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How Half-Tibetans Made Tibet Whole

On October 6, 1942, a brawl between two half Tibetans—one a half Nepalese (Tib. *kha tsa ra*) and the other a half Chinese (Tib. *ko ko*)—broke out in the center of Lhasa.[1] As it was later described by the British assistant political officer in Lhasa:

> A half-breed Chinaman and a half-breed Nepali started a quarrel outside the Cathedral [Jokhang]. The koko picked up a stone and hit the Nepali half-breed over the head. Four Tibetan constables now intervened. The koko flew, hotly pursued by the constables and sought refuge in the Chinese Mission. The constables followed, intending to arrest the koko, but were themselves arrested by Dr. Kong.[2]

Insisting the Koko merited the representation of the Chinese government, Dr. Kong Qingzong refused to release him to Tibetan officials and held the four Tibetan policemen for nearly five months.[3] It was only when the Tibetan government withdrew all of the government's assistance (including a translator and essential supplies for the Chinese Mission) and demanded that Kong be cashiered that the Chinese home government intervened and ordered Dr. Kong to release the policemen.

On the surface, this might appear a simple case of an overzealous foreign representative intervening to protect the rights of their citizens or China's representative in Tibet attempting to prevent Tibet from acting independently of the Chinese central government. Yet neither would be an accurate interpretation of the situation. By 1942, China had, for three decades, ceased to have oversight of Tibetan affairs. Tibet's laws were unequivocal on the matter. With few exceptions, those born in Tibet to a Tibetan mother were categorically treated as Tibetan subjects.

As far as the Chinese were concerned, however, China's control over Tibet could be demonstrated historically. This reasoning, then as today, was selectively applied

to regions formerly controlled by China that had slipped out of China's political control in the early twentieth century. Casually ignoring the geopolitical realities, the Nationalist government perpetuated the notion that "China" included Tibet by a tenuous reading of the past. Insisting that since both Tibet and China came under Mongolian rule in the thirteenth century, it argued that Tibet should be considered Chinese from that point forward. Such explications, while perhaps superficially plausible, crumble under more careful scrutiny. As the historian Warren W. Smith has written in his work on Tibet's relationship to China, after the fall of the Mongols in the late fourteenth century China "had no real interest in Tibet beyond Tibet's role in Ming relations with the Mongols." For the Tibetans, "Tibet's continuing relations with the Mongols were much more politically significant than Tibetan relations with the Ming."[4]

It was only three hundred years later, with the rise of the Qing, that China's more direct relationship with Tibet began under the Qing dynasty. But even then, its political oversight remained tenuous. As the Tibet scholar Fabienne Jagou provocatively contends, if one is speaking of Tibet as being part of China in the stricter sense of China having territorial control over Tibet, "it was only with the end of the 19th century that all three Tibetan provinces became a 'buffer zone' of overlapping international interests and a focal point of Inner China and the maintenance of the Qing Empire."[5] However, the end of the nineteenth century was precisely the period when the Qing central government was at its weakest, undermining the argument that there was an unending line of direct Chinese control.

By the twentieth century, though many of Tibet's distant neighbors schemed about ways to bring Tibet under their sphere of control, most treated Tibet as Metternich once famously described Italy, as merely a "geographical expression."[6] No two of Tibet's neighbors agreed on its political status, geographic delimitation, or international standing. Just as China insisted that Tibet remained part of China, the British perceived Tibet as it did many of the principalities in India, namely, professing the presence of native governance but appointing a British adviser to influence policy and deter others from doing the same. Both the Chinese and the British flattered themselves that Tibet remained in their sphere of influence while ignoring the mounting evidence of Tibet's independence.

Jagou's and Smith's comments reflect the scholarly predisposition to defend Tibet's independence primarily by examining its actions. Few studies have reversed the lens to question China's political fragmentation during this same period. Between the fall of the Qing in 1911 and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China proper (typically defined as China's internal eighteen provinces) experienced multiple "central" governments, a nonstop succession of warlords, Japanese occupation, and a full-on civil war. One cannot identify any period from 1911 to 1950 when the Chinese central government could be described as exerting steady political, economic, or military control over the entirety of what today is understood as China. By comparison to China, Tibet appears the model

of political stability, establishing its de facto independence over the course of four decades. If one can accuse Tibet of anything, it is that, as Melvyn Goldstein has stated, Tibet was "poorly prepared to defend its contested status."[7]

Given the considerable debate over Tibet's political status, it is surprising that so little attention has been paid to its relations with its Himalayan neighbors and their activities in central Tibet. Tibet's concern with regional, ethnic and occupational identity stems not from a misplaced elitism or ethnocentrism, rather it arises out of a long history of ethnic and religious tolerance of and interaction with its neighbors. According to traditional Tibetan historical accounts, Tibet's first ruler, King Songtsen Gampo (ca. 617–47), married both a Chinese and a Nepalese princess.[8] The elevated stature of the two princesses in Tibet's representation of its past can be measured in part by the fact that among their many accomplishments they are credited with bringing Buddhism to Tibet and founding two of Lhasa's most sacred sites, the Jokhang and Ramoche Buddhist Temples.

Although this idealized framing of the past illustrates Tibet's positive relations with its neighbors, it is with the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and many Tibetan elites began to recognize the need to clarify precisely who they were claiming as their subjects within the emerging modern definitions of statehood. In this reformulation, the memory of the two princesses continued to play a crucial role in their representation of their past. In 1923, the Tibetan regent, in a letter to the Nepalese government attempting to resolve a tense issue, sought to strike a conciliatory note by opening the correspondence by invoking the marriage between the Tibetan king and the Nepalese princess as evidence that "ever since, the two states treated each other as the members of one house" and that relations between Nepal and Tibet were thus the same as "the relations between two brothers."[9]

The relationship with China was presented quite differently. From a religio-spirtual perspective, in the priest-patron relationship between the Qing and Tibet during the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, the Dalai Lama had been superior to the emperor, as this was the dominant perspective in the Tibetan theocracy. From a political point of view, the wobbly Chinese Republic that replaced the Qing had even less ability to enforce its will on Tibet.

With the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama took formalized steps to demonstrate Tibet's status as an independent state, including standardizing the Tibetan flag, issuing postage stamps, and printing Tibet's first paper currency.[10] Despite the unrelenting rhetoric emanating from China, it is difficult to identify any official Chinese presence in Tibet. As discussed more fully in the next chapter, many scholars (largely historians of China) have taken the lack of Tibetan declarations of independence during this time as hard and fast evidence that Tibet remained part of China. Here I persue a highly visible on-the-ground perspective that demonstrates how Tibet perceived and protected those it treated as Tibetans subject to Tibetan

governance. Such a shift in perspective also allows us to better understand precisely how the Khache community negotiated their positioning within this complex Himalayan context always retaining and emphasizing their status as Tibetan subjects.

The adoption of a more Tibetan-centric frame of reference, one that fully emphasizes the importance of the Himalayan context, is crucial to appreciating the many steps Tibet took to act as an independent state. The traditional framework in which the Tibetan government regulated foreigners, Tibetans, and half Tibetans—particularly in relation to their Himalayan neighbors—bears witness to its perception of itself as an independent state grappling with modern conceptualizations of citizenship, race, and statecraft. The efforts of Tibet in support of its independence certainly demonstrate that descriptions of it as a "fourth world state" mired in "statelessness" with "non-state actors" are exaggerated.[11] The specific cases also establish that many of the key examples used by those arguing for Chinese control—particularly the role of Liu Manqing, Huang Musong, Kong Qingzong, and Shen Zonglian—upon closer examination show how tenuous China's presence was in Lhasa. Rather what we find is a Tibetan government and society confident of their sovereignty and knowing precisely who fell under its rule.

At the heart of almost every challenge to Tibet's de facto independence were the communities that had existed as an integral part of Lhasa life for several centuries: the half-Nepalese (Khatsara), the half-Chinese (Koko), and the Khache.[12] The status of mixed-parentage offspring had concerned Tibetans and the Tibetan government long before issues of nationality and citizenship began to shape global relations, particularly in the post–Versailles Treaty and later postcolonial periods. By the early twentieth century, the Tibetan government had unambiguous definitions of who was and who was not Tibetan for the purposes of taxes, trade, and political rights.

The Khatsara and the Koko were two of most recognized and demographically significant groups within central Tibet. The Khatsara (Tib. *Kha tsa ra*; Newari, *Khacarā*; N. *khaccar*)[13] were children of mixed Nepali-Tibetan parentage, and the Kokos were children of Chinese-Tibetan parentage. The origins of both terms suggest an uncharitable view belied by the cordial acceptance and seamless integration of these individuals into Tibetan culture. "Khatsara" originates from a Nepali word for "mule," the infertile offspring of a donkey and a horse.[14] Most Tibetans remain unaware of the derogatory roots of this term, hinting at a more sustained Nepalese disdain for such mixed children than an innate negative opinion of the Khatsara by the Tibetans. The term for half-Chinese Tibetans, Koko, is derived from "Koko Yak" (Tib. *ko ko yak*), the offspring of a yak and a dzo (Tib. *mdzo*), a cross between yaks and domestic cattle.[15] The term's derivation emphasizes the commonly accepted notion of cross-breeding among Tibetans as a natural occurrence rather than the negative implication that the terms "mongrel" or "half-breed" inherently retain.

Nepalese picnic outside of Lhasa, 1921. Picnics were a common summertime activity of all groups in Lhasa. Note the diversity of the individuals in the photo, ranging from the clearly Newari hosts sitting at the table next to the phonograph but also the Chinese, Tibetan, and Khatsara individuals who were guests participating in the festivities. Copyright Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

The populations of these mixed communities in Lhasa were estimated by the early twentieth century to be well over 1,000 individuals—a sizable presence in a city that was by most estimates no larger than 25,000 to 30,000 people in the first half of the twentieth century. Similar to the Khache communities, the Khatsaras and Kokos, while not limited to living in Lhasa, were largely concentrated in central Tibet's urban centers, thus amplifying their role in central Tibetan life.[16]

THE POLITICS OF MIXED PARENTAGE IN TIBET

For centuries, Lhasa attracted foreigners who, as merchants, soldiers, or laborer, found themselves in Tibet for extended but finite periods of time. Given the transient nature of their postings to Tibet, these foreign communities were unique in ways that altered the manner in which they were treated, understood, and distinguished by most Tibetans. Lhasa's foreign communities varied in significant ways from the diasporic communities found across Asia. Unlike overseas Indian and Chinese communities, very few foreigners permanently settled in Lhasa.

The foreign sojourners, mostly from Nepal and China but also Kashmir, Bhutan, and Sikkim, tended to be overwhelmingly transient, young, and male.[17] Combined with central Tibet's gender imbalance due to the large number of males joining monasteries, many of these foreign men formed relationships, and in some cases established households, with Tibetan women. It was the children of these mixed unions who emerged as clearly identifiable cores of the foreign communities in the central Tibetan cities of Lhasa, Shigatse, and Gyantse and to a lesser extent in the eastern Tibetan cities of Dartsedo (Ch. *Kangding*) and Siling (Ch. *Xining*). As a result, while foreign observers, particularly in the twentieth century, viewed them as non-Tibetan, the Khatsara, Koko, and Khache were uniformly perceived as Tibetan by Tibetans.

Out of this ethnic and cultural mix, a consistently used nomenclature emerged for the offspring of mixed parentage: Tibetan Muslim (Khache), half-Nepalese (Khatsara), half-Chinese (Koko). Like the Khache, the Khatsara and the Koko played a prominent role in Lhasa society. Confusion arose as outsiders consistently conflated the "mixed parentage" term to mean non-Tibetan. Yet with the majority of these half-Tibetans being raised by Tibetan mothers, the mixed offspring retained strong cultural and, as we will see, legal ties to Tibet. In this way, and on a daily basis within Tibetan society, the Khatsara, Koko, and Khache tended to be treated not as outsiders but as identifiable Tibetan subgroups.

Of the three communities, only the Khatsara retained vestigial legal rights of citizenship as a result of their foreign mixed parentage.[18] This legal status, sharply delineated in ways quite different from the Koko and the Khache, arose largely from the fact that of all Tibet's neighbors none remained so consistently engaged and demographically present in Tibetan society as the Nepalese. Nepalese merchants were semipermanent residents, often taking Tibetan wives, as early as the seventeenth century.[19] The growing number of incidents over the Khatsaras' rights emerged as a point of conflict by the mid-nineteenth century, leading to the Nepalese inserting a clause in the Treaty of Thapathali of 1856. In a treaty with only ten articles, three deal directly with Nepalese subjects in Tibet. Specifically, Nepal gained the right to post an envoy (N. *bhardar* or *vakil*) in Lhasa who was given legal oversight over all Nepalese residents in Tibet, including half Nepalese and "Nepalese Khache" (N. *Nepal ka Kashmiri*).[20] The emphasis on granting male Khatsaras legal protection in Tibet reflected an acknowledgment by the Nepalese community that such children had virtually no legal standing back in Nepal.

At the same time, Nepalese traders relied on their half-Tibetan offspring to help them maintain a commercial presence in Tibet during their extended absences. While the Nepalese may have held children of these mixed marriages in contempt, they relied enough on the Khatsaras' role as guardians of lucrative Nepalese business interests to jealously guard their legal status within Tibet. It is significant that the term "Khatsara," while highly derogatory in Nepalese, retains little of those pejorative overtones in Tibetan. From the nineteenth century on,

these conflicting perceptions of the Khatsara caused the Khatsara population to remain a primary cause of tension between Tibet and Nepal.

With the departure of the Chinese in 1912, the Nepalese, and consequently the Khatsara, became the most dominant foreign presence in Lhasa, and they increasingly leveraged their privileged position to their economic benefit. Such economic activity resulted in the Khatsara becoming an increasingly vilified group by their Tibetan business rivals. After 1912, Tibetans accused the Khatsara of minor but persistent acts of fraud and theft. These offenses were often undertaken with the open protection of the Nepalese consul. The growing bias against the Khatsara often boiled over during the Great Prayer Festival (Tib. *smon lam chen mo*).

The Great Prayer Festival was one of Lhasa's prominent celebrations. Tibetans from across the region flocked to the city. Monks flowed into Lhasa from the surrounding monasteries. The population of the city doubled, and according to tradition monks took administrative control of the city for the duration of the festival. The monk officials, who were notoriously stringent in punishing any infraction, accused Khatsaras on numerous occasions of refusing payment on goods or, alternately, of demanding that goods be sold to them at extortionately low prices. When confronted with their crimes, Khatsaras would inevitably maintain their innocence and seek protection from the Nepalese consul, which only further inflamed the large crowds. In numerous instances the public outcry spiraled into violence, with rioting and the frequent destruction of Nepalese shops.[21]

The popular disdain of the Khatsara did not arise out of ethnic bias, religious prejudice, or Tibetan nationalism. Accounts from early twentieth-century Tibet are rife with anecdotes clearly explaining that the animosity towards Khatsara were based on their unfair business practices and the perception they were hiding behind their Nepalese foreign parentage.[22] Foreign visitors often remarked on the tension. In 1921, Charles Bell observed in his characteristically laconic manner that "disputes between the Tibetan and Nepalese Governments are not uncommon, and sometimes reach an acute stage."[23] A few years later the political officer posted to Lhasa, Major F. M. Bailey, succinctly summarized the popular perceptions:

> The Newars who settled in Tibet as traders married Tibetan women and all their halfbreed sons are Nepalese subjects. This arrangement was peacefully observed for many years and in case of any disputes arising between the subjects of the two States, the subjects report[ed] the case to their respective authorities, who decided the case at once to the satisfaction of both. Since sometime, some of the khachars [Khatsaras] have been breaking the law, and in defiance of the laws of Tibet they make big cases out of trifling matters with the help of the Captain, the Agent of the Maharaja of Nepal. . . . In spite of our [the British] efforts, the Nepalese officer desires the khachars [Khatsaras] to win their cases although they are in fault.[24]

The animosity toward the Khatsaras tended to cluster around the excessive privileges, perceived and real, that the Nepalese and Khatsaras garnered as a result

of their special status. Fearful of disrupting relations between Nepal and Tibet, the Tibetan authorities rarely pressed the privileges held by the Nepalese. Instead Tibet repeatedly sought to reclassify the Khatsara as Tibetans, to be treated like the Khache and Koko: as Tibetans, subject to Tibet's laws, taxes, and regulations.[25] The Nepalese government adamantly and repeatedly rejected any overture by the Tibetan government to change the Khatsaras' status.

Despite Nepal's pressing for protection of the Khatsaras' legal status in Tibet, the Khatsaras occupied a very tenuous legal position in Nepal. According to the Nepalese scholar Tirtha Mishra, until the mid-twentieth century Khatsaras held no legal claim to their fathers' Nepalese property, even if they were the only living heirs.[26] The Newari's strict caste-class system considered the Khatsaras, who were often practicing Buddhists, unclean. Thus, prior to 1950, they were rarely invited (or ritually allowed) to return to Nepal to the embrace of the larger family.[27] In addition, Nepalese officials levied an annual tax on Khatsaras living in Tibet, forced them to pay a surcharge when obtaining a Nepalese passport, and charged them the same tariffs as foreigners. Notwithstanding Nepal's dismissive attitude towards the Khatsaras and despite repeated attempts by Tibetan authorities to bring the Khatsaras back under their direct rule with promises to collect and deliver taxes to Nepal at five times the normal rate, the Nepalese government preferred the status quo.[28]

Tensions continued to grow as the Khatsaras continued to abuse their special privileges, as did Tibetan outrage that a group they considered Tibetan were allowed to persist in such obviously inappropriate behavior. Some Tibetans suggested that the level of benefits and protection had grown to the extent that even non-Khatsaras were claiming themselves to be Khatsara. In one such incident, which occurred during the Great Prayer Festival in the late 1920s, Chabdam Ugen, a Tibetan monk acting in his role as a monastic warden during the festival, overheard a Khatsara monk telling a confidant about a crime he had committed. Understanding Nepalese, the elder monk immediately arrested him, only to have the younger monk protest his innocence and declare his immunity as a Khatsara. Unable to contain his indignation, Chabdam Ugen replied, "If you are a Khatsara I am a *na-tsara*" (Tib. *khyoe Khatsara yina nga natsara yin*)," with "na-tsara" being a nonsensical made-up term implying the man was an imposter.[29] Though the arrest is said to have caused a minor diplomatic row, Chabdam Ugen became a minor celebrity for his actions. The tendency of Khatsaras to abuse their immunity fueled growing popular indignation against the half-Nepalese community.

The growing outrage over the legal protection given the Khatsara culminated in the infamous "Gyalpo Affair" of 1929. Sherpa Gyalpo, sixty-five years old at the time of the incident, was born in Tibet and raised from the age of five in Nepal by his Nepalese uncle. According to court documents, Gyalpo married a Nepalese Sherpa woman and worked for a decade as a tenant farmer in Nepal, then took a series of odd jobs before finally becoming an itinerant curio dealer trading

items between Lhasa, Darjeeling, and Kathmandu. The strong relationships he forged while in this trade gave rise to rumors of sordid activities he conducted under cover of this ostensible trade in rare objects and jewelry. Many Tibetans accused him of being a Nepalese spy who used his supply of high-end (and highly desirable) coral and turquoise to gain entry into many of Lhasa's elite households.[30] As was common among many Nepalese and Khatsara men, he took a local Tibetan woman as a second wife to help run his affairs during his absence. His status as a Khatsara allowed him to avoid paying taxes on many of his goods, which fostered considerable resentment among Tibetan traders, a reaction only exacerbated by Gyalpo's imperious behavior toward others in Lhasa's trading circles.[31]

It is unclear exactly why Tibetan authorities charged Gyalpo in early 1928 with a "series of alleged offenses ranging from the illicit trade in cigarettes and tobacco, minting counterfeit Tibetan copper coins, . . . and above all furnishing secret information to the Nepalese *Vakil* in Lhasa."[32] These scattershot accusations led some to speculate that the charges were fabricated and that the Tibetan government simply wanted a scapegoat to soothe local discontent and to deflect blame for the years of ineffectual efforts to resolve the Khatsara issues. Others suggested that his arrest would be better characterized as a backlash against the Khatsaras' growing immunity in the Tibetan legal system. Gyalpo's arrogance and high-profile behavior made him a perfect target in the eyes of many Tibetans. The incident might have ended there if public resentment had simply faded and government officials had quietly resolved any differences. However, popular opinion within Lhasa clamored for a harsh sentence, and the Nepalese government refused to accept any blame and rejected anything less than complete exoneration of Gyalpo, on the basis that Tibetan courts had no jurisdiction over Nepalese citizens.[33]

Held in custody for more than a year, Gyalpo managed to flee to the Nepalese legation in September 1929. The drama of his escape, and the swift sanctuary provided by the Nepalese consul, caused many to suspect collusion between the two governments, thus reigniting popular resentment. The Nepalese reasserted their claims that it was perfectly legal for a Nepalese resident, a Khatsara, to seek sanctuary. They refused to turn him over to the Tibetans until it was agreed that his case would be settled by a joint judicial proceeding.[34] Tibetan authorities replied that Gyalpo was simply a Tibetan trying to avoid government oversight and taxation by falsely asserting to be a Khatsara. They twice summoned the Nepalese *vakil* before the Kashag, but he stubbornly refused to release Gyalpo until the question of his nationality was settled.

With public pressure mounting, the government acted. On August 25, two weeks after his escape, over a thousand Tibetan police and soldiers stormed the legation and forcibly removed Gyalpo. Gyalpo found himself again placed in detention, now with round-the-clock guards.[35] Nepalese sources claim that following his return to Tibetan custody, his jailers alternately caned and scalded him with boiling water until he died from his injuries some days later.[36] Tibetan

sources asserted that he succumbed to pneumonia and that they were blameless in his death. British accounts tend to support the Nepalese claims. They indicate he died a slow, painful death from his injuries and that he ultimately succumbed to gangrene, for "pieces of flesh have begun to drop out of the affected parts."[37] All three sources agree that until his death, Gyalpo refused to sign a statement attesting to his Tibetan nationality.

In most Tibetan accounts, the case of Sherpa Gyalpo is cast as a prime example of the excesses occurring under Tibetan governance in the 1930s, in particular, due to the influence of the Tibetan official, Lungshar. Representing an ultraconservative and reactionary side of Tibetan politics, Lungshar is typically presented as a villain who pushed Tibet to the brink of war with Nepal.[38] But the Gyalpo case suggests considerably more was at stake.

More than a singular case of an individual attempting to falsely hide behind his Nepalese citizenship, the Gyalpo Affair offers insight into the complex stance Tibetan authorities adopted in distinguishing between those who were clearly foreigners (e.g., the Nepalese, Bhutanese, Ladakhi, and Chinese) and those who were often confused with foreigners but considered Tibetan (e.g., the Khache and Koko) and the Khatasara, who tended to play both sides against the middle.[39] In fact, Sherpa Gyalpo's ambiguous status was the exception to the norm in the treatment of the Khatsara. With the strong Nepalese bias against the Khatsara hindering their return to Nepal and commercial incentives enticing them to remain in Tibet, it was rare for the Khatsara to leave Tibet. According to local perceptions, the Khatsara were considered Tibetan in all but their citizenship.

As the Nepalese scholar Prem R. Uprety has demonstrated, documents uncovered in the Nepalese archives almost certainly certify Gyalpo's status as a Khatsara. From the perspective of the Tibetan government, its case was equally ironclad, for it maintained that since the matter of his birth in Tibet was undisputed, little else mattered. (It should be noted that at the time considerable emphasis was also placed on the signed affidavits of nine witnesses who swore that Gyalpo was not Nepalese, although their motives in making the sworn statements were deemed dubious).[40]

The Gyalpo Affair also illustrates the shifting measures used by governments to assert, authenticate, and endorse citizenship in the twentieth century, as well as the increasing difficulties individuals faced when seeking to verify their citizenship in a world without clear national boundaries, passports, or identity papers. As Gyalpo's case demonstrated, it was community confirmation, not state documents, that remained the central determiner of the validity of such cases.[41] An established Nepali merchant and his Khatsara son who lived in Lhasa their entire lives were likely to have had little difficulty establishing their provenance. It was harder for someone like Gyalpo who led a peripatetic life with relatives and property both inside and outside of Tibet. Marital relations figured prominently in establishing one's Himalayan identity, and that also complicated Gyalpo's case: his first wife

being Sherpa suggested he was Nepalese, while his second wife being Tibetan led many to believe he was Tibetan. Though the details of Gyalpo's case remained in dispute between the Nepalese and Tibetan governments, the Tibetan government had the more difficult task of proving he was not Khatsara in spite of the strong evidence of his Nepalese upbringing, his Sherpa wife, and his self-identification as a Khatsara.

Gyalpo's arrest and death, far from a marginal footnote, took Nepal and Tibet to the brink of war. In February 1930, the Nepalese prime minister mobilized troops, and Tibet quickly followed suit.[42] With Gyalpo's death, however, relations between the two countries eased. Not wanting to see Tibet get engaged in a war with their protectorate state, British officials worked to deescalate the situation. On March 7 the Thirteenth Dalai Lama wrote a formal apology acknowledging that Tibetan police had entered the Nepalese legation. He wrote, "Once more for the sake of unity, with deep regret I submit this apology to the Maharaja [of Nepal]."[43] Given the diplomatic discord, the rumors of war, and the tales that circulated among Tibetan tea and beer houses about this and other cases for many years afterward, one can understand how outsiders new to Lhasa misinterpreted the incident as a series of border issues rather than an issue of nationality.

Treated primarily as a border incident in the nationalist histories of India, Nepal, and China, the Gyalpo case highlights the manner in which individuals of mixed parentage shaped the definition of Tibetan citizenship in distinct ways. The confusion and tensions over Sherpa Gyalpo's nationality highlights a seldom acknowledged but common facet of Tibetan society. His case is important for gaining an understanding of the evolution of twentieth-century Tibetan notions of citizenship. Unfortunately, this incident only served to muddle the position of the Khatsara, Koko, and Khache in Tibetan society because many outside observers assumed all three groups held the same rights and privileges in Tibet.[44]

Efforts to treat Khatsaras, Kokos, and Khaches as synonyms for Nepalese, Chinese, and Kashmiris effectively masked the central role these mixed communities played in Tibet, despite the fact that the latter two groups were without question subject to Tibetan law. The resentment toward the Khatsara largely stemmed from the fact only male Khatsaras could claim Nepalese citizenship and thus were the only individuals of mixed parentage who could claim foreign status.[45] Female Khatsaras, that is, women with a Nepalese father and Tibetan mother, were, for all intents and purposes, considered Tibetan (though still referred to as Khatsara). The fact that only male offspring could claim foreign citizenship became a central indicator of the Khatsara status to many outside observers. The confusion arose when outsiders, believing that the Koko and the Khache held the same status, incorrectly assumed that Koko and Khache men were foreign but that their women remained Tibetan. Some accounts took this a step further to suggest that the status of Khache children as Tibetan or foreign depended on the gender of the offspring (e.g., daughters being Buddhist and sons, Muslim).[46]

At the heart of such confusion lay the unmistakable fact that all Khatsara, Koko, and Khache were originally offspring of marriages between Tibetans and non-Tibetans. As Khatsaras were, by definition, the children of Nepalese men and Tibetan women, many accounts sought to assert that this was equally the case with the Koko and Khache. One such account suggested that "all [Khache] Muslims marry Tibetan women."[47] At the same time, some visitors insisted that for religious reasons Khaches only married other Khaches, accepting at face value the common Muslim assertion that the Khache were entirely endogamous.[48] This was likely a misconception stemming from the fact that Muslims are expected to only marry Muslims. All this means is that the Tibetan women who married Khache men were expected to convert prior to marriage; it did not prohibit Khaches from marrying ethnic Tibetans.[49] The central point here is that among the Khatsara, Koko, and Khache, only Khatsara men had the right of extraterritoriality.

The demographic inference of these claims—that all Khache women *only* married Khache men, while Khache men tended to marry Tibetan women—is that the community would have consistently grown in size over the centuries rather than remain, as it did, at approximately three thousand individuals. It is far more likely that the Khache engaged in exogamous marriage with Tibetans in greater numbers than the other two groups in order to maintain a more or less numerically stable Khache community over several centuries.[50] Even as early as the eighteenth century, Bogle noted that "the Kashmiris settled in Tibet are mostly the offspring of Tibetans."[51] Evidence points heavily toward the conclusion that intermarriage between Khache and their Tibetan Buddhist neighbors caused little consternation among either group. Certainly, historical evidence suggests that Khache men and Tibetan women married frequently enough that it was not viewed as atypical or objectionable.[52]

Perhaps the most extreme such characterization is that of Ghulam Muhammad in early 1933. Almost certainly motivated by the attempt to curry favor with the British (and elicit direct British support), he maintained, "The Muslims had long been taking Buddhist girls in marriage. A few months ago, the Tibetan authorities gave orders that all such women should revert to their former religion."[53] Perhaps fearing that the British would soon learn no such law was enacted, he quickly added that the Dalai Lama had rescinded that order. Then, rather bewilderingly, he insisted that the "Tibetans confiscated the mosque of the Muslims," but it was later restored by the Dalai Lama. His most peculiar assertion was that the "Chinese Muslims who reside in Lhasa are not treated this way." Muhammad's entire letter, with its numerous contradictions, is most sensibly read not as an accurate description of Khache marriage practices but as an effort on his part to play to the British interest in retaining influence in Tibet and to be offered direct oversight of the Barkor Khache.[54] His statements suggest that anxieties over mixed marriages were of greater concern to foreigners trying to maintain their preformed notions of a pure Buddhist land than they were to Tibetans themselves.

By the 1940s, when we have a far greater number of personal memoirs, anecdotal evidence suggests there were few if any barriers to intermarriage between Khache, Nepalese, or Chinese with Tibetans. Phünwang Wangye, a founding member of the Tibetan Communist Party, married a Wapaling Khache named Tsilila (Tib. *mdzes legs lags*).[55] Abdul Wahid Radhu, a Ladakhi Khache who traveled to Lhasa in the 1940s, noted that "intermarriages were common," and he detailed a number of intermarriages within his family across three generations.[56] In a more systematic study, the Chinese scholar Chen Bo confirms this practice by citing Tibetan archival records from 1960 that estimate Khache intermarriage constituted roughly 85 percent of all Khache marriages.[57]

Significantly, although many foreign sources tend to characterize the Khache, Khatsara, and Koko as foreigners, the reality was almost the exact opposite. Outside observers consistently played on the notion of Tibet as a homogeneous Buddhist society intent on preserving its purity by resisting the reality of mixed parentage. Even when confronted with mixed marriages, non-Tibetans failed to see the communities as anything other than foreign. While post-1950 documents sometimes acknowledge the existence of "mixed Chinese" (Ch. *hunxue;* lit., "mixed-blooded") the documents of the Nationalist Chinese period stubbornly clung, with patent self-interest, to the belief that the Koko and Khache remained Chinese (Han or Hui).[58] The situation had hardly changed after 1959. The facts became so muddied that a Wapaling Khache interviewed in the late 1980s suggested that in pre-1950s' Tibet "the *Kha-che* were considered as Indian citizens, thus having the status of foreigners. In the case of a mixed marriage the son was considered as an Indian citizen and the daughter as a Tibetan."[59] Despite confusion, false assertions, and a misremembered past, the Khache, throughout all this, remained unambiguously Tibetan and together with the Khatsara and Koko, occupied a distinct and acknowledged position within Tibetan society. However, like the Khatsara and the Khache, the Koko were also caught between foreign assertions and a Tibetan reality.

BEING HALF-TIBETAN AND ALL CHINESE

Even with the dramatic diplomatic consequences of the Gyalpo Affair, no group faced more pressure from an outside force than did the Koko. After the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and the expulsion of the Chinese forces in 1912, virtually no Chinese representative was stationed or sent to Lhasa in a formal capacity until after the formation of the Nationalist government in 1927. Among the first was a young woman of Chinese-Tibetan parentage who helped usher in a new phase in China's efforts to reassert control over Tibet.[60] Born in Lhasa to a Wapaling Khache father and a Kham Khache mother, Liu Manqing, or Yudhona (Tib. *Dbyangs can*),[61] lived in Lhasa before moving with her family to the Himalayan hill town of Darjeeling when she was five or six years old. Despite being commonly

referred to as "Chinese" or "Chinese Muslim Hui," Liu's father was born and raised in Lhasa and spoke fluent Tibetan, and, although he served as a clerk in the Amban's office in the early twentieth century, all indications suggest he was Wapaling Khache.[62] After first moving to Darjeeling, India, Liu's father, in 1918, relocated his family to Beijing. There he enrolled his daughter in a Chinese primary school, and she quickly became fluent in Chinese.[63] Coming of age in the heady political activism of the May Fourth era (ca. 1917–21), she sought to pursue a path that allowed her to help the Tibetan people in the context of the new Chinese nation. In 1927, she arrived in Nanjing and was embraced by the politically active Kham Tibetan community, which had been swept into a position of influence by the newly established Nationalist regime. As she would later recount, it was this serendipitous sequence of events that led to her return to her birthplace: "I was in Nanjing for two years. In 1929, because the Tibetan and central [Chinese] governments had absolutely no lines of communication, the Nationalist government decided to send me to serve as an envoy to Tibet in order to reestablish relations."[64] The precise powers the Nationalist government granted her remain unclear, but late that summer, when she was twenty-three years old, she set off overland to Lhasa through Kham (eastern Tibet), a longer and more precarious route than traveling by sea and then overland via India. Upon her arrival in Lhasa, the Wapaling Khache community received her as one of their own. It was through these local connections that she succeeded in achieving numerous interviews with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.[65] Staying a little over three months, Liu returned to Nanjing as the first quasi-governmental delegate to travel to Lhasa and publicly write about her travels.

The Chinese media showered Liu with praise. In 1930, the *China Weekly Review* led with a story, "Miss Liu—China's Hero," that aptly captured the excitement elicited by Liu's visit to Lhasa. The media also broached the awkward fact that "one president came after another but no attention had ever been given to Tibetan Affairs."[66] One report stated that "it has been 20 years since a special envoy was sent by the Chinese government to Lhassa."[67] The discontent over the discernible gap between the Nationalist government's words and their deeds with regard to Tibet had not gone unnoticed by the Chinese public. Aside from quasi-governmental and private goodwill missions carried out by individuals like Liu Manqing, nearly two decades had passed with no official Chinese representative in Lhasa. Despite the enduring fiction that China's territorial integrity remained much as it had under the Qing, the public readily could see that Tibet (much like Xinjiang, Mongolia, and Manchuria) had been independent from any Chinese oversight since 1912.[68] The power of Liu Manqing's mission to Lhasa lay in its ability to spark a new optimism and interest among the Chinese public, who hoped to end the two-decade break between the central governments of Tibet and China.[69]

That Liu had traveled through the large swath of eastern Tibet claimed by both the Tibetan and Chinese central governments—tantalizingly outside the reach

of both—only accentuated the belief that perhaps the moment had arrived for peaceful reconciliation.[70] Liu Manqing's book-length account of her trip, *Overland Travel to Xikang and Tibet* (Ch. *Kang-Zang yaozheng*), captivated Chinese audiences and sealed her celebrity status. Her book was so popular that it went through three editions and was translated into five languages. Much of the book's charm for the Chinese public came from the manner in which Liu downplayed the implications of her parents' mixed ethnicity, referred to herself as Han Chinese, and promoted China's presence in Tibet. In this manner, her journey back to Tibet represented the journey that many Chinese hoped their government was embarking on. In fact, it was nothing of the sort.

The primary barrier to the normalizing of Sino-Tibetan relations was China's lingering inability to accept that Tibet no longer considered itself under Chinese authority. Throughout the first decades after the Republic of China was founded in 1912, no phrase captured the idealized vision of China better than "Unity of the Five Races" (Ch. *wuzu gonghe*).[71] A powerful rhetorical device, it presented a territorially and ethnically unified China that is sometimes also translated as the "Republic of Five Races" or "Five Races Harmoniously Joined." As the historian Gray Tuttle has remarked, "The discrepancy between translations shows that the concept could be understood both as a political system in which five races were joined in a single state structure, or as a racial ideal, in which case the 'harmonious' links took priority over any particular conception of state structure."[72] The dilemma was less the danger that the term was understood in only racial or ethnic terms than that in public discourse it could seamlessly pivot from one meaning to the other or mean both at once.[73]

The ethno-territorial logic inherent in the term suggested a Chinese nation with a Han Chinese core surrounded by Tibetan, Muslim, Mongolian, and Manchu peoples or territories. "Unity of the Five Races" was virtually omnipresent in the rhetoric of the Chinese Republic, as illustrated by the original flag of the republic under Sun Yat-sen, which contained five different-colored stripes, and the academic discussions of the archaeological discoveries of Peking man, which posited that they demonstrated that the "five races" all descended directly from a single ancient people.[74] Although Chinese leaders spoke of a China that maintained the territorial boundaries of the Qing Empire, a considerable disconnect existed between the idealized rhetoric and the reality.

China's paramount leader at the time, Chiang Kai-shek, had been propelled to prominence as a result of his leadership role in the Northern Expedition, which reunified much of southern and central China primarily through the use of military force and the forging of political allegiances with local power brokers. He had defeated or co-opted many of his rivals in southern and central China, creating a functioning central government based in Nanjing. His support in western China relied on a tenuous patchwork of regional warlords who agreed to acknowledge the Nationalist government in exchange for near-complete autonomy. Japan's

invasion of Manchuria and the creation of the Japanese-backed puppet state of Manchukuo in 1931 only highlighted the deeply flawed premise of a Chinese state that embodied the Unity of the Five Races. The Nationalist government's principal concern now focused on defending its already precarious position against further territorial incursions while stabilizing its political grip onr those areas they did control.

The Tibet question for the Nationalist leadership in the 1930s was not a matter of how to reintegrate Tibet into the Chinese nation-state but how it would prevent Tibet from openly declaring itself independent. Of even greater concern was the fear that any actions against Lhasa would exacerbate the situation in eastern Tibet and western Sichuan, further degrading the Nationalists' already negligible influence there. No high-ranking Nationalist official had dared step foot in Kham or Tibetan Sichuan since 1928, and the entire region was openly governed by local warlords who might take Tibet's public expression of independence as a sign that they too could openly do away with the thin pretense of loyalty to the Nationalist government.[75] If the central Chinese government had hoped that Liu Manqing's visit would lead to Tibet formally relinquishing all claims of independence in the early 1930s, it failed. More to the point, the Chinese government simply did not have the resources, the expertise, or even any direct oversight of the territories abutting Tibet to pressure Tibet into an open admission of being under Chinese sovereignty.

Just when it seemed no avenue forward existed, the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama on December 17, 1933, provide just the opening the Nanjing government needed. As the historian Hsiao-ting Ling noted in his description of their subsequent efforts, it was the death of the Dalai Lama in Tibet coupled with the fact that the Eighth Panchen Lama remained in China proper (a result of a political dispute with the Lhasa government) that the Tibetan theocracy found itself without its two most prominent leaders. The requisite multiyear search for the Dalai Lama's reincarnation allowed the Chinese government a rare window of opportunity that proved too tempting to resist.

Measuring what goals the Nanjing government believed feasible at this juncture is largely an exercise in conjecture. Almost certainly Chiang Kai-shek saw his primary objective as the establishment of direct political control over the informally allied provincial leaders of southwest China through the settlement of the eastern Tibet boundary. The likelihood of convincing the Tibetan leadership to accept formal reintegration under Chinese sovereignty, while certainly desirable from the Chinese standpoint, remained so improbable that few believed such an outcome plausible and the dangers of aggravating the situation too great. More pressing was finding an experienced and senior official who could undertake such a sensitive mission with grace and vision. The official eventually selected, General Huang Musong, would prove to have neither grace nor vision.[76]

Appointed special commissioner to Tibet in 1934, Huang, from the Nationalist perspective, seemed the perfect choice. A member of Chiang Kai-shek's inner

circle and deputy chief of staff in Nanjing, he was a trusted insider. He also understood the government's precarious position in the ethnically diverse borderlands. However, the previous year when Huang had served as "pacification commissioner" to Xinjiang he demonstrated a harrowingly bad sense of judgment. Aggressively pushing a pro-Nationalist agenda, Huang so alienated the Xinjiang warlord Sheng Shicai that he barely escaped with his life. It was only after Chiang succumbed to Sheng's extortionate demands that Huang was even allowed to return to Nanjing. But Huang's ham-fisted efforts resulted in Sheng purging and executing several key pro-Nationalist sympathizers after his release.[77]

Perhaps apprehensive of a repeat of that failed intervention, prior to Huang's departure to Lhasa Chiang Kai-shek explicitly instructed him to adopt a conciliatory tone. Specifically, Huang was cautioned to be sensitive to any points relating to Tibet's sovereignty and advised not to push for border delimitation in eastern Tibet unless Tibet broached it first.[78] Huang chose to follow neither piece of advice.

In the late spring of 1934, Huang's small platoon of eighty staff, porters, and translators set out from Chengdu. Instead of going via the faster, cheaper, and safer India route, Huang chose to travel overland through poorly mapped territory and areas of questionable political allegiance.[79] Almost from the start, Huang reverted to his old habits. An advance team of Chinese officials, traveling via India, had arrived in Lhasa several weeks ahead of Huang and were instructed to post notices written in both Chinese and Tibetan throughout Lhasa advising the Tibetans to place their trust in "the Chinese government that can ensure the comfort and happiness [of all Tibetans] forever."[80] The patronizing tenor of these notices, not to mention the obviously misplaced political message, incensed the Tibetans.

Arriving in Lhasa on August 28, Huang stubbornly ignored the advice proffered by Tibetan officials, insisting instead on a flamboyant procession and public ceremony to present China's gifts. The Tibetan officials demurred, suggesting Huang's proposed memorial ceremony for the Dalai Lama was inappropriate given that the Tibetan people were still in mourning for him. Huang refused to be dissuaded and insisted on publishing "a panegyric to the late Dalai Lama" that included an "invitation to the Tibetan people to join the family of nations and rely on the Chinese Government."[81]

Huang, perhaps taking the wrong message from the Tibetans' reluctant consent to the ceremony began to strong-arm Tibet into formally acknowledging Chinese sovereignty over the country. His actions resulted in the Tibetans systematically stonewalling his proposals. Headstrong and not realizing how damaging his actions were to his larger goal, Huang blamed his lack of progress in the negotiations with the Tibetan officials on their lack of ability or appreciation of the benefits China could offer Tibet in his reports back to Nanjing.[82] Only when the Tibetan authorities were pressed to reply formally to his queries did they finally deliver a carefully translated response to Huang. The October 17 communiqué, written in

spare but precise language, indicated that Tibet, a "self-governing, independent country" (Tib. *rangda gyekab;* Ch. *zizhu zhiguo*), was governed by a religious-political system incompatible with that of the Chinese Republican government. In a veiled rebuke to Huang's pretentious assertions about Tibet being part of the same family as China, the document asserted that "there was no reason for China to interfere in its affairs or to station civil and military officials in Lhasa."[83]

Taken aback by the unequivocal tone of their reply, Huang refused to accept the Tibetan government's response as the last word on the subject. Concerned, perhaps, with the continued presence of British officials in Lhasa, he pressed for assurances from the Kashag that the Tibetan government would at least agree to consult with and then follow China's counsel with regard to external affairs. He could not have been pleased with their response, which arrived in early November. The Kashag's ten-point memorandum politely but forcefully rebutted each point Huang had raised in support of increased Chinese presence. It reiterated that the Chinese government retained no legal powers within Tibet. It restricted the number of formal Chinese representatives in Lhasa to one, with a retinue no larger than twenty-five, before going on to explicitly state that "those Chinese (Ch. *Hanmin*) who have resided in Tibet since 1912 shall continue to be governed by the Tibetan Government's Agricultural Ministry."[84]

Almost certainly realizing that his gambit to push Tibet to recognize Chinese sovereignty had backfired, it dawned on Huang, certainly more slowly than it should have, that he had wildly exceeded his government's initial directives. A swift exit was his only option. As a last request before hurriedly crossing the Himalayan passes before the winter snows, Huang received permission from the Tibetan authorities to allow two members of his delegation, Jiang Zhiyu and Liu Puchen, to remain behind to set up a permanent wireless radio station.[85]

In most accounts, this is where the narrative of the Huang Mission ends.[86] Chinese newspapers heralded Huang's return from Lhasa with glowing praise. Public reports, left uncorrected by Huang, gave the impression that his mission had single-handedly reversed the slow decline of Chinese influence in Tibet. Most accounts not only failed to mention that the Tibetan government had only allowed Liu Puchen to remain in Lhasa to run the wireless radio station, but suggested he was the new head of the Chinese Mission.[87] This led the world to assume, as the *New York Times* reported, that "Tibet, after twenty-two years of estrangement, has pledged its support to the Nanjing Government."[88] For these successes, Huang was promoted to the position of head of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Office.

In Lhasa, China's position appeared far less promising. In early January 1935, Liu Puchen died after a short illness. As a result, sole authority in Lhasa fell to Jiang Zhiyu, who became the first permanently stationed Chinese official in Lhasa in more than two decades.[89] Despite the world press proclaiming a Chinese victory, Jiang had no formal title, no background in Tibetan affairs, and, other than running the wireless station, no clear directives from Nanjing. To make matters

worse, Huang's aggressive pressure tactics had greatly increased anti-Chinese resentment.[90]

Tibet's decision to permit a Chinese official to remain in Tibet, if only to run the wireless radio, reflects inconsistencies that would typify Tibet's international policy for the next decade. As Melvyn Goldstein remarks in his study of the Huang Mission, the "decision again reflects the paradox of Tibet's China policy": Tibet neither clearly asserted its de facto independence nor endeavored to make a complete break with China.[91]

Perhaps seeing no other path forward, Jiang continued where Huang left off, by following an unabashed pro-China agenda. With no secular public schools available in Lhasa and with the Nationalist government's strong tradition of promoting public education across China, Jiang focused on establishing a Chinese school in Lhasa. To Jiang, the proposition seemed an appropriate starting place and one that would not cause any displeasure among his superiors in Nanjing. One could argue that by shifting from hard to soft diplomacy Jiang was bound to succeed where Huang had failed. Yet Jiang's efforts to make Lhasa conform to China's perception of Tibet, rather than respecting Tibet as it was, typified the attitude of almost every Chinese official posted to Tibet until the late 1940s.

Jiang demonstrated his shallow understanding of Tibetan society almost immediately. Perhaps by falsely concluding that the Wapaling Khaches were Hui Chinese Muslims, Jiang hastily targeted the Wapaling Khache half day school as the best place to begin his school reform. He demanded that the school be turned into his new Chinese school. In February 1935, Jiang instructed the Wapaling Khache in charge of the mosque to close it. According to Derrick Williamson, a British political officer visiting Lhasa at the time, Jiang then ordered it to be "opened 'by the Chinese Government' as a school for the study of Tibetan."[92] Mistaking the Khaches' Chinese linguistic and cultural proficiency for Chinese support, he must have been shocked when the Wapaling Khache immediately and effectively blocked his efforts.

As soon as Jiang attempted to have the mosque closed, a group of Wapaling Khaches, led by a senior Khache named Isi Shah, openly objected to the mosque's conversion and "refused to agree that the mosque should be used as such a school."[93] Jiang's scheme encountered a further setback when his plan became known to the Tibetan National Assembly (Tib. *tshogs 'du*), which swiftly ordered representatives from both sides to appear before them. When the appointed day arrived, only the Wapaling representative appeared, and the case was referred to the Kashag. But before the Kashag could begin its inquiry, several Chinese soldiers apprehended and then forcibly escorted Isi Shah to the Chinese Residency where he was interrogated and severely beaten. Soon thereafter, soldiers went to Isi Shah's home, and upon their arrival they "broke open the house and shot Isi Shah's son dead."[94] In less than a week, Jiang's actions had, remarkably, surpassed Huang's inept legacy by reinvigorating the "very strong feeling in Lhasa against the Chinese."[95]

After its formal inquiry, the Kashag ordered Jiang's school closed and demanded he pay retribution to Isi Shah and his family. Unfazed, Jiang set up lessons at his own residence. Teaching in both Chinese and Tibetan (as well as Qur'anic Arabic) for several decades, the school succeeded in attracting a handful of both Muslim and non-Muslim Tibetan students.[96] Despite being asked repeatedly by the Tibetan government to shut his school, Jiang took "no notice of the warning," and the school remained open throughout the remainder of his tenure in Lhasa.[97] When he finally left Lhasa in 1937, after more than three years in the Tibetan capital, he was despised by the Tibetans and derogated by his superiors, who felt he had diminished rather than advanced China's stature in Tibet.[98]

After Jiang's departure, British officials noted that attendance at the school quickly diminished to only 20 or more half-Chinese children.[99] It is surprising then that both the Huang Mission and Jiang Zhiyu's tenure in Lhasa are consistently cited as evidence in support of China's claims of solid influence in Tibet. After the fall of the Qing in 1912, there were no Chinese officials present in Tibet, and though the coming of Huang and Jiang signified an increase in Chinese involvement in Lhasa, their presence hardly demonstrated a robust Chinese influence in that city, let alone more broadly in Tibet.

TIBET'S RHETORICAL PLACE WITHIN CHINA'S NATIONALIST IMAGES

In their governmental and private correspondence, Huang Musong and Jiang Zhiyu rarely indicated how the Tibet they encountered differed from how it was represented in China. They employed the standard China-as-center terminology as they doggedly reinforced China's claim to Tibet through distorted representations of the past. Huang, in his published writings about his time in Lhasa, stated that when the Chinese army departed in 1912, "three hundred to four hundred Han and Hui households remained in Lhasa."[100] At best, such assertions should be dismissed as half-truths, since few Chinese soldiers, let alone hundreds of households, chose to stay behind. The larger problem is that his statements have uncritically been accepted to mean that there was a considerable population of native Chinese who resided in Lhasa. Not a single extant source points to even half that number of Chinese living in central Tibet. Such claims are relevant to this discussion of the half-Tibetan populations because one soon realizes that Huang and Jiang presumably believed and erroneously presented the highly assimilated Wapaling Khache and Koko as Chinese citizens.

In his writings, Huang went to great lengths to simultaneously assert China's cultural superiority and its presence in Tibet. In his description of Lhasa, he disingenuously tried to suggest that a local proverb stated, "A skilled Tibetan official was not as good as an incompetent Chinese official" (Ch. *yi hao zangguan buru yi huai hanguan*).[101] In his efforts to rewrite the rather shameful behavior of

the Chinese army in 1912, he asserted that the Khache had protected three hundred of their "Han and Hui brothers" (Ch. *Han Hui bao*) against the Tibetans.[102] It became increasingly clear that in ignoring the historical and ethnic realities of central Tibet, Chinese officials were playing to their home audience and not offering an accurate reflection of central Tibet's ethnic makeup. Although there were certainly Han and Hui Chinese in Lhasa prior to 1951, these individuals represented but a small number of the total population.[103] The mischaracterization of the half-Tibetans by Huang and Jiang and, as we will see, by subsequent Chinese officials posted to Lhasa was simply a thinly veiled effort to exaggerate China's presence in the country. Chinese officials began to base Chinese policy on this poorly constructed notion of Tibetan society, and by the mid-twentieth century their policy demonstrated a rejection of Tibet's highly nuanced conception of what constituted Tibetan citizenship.

Chinese claims of a prominent Chinese population are unreliable for several reasons. Almost all Chinese accounts, in adopting the "five groups" (*wuzu*) taxonomy, divided Tibet's population into only three groups: Tibetans, Han Chinese, and Hui Muslims. This simple act, one that seemed (and still seems to most Chinese today) completely appropriate, largely suppresses the nuanced realities of Tibet's cosmopolitanism. To adopt a more legalistic tone, such statements defiantly ignore the Tibetan government's repeated admonition that any Chinese citizens who remained in Lhasa after Chinese forces departed in 1912 had, by virtue of staying, accepted Tibetan citizenship. One could argue this was an issue of semantics by all parties, but the descriptions of both Huang and Jiang seem to be at odds with all other accounts of the period. The few firsthand accounts that remain indicate that all the Chinese in Lhasa realized that to remain was tantamount to becoming Tibetan citizens.[104] More significantly, no permanent Chinese population existed in Lhasa that considered itself Chinese citizens or, as in the manner of Sherpa Gyalpo, sought protection from the Chinese. The groups that Chinese officials inevitably attempted to categorize as Han and Hui Chinese—the Koko and the Wapaling Khache—were, by cultural, linguistic, and legal definition, Tibetan. What one is left with is the realization that for the Chinese officials to admit no native Chinese remained in Lhasa was tantamount to admitting that Tibet was no longer Chinese. As that was an unacceptable conclusion, they simply identified the closest thing to Chinese in Lhasa, the Kokos and the Khaches, as Chinese.

Such a stance played well with virtually all segments of the population in Central China. The Chinese press, the Nationalist leaders, and most Chinese continued to cling to the convenient fiction that Tibet remained a part of China and that all people there were Chinese. In the face of all the evidence to the contrary, such assertions were just that, assertions. The historian Hsiao-ting Lin's recent analysis of China's frontier policies finds him equally at a loss to explain the disconnect between the reality of China's extremely tenuous presence in Tibet and the image of Tibet as a part of China held by the Chinese. He concludes that "regardless of

how brilliantly Huang's visit to Lhasa impressed [the Chinese] people, . . . [t]he mission can by no means be deemed a victory."[105] Lin's harsh verdict is equally true with regard to the manner in which Huang and Jiang's narratives had neatly created the illusion of a continuous Chinese presence in Tibet from 1912 until 1949, an illusion often uncritically accepted as the final word on that period.

At the heart of this misrepresentation of China's presence in Tibet is the repeated portrayal of the Koko and Khache as Chinese. Unlike the Qing imperial officials who wrestled with adopting the correct Chinese terminology to delineate the divisions within the Khache community, Huang and Jiang rarely acknowledged the Tibetanized nature of Muslims and repeatedly declared the Koko were Han Chinese. By ignoring how the Tibetan groups perceived their nationality, the descriptions of these two groups as Chinese lent deeper credibility to the notion that a Chinese community, and thus Chinese sovereignty, endured in Tibet over the centuries.

Particularly because of the Chinese tendency to treat Tibetan, Han, and Hui as impermeable categories, Huang and Jiang rarely acknowledged the notion of mixed parentage as the British did. Instead, the reports by Chinese officials from Lhasa routinely divided the population into Tibetan, Han, and Hui, conforming to and neatly glossing over the knotty ethno-territorial contradiction implicit in the Republican-era definitions of China. As a result, China was able to sidestep the reality that in the context of central Tibet those three groups reported by Huang and Jiang as Tibetan (Ch. *Zang*), Chinese Han, and Hui all considered themselves Tibetan, not Chinese.

One gets the distinct sense that many Chinese accounts attempted to treat the Koko and Khache populations in Tibet in a manner quite similar to how the Overseas Chinese populations were treated. The adoption of the once-a-Chinese-always-a-Chinese logic that had tied Overseas Chinese communities to their ancestral homeland despite centuries of intermarriage with non-Chinese reflected an ethnocentric petulance that when applied to Tibet was entirely wrong. Unlike the Overseas Chinese, few of the Khache or Koko identified themselves as Chinese. As Chris Vasantkumar's research on the ethnocentric and homogenizing power of "Overseas Chinese" demonstrates, Chinese categories of citizenship often elided any ethnic contradictions within such categories. Although in English "we can write Han Chinese, . . . it is impossible to hyphenate other nationalities with Chinese."[106] In other words, of the other four of the "five races" that ostensibly constituted China, none is easily delineated as "Chinese" in English. Conversely, when speaking of the Overseas Chinese communities across much of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean world, neither the passage of centuries nor the generations of intermarriage with non-Chinese altered the deep-rooted cultural chauvinism underpinning the notion of what it meant to be Chinese. Crucially, it was the strict maintenance of their Chinese identity, so typical of the Overseas Chinese, that was missing in Tibet. Tibetans openly accepted the half-Tibetans

as Tibetan unless, as demonstrated by the Khatsaras, when explicitly forced to relinquish such a standpoint.

The ethnic chauvinism demonstrated by Nationalist China in the 1930s and 1940s is further compounded when it is placed within the prevailing political rhetoric of the period, as in the Unity of the Five Races, which was a cornerstone of China's identity as an independent nation. Most Chinese, throughout the mid-twentieth century and despite a lack of political control, never relinquished their idealized notion of China as territorially retaining the same borders as it had in the Qing dynasty. As a result, political rhetoric obscured the considerable gap between being a Chinese citizen and being an ethno-cultural Han Chinese. The selective manner in which the term "Chinese" (Ch. *Zhonguo ren*), could omit the non-Han in some instances, such as with the term "Overseas Chinese," and yet incorporate them in others, such as in the concept of the Unity of the Five Races, remained an unquestioned pillar of Chinese identity within mainstream Chinese culture throughout the twentieth century. If, during this period, a Chinese were to speak in Chinese of a Mongolian, Manchu, Hui, or Tibetan, the language used would make clear that one was speaking of them as Chinese citizens.

The ethnonationalist formulations offered up by Huang and Jiang provide rare insight into the limitations of the Chinese concepts of ethnic and political Chineseness during the first decades of the twentieth century. It is not surprising, though still wrong, that many of the Chinese officials appointed to Lhasa were unfamiliar with Tibetan culture, and because they rarely spoke Tibetan, they erroneously promoted the notion of the Wapaling Khache and Koko as having never stopped being Chinese. In many ways, by designating the Khache and Koko as Hui and Han Chinese, the Chinese officials were not simply fulfilling their own expectations, but were attempting to make Tibet conform to the political discourse of the center. The fact that Lhasa preserved its cosmopolitan structure and that other semipermanent communities of Bhutanese, Nepalese, and Ladakhi retained their legal standing seemed, at least to the Chinese, to lend their claims a veneer of plausibility. In reality, however, China's assertions flaunted the very clear definitions of who the Tibetan state considered citizens of Tibet. As the soccer matches that opened the book aptly captured, even in a recreational milieu the division between Tibetan and non-Tibetan remained clearly self-evident to those living in Lhasa society.

The irony is that Chinese officials, by seeking to impose an inaccurate definition of "foreigners" in a Tibetan context, only highlighted how Tibet administratively defined itself as independent from China—a stance the Chinese officials desperately wanted to stifle and not amplify. Huang Musong, for example, attempted to contrast the situation of the Han Chinese with that of the Nepalese by asserting, "The Han in Tibet are required to provide corvée labor while the Nepalese are not. Thus, we can see that the Tibetan Government is afraid of the Nepalese and are

in harmony with us."[107] Huang's claim is peculiar on several levels. Corvée labor was a tax imposed on citizens of Tibet. The Nepalese, among all the communities residing in Lhasa, were unambiguously foreign. Nepal, Britain, and Tibet all recognized their foreign status in Tibet. Huang's claim suggests, if anything, that the Han, by virtue of providing corvée labor to the Tibetan government, are Tibetans fulfilling their duties as Tibetan subjects, not that they are Chinese.[108]

The consistent inclination to consider the Khache and Koko Chinese had specific implications for the Khache communities in Lhasa. Jiang's usage "Hui" in his efforts to commandeer the Grand Mosque stemmed directly from a misapprehension of the Wapaling Khache as Chinese. Nor was the Chinese misreading of Tibetan citizenship limited to those communities. In examining Tibet's relations with Nepal, Chinese officials and the Chinese press presented the Gyalpo Affair primarily as a territorial dispute over a border between China and Nepal rather than a test of wills over the issue of citizenship. The disconnect between China's complete absence from Tibet at that time and its assertions of sovereignty over Tibet are particularly striking given the utter lack of documentation for its claims. In one 1930 press account, an article concluded that "unless strong detachments of Chinese troops are immediately dispatched [to the Nepalese border], it is feared that southern Tibet may soon be lost to China."[109] While this may have been a convenient ploy for maintaining the fiction of a unified China in the face of multiple external threats (foremost, from the Japanese) as credible policy, it borders on delusional. Already by 1930 the military reach of the Chinese central government could barely maintain control over much of Central China let alone having the resources to mount, supply, and finance sending troops to the Nepalese-Tibetan border. Yet such press accounts neatly capture the mind-set that Huang, Jiang, and subsequent Chinese officials brought to their positions. Their approach seemingly left them with the unsavory choice of perpetuating a reality entirely of China's own making or openly conceding Tibet's independence. With the latter option untenable, they were left with only the former. And by making such a choice, their actions and their interpretation of Tibet remained unalterably skewed.

FRACTIONAL POLITICS: A HALF-CHINESE IS BETTER THAN NONE

On August 27, 1942, a Lhasa policeman came upon a Koko beating his wife in the middle of a Lhasa street. When the policeman attempted to intervene, the Koko responded by assaulting the policeman. He was swiftly arrested, imprisoned, and the next day tried and sentenced to one hundred lashes. Learning of the man's arrest and punishment, the new Chinese representative in Lhasa, Dr. Kong Qingzong, "intervened and demanded the release of the Koko," insisting that he had the right to impose punishment on the Chinese. This occurred six weeks

prior to the incident that opened this chapter, and it was the first indication that Kong intended to impose China's ethnonationalist categories in central Tibet in a manner that far exceeded those imposed by Huang and Jiang.

Well acquainted with this strategy, Tibetan authorities rebuffed his appeal by once again patiently explaining that in 1912 all half-Chinese were given the choice to return to China as Chinese citizens under the terms of the truce with the Chinese military forces. Those half-Chinese who chose to remain agreed to accept Tibetan authority, including adhering to all Tibetan laws and paying taxes. The Lhasa government, confident in the question of jurisdiction and the appropriateness of the sentence, duly applied the one hundred lashes to the Koko. Seemingly more incensed by the lack of respect Kong felt due to him by the Tibetan government than by the actual punishment, he attempted to create a political firestorm over the event. He demanded photographs of the man's bloody back be forwarded to his superiors in the central government.[110]

Kong's efforts to interfere in the Koko's sentencing did not emerge solely out of a desire to protect the rights of a Chinese citizen. Frank Ludlow, the British political officer posted to Lhasa at the time, noted that Kong had made multiple requests the previous month to the Tibetan government and "was very hurt at thus being ignored."[111] Ludlow did note that up to that point Kong had cooperated with the Tibetan government, and in a previous incident "when a Koko (half-Chinese) committed an offense, Dr. Kong always used to hand them over to the Do-de Minpon [city magistrate] for trial."[112] All this suggests a level of awareness that abruptly disappeared when his political ambition took a new direction.

Some weeks after Kong's arrival, the Tibetan government took the formal step of establishing the Foreign Affairs Bureau. As part of this process, it demanded credentials from all foreigners, including the Chinese who traveled to Tibet. The Tibetan government's decision stemmed from an unmistakable desire to formalize its independence on the world stage. It instructed all foreign governments to cease addressing their concerns through the Kashag and instead communicate through the Foreign Affairs Bureau. An exception was made for the Nepalese (and Khatsara) since an office already existed to deal with their needs and demands.[113] This change, and the exception made for Nepal but not China, triggered a sudden change of heart and interpretation of policy by Kong. In a fit of pique, and without specific instructions from Central China, he insisted that his "instructions were to deal with the Kashag only."[114]

Born in Sichuan in 1898 and educated at the University of Brussels, Belgium, Kong had been a professor at the National Sichuan University and National Central University in Nanjing. In the years leading up to his appointment to Lhasa, he had served as counselor to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission.[115] A member of the Wu Zhongxin Mission to Lhasa in 1940, Kong attended the induction of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. After the ceremonies concluded, he was selected to remain in Lhasa and to assume the new post of China's representative to Tibet.

Whether this was a foreign or domestic posting was a point of contention that remained unresolved, though the Chinese made their perspective clear on the sign over the mission's main gate: "Tibet Office of the Tibetan Mongolian Affairs Commission of China."

Kong faced a dilemma. Desperate to challenge the treatment of the half-Chinese Koko, he was equally adamant that he would not acknowledge Tibet's sovereignty by filing his charges, as the Tibetan government required, in the new Foreign Affairs Bureau. If he agreed that the Koko was a Tibetan, he would be tacitly acknowledging Tibet's independence and his own status as a foreign representative. Yet to file a complaint he would need to adhere to the new protocol, tacitly accepting that Tibet was not part of China. If he agreed, he would be accepting his status as a foreigner, an act that was at variance with the very outcome he was attempting to achieve.[116] Unsure how to both file a complaint and not undermine his position, he alerted his superiors and let the matter drop. A little over a month later, when another incident involving a Koko came about, Kong decided to act.

On October 6, 1942, a scuffle, this time between a half-Nepalese Khatsara and a half-Chinese Koko, occurred.[117] According to bystanders, the Koko and the Khatsara were engaged in a verbal dispute in front of the Jokhang Temple when, to borrow from the British version of the incident, the Koko "picked up a stone and hit the Nepali half-breed over the head." Four Tibetan policemen witnessed the altercation and immediately tried to intervene. Fearing arrest, the Koko took flight and sought refuge at the Chinese Mission. There, Kong offered him sanctuary, and when the police entered the mission to arrest the Koko, they instead found "themselves arrested by Dr. Kong."[118]

Desperate not to let an opportunity slip through his fingers again, Kong hurried, not to the Foreign Affairs Bureau, but to the Norbulingka Palace to seek an audience with the regent. It was already very late, and he arrived to find the gate shut. Breaking with propriety, he pounded loudly on the doors and demanded to be allowed to meet with the regent. He was informed that the regent would not meet with him and told to return in the morning.[119] The following day the National Assembly convened and immediately censured Dr. Kong for his actions. Incensed over his interference in the street fight between two Tibetans, as well as his arrest of the four Tibetan policemen in deliberate defiance of Tibetan rule of law, the government demanded that the Nationalist government in Chongqing recall him and replace him with a more suitable candidate. More pointedly, and quite likely with more effect, the Tibetan government withdrew their liaison officer, ceased delivery of firewood to the Chinese Mission, and halted all government provisions for them. Without these services, Dr. Kong was stripped of all Tibetan assistance, an act that effectively denied him any formal standing while not formally expelling him.

Resentful of his treatment, Kong stubbornly held the policemen for five months. Initially the Chinese home government had accepted his interpretation

of the events as yet another tactic by the Tibetans to force China to accept Tibetan independence. But the recognition that Kong had instigated the incident became increasingly difficult to ignore. In the end, and desperate not to let Tibetan-Chinese relations slide into endless bickering, Chiang Kai-shek ordered Dr. Kong to immediately release the four policemen he still detained within the Chinese Mission.[120] Although Dr. Kong and his staff would remain in Lhasa until 1944, largely due to the exigencies of the war against Japan, he and almost all his staff were formally notified that they would be recalled to Chongqing and replaced.[121]

As the actions above suggest, Dr. Kong was not an endearing individual. Secretive, impulsive, and overbearing, he frequently insisted that the Tibetan government had no right to treat him as a foreign representative. He repeatedly asserted that Tibet was part of China and that he, a Chinese official, should have the right to address the Kashag directly. Within Lhasa, his assertions gained little traction. It vexed him that the Tibetan leadership had rejected China's many offers for Tibet to return to China's protection. His vision of Tibet was unambiguously one where Tibet remained firmly rooted within the Chinese sphere of influence, as it had been under the Qing Empire. In offering counsel to Nanjing, Dr. Kong appealed to his superiors to accept the notion that "Chinese affairs should be dealt with in the same way as they were in the days of the Manchu emperors." In essence he was advocating that Tibet return to a protectorate status and promoting himself to the status of an Amban, the imperial official appointed to Tibet during the Qing dynasty.[122] The Nanjing government, slightly more circumspect in their efforts to reassert control over Tibet, repeatedly rebuffed his requests. Within Lhasa, his imperious attitude caused his prestige to fall to a new low. He became a social pariah, rarely invited into, visited by, or allowed to participate in elite Tibetan social circles.

As World War II wound to an end, the influential Wellington Koo, serving as ambassador to the United Kingdom at the time, urged Chiang Kai-shek to address the deteriorating relationship between Lhasa and China by appointing a more level-headed official.[123] The appointment of Shen Zonglian, a graduate of Qinghua and Harvard Universities and a powerful Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, appeared to be the perfect antidote to Kong's calamitous tenure. Shen's well-oiled network of acquaintances and allies allowed him to dictate his own terms of engagement. He hand-picked a team of officials to accompany him to Lhasa, including individuals with specialties in sociology, engineering, and geology—several of whom could speak Tibetan.[124]

Shen and his team's arrival in Lhasa on August 8, 1944, ushered in a new direction in both Chinese policy and on-the-ground diplomacy. Shen adopted a conciliatory and friendly tone in his general interactions with Tibetan officials, including hosting popular dinner parties. The Tibetan government immediately responded in kind, relaxing their harsh treatment of the Chinese officials and resuming delivery of supplies to the Chinese Mission, which had been cut

off since Kong's unfortunate 1942 incident. With access to discretionary funds far exceeding those available to Kong, Shen's appointment marked the beginning of what one historian termed an escalating "cash diplomacy" between China and Britain, including increasing China's annual donations to the Tibetan monasteries surrounding Lhasa by nearly 20 percent.[125]

A prominent concern with educational reforms is one area where one can see continuity between Shen and his predecessors. Although the Chinese school had remained in operation since Jiang established it in the late 1930s, Shen sought to make it a showpiece of his office's initiatives. Within weeks teachers' salaries were increased, students were provided with free khaki uniforms, and Shen personally instructed that cash gifts be distributed to the poorer students' parents.[126] The support of the Wapaling Khache during Shen's tenure is unmistakable.

Topics taught at his school consisted of the normal curriculum of any Chinese school, including the Chinese language and arithmetic, in addition to, not surprisingly, Tibetan. It was, however, inclusion of a course on the Qur'an, among several additional optional courses, that signaled the considerable influence and presence of the Khache. Officially the Chinese school was referred to in documents as the Lhasa National Elementary School (Ch. *guoli xiaoxue*). However, it was perceived by most in Lhasa and central Tibet—and even Tibetan Muslims interviewed decades later—as the Wapaling Khache mosque school.[127] British estimates suggest enrollment of nearly a hundred students of whom nearly half were Khaches, with only ten listed as Chinese.[128] The remainder was made up of Tibetans and Khatsaras.[129] Perhaps indicative of the socioeconomic backgrounds of the students, none of the children of Tibetan officials attended the school (although several were tutored privately in Chinese).

Far from mounting a simple cash-infused charm offensive, Shen assiduously adhered to Chiang Kai-shek's explicit threefold directive: "not interfering with Tibetan internal affairs," ensuring that Tibet "not lose any part of her territory to other powers," and respecting Tibetan jurisdiction over "Chinese half castes and other Chinese nationals in Lhasa."[130] Such directives, while deviating from Sun Yat-sen's Unity of the Five Races of the early Republican period, also digressed considerably from the position Chiang Kai-shek had laid out in *China's Destiny* only two years earlier, in 1943. Shen's actions did, however, reflect a broader Nationalist postwar effort to pursue a policy of borderland autonomy. Most likely stemming from Shen's success in Tibet, Chiang went as far as to articulate, in a major policy speech, the promise that "if the Tibetans should at this time express a wish for self-government, our government would, in conformity with our sincere traditions, accord it a very high degree of autonomy."[131]

Yet even as Shen greatly ameliorated Sino-Tibetan tensions in Lhasa, Tibetan attitudes towards the Chinese generally remained negative. The lingering distaste for the Chinese presence and for their political messages was most obvious when Shen organized several hundred Chinese, half-Chinese, and Wapaling Khaches

in August 1945 to celebrate China's victory over Japan. Bearing Chinese flags and a large photograph of Chiang Kai-shek and accompanied by a Chinese band, the procession marched around the Barkor. Mistaking the march for a display of pro-Chinese nationalism, Tibetans lined the route "booing, hooting and hissing."[132] Even with Tibetan policemen accompanying the procession, many in the crowd threw stones and at one point damaged decorative lanterns carried in the parade. Several months later, in early 1946, Shen returned to China, bringing to an end the era of Nationalist efforts in Lhasa. His tenure signaled the high-water mark of Chinese influence in Tibet in the first half of the twentieth century, a mark that would be dramatically overtaken with the arrival of the People's Liberation Army five years later.

Khatsaras, Kokos, and Khaches featured prominently in Tibet's confrontations with its neighbors during the 1912–50 period. While most of the incidents discussed above are well documented, the role of half-Tibetan communities is frequently obscured, overlooked, or glossed over in favor of narratives that highlight the non-Tibetan perspectives of their neighbors or outsiders. In part, this is because historical interpretations of the period overwhelmingly emphasize the question of Tibet's independence. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Tibet displayed a reluctance to openly declare itself independent or to be drawn into discussions on the matter with either British or Chinese officials. British and Chinese representatives repeatedly approached Tibetan officials to seek clarification. Tibet repeatedly demurred.

As late as 1945, Shen Zonglian, a Chinese representative who had engendered considerable goodwill in Lhasa, appealed for advice from all levels of his Tibetan contacts as to how to get a definitive response about Tibet's status. Even as he "heard that most of the Tibetans are very keen on 'Tibet's independence,'"[133] few would discuss it with him. During casual conversations with high Tibetan officials, "they either evade[d] the question or decline[d] to give any answer."[134] The British Foreign Office concluded in 1950 that all evidence demonstrated that Tibet was not part of China but rather "had a clear international identity of her own."[135]

If Tibet displayed some hesitancy in declaring itself independent on the international stage, internally it openly defended itself against all external attempts to declare that half-Tibetans were not Tibetan. Tibet's defense of the Khatsaras, Kokos, and Khaches as Tibetan citizens demonstrates how these three communities lay solidly within Tibet's traditional definition of itself. The significance of Tibet's proactive stance on citizenship has seldom been explored because of the ambiguity surrounding its status as an independent state, yet the clarity with which Tibet delineated and defended the status of these groups suggests a confidence not previously recognized. When one accepts the premise that these groups were unequivocally Tibetan, as Tibetans typically did, the incidents involving Khatsaras, Kokos, and Khaches discussed above take on a new significance.

In this broader context, it appears that in practice Tibetans—and other subcategories such as Khatsaras, Kokos, and Khaches—had little difficulty traveling between Tibet and India. Indeed, it was harder for Chinese to travel to Tibet than it was for Tibetans to travel to India. By the 1940s, particularly after the war, increasing numbers of Tibetans, including Tibetan Muslims, were traveling to the hill town schools of Darjeeling and Kalimpong in India and elsewhere to continue their education. Although monitored, most such travel occurred without any formal border control. At the same time, Tibetans also traveled to the interior parts of China with equally limited oversight. Finally, Tibetan Muslims traveled freely to the Middle East on hajj via both China and India and typically did so by taking the fastest route, via Bombay.[136] In each case, there appears to have been a willingness, a customary acceptance, and a desire to maintain the status quo of freedom of travel, such that travel rarely precipitated diplomatic protocols such as the carrying of passports, let alone documents proving one's residence or citizenship.[137] The expectation that such documents were unwarranted would later, after the arrival of Chinese governance, prove to be an unexpected shock.

The breadth of Tibet's (and similarly British India's) acceptance of the many Muslim groups entering India is apparent in the well-documented maneuvers by the Tibetan government to extricate the Fourteenth Dalai Lama from the grip of the Muslim Chinese warlord Ma Bufang. In a complicated negotiation, culminating in a payment of large bribes to Ma Bufang from the Chinese Nationalist and Tibetan governments, the Dalai Lama was released to a group of rich Siling (Ch. *Xining*) Tibetan Muslim merchants who intended to travel via Lhasa to India and on to Mecca to carry out their hajj.[138] Acting as guarantors in the transaction, the Tibetan Muslims would first advance Ma Bufang the promised payment, with the Lhasa government repaying the merchants upon the young reincarnation's arrival in Lhasa. Several months later, the Muslim traders, with several Chinese escorts, arrived and were duly paid in Indian rupees at an advantageous rate before continuing to India and then Mecca. Their onward travel to India was sanctioned, and it was even expressly indicated that they were traveling "without valid passports."[139] The Tibetan government, acknowledging their crucial role in escorting the new Dalai Lama out of harm's way, diligently facilitated the Qinghai Khaches' travels in their communications with the British officials. For all parties, the prosaic nature of Tibetan Muslim merchants made them the most dependable option for Ma Bufang, the Chinese Nationalists, and the Tibetan and British governments.

These merchants were part of a rarely remarked on branch of the large number of Muslims from Tibet and Central Asia who traveled via Indian ports on the hajj. Between 1930 and 1938, the annual number of Muslim pilgrims traveling via India who were classified as Tibetan, Nepalese, or Turkestani averaged nearly a thousand individuals per year—a number confirmed by official hajj figures of pilgrims arriving by sea.[140] Issues of mixed parentage, cross-border identity, and Himalayan

interstate relations played key roles in how Tibet defined itself, a definition very often inconsistent with the interpretation applied by China but accepted by most other nations the Tibetans passed through. It was Tibet's cosmopolitan populace that lay at the intersection of the various notions of citizenship, notions that were quickly hardening with the Chinese occupation and taking on new and untraditional meanings. Typical of most Himalayan states, Tibet remained far less concerned with what it considered an abstract demarcation of formal territorial boundaries and more concerned with retaining and delimiting the peoples who populated its urban centers. The consistency with which Tibet maintained that focus for nearly four decades suggests that Tibet was forcefully and successfully able to assert its independence primarily through its definition of Tibetan citizenship, in all its complexity.

Even as such crossing of international borders remained commonplace, the concern over the individual's precise status began to slowly change in the postwar years. The ability to delineate and categorize individuals according to their country of residence, which had been put aside during World War II, arose again, more prominently, after the war. Hugh Richardson, who had remained in Lhasa after Indian independence in 1947, to serve as the Indian consul-general, somewhat presciently noted in an annual report that "except for Government servants, there are few Indian subjects in Lhasa, etc., and those others who can technically claim that status are Ladakhi Muslims at present somewhat undecided about their allegiances."[141] Concerns about nationality were superseded by the arrival of the People's Liberation Army in Lhasa in October 1950. With the army's appearance, the question of what being Tibetan meant began, abruptly and forcibly, to bend to the Chinese conceptualizations, ones that the Nationalists could only express but never impose.[142]