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REVIEW

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of a member of the dissertation council for the doctoral dissertation by Natalia N. Moskaleva, "Constructing the Metanarrative of Independence in *The Tibet Mirror* Newspaper in the 1950s and 1960s" submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences, 5.6.2 History.

The dissertation "Constructing the Metanarrative of Independence in *The Tibet Mirror* Newspaper in the 1950s and 1960s" by Natalia N. Moskaleva, is a study of the Tibet Question and Tibetan Nationalism through the lens of one of the earliest Tibetan Newspapers, *The Tibet Mirror* (*Yul phyogs so so so'i gsar' gyur me long*) from 1950 to 1962, in particular of its "construction of the metanarrative of Tibetan independence and the corresponding pro-nationalist model of representation of Tibetan history" (p. 6). In doing so the candidate attempts to shed light on the ideological bias underlying the ongoing debates on the historical status of Tibet and uncovering the discursive origins of the vital meta- or master narrative of Tibetan independence.

The Tibet Mirror was published by Dorje Tharchin (1890–1976) from 1925 to 1963 in Kalimpong, a trade town in West Bengal's Indo-Tibetan cultural border region. With its extensive reporting on Tibet, the newspaper thus chronicled the transition of Tibet into modernity. The dissertation systematically analyses the narratives, arguments, tropes, and facts employed in the

newspaper to engender Tibetan Nationalism based on the concept of Tibetan independence, thereby revealing the discursive origins of the major discourse fragments used in exiled Tibet's contemporary plea for independence. Moskaleva's thesis is a convincing example of how a thorough philological reading of the sources at hand combines well with the state-of-the-art analytical methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and is undoubtedly a significant contribution to the study of Tibetan Nationalism. Moskaleva builds her argument on Benedict Anderson's seminal findings that newsprint played a crucial role in developing "imagined communities" and modern Nationalism and maps out the correlation between early Tibetan print media and the development of modern Tibetan national identity.

Moskaleva's 500-page study is structured into an introduction, three substantial chapters, and an extensive bibliography of consulted sources in Russian, English and, to a lesser extent in, Tibetan. The bibliography demonstrates the expansive reading in Tibetan history of the author. The inclusion of more Tibetan sources, e.g. of memoirs of *Zeitzeugen* or the 14th Dalai Lama's autobiography, would have added an even more solid fundament for the analysis of the intra-Tibetan discourse. The excellent command of Tibetan—and in this case also of the highly sophisticated language of the *Tibet Mirror*, which is peppered with loan words from English, Chinese and Hindi in addition to neologisms and newly coined terms—is convincingly demonstrated in the abundance of translations from the source material.

The first chapter outlines the newspaper's publishing context and the personal history of its editor Dorje Tharchin. Moskaleva summarises the knowledge on the *Tibet Mirror* and establishes Dorje Tharchin as the central voice of an emergent Tibetan Nationalist discourse producing the grand or master narrative of Tibetan independence (p. 21, pp. 38ff.) This perception of Tharchin has been a longstanding topic in Tibet literature. Tharchin's ambivalent role as a missionary, spy, and Tibetan activist in late-colonial subcontinental politics and diplomacy, as well as his or rather his newspaper's role in modernising Tibetan culture, was documented by, among others, Anna Sawerthal (2011, 2017, 2018a, 2018b) and Isrun Engelhardt (2012, 2013, 2018a, 2018b).

Chapter 2, with 18 subchapters covering more than 350 pages, contains a detailed critical discourse analysis of the *Tibet Mirror* and represents the dissertation's core. The analytical part is preceded by a reflection on historiography introducing Foucault, Ferro and Kosellek as the theorist that inspired the theoretical approach of the dissertation as well as a perhaps too brief introduction to the chosen methodological approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA as an analytical method is grounded in the theoretical insights of Michel Foucault and has since evolved into an interdisciplinary analytical method for studying social phenomena mainly through textual representations.

The dissertation concludes with the comparatively short Chapter 3—perhaps containing the most exciting findings—discussing the *Tibet Mirror's* crucial impact on the subsequent discursive construction of an independent and unified Tibetan nation in the Tibetan diaspora. Moskaleva connects the results of her discourse analysis with the discussion of the conceptualisations of Tibetan independence and the Tibetan nation within the official discourse of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and the Tibetan diaspora. She shows that Tharchin's ideas and arguments not only are mirrored by the concepts adopted by the CTA but also predate them by a decade, and hence the *Tibet Mirror* can be understood as the source of the contemporary concept of the independent Tibetan nation.

Moskaleva structures her discourse analysis in Chapter 2 according to Halliday's (1989) threefold model, dividing the discourse up into the three fields of *tenor*, i.e. the discourse

participants, *field*, i.e. the discourse topic and content, and *mode*, i.e. the modes and registers but also pragmatic aspects of language employed in the discourse. While the *tenor of discourse* is difficult to determine since only a few references to authors or sources are given in the *Tibet Mirror*, Moskaleva attributes it to Tharchin alone—a decision that should have been explained thoroughly in theoretical terms. The *mode of discourse* highlights the persuasive rhetorical modalities of the analysed articles and supplements the main analysis of the *field of discourse*. Moskaleva follows a uniform approach. The author presents relevant articles from the *Tibet Mirror* in translation, followed by a paraphrase highlighting the crucial points, which are then discussed and analysed for their historical accuracy.

The outline of the theoretical considerations would have profited from more detail and elaboration, particularly of the central key categories used to identify relevant articles in the *Tibet Mirror* (pp. 18-19) and of the critical concepts that form the focus of analysis, namely independence and nation. Moskaleva deduces her analytical concepts and categories from the relevant research literature on Tharchin and his newspaper and modern Tibetan history. This deductive approach to the material leads Moskaleva to accept the role of Tharchin as a Tibetan nationalist and pro-independence activist, as established in the literature review of Chapt. 1, and filters the publications in the *Tibet Mirror* for respective claims and arguments, deconstructing each through a rigorous fact-checking process. This methodology allows her to demonstrate and highlight in Chapter 2.2.3 the construction of the discursive fields of the Tibetan past (2.2.3.1), present (2.2.3.2), and future (2.2.3.3) but also of Tibetan identity (2.2.3.6) versus its Other (2.2.3.5), i.e. Communist China as well as Tibet's place in the world (2.2.3.7).

The deductive methodology chosen puts a strong emphasis on historical fact-checking. This focus on deconstruction leads to light-handed descriptions of Tharchin as "distorting" (e.g. pp. 98, 104, 110, 118, 122, 127, 138, 143, 420, 423) and "manipulating" (e.g. pp. 98, 99, 146, 202, 285, 289, 294, 422, 423, 479) historical facts. Here the question of scholarly bias could be raised and asked what actually are historical facts. The author occasionally falls short of questioning her sources or the constructedness of historiography, i.e. the narrativity of historical scholarship on Tibet in general. Hayden White and others have demonstrated that historiography makes sense of history by emplotting historical events into a consistent historical narrative. When Moskaleva attempts to uncover Tharchin's strategies of emplotment, she resorts to mere fact-checking. A bottom-up, inductive approach that explores the material for narratives and arguments contained would have had the potential of surprising insights that complement or, perhaps, question the views on Tharchin and the *Tibet Mirror* so far put forward in the research literature.

All the more interesting are Moskaleva's discussions of various discourse fragments, each contributing to the metanarrative of Tibetan independence and ultimately of Tibet as an independent nation, or, in the words of Moskaleva: to "the metanarrative of Tibetan independence constructed by Tharchin in the 1950s and 1960s [that] predetermined the development of the national consciousness of members of the Tibetan diaspora and was deliberately integrated into the historical memory of the 'Tibetan nation-in-exile'" (p. 468). For example, in her analysis of the Tibetan Self, which by its very nature only functions in radical demarcation from its Other, communist China, Moskaleva repeatedly addresses the question of a unified Tibetan nation. She shows that Tharchin, in his attempt to delineate the Tibetan nation turns to the medieval concept of the Thirteen Hierarchies (*khri skor bcu gsum*), an administrative system introduced by the Mongols in the 14th century, which he then reinterprets as "the three regions of Mnga' ris, the four regions of the central provinces Dbus and Gtsang, and the six ranges of Amdo and Kham" (226) in order to be able to include the Tibetan areas of Amdo (today's Qinghai and parts of Gansu) and Kham

(parts of today's Sichuan, Yunnan and the Tibetan Autonomous Region) in the claimed Tibetan territory. Moreover, Moskaleva can identify a shift in strategy, showing that the concept of the Thirteen Hierarchies is replaced with an actualisation of another traditional administrative model of the Chol kha gsum or the Three Regions. While the territorial meaning of Chol kha gsum always remained vague and ambiguous (pp. 226f.), after the arrival of the 14th Dalai Lama and the first wave of refugees in India in 1960, its meaning became stabilised not least through the usage of the concept in the *Tibet Mirror* and now included all of the territories as mentioned above (p. 249, pp. 460f.) Moskaleva thoughtfully interprets this development as an indication for the notion of the Tibetan nation only being defined at the time. In combination with the discursive fragments construing Tibet as a Buddhist land or claiming that Tibetans speak a unified language, Moskaleva convincingly shows how Tharchin, in his *Tibet Mirror*, creates the idea of a Tibetan nation, downplaying religious diversity and sectarianism as well as the linguistic realities of the Tibetan plateau. And, demonstrates how these ideas lived on in the Tibetan diaspora.

The dissertation is replete with an overwhelming richness in detail, mainly owing to the long verbatim quotations of articles from the *Tibet Mirror* in translation. The substantial source material presented in the dissertation results in a higher degree of repetitiveness due to the similarity of arguments in the *Tibet Mirror*. While this is demanding for the reader, it is constructive and necessary to convey an impression of the discursive presentation to appreciate the analysis of the arguments, tropes, and metaphors employed in constructing the narratives in the *Tibet Mirror*. Placing the translations in an appendix would have certainly enhanced the readability of the dissertation and avoided repeating the same arguments multiple times.

While the initial pages of the dissertation provide a comprehensive overview and discussion of the relevant extant literature on the *Tibet Mirror*, a concise discussion of the historical developments of the time would have been helpful for the reader in general and enabled critical analytical insights. To give but one example: Moskaleva bases her analytical approach on the notion of Tibetan independence and muses that the earlier British colonial discourse on Tibet may have influenced Tharchin (p. 255, pp. 450f.) She remarks that Tharchin "deliberately portrayed India as a role model to be followed by Tibetan-speaking readers in their struggle for the independence" and "extolled the independence of India and praised activists of the Indian independence" (383). However, the discussion of India as a "friend" of Tibet focuses on a conception of independent India under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru as a religiously tolerant state (p. 390) and "Tibet and India as 'comrades in arms' against their shared 'enemy'" (p. 392). It does not consider the impact that Mahatma Gandhi's struggle and Indian independence might have had on Tharchin and intellectual debates in Kalimpong.

Another, perhaps minor, flaw that should be considered when turning the thesis into a book is the relatively high degree of redundancy in presenting the facts. Similarly, the author's decision to summarise the findings of each chapter and sub-chapter in concluding paragraphs leads to nested conclusions that repeat the same findings repeatedly.

Leaving this minor criticism aside, the dissertation, which I have read in its English translation, is very well written, presents translations of the source materials for the first time in English (and Russian), and conclusively demonstrates that Tharchin's discursive construction of the metanarrative of a unified and independent Tibetan nation became ultimately productive as a major source of inspiration for the Central Tibetan Administration's or Tibetan government-in-exile's successful construction of a "Tibetan nation-in-exile" (p. 467). Natalia N. Moskaleva's dissertation is a valuable contribution to the study of Tibetan Nationalism, its sources, and its impact on Tibetan politics and the academic study of Tibet.

The doctoral dissertation of Natalia N. Moskaleva, "Constructing the Metanarrative of Independence in The Tibet Mirror Newspaper in the 1950s and 1960s," conforms with the requirements for doctoral dissertations, and the doctoral candidate Natalia N. Moskaleva deserves to be awarded the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences in 5.6.2 History.

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