

Introduction: “We Will Always Hold Tibet in Our Hearts”

IN 1999, A TWENTY-YEAR-OLD TIBETAN WOMAN named Namgyal¹ watched her father, Lobsang, take an oath to become a citizen of the United States of America. Her father came to the United States as part of the Tibetan U.S. Resettlement Project (TUSRP), the first significant resettlement of Tibetans in the United States. He was one of 1,000 Tibetans who benefited from a provision in the 1990 Immigration Act that provided immigrant visas for Tibetans living in India and Nepal. She recalled that as she watched, her father swore an oath of fealty to the United States: “I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to support any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen.”² She reported thinking, “Those words aren’t really true for us, we will always hold Tibet in our hearts.” This book is an exploration of the emergence of new ways of thinking about loyalty to states or to a nation, about the meaning of “nation” and “culture,” about the way states both constrain and enable these relationships, and finally, about the way Tibetans’ sense of themselves in relation to these ideas is changing.

The advent of the TUSRP and, subsequently, the years during which this research was conducted (1995–2002) mark a period of time in which, more than ever before, Westerners have come face to face with Tibetans, and at the same time, Tibetans have confronted Western ideas about themselves and their homeland. For Tibetans in exile, Tibet is a site of nostalgia and of often painful memories, or for those born in exile an *absence* of memory. Tibet represents both a palpable sense of loss and, at the same time, it represents all that is most saturated with meaning, the *raison d’être* for many exile selves. The introductory

anecdote, then, is more complex than it would originally seem. Namgyal's and her father Lobsang's loyalty to Tibet is not a rejection of a patriotic attachment to the United States. Indeed Namgyal and other Tibetans take citizenship very seriously and are grateful for all the rights and responsibilities U.S. citizenship affords. At the same time, they are deeply devoted to Tibet, and this devotion is not something that can be simply understood. Namgyal has never been to Tibet and her father left Tibet when he was seven or eight years old.

Namgyal's attachment to Tibet developed in India, where she was born and raised. Her sense of self, and of what I will refer to as "Tibetanness,"³ is built around a concept of "home" constructed in exile, primarily in India and Nepal, by people the majority of whom have chosen to remain "stateless." For Tibetans in India, remaining stateless is a mark of a good Tibetan, one who is loyal to the cause. Yet, in the United States, Tibetans are adopting U.S. citizenship. What is more, they are doing so with the approval and rhetorical support of the Tibetan government-in-exile, which is located in India. As citizens of the United States, Tibetans are exhorted by the government-in-exile to use their newfound voice as members of a democratic state and the world superpower to be "ambassadors" for Tibet.

This book examines the articulation of Tibetanness among stateless Tibetans in India and how this might be changing among those Tibetans who have resettled in the United States and are becoming U.S. citizens. Recent migration to the United States and the subsequent adoption by most Tibetans in the TUSR of U.S. citizenship are a form of what Aihwa Ong (1999) calls "flexible citizenship," referring to those immigrants from the Pacific Rim whose access to capital provides a route to immigrant visas and citizenship. "Flexible citizenship" refers to the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions" (Ong 1999: 6). Although at the time of this research Tibetans did not have access to the economic capital to facilitate transnational migration, they were able to successfully wield the *symbolic capital* of their statelessness in order to facilitate migration to the United States on a very small scale. What is of interest here is not only the social fact of their migration—its historical and political contexts—but also how this migration and resettlement in the United States reflect emergent identity formations in diaspora. The diaspora context is significant because it necessitates the constant calling together of disparate people across a broad geographic range. For Tibetans, the current historical period is particularly significant because it marks the expansion of the

diaspora beyond South Asia, where most exile Tibetans live. In 1990, there were approximately 500 Tibetans living in the United States. By the end of TUSRPF family reunification in 1998, the U.S. Tibetan population was approximately 5,000. In 2007, the Tibetan population in the United States was roughly between 7,000 and 10,000 people, thus constituting a significant demographic shift in the diasporic population of Tibetans.

Theorizing Tibetan Identity in a Globalizing World

“Tibet” is much more than a place. Tibet is a concatenation of images that, for Westerners, call up ideas that have been centuries in the making. Of late, Tibet scholars have attended to the strong hold that Tibet has on the Western imagination and the consequences this has for Tibetans both in and outside Tibet.

Peter Bishop’s work (1989) traces the evolution of the place of Tibet in the Western imagination from the eighteenth through the twentieth century. Images of Tibet are therefore palimpsest-like, where the “Tibet” of the eighteenth century—exotic, remote, and primitive—is still glimpsed in the nineteenth-century ideal of Tibet as *axis mundi*, a place of refuge from the destructive forces of modernity. In *Prisoners of Shangri-La* (1998), Donald Lopez writes that perceptions of Tibet follow “a play of opposites: the pristine and the polluted, the authentic and the derivative, the holy and the demonic, the good and the bad” (4). A set of bifurcated images is the framework upon which turn-of-the-twenty-first-century discourses about Tibet are hung. These develop in the context of worldwide discourses such as environmentalism, human rights, and democracy that spread with increasing rapidity to every corner of the globe.⁴ The importance of “nonviolence” as a feature of the Tibet movement is another example of rhetorical positioning dependent on the Tibet-as-Utopia/Tibet-as-victim dichotomy. This book builds on the insights and work of these scholars. I argue that while these images are still powerful and certainly affect the immigration experience of Tibetans in the West, and Tibetans deploy these images to their advantage (see Adams 1995; Huber 1997; Lopez 1998; Schell 2001; Klieger 2002), Tibetans also “speak back” to these images and are in the process of creating new, more complicated images of themselves, for others, and themselves.

Frank Korom (1999: 2–3) argues that not enough attention has been paid to the Tibetan case as diaspora theorizing has taken on greater importance in recent years (see, however, Houston and Wright 2003). This book addresses this gap in the literature. Recently, a number of scholars have made significant contributions as they have located Tibetan exile society and culture and the way it intersects with

various globalizing processes or forces. Meg McLagan's work on the internationalization of the Tibet movement (1996a, 1996b, 1997) and Keila Diehl's work on modern Tibetan music in Dharamsala (2002) are examples. This work illuminates Tibet's place in an interconnected world, undermining common myths of Tibet and Tibetans as premodern holy beings unassailed by the winds of modernization, or as swept along by "global flows" (Tsing 2000). My focus here on recent migratory movement of Tibetans necessitated a "follow the people" approach to ethnographic research (Marcus 1995). This book uses the macroprocess of migration as a lens with which to view the transformation of identity as it is in the process of morphing into something still recognizably Tibetan, but with different features. One of my informants, a thirty-one-year old Tibetan living in Dharamsala, explained why he wanted to go to the West: "I don't want to be a pond frog to remain just in one country. I want to be a sea frog to explore and educate by going out." This book, then, explores what happens when Tibetans move from the pond to the ocean.

In an article that analyzes anthropological approaches to globalization, Anna Tsing (2000) suggests that attention to global flows often leads scholars to ignore the importance of human agency. My goal in this book is not only to provide a window onto recent migratory movement and the attendant transformation of identities, but to highlight the Tibetan motivations, desires, and actions that fuel, direct, and shape this phenomenon.

Rethinking Diasporic Identity

In *Global Diasporas*, Robin Cohen (1997) uses the origin of "diaspora" as his starting point:

The term is found in the Greek translation of the Bible and originates in the verb "to sow" and the preposition "over." For the Greeks, the expression was used to describe the colonization of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean in the Archaic period (800–600 BC). Although there was some displacement of the ancient Greeks to Asia Minor as a result of poverty, overpopulation and interstate war, diaspora essentially had a positive connotation. Expansion through plunder, military conquest, colonization, and migration were the predominant features of the Greek diaspora. (Cohen 1997: 2)

Cohen argues that "victim diaspora" has become the normative way of defining and thinking about diaspora. By reviewing the Greek origin of the word and reintroducing its colonialist meaning, he reconsiders current notions of

diaspora that include complex motivations for dispersal, reintroducing the notion of “imperial diasporas,” “trade diasporas,” and “labor diasporas.”

Cohen builds on the features of diaspora outlined by Safran in the inaugural issue of the journal *Diaspora* in 1991. Cohen’s criteria are useful and comprehensive and, further, they raise questions that I wish to explore with the goal of illuminating something about the contemporary nature of diaspora. Cohen’s first feature—dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions (1997: 26)—refers to the fact that diaspora frequently arises as a result of cataclysmic events. Cohen’s second feature adds another catalyst for diasporic movement: expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade, or to further colonial ambitions (26). In making this point, Cohen recognizes motivations behind voluntarist aspects of diaspora. In doing so, he echoes other theorists, particularly Clifford (1994), and their concern for a more expansive definition of diaspora. I wish to look even deeper, beyond *events* as such, into *processes*, namely the unequal power relations that effectuate such events.

To examine diaspora closely is to break open received understandings of the phenomenon by looking at both migration histories and the symbolic meanings assigned to these movements. For example, in addition to rejecting the normative model of victim diasporas, Cohen deconstructs the Jewish diaspora (often considered to be the prototypical diaspora), showing that victimization is only one of its aspects. According to Cohen, by characterizing the Jewish diaspora with the Hebrew term *galut*, which is a negative state “implying forced dispersal,” Israeli Zionists construct a narrow range of possibility for the maintenance of healthy Jewish communities. In effect, they are constructing a measure of authenticity that negates and effaces millennia of Jewish history. This is important in an examination of the Tibetan diaspora, because even though it began as a prototypical “victim diaspora,” originating with the flight of the Dalai Lama from Chinese occupation of Tibet, a close examination complicates the picture. Tibetans leave Tibet and South Asia for the West motivated by a variety of interconnected individual and social factors including (1) religious, economic, and political persecution in China and Nepal; (2) limited educational and economic opportunity in China, Nepal, and India; and (3) more “diffuse” motivations such as a “desire to see the world,” to further their education, and to raise the political profile of Tibetans internationally in an effort to regain their lost homeland.

In Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin’s essay “Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity” (1993), they embrace a Jewishness that is composed

of multiple parts. “Jewishness disrupts the very categories of identity because it is not national, not genealogical, not religious, but all of these in dialectical tension with one another” (Boyarin and Boyarin 1993: 721). The creation of a Jewish state and the subsequent possibility of return does not mitigate or erase thousands of years of identity formation in diaspora. A great deal of what it means to be Jewish was, and continues to be, related to disparate processes of identity formation of a “community” that, despite deep differences and disagreements, still claims a multifaceted, complex, yet single label as “Jew.” This is what I call *diaspora consciousness*. I argue that Tibetan diaspora consciousness has emerged over the last fifty years of exile, and if it is nurtured during this critical period of diasporic expansion, this consciousness will serve to bind Tibetans together even as they develop new relationships and understandings of Tibetanness in disparate locales.

Liisa Malkki’s book *Purity and Exile* (1995), in which she compares two different communities of Hutu refugees in Tanzania, has been critical in forming my ideas on diaspora consciousness. One of the groups was a refugee “camp,” Mishamo, and the other was a loose assimilationist “community” in a town called Kigoma near Lake Tanganyika. Malkki explores the very different relationship each community develops with “home,” history, and the appropriation or rejection of the category “refugee.” Through exploring the historicization of nationhood—the making of a national history and the concurrent process of constructing a national consciousness—Malkki has provided me with a framework for the discussion of the creation of “diaspora consciousness.” I suggest that diaspora thinking should be explored because it creates a powerful narrative of connectedness without always resorting to the territoriality of nationalisms. In short, exploring diaspora consciousness clues us in to the possible emergent “structures of feeling” (Williams 1977) of our (always and increasingly) hybrid world.

Malkki adopts a Foucauldian notion to explain the way national consciousness was produced for the Hutu camp refugees. She describes the refugee camp as a

“technology of power” [that] produced its objects and domains of knowledge on two levels. On the one hand, it helped to constitute the refugees as an object of knowledge and control. On the other, the camp served to produce “the refugees” as a categorical historical subject empowered to create a mytho-history of a people. Its local, particular pragmatics conspired to produce—independently of intentions—historical narratives which reordered the lived-in

world. Thus, as a technology of power, the camp ended up being much more than a device of containment and enclosure; it grew into a locus of continual creative subversion and transformation. (1995: 236–237)

The refugee settlements in South Asia, established with support of the Government of India, are akin to a “technology of power.” However, just as Tibetans in South Asia are moving out of relatively isolated refugee settlements to more integrated Western communities, in this book my theoretical framework moves beyond the physical circumstances of Tibetans in diaspora and looks closely at state categorizations of Tibetans as refugees, undocumented migrants, immigrants, and citizens, combined with state policy and the process through which Tibetans are transforming themselves from stateless refugees to citizens of a powerful state. Tibetan responses to these categorizations and processes, whether active resistance or more subtle forms of acquiescence or internalization, are key to the creation of diaspora consciousness. Thus, a key aspect of this notion of diaspora consciousness is that it is not created solely from the inside of a diaspora community. Refugees, as well as those with citizenship, are always subject to state power. In the case of Tibetans and other exile groups, their government-in-exile, although not a state, exercises some of the same kinds of power as a state in the Tibetan diaspora. Power works dialectically—internally and externally—to create a sense of *necessary* solidarity for those who *keep themselves apart* and simultaneously are *kept apart*. Narratives of diaspora are not totalizing. Echoing the Boyarins, the multiple facets of diaspora consciousness—that one is a Jew and an Arab and an Egyptian, or a Tibetan and a Buddhist and a U.S. citizen—must all be held in tension. This is the creative force of diaspora.

Malkki proposes that consciousness is a process of discovering, or *seeing* “by those who are in the process of transforming, subverting, and creating politico-moral orders” (1995: 241). But where does consciousness dwell? Malkki says that the case of the refugee camp suggests that “historical consciousness is lodged within precarious, sometimes accidental processes that are situated and implicated in the lived events and local processes of the everyday” (241).

The routinized administrative and social practices as well as other experiential circumstances of exile that characterized camp life helped to promote a specifically Hutu nationalism in Mishamo. The Hutu there saw themselves as a nation in exile and tended to speak of exile as a long period of trials and tribulations that would finally culminate in the regaining of their homeland, of Burundi. It emerged that this imagined community was animated by a profoundly moral

vision—both of present-day Burundi as a country ruled by impostors, fake citizens, and of themselves as the exiled true citizens of the moral community, the nation. (Malkki 1994: 46)

I suggest that the development of nationalist consciousness as well as diaspora consciousness may translate to activism, for example Zionism, the movement for the creation of a Palestinian state, or the internationalization of the Tibet issue, which has coincided with the development of Tibetan diaspora consciousness.

Citizenship and Belonging at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century

The above discussion of diaspora consciousness serves to create a kind of foundation, both historical and theoretical, to reveal current understandings and expressions of Tibetanness at the turn of the twenty-first century. Throughout the book, I illustrate what I see as a transformation of diaspora consciousness through an examination of the processes undertaken by Tibetans who are giving up their status as stateless refugees and adopting U.S. citizenship. Thus, the chapters that follow describe the bureaucratic maneuvers required to procure identity documents, travel documents, visas, asylum applications, citizenship ceremonies, and finally passports. More important, Tibetan *responses* to these processes illuminate their transformative nature, not only in terms of civil status, but in terms of identities. The discussion of diaspora consciousness paves the way for my argument that it is a mindset that fosters the development of multiple loyalties and attachment to multiple “homes.” It is for this reason that an understanding of diaspora consciousness reveals the cultural logic of Tibetan exile society that has enabled the expansion of the diaspora at this historical juncture. In South Asia, Tibetans have been encouraged by the government-in-exile to remain stateless and to refrain from adopting Indian, Nepalese, or other citizenships. Remaining refugees keeps the problem of Tibetans’ statelessness alive for both Tibetans and the states in which they live, as well as for China, where the continual exodus of Tibetans from Tibet highlights human rights abuses and the lack of political and religious freedom that characterizes Tibetan life under the Chinese state.

While Tibetans in South Asia are encouraged to remain stateless, members of the TUSRIP were encouraged to adopt U.S. citizenship in order that they might become ambassadors for Tibet. This mandate was explicitly laid out in materials produced by the government-in-exile and distributed to would-be Tibetan im-

migrants before they even left South Asia (see, for example, Central Tibetan Administration 1992). This is not to say that Tibetan immigrants to the United States were uniformly accepting of this directive and their “ambassadorial” status. During the course of this research I found that even while the vast majority of Tibetans in the United States have chosen to become U.S. citizens, they invest this practice with multiple meanings and understand its implications in a variety of sometimes contradictory ways. Yet, because the first years of my research were conducted solely in the United States, primarily with Tibetans who were among the “Lucky 1,000”—immigrants chosen by lottery to participate in the program—I was unprepared for the highly ambivalent reactions to the adoption of “foreign” citizenships that I encountered among Tibetans in India.

One of the most striking findings of my research is that Tibetans are adopting U.S. citizenship in order to become more effective transnational political actors in an attempt to regain their lost homeland. Thus, following a number of scholars of transnationalism, I suggest that the meanings of citizenship are changing, not only among Tibetans, but among other “people out of place” as well (Basch et al. 1993; Coutin 2000, 2003; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Ong 2003; Balibar 2004; De Genova 2005; Park 2005; Shandy 2007). In the United States, individuals are increasingly comfortable with hybrid notions of identity, and in fact state policy reflects these notions. Similarly, Tibetans and other transnational migrants articulate the possibility of holding multiple loyalties. Other scholars have examined the growing political power of diasporic populations (Kaldor 2007) and the implications of dual citizenship and nationality for transnational populations (Smith 1996; Boehm 2000; Bakker and Smith 2003). The case I put forth here builds on this research and suggests that these statements are true for diasporic Tibetans. Moreover, here I argue that Tibetans see the adoption of U.S. citizenship as a means to empower themselves as political actors for their lost homeland in a transnational sphere. *In short, by becoming U.S. citizens they become political agents for their own lost state.*

I discovered that for Tibetans, the adoption of U.S. citizenship, both practically and ideologically, is seen to bolster or reinforce the attachment and national pride Tibetans have in Tibet. This is not and should not be seen as antithetical to the creation of loyal U.S. citizens. Tibetans feel that the democratic structure of the U.S. government, the concern for human rights issues generally, and specific concern for human rights in Tibet lend support for achieving a solution to their issue. What is more, exile Tibetans are contributing to a future Tibetan society through immersion and participation in a democratic society. On a practical

level, U.S. citizenship allows Tibetans to maintain transnational connections more easily, through ease of travel, whether it is to Tibet or to India and other places where diasporic Tibetans live.

Although Tibetans' motivations for becoming citizens are disparate and complex, it is clear that the process, the act, and the experience of being a citizen are very empowering for them (see Chapter 9). Tibetans use their political voice effectively in both the national and the global arena. My research suggests that U.S. citizenship empowers Tibetans not only to act as citizens of their adopted countries, but to reinforce transnational family and economic connections and to (re)establish connections with their homeland. Many Tibetans feel that the adoption of U.S. citizenship does not make them more removed from the diasporic center on which their identities hinge—Tibet—rather, it takes them *closer*. A passport that allows them to travel more freely makes this “second exile” an opportunity to go home once again. Moreover, the freedom symbolized by U.S. citizenship also empowers Tibetans to be more effective activists on an international stage—fueled by capital, education, and increased mobility.

The meanings of citizenship are transforming in an increasingly transnational world, and adopting U.S. citizenship for Tibetans, like other people, does not mean abandoning other aspects of their identity, including attachment and loyalty to other nations. At the same time, we must acknowledge citizenship's potential to empower, its ability to engage individuals and collectivities in activism that, like their experiences, increasingly expands beyond local change to national and even global arenas.

Methodology

This book is the outcome of six years of multisited ethnographic research conducted between 1995 and 2002 in resettlement sites in northern and southern India and in the United States, specifically in the New Mexico “cluster site” of the TUSRIP. My research in New Mexico spanned five years. I recorded interviews with recently resettled Tibetans, both males and females, covering a range of ages, class and professional backgrounds, and religious affiliations. The research was also based on extensive participant observation that was conducted during *Losar* (Tibetan New Year) celebrations, commemorations of the March 10, 1959 Lhasa Uprising, celebrations of the Dalai Lama's birthday, Human Rights Day (December 10, which marks the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama), and other community celebrations and meetings. I also tutored a number of Tibetans in English as a Second Language, as well as in U.S. history, in or-

der to help them pass the exam en route to U.S. citizenship. These interactions were useful in that they allowed me to develop friendships with Tibetans and to spend time in their homes, participating in some of the daily aspects of life in the United States, which can be difficult in situations where one's home and field site are the same. In playing with children, watching the Disney animated film *Mulan* on television, learning to make Tibetan sweet tea and *momos*, or driving a friend to the bank, the offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and doctors' visits, I felt privileged to be allowed a window into the lives of Tibetans as they resettled in the United States.

The Indian research was conducted in the year 2000. Prior to my arrival, I had spent a number of years studying the Tibetan language with private tutors and in an intensive summer course at the University of Virginia in 1998. In India I continued to study, in classes at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives and with a private teacher, Ajam Gedon, who later became a research assistant. Some research was conducted using the Tibetan language, especially with elders and newcomers who preferred to speak Tibetan, but the majority of interviews in India, and all of the interviews conducted in the United States, were done in English. In India, I conducted interviews with representatives of the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, a number of settlement officers in various resettlement camps around India, religious leaders, educational leaders, nonprofit administrators, newcomer refugees from Tibet (both employed and unemployed), those who designed and implemented the TUSRP, schoolteachers, students, monks, employees of the government-in-exile, relatives of people who had migrated to the West, and even a man who had returned disillusioned from his time in the United States.

I conducted archival research at the Department of Home of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the government-in-exile department that organized the resettlement. They graciously allowed me to go through the files and photocopy what I wanted. I also spent many hours at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives of the CTA looking through back issues of journals and magazines for any mention of the TUSRP as it was being implemented.

Finally, I conducted an extensive bilingual (Tibetan-English) survey distributed in Dharamsala in October 2000. The survey's focused demographic was young, educated Tibetans between the ages of twenty and thirty. Titled "Attitudes Towards Migration to the West," this survey examined the differences between two groups: newcomer refugees and those "born refugees," Tibetans born or educated primarily in India. With 211 respondents, the survey

revealed interesting distinctions in attitudes not only between these groups, but also important differences in attitude differentiated by age, gender, and educational level as well.

Structure of the Book

The chapters of this book are ordered in a way that honors the migratory flow of Tibetans in recent years—from Tibet to India and Nepal to the West, then to the United States, examining the New Mexico case in particular.

Part I provides the historical, discursive, and state policy context in order to understand recent Tibetan immigration as well as Tibetan responses to the expansion of the diaspora. Chapter 1 begins with a brief discussion of Tibet. It is perhaps both ironic and appropriate that as a researcher of the Tibetan diaspora, I, like many of my subjects, have not been to Tibet. Nevertheless, as I trace the paths of the Tibetan diaspora, I must address the center to which the diaspora constantly refers. This chapter looks briefly at how Tibet has been referred to in the Western imagination in a geographical and political sense and highlights the relationship between Tibet and the United States prior to the flight of the Dalai Lama to India in 1959. In Chapter 2 I discuss the sites where the fieldwork was conducted. This chapter explicitly compares these sites along the primary axes that structure many of the chapters of the book—culture, politics, and economics—the areas many Tibetans referred to when talking about the impact of the expansion of the diaspora on Tibetans in exile.

Chapter 3 explores how Tibetan exiles formally frame the elements so important to exile discourse. I argue that as stateless refugees, Tibetans must creatively wield well-worn concepts of “culture,” “nation,” and “modernity” in a world still ordered by nation-states. This chapter establishes for the reader the way these ideas have been developed by the Dalai Lama, the government-in-exile, and other elites in Tibetan exile culture. This formalized framework then becomes a backdrop against which we can examine emerging disjunctures and the changing nature of Tibetanness in the context of increased migratory movement.

Chapter 4 begins with the story of the flight of the Karmapa from Tibet to India and the subsequent problems his status as a refugee posed for the Indian government. The case of the Karmapa highlights various difficulties the facts of Tibetans’ stateless status and presence pose for the Indian and Chinese states. I then trace the contours of the Tibetan diaspora in particular, examining the way various host governments including India, Nepal, Switzerland, Canada, and the United States have placed Tibetans in and out of the categories of “refugee,”

“immigrant,” or “citizen,” depending on a variety of factors. Pairing state policy with the previous chapter on the discourses that characterize the Tibetan diaspora provides a framework in which to contextualize and understand the rest of the book, which focuses on Tibetan responses to these “structures.”

Part II describes the advent of the TUSRP and the way Tibetans in India have responded to the project. In this section of the book I present an analysis of the data collected during the Indian portion of my fieldwork. Chapter 5 begins with an examination of the history of Tibetan immigration to the United States prior to the TUSRP. The rest of the chapter examines the establishment of the TUSRP by U.S. backers, its structure, and initial responses to it in exile society as evidenced in interviews and publications. I outline three primary areas associated with increased migration to the United States of concern and interest to Tibetans: culture preservation and loss, the effects of migration on the political movement, and the economic impact of migration. These three concerns create an organizational structure that underlies much of the rest of the book.

Chapter 6 further examines the ways in which Tibetans conceive of culture and Tibetanness and how these are highlighted by the anxiety and excitement caused by increasing numbers of people choosing to go abroad. In this chapter I highlight the distinction between “newcomers,” or recently arrived refugees from Tibet, and Tibetans born in exile, and their reasons for migration, and conversely, for staying in India.

Part III focuses primarily on data collected in the United States, specifically in the New Mexico “cluster site” of the TUSRP. A focus on one particular site is useful, as it illuminates the way local processes of identity construction articulate with Tibetan understandings and expressions of identity. Chapter 7 examines how the 1,000 members of the TUSRP were welcomed in the United States. The chapter focuses on the initial stages of resettlement, before family reunification, specifically the years 1992–1996. Unsurprisingly, the same concerns of culture loss and change, politics, and economics arose again, but this time filtered through particular U.S. national interests at the time—anxiety over immigration and its attendant economic “burdens” and an economy in recession.

Chapter 8 explores similar themes related to the expansion of the diaspora that Tibetans discussed in previous chapters. However, the focus is from the time period after family reunification. Thus, much of the chapter is organized around parental concerns that arose after the arrival of spouses and children,

and we see attention shift to cultural preservation and education. Interviews with Tibetan youth reveal complex expressions of emergent Tibetan American identity.

Chapter 9 closely examines the processes by which Tibetans become U.S. citizens. While I attempt to show how the state subjugates its members, a focus on agency demonstrates the ways in which the state fails to subjugate its people. Furthermore, such an analysis shows how U.S. Tibetans understand their own experiences, mobilize resistance, and negotiate with the state in ways that forge new subjectivities.

Throughout the book, my goal has been to show how dominant discourses and state structures, though powerful, do not subsume Tibetan voices. My goal is to demonstrate how Tibetans' own views of self, as well as these same structures that supposedly contain them—"state," "nation," "culture," and "Tibetan"—are simultaneously being created and transformed by Tibetan agency. Thus, Tibetans' own sense of self—in relation to place and to various state entities (and in the case of the government-in-exile, nonstate, statelike entities)—is necessarily changing in order to meet new alignments, configurations, and challenges of an increasingly transnational and, as the Dalai Lama says, "interdependent" world. This book, then, fits in with other transnational theorizing that rejects the view that there is a process of flattening, of homogenization of difference across the globe. I argue that those who choose to engage with dominant discourse, to speak back to it, can perhaps have some influence on transforming that discourse in order to reflect their own experience in the world.