

Approaching Tibetan Studies

Curricular Ideas and Support Materials

Glossary of Political Terms Associated with the Tibetan Situation

- Autonomous** self-governing
- de facto** Something generally accepted or agreed to without any formal decision in its favor. (DCL); Latin: *in fact*
- Diaspora** The flight, scattering, or migration of a people from their country or homeland.
- exile** A person separated from his or her native land. Prolonged separation from one's country, as by force of circumstances. (RHWC)
- independence** A nation, state, or territory not under the control of any other power.
- legitimate government** A government generally acknowledged as being in control of a nation and deserving formal recognition, which is symbolized by the exchange of diplomats between that government and the governments of other countries. (DCL)
- nation** A body of people, associated with a particular territory, that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or possess a government peculiarly its own. (RHWC)
- People's Republic of China (PRC)** The government of China set up in 1949 after communist forces under the leadership of Mao Tse Tung took control of the country.
- self-determination (national)** The collective right of a people to choose to view themselves as a distinct nation and freedom of a people to determine the way in which they should be governed. (RHWC)
- sovereignty** A nation or state's supreme power within its borders. (DCL)
- suzerainty** The position or power of a state exercising political control over a dependent state. (RHWC)
- theocracy** A nation or state in which the clergy exercise political power, an in which religious law is dominant over civil law. (DCL)
- Tibet Autonomous Region** The official title given to Tibet by The People's Republic of China in 1965. Regional borders of historical Tibet were re-defined by China.
- Tibetan Government-in-Exile** The Tibetan government of The Dalai Lama holding power in Tibet prior to the Chinese occupation, reformed in exile and operating out of Dharamsala, India.
- Xizang** Chinese for *western treasure house*; The Chinese historical name for Tibet.

Source Citation Abbreviations:

DCL - *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1991.

RHWC - *Random House Webster's College Dictionary*, Random House, New York, 1992.