

Exclusionary Policies and Practices in Chinese Minority Education: The Case of Tibetan Education

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Introduction

Multicultural countries around the world have implemented mass education for school-aged children. Educational systems exist to reproduce the dominant society in which they are an integral part or to impose a new social order. "Transmitting culture and socializing youth are basic goals of the public school" (Gajrcia, 1978, p.8). Another goal of public education is to promote national unity and economic development. However, the development of mass education in multicultural societies has often been at the expense of minority culture and ethnic identity. Schools are often the medium through which the state establishes the culture of the dominant language while at the same time depriving linguistic minority children of their right to use their mother tongue. Minority education policy is fraught with political, educational, economic and social complexities.

This paper examines how the government of the People's Republic of China (hereafter referred to as China) modifies its educational policies to achieve separate and distinct regional objectives, which are linked to regional and ethnic differences. These policies often result in exclusionary practices. Using the case of the Chinese region of Tibet, this paper illustrates the dichotomy of Chinese educational policy: how to achieve universal education for all students and at the same time contain regional ethnic resistance against the communist government and maintain national unity.

Education in China

China is a country of 56 "official nationalities." Out of a population of 1.2 billion people, over 70 million are non-Han Chinese (Insight Guide, 1998). Minority peoples in China mainly reside in areas along China's strategic and sometimes troubled international borders and often maintain close relationships with those of their group living on the other side of the border (Lin, 1997). As a result of China's history of being invaded by neighboring countries, government policies often attempt to pacify the minorities living on the border by providing them with relevant social and cultural services (Sharpes, 1993). Education for minorities is therefore a part of China's overall defense strategy--focusing on the pacification of minorities within its borders (Sharpes, 1993).

In the 1950's five provinces with large minority populations were designated as autonomous minority nationality regions--Xinjiang, Inner-Mongolia, Tibet, Ningxia and Guangxi. For these regions "autonomous means primarily that there is increased local control over the administration of resources, taxes, birth planning, education, legal jurisdiction and religious expression" (Gladney, 1994, p. 185 as cited in Lin, 1997). However, since the mid-1980's, political instability caused by ethnic tension in minority provinces has resulted in governmental policies, including educational policies, that

focus on reestablishing national unity and a national identity (Lin, 1997). These policies have resulted in many exclusionary practices that prevent minority students from fully participating in and gaining benefits from the educational system.

The Chinese Educational System

To understand China's exclusionary educational policies, it is important to first understand the structure and organization of the Chinese educational system. Universal primary education has been an important goal of the Chinese government and is viewed as a means to improve the economy, the standard of living of its citizens, and as a way to ensure the continued existence of the communist state. To achieve these goals Chinese educational policies intentionally (and inadvertently) exclude certain groups from full participation in the educational system. In China, education has been characterized by: 1) attempts to universalize elementary education, 2) achievement measured by examination, 3) a uniform curriculum laden with a nationalist message, 4) teaching styles that emphasize the authority of the teacher, and 5) demands for great amounts of memorization and recitation (Postiglione, 1999).

The characteristics, structure and organization of the educational system exemplify how the system excludes certain groups from school participation. (See Figure 1 below). Chinese law guarantees every child nine years of schooling. However, the government's ability to provide mass education is limited by both economic and societal influences. Economically, the task of building over one million schools (the number required to implement this objective) is a strain on the limited resources of the government. Even so, approximately 80 to 90 percent of children begin elementary school in China (Postiglione, 1999).

After the completion of elementary schooling, students are required to pass an examination to advance to Junior High School/Middle School. A portion of the examination tests students' knowledge of Chinese (Mandarin) because secondary education is taught in this language. This creates a barrier for linguistic minority students to advance to secondary education. For example, of the Tibetan children who enroll in elementary school, less than 10 percent will go on to junior high school (Sangay, 1998). There is a second examination after Junior High School/ Middle School to advance to high school, which is even more competitive than the first. Likewise a third and final examination, called the "National Examination" is required to gain admission to university.

The examination system is designed to eliminate all but the most academically proficient students and is exclusionary by nature. It is particularly difficult for a linguistic minority student to advance through this system. Although by law minority languages are granted equal status with Mandarin, historically inequities in political and economic development illustrate that the languages are functionally unequal (Postiglione, 1999). Acknowledging this, the Chinese government passed The Law of Regional Minority that stipulates examinations should be given to minority students in their native languages. However, this rarely occurs in practice (Sangay, 1998).

Figure 1: The Basic Structure of the Chinese Educational System



The more common practice is for minority students to receive "bonus points" when they take exams in Chinese. However, the extra points do little to make up for the deficits of taking an examination in a foreign or second language. This preferential policy would seem to make higher education more accessible to minorities, however, minorities, especially Tibetans, are still underrepresented at the university level. The "bonus points system" is a failure and continues to prevent minority students from fully participating in the Chinese educational system (Sangay, 1998).

The exclusionary nature of the curriculum

The examination system is based on a nationalized curriculum that is standardized for all subjects at all levels. Therefore, "despite wide variation in geography, agriculture, climate, language and local customs, the same subjects are taught with the same materials almost all over the country" (Postiglione, 1999, p.219). The underlying theme in the standardized curriculum projects the message that "China is a unified, glorious country with a great past, an uncertain but improving present and a bright future" (Postiglione, 1999, p. 219). To promote a sense of this national unity the nationalized curriculum policy downplays the culture and identity of ethnic minorities. This educational policy meets with practical problems in areas occupied by ethnic minorities, who are linguistically and culturally different from the Han (Postiglione, 1999). One problem is "that minority nationality children become very self-abased when they find no reference to their own culture or history in school materials. When they find there is no content which can make them feel proud of being a person of their own nationality, they lose self-esteem and interest in schooling. This is reflected in the high dropout rates of minority children" (Nima, as cited in Postiglione, 1999, p. 134). The continued low literacy rates in these areas resulted in the modification of the standardized curriculum to accommodate the specific educational needs of minority children.

Under Chinese law (The Law of the People's Republic on Regional National Autonomy [1984] and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China) minorities have a right to use and preserve their native languages (Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy 1984, Article 36, 37 as cited in Sangay, 1998). Furthermore, the Regional National Autonomy Law provides that the curricula of local schools should

reflect the interest of their constituencies and "ought to use textbooks in the relevant minority language and the minority language should be used as the medium of instruction" (Sangay, 1998, p. 293). Chinese law provides these rights to minorities, but the reality is often somewhat different. Minority peoples have no real freedom to select or create a separate curriculum for their schools. In fact, the curriculum is the same for all of the schools in China because of the required examinations. Students are required to be proficient in Chinese to advance in school. As a result, many minority students do not receive the education that they are entitled to by law.

The Chinese standardized curriculum causes some minority students to drop out of school because they do not see the relevance of what they learn in school to their lives (Postiglione, 1999). For example, historically the majority Han culture has always been secular. The Chinese educational system was based on Confucianism, a philosophy of life, and not a religion. Religion and education were not (and still are not) related. In contrast, in Tibet religion was the main form of organized education outside the family (Postiglione, 1999). The transition from religious education to mass secular education has been slow and difficult in Tibet and other minority regions. Minorities continue to claim that there is a need to include some religious information in the curriculum so that the children will be motivated to learn (Johnson, 1999; Postiglione, 1999). Many minority parents believe that for their children, knowing about their language and religion is of greater importance than learning mathematics and science. This attitude often results in low school attendance rates. Postiglione (1999) explains that "if members of a minority hold the view that they can use education to achieve success, they devise ways to surmount the obstacles posed by cultural divergence. If they hold, on the other hand, the view that the education system will merely strip them of their own culture and identity without giving them equal opportunity in the wider society, they will respond with resistance" (p. 214).

Bilingual education and national unity

The fostering of a national identity is an important goal of the communist state and is necessary for its survival. Since the mid-1980's political instability caused by ethnic tension in minority provinces has resulted in governmental policies, including educational policies, that focus on reestablishing national unity and a national identity (Lin, 1997). These policies have resulted in many exclusionary practices. This fact has led to the creation of separate but distinct bilingual policies depending on the political objectives of the Chinese government in that area. For example, in Tibet, the teaching of the indigenous language (Tibetan) is discouraged because of its association with the Tibetan nationalistic movement. However, in Hong Kong, the government actively promotes the local dialect of Cantonese to erase the prevalence of English language--a legacy of British colonialism. Although the ultimate goal of both policies is to promote a national identity, one policy promotes the use of native languages and the other strongly discourages it. Consequently, the political agenda often eclipses appropriate educational practices.

Historically, schools in minority regions oriented students toward assimilation and conformity to the centralized control of the Chinese government. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) minority customs were denounced as "backward" and minority schools were forced to use only Chinese to teach the required standardized national

curriculum (Lin, 1997). However, since 1978, the government's policy toward minorities has changed. Facing ethnic tensions and the possible disintegration of the country, the Chinese government has adopted various measures to improve relationships with minorities (Lin, 1997). Minority families are permitted to have more than one child, and are sometimes exempted from paying taxes to the central government (Johnson, 1999). Other efforts include increasing educational opportunities for minority children by establishing boarding schools, conducting some instruction in local languages, increasing teacher salaries in minority regions, and lowering requirements and including affirmative action consideration for university admission.

Attempts to improve relationships between the central Chinese government and minority groups have not improved the educational situation in minority regions. Although the Chinese government claims to have made "tremendous efforts to promote the culture and education of the minority nationalities," (State Council 1992, p. 58, as cited in Sangay, 1998, p. 291) in some areas two-thirds or less of minority students finish primary school (Chen Kai et al., 1996 as cited in Lin, 1997). In Tibet, of the students who enter primary school, 89.4 percent do not make it to secondary school (Li, 1986 as cited in Sangay, 1998). Many of the minority students drop out because they fail to qualify in the Chinese language examination (Li, 1986 as cited in Sangay, 1998).

Since the mid-1980's the Chinese government has advocated bilingual education for the "preservation and promotion of minority culture" (Lin, 1997, p.195).[1] These policies acknowledge that language carries important cultural knowledge and that native languages help minority cultures inherit and preserve their cultural values and beliefs (Lin, 1997). But the Chinese government's decision to allow bilingual education is not completely altruistic; it has a distinctly political purpose. In Tibet the policy is designed to enhance political stability in an otherwise unstable area by making it appear that Tibetans are truly "autonomous" in language and culture (Lin, 1997). However, the appearance of autonomy was the only thing accomplished by this policy. The absence of minority language textbooks and bilingual teachers are evidence of the lack of commitment of the Chinese government to honestly implement bilingual education policies in Tibet.

The problems with bilingual education in China

"The number and diversity of languages used by the non-Han peoples of China is a formidable barrier to the popularization of education in China's rural and remote frontier regions" (Postiglione, 1999, p. 95). Estimates of the number of mother tongues spoken in People's Republic of China range from 80-100. How to deal with this diversity has been a challenge to the Chinese government.

Since literacy is essential for achieving the goals of state schooling, scholars in China advocate bilingual education for minority students (Lin, 1997). "They maintain that to teach in the language of minority students is essential for the development of their intellectual ability, particularly for those living in remote areas who have little contact with the Han culture and who speak only their own native language" (Lin, 1997, p. 195). Scholars argue that bilingual education would build a bridge between home and school and could increase attendance rates and strengthen socialization into national ideologies (Postiglione, 1999; Lin, 1997; Bass, 1998). However, they also admit that the socialization

process has not always resulted in obtaining the goal of national unity. Although minorities have a right to use their own language, regional and local officials (who are mostly Han Chinese) make most of the decisions on language usage and language of instruction in the schools. This fact creates a wide variety in the goals and methods of bilingual education in China and makes it difficult to evaluate the overall effectiveness of bilingual education programs in minority areas.

Resistance to bilingual education

Many schools in minority areas do not utilize bilingual education because there is considerable resistance by some minority parents, government officials and educators to the idea of teaching both the minority language and Chinese (Postiglione, 1999). This is justified by claims that the Han Chinese language, is "international" and therefore should be the main education language and medium of instruction (Postiglione, 1999). Officials believe that the use of Mandarin typifies the Chinese nation as a whole and serves the role of presenting a unified face to the world (Wang Jun as cited in Postiglione, 1999). There is also the lingering belief in many public officials that "to learn Chinese mean(s) one (becomes) Chinese" (Postiglione, 1999, p. 61). Finally, historically the concept of culture in China was linked to literacy in Chinese. "The Chinese term *wen*, translated as 'literature, writing, inscription,' is a central part of the idea of culture. To be "cultured" is to possess *wen* or 'literateness' and to be transformed by such knowledge of *wen*" (Postiglione, 1999, p. 60). Therefore, to many Han Chinese the only way to civilize or acculturate the minority nationalities is to have them become literate in Mandarin.

Some resistance to bilingual education comes from minority parents who believe the minority language may "not help their children's future" (Sangay, 1998, p. 294). Minority parents are concerned about their children's ability to pass the qualifying examinations to move on to higher education. School administrators and teachers also have objections to bilingual education. Some fear that the study of a native language will slow the learning of Chinese. Others object because of the lack of textbooks and teaching materials to facilitate the teaching of the minority language. Even if minority textbooks are available, teachers fear that they will not contain the same curricula as the Chinese language textbooks, needed for the national examinations.

The biggest obstacle to bilingual education in China is the lack of qualified teachers. "In China, as elsewhere, scarcities of human resources (qualified minority language teachers) and material resources (texts and materials in minority languages) are obstacles to the implementation and effectiveness of bilingual education policies" (Postiglione, 1999, p. 95). There is a severe shortage of qualified native language speaking minority teachers. Over the last 20 years various measures have been designed to encourage graduates from teacher education colleges to work in minority regions (Lin, 1997). Teachers willing to work in minority areas are given improved working conditions, they receive higher wages, and they are permitted to have a second child (Lin, 1997; Johnson, 1999). Unfortunately, the incentives have done little to improve the situation and the trend of minority teacher shortages is likely to continue for some time.

Gerard Postiglione and other experts in Chinese minority education believe that to reduce the exclusionary nature of the language policy, China needs to construct a strong

bilingual education program. Postiglione points out the dichotomy of China's position. On the one hand, "without mother tongue instruction, China cannot possibly enroll and keep monolingual linguistic minority children in school, but on the other hand, without providing minority children instruction in Mandarin [Chinese] the Chinese government cannot socialize these children into the political, cultural and economic mainstream of Chinese society. To be successful, the Chinese educational system needs to produce people who are 'both ethnic and expert'" (Postiglione,1999,p.124).

A Case Study of Education in Tibet

To most Tibetans, prior to the Chinese takeover in 1951, Tibet was an independent nation. From the Chinese perspective, however, Tibet has always been a part of China. China traces its claims to Tibet back to 1792 when the Qing Emperor sent Chinese troops to drive back the invading Nepalese. For the Qing Dynasty, Tibet was an important buffer state (Hessler, 1999). Imperial administrators and armies were sent to the region to ensure peace, but the Tibetans were left to maintain authority over most internal affairs (Hessler, 1999). In the early 1900's the Qing Dynasty collapsed and Western powers, specifically the British, invaded Tibet and forced the Dalai Lama to establish open relations with them. As the result of nationalistic rhetoric, China viewed the loss of Tibet as disgraceful; a humiliation inflicted on China by foreign powers. "By the time Mao Zedong founded the People's Republic of China in 1949, Tibet had figured into the nation's pre-eminent task: the reunification of the once-powerful motherland" (Hessler, 1999, p. 59).

When the Chinese took over Tibet the region was a feudal-theocracy. Ninety-five percent of the population were hereditary serfs and/or slaves owned by monasteries and nobles (Hessler, 1999). The ills of the feudal system were part of the rationale for why China needed to "liberate" Tibet. Mao's regime viewed the class differentiation in Tibet as a threat to the communist ideology. Tibetans were (and still are) viewed as "backward" and ignorant. They needed to be "civilized." The Tibetan language was also ridiculed because it was associated with Tibetan nationalism, but equally importantly it was denounced because of its use of "honorific" phrases that reinforce class distinctions.

Prior to 1951, Tibet had its own traditional form of education--monastic education. Tibetan tradition required that all families with more than two sons send one of them to a monastery to become a monk (Lin, 1997). Schools were housed in large monasteries of Tibetan Buddhism. The schools taught basic literacy in Tibetan and the values and teachings of the religion. Advanced academies for the in-depth study of Tibetan Buddhism and medicine also existed. Monastic education was an early form of organized formal education in Tibet.

Private schools also existed in pre-"liberated" Tibet. In the eighteenth century it was a common practice for a monk or retired government official to establish a school in their home (Sangay, 1998). The private school admission was open to both rich and poor children. School fees did not exist, but gifts were often given to the teacher during the Tibetan New Year (Sangay, 1998). The belief was that the imparting of wisdom was good for the community.

With the advent of Communism in Tibet, from 1950's onward, the Chinese opened schools to spread the Communist ideology and power base (Sangay, 1998). Students were paid silver coins to join the Communist party and attend school. The goal of the communist government was to assimilate the Tibetans into the Han Chinese culture. Chinese became the official language in all schools, and as a result, Tibetans grew up illiterate in both Chinese and Tibetan (Sangay, 1998).

Tibet remains one of the least literate regions in China. The Chinese government asserts that the illiteracy rate in Tibet is at 44.43 percent, a vast improvement over the estimated 90 percent illiteracy rate at "liberation" (Sangay, 1998). However, some outside observers put the illiteracy rate in Tibet as high as 74.31 percent (Chinese Education, 1989 as cited in Sangay, 1998). One reason for the low literacy rate is the lack of school attendance. "China in general has a 98.4 percent enrollment rate of primary-school-age children, whereas Tibet lags behind with only a 66.6 percent enrollment rate" (China Statistical Yearbook, 1995; Tibet Statistical Yearbook, 1995 as cited in Sangay, 1999, p. 292).

Another major problem for Tibetan education is the lack of qualified teachers. "Seventy percent of teachers ...have no more than a high or middle school education. In rural areas, some teachers cannot teach above grade three because [they] have the knowledge standards of no more than a fifth year school student" (Li, 1986 as cited in Sangay, 1999, p. 293). The Chinese government has created incentives for Chinese teachers to relocate and teach in Tibet. However, because of the generally held belief in China that living at high altitudes does damage to one's health, it is usually only those who cannot find jobs in their home province who move to Tibet.

Constitutional rights and Tibetan education

Although Chinese law provides certain linguistic rights to minorities, the reality is that Chinese, not Tibetan, is used for all official and judicial purposes and is the "medium of instruction" in most Tibetan schools. "The exception used to be the Tibetan primary schools, where all the courses are taught in Tibetan, but recently these have begun to teach [in] the Chinese language" (Sangay, 1999, p. 294). Since 1997, from the first grade of primary school, Chinese has become the language of instruction in almost every school. Government officials claim that the shift back to Chinese language instruction is the result of many minority parents believing "that the sole use of Tibetan may not help their children's future" (Sangay, 1999, p. 294). Indeed, exclusionary political and economic policies play a role in the decision to use Chinese as the language of instruction.

Each year top-ranking students from the elementary schools are sent to other "Tibetan Secondary Schools" in China (Postiglione, 1999). However, many minority parents in Tibet resist and oppose this controversial policy which is viewed as a systematic way to forcibly assimilate Tibetans into the Chinese culture. Students are sent to China when they are very young and return home "substantially assimilated into Chinese culture and find it difficult to reintegrate into Tibetan culture" (Sangay, 1998 p. 296). This practice diminishes the constitutional right of minorities to maintain and preserve their culture and leads to children who feel excluded from both Chinese and Tibetan society.

Higher education for Tibetans

China has one of the oldest and largest programs of state-sponsored preferential policies for ethnic minorities. Unfortunately, until recently the preferential policies were often misused by Han Chinese who reclassified themselves as Tibetan (or another minority) to take advantage of these programs (Postiglione, 1998). "Reclassified" Hans occupy slots in the university that would otherwise be filled by Tibetans.

Another limitation to Tibetan higher education is the lack of universities in the region. The small number of Tibetans who do get a higher education usually attend teacher colleges. Until 1985, the Tibetan Autonomous Region Teachers' College was the only institution of higher learning in the region. Renamed the Tibet University, today the school offers a wider range of degrees, but it still admits very few students and is considered a low quality school. The lack of institutions of higher learning effectively excludes Tibetans from being integrated into the economic and societal mainstream.

Conclusions

In China, public school enrollments will continue to be transformed by an increase in the number of students who bring linguistic and cultural diversity with them to school. The issue of how to implement universal education for all children and at the same time preserve the language and culture of minority students is a problem that China must face. China's educational success in Tibet (and other minority regions) will depend on her ability to engage ethnic students in the universal primary school system. For universal education to be embraced it must be seen as a way to improve one's situation in life. Minority students must believe that there is a possibility of making it through the selective secondary program and gaining a place at a university. However, if public education does little more than assimilate the Tibetan students into Han culture, minority students will continue to dropout of school and consequently be excluded from enjoying the privileges of education.

Bilingual education that focuses on the teaching of Tibetan beyond the elementary level is one way that Tibetan culture could be infused into the school system, and has the possibility to improve the overall quality of learning and enhance the self-confidence of minority students. If bilingual education is utilized in Tibet to institutionalize the importance of the minority culture and language then attendance rates may increase and the goal of universal education may be reached. However, the probability of Tibetan language instruction beyond the elementary level is unlikely because the Chinese government recognizes that Tibetan language is linked with Tibetan nationalism and is therefore a threat to national unity.

Bilingual education can help to ensure equal access to education. A fully implemented bilingual education program using a student's native language (to varying degrees), designed and implemented at the local level, is a way to encourage minority participation in public schools, increase academic performance of minority students and create a truly multicultural society. However, in China the government fears that a multicultural society would threaten the communist state by creating distinct social groups that could develop into divisive social classes. Exclusionary practices have been implemented to prevent this from occurring.

The debate over bilingual education is part of a larger political debate over two competing visions of the future--diverse societies made up of many cultures or one societal or global culture. While some praise diversity, others believe that their country will be divided by differences. China has embraced a multilingual approach. However, lack of policy enforcement and conflicting political forces within the nation could continue to make bilingual education a policy dilemma for many years to come.

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Notes

1. Bilingual education in China is directed at the language minority students, who are required to be proficient in their native language as well as Chinese (Mandarin).
2. Important events in Tibet and Tibetan education since 1950:

Date	Event
1951	First Conference on Minority Nationality Education held in Beijing.
1952	Lhasa Primary School opened.
1956	Second Conference on Minority Nationality Education held in Beijing. Lhasa Secondary School opened.
1959	Lhasa Uprising.
1960- 1962	Land reforms. Aristocratic and monastic estates broken up. Wide spread famine.
1965	Vocational schools established.
1966- 1976	Cultural Revolution No Tibetan language instruction. Minority nationality education abolished. Expansion of primary and secondary education. University admission dependent on class origin.
1978	University entrance exams reintroduced.
1980, April	First Forum on Work in the TAR -Guarantee of use of Tibetan as the first language in school and society, state funding for education and the transfer of Han Chinese personnel out of the TAR. "Putting More Tibetans in the Saddle" was the slogan.
1980, May	Apology to Tibetans by Hu Yaobang, the General Secretary of the CCP Central Committee.
Mid 1980s	Han Chinese entrepreneurs migrate to Tibet in large numbers. Large declines in school enrollment.
1984	Law on regional autonomy passed. Policy established to send Tibetan students to secondary school in China.
1985	Tibetan language primary schools established. School tuition established. Han Chinese governmental officials sent into the TAR in large numbers. The

- mention of transferring out Han Chinese officials disappears from public discourse. TAR Teacher's College became Tibet University, a comprehensive university. TAR opened to tourism.
- Policy on the "Provisions on the Study, Use, and Development of Spoken and Written Tibetan" was established. Chinese government attacked the Dalai Lama. Public demonstrations followed. These protests effected Tibetan education.
- 1987 Monasteries viewed as a threat to China's security and therefore monastic education, including literacy education, in rural areas declined. The school curriculum narrowed. It focused on Chinese culture and language at the expense of Tibetan cultural information and language instruction.
- 1989 Tibetan Secondary school opened in Beijing. Experimental Tibetan Language schools operated (1989-1996). Tibet was under martial law from 1989-1990.
- 1993 Designated as the "Year of Education in the TAR" which led to more money to education. By 1994 educational expenditures were double the 1990 level (1995 TAR Statistical Yearbook). Riots in Lhasa. Attacks focused on Han Chinese businesses.
- Mid-1990's The large number of Han Chinese children in the Tibetan school system results in Chinese being the language of instruction in secondary schools.
- 1994 The policy of sending Tibetan children to study in mainland China was extended to include Han Chinese students, further decreasing the number of Tibetan in secondary and higher education. 1994-1997 = "Anti-Dalai Lama" campaign by the Chinese government.
- 1996 Tibetan language instruction at the secondary level was abandoned. Financial and political considerations played a role in this policy decision. Chinese conduct the "Propagation of Atheism" campaign.
- 1997 Introduction of Chinese language instruction from the first grade.
- 1996-present De-emphasis of Tibetan language and culture in schools.

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