

Sketches of Contemporary Tibetan History in *The Tibet Mirror* (1949–1963)

Natalia Moskaleva¹

(Saint-Petersburg State University)

In September 1950 *The Singapore Free Press* featured an article entitled “A Lone Battle with Mao” about a lonely Tibetan fighter standing against the Chinese communist regime and its advancement in Tibet.² It was Dorje Tharchin (rDo rje mthar phyin, 1890–1976), a prominent Tibetan public figure and a political activist, an advocate for the modernisation of Tibet and Tibetan independence. In his attempts to introduce Tibetans to the latest developments in the modern world beyond the Tibetan borders Dorje Tharchin launched one of the earliest Tibetan periodicals issued by a Tibetan editor.³

Yul phyogs so so'i gсар 'gyur me long (literally “The Mirror of News from Various Countries” or, as it was called by its editor, *The Tibet Mirror*) was published from 1925 to 1963 in Kalimpong, India and presented a rather non-conventional look at the described news. Dorje Tharchin exerted every effort in his practically unprofitable, but enthusiasm-charged undertaking of the newspaper issuing and its distribution among representatives of the Tibetan society. The range of topics for news coverage was extensively diverse and the editor surely could not have kept silent about major events in Tibet, especially after the official establishment of the People’s Republic of China and the Chinese communists’ announcement of their high-priority goal of Tibet’s liberation in 1949.

This article aims to explore some of the facts and peculiar details of Tibetan history as they were depicted by Dorje Tharchin in his periodical *The Tibet Mirror*. At present publications of *The Tibet Mirror*

¹ The author acknowledges Saint-Petersburg State University for a research grant 2.38.293.2014 “Modernizing the Tibetan Literary Tradition” that supported the discourse analysis of *The Tibet Mirror*. The historical aspect of the study was conducted with support of the Russian Foundation for Humanities grant No 14-31-01021 “Contemporary History of Tibet Based on the Materials of the First Tibetan Newspaper *The Tibet Mirror* (1949–1963)”.

² Engelhardt 2012: 210.

³ For more details on some early Tibetan newspapers, see Erhard 2015.

remain largely unexplored by Tibetologists throughout the world, therefore, considering the stance of Dorje Tharchin who long before the 1950s warned his compatriots against – what he considered – the Communist threat, it seems particularly interesting to see what kind of topics he chose to cover and observe his interpretation of historical events in Tibet. The study is conducted on the basis of a number of selected original materials from *The Tibet Mirror* issues dated from 1949 (the year of the communists' rise to power in China) to 1963 (the last year of publication of *The Tibet Mirror*) and presents a discourse analysis of *The Tibet Mirror* articles. All issues of *The Tibet Mirror* for this study have been retrieved from the Columbia University online archive.⁴

1. The Tibet Mirror and Its Editor

The Tibet Mirror is one of the few early periodicals in the Tibetan language that had been continuously published in Kalimpong, India over 38 years by the Tibetan Christian and public leader Dorje Tharchin, who attempted to change the conventional Tibetan world outlook within Tibet and at the same time to preserve Tibetan culture in the culturally-mixed Indian border region. With the help of his newspaper Dorje Tharchin not only supplied international and local news for Tibetan-speaking residents of the Kalimpong area, but also offered a major media channel connecting Tibet and the rest of the world at that time.

Apart from subscribers from the above-mentioned Indian border territories and Tibet proper, the range of *The Tibet Mirror* distribution spread as far as along areas of the Mongolian trade route in Amdo and along the East Tibet-Assam border in Sadiya.⁵ Dorje Tharchin started his publishing enterprise with 50 copies of *The Tibet Mirror* in 1925. Later the number of printed copies would rise significantly, at times estimated at around 500 copies.

Due to financial difficulties the newspaper designed to be published monthly failed to do so. Inefficient postal services and non-existent money transfer services often made it impossible for Dorje Tharchin to receive subscription fees.

The Tibet Mirror featured different kinds of materials to meet the needs of its readers: political news, reports on the latest technological innovations (e.g. airplanes, airships, automobiles, etc.), stories about

⁴ "Yul phyogs so so'i gсар 'gyur me long", Columbia University Libraries Digital Collections, accessed May 1, 2016, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/cul/texts/ldpd_6981643_000/

⁵ Fader 2004: 282.

famous people (e.g. Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, etc.), short pieces of didactic narratives, articles about foreign travellers to Tibet, maps, etc. A lot of materials were supplemented with pictures and photographs. Besides its informative function, the newspaper also provided practical data for Tibetan businessmen and offered some educational and entertainment materials (riddles, cartoons), advertisements and articles devoted to religious topics (both Christian and Buddhist).

British officials in India and Chinese authorities showed interest in *The Tibet Mirror* and either side attempted to exert its influence over Tharchin's publication business, with the former having a certain success in that and, in fact, occasionally providing some financial support to the edition of the periodical.⁶ However, as for the latter, due to the fact that the newspaper editor Dorje Tharchin was a zealous anti-communist activist, Chinese representatives did not manage to establish any kind of cooperation with him.⁷

Dorje Tharchin was, indeed, a rather extraordinary person: a devout Christian by faith and a sincere lover of the Tibetan language and literature, an Indian citizen, but born in the Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh, therefore, a Tibetan by origin and a dedicated fighter for Tibet's independence.⁸ Tharchin had an opportunity to meet and work with a number of his eminent contemporaries: the Scottish missionaries John Graham and Robert Knox, the British Political Officers in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet Charles Bell and Basil Gould, the Indian Government Official in Tibet Hugh Richardson and the British Trade Agent in Tibet David Mackdonald, the Italian Tibetologist Giuseppe Tucci, the British writer and mountaineer Marco Pallis, the Tibetan scholar and poet Gendun Chopel (dGe 'dun chos 'phel), the Mongolian scholar Geshe Chodrag (Chos grags), the Tibetan officials Changlochen Sonam Gyelpo (lCang lo can bSod nams rgyal po) and Rabga Pomdatsang (Rab dga' sPom mda' tshang).⁹

As early as in the 1930s, Dorje Tharchin condemned Chinese military operations in Eastern Tibet and later, in the 1950s, strongly protested against the occupation of Chamdo by the Chinese army.¹⁰ Tharchin continuously addressed the Tibetan government and the Tibetan aristocracy with warnings about the approaching Chinese military attacks, but nobody took heed. Tibetan political activists and scholars had regular secret meetings at Tharchin's place where they

⁶ Engelhardt 2011: 241.

⁷ For details, see Norbu 1998: 12.

⁸ Norbu 2002: XI.

⁹ Tsering 1998: 9.

¹⁰ Fader 2009: 316.

discussed the future of Tibet.¹¹

Obviously, Tharchin's political views could not have avoided affecting the articles he published: these propaganda materials set a type of political discourse that started to unfold in *The Tibet Mirror* after the Chinese Communist Party had declared the goal of Tibet's liberation in 1949.

2. Historical Sketches in Terms of Discourse Analysis

The present paper focuses on the analysis of discourse-charged publications in *The Tibet Mirror*, i.e. discursive sketches of Tibetan history depicted by Dorje Tharchin. Tracking unusual interpretations of the historical facts and elements of Tharchin's anti-communist (or rather pro-Tibetan) discourse in *The Tibet Mirror* was seen as the primary task of this research. Therefore, there is a need to start with a brief introduction of the methodology used for enabling the process of identification of discourse-charged materials within the general corpus of *The Tibet Mirror* issues.

In order to find publications related to the anti-communist discourse in *The Tibet Mirror*, attention was paid to specific headlines of the articles (e.g. Tibetan News, Chinese News, as well as Indian News, Nepalese News and other news that could be related to Tibetan-Chinese relations). Articles without headlines were examined with the help of two lists of key words:

1. A list of thematically organised 'ideal' words that could help identifying the necessary discursive topics (e.g. *place names*: Tibet, China, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Mongolia, Taiwan, Lhasa, Beijing, Chamdo, Mussoorie; *officials*: Mao Zedong, the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama; *political structures and positions*: a state, a government, the United Nations (UN), a Chinese or Tibetan representative, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), communists, a chairman, the Kuomintang; *military affairs*: the Chinese People's Liberation Army, the Tibetan Volunteer Army for Defence of Religion, a commander-in-chief, soldiers, a guerrilla army, a military attack, a conflict, an aggression, to keep in custody; '*peaceful reconciliation*': the Seventeen Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet, a petition, a development plan; and some other words that could be related to the political sphere, e.g. propaganda, independence, freedom, rights, etc.)

¹¹ Samphel 2004: 173.

2. A list of similar discourse-charged 'real' Tibetan words that was compiled during the actual analysis of the newspaper issues.

During the analysis both lists were supplemented with additional new key words.

The time frame for the research was set from 1949 to 1963: referring to a milestone event in the modern Tibetan history—October 1, 1949—the establishment of the People's Republic of China, and November 1, 1963—the publication date of the last issue of *The Tibet Mirror* respectively.

The target publications of *The Tibet Mirror* were analysed according to the M.A.K. Halliday's model that studies discourse in three topics: field of discourse, tenor of discourse and mode of discourse.¹²

2-1. *Tenor of Discourse in The Tibet Mirror*

The tenor of discourse specifies participants of the discourse, their status and relationships, i.e. in the present case the author of the discourse and his recipients. Obviously, the main participant of *The Tibet Mirror* discourse is the owner and the chief editor of the newspaper Dorje Tharchin. As it was mentioned before, Tharchin was a quite peculiar Tibetan born in India and residing in Kalimpong, but at the same time held in esteem and enjoying certain influence among Tibetans.

Tharchin gathered news from different sources (i.e. foreign newspapers, radio, official statements of the state leaders or other government officials, correspondence, etc.). Thus, on the one hand, he was the subject (the author) of the discourse in *The Tibet Mirror*, but, on the other hand, he was in a way the object (the recipient) of the global mass media political discourse of the anti-communist coalition.

It is fair to say that in *The Tibet Mirror* Tharchin not only condemned the Chinese communists and published anti-communist propaganda materials, but at the same time he did not fail to criticise the Tibetan government for its narrow-mindedness and dim-sighted politics and also spoke with great regret about the Indian government's refusal to provide military aid to Tibet in its conflict with the PRC. Besides, in some cases Tharchin was rather moderate in expressing his understandable pro-Tibetan feelings and published

¹² Halliday 1989: 12.

relatively good news from Tibet regarding the Chinese communists' policies there. For instance, he reports on the construction of a new airport¹³ or a highway¹⁴ in Tibet. Or, for example, in a short piece of news about the Chinese communists in 1951 he remarks: "It is said that Chinese soldiers are very well-disciplined and do not attack or rob other people."¹⁵

For discourse analysis it is important to understand who is in charge of selecting topics of publications and who decides when the topic is to be changed¹⁶, i.e. in the case of *The Tibet Mirror* what kind of topics Tharchin chose for his publications and how he as the chief editor of the newspaper selected them. The latter, in its turn, stipulates the need to distinguish whether the material was written by Tharchin himself or it was borrowed from some other media source, translated into Tibetan and paraphrased by Tharchin.

As for *The Tibet Mirror* publications, Tharchin rarely indicated the exact source of his news, often restricting this information to: "there is news that ...",¹⁷ "as it was said ...",¹⁸ "there are rumours that ...",¹⁹ "one newspaper states that ...",²⁰ "as all learned men know, ...",²¹ "these are the news in short...".²² Only sometimes he gave an additional information on the geographical location of a source or (even less often) the name of a source: "as it is reported from New Delhi...",²³ "as it is known from Mussoorie...",²⁴ "News from Lhasa published in Kathmandu: ...",²⁵ "a rough translation from an English newspaper in Kolkata...",²⁶ "according to the Kolkata newspaper *Statesman*, ...",²⁷ "from a Washington newspaper ...",²⁸ "from a Hong

¹³ *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XIX, no. 7, Oct. 1, 1951: 5.

¹⁴ *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XIX, no. 1-2, Dec. 1950-Jan. 1951: 4.

¹⁵ *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XIX, no. 7, Oct. 1, 1951: 5.

¹⁶ van Dijik 1993: 256.

¹⁷ *gnas tshul thos* (*Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XXV, no. 11, Apr. 1959: 4).

¹⁸ *brjod gsal ltar na* (*ibid.*: 3).

¹⁹ *phan tshun nas go thos su* (*Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XIX, no. 7, Oct. 1, 1951: 5).

²⁰ *gsar 'gyur zhiig nang gsal* (*Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XXVI, no. 1 Jun. 1959: 5).

²¹ *mkyen ldan tshang mas dgongs mnga' ltar* (*ibid.*: Suppl. 1).

²² *gnas tshul mdor bsdus* (*Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XXV, no. 11, Apr. 1959: 5).

²³ *ne'u di li nas gsar gsal du* (*Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XXVI, no. 1, Jun. 1959: 7).

²⁴ *ma su ri nas gsar gsal du* (*ibid.*: 6).

²⁵ *ka ta man du nas lha sa'i gnas tshul du* (*ibid.*: 3).

²⁶ *ka ta'i in ji'i gsar shog tu bkod 'dug pa las rags bsgyur mdor bsdus* (*Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XXV, no. 9-10, Feb.-Mar. 1959: 6).

²⁷ *ka ta'i gsar shog si te ta man nang gsal ltar na* (*Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XXV, no. 11, Apr. 1959: 3).

Kong newspaper ...”,²⁹ “from a Kolkata newspaper in English ...”,³⁰ “from a New Delhi newspaper ...”,³¹ “the official Chinese statement: ...”,³² “the Chinese radio reports that ...”.³³

It is a fact that mass media (an example of which is *The Tibet Mirror*) often unavoidably loses in the attempt to present an independent piece of information. Even if it is not a partisan article, the author still renders information within a generally accepted media frame. In the case of *The Tibet Mirror*, owing to the fact that at those times Tibetans did not have a variety of opportunities to acquire information about the world beyond the Tibetan borders and some of the notions and concepts described by Dorje Tharchin in his articles were virtually non-existent in the Tibetan language, the editor of the newspaper partly defined the perception frames of his Tibetan readers on his own. Dorje Tharchin enjoyed a practically unlimited potential for the news selection and interpretation. He could select any kinds of news and present them in the way that was appropriate according to his perspective. Therefore, while studying the ideological aspect of *The Tibet Mirror* publications, one should keep in mind that Tharchin was the chief, if not one and only, interpreter of the published news and, as mentioned earlier, he was far from friendly towards Chinese communists.

Nevertheless, Tharchin was not the exclusive tenor of the discourse. Among other passive or silent participants of the discourse were the recipients of the news, which are, first of all, a rather news-inexperienced and news-hungry Tibetan audience reading the materials presented in *The Tibet Mirror* as well as some foreign readers, including Tharchin’s adversary in this discourse—the Chinese communist government.

2-2. Field of Discourse in The Tibet Mirror

The field of discourse could be defined as the nature of the social action that is occurring and the activities in which the participants are engaged. The field of discourse in *The Tibet Mirror* is presented by Dorje Tharchin’s news coverage and has a form of discourse-charged publications on Tibetan-Chinese relations, the establishment of the

²⁸ *wa shing ton gyi gsar gsal ltar na (ibid.)*.

²⁹ *hong kong gsar gsal ltar (ibid.: 4)*.

³⁰ *ka ta’i dbyin yig gsar shog ltar na (ibid.)*.

³¹ *ni’u dil li’i gsar gsal ltar na (ibid.: 5)*.

³² *rgya dmar gyi khyab bsgrags (Yul phyogs so so’i gsar ‘gyur me long v. XXVI, no. 1, Jun. 1959: Suppl. 2)*.

³³ *rgya dmar gyi rlung ‘phrin nang [...] gnas tshul mang po zhid shod kyi ‘dug (ibid.)*.

new communist government in Tibet and other significant factors and momentous events in contemporary Tibetan history, such as Tibet's "liberation march" of the People's Liberation Army, power shifts within the Tibetan government, signing of the Seventeen Point Agreement, political and economic reorganisations in Tibet, Tibetan-Chinese tensions and the rising guerrilla movement in Kham, the Tibetan uprising in March 1959 and the political crackdown of the protesters, the Dalai Lama's flight to India, etc. This kind of political, economic and social action had to be reflected in *The Tibet Mirror* and constitutes the field of discourse.

Discourse materials found in *The Tibet Mirror* issues could be divided into three groups: articles in Tibetan, articles in English and visual materials (e.g. cartoons, maps, photographs). Among some topics covered by Tharchin in the examined newspaper issues are the Dalai Lama's activities and the politics of the new communist government in Tibet, new appointments to posts in the Tibetan government and the recent economic development of Tibet, civil strife in China and confrontation between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party, Chinese military operations in the Tibetan region and the counter attacks of the Tibetan population. Tharchin published materials about the destruction of Tibetan monasteries and the persecution of Tibetan monks, news on the Dalai Lama's life in exile in India and his official statements, reports describing Tibetan uprisings and the braveness and success of the Tibetan Volunteer Army for Defence of Religion. Besides, pages of *The Tibet Mirror* featured copies of Tibetan petitions against the Chinese communist authorities in Tibet, numerous appeals by Tibetans to the United Nations and Tharchin's own appeals to help Tibetan refugees, as well as a recurring publication of the Seventeen Point Agreement.

Tharchin held his discourse in a broader geographical context: apart from news on Tibet and China, he also published potentially discourse-charged news of some other countries. It was with this purpose that he published materials where he gave examples of the countries that became independent; for example, a report on Outer Mongolia which used to be part of the Qing Empire like Tibet, but managed to gain independence with the help of the Soviet Russia,³⁴ or an article about an application of the Nepalese government to be admitted to the United Nations (UN) with a detailed description of the reasons for Nepal to be admitted to the UN.³⁵ Probably, within the same discourse strategy Tharchin repeatedly published at the front pages of *The Tibet Mirror* visual and textual materials on Indian

³⁴ *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XIX, no. 6, Sep. 1, 1951: 6.

³⁵ *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XVIII, no. 10, Sep. 1, 1950: 5.

independence.³⁶

Tharchin's publications from the late 1950s are more intriguing since the discourse becomes sharper and more emotional there. For example, in *The Tibet Mirror* no. 11 v. XXV (April 1959) Tharchin is happily talking about the "fantastic plan" (*srid byus ngo mtshar che ba*) of the Dalai Lama that helped him break through the "iron boundaries of oppression of the red Communists" (*rgya dmar gung phran gyi btsan dbang lcags ri*) and a warm welcoming ceremony conducted in his honour in India.³⁷ He openly condemns the Chinese communist ideology and is enthusiastic about the news that Tibet could get help from the Kuomintang party and gain independence.³⁸ He reports on the failure of a Chinese program of the communist re-education of the Tibetan population,³⁹ fierce battles of Tibetans with the communist "bandit" army (*gung bran jag dmag*)⁴⁰ and the destruction of Ganden and Sera monasteries during the Chinese military incursions.⁴¹ Tharchin praises one of the Tibetan heroes that led an uprising against the Chinese communist regime⁴² and warns other countries of the Chinese communist "epidemic" (*gung phran tang gi rims nad*) that already seized the larger part of Tibet and which needs to be exterminated or it is going to spread throughout the whole world.⁴³ He publishes materials about Tibetan monks and lay people sacrificing their lives in order to save their country⁴⁴ and Tibetans praying for their rescue from the communist "bullying" (*dbang gnon*) and "oppression" (*btsan gnon*).⁴⁵

The field of discourse in *The Tibet Mirror* includes many traditional cultural markers and Tibetan images that are frequently being brutally violated by the new communist authorities. For example, Chinese soldiers making fortifications and placing their weaponry on the rooftops of sacred Buddhist temples, which goes "against the will of Tibetans and against local traditions,"⁴⁶ communist troops firing at

³⁶ E.g. *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XVIII, no. 10, Sep. 1, 1950: 1 and *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XXII, no. 5, Sep. 1, 1954: 1.

³⁷ *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XXV, no. 11, Apr. 1959: 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*: 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: 3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*: 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*: 4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*: 1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*: 4.

⁴⁶ *nang mi so so'i chos khang thod du bod mi'i blo mos yul srol dang 'gal bzhi mi sin gan sogs bzhag sa'i 'dzing rags bzos* (*Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XXV, no. 9–10, Feb.–Mar. 1959: 7).

monasteries and destroying sacred objects,⁴⁷ Chinese trying to seduce a respected tulku lama by sending a new Chinese girl to sleep with him every night⁴⁸ or Chinese communists falsely accusing the Dalai Lama for the Tibetan uprising and insulting the Buddha⁴⁹.

During the analysis of *The Tibet Mirror* issues special attention was also paid to the Kuomintang topic reiteration. It seems interesting that Tharchin regularly published news on the Kuomintang and treated the CCP's main adversary party more favourably in his publications. Tharchin called the Kuomintang the "real" Chinese government (*rgya nag gi gzhung ngo ma*) and made wishful remarks that soon they would get back to power in China and grant independence to Tibet.⁵⁰

2-3. Mode of Discourse in The Tibet Mirror

The mode of discourse describes the language used by the participants and what they expect the language to do for them (whether it is expository, didactic or persuasive). As far as the third aspect of discourse analysis is concerned, the mode of discourse in *The Tibet Mirror* is manifested in the general voice tone and the language employed by Dorje Tharchin in his publications. In general, a political discourse designer can use certain linguistic constructions or apply different types of lexical manipulation playing with the connotations of words and concepts, for instance, notions of 'a state' and 'a country' or 'a war' and 'a counterterrorist operation'.

It was particularly interesting to find in *The Tibet Mirror* an example of a spelling game with Mao Zedong's name. In the earlier issues⁵¹ Tharchin spells his name using a combination of syllables *dMa' Tshe thung*, standing for 'low/inferior', 'life' and 'short' respectively, what could be interpreted as 'the inferior [one] who has a short life', while in the later publications⁵² Mao Zedong's name is spelled with a different combination of syllables *Ma'o Tshe* (or *rTse tung*) that does not carry any derogative connotation.

⁴⁷ *dgon par me sgyogs shugs chen 'phen nas rten gsum chos chas kyis mtshan pas nang pa'i chos kyi glegs bam mang po gtor rlags* (*Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long v. XXV, no. 11, Apr. 1959: 5*).

⁴⁸ *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long v. XXVI, no. 1, Jun. 1959: Suppl. 3*.

⁴⁹ *gong sa mchog la ngo rgo! guang mi red ces brnyas 'dogs mang po dang / sangs rgyas la'ang smad ra mang po btang* (*ibid.: 2*).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.: Suppl. 2*.

⁵¹ E.g. *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long v. XVIII, no. 1, Oct. 1, 1949: 3* and *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long v. XVIII, no. 5, Feb.–Mar. 1950: 7*.

⁵² E.g. *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long v. XIX no. 6, Sep. 1, 1951: 7* and *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long v. XIX, no. 7, Oct. 1, 1951: 5*.

Dorje Tharchin's attitude towards certain events and people is expressed through his lexical choices and the usage of honorific forms of Tibetan words. It was noticed that Tharchin talked with utmost respect about the Dalai Lama and his family in *The Tibet Mirror* publications and always used the exceptional honorific language for that (honorific and higher honorific forms). Moreover, the editor frequently used different metaphorical epithets for the Dalai Lama, e.g. "omniscient" (*gong sa thams cad mkhyen pa*),⁵³ "precious" (*gong sa yid bzhin nor bu mchog*),⁵⁴ "great omnipotent" (*gong sa thams cad mkhyen gzigs chen po*)⁵⁵, etc. Tharchin's deep respect for the Dalai Lama is also reflected in the number of pictures of the Dalai Lama published in *The Tibet Mirror*.

Another marker of Tharchin's attitude towards the described object is the employment of the Tibetan honorific particle *mchog* used after proper names and titles. In the analysed issues of *The Tibet Mirror* Tharchin never used *mchog* after Mao Zedong's name. Besides, apparently Tharchin deliberately skipped *mchog* after, for example, the name of the Chinese military commander Zhang Jingwu in a report on his visit to India.⁵⁶ On the other hand, some of the Tibetan and Indian names were usually accompanied by this honorific particle, for example, *mchog* was used for "the government of Sikkim",⁵⁷ "the son of a Sikkim official",⁵⁸ "the regent",⁵⁹ "Panchen Erdeni"⁶⁰ and even for "the Chairman of the Chinese Kuomintang government Chiang Kai-shek".⁶¹

Tharchin's rhetoric in the earlier publications seems to be relatively mild and subtle. In v. XVIII (1949) and v. XIX (1951) he is carefully presenting the Tibetan and Chinese news and is rather moderate in his expressions. However, in v. XXV (1959) his rhetoric is more vivid, while the language used by him is more vitriolic and metaphorical. The reports are often accompanied by his critical, ironic or derogatory comments. Writing about the Chinese communists in the late 1950s, Tharchin uses the term "evil" for the communist ideology (*lta spyod ngan pa*).⁶² He calls the communist regime "an epidemic" (*rims nad*) that commits "crimes" (*nyes skyon*) and condemns their "oppression" (*btsan dbang*) of Tibet, reporting,

⁵³ *Ibid.*: 6.

⁵⁴ *Yul phyogs so so'i gсар 'gyur me long* v. XXVI, no. 1, Jun. 1959: 8.

⁵⁵ *Yul phyogs so so'i gсар 'gyur me long* v. XIX, no. 6, Sep. 1, 1951: 4.

⁵⁶ *Yul phyogs so so'i gсар 'gyur me long* v. XIX, no. 5, Aug. 1, 1951: 5.

⁵⁷ *Yul phyogs so so'i gсар 'gyur me long* v. XXVI, no. 1, Jun. 1959: Suppl. 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Yul phyogs so so'i gсар 'gyur me long* v. XIX, no. 1-2, Dec. 1950-Jan. 1951: 5.

⁶⁰ *Yul phyogs so so'i gсар 'gyur me long* v. XXVI, no. 1, Jun. 1959: Suppl. 4.

⁶¹ *Yul phyogs so so'i gсар 'gyur me long* v. XXV, no. 11, Apr. 1959: 3.

⁶² *Ibid.*: 4.

for instance, the arrest of Tibetan tulkus, which was a “wrong and graceless” act to do (*shin tu ma 'os pa'i las ngan pa*).⁶³ Apart from that, Tharchin is ironically writing about different independent countries enjoying their freedom and talking a lot about helping Tibet (*'dzam gling rang dbang la dga' ba tshang mas kyang bod kyi ched du grogs ram kyi bka' mol mang po brjod mus kyang*). But he uses a metaphorical comparison and concludes his article: “If a sick person who is still alive is not getting his medical treatment in time, what would be the use of regrets after he dies” (*nad pa ma 'chi gong sman thabs ma byas na shi ba'i rjes su 'gyod pas ci la phan*).⁶⁴

Tharchin's discursive irony could also be found in his explanation of the Tibetan term 'liberation' *bcings bkrol* in one of the articles in the v. XIX no. 7 issue.⁶⁵ He explains that *bcings* is the past tense form of the verb '*ching* 'to tie', which could mean, for instance, when somebody possessing the power ties the limbs of somebody powerless with a rope or shackles. Or, when a cruel hunter is hunting down and encaging the animals that carelessly lived in wilderness before and which now have to live begging for food from the hunter. Or, when the aggressive countries that have political power, money and military might, subjugate other weak but independent countries. As for the second syllable *bkrol*, he continues that it is the past tense form of the verb '*grol* 'to untie/to loosen', which should signify the action when somebody possessing the power and righteous intentions protects and helps those that were tied or caught with a lasso or subjugated with the military and peaceful strategies, as in the above-mentioned examples [with the verb '*ching* 'to tie'], and now they can live where they like, carelessly and independently.

Provocative rebellious songs and poetical pieces in *The Tibet Mirror* constitute another important part of Tharchin's mode of discourse. For example, the “Liberation Song” (*bcings bkrol glu gzhas*) in v. XIX no. 8 of *The Tibet Mirror* reads:

Stand up, the oppressed Tibetan brothers! Strive for the national uprising! Sacrifice your life for the liberation of the Tibetan people from suffering! Stand up, all the oppressed compatriots! Fight for independence and happiness! Stand up! Stand up! Stand up! Tibetan brothers, stand up! Stand up! Stand up!

*longs shog btsan dbang 'og gi /bod rigs spun zla rnam/ rang rigs sger lang
byed phyir/ brtson 'grus lhod med gyis/ bod rigs sdug las 'grol phyir/ rang
srog blos btang byed dgos/ btsan dbang drag shugs 'og gi /spun zla thams cad*

⁶³ *Ibid.*: 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XIX, no. 7, Oct. 1, 1951: 2.

longs shog /rang dbang bde skyid thob phyir/ rdog rtsa gcig tu 'dzings/ longs shog_longs shog_longs shog /bod rigs spun zla rnam/ longs shog_longs shog_longs shog /⁶⁶

Another fascinating example in *The Tibet Mirror* is an ironical song titled “New Song about People’s Liberation” (*mi dmangs bcings bkrol gyi glu gzhas gsar pa*) published in the same newspaper issue:

Tibetan young men, we will give you wages and food. It is time to show your minerals! Return to the family! Return, return! Tibetan young girls, we will make friends with you. It is time to increase population. Return to the family! Return to the family! Tibetan people, we will liberate you. It is time to make use of your national wealth. Return to the family, return! Return! Return! Tibetan farmers, we will increase your well-being. It is time to eat your crops. Return to the family! Return to the family! Tibetan slaves, we will liberate you. It is time to become public servants. Return to the family, return, return! Return to the family! Tibetan aristocracy, we will offer you *tog go*⁶⁷. It is time to do detailed calculations. Return to the family! Return to the family! Tibetan lamas and monks, we will bring offerings to you. It is time to look for food for practicing. Return to the family! Return to the family! Tibetan people, we will let you act according to your own will. It is time to make use of public property together. Return to the family! Return! Return! Return!

bod ljongs kyi gzhon pa tsho/ nga tshos gla lto sprad chog /khyod tsho'i sa gter ston ran/ khyim tshang nang la log shog /log shog log shog /bod kyi gzhon na ma tsho/ nga tshos mthun grogs byed chog_khyod tshos mi 'bor spel ran/ khyim tshang nang la log shog /XXX/ bod ljongs kyi mi dmangs tsho/ nga tshos bcings bkrol byas chog /khyod tsho'i spyi nor spyad ran/ khyim tshang nang log log shog /log shog XX /bod ljongs kyi zhing pa tsho/ nga tshos bde skyid spel chog /khyod tsho'i lo tog za ran/ khyim tshang nang la X /XXX bod ljongs kyi bran 'khol tsho/_nga tshos bcings bkrol btang cho /khyod tshos spyi g.yog rgyugs ran/ khyim tshang nang la log log shog /XXX/ bod ljongs kyi sde dpon tsho/ nga tshos tog go phul chog /khyod tshos zhib rtsis rgyag ran/ khyim tshang X /XXX/ bod ljongs kyi bla grwa tsho/ nga tshos bsnyen bkur zhush chog /khyed tshos chos rgyags 'tshol ran/ khyim tshang nang X /XXX bod ljongs kyi mi rigs tsho/ nga tshos rang 'dod byen chog /spyi rdzas mnyam du spyod ran/ khyim tshang nang la log shog /log shog_log shog_log shog /⁶⁸

These and many other examples found in the analysed issues of *The Tibet Mirror* give an idea of the variety of materials on Tibet

⁶⁶ *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XIX, no. 8, Nov. 1, 1951: 5.

⁶⁷ It was impossible to determine the meaning of the Tibetan term *tog go*.

⁶⁸ *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long* v. XIX, no. 8, Nov. 1, 1951: 4.

published by Dorje Tharchin in his newspaper. Most of the Tibetan stories in *The Tibet Mirror* could be characterised as emotionally charged and expressive, some of them are short and simple, some of them are longer and more elaborate, but a lot of them do not indicate the exact source of information and lack a more consistent or more detailed description. Regardless of the fact that these stories vary in topics, genre and style, news on the events happening in Tibet under the Chinese communist rule are rich with Tharchin's artistic expressions and almost always unavoidably grasp the reader's attention. Sketches of contemporary Tibetan history found in *The Tibet Mirror* publications often resemble a virtual battlefield where Tharchin exerts his best efforts to fight for Tibet's independence and to give voice to the Tibetan stories he encountered.

Dorje Tharchin's devotion to the cause of creating and running a newspaper in the Tibetan language during 38 financially challenging years could be hardly underestimated. *The Tibet Mirror* presents an interesting source of alternative materials for a study of modern Tibetan history and formation of one of the first original pro-Tibetan discourses. As a source *The Tibet Mirror* has its limitations in terms of the particular anti-communist or rather pro-Tibetan views of its editor, which should be kept in mind during the analysis process. However, *The Tibet Mirror* surely has its advantages as well, the most noteworthy of which is the first hand news that Dorje Tharchin was able to collect from the Tibetan refugees passing Kalimpong as a transit point on their way to exile, especially after the 1959 Tibetan Uprising.

Bibliography

- Engelhardt, Isrun. 2011. "Reflections on the Tibet Mirror: News of the World 1937–1946." In *Mapping the Modern in Tibet*, edited by Gray Tuttle, 205–64. Andiast: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies (IITBS).
- . 2012. "Tharchin's One Man War with Mao." In *Studies on the History and Literature of Tibet and the Himalaya*, edited by Roberto Vitali, 183–212. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications.
- Erhard, Franz Xaver. 2015. "Tibetan Mass Media: a Preliminary Survey of Tibetan Language Newspapers." In *The Illuminating Mirror*, edited by Olaf Czaja and Guntram Hazod, 155–171. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.

- Fader, H. Louis. 2004. *Called from Obscurity: the Life and Times of a True Son of Tibet, God's Humble Servant from Poo Gergan Dorje Tharchin*. Volume II. Kalimpong: Tibet Mirror Press.
- . 2009. *Called from Obscurity: the Life and Times of a True Son of Tibet, God's Humble Servant from Poo Gergan Dorje Tharchin*. Volume III. Kalimpong: Tibet Mirror Press.
- Halliday, Michael A.K. 1989. *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Norbu, Dawa. 2002. Introduction. In *Called from Obscurity: the Life and Times of a True Son of Tibet, God's Humble Servant from Poo Gergan Dorje Tharchin* Volume I, by Fader H. Louis, XI-XII. Kalimpong: Tibet Mirror Press.
- . 1998. "Pioneer and Patriot. An Extract from an Interview with Rev. G. Tharchin." *Lungta* 11, 11-12.
- Samphel, Thubten. 2004. "Virtual Tibet: The Media." In *Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora*, edited by Dagmar Bernstorff and Hubertus von Welck, 167-186. New Delhi: Orient Longman Private Limited.
- Tsering, Tashi. 1998. "The Life of Reverend G. Tharchin, Missionary and Pioneer." *Lungta* 11, 9-10.
- van Dijik, Teun A. 1993. "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse & Society* 4(2), 249-283.
- Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long*. Kālimpong: edited by Dorje Tharchin, 1925-1963. Electronic reproduction. v. II: no. 5 (1927), v. V: no. 1 (1930)-v. XXVIII (1963). New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Libraries, 2009. Accessed May 1, 2016. http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/cul/texts/ldpd_6981643_000/

