

Truth, Fear, and Lies: Exile Politics and Arrested Histories of the Tibetan Resistance

Carole McGranahan
University of Colorado, Boulder

“History is truth and fear. And some lies.” Kesang Tsering, a Tibetan refugee who lives in Kathmandu, said this to me one day as we sat in her altar room enjoying the late afternoon sun.¹ I laughed and said, “you’re right.” We continued to talk about claims individuals had made to specific Tibetan histories until it was time to put on our nice clothes and go for *kora* (circumambulation, a form of walking prayer) and gossip at the Boudha stupa. As we debated whether so-and-so, who had not actually fought against the Chinese, could be considered a member of the Tibetan resistance, I was thinking through the implications of this latest fieldwork epiphany. Kesang Tsering’s equating of history to truth, fear, and lies seemed compelling because it resonated with what we think we know about history. We know about struggles over truth, lies disguised as truth, and the fear that induces secrets and silences. Yet it was not just truth and lies but truth and fear that Kesang Tsering linked together, suggesting a different approach to history.

For Tibetans in exile, history is caught between what “really happened” and the epistemic murk of historical memory (Daniel 1996; Taussig 1984), between individual and state desires to tell the struggle in local cultural terms and to fit their narratives into global structures of human rights and international law. Thinking of history and historical production as composed of fears and lies, as well as of truths, demands attention to the processes whereby pasts do or do not become histories. Although any historical narrative could be said to be a “particular bundle of silences” (Trouillot 1995:27), I am interested here in the actual process by which histories and silences are both produced and unproduced, especially in connection with political projects of the nation-state (Pandey 1992; Sider and Smith 1997; Stoler 1992; Taussig 1991, 1999; Watson 1994). How are such silencing processes confirmed or contested in everyday life? How do people make history as an object

as well as an event, as a possibility as well as an actuality (Daniel 1996; Feldman 1991; Foucault 1972, 1977)?

Kesang Tsering's truth, fear, and lies as a model for historical production resonates with Walter Benjamin's famous statement that to "articulate the past historically . . . means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" (1968:255). I argue that histories of the Tibetan resistance movement are silenced because they present moments of danger challenging the status quo of the Tibetan community in exile. Although there is no generic form of exile (Kaplan 1996; Said 1984), loss and displacement lend an urgency to collective histories, identities, and memories (Axel 2001; Ballinger 2002) that prohibits such challenges to hegemonic versions of community. As Tibetan resistance veterans in India, Nepal, and the United States taught me, their histories are dangerous but not always for expected reasons.

Both inside and outside of the Tibetan community, stories of the resistance army are almost exclusively limited to narratives of Cold War intrigue. A deeper, more nuanced consideration of the resistance reveals that unofficial bans on telling this history are as much or more about issues of internal difference and national dissent in the exile Tibetan community as they are about Cold War secrets between governments. As a result, stories of the Tibetan resistance hover about the edges of the recent past but do not enter the mainstream of exile Tibetan history in either popular or governmental narratives. The production—or not—of a history of the resistance is directly linked to the creation and re-creation of certain types of national community and to a practice I call "historical arrest." Historical arrest is the apprehension and detaining of particular pasts in anticipation of their eventual release. As such, arrested histories are not so much erased or forgotten as they are postponed and archived for future use. In the case of the Tibetan resistance, what is acknowledged to have happened, as well as what lies below the surface, remains mired in the controversial murk of historical memory, government secrets, and the politics of community in exile.

The Exile Nation-State

In the 1950s, the People's Republic of China incorporated Tibet into its territory and began a major reform of all aspects of Tibetan life—social, religious, economic, and political—to align Tibetans with the socialist vision of the Chinese state (Shakya 1999). As the reforms grew more severe in 1956, Tibetans in the eastern Tibetan region of Kham began armed revolts against Chinese troops and officials. Fervent but unorganized, these Tibetan fighters were easily outnumbered by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). Scores of people fled toward Lhasa, Tibet's capital; we still do not know how many thousands of people were killed in the fighting in Kham or other areas of Tibet. In central Tibet, Tibetans from Kham (called "Khampas") decided to join forces with other Tibetans to create an all-volunteer army independent of the Tibetan government

army. In 1958, they officially formed the Chushi Gangdrug army headed by Khampa trader Andrug Gampo Tashi.²

The Chushi Gangdrug resistance army fought against Chinese troops until 1974. Since then, it has operated as a political and social welfare organization in the exile community. The Tibetan government in Lhasa covertly supported the resistance during the 1950s, as did the exile government until 1974. Other governments also gave aid: India provided training and funds and created Tibetan military units within its own forces; Nepal allowed the resistance to use the Nepali territory of Mustang (a semi-independent Tibetan kingdom within Nepal's borders) as a base for operations in Tibet from 1961 to 1974; and the United States provided training, funding, and logistical support through the CIA. Although the resistance was no match for the PLA, they did register some victories, the most important of which was escorting the Dalai Lama on his escape to India in 1959.

As told, the story of the Tibetan national past is one of political, not military, struggle. Naturalizing the status of the nation through the denying or forgetting of violent struggles for the nation is not uncommon (Anderson 1983; Pandey 1990). Although one would expect the story of the popular armed struggle for Tibet to be at the center of national narratives of modern Tibet, it is not. The Dalai Lama's decision that the Tibetan struggle was to be nonviolent is one reason, as is the resistance army's volunteer, nongovernmental status, and mostly Khampa composition.³ None of these reasons, however, explains why histories of the Tibetan resistance have yet to secure a solid place within the history of the nation in exile. My goal here is to consider why some pasts become histories when others do not.

For Chushi Gangdrug veterans, the failure of the resistance to regain Tibet does not diminish its historical importance. Many consider the resistance a key part of recent Tibetan history, viewing their own participation as a defining experience in their lives that should earn them social recognition for their role in that history. In their estimation, the resistance has national importance for defending Tibet against the Chinese and for protecting his holiness the Dalai Lama during his escape. As they tell it, their armed defense of the nation is not counter to the policies of the Dalai Lama but an example of a state of exception in which nonviolence was but one component of the necessary response. Although the Tibetan farmers, monks, nomads, and traders who composed the Tibetan resistance tell different and multiple stories of this past, they do so in ways that are caught between local cultural practices, the conditions of exile, and international networks of politics and meaning structured around the nation-state.

Histories around the world have been "captured" by the nation (Chatterjee 1993; Dirks 1990; Duara 1995). For Tibetans in exile, however, the loss of their home country has fused history and nation together so tightly that even subaltern Tibetan histories are framed within the nation. In distinction to subaltern histories in India that write against nationalist histories (Guha 1982; Guha and Spivak 1988), Chushi Gangdrug histories are not so much alternatives to nationalist histories as

they are alternative nationalist histories. Although the concept of the nation has a long career in Tibet (Dreyfus 1994, 2002) and progressive Tibetans have advocated national views of Tibet since the first half of the 20th century (Stoddard 1985), it was not until the 1950s and the Chinese occupation of Tibet that national history gained prominence. The time of exile has put an emphasis on political histories focused on the Tibetan government (Goldstein 1989; Grunfeld 1996; Shakabpa 1967, 1976; Shakya 1999; Smith 1996).

Contemporary representations of the Tibetan nation leave ambiguous the national place of regions and districts beyond Lhasa. However, other regions have long played an important role in grounding the Tibetan nation. “Bod chol kha gsum red” (Tibet is three regions) is the way that many refugees began to explain Tibet to me referring to the three provinces: U (*dbus*), Amdo (*a mdo*), and Kham (*kham*s). Those with a deeper historical consciousness would go on to explain the shifts over time in the number and composition of regions understood to compose Tibet. Despite popular understanding of these regions as constitutive of Tibet, exile discourses of the nation downplay rather than celebrate regional diversity in their focus on Tibetan histories and identities centered on Lhasa and central Tibet.

Reconstituting community in a time of national trauma within new and scattered locales is no easy task, yet the Tibetan diaspora has worked hard to create a coherent refugee community. The result is a homogenized “Tibetan refugee” identity produced at the expense of regional or religious affiliations such as the Khampa identity so strongly associated with Chushi Gangdrug. As Liisa Malkki has shown (1995a, 1995b), such flattenings of identity or ethnicity are global phenomena generated in part by post–World War II conditions. Yet, although dislocation does force a new shared refugee identity on Tibetans, this identity does not always trump the power of “local, tribal, and sectarian identities” that have long played “a divisive role in the Tibetan world, [and yet also] presuppose, and so in some aspects also maintain, the very fabric of that world” (Kapstein 1998:145). Assertions of these regional identities were castigated in newspaper articles, public speeches, and community actions as harmful to the Tibetan cause, and they are interpreted as signaling dissent.

This logic draws on Buddhist hierarchies of authority and subordination that are very much part of Tibetan social worlds as well as on notions of modern identity such as the idea that Tibetans are now global citizens able to transcend such internal and anachronistic divisions as region and sect. Much of exile life is ordered by the twin goals of remaining traditional yet moving forward: preserving cultural and religious traditions while embracing new ideas such as education and democracy (Calkowski 1991; Diehl 2002; Harris 1999). Theory and practice, however, do not always converge so neatly. At the same time that exile Tibetans are exhorted by the exile government in Dharamsala and by their peers to drop regional and sectarian identities in favor of pan-Tibetan identities, they continue to elect their representatives to the exile Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies on the basis of just such regional and sectarian affiliations.⁴ Thus, despite homogenizing and

hegemonizing efforts, regional affiliations and allegiances to both lay and religious district leaders, such as village chiefs and lamas, retain both practical and symbolic importance in exile.

Given the strong association of the resistance with the Kham region of Tibet, the act of remembering Chushi Gangdrug as a part of national history would require one to change one's view of the Tibetan nation. Although the overwhelmingly Khampa resistance army sought liberation for all of Tibet and not just for Kham, Tibetan discourses of the nation only allow limited room for regional difference. Difference is not always denied, but the default categories for internal and external representations and performances of national history, identity, religion, and language all center on the central Tibetan provinces of U and Tsang. Tensions often flare over this hegemonic definition of things Tibetan. As one resistance veteran explains: "Kham and Khampa history is important for Tibetan history. Films like *Kundun* and *Seven Years in Tibet* don't help with this. They either entirely ignore Kham and Khampas or portray all Tibetans generically as U-Tsangpas, even when they're wearing Khampa clothes!" In exile, historical production must also mediate between the internal dynamics of the refugee community and external forces. London-based Tibetan historian Tsering Shakya argues that the current conflict with China generates a "denial of history," in which both Dharamsala and Beijing produce simple and stubborn histories with no room for complexity or responsibility (1999:xxii). Two young women in Delhi echoed this sentiment: "Everyone talks about how the Chinese government changes Tibetan history, but the Tibetan government changes it too. No one—Tibetans or Westerners—wants to hear about this."

Historical Arrest: Time Delay as Cultural Practice

In a conversation in 1997 about Taiwan, I first learned about how the narration of history is structured through this sense of arrest. The Dalai Lama had just returned from his first trip to Taiwan, and the Tibetan community in Kathmandu was buzzing with talk about it. Some were hopeful that the Taiwanese government would change its position on Tibet from considering it as a part of China to accepting it as an independent state. Others focused on the (mostly) secret economic and political support individual Tibetans in exile had received from the Taiwanese government. Such relations had long been subject to public criticism as being anti-Dharamsala or, at the very least, signaling a falling-out with the Tibetan government in exile. I mused to a Tibetan friend about how relations between Tibet and Taiwan were rarely discussed. He agreed that for years this had been the case; however, now that the Dalai Lama had made his historic trip to Taiwan, it was open for discussion. My friend agreed that Chushi Gangdrug resistance histories also fit into this pattern of arrest and offered several other pasts that he thought qualified, all of which had to do with internal politics and external perceptions of the Tibetan community. Although it had been clear to me that some pasts had not been publicly converted into histories, precisely how and why this had happened had not been clear to me until then. Although many Tibetans

throughout the diaspora would speak with me about this time delay and the public secrets it often engendered (Taussig 1999), this practice did not seem to have a name. I settled on the idea of historical arrest as a way to talk about this practice because it captured the idea of a future time for revealing a history prohibited in the present. The question, then, became one of understanding the collective acceptance of histories that could not be told or for which “the time was not right.”

I define historical arrest as a practice in which pasts that clash with official ways of explaining nation, community, and identity are arrested, in the multiple senses of being held back and, thus, delaying progress but also, in the ironic sense, of drawing attention to these pasts. Sometimes overtly categorized as secrets, arrested histories are left noticeably unspoken. The halting of such histories in the present to store them away to be told at another time is a conscious act, albeit not always explicitly stated. In the Tibetan context, such histories are detained by those with sufficient power, such as the Dalai Lama or agents of the government, through overt mentions, subtle silences, or meaningful actions. Historical arrest is not a permanent ban and times are anticipated—although not guaranteed—in the future when these histories will be opened for discussion. This practice is more complicated than sweeping under the rug inconvenient pasts and politics; it is a delay or postponement of histories for the present. Arrest is not just for written histories, but also for the many and varied forms that history may take and the ways that histories are unmade as well as “made and made sense of” (Dirks 1996:32; see also Cohen 1994; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992). Such prescriptions for history are efforts to control knowledge of the past, to reproduce power structures in the present, and to secure particular futures. In this context, I understand culture as not a category of history but as both a condition for history as well as its product.

This conceptualization of historical arrest resonates with a Tibetan Buddhist tradition of the storing away and rediscovery of religious texts and ritual objects. Tibetan Buddhist teachings are transmitted orally and passed down through the generations and, in the case of the Nyingma sect (and Bon religion), through revealed teachings called treasure teachings that become available only at specified times. These treasure teachings may be either texts or sacred objects (*gter ma*) hidden in the ground, in caves, or other places by a trained religious master (*gter bdag*) to be discovered by a similarly trained master (*gter ston*) at a specific time in the future (Gyatso 1986, 1996, 1998; Thondup 1986).⁵ The time elapsing between when a treasure teaching is hidden and when it is found may be hundreds of years. Arrested histories follow a similar cultural and temporal protocol insofar that their arrest and release is also understood to be in the hands of authority figures, most notably in this case, the Dalai Lama. The connection between arrested histories and the treasure teachings is a slightly circular one: scholars believe that the treasure teachings were developed out of the early Tibetan political practice of burying “politically sensitive items underground as a means of preventing their destruction” (Gyatso 1996). At present, what are metaphorically buried or arrested are exactly such politically sensitive topics.

In its 20th-century incarnation, I argue that this practice is directed specifically at histories that challenge dominant versions of the nation. These challenges trigger fear in individual and collective registers, as well as in karmic, social, and political ones: fears that Tibet will not be regained, the diasporic community will splinter, harm will come to the Dalai Lama or to Tibet, one might be excommunicated from the community or given a “bad name,” or harmful actions in this life—killing, fighting, or causing trouble—will negatively affect one’s next life. The social and political limits encouraged by such fears work on renegade pasts in tandem with “delayed” time.⁶ Historical arrest fixes the linear truths of official history through nonlinear means. By arresting potentially disruptive histories so that they are “structurally unavailable as history” (Spiegel 2002:158), spaces are secured for both past and present official truths.⁷ Such truths and their temporal logics are generated in and by specific cultural contexts and practices. New meaning is both assigned and withheld from the discrete memories and histories collected together (Young 1993). In the assimilation of renegade experience to normative storylines, the state—here in the form of the exile Tibetan government—is not so much destroying memory and experience as it is relocating and refunctioning it (Taussig 1991:48). This takes place in many domains, often forcing awkward complicities between rupture and continuity, between desires for recognition and obligations to submit to the demands of the present.

Consent, Dissent, and the Dalai Lama

Of all the things that bind the Tibetan community in exile—culture, religion, heritage, and loss—the Dalai Lama is supreme. The leading representative of the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama lineage was installed as rulers of Tibet in 1642, and since then their power has grown so that national (rather than just sectarian) genealogies of religion and politics now validate their rule. In exile, the power of the Dalai Lama lineage has only been further strengthened. Respect and devotion to the 14th Dalai Lama is on both sacred and secular terms but is primarily because of his being an incarnation of Chenrezig (in Sanskrit, Avalokiteshvara), the deity who embodies wisdom and compassion. Social prohibitions against critiquing the Dalai Lama extend also to the exile government. Even secular critiques of the government are controversial and widely avoided despite the Dalai Lama’s efforts to encourage democratic reform in exile.

The strength of allegiances between community and state contributes to the securing of consent to historical arrest (Gramsci 1971; Williams 1977). This consent is often explained through notions of community welfare or opinions about what will benefit the community in its attempt to regain Tibet. In line with Buddhist notions of accumulating merit, the concept of beneficial action (*phan thogs*) is of prime importance for many Tibetans, as when people say, “telling this or that history will not be beneficial” or “she has done work that has benefited the community.” Veterans see their participation in the resistance, specifically their

defense of the Dalai Lama and the nation, as an example of such sacrifice. Although opinions may vary on what actually benefits community, in general, what is beneficial is anything that is believed to benefit the Dalai Lama. In regard to the nation, loyalty to the Dalai Lama is not without its contradictions. People often find gentle (and sometimes not so gentle) ways to transgress the arrest of certain memories, experiences, and narratives. Keepers of arrested histories are often torn between voice and silence, between publicly proclaiming their service to the Dalai Lama and Tibet, and honoring the arrest of their histories.

Historical arrest works because Tibetans have a deep faith in the Dalai Lama and in the community-ordering principles and practices enacted through him and by extension the exile government. Every year on the anniversary of March 10, 1959, which marks the Tibetan Uprising in Lhasa, the Dalai Lama makes a public statement to the Tibetan people.

[In my first March 10th statement,] I stressed the need for my people to take a long-term view of the situation in Tibet. For those of us in exile, I said that our priority must be resettlement and the continuity of our cultural traditions. As to the future, I stated my belief that, with Truth, Justice, and Courage as our weapons, we Tibetans would eventually prevail in regaining freedom for Tibet. [Gyatso 1990:159]

The “long-term view” suggests a temporal approach compatible with historical arrest: the delay of certain things (such as specific actions or acknowledgements) until some future time. Established also were the still-prevalent exile goals of maintaining cultural traditions and regaining Tibet through the righteousness of the cause rather than through military defense. The Dalai Lama’s public statements are often interpreted as signs of historical arrest in that what he does not say is attended to as much as what he does.

In a 1975 interview, a Western journalist asked the Dalai Lama about the Tibetan fighters who had been stationed in Mustang, Nepal, from 1961 to 1974. Although the connection to the CIA was still denied at that time, his holiness spoke about them as follows:

It’s difficult to comment. I have sympathy for the people who formed this group. They sacrificed a good deal. I have met some and exchanged letters with others . . . it certainly helped to boost the morale of Tibetans in Tibet and to make them feel that the exiles were doing something. It’s not a question of whether I approved or not. Events were such that the resistance came into existence in any case. In the overall struggle we have nothing to hide. Put clearly the true situation. That is my request. [Mullin 1975:33]

At that time, however, the Dalai Lama most likely did not know the true situation. Much about the resistance was kept secret from him, and although he says that there was “nothing to hide,” his knowledge of the situation was most likely partial. Even today, putting the true situation forward remains difficult to do for reasons beyond CIA involvement. Although the story of the resistance is finally starting to be told, this remains a project with repercussions both very real and very raw for the individuals and communities involved.

The Autonomy of Soldiers' Stories

Lobsang Jampa is one of the unsung heroes of the resistance. When he was a young boy, his parents enrolled him in the local monastery in their town of Lithang in eastern Tibet. At age 21, he left the monastery to become a trader, and when communist Chinese rule became too oppressive in the mid-1950s with the introduction of massive social, economic, and political reforms, he joined the resistance, leading and financially supporting a group of ten horsemen. His group fought throughout Tibet, and in 1959, they followed the Dalai Lama to India. There, he was chosen to go to the United States for military training at Camp Hale in Colorado, after which he joined the resistance in Nepal. He married a woman from Mustang and is now an elderly widower living in Kathmandu, spending his days in pursuit of his three passions—the Tibetan language media, visiting with friends, and religious practice and prayer, including 60 kora of the Boudha stupa each day. In his own words, his schedule is “doing kora, eating, having tea, sitting at home, resting, and then coming back for kora—30 in the morning and 30 in the evening.” He is devoted to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in exile.

“Honest” and “humble” are how others describe Lobsang Jampa. I had known him for some time before I found out that he had been in the resistance; and even after that, I learned from others that he had been picked by the CIA to be in charge in Mustang (a position he did not take up out of respect for the man he was sent to replace). Friends of his tell me that he was an excellent shot, and even now, amidst the posters of deities and horses that adorn his walls, there hangs a plastic rifle with white prayer scarves wrapped around it. For Lobsang Jampa, telling the story of Chushi Gangdrug began well before the socialist reforms of the 1950s. Over tea, and with the audiotape recorder running to lend a suitably official tone to our conversations, his narrations were serious, told with purpose, and full of the sort of intimate detail that oral traditions encourage—personalities fleshed out, vivid recollections of landscape features, sensory moments, and the varied minutiae of everyday life from three or four decades ago.⁸ In the histories Lobsang Jampa told me, his own experiences were interwoven with broader historical events. He presented this history as not merely a local or personal story but as a history of Tibet, ignoring or perhaps defying the fact that resistance histories were themselves ignored in narrating national history. In particular, as we see below, his story narrates an agency for the resistance army that is independent from both U.S. and Tibetan histories.

Tibetan veterans and retired CIA officers have overwhelmingly fond words for each other: “The Tibetans were the best men I worked with” and “[The Americans] were good men” [Kong tsho mi yag po red]. The relationship between the Tibetan soldiers trained in Colorado and their American “teachers,” as they were called, confounds expectations: Two groups of men, from very different backgrounds, unable to communicate without translation, were quartered together in a military camp in the Rocky Mountains that did not officially exist. The Tibetans went

on to conduct military and intelligence missions against the Chinese from their camps in Mustang through 1974. The U.S. agents would work on the Tibetan operation for a few years before being transferred to another case—Vietnam, the Philippines, Eastern Europe—as was CIA protocol. Both sides shared a mutual admiration for each other that continues to this day. The Tibetans were appreciative of the assistance they were given, the skills they were taught, and the hope for their cause fostered by U.S. support. In turn, the U.S. agents were in awe of the Tibetans' ability; they admired their character, and according to the retired CIA officers I interviewed, they connected with them in ways not matched in CIA operations in other parts of the world. Although U.S. support might look paltry and self-interested today, Chushi Gangdrug veterans remain convinced that it was an important part of their personal and collective experience of struggle.

Against this backdrop, the autonomy evidenced in Lobsang Jampa's stories was made all the more evident. As Lobsang Jampa told the story, contact with the U.S. government was at the initiation of resistance leaders who asked the Dalai Lama's brother to seek military help from the United States. Such decisions, Lobsang Jampa told me, were made by consensus: decisions about battle strategies in Tibet before they fled to India, the decision to set up headquarters in Nepal, decisions about who would go to the United States for training, and decisions about resistance relations with the Tibetan government. Decisions affecting the resistance were made by the resistance. "In those days," according to Lobsang Jampa, "Chushi Gangdrug was very powerful [and] his holiness the Dalai Lama also had a very good opinion of our organization." Deferential politics were not an inherent aspect of resistance relations with the Tibetan or U.S. governments. In Lobsang Jampa's narrations as in those of other veterans, these relations were described as having been built on notions of equality and respect.

In talking about his time in Colorado, Lobsang Jampa described the type of training the Tibetans were given (how to jump from a plane and land on the ground) and the code names given to Tibetans by Americans (his was Solo). In one training session, the U.S. instructors ambushed them, pretending to be Chinese soldiers. On other occasions, the Tibetans answered "hundreds" of questions that the U.S. instructors asked them about how the Chinese fought and what kind of weapons they used. After finishing their training, the Tibetan soldiers returned to Tibet, and Lobsang Jampa recalled with a smile that both the U.S. teachers and the Tibetan soldiers shed tears at this separation. The gravity of the situation was evident to all:

Eight of us [were to] parachute into Tibet. We had excellent weapons. Each of us carried three different types of guns. We were also provided with a cyanide capsule that we wore around our neck. In times of need, we were simply to put it into our mouth. The most important point was that we must not allow ourselves to be captured alive by the Chinese.

The stories that Lobsang Jampa told me had their own independent form in which the resistance was in an equal partnership with the U.S. and Tibetan governments. This view was not one shared by the two governments. In both Washington and

Dharamsala, the resistance army was seen as a project to be managed rather than a partnership to be maintained. The agency that Lobsang Jampa claims for the resistance is not part of governmental versions of the story. Although this agency and the autonomous histories it inspires are themselves generated out of Tibetan senses of obligation for service and sacrifice to the nation and to the Dalai Lama, to claim this agency is nonetheless to launch a critique.

Tibetan exile society does not allot much space for public critique, and therefore these are more often privately aired in people's homes and among friends. Lobsang Jampa's departures from how resistance history has and has not been told are subtle, informing both what he says and how he says it:

[After the end of the Mustang operation], the Tibetan Government in exile in Dharamsala . . . told all the soldiers to join the Indian Army. Tibetan settlements [established for Chushi Gangdrug members and other Tibetans] should be shifted to India. But nobody wanted these things. Instead we bought land and built houses in Nepal. We opened carpet industries, shops, and hotels.

Lobsang Jampa makes declarative statements rather than defensive ones; he describes the resistance not just as a guerrilla army but as a political entity in the community-at-large; he tells not just a history of resistance but also a history of Tibet viewed through the lens of resistance. In his narrations, Tibetan history is a history of struggle, including armed struggle. It is told in a parallel register, rather than a reactive one. His narrative, thereby, continues the Khampa practice of criticizing the Tibetan government while at the same time building direct positive links to it. He makes these subtle critiques from the position of solidly supporting the exile government, of being grateful to the CIA for all they did to help, and of being proud of his part within the resistance. These matter-of-fact elements reveal that the tensions between arrested and national histories in this instance are about much more than just the story of a guerrilla war.

June 16 as Nonevent

If the event is that which can be narrated (White 1987), then what happens to events that cannot be narrated? Is historical recognition predicated on narratability, and if so, then where do nonevents fit into history? As multiple scholars have argued, events are real not because they happened, but because they are told in culturally meaningful ways (Halbwachs 1992; Ricoeur 1984; Sahlin 1981; White 1987). Historical arrest employs such a logic by withdrawing the culturally meaningful frameworks that would validate the national significance of events or histories. However, although cultural meaning is actively divorced from certain events and histories, this does not mean arrested histories solely pass the time of arrest as unnarratable nonevents. Commemorations of the founding of the Chushi Gangdrug resistance demonstrate that such struggles over nation and narration (Bhabha 1990) illuminate the importance of the past as a form of present-day politics.

The morning of June 16, 1999, seemed like any other in Dharamsala. Individuals of all ages rose early and headed to the main temple complex to perform kora and make offerings. Walking down the paved ridge roads and forest paths to the temple were families, couples, and groups of older men, each carrying *khatas* (white silk offering scarves) and bags filled with juniper incense. They were all in the respectful dress Tibetans don for social and religious occasions—the Lhasa-standard *chuba* (robe) and apron for married women, and either a *chuba* or Western dress for the men. Although it was early, the morning was already saturated with premonsoon warmth, and the mood was festive as people joked, chatted, and greeted old friends. Although it could have been almost any day, it was not; it was the 41st anniversary of the founding of the Chushi Gangdrug resistance army in 1958.

Throughout South Asia, resistance veterans and their families gather on the 16th of June. Speeches and offerings are made and prayers said for the Dalai Lama, for the protection of Tibet and Tibetans, and in honor of the martyrs of the Tibetan resistance movement, especially its leader Andrug Gampo Tashi. In the Dharamsala ceremony, offerings were made to portraits of the Dalai Lama and Andrug Gampo Tashi, the resistance flag was raised next to the flag of Tibet, and speeches were given by current Chushi Gangdrug leaders. A key reference point in the ceremony was the first public act of the resistance. This act was not a military offensive, but the 1957 presentation to the Dalai Lama of a fabulous throne made of over 80 pounds of pure gold decorated with diamonds, turquoise, and other precious stones. This gift was designed to express “the people’s loyalty and confidence in the Dalai Lama’s leadership and [to] confirm his earthly sovereign powers” in light of growing Chinese political oppression (Andrugsang 1973:51). In the minds of resistance veterans, the gift of this throne unequivocally demonstrated their devotion to the Dalai Lama and to a unified Tibet. However, only resistance veterans and their families commemorate this anniversary. Other members of the Tibetan community do not mark the day with any special fanfare; indeed, many are not even aware of it. Instead, they celebrate March 10th, Tibetan Uprising Day, commemorating the 1959 uprising in Lhasa.

Along with the Tibetan New Year and the Dalai Lama’s birthday, March 10th is one of the primary Tibetan holidays in exile (McLagan 1996, 2002). It is specifically a political holiday: in all diaspora locations except Nepal,⁹ it is marked by marches of slogan-shouting Tibetans and Tibetan supporters of all ages, political posters, awareness programs, newspaper editorials, protests at Chinese embassies and consulates, and most importantly, reception of the Dalai Lama’s annual March 10th statement. For some veterans of the resistance, the March 10th commemoration is an inadequate substitute for a holiday recognizing the two-decade-long organized resistance movement. As one veteran told me, “March 10th is not so important. It was not the real fight for Tibet.”

Most, if not all, veterans celebrate both the June 16th and March 10th holidays. However, the lack of public recognition of June 16th is a sore spot for many

veterans. They realize that public recognition in the form of community rituals and the celebration of holidays in the school curriculum is crucial for being included in the category of national history (Connerton 1989). "The younger generation doesn't know resistance history. It's not taught in schools. This is because the past is controlled by the same people who control the present." The people "who control the present," as implied by the young Khampa Tibetan woman in Delhi who shared these thoughts with me, are neither resistance veterans nor individuals sympathetic to them. Historical arrest has successfully prevented a widespread consciousness of the Tibetan resistance beyond the immediate resistance community. Although veterans commemorating June 16th do so in ways that demonstrate allegiance to the Dalai Lama and, thus, to Tibet, they have yet to be able to escape the regional stigma attached to the resistance in general. As such, June 16th remains a nonevent in the broader Tibetan community.

In "The Return of the Event, Again," Marshall Sahlins suggests that historical events consist only of actions that "change the order of things" (1991:46). In Sahlins's synthetic view of event and structure, events alter the structural relations and forces through which they are constituted. As events, arrested histories would challenge the order of things, if not change them. Hence, the defusing of resistance history into the category of "nonevent" means that the national past remains a simplified version of history with room only for external and not internal conflict. The Chushi Gangdrug resistance problematically presents a history of both: it is a history of external conflict with China, and it is also a history of internal conflict within the Tibetan community that ranges from Tibetan government debates in the 1950s over whether or not to support the resistance to contemporary Internet debates over the place of the resistance in Tibetan history.¹⁰ Yet a conflict-ridden view of Chushi Gangdrug is a selective one, dependent on a certain relation to the new ways of seeing and being in the world offered by exile places and practices. As Sherry Ortner (1989) argues, these new options may be either guarded against or embraced, the former in the service of reproducing previously existing structures and practices and the latter in the service of altering them.

In the "newness" of exile, the Chushi Gangdrug resistance gave its members, who were predominantly men without national power, a sense of participation in national projects, including the idea that they could be involved in positive transformation at the government level. Such aspirations to national participation were not entirely new but drew on long-standing tensions between Lhasa and the regions of Tibet over issues of local control and national representation. Similar tensions also compose much of the treasure tradition and were generated out of the same vertical allegiances that define much of Tibetan religious and social life (Gyatso 1998). In present-day Tibet, the treasure tradition is being revitalized as part of the reformation of Tibetan identity under socialist Chinese rule (Germano 1998). In a time of religious and cultural persecution, the revitalized practice serves to connect the present to both recent and distant pasts, to "artwork and texts buried just a few decades ago in response to Chinese-initiated repression of Buddhism,"

and also to material and scriptural treasures of Tibet's own imperial age, a time when Tibet ruled portions of China (Germano 1998:55). In general, the treasure tradition remains slightly outside the mainstream of Buddhist practice; it is not, for example, part of the Dalai Lama's Gelugpa school. Issues of legitimacy and authenticity haunt the practitioners and their discovered treasures, much the same as with Chushi Gangdrug and their histories. That both the treasure tradition and the Chushi Gangdrug resistance happen to be associated with the region of Kham may not entirely be a coincidence.

The sociopolitical alternatives that Chushi Gangdrug poses (e.g., questions about who "really fought for Tibet" or discussions about what a decentered Tibetan government and community might look like) challenge the status quo in a time marked by strenuous efforts to monitor buried histories and alternative memories. Whereas the June 16th commemoration and Lobsang Jampa's narrations represent gentle challenges to the status quo, there are also times when veterans chose more direct paths toward righting what they consider to be a historical wrong.

History over Breakfast, or Why Does Arrest Work?

"The Tibetan Government did not help Chushi Gangdrug, not one bit." One 1997 winter morning in Delhi, two older men lectured a younger man over a breakfast of fried eggs, Tibetan bread, and bottomless cups of buttery tea. Their lesson to this young man recently arrived from Kham was a shorthand version of resistance history not available in Tibet itself. His father, he said, had taught him about the history of Tibet, but all that he had known was that Tibetans organized a military resistance to the Chinese. People in his area did not know the details or the full story of the resistance. That morning, he heard a version of Chushi Gangdrug history, as full and as partial as any, skimming over or avoiding certain aspects while emphasizing others. Chushi Gangdrug, his elders instructed him, was a Khampa group responsible for helping the Dalai Lama to escape Tibet safely, but, although it took the Dalai Lama as their religious leader, it also disagreed with some of his political positions. Absent from this history lesson was much of what one of the men, Athar Norbu, commonly known as "Lithang Athar,"¹¹ had discussed with me earlier—the splits within the resistance generated as much by ego and greed as by political factions and regional allegiances that predated exile, in which Athar had taken different sides over the years.

The day before, Athar had handed me a copy of a new book he had just received in the mail by Roger McCarthy (1997), the head of the CIA Tibet operation. "All the stories are there. He was the leader, the key leader. He knows all between the CIA and the Khampa guerrillas. You can find everything in this book. He wrote all [about] my life and the lives of my friends, the Khampa guerrillas." A moment passed, and he rethought this glowing endorsement. "However, not everything [in the book] is correct." The next day, after the young man had left, the two men spoke directly to me: "So much is still unknown," said Athar. "The good and the

bad, it will all come out in the future.” His friend added, “You should know the details, and then you can be truthful. Otherwise it will spoil your book.”

How can one know the details and be truthful in the time of arrest? Although many resistance veterans were sharply aware that there were different “truths” in circulation, they also recognized that history was to be found in the aggregate of dissenting, rather than consenting, truths. Almost to a fault, veterans I met with encouraged me to talk with people “on both sides” of the issue—that is, those who wanted a more prominent place for Chushi Gangdrug in exile society and those who were content to defer to Dharamsala. In the early 1990s, a new governmental focus on democracy was accompanied by an overture toward acknowledging resistance history. However, the release of resistance histories remains tenuous and gradual. For the veterans, the most important signs of release come from the Dalai Lama.

In the spring of 1994, a group of resistance leaders led by Lithang Athar signed a political agreement with the Tibetan and Mongolian Affairs Office of the Taiwanese government. The agreement stated that Tibet would be independent on Taiwan’s reclamation of mainland China, and the Dalai Lama would be recognized as the sole legitimate head of Tibet. Although there was some precedent for a non-governmental group engaging in governmental affairs, this was a bold move, but one that the resistance leaders thought the Dalai Lama would support. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in exile were unaware that the resistance was making this arrangement, and by all popular accounts, they were furious when it was presented to them. The government excommunicated the leaders who signed the agreement and the veterans who supported them; those who did not support the Taiwan agreement were installed in Dharamsala as the “true” representatives of the resistance. This was not the first split within the resistance and it was not the first split between the resistance and the government, but as the years go on and the men involved grow older (into their sixties, seventies, and eighties), this split took on a new poignancy. It separated families, friends, and neighbors in a community that was already fragmented for men in the twilight years of their lives. In October 2000, six years and several months after the agreement was signed, the split was finally mended, albeit somewhat fragiley. The Dalai Lama met with the renegade resistance group, and relations were mended not just between the two resistance groups, but also and more importantly, between the Dalai Lama and the renegade group. The Dalai Lama’s actions were a sign to the Tibetan community that the release of arrested histories was now in progress. Not all veterans, however, are rushing to tell their stories.

Histories told over breakfast are no less susceptible to attempts to fix one version of the past as the real one. Despite her proclamation of history as truth, fear, and lies, Kesang Tsering is as guilty of inciting historical controversy as anyone. One day, she told me the story of what had happened to Tibetans in Bhutan in the 1970s. The story was vivid, frightening, and very damning of the Bhutanese Government. The King of Bhutan, she said, rounded up all the Tibetan government officials and threw them in a dungeon. Many were killed and some

of them were tortured with hot irons!¹² As she spoke, her voice grew animated, and her husband began to interject. “Who told you that? You don’t even know what you’re talking about. You don’t even know why the troubles began.” Thubten Jigme, a former monk and resistance veteran who had fled Tibet in 1959, often felt compelled to correct his wife’s explanations. She had only escaped from Tibet in 1982. The histories she learned in Nepal were ones that he had lived through. In a reasoned voice, Thubten Jigme began to tell his version of the story: some bad elements in the Tibetan government caused some troubles with the Bhutanese government. Yes, it was unfortunate that many people were arrested and killed, but that was all in the past, and we do not need to talk about these things now. He stopped with a look that implied the discussion was over; it was, of course, just beginning.

Kesang Tsering and I objected; she arguing the truth of her version, I arguing some sort of middle road between the sensational and the censored. Our debate continued without real resolution but with a mutual acceptance that we did not know what had really happened. The story of Tibetan refugees in Bhutan is an example of an arrested history the release of which has not yet been authorized. Kesang Tsering’s transgression of this arrest provoked her husband to defend what is not to be told, to patrol those boundaries that her story threatened to cross. For Thubten Jigme, the dilemma was not just in the historical disobedience of crossing unreleased boundaries but also in risking a weakened power and position for the Tibetan government in exile. Such deferrals to the government are commonly found throughout the exile community. Veterans, for example, are only telling resistance histories now, in this time of gradual release, whereas in earlier periods, these histories were not told, or were told in only partial form, or to limited audiences. Why then was Kesang Tsering willing to discuss Bhutan when her husband was not?

As with Chushi Gangdrug, histories of the time in Bhutan are not just about facts but also about relations. Relations between individuals, communities, governments; pasts, presents, and futures; and relations also to histories themselves: Thubten Jigme, for example, was in Nepal during the time of the disturbances in Bhutan. He knew people who had been in Bhutan and had heard their stories. He remembers the subsequent difficulties that the Tibetan government and refugee community encountered as a result. In 1998, when Kesang Tsering told this story, it was easy to forget that in the early 1970s the Tibetan government in exile did not have the international support or even degree of regional security that it has now. Kesang Tsering’s relation to what happened in Bhutan differs significantly from Thubten Jigme’s. For her, telling this story is a way of connecting pasts she did not experience with the continuing difficulties of being “so so’i lung pa med na” [without one’s country]. For both wife and husband, the story of Bhutan shows the importance of grounding oneself within current sociopolitical realities. For Kesang Tsering, this involves determining how her version of exile came to be; for Thubten Jigme, it requires withholding certain stories so that blemishes of the exile

community are covered; and yet for both, it includes persistent and mostly unvoiced questions of why the story of Tibet has come to be told the ways that it has.

Outsiders and Secrets

History does not stop in the time of arrest. People inside and outside of the Tibetan community have found ways to relate arrested pasts. This brings us to a seeming paradox: there are a number of written histories that mention the resistance either in passing or in varying degrees of detail. Who writes what, when, and why? In 1997, a veteran in Darjeeling told me “Everything is over now. Now we can tell the secrets.” However, between then and our most recent conversation in 2002, he chose to keep secrets that others had told me, raising an important question about outsiders and secrets. Outsiders are not bound to the same rules for keeping secrets or honoring historical arrest (Simmel 1950). For outsiders, revealing secrets does not require understanding why something was categorized as secret. My argument that categories of internal difference matters as much as political fact in the arrest of resistance histories is specifically directed at the internal workings of the Tibetan community in exile that include community tensions not readily visible to most outsiders. Given this, it should come as no surprise that most writings on the resistance focus on political facts and are written by outsiders rather than Tibetan authors.

Literature mentioning or directly discussing the Tibetan resistance can be loosely grouped by period (before or after 1959), national origin (Tibetan or Western), and focus (resistance or the CIA). The first to write openly about the resistance were Westerners concerned with the lack of global support Tibet was receiving (Avedon 1979; Cowell 1967; Patterson 1968, 1970),¹³ or by those who were committed to uncovering and exposing CIA operations around the world (Marchetti and Marks 1974; Mullin 1975; Robbins 1979; Wise 1973),¹⁴ or by those who, as in the case of the French anthropologist Michel Peissel (1968, 1972), stumbled across the resistance in the pursuit of other projects. Although Westerners tended to focus on post-1959 events outside of Tibet and on the CIA connection, the much smaller list of Tibetan authors primarily focused on pre-1959 events and avoided mention of the CIA (e.g., D. Norbu 1979).¹⁵ The Dalai Lama’s two autobiographies, for instance, mention the resistance in passing (Gyatso 1962, 1990), and the Tibetan Government published the posthumous memoirs of resistance leader Andrug Gompo Tashi (Andrugsang 1973) and a biography of a Chushi Gangdrug veteran (J. Norbu 1979). At the same time, however, the leading Tibetan historian Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa mentions the resistance only briefly in his Tibetan-language history of Tibet (1976) and does not mention it at all in the English-language translation (Shakabpa 1967). Other English-language histories of 20th century Tibet (Grunfeld 1996; Shakyas 1999; Smith 1996) include the resistance but primarily in terms of political rather than ethnographic attention.

Such writings on the resistance remain in the Foucauldian category of “subjugated knowledge”—existing either (or both) as “historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systematization” or as “a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated” (Foucault 1980:81–82). Tibetan government publications of resistance narratives, therefore, are exclusively in the realm of personal or secondary history rather than of national history.¹⁶ As this particular instance of arrest has been gradually released, accounts of the resistance have been on the rise (Conboy and Morrison 2002; Dunham 2004; McGranahan in press; Sonam and Sarin 1998), especially in terms of U.S. and Tibetan veterans (Dewatshang 1997; Knaus 1999; McCarthy 1997; Norbu 1994; Tsering 1992, 1998, 2002, 2003). Although writing history is only one means of forging national sentiment,¹⁷ it remains a highly valued medium for sharing resistance history. This sharing, has a twist, however: the use of a scribe.

My work on resistance histories began in 1993 as part of a study on regional identity in exile. In one of my very first interviews in Kathmandu, the late Nyarong Aten sat me down and told me that if I wanted to ask him questions about identity, then we had to start with history. I took his advice seriously and began collecting Khampa oral histories loosely covering the period from the 1930s to the present. Three patterns were immediately evident: (1) the 1950s was the primary focus of these collective narrations, (2) histories of Kham were specifically told as Tibetan histories, and (3) histories of the informal and formal resistance were of crucial importance to the Khampa refugee community. The more I learned, the more aware I became of gaps in the exile community as well as in the historical record. Many Khampa veterans openly discussed community politics and frustrations with me, whereas others like Thubten Jigme tried to keep history and politics separate. As I traveled back and forth between Tibetan communities in Nepal and India, some of the veterans took a great interest in tracking with whom I spoke, the new information I had learned about the resistance, and the new insights I had gained in terms of making sense of this information. Some took great pride in the number of veterans I interviewed and in my meeting with individuals whose stories had not yet been recorded (as opposed to those who were more regular spokespersons for the resistance). Others pushed me to talk with people who had differing political opinions and coached me on what to ask or not to ask. “Don’t ask him about politics,” I was told about one elderly veteran who lived in a monastery, “Just ask him about history.”

Given this link between history and politics, my research was possible only through the unanimous cooperation I received from Chushi Gangdrug veterans. Explaining this unanimity is complicated for it involves contradictory sets of hopes and dreams, privileges and commitments, senses of obligation and service, skills of narration and writing, and continually negotiated feelings of trust and fear. Literacy rates among veterans are low, and the position of a scribe (*drung yig*, commonly translated into English as “secretary”) is a culturally important one. Yet literacy

rates alone (or ethnographic accomplishments for that matter) are not sufficient reason to entrust a U.S. anthropologist with stories to be turned into histories. Instead, I understand the cooperation I received as evidence of the collaborative nature of historical production as both political strategy and cultural practice and as evidence of the gradual release of this particular history throughout the 1990s.

In the Time of Arrest: Chushi Gangdrug Tells Its Story

Thus far, the Tibetan resistance has been reduced to a brief moment in the strategic lives of other histories. It is at most a chapter or two in histories of modern Tibet or of U.S. Cold War politics in Asia. Historical arrest, however, is a temporal hegemony with cracks; it is not total. Although the resistance is in some ways a history still waiting to happen, for years the resistance fighters have told their stories in certain venues, to certain audiences, and although they respect the limits placed on resistance history, they often gently transgress these limits, trying to find spaces for public comment, if not public critique. They do so in several ways—by writing and telling their stories and also by active political and social participation in the refugee community in India, Nepal, and farther afield in the United States and Canada. Although some of the veterans do hold that the story of the resistance is the “true” history of Tibet, not all hold this view, or even the view that everything will be OK once the period of arrest is over. There is not simply one but different and even ranked versions of the history that has been arrested. Many of the former soldiers with whom I spoke realized, some more consciously than others, that just as secrets may have their own secrets, so too do excluded pasts have their own exclusions as seen in the following statement by a Khampa Tibetan government official:

Even before the CIA was involved, there was resistance throughout Kham. There was lots of fighting. This has been excluded from history in general but also from the history of Chushi Gangdrug. Chushi Gangdrug history now begins in Andrugtsang’s living room in Lhasa. But, by this time, lots of men and women were already dead. Tens of thousands of people were already fighting.

Even within the resistance, hierarchies are codified through stories, persons, and events that become iconic. The irony is that even the icons remain marginalized beyond the resistance community.

Chushi Gangdrug leaders have been collecting information for a history project in progress since the early 1960s. One of the problems they have faced is the rupture and disjuncture that marks their experiences. In a society in which history has long been an exercise in demonstrating continuity (Aris 1997; Klieger 1989), the resistance tries to write, in a time marked by a lack of continuity, a history that does not have a genealogical past on which to build. Veterans realize that not much has been written about the resistance and that some Tibetans would rather not discuss Chushi Gangdrug at all in light of the internal politics involved.¹⁸ Since the initial days in exile, however, they have recognized the need to tell their

story, specifically to document the names and place affiliations of people who struggled to defend Tibet.

At the organizational level, Chushi Gangdrug has not published a comprehensive history, releasing instead several self-published Tibetan-language political critiques over the years (most, if not all, of which are censored by the exile government), and recently a short English-language pamphlet detailing resistance history. Individually, encouraged by requests from the resistance leadership for district and battalion histories as well as by overtures from the Dalai Lama regarding release as part of an effort to mend community splits following the 1994 Taiwan scandal, an increasing number of resistance veterans are telling their stories to Tibetans and outsiders, as well as writing their own histories, most of which remain unpublished. Many Tibetans speak of the difficulty of writing: "Tibetan people do not have the practice of writing about events. My generation and the previous generation did not realize the importance of writing about past events. Even if we did write, it was not a vivid account, but a haphazard account of some events." Other veterans chose to spend their time on religious activities, atoning for sins committed: "[Resistance leaders] told me to write my life story. But I did not write anything. War is futile. I saw a film on the dropping of atom bombs on Japan. If modern weapons are used, the consequences are disastrous. Instead, I spend my time practicing religion and saying prayers for the well-being of others."

One veteran who spent most of his time in prayer was Baba Yeshe, the late former leader of the Mustang force. Baba Yeshe's cooperation with the Nepali government in 1974 resulted in his excommunication by the Tibetan Government in exile along with the excommunication of all those associated with him.¹⁹ The "black" name that Baba Yeshe was given struck the Nepal community of Mustang veterans particularly hard. The majority of the veterans lived in refugee camps associated with the Tibetan Government in exile, and the political strife between the government and their Mustang leader was hard for many of the men to reconcile. In 1990, Baba Yeshe met with the Dalai Lama to "explain everything to him."²⁰ The Dalai Lama personally pardoned him. This pardon not only removed the black mark from his reputation, but it also allowed (in theory) for denizens of Baba Yeshe's camps to be associated with the Tibetan Government in exile. For Mustang veterans, the reunion of Baba Yeshe with the Dalai Lama was of great importance. His history can now safely be told, according to a group of veterans in Delhi:

Baba Yeshe has done a lot of work. We must make the effort to write the deeds of those people who have died for the cause of Tibet. We cannot forget what they have done for our country. It will be difficult to find people as brave in the times to come. What they have done must be put clearly in black and white. Also, from the point of view of politics, the work of these people forms the basis of our thought. Our government itself was not stable, and we lost our country to the Chinese. If the government had been stable, then there would have been less trouble and controversy.

Baba Yeshe's story, which still remains mired in trouble and controversy for some, is both a collective and an individual fear realized, a strong example of the

connections between historical arrest, the Dalai Lama, and the status quo. Explaining his story and “putting things clearly in black and white” requires continuing an exploration of the gray zones of history and community.

The internal and external amnesia that accompanies historical arrest fosters bitterness in some quarters of the Chushi Gangdrug community. Members of this community, including non-Khampa family members and supporters of veterans, often speak frankly about the community shame involved in “not knowing” about resistance contributions. One woman in Kathmandu encouraged me to speak with “ordinary” men in the refugee camps in Pokhara:

It is so sad. These soldiers are now all old men living in the camps. They fought in Chushi Gangdrug for Tibet and His Holiness [the Dalai Lama] and now their lives are wasted. They couldn't fight any longer because His Holiness chose nonviolence as a political strategy. They now just sit and spin wool all day. They never would have done that in Tibet.

Telling the stories of these men would be valuable for her children, she continued. The fact that resistance history is not known by the younger generation in exile (often even by those whose family members—fathers, uncles, and grandfathers—were involved) is considered a problem to be remedied. The idea of history as inheritance runs throughout the histories I have collected. The great majority of veterans believe that the story of the resistance is a key part of national Tibetan history. They have, thus, both abided by arrest (mostly by withholding their histories) and have protested its most difficult aspects (by publicly defending themselves in times of political strife). Lacking a genealogical past on which to build and a heroic nationalism into which to fit arrested histories of the Tibetan resistance do not represent attempts to return to an idealized past, but they are efforts to construct the future as a return to a different past.

Conclusion

Returning to Kesang Tsering's opening comment, history is truth and fear, and some lies. What characterizes histories built of fear? A negative politics is one component, the avoidance of perceived evils rather than the pursuit of perceived goods. Fear is part of the production of arrested histories and a response to it, processes through which certain political projects are made true. It is not always possible to “seize hold of a memory” even when its danger is well concealed. As a result, telling resistance histories quietly is the most radical step many veterans make toward challenging historical arrest, and I emphasize that even decisions to tell history are done with respect for the Dalai Lama, with the notion of beneficial action in mind and with the hope, if not belief, that telling will benefit the Tibetan cause.

Explanations of how people respond to the fear implicit in historical arrest require ethnographic inquiry into the conditions of possibility for history. In

determining how people work with and around the arrest of histories, and in thinking about which histories slip through the cracks of arrest, attention to Tibetan concepts of history is key. My recognition of historical arrest as a practice is indebted to the many conversations about history that I had with Tibetans in exile. Although there is no Tibetan name for “historical arrest,” it is still very much a part of discussions of history. People talk both abstractly and directly of things that cannot yet be spoken of, of those events and peoples whose stories are publicly recognized as not yet historicized. The key is in the “not yet” aspect, in the hope that after arrest will come a time when these histories shall be told. Built into the conceptual structure of arrested histories is an anticipation of a time other than now when buried political items can be dug up and treasures revealed, and when histories might no longer be drafted in the terms of the modern nation-state.

As arrested histories move through different stages of their arrest, the gap between meaning and event contracts and expands, moving through periods when some individuals tell parts of the story and then returning to long spells of silence until another narrative opening is either seized or created. Alongside temporal ebbs and flows are sociopolitical ones: the resistance was a unified effort composed of individuals who did not always agree. In addition to institutional arrest, therefore, histories of the resistance move through other stages in step with the internal rhythms of the organization such that the content and temperament of resistance histories are not static. Although arrest holds the promise of national recognition, a goal desired by all veterans with whom I have spoken, the deferral of this recognition was considered problematic by those who sought national acknowledgment in this lifetime. Other veterans dissented from this urgency, content in the faith that the authorities would choose the right time for release. Although dependent on ethnographic and political context, historical arrest is perhaps not so much a tool for denying history as it is one for producing certain types of community.

On Lobsang Jampa’s wall, along with pictures of running horses, toy rifles, and deity images, there hangs a poster, a still life of fruits and vegetables, on which is imprinted the slogan, in English, “All for one, and one for all.” The Tibetan refugee community is a relatively small one, estimated to be around 130,000, and is—despite being spread around the world over the last five decades—remarkably coherent and united in its goal of restoring Tibet to Tibetan rule in some form. The limits of exile, however, are beginning to be felt as this nation without a state tries to simultaneously forge a modern democratic government and preserve its cultural traditions. Although the political stakes involved in remembering and forgetting certain histories and the identities and relations they index are undoubtedly high, they are not, as historical arrest demonstrates, irreversible. Working with the exile government rather than against it, resistance veterans and other refugee Tibetans abide mostly by an “all for one” motto in the forging of community and the telling of history, such that life in exile is defined as much by a politics of hope as by a politics of fear.

Notes

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1. In this article, I use both pseudonyms and real names. Following anthropological convention, pseudonyms are used in connection with ethnographic information, and following history protocols, real names are used when presenting historical information. In those instances in which ethnographic and historic contexts converge, the use of pseudonyms or real names is based on political context.

2. Khampa Tibetan families names end with the suffix “tsang.” In referring to Gompo Tashi (a given name) from the Andrugtsang family, one would call him “Andrug Gompo Tashi.” Chushi Gangdrug is a geographic name for Kham.

3. It is difficult to fix a date to this decision. In the 1950s, the Dalai Lama did advocate nonviolence as political strategy vis-à-vis China, but the official Tibetan policy of nonviolence was developed over the years in exile (and adopted by many in Tibet as well).

4. Not all types of difference are labeled dangerous. For example, issues of class are left mostly unaddressed in the exile Tibetan community. In a related discussion of identity politics in Ladakh, Martijn van Beek reports a similar evasion of discussions of class and new local demands to address “skudragism” or aristocratic dominance (2001:545).

5. For accounts of specific treasure finders, see Aris 1988, Germano 1998, Hanna 1994, and Terrone 2002.

6. Such temporal lags are often associated with modern space–time configurations. Homi Bhabha, for example, suggests that historical revision and generation of political and cultural agency often takes place through a “discursive time-lag,” in which dominant symbols are subject to new signs, meanings, and truths (1994:191–198). Similarly, Reinhart Koselleck argues that modern forms of temporality incur new demands on the future, such that novel approaches to and ways of assimilating experience emerge (1985:xxiv; see also Feldman 1991).

7. In the context of the Holocaust, Gabrielle Spiegel (2002) suggests that durational time places Holocaust testimonies outside the bounds of history, such that they are “structurally unavailable as history.” The content of durational time, Spiegel argues “has always been there, suspended atemporally, not to be ‘recovered’ but only uncovered and then covered once more, buried again beneath the fruitless struggle to expose ‘the way it was’ ” (2002:158). Her understanding of durational time as resisting closure (“the putting an end to the past”) strikes me as resonant of the temporal work of historical arrest and suggestive of the value of further inquiry into the cultural particularities and similarities of notions of historical time other than chronological and linear forms. See also Chakrabarty 2000, Gupta 1994, and Hughes and Trautmann 1995.

8. My formal interviews with Lobsang Jampa began in October 1997, and along with informal conversations, continued through August 1999, and then again in February 2003.

9. Although Tibetans do not have guaranteed rights in either India or Nepal, their rights to express themselves and to gather in public are severely restricted in Nepal. As a result of Nepal’s weak position vis-à-vis China, His Majesty’s Government of Nepal

has progressively hardened its stance toward Tibetans in Nepal as part of their effort of prohibiting “anti-China activities.”

10. See, for example, Tashi 1997 and contemporary debates on www.phayul.com.

11. Many Tibetans are identified by their home villages, rather than by family names. The name Lithang Athar refers to “Athar from Lithang.”

12. Kesang Tsering insists that Tibetans were “ironed,” that is, hot irons were used to torture them. I am not aware of any studies of this incident and present this information as commentary on the social politics of historical production rather than as empirically demonstrated historical fact.

13. In 1964, Scottish missionary, journalist, and Tibet supporter George Patterson illegally traveled to a guerrilla camp east of Mustang with a British film crew led by Adrian Cowell. A resistance battalion allowed the film crew to accompany them on a raid into Tibet. The British government suppressed the footage, entitled “Raid into Tibet,” for several years before it was publicly shown.

14. After a lull in the 1980s, journalists rediscovered the CIA–Tibet connection in the 1990s (Lane 1994; Leary 1997:98; Liu 1999; Roberts 1997a, 1997b). The majority of these articles focus on retelling the CIA–Tibet connection and, much to the concern of the Tibetan government in exile, have at times overestimated the role of the CIA in the resistance. For example, in the October 1997 issue of the political magazine *George* was an article charging that the Dalai Lama’s escape from Tibet was entirely planned and carried out by the CIA, thus basically contending that the Tibetans were nothing but U.S. stooges of the Cold War (Roberts 1997a). The Tibetan government responded swiftly and sharply, immediately issuing a press release through the International Campaign for Tibet in Washington, D.C., stating, “It is an insult to the Tibetan freedom movement to imply that we were inspired and led by the CIA. On the contrary, the Dalai Lama’s flight was planned and executed by Tibetans.”

15. In addition, the resistance was also fictionalized in an obscure Indian novel entitled *The Crusaders of Tibet*. Written by an Indian schoolteacher of Tibetan refugee children and published by Khampa Pocket Books, the book is advertised as a “blood-hot story of LOVE and WAR of the Tibetan guerrillas; their stirring and breathtaking exploits against the Red Chinese occupying forces in TIBET” (Bambi n.d.).

16. In this category, I would include recent Tibetan-language publications by former government officials such as Namling Paljor Jigme (1988), Thubten Khentsun (1998), Dronyer Chenmo Phala (1996, as orally recorded in 1976), and Taklha Phuntsok Tashi’s three-volume autobiography (1995).

17. There has long been talk about Steven Seagal’s plans to make a film about the resistance, tentatively entitled “Dixie Cups.” In a 2001 interview, filmmaker Eric Valli (*Himalaya* 1999) also spoke of earlier plans to make a film about the resistance starring Richard Gere. He says, “I worked with Richard Gere on a story about this. And then, because it’s still very sensitive, it didn’t go. The Dalai Lama is not interested in telling this story” (Rosen 2001).

18. A resistance website formed during the 1990s split within Chushi Gangdrug remained active and unedited through the summer of 2001 (<http://www.chushigangdrug.org>). The website included photos from guerrilla operations in Tibet and a brief and antagonistic history of the resistance that directly challenged its arrest and subsequent bad name. Although the website’s version of history was telling in its own right, the site also included several statements that underscore the collective frustrations of resistance veterans with their lack of positive recognition within the exile community—one example is the declaration that “those who find Chushi Gangdrug embarrassing are ignorant.”

19. The details surrounding this cooperation are complicated. An abbreviated version of what happened is as follows: the Tibetan soldiers refused to end their operations in

Mustang until the Dalai Lama's brother-in-law carried an audiotaped message to the soldiers from the Dalai Lama. At that point, some veterans surrendered to the Royal Nepal Army, some tried to escape Nepal into India, and some committed suicide rather than surrender. Baba Yeshi was the leader of the group that cooperated with the Government of Nepal and as a result, he and his followers received land in several places in Nepal as well as Nepali citizenship.

20. Interview, Baba Yeshi, Kathmandu, December 16, 1997.

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ABSTRACT *Narratives of the Tibetan resistance army are not a part of national history in the Tibetan exile community. Drawing on stories by veterans of the resistance to the Chinese invasion and the explanations they give of its absence in Tibetan national history, I argue that this history has been “arrested” because of the challenges it poses to normative versions of history and community and, in turn, to internal and external representations of Tibet. This practice signifies the postponing of narrating certain histories until a time in the future when the dangers they pose to sustaining a unified Tibetan community in exile has receded. This practice of historical (un)production offers insight into temporality and subjectivity, plural identities in the face of national hegemony, and why history might be considered a combination of truth, fear, and lies. [history, memory, Tibet, war, national politics]*