

Course on China and Tibet

Teaching from the Margins: Putting the Periphery at the Center of Chinese Studies

Charlene Makley
Reed College

I teach the anthropology of China and Tibet at Reed College and have attempted to develop courses that train students to use a wide variety of analytic tools and sources (visual, as well as textual), to think empirically from the ground up: that is, to rigorously consider historical and ethnographic accounts of ordinary (and often marginalized) peoples' lived experiences as a way to challenge dominant categories organizing social lives—in both local and in academic discourses. “Gender and Ethnicity in China and Tibet” was one of the first courses I designed when I finished my Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, and since coming to Reed I have taught it and tweaked it repeatedly.

Reed College has a reputation for being an odd place, a “quirky” liberal arts college in Portland, Oregon, with about 1300 students—(in fact, the college cultivates that image!) Some of the rumors about Reed are true, others aren't (my dentist once asked me if I was a “commie” when I said I taught at Reed!), but what is perhaps most important about Reed's campus culture is that it fosters a climate, like a “prep school for graduate schools,” where academics are actually cool—the library is the biggest hang-out and students compete for how hard one works and how little one bathes.

For pedagogy, the upshot of this situation is that the academic bar is set very high; I can expect a lot from my students, and I can design upper-division syllabi that border on graduate level requirements. In this kind of environment, and with the college's ample support for computerized audiovisual technology in the classroom, I've been able to do what I think my own fieldwork and research among Tibetans in China prepared me best

for: bringing an anthropological perspective to bear on Chinese studies by “teaching from the margins.” Let me explain what I mean by that, and then I want to briefly discuss my course on China and Tibet, which I see as exemplifying those efforts.

What teaching about Sino-Tibetan relations is especially suited for (given the high profile of this area in international politics) is getting students to ground their inquiry in the politics of representation, a politics, I emphasize to them, in which we ourselves are always caught up. In many ways I see the 300-level course, “Gender and Ethnicity in China and Tibet,” as my attempt to accomplish this goal at Reed. I view this course as directly informed by the conceptual frameworks and empirical perspectives I developed during my ethnographic fieldwork between 1992-

I want to challenge students to think about ethnic, national and even gender politics as fundamentally intertwined... we can't really abstract out one or the other type of identity politics and focus on it in isolation.

1996, on gender and monastic revitalization in Labrang, the famous Tibetan Buddhist monastery town located in what has been called the “frontier zone” in China. This “frontier zone” runs Southwest to Northwest in the contemporary PRC, in Yunnan, Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces, roughly along the foothills of mountain ranges that rise to the Himalayas and the Tibetan plateau; some say this is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in the world. Indeed, when early Chinese Communist party leaders, as part of their initial state-building efforts, launched their “ethnic

identification” (minzu shibie) project in 1953 with the guidance of western-trained Chinese anthropologists, over 400 groups made claims to unique ethnic group or *minzu* status—and most of those groups resided in this zone (of course the state ended up recognizing only 56 groups or minzu, including the Han). As many anthropologists working in these areas have recently pointed out, historically—indeed, from the earliest Chinese dynasties, this rugged region was a complex zone of interaction and contestation over imperial and local jurisdictions, and was notoriously difficult to administer centrally.

At Reed, I had to restructure the course from its original lecture format at Michigan to a more demanding seminar format where students take turns facilitating discussions on weekly readings and films. An introduction to anthropological theory course is a prerequisite, so I can pitch the course at a fairly high level of sophistication, assuming some familiarity with basic anthropological paradigms and debates. The course's title indicates the level of complexity I expect students to ultimately

grapple with: that is, in keeping with recent emphases in anthropological theory, I structure the readings in order to give students some analytic tools with which to grasp social life as empirically grounded in the simultaneous intersections of people and types of social difference. That is, I want to challenge students to think about ethnic, national and even gender politics as fundamentally intertwined—the take-home message being that in order to understand the exigencies of life for differently positioned people in the PRC, we can't really abstract

out one or the other type of identity politics and focus on it in isolation.

My hope is that the course thus provides a uniquely illuminating “view from the margins” on a variety of levels. For one thing, it is positioned at the margins of academic disciplines. The legacy of “Orientalist” area studies in the West has effectively divided Tibetan and Chinese studies because scholars have focused on the discourses of “great traditions” that lead them in opposing directions—to Chinese dynastic capitals east or to Indo-Tibetan Buddhist centers west and south. So combining Tibetan and Chinese studies in the context of contemporary China is only a very recently emerging field of inquiry. For example, when I was in graduate school, it was almost unheard of for a student to study both Chinese and Tibetan languages, the usual configuration being Tibetan and Sanskrit or Chinese and Japanese. In addition, my own research in Labrang allowed me to glimpse the perspective of locals who were positioned historically at the geographic and political economic margins of both Chinese and Tibetan centers from the 18th century onwards. This perspective then, in the course, and in my research, including my book on Labrang that is being published in the fall of 2006, helps me to crystallize converging interests among social theorists and historians about new approaches to space, time and culture. Let me just briefly explain how I see this playing out in scholarly directions of inquiry.

In the past several decades, the “space-time compression” and labor displacements accompanying the rapid expansion of new markets and means of global coordination, have compelled social theorists to break with earlier notions of space as a neutral backdrop for progressive time, and to develop instead radically altered notions of space and time as simultaneous, culturally specific, and politicized processes. The effect of this shift for understandings of “margins,” “boundaries” or “borders” in social lives is that differences delineating “persons,” “cultures,” or “nations” one from the other are not to be taken as given, definite lines across which bridges must then be built. As Akhil Gupta argues, we have to focus instead on “...exploring the processes of the production of difference in a world of interconnected spaces” (p. 14). So, in contemporary social theory “margins” and

The effect of this shift for understandings of “margins,” “boundaries” or “borders” in social lives is that differences... from the other are not to be taken as given, definite lines across which bridges must then be built.

“borders” are no longer ignored as clearly defined peripheries serving only to demarcate a center for analytic focus. Instead, as “interstitial zones” (Gupta, p.18) constituted by ever-changing networks of interrelations, they are now the preferred starting point for analyses, that is, the vital places where spaces, persons and nations are disintegrated or (re)made.

In anthropology and cultural studies, researchers have focused on the difficult and often contradictory experiences of people who find themselves to be “in betwixt and between” cultures and places due to the legacy of colonialisms (Limon 1991, Anzaldua 1987, Behar 1993, Hall 1989). This kind of “borderlands” research contributes to a powerful critique of older anthropological notions of discrete cultures hierarchically arranged in time and space, and calls into question the consequent self-other relationship that underlies ethnographic research. As Sherry Ortner (1996b: 181) notes, this work goes right to the heart of the critique implicit in most of contemporary anthropological theory: it looks at “...the place where culture is constantly challenged and constructed” and focuses on movements and encounters among various people despite the seeming fixity of cultural and political boundaries.

In Tibetan and Chinese studies as well, research on borders and “frontiers” has come to the fore in recent years. Scholars in both areas have recently called for the recognition of the importance of the so-called “hinterlands”, and have urged a move away from the exclusive focus on “centers” of political and “civilized” life in dynastic capitals. This emphasis on border regions (or at least its potential) I would argue, is not just a call to study hitherto neglected areas; I would say that it is indicative of an important paradigm shift in these fields—calling into question the influential “center-periphery” models

of governance, culture and identity that ultimately reiterated the schemas of dominant native powers, and looking instead at how such political and discursive hegemonies are constructed and contested in irreducible interaction with “alien” others.

In Tibetan studies, scholars have critiqued the use of generalized models based on the great agricultural estates of the Tibetan power base in the Lhasa valley. They call instead for a recognition of the actual diversity of Tibetan lifeways and political arrangements throughout the vast regions once controlled by the Tibetan Yarlung dynasty in the 7th-9th centuries (cf. Samuel 1993, Goldstein and Kapstein 1998, Willis 1987). This kind of diversity then has major implications for understanding the (re)construction of contemporary Tibetan identities and communities amidst the exigencies of life within the Chinese nation-state as well as in the Tibetan exile diaspora.

In Chinese studies, scholars are increasingly focusing on the study of the “frontiers” (*biánjiāng*) of Chinese polities in Manchuria and Mongolia, as well as throughout the ethnically diverse frontier zone which historically formed the western extent of Chinese settlement. Such scholars argue that the practices and ideologies constructing the frontiers as inferior, uncivilized, liminal and peripheral, were inextricably bound up with Chinese empire or state building (cf. Hershatter et al., 1996, Millward 1996, Sperling 1990, Petech 1988, Forage 1996, Fletcher 1978, Lipman 1980, Harrell, 1995).

The recognition now is that the borders of Chinese empires were never as distinct as the imperial “Chinese World Order” (Fairbank, 1968) constructed them to be—a notion epitomized in the hubris of the Great Wall. Instead, they were more like shifting zones of complex inter-ethnic contact which served to threaten, as well as to shore up, the hegemonies of particular rulers through trade and tribute, military campaigns and settlements (Lattimore 1940, p. 3, Aris 1992, p. 13). My own research and the China-Tibet course take inspiration from these China scholars who focus on the frontiers, and on their legacy in the cultural politics of contemporary “Nationality” (*minzu*) policy, as a way to understand the processes by which centers of power in China and dominant (Han Chinese) subjectivities are actually

(continued on next page)

constructed, contested and broken down (Dreyer 1976). So the view from the “margins” entails the interrogation of the common categories of “nation,” “state,” and “ethnic identity,” whose assumed unitary nature continues to underpin social theory and state policy in contemporary China.

I try to present my research and my China-Tibet course in this light not as peculiar case studies of exotic margins, but as exemplars of this broader paradigm shift in social theory and Asian studies. That is, I hope my students come away from the course with the view that so-called “frontier zones” only make more explicit the dialogic interpretive politics at the heart of all socio-cultural worlds. The case of Tibetans in China then stands not as an anomaly but as one case of a more general, pervasive social condition of hybridity in an increasingly interconnected world. By pairing general theoretical readings with Sino-Tibetan history, ethnography and media discourse, I frame the course ultimately as an introduction to the contemporary PRC in general, and as a window onto one major node in a globalizing network of cultural and political economic relationships. Given students’ often powerful and unexamined essentialist assumptions about both “Tibet” and “China,” this course is uniquely positioned to try to restructure their thinking about global processes in this way. Through trial and error over time, I have developed a syllabus that attempts to simultaneously demystify “Tibet” and problematize “China” as unitary entities or identities, and focus on complex historical and cultural processes instead.

What I’ve found over the years is that the main difficulty posed by a course with such ambitious breadth is achieving some manner of cultural and historical depth, especially since I’m always emphasizing to my students the need to ground our understandings of contemporary cultural politics in particular historical legacies. So the course structure evolved into two parts that straddle spring break. As the framing of the webpage by the contesting national flags suggests, the first half of the course works to frame our semester’s inquiries in the historical specificities of emerging modern nationalisms among Tibetan and

Chinese elites and intellectuals. During the first 7 weeks, I combine readings about recent theories of nationalism, statehood, ethnicity and gender, with readings that illustrate Tibetan and Chinese nationalist discourses, as well as readings that ground our inquiry historically in the period of nation-state building beginning in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through the Communist Party regimes’ struggles and reforms up to the 1980s. In order to problematize understandings of “space” from the outset, I begin the very first week by getting students to consider the cultural politics and history of westerners’ efforts to locate “Tibet” as actually an “imagined geography” or “Shangri-la.” One of the things I have them do is a google image search for “Tibet map,” and then they can

Through trial and error over time, I have developed a syllabus that attempts to simultaneously demystify “Tibet” and problematize “China” as unitary entities or identities, and focus on complex historical and cultural processes instead.

immediately glimpse the wide range of representational strategies for portraying the same spaces, and we analyze several in class together.

The second half of the course then builds on this background, which I reinforce with an in-depth take home midterm exam, to look more closely at various aspects of Tibetan and Chinese lives in post-Mao China. I frame this half of the course with an opening week on the cultural politics of development, because state policies and local practices throughout the PRC in the post-Mao “reform and opening up” era have been broadly informed by “development discourses” that seek to integrate China with global capitalist markets. Those policies and projects have had major implications for China’s rural citizens in particular, creating what many have called a massive underclass of rural-to-urban migrants, and threatening to further marginalize ethnic minorities—especially since then president Jiang Zemin launched the “Develop the West” campaign in 1999, a campaign

designed to channel domestic and foreign investment to the PRC’s so-called “underdeveloped” western regions. In the remaining weeks, I combine ethnographic and mass media readings on particular aspects of social life, such as marriage and family planning, religious revival, work and urban consumption, with images, music, poems and short stories about Tibet produced by Tibetan and Chinese writers and artists in the post-Mao blossoming of mass media cultural production. During all of the weeks, the readings stress that these processes are fundamentally gendered, and we begin to grasp how differently state policies can affect Tibetan and Chinese men as opposed to women.

Finally, using computer-projected digital images in class and a film series outside class, I try to integrate all of our discussions with visual and media studies. The expansion of mass media in the PRC since the 1980s is a huge element in China’s globalization processes and is part of an ongoing effort to integrate Tibetan regions with broader domestic and global economies. The films I assign range from old and new feature films (Frank Capra’s 1937 film *Lost Horizon* or Joan Chen’s 1997 film *XiuXiu, the Sentdown Girl*) to various documentaries and propaganda films. Students write film commentaries the week they view the films, in which they apply insights from the week’s readings to the subject matter and visual strategies of the film. Since much discourse and organizing around Sino-Tibetan issues occurs through web media now, another thing I have done in past years is have students write analyses of relevant websites which they project and present to the class. The analyses are then linked to the course website, under the link for that site.

Ultimately, if I take what seems to be the increasing quality of students’ writings in the course as a measure, the course seems to be fairly successful, though I remain daunted at its overly ambitious scope. The course did however inspire fully three students to undertake field research projects of their own in Tibetan regions of China, funded by Luce Foundation fellowship monies that accompanied the establishment of my position. If that is any indication, then Luce funds have indeed had a direct impact on broadening undergraduates’ horizons in Asian studies.

Editor's note: For reasons of space, a condensed version of Professor Makley's syllabus is printed below. The full version can be found at <http://academic.reed.edu/anthro/362/>

**Anthropology 362: Ethnicity and Gender in China and Tibet
Fall 2005**

Professor Charlene Makley

email: charlene.makley@reed.edu

Syllabus on the Web: <http://academic.reed.edu/anthro/362/>

Description:

Chinese and Tibetan peoples have interacted for centuries, but it is only in the last half of the twentieth century that the "Tibet question" in China has risen to global attention. This course looks at modern Sino-Tibetan relations through the lens of ethnicity and gender as a way to understand the contentious process through which the Chinese nation-state and national identity have been constructed. Through readings, films, discussions and lectures, we will explore the diversity of Tibetan and Han Chinese ethnic identities, gender ideologies, and family organization just prior to, during and after the Communist revolutionary period. This perspective will shed light on the incorporation of Tibetans as a "minority nationality" in the Chinese "multinational state", the role of such minorities in constructing Han Chinese majority identity, and the differing impact of state policies on men and women in the context of rapid economic reform and globalization in the PRC. Prerequisites: Anthropology 211. Conference.

Summary of Requirements:

- Discussion leadership
- 4 film commentaries (due by Friday of week after film screened).
 - 1 of these MUST be for week four film Stranger; Must discuss the film in terms of nationalism and imagined community (due Monday, Sept. 26, 5 pm)
 - All 4 must be turned in by the end of the 7th week, or others to improve won't be accepted.
- Take-home midterm exam (due Friday, Oct. 14, 5 pm)
- Final paper proposal and annotated bibliography (Friday Nov. 11, 5 pm)
- Optional 2-3 page print ad or website analysis (due Friday Dec. 2, 5 pm)
- 10 page final paper: (due Wed., Dec. 14, 5 pm).

Course Organization:

This course is your chance to delve into a particularly controversial topic in current world politics. Classes will revolve around student-led discussions, presentations, and film viewings. There will be a take-home midterm exam, 4 film commentaries, an optional 2-3 page print ad or website analysis, and a final 10 page paper. I will expect your avid participation—including regular attendance, prompt completion of assignments, and active involvement in discussions whenever possible. In fact, class participation and attendance will comprise a significant portion of your grade. Beginning week 2 class members will take turns posting discussion questions on the class email list and helping to lead class discussions.

Reading and writing assignments are meant to encourage close, critical engagement with the history and cultural politics of the Sino-Tibetan relationship, as well as your thoughtful reflection on the issues they raise in the context of the anthropological perspective on gender, ethnicity and nationalism presented in class. The reading load is moderate to heavy and it is assigned per week. On average, you should expect to put in two to three hours of work outside of class for every hour of in-class time.

Weekly supplemental readings are provided for your use. These readings are ones that are especially relevant or provide differing viewpoints; they offer points of departure for deepening your understanding of particular issues.

Required readings are marked on the syllabus for where they can be found. Multiple copies of all texts are available on reserve in the library, and many books are available in the bookstore. In addition, a large number of required readings are available on-line, through e-reserves and on the web. E-reserves can be accessed at: <http://ereserves.library.reed.edu/eres/courseindex.aspx?page=instr>. Just go to the log-in page at this address, type in the course password (I will give that to you in class), and search for the reading you need by title. **Please print out all on-line readings! Reading is much more engaged when it is on paper.** All readings available on-line are easily accessed via links on the web syllabus (see URL above). All readings on e-reserve are also available in hard copy form in the reserve folder for that text. Please let me know if you have any trouble obtaining the readings. **To facilitate discussion, you should bring all readings for the day to class.**

Copies of the following books (listed in the order they are assigned in the course) are available at the bookstore; 3-4 copies of each are also on reserve at the library:

-Containing substantial assigned readings (many available):

Duara, Prasenjit. *Rescuing History From the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Goldstein, Siebenschuh and Tashing Tsering. *The Struggle for Modern Tibet: The Autobiography of Tashi Tsering*. NY: ME Sharpe, 1997.

Schwartz, Ronald. *Circle of Protest: Political Ritual in the Tibetan Uprising*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Shakya, Tsering. *The Dragon in the Land of the Snows*. NY: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Honig and Hershatter, *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980s*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.

Dutton, Michael. *Streetlife China*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998.

-Recommended, only a portion assigned (a few copies available):

Goldstein, Melvyn. *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama*. Berkeley: Univ. of CA Press, 1997

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*

Gupta and Ferguson, eds. *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

Harrel, Stevan, ed. *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1995.

Nira Yuval Davis. *Gender and Nation*, Sage: London, 1997.

Enloe, Cynthia. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 1989.

China Urban: Ethnographies of Contemporary Culture. Duke University Press, 2001.

Web and Email Resources:

Electronic Newsletter: For those who are particularly interested in keeping up with Tibetan affairs this semester, you may sign onto the World Tibet Network News Mailing List. This is a daily electronic newsletter which contains news and comments about Tibet from a variety of viewpoints. **To subscribe:** 1) send an email to: listserv@lists.mcgill.ca and 2) In the body of the message type: SUB WTN-L your name. They will send you a return email confirming your subscription. **To cancel:** 1) send an email to: listserv@lists.mcgill.ca and 2) In the body of the message type: SIGNOFF WTN-L. All articles (over 15,000 since 1992) published on WTN are archived on the web at: <http://www.tibet.ca/wtnnews.htm>. You can search the archive for articles related to any topic you're interested in.

Chat Lists: You can also subscribe to email chat lists about Tibet-related topics. Two such lists are

(continued on next page)

- 1) **Tibet-L:** General discussion list on all matters related to Tibet, unmoderated. To subscribe: send email to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU with the command (paste it!):SUBSCRIBE TIBET-L
- 2) **The Students for a Free Tibet “Yak” List:** Discussion list on Tibet issues among students worldwide. To subscribe: 1) send an email to: majordomo@cyborganic.org and 2) In the body of the message type: subscribe sft-yak

General Websites (see syllabus for other sites related to weekly topics):

Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library: <http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html>

Tibetan and Himalayan Digital Library. Based at the University of Virginia, has links about all aspects of Tibetan language and culture. <http://iris.lib.virginia.edu/tibet/>

Students for a Free Tibet, (Has a “Tibetan Women Speak Out” page): www.tibet.org/SFT

Tibet Online: <http://www.Tibet.org/>; (Has list of major Tibet sites and Online Tibet resources)

Tibet Information Network. Excellent independent news coverage on Tibet. <http://www.tibetinfo.net/>

Human Rights Watch. Coverage on China and Tibet: <http://www.hrw.org/asia/china.php>

www.chinanews.org/; (Chinese state site, has pages on Tibet)

China News Digest: (fairly neutral online newsletter managed by overseas Chinese volunteers in Maryland) www.CND.org

China Education and News Network (Chinese site, in Chinese), <http://www.net.edu.cn/>

China Today (Chinese state-sponsored magazine): <http://www.chinatoday.com/>

Inside China Today (Overseas Chinese magazine, produced outside of PRC control, has links to non-PRC news re: China): <http://www.insidechina.com>

People’s Daily. PRC main newspaper. <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn>

China Web. Chinese produced site providing excerpts of Xinhua and People’s Daily newspaper articles in English, has many links on Tibetans: <http://www.china.org.cn/>

Human Rights in China. Recently produced huge website under auspices of CND. Has links on Tibet, ethnic groups in China, photos and more. <http://www.humanrights-China.org/>

COURSE SCHEDULE

[See course website for links for each week]

PART I: NATIONALISMS AND RETHINKING HISTORIES

Week One: Locating “Tibet”

Tues Aug. 30 Introductions and Goals of the Course

Week One Film assignment: Wed. Aug. 31, 7 pm, Bio 19, Lost Horizon, 1937, Frank Capra, 130 mins.

Thurs Sept 1: Locating “Tibet”

Week Two Film Assignment: 7 pm Sunday, Sept. 4, Bio 19 Red Flag Over Tibet, PBS *Frontline*, 1994, 56 min.

Week Two: Imagined Communities

Sept. 6 Nation, Culture and Identity Theorized

Sept. 8 Narratives of Nation

Week Three: Making Majorities:

From Empire to Nation in China and the Invention of Nationality

Sept. 13 Empire and Nation in China

Sept. 15 Ethnicity and Nation in the PRC

Week Four: Constructing a Pan-Tibetan Identity: From Empire to Nationalism in Tibet

Sept. 20 Empire and State in Tibet

In class Film Assignment: A Stranger in My Native Land, 1997 (33 min).

Stranger/Nationalism film commentary due Monday, Sept. 26, 5 pm my office, 312 Vollum

Week Five: Gendered Nationalisms

Week Five film assignment: Sun. Sept. 25, 7 pm, Bio 19, Through Chinese Women’s Eyes, Mayfair Yang, 1997, 53 mins

Sept. 27 Gender, Nation and Modernity

Sept 29 Engendering Tibet

Week Six Film assignment (7-9 pm Sun, Oct. 2, Bio 19):

“XiuXiu: The Sentdown Girl”, Joan Chen, Stratosphere Films, 1998, 99 mins.

****Warning: This film contains graphic sexual violence**

Week Six: One Nation Under Mao:

Erasing Difference During The Radical Years

Oct. 4 The Pursuit of Gradual Assimilation: Reform and Revolt

Oct. 6 The Homogeneous and Androgynous Ideal: The Cultural Revolution and the Collective State

Week Seven Film assignment (7-9 pm Sun, Oct. 9, Psych. 105):

“Dao Mazei” (The Horse Thief), Xi’an Film Studio, 1987, 100 min.

Week Seven: The Eighties Reforms: Reasserting Dangerous Difference

Oct. 11 Reform and Opening Up

Oct. 13 Living the Reforms

PART II: POST-MAO CULTURAL POLITICS

Week Eight: The Cultural Politics of Development

Oct. 25 Nation, Ideology and Development

Oct. 27 Living Development in Tibet: Myth and Reality

Week Nine Film Assignment (7 pm, Sun. Oct. 30, Bio 19): “Women of the Yellow Earth”, 50 min., John Bulmer, Cicada Films, 1995,

Week Nine: Gender and the Family in the Reform Era

Nov. 1 Marriage and Family

Nov. 3 Gender, Ethnicity and the State: “Family Planning”

Week Ten Film Assignment (7 pm, Nov. 6, Bio 19): The XVII Karmapa’s return to Tsurphu, 1993 (110 min.)

Week Ten: Religious Revival and Ethnic Nationalism

Nov. 8 Gender, Ethnicity, Religion and the State

(continued on page 10)

From the Executive Director



Highlights of the Fall 2006 Board of Directors Meeting

Due to space constraints within the newsletter, I will confine my remarks to some of the highlights of the Board of Directors' fall meeting. For the same reason, Phyllis Larson, Board Chair and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, will report about the strategic planning process in the spring issue of the newsletter. Before proceeding, I wish to remind you of the e-mail message I sent in late November asking for your participation in a survey regarding the strategic planning process that we are undertaking. We thank you very much if you have already filled-in the web-based survey but if you have not yet done so, please take a few minutes to complete the survey.

Membership matters: After considerable discussions, the Board approved the motion from the Membership Committee to raise institutional dues. Starting with the 2007-2008 academic year, the institutional dues will be \$300 for full members and \$200 for associate members; membership dues for affiliate organizations and individuals will remain the

same. These dues will cover up to eight individuals per institution, an increase from the current coverage of only six individuals. For those institutions that have already paid their dues for multiple years, the increase will not apply until their time of renewal. There are several reasons for proposing this increase. First, although ASIANetwork has not increased its membership dues for the last seven years, the expenses of running the consortium, most notably, the administrative and annual conference expenses, are steadily increasing. Our \$300,000 grant from the Luce Foundation, which

[We ask] for your participation in a survey regarding the strategic planning process that we are undertaking. We thank you very much if you have already filled-in the web-based survey but if you have not yet done so, please take a few minutes to complete the survey.

was designed to help ASIANetwork build an "endowment fund," ended last June. While we have built our fund to about \$900,000, our investment policy stipulates that we can only start drawing from the interests of this fund after we have reached our goal of securing one million dollars. Even after reaching the \$1M goal, the amount of the interest earnings that we can withdraw, based on our investment policy, will barely cover 50% of our annual expenses. The rest will have to come from membership dues and grants.

Because it has been increasingly difficult to find new benefactors, we have not been able to launch new projects. This year, we only have two programs whose funding contributes

to defraying our administrative costs: the Freeman-funded Student-Faculty Fellows program and the Luce-funded Asian Art in the Undergraduate Curriculum project. We are in the last year of the third cycle of the Freeman-funded program, and while we are applying for renewed funding and remain hopeful of a positive outcome, there is no guarantee that we will receive further funding. The Luce-funded Asian Art project will run through 2008 only. As it costs about \$110,000 annually to run the consortium and the Freeman and Luce funded programs contribute a total of \$58,000 to our annual budget, the rest of our funding comes from membership dues. Obviously, we need to reach our \$1M goal soon so that when these grants end, we will have sufficient funds to operate the consortium.

Grants: The Board voted that as a matter of propriety, a board member cannot apply for an individual grant during the board member's term on the board. And, as a result of a post-meeting e-mail consultation, the Board decided to resubmit a proposal to the Department of Education's Fulbright-Hays Groups Study Abroad Project to sponsor a second faculty development seminar in the Pearl River Delta region of China. Prospective participants will include those who were accepted last year for the same program whose proposal was unfortunately not funded. Let us hope that we receive funding this time!

(Tibet syllabus, continued from page 24)
Nov 10 Gender and religious revival: the case of nuns

In class film: "Satya", Ellen Bruno, 1994, 28 min

Weeks Eleven-Twelve: Work and the Rural-Urban Divide

Nov. 15 Work, Gender and the State
Nov. 22 Work, Gender and Education among Tibetans

Week Thirteen Film assignment (7 pm, Sun. Nov. 27, Bio 19):
"Windhorse", Paul Wagner, 1998, 97 mins.

Week Thirteen: Refiguring Identities: Globalization, Urbanity, and Consumption

Nov. 29 Han Disenchantment and the Commodification of Minorities
Dec. 1 The Threat of Assimilation: Disenchantment and the Negotiation of Modernity among Tibetans (Charlene at AAA's, reschedule for Wed. eve?)

Week Fourteen: Conclusions: the Future of a Relationship

Dec. 6 Global Futures?
Dec. 8 Tibet Futures?

* * * * *

Charlene Makley, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Reed College, will have her book, *The Violence of Liberation: Gender and Tibetan Buddhist Revival in Post-Mao China* published in the fall of 2007 by the University of California Press.