D. eds. (1993) *Place/Culture/Representation.* London & New York: Routledge.

Dyke, M. Van (1997) Grids and Serpents: a Tibetan Foundation Ritual in Switzerland. In *Constructing Tibetan Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. F. J. Korom. Quebec: Contemporary World Heritage Press, pp. 178 - 227.

Eastmond, M. (2007) Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research. *Journal of Refugee Studies,* 20 (2), pp. 248-264.

Edwards, E., Gosden, C. and Phillips, R. eds. (2006) *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture.* Oxford: Berg.

Eicher, J.B. ed. (1995) *Dress and Ethnicity.* Oxford & Washington D. C.: Berg.

Ewart, E. (2007) Black Paint, Red Paint and a Wristwatch. In *Body Arts and Modernity,* eds. E. Ewart and M. O'Hanlon. Wantage: Sean Kingston Publishing, pp. 36 – 52.

Feld, S. and Basso, K. (1996) Introduction. In *Senses of Place,* eds. S. Feld and K. Basso. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, pp. 3 – 11.

Figueiredo, B. (2015) Home in Mobility: An Exercise in Assemblage Thinking. In *Assembling Consumption: Researching Actors, Networks and Markets,* eds. R. Canniford and D. Badje. London & New York: Routledge. [Online]. Available from: http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/OXVU1:oxfaleph020433094 [accessed 8 Dec 2015].

Foucault, M. (1979) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison.* New York: Random House.

Frechette, A. (2007) Democracy and Democratization among Tibetans in Exile. *Journal of Asian Studies,* 66 (1), pp. 97 - 127.

Fürer-Haimendorf, C. von (1990) *The Renaissance of Tibetan Civilization.* Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays.* New York: Basic Books

Gell, A. (1998) *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory.* Oxford: Clarendon.

----- (1995) On Coote's 'Marvels of Everyday Vision.' *Social Analysis,* 38, pp. 18 - 31.

----- (1992) The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology. In *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, eds. J. Coote and A. Shelton. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 40 - 63.

Gennep, A. van (1960) *The Rites of Passage.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Goldstein, M.C. (1989a) *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

----- (1989b) Freedom, Servitude and the 'Servant-serf' Nyima: A Rejoinder to Miller. *Tibet Journal,* 14 (2), pp. 56-60.
----- (1988) On the Nature of the Tibetan Peasantry: A Rejoinder. *Tibet Journal,* 13 (1), pp. 61-65.
----- (1986) Re-examining Choice, Dependency and Command in the Tibetan Social System: 'Tax-appendages' and other Landless Serfs. *Tibet Journal,* 11 (4), pp. 79-112.
----- (1975) Ethnogenesis and Resource Competition among Tibetan Refugees in South India: A New Face to the Indo-Tibetan Interface. In *Ethnicity and Resource Competition in Plural Societies,* ed. L. A. Despres. Paris: Mouton Publishers, pp. 159 - 186.
Goldstein, M.C., Jiao, B. and Lhundrup, T. (2009) *On the Cultural Revolution in Tibet: the Nyemo Incident of 1969.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Gosden, C. (1999) *Anthropology and Archaeology: A Changing Relationship.* London & New York: Routledge.
Graham, J. (2006) The Contemporary use of Gyasar Brocade in Qinghai Province, China (Amdo, Tibet). In *Textiles from India: The Global Trade*, ed. R. Crill. Oxford, New York & Calcutta: Seagull Books, pp. 27-38.
Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. eds. (1997) *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology.* Durham & London: Duke University Press.
Gyatsho, T. L. (1979) *Gateway to the Temple: Manual of Tibetan Monastic Customs, Art, Building and Celebrations,* trans. D. P. Jackson. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
Gyatso, J. (1987) Down with the Demoness: Reflections on a Feminine Ground in Tibet. In *Feminine Ground: Essays on Women and Tibet*, ed. J.D. Willis. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion, pp. 33 - 51.
Gyatso, L. L. (2004) *Tibetan Traditional Dress (mdo smad).* McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala: Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts.
Hall, S. (1990) Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. J. Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, pp. 222 - 237.
Hansen, K. T. (2004) The World in Dress: Anthropological Perspectives on Clothing, Fashion, and Culture. *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 33, pp. 369-392.
Hansen, P. (2003) Why is there no Subaltern Studies for Tibet? *Tibet Journal,* 28 (4), pp. 7-22.
Haraway, D. (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature,* ed. D. Haraway. London: Free Association Books.
Harris, C. (2012) *The Museum on the Roof of the World: Art, Politics, and the Representation of Tibet.* Chicago & London: Chicago University Press.
----- (2006) The Buddha goes Global: Some Thoughts towards a Transnational Art History. *Art History,* 29 (4), pp. 698 - 720.
----- (2004) The Photograph Reincarnate: The Dynamics of Tibetan Relationships with Photography. In *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images,* eds. E. Edwards and J. Hart. London: Routledge, pp. 139 – 155.

----- (2001) The Politics and Personhood of Tibetan Buddhist Icons. In *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the Technologies of Enchantment*, eds. C. Pinney and N. Thomas. Oxford: Berg, pp. 181 - 200.
----- (1999) *In the Image of Tibet: Tibetan Painting after 1959.* London: Reaktion.
Harris, T. (2013) *Geographical Diversions: Tibetan Trade, Global Transactions.* Athens, U.S.: University of Georgia Press.
Hecht, A. (2001) Home Sweet Home: Tangible Memories of an Uprooted Childhood. In *Home Possessions: Material Culture behind Closed Doors*, ed. D. Miller. Oxford & New York: Berg, pp. 123-145.
Heidegger, M. (1971) *Poetry, Language, Thought,* trans. A. Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row.
Hertz, R. (1960) *Death and the Right Hand,* trans. R. Needham and C. Needham. Aberdeen: Cohen and West.
Hess, J. M. (2009) *Immigrant Ambassadors: Citizenship and Belonging in the Tibetan Diaspora.* Stanford: Stanford University Press
Hirsch, E. and O'Hanlon, M. eds. (1995) *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
----- (1995) Introduction. Landscape: Between Place and Space. In *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space,* eds. E. Hirsch and M. O'Hanlon. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 1-30.
Hirsch, M. (1997) *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory.* Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press.
Hobsbawm, E. (1983) Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-14.
Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T.O. eds. (1983) *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.
Horn, M. (1975[1968]). *The Second Skin: An Interdisciplinary Study of Clothing.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
Houssain, K. (1997) Refugees and Rights: A South Asian Perspective. In *The State of the World's Refugees: A Humanitarian Agenda*, ed. UNHCR. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 78-79.
Houston, S. and Wright, R. (2003) Making and Remaking Tibetan Diasporic Identities. *Social and Cultural Geography,* 4 (2), pp. 218 - 232.
Howes, D. (2006) Scent, Sound and Synaesthesia. In *Handbook of Material Culture*, eds. C. Tilley, W. Keane, S. Küchler, M. Rowlands and P. Spyer. London: Sage, pp. 161-172.
Howes, D. (2005) *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader.* Oxford: Berg.
Huber, T. (2008) *The Holy Land Reborn: Pilgrimage and the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India.* Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
----- (2006) The Skor lam and the Long March: Notes on the Transformation of Tibetan Ritual Territory in Southern Amdo in the Context of Chinese Developments. *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies,* 2, pp. 1 - 42.

----- (2001) Shangri-La in Exile: Representations of Tibetan Identity and Transnational Culture. In *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections and Fantasies*, eds. T. Dodin and H. Räther. Boston: Wisdom Publications, pp. 357-372.

----- (1997) Green Tibetans: A Brief Social History. In *Tibetan Culture in Diaspora. PIATS 1995. Papers presented at the panel of the 7th seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies. Vol. 4.*, ed. F. J. Korom. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 102 - 119.

----- (1994) Putting the Gnas back into Gnas-skor: Rethinking Tibetan Buddhist Pilgrimage Practice. *Tibet Journal,* 19 (2), pp. 23 - 60.

Hurdley, R. (2013) *Home, Materiality, Memory and Belonging. Keeping Culture.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ingold, T. (2000) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill.* London & New York: Routledge.

Joffe, B. (2015) *Angry White Buddhists and the Dalai Lama: Appropriation and Politics in the Globalization of Tibetan Buddhism.* Savage Minds. Notes and Queries in Anthropology. [Online]. Available from: <http://savageminds.org/2015/02/01/angry-white-buddhists-and-the-dalai-lama-appropriation-and-politics-in-the-globalization-of-tibetan-buddhism/> [accessed 1 Apr 2015].

Josayma, C. B. (1986) The Folk Opera of Tibet. *Choeyang,* 1 (1), pp. 111-118.

Kapstein, M. (2013) *Tibetan Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Karmay, H. (1977) Tibetan Costume, Seventh to Eleventh Centuries. In *Essays sur l'Art du Tibet*, eds. A.W. Macdonald and Y. Imaeda. Paris: Libraire d'Amérique et d'Orient, pp. 64-81.

Karmay, S. (1994) Mountain Cults and National Identity in Tibet. In *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, eds. S. Akiner and R. Barnett. London: Hurst, pp. 112 - 120.

Kauffman, T. (2011) Put Your Compassion into Action: The Political and Religious Agendas of the Central Tibetan Administration in a World of Transnational Organisations. DPhil. University of Oxford.

Kerin, M. (2013) Materiality of Devotion: Tibetan Buddhist Shrines of the Western Himalaya. In *Art of Merit: Studies in Buddhist Art and its Conservation: Proceedings of the Buddhist Art Forum 2012*, eds. D. Park, K. Wangmo and S. Cather. London: Archetype Publications, pp. 286-296.

Kerin, M., Andrews, V. and Cribb, B. (2014) Tibet Field Report, July 2014: Devotional Imagery at Buddhist Shrines. *Orientations,* 45 (8), pp. 115-118.

Khosla, R. (1979) *Buddhist Monasteries in the Western Himalaya.* Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (1990) Objects of Ethnography. In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Display*, eds. I. Karp and S.D. Lavine. London & New York: Leicester University Press, pp. 386-443.

Kleisath, C. M. (2014) The Costume of Shangri-La: Thoughts on White Privilege, Cultural Appropriation, and Anti-Asian Racism. *Journal of Lesbian Studies,* 18 (2), pp. 142-157.

Klieger, P.C. (2002a) Engendering Tibet: Power, Self and Change in the Diaspora. In *Voices of Difference. PIATS 2000. Proceedings of the 9th seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies. Vol. 8.*, ed. P.C. Klieger. Leiden, Boston & Köln: Brill, pp. 139-154.

----- ed. (2002b) *Tibet, Self, and the Tibetan Diaspora. Voices of Difference. PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 9th seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000.* Leiden, Boston & Köln: Brill.

----- (1997) Shangri-La and Hyperreality: A Collision in Tibetan Refugee Expression. In *Tibetan Culture in the Diaspora. Papers presented at a panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, ed. F.J. Korom. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 59-67.

----- (1991) *Tibetan Nationalism: The Role of Patronage in the Accomplishment of a National Identity.* Delhi: Archana Publications.

Korom, F.J. (1999) Tibetan Culture in Exile: A Euro-American Perspective. *Passages: Journal of Transnational and Transcultural Studies,* 1 (1), pp. 1-23.

----- ed. (1997) *Constructing Tibetan Culture: Contemporary Perspectives.* Quebec: World Heritage Press.

Kratz, C. (2011) Rhetorics of Value: Constituting Worth and Meaning through Cultural Display. *Visual Anthropology Review,* 21 (1), pp. 21 - 48.

Küchler, S., and Miller, D. eds. (2005) *Clothing as Material Culture.* Oxford & New York: Berg.

Latour, B. (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern.* Hemel Hampstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Lau, T. (2012) Sweater Business: Commodity Exchange and the Mediation of Agency in the Tibetan Itinerant Sweater Trade in India. In *Moving Subjects, Moving Objects: Transnationalism, Cultural Production and Emotions,* ed. M. Svašek. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 96-116.

----- (2009) Tibetan Fears and Indian Foes: Fears of Cultural Extinction and Antagonism as Discursive Strategy. *Explorations in Anthropology,* 9 (1), pp. 81-90.

Law, J. (2009) Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics. In *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory,* ed. B. Turner. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 141-158.

Lee, R. B. (2006) Twenty-first Century Indigenism. *Anthropological Theory,* 6 (4), pp. 455-479.

Lefebvre, H. 1991[1974] *The Production of Space.* Oxford, UK & Cambridge, USA: Blackwell.

Leonard, K. (1997) Finding One's Own Place: Asian Landscapes Re-visioned in Rural California. In *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, eds. A. Gupta and J. Ferguson. Durham & London: Duke University Press, pp. 118-136.

Leys, R. (2011) The Turn to Affect: A Critique. *Critical Inquiry,* 37 (Spring), pp. 434-472).

Levine, N. (1988) *The Dynamics of Polyandry: Kinship, Domesticity and Population on the Tibetan Border.* Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
Lévi-Strauss, C. (1982) *The Way of the Masks.* Seattle: University of Washington Press.
Lindegger, P. (1988) *20 Jahre Klösterliches Tibet-Institut Rikon/Zurich.* Rikon: Klösterliches Tibet-Institut.
Lokyitsang, D. (2013) *Non-refugee Refugees: Tibetans' Struggles for Visibility in Bureaucratic India.* Lhakar Diaries. [Online]. Available from: <http://lhakardiaries.com/2013/10/02/non-refugee-refugees-tibetans-struggles-for-visibility-in-bureaucratic-india/> [accessed 2 Apr 2015].
Lopez, D. (1998) *Prisoners of Shangri-La. Tibetan Buddhism and the West.* Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
Mackenzie, C., McDowell, C. and Pittaway, E. (2007) Beyond 'Do No Harm': The Challenge of Constructing Ethical Relationships in Refugee Research. *Journal of Refugee Studies,* 20 (2), pp. 299-319.
MacPherson, S., Bentz, A. and Ghoso, D. B. 2008. Global Nomads: The Emergence of the Tibetan Diaspora (Part I), *Migration Information Source* (Sep 2). [Online]. Available from: http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/global-nomads-emergence-tibetan-diaspora-part-i [accessed 28 Jul 2015].
Madheshiya, A. and Abraham S. n.d. Tiled Gods Appear on Mumbai's Streets. In *Tasveer Ghar: A Digital Archive of South Asian Popular Visual Culture.* [Online]. Available from: http://www.tasveergharindia.net/cmsdesk/essay/51/index.html [accessed 14 Dec 2015].
Magnusson, J. (2002) A Myth of Tibet: Reverse Orientalism and Soft Power. In *Tibet, Self, and the Tibetan Diaspora: Voices of Difference. PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 9th seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000*, ed. P.C. Klieger. Leiden, Boston & Cologne: Brill, pp. 195-212.
Mahler, S. (1998) Theoretical and Empirical Contributions: Toward a Research Agenda for Transnationalism. In *Transnationalism from Below*, eds. M.P. Smith and L.E. Guarnizo. New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Publishers, pp. 64 - 100.
Makley, C. (2007) *The Violence of Liberation: Gender and Tibetan Buddhist Revival in Post-Mao China.* Berkeley & London: University of California Press.
Malkki, L. (1995) *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania.* Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
----- (1992) National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees. *Cultural Anthropology,* 7 (1), pp. 24-44.
Marcus, G. (1995) Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 24, pp. 95-117.
Markowitz, F. (2004) Talking about Culture: Globalization, Human Rights and Anthropology. *Anthropological Theory,* 4 (3), pp. 329-352.
Martin, E. (2013) The Potentiality of Ethnography and the Limits of Affect Theory. *Current Anthropology,* 54 (S7), pp. S149-158.

Massumi, B. (2002) *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect and Sensation.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Mata-Codesal, D. (2010) Eating Abroad, Remembering (at) Home: Three Foodscapes of Ecuadorian Migration in New York, London and Santander. *Anthropology of Food,* 7. [Online]. Available from: <http://aof.revues.org/6642> [accessed 11 May 2015].

Mauss, M. (1979) *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*, trans. B. Brewster. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

McConnell, F. (2013) Citizens and Refugees: Construction and Negotiating Tibetan Identities in Exile. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers,* 103 (4), pp. 967-983.

----- (2011) A State within a State? Exploring Relations between the Indian State and the Tibetan Community and Government-in-Exile. *Contemporary South Asia,* 19 (3), pp. 297 - 313.

----- (2009) De Facto, Displaced, Tacit: The Sovereign Articulations of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. *Political Geography,* 28 (6), pp. 343 - 352.

McConnell, F. and Tsering, T. (2013) *Lhakar: Proud to be Tibetan.* Open Democracy. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/fiona-mcconnell-tenzin-tsering/lhakar-proud-to-be-tibetan> [accessed 18 Jan 2014].

McGranahan, C. (2010) *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War.* Durham: Duke University Press.

McGuckin, E. (1997) Tibetan Carpets: From Folk Arts to Global Commodity. *Journal of Material Culture,* 2 (3), pp. 291-310.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1989) *Phenomenology of Perception.* London: Routledge.

Miller, D. (2010) *Stuff.* Cambridge, UK & Malden, USA: Polity Press.

----- (2008) *The Comfort of Things.* Cambridge, U.K. & Malden, M. A.: Polity.

----- ed. (2005) *Materiality.* Durham: Duke University Press.

----- ed. (2001) *Home Possessions: Material Culture behind Closed Doors.* Oxford & New York: Berg.

Misra, A. (2003) A Nation in Exile: Tibetan Diaspora and the Dynamics of Long Distance Nationalism. *Asian Ethnicity,* 4 (2), pp. 189-206.

Mitchell, D. (2002) Cultural Landscapes: The Dialectical Landscape – Recent Landscape Research in Human Geography. *Progress in Human Geography* 26 (3), pp. 381-389.

Moors, A. and Tarlo, E. (2013). Introduction. In *Islamic Fashion and Anti-fashion: New Perspectives from Europe and North America,* eds. E. Tarlo and A. Moors. London, New Delhi, New York & Sydney: Bloomsbury, pp. 1-30.

Morphy, H. (1995) Landscape and the Reproduction of the Ancestral Past. In *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives of Place and Space*, eds. E. Hirsch and M. O'Hanlon. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 184-209.

----- (1989) From Dull to Brilliant: The Aesthetics of Spiritual Power among the Yolngu. *Man,* 24 (1), pp. 21-40.

Morphy, H., Overing, J., Coote, J. and Gow, P. (1994) *Aesthetics is a Cross-cultural Category: A Debate Held in the Muriel Stott Centre, John Rylands University, Library of Manchester, on 30th October 1993, edited by James Weiner.* Group for Debates in Anthropological Theory.

Motasim, H. and Heynen, H. (2011) At Home with Displacement? Material Culture as a Site of Resistance in Sudan. *Home Cultures,* 8 (1), pp. 43-70.

Müller, M. (2015) Assemblages and Actor-networks: Rethinking Socio-material Power, Politics and Space. *Geography Compass,* 9 (1), pp. 27-41.

Munn, N. (1983) Spatiotemporal Control and the Symbolism of Influence. In *The Kula: New Perspectives on Massim Exchange,* eds. E. Leach and J. Leach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 277-308.

Namgyal, T. (2006) *Little Lhasa: Reflections on Exiled Tibet.* Mumbai: Indus Source Books.

Navaro-Yashin, Y (2012) *The Make-Believe Space: Affective Geography in a Postwar Polity.* Durham & London: Duke University Press.

----- (2006) Affect in the Civil Service: A Study of a Modern State-System. *Postcolonial Studies,* 9 (3), pp. 281-294.

Nebesky-Wojkovitz, R. (1956) *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities.* The Hague: Mouton & Co.

Norbu, J. (2015a) *Freedom Wind, Freedom Song -1.* Shadow Tibet. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.jamyangnorbu.com/blog/2015/02/12/freedom-wind-freedom-song-1/> [accessed 18 Apr 2014].

----- (2015b) *Early International Awareness of the Tibetan National Flag.* Shadow Tibet. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.jamyangnorbu.com/blog/2015/02/28/early-international-awareness-of-the-tibetan-national-flag/> [accessed 18 Apr 2014]

----- (2005) *Back to the Future: Enduring Phobias and Superstitions in Tibetan Society (Part Two).* Phayul. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=9412&t=1&c=4> [accessed 1 Apr 2015].

Nowak, M. (1984) *Tibetan Refugees: Youth and the New Generation of Meaning.* New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press.

Oberi, P. (2006) *Exile and Belonging: Refugees and State Policy in South Asia.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Oliver, P. (1987) *Dwellings: The House across the World.* Oxford: Phaidon.

Olwig, KEF. (2003) 'Transnational' Socio-cultural Systems and Ethnographic Research: Views from an Extended Field Site. *International Migration Review,* 37 (143), pp. 787 - 811.

Ong, A. (1999) *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality.* Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Palakshappa, T.C. (1978) *Tibetans in India: A Case Study of Mundgod Tibetans.* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.

Panchen Ötrul Rinpoche (1987) The Consecration Ritual (Rabney). *Chöyang,* 1 (2), pp. 53-65.

Parkin, D. (1999) Mementoes as Transitional Objects in Human Displacement. *Journal of Material Culture,* 4 (3), pp. 303 - 320.
Parrott, F. (2005) 'It's Not Forever.' The Material Culture of Hope. *Journal of Material Culture,* 10 (3), pp. 245-262.
Pinney, C. (1997) *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs.* London: Reaktion Books.
Pinney, C. and Thomas, N. eds. (2001) *Beyond Aesthetics.* London: Berg.
Pirie, F. (2007) *Peace and Conflict in Ladakh: The Construction of a Fragile Web of Order.* Boston: Brill.
Planning Commission (2009) *Demographic Survey of Tibetans.* Dharamsala: Central Tibetan Administration.
----- (1998) *Tibetan Demographic Survey - 1998.* Dharamsala: Central Tibetan Administration.
Ramble, C. (1997). The Creation of the Bon Mountain of Kongpo. In *Mandala and Landscape,* ed. A. W. Macdonald. New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, pp. 133-232.
----- (1995) Gaining Ground: Representations of Territory in Bon and Tibetan Popular Tradition. *Tibet Journal,* 20 (1), pp. 83 - 124.
Rapport, N. and Dawson, A. eds. (1998) *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement.* Oxford & New York: Berg.
Read, C. J. (2014) Un-settlement: Demolition, Home Remaking, and the Everyday Politics of Citizenship in a Low-Income Delhi Neighbourhood. *Home Cultures,* 11 (2), pp. 197-218.
Renne, E. P. (2012) What to Wear? Dress and Transnational African Identity. In *West African Migrations: Transnational and Global Pathways in a New Century*, eds. M. O. Okome and O. Vaughan. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 77-100.
Repo, J. (2011) The Buddhist Architecture of the Tibetan Diaspora in India. PhD. School of Oriental and African Studies.
Reynolds, R. (2012) Homemaking, Homebuilding, and the Significance of Place and Kin in Rural Kyrgyzstan. *Home Cultures,* 9 (3), pp. 285-302.
Richardson, H. (1962) *Tibet and its History.* London, Toronto & Melbourne: Shambhala.
Rizvi, J. (1996) *Ladakh: Crossroads of High Asia.* Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Rogers, C. (2008) *Where Rivers Meet: A Tibetan Refugee Community's Struggle to Survive in the High Mountains of Nepal.* Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point.
Rolfe, E. (2008) Refugee, Minority, Citizen, Threat: Tibetans and the Indian Refugee Script. *South Asia Research,* 28 (3), pp. 253 - 283.
Russell, J. (2000) *Dharamsala: Tibetan Refuge.* New Delhi: Roli & Janssen BV.
Safran, W. (1999) Comparing Diasporas: A Review Essay. *Diaspora. A Journal of Transnational Studies,* 8 (3), pp. 225-291.
----- (1991) Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return. *Diaspora. A Journal of Transnational Studies,* 1 (1), pp. 83-99.
Saklani, G. (1984) *The Uprooted Tibetans in India: A Sociological Study of Continuity and Change.* New Delhi: Cosmo.
Samuel, G. (1993) *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies.* Washington, D.C & London: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Sauer, C. (1963[1925]) The Morphology of Landscape. In *Land and Life: A Selection from the Writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer,* ed. J. Leighly. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 315-350.

Savaş, Ö. (2010) The Collective Turkish home in Vienna: Aesthetic Narratives of Migration and Belonging. *Home Cultures,* 7 (3), pp. 313-340.

Schaik, S. van (2011) *Tibet: A History.* New Haven, Conn. & London: Yale University Press

Schwartz, R. (1994) *Circle of Protest: Political Ritual in the Tibetan Uprising.* London: C. Hurst & Co.

Semple, W. (1992) Symbolism and Ritual in Tibetan Architecture. *Choeyang,* 5, pp. 105-116.

Seremetakis, N.C. (1994) The Memory of the Senses, Part I: Marks of the Transitory. In *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity*, ed. N.C. Seremetakis. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1 - 18.

Shakya, T. (1999) *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947.* London: Pimlico.

----- (1993) Whither the Tsampa Eaters? *Himal,* 6 (5), pp. 8-11.

Shakya, T. and Blondeau, A. (2008) Why was the Issue of 'Tibetan Independence' raised early in this century? In *Authenticating Tibet: Answers to China's 100 Questions*, eds. A. Blondeau and K. Buffetrille. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, pp. 39-44.

Sharling, T. D. (n.d.) Hysteria: Reproductive Governance in the Tibetan Community in Exile – Discrepancies and Digressions. [Online]. Available from: http://www.hystericalfeminisms.com/reproductive-governance-in-the-tibetan-community-in-exile-discrepancies-and-digressions/ [accessed 10 Dec 2015].

Sharma, J. (2003) *Architectural Heritage: Ladakh.* New Delhi: Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) & Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd.

Sigona, N. (2014) The Politics of Refugee Voices: Representations, Narratives, and Memories. In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, eds. E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh G. Loescher K. Long and N. Sigona. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 369-382.

Singh, K. 2015. Ghosts of Future Nations, or The Uses of the Holocaust Museum Paradigm in India. In *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies: Museum Transformations,* eds. A. E. Coombes and R. B. Phillips. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 29 - 60.

----- (2010) Repatriation without Patria: Repatriating for Tibet. *Journal of Material Culture,* 15 (2), pp. 131 - 155.

Snellgrove, D. L. and Richardson, H. (2003[1968]) *A Cultural History of Tibet.* Bangkok: Orchid Press.

Sonam, B. D. (2012 [2009]) *Songs from a Distance.* Dharamsala: TibetWrites.

Spivak, G. C. (1996[1985]) Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography. In *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak,* eds. D. Landry and G. MacLean. London: Routledge, pp. 203-235.

Spooner, B. (1986) Weavers and Dealers: The Authenticity of an Oriental Carpet. In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective,* ed. A. Appadurai. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 195-235.

Stein, R. A. (1972) *Tibetan Civilization.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Stewart, S. (1993). *On Longing. Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection.* Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Stoler, A. Affective States. In *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics,* eds. D. Nugent and J. Vincent. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 5-20.

Subba, T.B. (2002) One or Many Paths: Coping with the Tibetan Refugees in India. In *Dimensions of Displaced People in North-East India*, ed. C.J. Thomas. New Delhi: Regency, pp. 131-148.

----- (1990) *Flight and Adaptation: Tibetan Refugees in the Darjeeling-Sikkim Himalaya.* Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

Sutherland, P. (2011) Photographing the Buchen. In *Disciples of a Crazy Saint. The Buchen of Spiti,* eds. P. Sutherland and T. Tsering. Oxford: Pitt Rivers Museum, pp. 7-25.

Svašek, M. (2012) Introduction. Affective Moves: Transit, Transition and Transformation. In *Moving Subjects, Moving Objects: Transnationalism, Cultural Production and Emotions,* ed. M. Svašek. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 1-40.

----- ed. (2012) *Moving Subjects, Moving Objects: Transnationalism, Cultural Production and Emotions.* New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Swank, H. (2014) *Rewriting Shangri-La: Tibetan Youth, Migrations and Literacies in McLeod Ganj, India.* Leiden: Brill.

----- (2011) A Wanderer in a Distant Place: Tibetan Exile Youth, Literacy, and Emotion. *International Migration,* 49 (6), pp. 50-73.

Tarlo, E. (2010) *Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics, Faith.* Oxford & New York: Berg.

----- (1996) *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India.* London: Hurst.

Tarlo, E. and Moors A. eds. (2013) *Islamic Fashion and Anti-fashion: New Perspectives from Europe and North America.* London, Delhi, New York & Sydney: Bloomsbury.

Thrift, N. (2008) *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect.* London & New York: Routledge.

Tilley, C. (1994) *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments.* Oxford: Berg.

Tolia-Kelly, D. (2004) Locating Processes of Identification: Studying the Precipitates of Re-memory through Artefacts in the British Asian Home. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 29 (3), pp. 314 - 329.

Tölölyan, K. (1996) Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment. *Diaspora. A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 5 (1), pp. 3 - 36.

----- (1991) The Nation-State and Its Others: In Lieu of a Preface. *Diaspora. A Journal of Transnational Studies,* 1 (1), pp. 3 - 7.

Tsering, Tashi (2001) Reflections on thang stong rgyal po as the Founder of the a lce lha mo Tradition of Tibetan Performing Arts. *Lungta* 15, pp. 36-60.

Tsering, Topden (1999) The Opera Power. *Tibetan Bulletin,* 3 (3), pp. 12-14.

Tsundue, T. (2002) *Kora: Stories and Poems.* 6th ed. Dharamsala: TibetWrites.
Tuan, Y. (1977) *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Tucci, G. (1980) *The Religions of Tibet.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Turan, Z. (2010) Material Objects as Facilitating Environments: the Palestinian Diaspora. *Home Cultures,* 7 (1), pp. 43-58.
Turner, V. (1995 [1969]) *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure.* Hawthorne, N. Y.: Aldine de Gruyter.
----- (1967) *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual.* Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
Turton, D. (2005) The Meaning of Place in a World of Movement: Lessons from Long-term Field Research in Southern Ethiopia. *Journal of Refugee Studies,* 18 (3), pp. 258 - 280.
United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (2003) *India: information on Tibetan refugees and settlements.* Available from: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3f51f90821.html> [accessed 11 May 2015].
Ureta, S. (2007) Domesticating Homes: Material Transformation and Decoration among Low-income Families in Santiago, Chile. *Home Cultures,* 4 (3), pp. 311-336.
Vertovec, S. (2003) Migration and other Modes of Transnationalism: Towards Conceptual Cross-fertilization. *International Migration Review,* 37 (3), pp. 641 - 665.
Walsh, E. (1938) The Image of Buddha in the Jo-wo-khang Temple at Lhasa. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland,* 4, pp. 535-540.
Walsh, K. (2006) British Expatriate Belongings: Mobile Homes and Transnational Homing. *Home Cultures,* 3 (2), pp. 123-144.
Warner, C. D. (2013) Hope and Sorrow: Uncivil Religion, Tibetan Music Videos and YouTube. *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology,* 78 (4), pp. 543-568.
Werbner, P. and Fumanti, M. (2014) The Aesthetics of Diaspora: Sensual Milieus and Literary Worlds. In *Arts and Aesthetics in a Globalizing World,* eds. R. Kaur and P. Dave-Mukherji. London, New Delhi, New York & Sydney: Bloomsbury, pp. 153-168.
Wilson, E. (2003) *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity.* London: I. B. Tauris.
Winnicott, D. (2001[1971]) *Playing and Reality.* New York: Bruner Routledge.
----- (1991[1964]) *The Child, the Family and the Outside world.* London: Penguin.
Woodcock, G. (1970) Tibetan Refugees in a Decade of Exile. *Pacific Affairs,* 43 (3), pp. 410 - 420.
Woodward, S. (2005) Looking Good, Feeling Right: Aesthetics of the Self. In *Clothing as Material Culture*, eds. S. Küchler and D. Miller. Oxford: Berg, pp. 21 - 39.
Wylie, J. (2007) *Landscape.* Abingdon & New York: Routledge.
Yeh, E. (2013) *Taming Tibet: Landscape Transformation in the Gift of Chinese Development.* Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
----- (2007) Exile meets Homeland: Politics, Performance, and Authenticity in the Tibetan Diaspora. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* 25 (4), pp. 648 - 681.

----- (2002) Will the Real Tibetan Please Stand Up! Identity Politics in the Tibetan Diaspora. In *Tibet, Self, and the Tibetan Diaspora: Voices of Difference. PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies. Proceedings of the 9th seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000*, ed. P.C. Klieger. Leiden, Boston & Cologne: Brill, pp. 229-254.

Yeshi, Kim (2006) Norbulingka Institute: The Beginning. A personal memoir by Kim Yeshi. In *Norbulingka: The First Ten Years of an Adventure,* ed. J. Russell. New Delhi: Norbulingka Institute, pp. 11-38.

8.1 Websites

aaanet.org/issues/policy-advocacy/upload/AAA-Ethics-Code-2009.pdf [accessed 10 May 2015]

angrytibetangirl.tumblr.com [accessed 11 May 2015]

centraltibetanreliefcommittee.org/settlements/india/north/jangthang.html [accessed 11 Sep 2014].

centraltibetanreliefcommittee.org/settlements/india/north/sonamling.html [accessed 12 Dec 2014]

centraltibetanreliefcommittee.org/settlements/india/south/doeguling.html [accessed 8 Dec 2014]

daijiworld.com/news/news_disp.asp?n_id=163606 [accessed 8 Apr 2015]

dalailama.com/messages/statement-of-his-holiness-the-fourteenth-dalai-lama-tenzin-gyatso-on-the-issue-of-his-reincarnation [accessed 17 May 2015]

dechenpemba.wordpress.com/page/2/ [accessed 8 Apr 2015]

facebook.com/185214558255468/photos/pb.185214558255468.-2207520000.1410359165./245577182219205/?type=3&theatre [accessed 1 Apr 2015]

himachaltourism.gov.in/post/dharamshala.aspx [accessed 4 May 2015].

hrw.org/news/2008/03/13/china-india-nepal-free-tibetan-protesters [accessed 25 Mar 2015]

hrw.org/news/2014/04/01/nepal-increased-pressure-china-threatens-tibetans [accessed 11 May 2015]

hrw.org/world-report-2009/china [accessed 25 Mar 2015]

lhakardiaries.com [accessed 11 May 2015]

lhakardiaries.com/2011/09/28/identities-large-and-small-2/ [accessed 8 Apr 2015]

lhakardiaries.com/2014/01/15/are-you-a-t-please-take-our-survey/ [accessed 8 Apr 2015]

ltwa.net/library/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49:inauguration&catid=20:default [accessed 7 Apr 2015]

ltwa.net/library/index.php?option=com_multicategories&view=categories&cid=15&Itemid=7 [accessed 7 Apr 2015]

phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=31994&article=Tibetans+on+'encroached'+land+in+Dharamshala+to+be+evicted+by+March+31 [accessed 6 Apr 2015]

savetibet.org/images-from-tibet-on-the-first-day-of-losar/ [accessed 16 Apr 2015]

savetibet.org/resources/fact-sheets/self-immolations-by-tibetans/ [accessed 12 May 2015]
savetibet.org/resources/fact-sheets/self-immolations-by-tibetans/#inexile [accessed 12 May 2015]
theasa.org/downloads/ASA%20ethics%20guidelines%202011.pdf [accessed 10 May 2015]
thlib.org/reference/transliteration/phconverter.php [accessed 12 Dec 2015]
tibet.net/2012/04/19/india-nod-to-extension-of-rc-for-5-years/ [accessed 2 Apr 2015]
tibet.net/2013/08/24/ten-questions-for-sikyong-dr-lobsang-sangay/ [accessed 2 Apr 2015]
tibet.net/2014/01/30/tibets-panchen-lama-25-years-after/ [accessed 16 Apr 2015]
tibet.net/2015/06/dharamshala-road-named-potala-road-by-chief-minister/ [accessed 23 Jun 2015]
tibet.net/about-cta/executive/ [accessed 24 Mar 2015]
tibet.net/factsheet-immolation-2011-2012/ [accessed 12 May 2015]
tibetanfeministcollective.org [accessed 11 May 2015]
tibet.net/home/ [accessed 17 Jul 2015]
tibetanwomen.org/history/ [accessed 19 Apr 2015]

9 Appendix I Glossary of Tibetan spellings in Wylie transliteration

Phonetic	Wylie
a chak	a lcag
a ché lha mo	a lce lha mo
a ni	a ni
a zhang	a zhang
a ma	a ma
Amdo	a mdo
ba su	*(no spelling, colloquial)*
bar do	bar do
bar kor	bar (b)skor
bö gang ri ra bé korwé zhing kham	bod gangs ri rwa bas skor ba'i zhing kham
bö kyi pawo pa mö dren ten do ring	bod kyi dpa' bo dpa' mo'i dren rten rdo ring
bö pa	bod pa
bö pa tsang ma	bod pa gtsang ma
Bön	bon
Bönpo	bon po
bu ré	'bu ras
cha trel	dpya khral
cham cham	'cham 'cham
chemar	phye mar
Chenrezig	spyan ras gzigs
chi pa	phyi pa
cho khang	mchod khang
chö kyi khor lo	chos kyi 'khor lo
chö mé	mchod me
chö shom	mchod shoms
chö ten (ch'orten)	mchod rten
chö tsek	chos brtsegs
chö yön	mchod yon
chöl kha sum	chol kha gsum
chu	chu
chu pa	phyu pa
Chushi Gangdrug	chu bzhi sgang drug
den sak sum	gdan sa gsum
der kha	rder kha
Drepung	'bras spungs
dri	'dri
drip	grib
dro so ché mar	gro so phye mar
drong sep	grong gseb
Drongmo (drok mo)	grogs mo
druk	'brug
dü	bdud

Ganden	dga’ ldan
gang ri	gangs ri
gau	ga’u
Gelug	dge lugs
Gelugpa	dge lugs pa
go bai lha	‘go ba’i lha
go yöl	sgo yol
gon pa (gompa)	dgon pa
gor zhé	sgor gzhas
gya mi	rgya mi
gya nak chak ri	rgya nag lcags ri
gya pip	rgya phibs
gya ré	rgya ras
gyel po	rgyal po
gyen cha	rgyan cha
Jampa	byams pa
Jangthang/Changthang	byang thang
Jigje	‘jigs byed
jin dak	sbyin bdag
jin lap	byin rlabs
Jokhang	jo khang
Jowo	jo bo
Kalon Tripa	bka’ blon khri pa
kar kyong	dkar skyong
kar po	dkar po
ka shak	bka’ shag
ké rak	ske rags
kha tak	kha btags
kha tsa ra	kha tsa ra
kha zé	kha zas
Kham	khams
Kham la nam bu	khams lwa snam bu
khang	khang
khang pa	khang pa
khor lo	‘khor lo
khor yuk	khor yug
kora (n.)	skor ba
kora gyap (v.)	bskor ba brgyab
ku	sku
ku par	sku (d)par
ku zhap	sku zhabs
kyang	kyang
kyé lha	skye lha
la	bla
la né	bla gnas
la ri	bla ri
la sem chen	bla sems can

la shing	bla shing
la to	bla rto
la tsé (laptsé)	la rtse
la tso	bla mtsho
la tsuk	bla btsug
la yu	bla g.yu
la za	bla gza’
lé pa jang khu	klad pa ljang khu
lha	lha
lha to	lha tho
lha gyel ri	lha rgyal ri
lhak pa	lhag pa
Lhakar	lhag dkar
Lhasa ké	lha sa skad
ling kor	gling (b)skor
lo sar	lo sar
lok pa	slog pa
lu	klu
lung	rlung
lung ta (lungta)	rlung rta
ma chen	ma chen
ma mo	ma mo
ma ni (mani)	ma Ni
ma ni kor	ma Ni skor
ma ni lha khang	ma Ni lha khang
mak pa	mag pa
menthang	ma Ni khri
mi chö	mi chos
mo	mo
mo lha	mo lha
mongdé	rmong dad
nam bu	snam bu
nam bu pu ruk	snam bu spu phrug
nam bu shé ma	snam bu shad ma
nam bu ting ma	snam bu ‘phyings ma
nam gyel chö ten	rnam rgyal mchod rten
nam za chen mo	nam bza’ chen mo
Namgyal (nam gyel)	rnam rgyal
nang	nang
nang kor	nang (b)skor
nang ma	nang ma
nang pa	nang pa
né	gnas
né jel	gnas mjal
né kor	gnas skor
ngak pa	sngags pa
Ngari	mnga’ ris

ngu len	rngul len
nö jin	gnod sbyin
nyam lé	mnyam las
nyen	gnyan
Nyingma	rnying ma
pa mé jin lap	pha ma’i byin rlabs
pang	spang
pang den	pang gdan
pé cha	dpe cha
pé ma	pad ma
pé rak	pad rag
pen bé	spen bad
pa yül (Phayul)	pha yul
po drang	pho brang
po lha	pho lha
pu mé	phu med
puk lha	phug lha
pün	spun
pün jar	spun sbyar (spun mched)
ra sa trül nang gi tsuk lak khang	ra sa 'phrul snang gi gtsug lag khang
rangzen	rang bstan
rap né	rab gnas
ri	ri
sa	sa
sa dak	sa bdag
sa ma drok	sa ma ‘brog
sang (fumigation offering)	bsang
sang (unit of Tibetan currency)	srang
sar jor (sar jorwa)	gsar ‘byor
ser zo (ser zowa)	gser bzo ba
Sera	se ra
sham bu	gsham bu
shing	shing
si pé khor lo	srid pa’i ‘khor lo
Sikyong	srid skyong
sö nam	bsod nams
sok za	srog gza’
ten	rten
thangka	thang ka
ti se	ti se
Tö	stod
tong	stong
tong khor lo	stong ‘khor lo
tra shi tak gyé	bkra shis rtags brgyad
tra zhü	skra zhud
tri	khri
truk	phrug

trung kar	khrungs skar
tsa ru	tsha ru
tsa tsa	tsa tsa
tsampa	rtsam pa
Tsang	gtsang
tsé pa cho nga	tshes pa bco lnga
tsé ring kyinkhor	tshe ring dkyil ‘khor
tsen	btsan
tsön sung	mtshon srung
tseterma	tshe ther ma
tsuk lak khang	gtsug lag khang
Ü	dbus
Ü ke	dbus skad
Ü-Tsang	dbus gtsang
u mé lam	dbu ma’i lam
ok juk	‘og ‘jug
yak	g.yag
yin ji	dbyin ji
yül lha	yul lha
za	gza’
za lhak pa	gza’ lhag pa
zhap pé	zhabs pad
zhap zhu	zhabs zhu