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Kalimpong

The China Connection

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Prem Poddar and Lisa Lindkvist Zhang

Kalimpong: The China Connection

Abstract Historically identifiable contact between Kalimpong and incoming Chinese migrants occurred, at the latest, in the early twentieth century. This essay makes reference to some of the interfaces and events involved, but chiefly focuses on the three phases in which Kalimpong emerged in the Chinese communist consciousness, especially the period between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s. The representations of Kalimpong in the Chinese language *Renmin Ribao* (hereafter *People's Daily*) of this time clearly embody the anxieties, fears, and suspicions that the Chinese government harboured about the foment and ferment of socio-political encounters with their locus in "Galunbao" (噶伦堡 or Kashag ministers' fortress). From a town hosting the Chinese trade agency and an "idyllic" (or *tianyuan* 田园) place where the Dalai Lama and the townspeople met, to its transformation into a "nest of spies" (a term used by both Nehru and Zhou Enlai) where "Indian expansionists," "American and British imperialists," and "Tibetan rebels" rubbed conspiratorial shoulders, Kalimpong was finally represented after 1962 as the place where Indian authorities were in cahoots with the Kuomintang, and put the local Chinese through the wringer. Using colonial archives, untranslated Chinese material, and secondary published sources together with recent interviews and field notes, the essay analyses these narratives, marked as they are by an ambivalence about the place's vernacularly cosmopolitan character. The hill station also emerges as a barometer and metonymic stand-in for the problematic relationship between China and India.

[...] so far as Kalimpong is concerned [...] a complicated game of chess [is being played here] by various nationalities (Nehru, 2nd of April 1959).

[...] what the map cuts up, the story cuts across (de Certeau).

A sense of politics does not generally unzip easily as an unequivocally observable analytic category with significances and meanings that are, of necessity, revealed and concealed. The aim of this paper is nevertheless to analyse, as clearly as possible, the *People's Daily's* representations of the border town of Kalimpong¹ in the 1950s and 1960s. Kalimpong came to play a pivotal role in the border politics of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Republic of India (ROI) for three reasons: (i) Historically a British trade post since the mid-nineteenth century, Kalimpong was favourably located on the Lhasa-Kolkata trade route—the same route used by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the early 1950s to transport supplies from China to Tibet² after the Battle of Chamdo. (ii) A sizeable Tibetan population lived in Kalimpong, especially after the PLA invaded the Kham region, when refugees started to stream into Kalimpong. This Tibetan population included residents, traders, refugees, and most importantly for this paper, influential members of the *Kashag* (or the Tibetan Governing Council). (iii) A diasporic Chinese population lived in Kalimpong, many of whom later were interned in Deoli after the 1962 Sino-Indian War. Drawing on archival material from the *People's Daily*, fieldwork notes along with interviews conducted over a period of three weeks, and many published primary and secondary sources, we shall attempt to show how Kalimpong functioned as a metonymic ambit in which ROI-PRC relations were to be played out in the 1950s and the 1960s.

Akin to *Pravda's* status in the Soviet Union at its height, *People's Daily*, as an official organ of the Chinese Communist party directly controlled by the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee (Wu 1994, 195), provided direct (and sometimes oblique) information on the policies and viewpoints of the government. Even though Deng Tuo (a well-known poet and intellectual) was its editor-in-chief during much of the time in question here, the newspaper, it is believed, was effectively controlled by Mao's

1 Besides 噶伦堡, also spelt 卡林邦 and 卡林蓬 in present day usage. See for example the entry in the Chinese Wikipedia (Wikipedia 2015). This is in itself interesting since the older rendering 噶伦堡 or "Galunbao" literally means "*Kashag* ministers' fortress" ("噶伦" signifies a member of the *Kashag*/Tibetan Government according to the *Hanyu Da Cidian* (汉语大词典) and 堡 denotes a fortress-like construction). 卡林邦 and 卡林蓬 are probably transliterations of the English name Kalimpong as they read "Kalinbang" and "Kalinpeng" in pinyin. None of the Chinese documents that we have read use 卡林邦 or 卡林蓬 to denote Kalimpong, but a quick Baidu search verifies that the names are in use, especially by tourist websites.

2 Whenever we refer to Tibet, we are mainly making reference to political Tibet or the Dalai Lama's state, and not ethnographic Tibet signifying the stateless braid of ethnic Tibetan localities.

personal secretary Hu Qiaomu. The paper's commentaries included here clearly represent the fears and anxieties of the Chinese government, especially in relation to Tibetan insurgency and suspicions about the postcolonial Indian establishment's possible sympathy and support for the Dalai Lama. Although India publicly denied it, it is not a wild conjecture that *Jenkhentsisum*, the main Tibetan émigré opposition group in Kalimpong, was secretly being assisted by India.

The appearance of the name of "Kalimpong" in headlines in the *People's Daily* spans the period from March 1955 to August 1963. These articles can loosely be grouped into three different themes that correspond to the historic unravelling of the Sino-Indian relationship, with its fulcrum in the idea and territory of Tibet. (i) 1955–57: Kalimpong as a nondescript, idyllic (田园) mountain town; (ii) 1959: Kalimpong as a "nest of spies"³ and command centre for Tibetan rebels; (iii) 1963: Kalimpong as a place that is hostile towards the Chinese.

Interfaces and entanglements: a conceptual detour

Between the 1900s and early 1960s, this interstitial space "[o]n the threshold of three closed lands" (Graham 1897) can best be summed up as a restless junction where cultures collided and coalesced, giving Kalimpong an air of being "vernacularly cosmopolitan" (Bhabha 1996, 191–207)⁴ or a "[b]order cosmopolis" (Steele 1951). Significantly—even though we use these terms rather loosely—culture, history, and politics exist here as "supplements," "adding only to replace, or insinuating themselves in place of the original, only then to become the original that in turn becomes written over and replaced again" (Dirks 2015, 74–75). The discursive evidence we employ in this essay bears out Pratt's transcultural "contact perspective," underlining "how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other" such that "copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices" (Pratt 2003, 7) are foregrounded, despite what states, governments, and media outlets might project. These projections are a function of cartographic anxieties that relate to separatist sentiments and normalized national and ethnic boundaries. Movements—separatist and unifying—appear to be common elements of Prattian contact processes, pointing to a circulatory notion of cognisance production: individuals constitute their identities in their encounters with others who, in turn, do the same thing, setting up an economy of perceptual reticulation. History has borne out the fact that the hybridised Kalimpong border has invited, to cite Friedman

3 It is difficult to ascertain when the term was first used, but it was routinely recycled to invoke the shenanigans occurring in an otherwise restive and quiet place.

4 The term is Homi Bhabha's. He deploys it to point to a multi-ethnic ethics as a counterweight to the Eurocentric claims vested in notions of a classic, Kantian cosmopolitanism.

writing in a different context, “transgression, dissolution, reconciliation, and mixing” (Friedman 1998, 17), even as we know that every representation of the Kalimpong world (or any other place for that matter)—poised between the spatial, social, and historical—is ultimately a negotiation between description and interpretive invention.⁵ What role can the town and the enmeshed demographic history of its environs be assigned—in narratives such as Kimura’s descriptive *Japanese Agent in Tibet* and Desai’s inventive *The Inheritance of Loss* (see Epilogue in this volume; also Poddar and Meador, forthcoming)—in the emergence of the complex, even cosmopolitan (albeit troubled), nature of Kalimpong’s “culture” today?⁶ Arguably Kalimpong did appear to travellers, colonialists, and adventurers as a transit space in its early history; ideas of place and belonging as the products of fixity and locality are nevertheless challenged, not necessarily uniquely, by Auge’s notion of “non-places,” where people communicate only through signs and images, and where exchanges are framed by rules that are not defined by the people participating in them (Auge 1995, 42; 78).⁷ The multi-sensory sociality of Kalimpong is, by contrast, clearly visible in most of the relevant writings.

These writings can be found in accounts ranging from that of the British settlement officer Bell written in 1905, to that of Italian Tibetologist Giuseppe Tucci in 1948, or to Sangarakashita, the British yellow-robed monk who walked through the streets, among the Tibetan red-robed monks in 1950 and reported: “The part of it [Kalimpong] which was regarded as being the social élite and which included members of the Bhutanese and Sikkimese ruling families, Tibetan aristocrats, and Indian Government officers, as well as a sprinkling of European and American research scholars, explorers, and journalists [... made it a] cosmopolitan little town” (Sangharakshita 1991, 29–30). “[T]he Harbor of Tibet” and “the largest emporium of northern Bengal” were amongst other epithets earned by the town (Fader 2002, 258–259).⁸ The conviviality (although it was somewhat more elitist than described in Bell’s more grounded, apparently classless idiom) of 1950s Kalimpong is captured in a romanticised tone here:

5 For a detailed theoretical articulation of this, see Poddar (1998).

6 We can also add Bell’s survey report (1905) and Foning’s tract on indigeneity (1987) to the list.

7 The idea of a “non-place” is not to be confused with the GNLF maverick leader Ghising’s employment of the diversionary tactic of “no man’s land” (and “ceded land”) in the late 1980s to stoke political fires. Marked as it is by anxious belonging, Kalimpong today must not be cast in terms of a naïve, atomistic ideal of affective place attachment. The eco-feminist philosopher Val Plumwood argues for a critical reading of place that makes visible the relationships between “sacrificial and shadow places” (2008, 140).

8 In the words of George Patterson, the controversial reporter ensconced in the hill station during most of the 1950s: “On a market day there may be seen Nepalese, Bengalis, Sikkimese, Bhutanese, Lepchas, Chinese, Mongolians, Tibetans, Mohammedians, Marwaris and other Indian nationals, not to mention the great variety of Europeans who are annually drawn to this charming Himalayan town” (1960, 72).

The thirteenth Dalai Lama had found asylum there. So had relatives of the deposed King Theebaw of Burma. Elderly Afghan princesses who had fled Kabul with King Amanullah could still be seen in the weekly market. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark and his wife, Princess Irene, were said to be studying Himalayan flora until their residence permits were abruptly cancelled. Sir Tashi's prince evoked memories of the court of St Petersburg. A neglected villa was pointed out as having once been Rabindarath Tagore's home. In another house had lived the Russian painter Svetoslav Roerich and his Bengali actress wife, Devika Rani. Some residents had known Denis Conan Doyle, son of the creator of Sherlock Holmes. Buddhists, Christian missionaries, writers and retired military officers from Europe and America graced the social circle (Datta-Ray 2013, 141–142).

In these accounts the Chinese are mentioned only in relation to Tibet, and clearly Kalimpong resists being narrated in geopolitically, let alone culturally, monolithic terms. With no proper passport controls in place, citizens (of various states), refugees, people of multi-ethnic origins and undetermined status, all (or, until the late 1940s, all who resided in or were in transit through the town) made up what today is called “superdiversity” (Vertovec 2007).⁹ Kalimpong became inscribed as a space “predicated upon the existence of plurality”; a multifaceted, magnetic matrix yet also subject to spawning the kinds of geopolitical and geo-cultural forces it in turn inscribes (as the rest of the essay shows); this suggests that a productive way to imagine this space might be in terms as “a simultaneity of stories-so-far” (Massey 2005, 9).

1955–57: Kalimpong as a nondescript yet idyllic mountain town

Two critical problems of an economic nature arose in Tibet as a direct result of the PRC's invasion in 1950: the PLA's presence in the region had brought about an acute food shortage and led to inflation in food prices (Scott 2009, 45–47; Garver 2001, 51),¹⁰ and an American trade embargo on communist countries was applied to the Tibetan wool export business,

9 The metastasis of empires into nation-states, from British India to independent India and from Qing China, say, to communist China, clearly demanded demarcated boundaries rather than blurred borders, thus obstructing the nomadic and “Zomic” mobility that obtained in some of these stateless tracts. British India as well as political Tibet of course controlled, if they did not actually bar, foreigners. It is not until the 1940s that the British started to register and demand identity papers from “Chinese” who entered India via Tibet (SAWB, IB 1939b, 51).

10 Both the PLA and the poorest Tibetans suffered immensely from the food shortage and transportation difficulties. Within six months after the PLA advance force entered Lhasa they were in danger of starving.

which significantly hampered the economy.¹¹ The PRC's short-term solution for these two problems was (i) to open up Tibet more to its neighbouring countries (Dai 2013, 24–27),¹² and (ii) to increase the transportation of goods between inner Tibet and China. By importing more grain to Tibet from China and elsewhere, the immediate food shortage could be staved off (Dai 2013, 24–27); and by buying the leftover Tibetan wool which was intended for the United States, the PRC could fill the economic gap that had been created in the market (Goldstein 2007, 259–260).

In the early 1950s the quickest route between inner Tibet and China was via the port of Kolkata (Garver 2001, 85).¹³ The lack of proper roads and the rugged terrain between China and Tibet made the overland journey far slower than the one via sea to India. After the PLA's invasion of Tibet, goods were increasingly brought by ship from China to Kolkata and then taken on by train to Siliguri. From Siliguri they would reach Lhasa via either the Kalimpong-Lhasa caravan route through the Jelep La pass, or along the Gangtok-Lhasa route over the Nathu La pass.¹⁴ As a response to this crisis, the PRC managed in 1952 to work out a system to transport rice from China to Tibet with Kalimpong as its transfer point (Goldstein 2007, 259–260).

It is also in this context that Kalimpong entered the public political *imaginaire* of the PRC.¹⁵ The first time Kalimpong is mentioned in a headline in the *People's Daily* is in March 1955. The notice on the first page briefly states that according to the 1954 "Agreement on trade and intercourse between Tibet region of China and India," a Chinese trade agency was founded on March 25 in Kalimpong (*People's Daily* 1955, 1).¹⁶ Although Kalimpong only appears here as the nondescript host town for the trade

11 Tibet's main source of income was from exporting wool and the United States was the main buyer. "In 1951 an estimated 1,600,000 pounds of wool was piled up in Kalimpong against the season's normal anticipated import of 8,000,000 pounds. Out of this, nearly 2,000,000 pounds will not arrive from Kham in Eastern Tibet, which is now under control of Chinese Communists" (*New York Times* January 22, 1951, cited in Harris 2013, 38–9).

12 Historically, Tibet relied on its neighbouring states, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim etc., for imports of staple foods. According to one Chinese source, in the 1950s, the Indian government imposed trade restrictions on Tibet and warned the other neighbouring countries not to trade with Tibet, which made the situation in Tibet even more perilous.

13 This changed in 1956 with the completion of several roads leading to inner Tibet from Qinghai and western Sichuan.

14 "Jelep-La" translates roughly as "easy pass," as old residents in Kalimpong nostalgic about the town's trade history like to repeat. Jelep-La is an all-weather and all-season pass, while the more treacherous Nathu-La can only be traversed during the warmer months.

15 It goes without saying that covert operations of the Chinese intelligence services run by the Tibetan-Mongolian Affairs Commission, Transport Department, and Defence Department, including mysterious murders in Kalimpong in the 1930s–40s, were not altogether unknown (Kimura 1990).

16 Unless otherwise stated, translations from the Chinese are our own.

agency,¹⁷ establishing the agency in Kalimpong was of tremendous importance for the PRC, Tibet, and India.

Negotiations for the “Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet region of China and India,” better known in India as the Panchsheel Treaty, started on December 31, 1953 in Beijing and continued for four months. One of the reasons the negotiations dragged on was that China wanted to match the Indian trade agencies in Gartok, Gyantse, and Yadong with Chinese ones in Shimla, Almora, and Kalimpong. India refused to let the Chinese have trade agencies in Shimla and Almora—two strategically important hill stations. Instead China had to be content with trade agencies in New Delhi and Kolkata, where they could be monitored more easily (Rowland 1967, 118; United Nations 1958, 72).¹⁸ In the end, deviating from the original proposition, China was only allowed to take over the already existing Tibetan trade agency in Kalimpong. This Tibetan Kalimpong agency had been set up in 1950 by Shakabpa, the finance minister in the *Kashag*, and was headed by Lobsang Tsewang and Surkhang Depön who had been sent by Lhasa. The new representative for the Chinese agency was Yamphel Pangda, who arrived in Kalimpong in January 1955 (Goldstein 2013, 156 n. 36). Yamphel Pangda came from the famous Pangda family, one of the three Tibetan families that had a monopoly on the wool trade. The family’s ties ran deep in Kalimpong: Nyigyal Pangda (Yamphel’s father) set up a trade empire and had already used Kalimpong as a trading post (See McGranahan 2002; Meilang 2005, 50). The Chinese chose Yamphel in order to appease the Tibetan opposition, as he had “virtually a monopoly over Indo-Tibetan trade” (Shakya 1999, 120).¹⁹

The 1953 takeover was not without controversy; the Tibetans were not consulted about the agreement and were caught unawares when the deal was announced in April. B. N. Mullik, chief of Indian Intelligence, paid a visit to Kalimpong, which by then had already become a meeting ground for Tibetan refugees and dissident voices. Upon hearing about the agreement they were “shocked and anguished,” according to Mullik. The Tibetans in Kalimpong suggested that the already existing Tibetan trade agency in Kalimpong should remain separate from the Chinese one, and that the Tibetan agency should only represent the Dalai Lama. This suggestion was not surprisingly turned down (Shakya 1999, 119–120).

After the 1955 notice, the *People’s Daily* remained silent about Kalimpong until 1957, when it was mentioned again in three short articles concerning the Dalai Lama’s visit to the town. The articles from 1957 employed language free of any negativity about the Dalai Lama’s visit to Kalimpong

17 Although the trade agency is called “agency” in official documents, locals in Kalimpong referred to it as the trade mission.

18 Not to mention the fact that, except for the trade and transportation benefits which China gained (India did not gain any, rather they lost the old colonial British trade benefits they had inherited), this was the first international agreement that recognised Tibet as legally a part of China.

19 Yamphel was also the richest Tibetan at the time (McGranahan 2010, 144).

and describe the hill station as a “small mountain town in the northern part of West Bengal with a population of 20,000. The perennial snow-capped peak of the Himalaya’s offshoot, Kanchenjunga, is just to the north of Kalimpong” (*People’s Daily* 1957a, 1). The articles describe how warmly the Dalai Lama was received by the people of Kalimpong, his religious activities (such as expounding sutras to more than ten thousand people), his meetings with important people such as Sherpa Tenzing and Prince Peter of Greece,²⁰ and the fact that he delayed his departure for Tibet because some prominent locals wanted him to stay longer for festivities (*People’s Daily* 1957a, 1; 1957b, 1; 1957c, 1).

One paragraph of particular interest is an account of the Dalai Lama attending the Chinese Trade Agency’s welcome reception for him. Among the attendees were “local Indian officers, the local Chinese-Indian Friendship Association, Bhutan’s Queen as well as representatives of overseas Chinese.” During the event (as also happened elsewhere), the Dalai Lama is said to have “inquired of the Trade Agency about its work; he also encouraged the agency’s Tibetan staff to work and study well” (*People’s Daily* 1957b, 1). Although quite brief, this depiction of the Dalai Lama projects the image of a good Chinese leader who encourages his subjects to work hard. The presence of the Chinese-Indian friendship association and the representatives of overseas Chinese suggests that the event should be read as intended to strengthen India-China ties and as blessed by the Dalai Lama.

The political backdrop was anything but cordial, despite the presupposition that ROI and PRC friendship was then at its zenith; when Zhou Enlai visited New Delhi in November 1956, Nehru made a speech at a banquet in his honour where he unequivocally declared “He will see for himself the affection that the people have for him and his country. Wherever he goes, he will hear the slogan which is becoming more and more popular Hindi-Chini bhai bhai” (Nehru 2005, 523).²¹

During the autumn of 1956, the Dalai Lama visited India on the pretext of attending the celebrations to mark the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha’s birth; but according to his elder brother, Gyalo Thondup,²² the real purpose of the trip was for the Dalai Lama to seek political asylum in India (Thondup and Thurston 2015, 157–160). When Zhou Enlai visited India on December 31, Nehru and Zhou had extensive talks, some of them taking

20 There is no mention of his affiliation to Denmark. He was of course Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, who saw himself as a scholar of Tibetan culture and polyandry.

21 Hindi-Chini bhai bhai translates as “India and China are brothers” and was a slogan used in the mid-1950s to portray ROI-PRC relations.

22 “Thondup, an elder brother of the Dalai Lama, is one of the most important figures in the history of the Tibetan diaspora. For many years, Thondup was the go-to Tibetan interlocutor for foreign governments and China” (Shakya 2015, 176). It is also commonly held that he worked for the CIA, which was particularly active in the region in its earlier guise as the Office of Strategic Services. Recruscent of this is his recent (2015) autobiography *The Noodlemaker of Kalimpong*.

place in the early hours. The topics which resurfaced again and again during these conversations were the question of Tibet, the Dalai Lama's visit to India, and in particular—Zhou's most pressing concern—whether or not the Lama should visit Kalimpong.

The reason why Zhou was so worried about the Dalai Lama visiting Kalimpong lay in the prevailing Chinese sense that it was "bound to be some trouble." The PRC government had advised the Dalai Lama not to visit Kalimpong because it harboured Tibetan "backward elements"²³ along with the troublemakers/rebels from Lhasa intimately connected with people in Kalimpong, not to mention Indian officials hostile towards China who routinely referred to Tibet as a "separate country." Nehru told Zhou Enlai that he did not know anything about the Dalai Lama going to Kalimpong, and was surprised to hear (not without equivocation) that there were so many Tibetans there. Nehru, however, conceded that he had heard in the past that Kalimpong was "a nest of spies and the spies are probably more than the population" (Nehru 2005, 137).

By then Kalimpong had, in other words, already become the focus of attention for the PRC, and this had been brought to the attention of the ROI. Later that day, Zhou Enlai also met with the Dalai Lama in New Delhi and tried to dissuade him from going to Kalimpong by reporting the conversation he had earlier with Nehru. He emphasized that there might be people in Kalimpong who did not want him to return to Tibet and might try to persuade him to stay in India. The Dalai Lama replied that he did not know yet whether he would visit, and that some of his ministers were still deliberating and hesitant about the matter (*Party Literature* 1994, 37–38). In the end the Dalai Lama decided to go, and he wrote briefly in his autobiography about the event: "I decided I ought to go, in spite of Chou En-lai's advice. It was not entirely a political matter. I had a spiritual duty to visit my countrymen, on which Chou En-lai could certainly not advise me" (Dalai Lama XIV 1962, 153–154). Although the *People's Daily* portrays the Dalai Lama's visit as a harmonious endeavour (albeit a hectic one), his stay was nothing of the sort. The Dalai Lama met both of his brothers and other self-exiled members of the Tibetan government. At the age of twenty-four, the Dalai Lama had to decide what the right action would be for Tibet, and he was delayed from leaving Kalimpong (Duff 2015, 113). According to Thondup, Nehru broke his promise to grant the Dalai Lama political asylum, which made it more or less impossible for the Dalai Lama to stay in India (Thondup and Thurston 2015, 164–165). However, there was yet another plan to prevent the Dalai Lama from leaving the subcontinent whilst he was in Kalimpong. This involved a simultaneous attack on the Chinese in Lhasa and Yadong; the upheaval, it was thought, would make it impossible for the Lama to return to Tibet. But this plan also fell through and in the end the Dalai Lama ended up returning to his native land (Goldstein 2013, 433, 436).

23 Such as his two elder brothers, Gyalo Thondup and Thubten Jigme Norbu.

1959: Kalimpong as a “nest of spies”

By 1959 the tone of the discussion in the *People's Daily's* narrative had changed radically; instead of the Dalai Lama's encouraging words to young Tibetans to study hard under Kanchenjunga's snow-capped peaks, Kalimpong had become a “spy centre” with a “stinking reputation” (*People's Daily* 1959a, 4). This is not only due to the fact that “suspicious foreigners,” “English and American imperialists,” and “Indian expansionists” were staying and scheming in Kalimpong, but also because these people were liaising with the Tibetan rebels whose “command centre,” incidentally, is also the borderland hill station (*People's Daily* 1959f, 4).

The two first articles about Kalimpong that appeared in the *People's Daily* in 1959 were derived from Indian media outlets. One was a translation of an article that had been published in an Indian magazine, and the other a summary of what several Indian newspapers and magazines had written about Kalimpong (*People's Daily* 1959b, 5; 1959c, 5). These two articles lend credibility to those written later by the Chinese communists aiming to expose the “true situation” in Kalimpong. Amongst these later Chinese articles, the most unabashed Chinese account of the “true situation” in Kalimpong is undoubtedly the piece “The Kalimpong We Saw.” Written by three Tibetans who lived in Kalimpong for some time and later returned to China, the article provides a highly unflattering portrayal of Kalimpong as a crossroads where people with harmful intentions towards China congregate and conspire. The article starts in the following manner:

Recently, after the Chinese PLA victoriously suppressed the Tibetan armed rebellion, some Indian expansionists started to shout for Tibetan “independence,” thus publicly interfering with China's internal politics. They have ignored a great deal of well meaning advice from the PRC; allowing the armed rebels, in the end, to use their territory to carry out evil activities to divide China (*People's Daily* 1959f, 4).

Two things are particularly worth noting here: first, the positive language used by the Chinese-Tibetans, “Chinese PLA *victoriously* suppressed the Tibetan armed rebellion” and “PRC's *well meaning* advice;” second, the conspiratorial equation of the Indians with the Tibetan armed rebellion is clearly spelled out in the claim that “Indian expansionists started to shout for Tibetan ‘independence’ [...] *to use their [Indian] territory* to carry out evil activities to divide China.”

The article goes on to declare: “The evil activities of Indian expansionists are obvious to everyone. For example, Kalimpong is at the centre of activities by the Tibetan armed rebels. But they deny it by all means. They are, however, wasting their efforts” (*People's Daily* 1959f, 4). The spirit and tenor of the passage quoted above is clear: India, the hypocrite, is secretly helping the Tibetans whilst denying it publicly to the Chinese; they cannot of course fool the Chinese. The rest of the article follows more or less in

the same splenetic vein. Kalimpong thus becomes an exemplar that illuminates the playing out of India-China politics on a transnational scale.

The changed perception of Prince Peter in the article is also worth noting.²⁴ Whilst in 1957 he was a prince who simply receives mention as a dignitary met by the Dalai Lama, in this article a portrait is painted in very different colours:

In the past there was a Greek prince who lived in Kalimpong and his name was Peter. This person is extremely interested in China's Tibet question and he is so devoted [to it] that he has made it his "occupation." He often goes to the China-India border to survey the terrain and take photographs. He is in close contact with some English and American imperialists who come and go frequently. He is not managing any business in India, but is living rather well. He has a villa in Kalimpong with the best view and he also owns ten or more cars. From this kind of ostentatious living, these kinds of "professional" activities, it is not hard to see who it is that is backing him (*People's Daily* 1959f, 4).

This change in the depiction of Prince Peter runs parallel to the shift in the representation of Kalimpong. Just as Peter transforms from a mere prince to a rich, decadent friend of the imperialists and an enemy of China,²⁵ Kalimpong likewise morphs from a mountain town with picture-postcard scenery to a town in which the world's evil forces gather to conspire against China in the neighbouring outskirts of the Himalayas.

But what drove all these evil people to Kalimpong? In the case of the postcolonial Indian expansionists, at least, the Chinese answer is as clear as Gandhi's image on the rupee notes: money. India's businessmen are swindling Tibetan workers and making huge profits by selling Tibetan wool for high prices: "The Tibetan worker's blood and sweat is thus sucked up into these people's pockets. Kalimpong is the big Indian capitalist's stronghold to feed on the Tibetans' blood and sweat" (*People's Daily* 1959f, 4).

In fact, the article argues that the enterprise of "speculative business" created the town of Kalimpong in the first place: "We know that not long ago, Kalimpong was just a remote mountain village with only sixteen households, but due to the development of speculative business, this town very quickly came to possess a population of some ten thousand" (*People's*

24 Peter visited Kalimpong in 1938 and was back after WWII in the mid-1950s. Under pressure from the Chinese, in 1956, he and his wife were served with an eviction notice for engaging in "undesirable activities." Lord Mountbatten is said to have interceded on his behalf, and Nehru allowed them to stay on for six more months, until early 1957. It is quite apparent that the expulsion was the result of a direct intervention by Zhou Enlai, the Chinese Premier; see Pedersen 2004-2005.

25 Interestingly, this is not dissimilar to the picture (which is not always unambiguous) painted by contemporary Chinese dissidents of Big Bucks and their intimate connection to the Party. Qiu Xiaolong's novels are particularly scathing in their depiction of the hypocrisy of a political culture and the government's advocacy of entrepreneurship for increased national progress.

Daily 1959f, 4). The implication is that it is no surprise, given that Kalimpong was founded on murky speculative business, that the city would attract “shady” and “rotten” people like the “Indian expansionists.” A narrative of class struggle in these articles draws a sharp distinction between the Tibetan rebel and the Tibetan worker. Whilst the poor Tibetan worker is exploited by the ruthless Indian expansionists, the Tibetan rebel (often an aristocrat) is seen working together with the Indian expansionists and the imperial forces of America and Britain in order to divide revolutionary China (*People’s Daily* 1959f, 4).

Another article reports that the Tibetan Buddhist Association pledge, which was published by the Tibet Mirror Press in Kalimpong, is a document that encourages “treasonous” activities against the “motherland,” and “incites” the people to take part in anti-Chinese activities by pledging that the Tibetans involved would “rather live one day under Buddhism and die; we [...] are unwilling to live under faithless rule well-clothed and fed for a hundred years” (*People’s Daily* 1959e, 3).²⁶

A theme that runs through all these articles is the Kalimpong Tibetans’ collusion with the Kuomintang (KMT).²⁷ Many of the articles allege that the Tibetans requested the KMT to help them in their fight against the Chinese. But perhaps the strongest “proof” that Kalimpong features as the command centre for the Tibetan rebels in the Chinese narrative is the testimony claiming that Kalimpong people (in particular Shakapba²⁸) were involved in the “kidnapping of the Dalai Lama” from Lhasa. The Chinese claim that they found two cipher telegram manuscripts which describe how Shakapba liaised with rebels in Lhasa so that they could “kidnap” the Lama (*People’s Daily* 1959d, 3).²⁹

The political situation became significantly worse after Zhou Enlai’s visits to India in 1956 and 1957: tensions between the nations were rising due to growing discontent and unrest among the Tibetans, and the Indian public was applying domestic pressure and questioning the Indian government’s meekness in its handling of the Tibet question. Border disputes were resurfacing more frequently as both the territories around the Niti Pass and the Shipki Pass remained unresolved; and in the summer of 1957 the PRC completed a road between Sinkiang and Tibet that crossed

26 无神 can be translated as “godless” or “faithless.”

27 In this essay we have used pinyin for most Chinese names; we have, however, chosen to use the Wade-Giles Romanizations in certain instances where they have remained the most prevalent, as in Kuomintang instead of Guomindang and Chiang Kai-shek instead of Jiang Jieshi.

28 Shakapba was Tibet’s Finance Minister in the *Kashag* who later authored *Tibet: A Political History* and *Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs*, (*One hundred thousand moons*). Having been one of the chief negotiators with the Chinese until the PRC entered Tibet in 1951, Shakapba decided to go into exile in India where, from 1959 until 1966, he was the principal representative of the fourteenth Dalai Lama in New Delhi. It is well known that he organised the Tibetan resistance together with the Dalai Lama’s two older brothers, Gyalo Thondup and Thubten Jigme Norbu.

29 Although the cipher telegrams do not state that they are going to “kidnap” the Dalai Lama, the article infers that this must be the case.

Indian territory. Nehru and Zhou Enlai were supposed to meet in April or May 1958, but the meeting was repeatedly postponed until being deferred indefinitely (*China Report* 1976, 63).

It is quite clear that Kalimpong had been on the PRC's watch list as a troublesome place since Zhou Enlai's visits in 1956 and 1957. In July 1958 the Chinese Foreign Office lodged a formal complaint to the Indian authorities. A background note in *China Report* summarised the charges adduced by the PRC and their consequences:

Kalimpong was used as a centre of "subversive activities" by Tibetan reactionaries, by Americans, by the Chiang Kai-shek clique and local special agents, and with "the hideous object of damaging China-India friendship." The Indian reply denied some of the charges and said others had been investigated and steps taken to remove the friction.

From this time onwards, the tone of the official, but secret, correspondence between the two Governments developed through a series of charges and counter-charges to a bitter crescendo (*China Report* 1976, 63).

It was however only after the 1959 Tibetan Uprising on March 10 that the PRC began to accuse India publicly of "colluding" with the Tibetan rebels. Because Kalimpong was seen as the command centre for the rebels by the PRC, the rhetorical battle between ROI and PRC came to be focused on the degree to which Kalimpong and its inhabitants played a role in hostile activities by the PRC and the 1959 Tibetan Uprising.

Given the town's strategic location in the borderlands and the array of people who frequented Kalimpong, even as the Great Game drew to a close, it comes as no surprise that in 1957, given to rhetorical flourishes, Nehru held that there were more spies in Kalimpong than the town's population.³⁰ Nor was it strange that the Tibetan dissidents had also organised themselves against both Chinese and Tibetan communists in the strategically located hill station, and that the PRC had gotten wind of these "subversive activities."³¹

30 British-Indian intelligence reported that Kalimpong had an "extensive spy-network" by 1946 (SAWB, IB 1946, 4). We will probably never know about all the spies who operated in Kalimpong, but arguably the two most famous who appeared in Kalimpong were Gergan Dorje Tharchin, the editor of the *Tibet Mirror*, and Hisao Kimura, the "Japanese agent who disguised himself as a Mongolian pilgrim [... and] was recruited by the British Intelligence to gather information on the Chinese in Eastern Tibet" (Kimura 1990, book jacket). Tharchin had settled in Kalimpong and started his newspaper; with that he became of interest to the British, and also the Chinese, who tried to buy him.

31 In fact, this was not the first time Kalimpong had been used as a base for dissident Tibetans. In 1939 Rapga Pangda wrote the "Concise Agreement of Tibet Improvement Party, Kalimpong," which stated that the Tibet Improvement Party (also known as the Tibet Progressive Party) (which Rapga had founded) would follow Sun Yatsen's "Three Principles of the People" and not the Kashag (Ga Zang 2013, 22–23). Tibetan communist criticism of feudal theocracy in Tibet was not scarce either, and even a novel like Davidson's *The Rose of Tibet* (1962) revisits this.

Much later Zhou Enlai told the British newspaper *Sunday Times* that Nehru had been machinating with the Dalai and Panchen Lamas since 1956 with “big-power backing” and instigating the Tibetans to rebel (Maxwell 1971).³² When Nehru spoke to the Lok Sabha on March 30 and April 2, 1959, he summarised the PRC charges as following: (i) Kalimpong was being used as a command centre for Tibetan rebels; (ii) subversive leaflets and pamphlets agitating against the PRC had been issued from Kalimpong; (iii) the Tibetans in Kalimpong were colluding with the United States and the Kuomintang; (iv) there were associations, such as the Buddhist Association, based in Kalimpong, that were hostile to the PRC; (v) the Tibet Mirror Press³³ located in Kalimpong routinely expressed reactionary and hostile views about the PRC government; (vi) agents and saboteurs who were smuggling arms were dispatched from Kalimpong to Tibet; (vii) certain individuals in Kalimpong were responsible for the Tibetan uprising.

Nehru responded to the charges by stating that Kalimpong was not a command centre for Tibetan rebels, and that the notion that people in Kalimpong had headed a rebellion which had spread slowly in the Tibetan region over a period of three years was absurd; the people who had issued the undesirable leaflets had been warned, and the editor of the Tibet Mirror Press had also been warned, but no legal action could be taken against the magazine on the grounds that it was “anti-government”; the organisations which the Chinese had pointed out as hostile did not exist; the people who were suspected of carrying out suspicious activities and colluding with the KMT and the United States had been warned, and lastly, there was no evidence of even a single case of agents and armed saboteurs being sent to Tibet from Kalimpong (*Lok Sabha Debates Second Series, Vol. XXVIII* 1959, 8461–8468).

1963: Kalimpong as a place hostile to the Chinese

The *People's Daily's* representations of Kalimpong underwent a drastic transmutation between 1959 and 1963. After the Sino-Indian war in 1962, the question of Tibet was put on the back burner; instead the PRC charged the Indian authorities with acting in conjunction with the KMT to illegally intern and force Chinese people in India to leave the country.

The stories about Kalimpong during this period were centred around KMT's “seizure of the Kalimpong Chinese Primary School (噶伦堡中华小学),”

32 Dispelling this view in the changing scenario of Sino-Soviet relations and India's leadership role in the Non-Aligned Movement, Khrushchev was later to record that Mao was the real cause of trouble with India “because of some sick fantasy” (Khrushchev 1974, 306–311).

33 The *Tibet Mirror* (Tibetan in Wylie transcription: *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long*) is the English name of a Tibetan-language newspaper that was published in Kalimpong, India, from 1925 to 1962 and circulated in Tibet. Its originator was Gergan Tharchin, who was at the same time its journalist, editor and manager. See also footnote 30.

highlighting this as an instance of collusion between the Indian authorities and the KMT. This narrative is perhaps best illustrated by a remark by Liang Zizhi (梁子质) (the former chairman of the board of the school) which was cited from an interview held after his return to China from Kalimpong:

Liang Zizhi says: under United States' instigation, the Indian government and the Chiang clique colluded together against China—this is already a public secret. Even though the Indian government evasively covers up these secret and sordid things, in reality the facts are there. That India and Chiang have formed a partnership to seize Kalimpong's Chinese school is precisely one of these concrete instances (*People's Daily* 1963a, 2).

The word "seize(d)" or "seizure" in relation to the Kalimpong Chinese school is frequently used, as are the terms "legitimate powers," "rights," and "genuine claim" that the Chinese had to the school.³⁴ According to the *People's Daily*, the KMT had illegally taken over the school with the help of the Indian authorities. It is also implied that the Tibetans and the KMT were still working together since the Chinese were asked to leave the school and instead join the Tibetan refugee school registered by the KMT (*People's Daily* 1963a, 2).

Another thread that runs through the 1963 articles is the assertion that the Indian authorities conspired with the reactionary KMT, and as a result of "threats" and "sinful activities" aimed at harming overseas Chinese, the Chinese were "forced" to leave: "Does this not abundantly reveal that India's concerned authorities collude with Chiang clique members, forming partnerships to carry out the criminal acts of persecuting overseas Chinese, and wrecking the overseas Chinese cultural and educational enterprise?" (*People's Daily* 1963a, 2). Another article gives a more detailed description of the treatment meted out to the Chinese at the school:

But since 1960 the Chinese school has unceasingly met up against the Indian authorities' scheming persecutions. The Indian side has successively ordered the chairman of the board of the school, Mr. Liang Zizhi, vice chairman Mr. Zhang Naiqian (张乃騫), and Mr. Ma Jiakui (马家奎) to leave India. Following an unjustifiable imprisonment, the headmaster of the school, Mr. Chang Xiufeng (常秀峰) and his wife, received extremely inhumane treatment and were forced to leave India. During this period, parents of the school's students were frequently intimidated and were forbidden to send their children to school to study (*People's Daily* 1963b, 4).

34 China was at this stage already beginning to use the vocabulary of international law to claim property and rights outside the sovereign borders of its state. See Cohen and Leng 1972, 283.

Kalimpong has had a Chinese settlement since at least the beginning of the twentieth century. A biography of Church of Scotland missionary Dr. John Anderson Graham tells us that there “were a few Chinese carpenters in town” in 1906 (Minto 1974, 95); the Roman Catholic Church in Kalimpong recorded the birth of a Chinese-Lepcha with the name Gratia Elizabeth in 1910 and her baptism in 1934 in Kalimpong (Douinel 1922–1946, no. 183), and the oldest (still legible) gravestone in the Chinese cemetery in Kalimpong dates back to 1918.

It was not until the Second Sino-Japanese war, which erupted in 1937, that the Chinese community started to grow significantly; by 1944 the group constituted the second largest foreign community in India (SAWB, IB 1939a, 542). Many Chinese from China as well as from Myanmar fled to Kalimpong during the war years, and as a response to the influx of refugees, and particularly to the lack of education available to their children, three well-established Chinese traders who lived in Kalimpong at the time, Ma Zhucai (马铸材), Zhang Xiangcheng (张相诚), and Liang Zizhi (interviewed in the article cited above), decided to raise funds in order to establish a school for the Chinese children in Kalimpong (Ma 2006, 35–36). The KMT sent money and two teachers from China to help set up the school,³⁵ which was successfully established in 1941³⁶ as a branch of the Meiguang Private Primary School in Calcutta (Zhang and Sen 2013, 218).

The KMT created the first coherent policy for overseas Chinese in 1927, and Zhuang Guotu writes that between 1931 and 1948 the Nationalist government “promulgated scores of laws and regulations dealing with overseas Chinese education, investment, migrations, and overseas Chinese voluntary associations, and diplomatic representatives in the management of *huaqiao* educations affairs” (Zhuang 2013, 35). It is noteworthy that education was the only section which also had diplomatic representatives, and that “uppermost on the government’s agenda by 1937 was education, a matter covered by the largest (at least 16) of regulations governing *huaqiao*” (Zhuang 2013, 35).

Since Chinese overseas schools became spaces for long-distance nationalism and patriotism, after the end of the Second Sino-Japanese war many of these educational institutions turned into arenas for KMT and CCP struggles as the civil war continued to rage on the mainland. The Kalimpong Chinese school was no exception; in addition to the conflicts between the KMT and the CCP, the school also became entangled with the question of Tibet. In July 1951, when Zhang Jingwu (张经武) came to Kalimpong in order to visit the Dalai Lama, who was then on the other side of the

35 This is according to one of our informants, but is also suggested in interviews with Chinese residents in Kalimpong, who are predominantly Hakka and emigrated via Kolkata. Details cannot be revealed in order to respect the identity of “S.”

36 Although the plaque at the entrance to the building where the Kalimpong primary school used to be dates the school’s establishment as January 1942, most other sources we have come across, including newspaper articles, cite 1941 as the year of the school’s foundation.

Chumbi Valley in Yadong, a reception was held for the communist general in the Kalimpong Chinese school, which had by then become a “communist school” instead of the nationalist school it had been in previous years—or at least on that particular day, the red five-starred flag fluttered from the roof (Fader 2009, 300–301).

There were many speakers at this reception, and the last final speech on the programme was by Gergan Dorje Tharchin who pronounced:

In Tibetan we have a proverb which says that everything is changing. For example, there is happiness and then there is sorrow. Everything turns like a wheel. This it seems is quite true, even today. Just the other day [and here the speaker pointed at the wall] there were different kinds of pictures on this wall, but now Chiang Kai-Shek’s picture has disappeared and Mao’s has taken its place. Tibet for centuries has been an independent country. The Chinese claim that it was under China. This state of affairs will not last permanently. It too will change. The Chinese will have to give up their claim to Tibet. Tibet will once again enjoy its original freedom and independence, free of all Chinese control (Fader 2009, 300–301).

As the *People’s Daily* pointed out in 1963, the Kalimpong Chinese school finally returned to the KMT’s hands—most likely due to the Indian government’s decision to shut down PRC-funded schools after the war (Zhang and Sen 2013, 224). This showcases the PRC’s struggles vis-à-vis the KMT on overseas territory during the Cold War.

The last (elaborate) *People’s Daily*³⁷ article in August 1963 describes how the Indian government used “foul tricks” in its attempt to stop “mixed-blood” family members of the Chinese who lived in Kalimpong from returning to China. Whereas previous articles about the school stated that the Chinese were forced to leave, this by contrast reports that the Indian authorities are “thwarting” the attempts of mixed-blood people to leave India. The article describes the inhumane treatment inflicted by the Indian authorities on a group of people of “mixed-blood:”

But, the Indian government carried out all sorts of dirty tricks to hinder them from going to China. On the afternoon of May 21, the Kalimpong Immigration Bureau official suddenly sought out them and the other eight or nine overseas Chinese in distress; harshly

37 It is not so much content as placement that defines the role of this newspaper. It becomes clear that a subject is rising or falling in importance when the coverage of a particular geographical area waxes or wanes. Kalimpong no longer posed any threat and therefore it was no longer especially visible or prominent in the official media. The town’s geostrategic positioning facilitated Kalimpong’s visibility to economic and political power for at least half a century until the 1960s; whether it was perhaps a region under covert surveillance long after that, due to its significant edge effects, remains an open question.

and severely he said to them: "Which of you want to go to China? When do you want to go? You have to scram tomorrow morning at six o'clock!" Following this he gave each person a form which had printed on it: "I voluntarily decline to go to China" etc., stipulating that if they did not leave on the next morning, they had to put their fingerprint on the form. Everyone was very shocked. No one wanted to put their fingerprints on the form; they wanted to desperately plead with and object to the Indian official, making it clear that they wanted to follow their husbands to China, but that they needed time to pack their luggage, to manage money matters and to figure out whether their dear ones had already left the concentration camp³⁸ and returned to China. But the Indian official said, harshly and unreasonably: "Either you go tomorrow, or you put your fingerprint on the decline-to-go-to-China form; if there is anyone who doesn't put their print on it, the police will come tomorrow morning and put their entire family in a car and expel them." The distressed overseas Chinese family dependants were so frightened by this time they all started to cry; under coercion they had no other choice but to print their fingerprints [on the form] (*People's Daily* 1963c, 2).³⁹

After the Sino-Indian war in 1962, following the proclamation of a national emergency on October 26, President Radhakrishnan issued the Defence of India Ordinance. On October 30 he also promulgated the Foreigners Law (Application and Amendment) Ordinance. In practice the order led to an authorized restriction "on movement, deprivation of certain basic rights of Indian citizenship, and arrest followed by either internment in camps or detention in prison" and the Foreigners Law was made applicable to "any person not of Indian origin who was at birth a citizen or subject of any country at war with, or committing external aggression against, India." The Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, which was invoked by the Indian government on January 14, 1963, "prohibited all Chinese nationals and all persons of Chinese origin from entering or remaining in designated restricted areas (the state of Assam and some districts of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab) without a permit, even if they were Indian citizens and residents of those areas" (Cohen and Leng 1972, 273-274).

2,165 people of Chinese origin were arrested and transported to the internment camp in Deoli, Rajasthan in 1962; 900 of these were Indian citizens (Banerjee 2007, 443).⁴⁰ A number of elderly people who could not

38 The "concentration camp" in this article is the camp in Deoli where many Chinese from Kalimpong were interned after the 1962 war.

39 This article was written by *People's Daily* journalist Gu Fan.

40 Deoli was an internment camp built by the British to intern Indians. Yin Marsh in her autobiography has written about how she ended up in Bungalow 2 at Deoli, the same bungalow that Nehru, the man who had given permission to intern the Chinese, had been given when he was interned by the British (Marsh 2012, Chapter 23).

endure the trauma died during the train ride to Deoli (Li 2011, 10–11). Together with 730 dependants, 1,665 Chinese internees were repatriated in 1963, and the last group of people was released from Deoli in 1967 (Banerjee 2007, 447–448). China and the Chinese emerged in Indian public discourse as people who engaged in “deceit” and “double talk,” and had their “hands full of blood” etc. (Banerjee 2007, 447–448).

Most people of Chinese descent who experienced 1962 and with whom we spoke in Kalimpong (December 2015) still vividly remember the time—in some cases, the traumatic memories linger on. One interlocutor reported that for some time after 1962, Tibetans would spit outside their family’s shoe shop; another recalls his father peeking out of the curtains in the middle of the night to see if the police were coming to take them away; a third resident remembers how he was scared that his parents would suddenly be taken; a fourth, how a classmate abruptly stopped showing up at school; a fifth, how the family sold off all their belongings and packed their bags in case they were escorted from their home; a sixth, how his father denied being Chinese when the police came to interrogate him.

Ming Tung Hsieh has written powerfully about what happened when the police came to his home in Kalimpong to take them to the police station. The exchange (in his own English) deserves to be quoted in full:

I took the papers from his hands and tried to read what was in the order, in an irritating tone, father told me in Chinese that they “wanted to take the full family, not only me and your mother” which shook him badly as we were not expecting this, as he never thought his whole family including the young children would be arrested also. I turned around and glared at the diminutive inspector and demanded to know from him in Nepali “why do you want to arrest us children?” “My youngest sister and brother were hardly 8 to 10 years old, they did not deserve to be arrested, they had committed no crime against anyone and they have to go to school” the inspector replied in a very apologetic voice, in his native Nepali tongue to me. “Kancha (young brother), we know everything, some of which may not be proper, but we are just doing our job and only following order,” pointing at the written order in my hand. I read the paper order which was in English again to find that indeed we four children names were in the arrest order issued by one Superintendent of Police Chatarjee, he further suggested that in a disgusting situation like this it would be better for all of us to preserve our calmness and health to out-last this bad period, and he would co-operate with us as much as possible, was he not trained by the police to sweet talk their victims like Hitler’s police and SS troops did to their Jewish victims a couple of decades earlier? (Hsieh 2012, 227)

Conclusions

These snapshots of Kalimpong in the *People's Daily* give us a means of understanding ROI-PRC relations in the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s. It is our argument that the hill station served both as a barometer and metonymic stand-in for the troubled relationship between the two states.

When Kalimpong first appeared in the *People's Daily* during the height of the professed Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai camaraderie in the mid-1950s, the public discourse this generated was that, despite the gathering storms overhead, China-India relations were moving hand in hand, and that a brotherhood had developed between the two nations. This is reflected in representations in which the town is described by the Chinese as *tianyuan* (田园, literally "field and garden"), connoting an "idyllic but rather nondescript" place. In other words, during this phase of the relationship the town itself was rendered as non-threatening, perhaps even as a metaphor for the sunny relations between the two polities.

Towards the end of the 1950s, when relations broke down between the two states with the 1959 Tibetan Uprising and the Dalai Lama's escape and exile to India, perceptions of Kalimpong in the Chinese media metamorphosed into a vision of the town as a veritable den of spies and command centre for Tibetan rebellions. The question of whether subversive activities against the PRC were or were not being plotted or carried out in Kalimpong was naturally of great importance to both governments. However, our interest has been in examining how Kalimpong became an analogue for the (il)legitimacy of the uprising; if hostile activities were indeed planned in Kalimpong, this simultaneously signalled that the uprising was indeed illegitimate and that the Indian government should have taken firm action against these unlawful activities involving double-dealing individuals. The PRC's subtext here is congruent with its standpoint that India had no right to give refuge to the Dalai Lama since his "kidnapping" was a result of insurrectionary actions. The Indian government's denial of the charges implied tacit approval of what was happening in the small, cosmopolitan hub.

In the 1960s, Kalimpong was presented as a town hostile towards and devoid of any Chinese. The maltreatment that individuals of Chinese ancestry suffered as a result of "collusion between the Indian authorities and the KMT," should be read here as an extrapolation from the events of 1962; Kalimpong was seen as expunging innocent and well-meaning Chinese from its borders. Additionally, if individuals who were not Chinese but "dependent" rather on the Chinese wanted to leave for China, the Indian authorities were seen as hell-bent on ensuring that their lives were made a misery. Anything related to China seems to have been cursed by the Indians, according to the *People's Daily's* narratives; this seems partly in keeping with piecemeal records and ethnographic hearsay. Hostility against the PRC issuing from Kalimpong—as narrated in the *People's Daily's* articles from 1959—underwent a transformation in 1963 as it became an

animosity directed against any individual residing in India who happened to have a Chinese connection.

More work is needed in order to fill in the gaps between the snapshots we have presented in this chapter. Some issues leave one perplexed; at the time of writing, many archives have yet to be declassified. It must be recognised that archival labour cannot just be extractive; archival production is after all itself an act of governance which testifies to the state's epistemic power—where fact, fiction and story are all marshalled in the service of bureaucratic conventions of recording, and hence recall (Stoler 2009).

We must recognise that we do not really know what exactly happened, or what precisely was meant when Beijing addressed Kalimpong at that specific point in time. What does appear from the archives is the openness or, if you like, the emptiness of the untranslatable journey from the intended object to its mode of intention. To read motivated meanings and deliberative intentions in the cipher of meaning is itself to beckon and hopefully exorcise the hovering spectre of dogmatism in prevailing power, be it Chinese or Indian.

However, we would argue that a convincing reading can be obtained, not necessarily against the grain, by demonstrating how the *People's Daily's* representations of Kalimpong produced a microcosm through which we can decipher ROI and PRC relations in the 1950s and first half of the 1960s. Cultural and, to an even greater extent, political encounters demand careful historical elaboration, especially when they are yoked to unresolved and still intractable geopolitical borders and the ideas about suzerainty (as opposed to sovereignty) that China has deployed to lay territorial claims on Tibet and other disputed regions around the LoC. The narrative we have produced in this essay is part of this matrix. We suggested earlier that politics as well as history can be read as “supplements.” Supplementarity explains why no synthesis in writing can ever be anything more than provisional. Whether “the supplement supplements [...] adds only to replace [...] represents and makes an image [...] its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness” (Derrida 2016, 157). The supplement ultimately is both accretion and substitution (ibid., 217) and the analytical gist of our endeavour is to suggest that the supplement is not a representor more than a presence, a writing (or the staging of an argument) more than a place (Kalimpong). It comes before all such modalities.

Kalimpong's space must be recognised—to adopt Lefebvrian terminology—as multiplicitous, never finished, never closed. A vernacularly cosmopolitan town, it is constructed through the “specificity of [its discursive] interaction with other places [Beijing, Lhasa, or New Delhi] rather than by [simple] counterposition to them” (Massey 1994, 121). Perched on one of the fringes of India's north-easternmost borders, it cannot be easily written off as peripheral or marginal or even just a “shadow place,” especially when its spectre haunts those narratives we have explored which are

threaded into the larger body-politics of at least two nations.⁴¹ Its locus as a space of transgressive potential is borne out in our analysis in that it gestures to the potentially equivocal “simultaneity of stories-so-far,” a small story in the Great Game.

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41 See footnote 7 above. To fast forward to the current matrix of politics in the area, Kalimpong is better seen now as a functional fulcrum for Gorkha ethnonationalism which relies on the articulation of a singularised affectively charged homeland. See also the Epilogue to this volume.

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