

dispute with India, and by the attitude of China towards the non-Communist world and perhaps also towards the USSR. The swing of the pendulum is likely to be slower this time and it is sad that the Dalai Lama, with his fine qualities of mind and spirit, should be prevented from putting his ideas into practice. Still, he is young; and although it may be difficult to share his calm faith in the ultimate triumph of justice, who dare say there is no hope?

HUGH RICHARDSON.

*Tibet and its History.* By H. E. RICHARDSON. [Oxford University Press. 1962. 308 pp. 16 illustrations and two maps. 42s.]

THE dust-cover presents this book as "a lucid and straightforward history of Tibet from its beginnings as a separate country in the sixth century A.D. to the present day." It would be more fairly described as a history of Tibet in its relations with China. Ten full centuries of Tibetan independent history are covered in Chapter II in just ten pages, and only when we reach the period of Chinese claims on Tibet are historical problems examined in precise detail. Thus the last two and a half centuries occupy five-sixths of the book.

The author, Mr. H. E. Richardson, lived in Lhasa for long periods between 1936 and 1950 as head of the British and Indian missions there, and as a Tibetan scholar in his own right. Since his return to Britain he has become one of the very few authorities in Tibetan historical studies. He certainly could have written a very much fuller history, covering the whole earlier period in detail. But this present book has been written with a special purpose—as a thesis in defence of Tibetan autonomy and as a strong appeal for the preservation of Tibetan culture. Since the Chinese Communists are actively responsible for present Tibetan misery, it is against the Chinese case, both actual and historical, that most of Mr. Richardson's arguments are deliberately directed. Thus he deals with the history of Tibetan dependence on the Mongols in some detail, so that he may argue the falsity of Chinese claims to Tibetan subordination in those periods (pp. 36–38 and 44–46). After dealing with the Gurkha war of 1788, he is concerned to argue the artificiality of imperial authority in Tibet (pp. 70–72). From page 137 onwards there are constant references to Li Tieh-tseng, for the arguments of his pro-Chinese work *The Historical Status of Tibet* require refutation.

On account of this argumentative aspect of the book and the occasional digs at the Chinese, one might judge the whole thesis as unduly tendentious, but this is not so. Where Chinese claims are not at issue, Mr. Richardson's presentation is a model of conciseness and balance, such as in the useful survey on the structure of the Tibetan government

(pp. 18–27) or the section on Tibet's relations with the Western world (pp. 61–68). Indeed, the whole work is lucid, straightforward and honest, and any thoughtful reader is free to draw his own conclusions.

The three main groups of actors in this sad story are the Tibetans, the Chinese and the British, and it is interesting to study them each in turn on the basis of Mr. Richardson's narrative. The pleasant qualities of the Tibetans are listed on page 10, and the present reviewer, like the author, is certainly one of their devotees. Foreign visitors to Tibet have agreed, too, that the simple villagers and townsfolk were happy and generally contented with their lot.

But here we are concerned primarily with the leaders of the country, whose mutual rivalries have always been a main cause of Tibetan weakness. We tend to identify Tibetan independence with the personal authority of the Dalai Lama, and it is difficult to do otherwise. But Dalai Lamas have, on the whole, ruled for very short periods; among the exceptions were the Great Fifth, who depended for his political power upon the Mongols, who ruled from 1642–82 and the Thirteenth from 1885 until his death in 1933. Even during the longer reigns one might overestimate the extent of their power.

From the ninth century until the thirteenth century Tibet had remained disunited. The Mongols then established the Sakya hierarchs as their vice-regents in Tibet, and Mr. Richardson rightly observes that in doing so they were giving authority to the head of one sect only. But the Mongols did the same again in the seventeenth century, for the Dalai Lamas are also heads of one sect only, and they have still not been accepted as religious overlord by the older sects. Mr. Richardson refers to Gelugpa "domination" as not having extended to Bhutan (p. 64), and it is precisely this domination which is resented by so many other Tibetans in outlying regions. He refers to Khampa and Amdo mistrust of Lhasa officials (pp. 183 and 213), but far more might be written about disunity amongst Tibetans. The main cause for the Panchen Lama's flight to China in 1923 was undoubtedly mutual jealousy and enmity amongst Tibetans. One might fairly observe that since 842 there has been little political stability in Tibet, except when it has been imposed by outsiders, Mongols, Manchus or Chinese.

Since 1911 one could make a case for Tibetan independence, but it was far too fragile a creation. The Tibetans feel themselves to be people of the "inside" (see page 13, where this is very well explained), and they did not want to learn about what went on "outside" from some innate fear of contamination. Thus as a sign of independence they set up a Bureau of Foreign Affairs in 1942 (it was used only by the British Mission), but they had closed the English school, which provided the sole means in Tibet of learning a little of the outside world. They wanted

arms and ammunition, but they did not want to be taught how to use them. These are certainly their chief weaknesses—their political disunity and their fundamental ignorance of everything non-Tibetan. They might have been autonomous, if someone else had had the patience to be their mentors. The reviewer sadly acknowledges that political independence was beyond their grasp—in so far as this seems to depend nowadays upon possessing sufficient armaments and skill in using foreign propaganda.

Apart from his description of Communist atrocities, Mr. Richardson portrays the Chinese in quite a pleasant light. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they mostly played the part of benign suzerains. Mr. Richardson emphasises their infinite capacity for misrepresentation, but it would be unfair to suggest that they have a monopoly of this art. He observes that their invasion of 1910 marks a turning-point in Sino-Tibetan relations, for this was the first Chinese army to reach Lhasa against the will of the Tibetans. But the Chinese were understandably angry, for their “vassal” had been flirting for several years with another would-be protector—the British. During the following years, when they were too preoccupied elsewhere to take any direct action in Tibet, they remained quietly consistent in their policy. They never ratified the Simla Convention of 1914, and they never recognised the British position in Tibet. It would have been naïve of them to do so, for time was clearly on their side.

Perhaps the British fail in this story, because they were usually in two minds about the matters on hand. They had no legal or moral right to force their way into Tibet in 1904, even if fear of Russian intrigue seemed to make it politically expedient. Once there, they certainly befriended the Tibetans, and realising that Tibetan independence was out of the question, they evolved the theory of Tibetan autonomy under Chinese suzerainty, on the assumption, one imagines, that the British would always be there to guarantee this autonomy. Otherwise their construction was meaningless, for if China is the suzerain, it is China alone who decides the limits of the autonomy. When the British were preparing to leave India in 1947, it was left to the British Mission in Lhasa, namely, Mr. Richardson himself, to reassure the Tibetans as far as possible. One realises now, what a difficult position he was in. His predecessors, in all good faith, had continued to lead these Tibetans up a garden path, and now he had to trust that the new Indian Government would be at least as forthright as previous British Governments. Yet he must have known that time was with the Chinese, for whenever China is strong, Tibet falls very easily within her sphere of influence. To the letters which the British had sent as a prelude to their invasion of 1904 the Tibetans had replied quite truly (not just evasively as Mr. Richardson

says) that it would displease the Chinese if the Dalai Lama were to correspond with the British. In the event the British behaved like a forceful suitor and the Chinese like an outraged husband.

These observations make the present sufferings of the Tibetans none the lighter. However much they must depend upon China, they are not a Chinese people. In race, in language, in natural disposition, in religion, in almost every aspect of their culture, they are different from the Chinese. The right political solution of their problems is autonomy under a sympathetic mentor. Now they have no autonomy and the most unsympathetic mentor in the world.

I am glad that Mr. Richardson's book will make their cause better known in the world, and grateful to him for stating the case with such clarity. His work is complete with an appendix of all the relevant treaties and agreements, a useful chronological table, a bibliography, an index, a good map and many photographs of his own taking.

D. L. SNELGROVE.

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