

Course Title: Society, Culture and Politics of Tibet

Course No: SA 663

Total Credits Three (3)

Course Teacher: Dr. Tsetan Namgyal

INTRODUCTION

The history of Tibet is divided into three periods, namely Ancient, Medieval and Modern and its understanding is necessary to study the contemporary Tibet. The early period deals with the historical and political events from the ancient time till the 9th cent, AD marking the end of royal dynasty. The second covers the Religio-Political system (chos srid 'nis ldan) from the 10th century AD i.e., from the later dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet up to the enthronement of 13th Dalai Lama in 1895. The third period has covered the period of political changes when Tibet was considered an area of competition between Tsarist Russia and British India finally ended with the Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1950s.

Aim and objective of the course

This course aims at understanding various issues confronting Tibet's History, Culture, Religion, and Politics. Before the arrival of Buddhism 'Bon' religion played a crucial role in shaping the politics of Tibet. The essence of Buddhist Religio- Political system of governance in Tibet originated on the basis of religious faith of the Tibetans. It inspired them to accept and support the authority of such order that in their custom was authorized by a supreme spiritual power within the framework of the Buddhist philosophical concept of human relations which preaches non violence and universal brotherhood.

On the whole, this course is expected to provide academic grounding to understand the various issues and system of Tibetan civilization and current debate on Tibetan autonomy, which may prove useful in widening our understanding of Tibet.

Significance and relevance

In the era of globalization the communities and countries across the world changing rapidly and Tibet is not an exception. Though, Tibet lost its independence position gradually in the post 1945 phase, but still it's going to play an important role. India has very strong and long bonding historical and cultural relations with this land for centuries. Over the last decades we have seen unprecedented changes in Tibetan politics, culture, religion and economy. Hence, understanding the present situation, peace and stability in Tibet (TAR) is necessary for strengthening Asian security. Tibet can play a significant role and regain its identity in the International community only when it will be able to integrate itself with global political system. This course will help students and researchers in and broadening a factual understanding about contemporary Tibet.

COURSE CONTENTS

1. Structure of Early Tibetan Society

- A. Geographical features and Ethnic groups
- B. Pluralistic Tibetan Society and Relations of Monarchy with Asian Countries
(West China, Central Asia, Nepal, Bhutan and India)

2. Social Identity and Culture

- A. Bon Religion, an indigenous mode of Spirituality
- B. Adoption of Indian Culture since (7th Century AD onwards)
- C. The Institution of the Dalai Lama

3. Politics and International Relations (Pre-1951 & post 1959)

- A. Tibet's Treaties, Conventions and Agreements with neighboring(1913-1951)
- B. Two-fold Identity of the Tibetans(1959)
- C. International Relations of the Dalai Lama Administration in India

4. Identity and Culture: Understanding Modern TAR of PRC

- A. Transformations of Tibetan society: Agriculture, education, economy etc through the ages
- B. Tibet's cultural contact with Central Asia, India, Mongolia, Buryats, Kalmikya & Tuva states of present Russia, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh, Tawang and Tibet's Cultural contact with West Asians Arabs and the Persians through trade and commerce.
- C. Development, Socio- Economic and Ecological policies and reforms in TAR (Tibetan Autonomous Region) since 1965 under the Peoples Republic of China(PRC)

TEACHING METHOD: Lectures, Seminars/Tutorials, discussion, brainstorming, quiz

EVALUATION PATTERN: Periodical Work and Semester examination

SELECTED READINGS

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Tibetan in Exile, part I&II Published by TEGD Dharamsala

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