

Nepal: Emerging new Chinese colony to crush free Tibet move¹

Nepal is fast becoming a full-fledged colony of China with Nepali leaders repeating what Beijing tells them to say, even using Chinese Communist jargon.

Take Mahesh Kumar Maskey, Nepal's Ambassador to China. According to *China Tibet Online*, on an official visit to Tibet, Maskey recently declared that Nepal will "firmly suppress the Dalai Clique's any anti-China activities on Nepali territory."

Maskey had just met Deng Xiaoguo, one of the vice chairmen of Tibet Autonomous Region in charge of the dreaded security apparatus.

The Ambassador affirmed that "under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, Tibet has overcome severe natural conditions and made outstanding achievements."

The Ambassador who was impressed by "the happy life of all ethnic groups in Tibet", was probably not aware of the 1856 Treaty between Nepal and Tibet which *inter alia* says: "the Gurkha (Nepal) Government will in future give all the assistance that may be in its power to the Government of Tibet, if the troops of any other 'raja' invade that country."

When 'Raja' Mao invaded Tibet in 1950, this clause was conveniently forgotten. The situation in Nepal is today fast deteriorating.

On April 18, 2013, soon after becoming China's President, Xi Jinping met with Puspa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda), chairman of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and pledged to boost cooperation with Kathmandu.

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Soon after, the Nepalese police installed hi-tech, night-vision CCTV cameras in areas to curb the anti-China activities (read Tibetan) in Kathmandu.

But there is a more worrying issue, the number of Chinese tourists taking over Nepal during several months of the year.

It is true that Chinese have always been great travellers.

Remember Xuanzang , the monk scholar who described so well his journeys through Northern India during the 7th century. But today there is a new brand of Chinese 'pilgrims'; their motivation is far more materialistic.

A Chinese website dedicated to tourism explains: "With the rise of personal incomes and living standards, Chinese people are eager to go sightseeing overseas which creates an immense market for some nearby countries."

The favorite destinations of the Chinese tourists are USA, Russia, France, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Maldives.

China Outbound Tourism Research Institute said that the new overseas Chinese pilgrims will soon cross 100 million. The Germany-based Institute has forecast that from July 1 to June 30, 2014, 106 million Chinese tourists will travel abroad and spend US\$ 129 billion (that is a lot of money).

Recently, *The South China Morning Post* reported: "Restaurants, hotels and even a hospital in the [Nepali] capital's Thamel district offer services to visitors from the north, in their own language."

All this after a bilateral agreement was signed between China and Nepal in 2001 and Kathmandu received an Approved Destination Status. Since then tourism has grown exponentially.

In one area of Thamel (Kathmandu's tourist hub), Chinese commerce - restaurants, hotels, travel agencies, shops and even a hospital are strictly dedicated to Nepal's northern neighbours.

The Hong Kong newspaper said: "[Some] streets are crowded with signs in Chinese: Hotels offer their room rates and services, restaurants display their menus and travel agencies plaster their windows with itineraries strictly in the script that would attract their targeted customers."

Chinese tourists increased by 25.7 % in June compared with the same month last year.

But Chinese tourists also travel towards Bhutan which has started receiving large groups of tourists from the Middle Kingdom.

Chinese are now the third most important contingent after the Japanese (6,967 visitors last year, an increase of 77 % from the previous year) and the US 6,007. In 2012, the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) recorded the highest ever number of Chinese tourists (3,766), an increase of about 30 % from the previous year.

Apparently, the wedding of Tony Leung, a Hong Kong actor, with Carina Lau was a great boost. On 21 July 2008, the couple got married in Bhutan in royal fashion; the media frenzy created by the wedding in Hong Kong greatly helped promote Bhutan as a tourist destination in the Mainland.

A tour operator told *Kuensei*: "Bhutanese culture isn't the main attraction for Chinese tourists. It's to do with the happiness factor. Most Chinese tourists say they come to experience happiness in Bhutan."

The number of Chinese tourists in Bhutan remains modest compared to Nepal or other countries, but it has shown a remarkable increase.

There Chinese tourists are usually highly educated, most of them holding university degrees; it is not the case of many other countries where the local population complains about the behaviour of the Mainland's visitors.

A factor which has come up in India is not mentioned for Nepal and Bhutan, it is the security angle.

The New Indian Express recently wrote about the Indian 'fears of Chinese indoctrination and recruitment' which make the top levels of the Indian intelligence establishment panicky.

The newspaper's source said that some 200 strategic institutions in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, including monasteries receive a large number of visitors from China and Tibet. The South Indian publication adds: "It is suspected that many young students from the Tibetan Autonomous Region are planted in monasteries to gather information about the activities of the Tibetan diaspora."

It is a fact that the Dalai Lama's Central Tibetan Administration and the Indian intelligence are facing a serious challenge.

But that is not all. In 2012, Liangki Jiancen, a Chinese spy posing as a trader, was caught by Indian agencies in Sikkim; he had collected information on the strategic infrastructures and key installations in the area.

Apparently some 650 Chinese nationals, who entered India on valid tourist visas, are still roaming free in the country without valid papers.

The New Indian Express quotes an intelligence agency source, saying that it is impossible to examine the antecedents of each and every tourist or pilgrim unless they understand the language of the visitors.

The suggestion of the intelligence agencies is to teach Mandarin through various dialects of the border areas.

Well, it may take some time to have officials speaking Mandarin.

In the meantime, the security angle does not seem to bother much the Bhutanese, and even less the Nepalese?

It could nevertheless become a serious issue, at least for India, in the years to come.