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Tibet



(above show US congress speaker Pelosi visiting Dhamlasalam)

1. Dalai Lama

Obviously this is the part about Tibet familiar to all, and let's dispose of it first. Dalai Lama is a cultural icon and social celebrity, probably better known than even Richard Geer who is his big fan. With books written (probably ghost written) in his name about happiness etc, his image is that of a benevolent and contented sage, but this has very little connection to Tibetan culture, religion, politics and social conditions. In the mean time, support for Tibet's nationhood aspirations has all but evaporated, partly because of the sheer difficulty of actually doing anything to promote it - just the physical task of infiltrating weapons and material, to support a future insurgency across the Himalayas, is daunting enough, aside from the much increased economic and military power of China - but partly also because of the inherent weakness of the Tibetan system, which is a theocracy ruled by a person chosen by monks on the evidence of reincarnation, hardly a good basis for democratic government.

While the West expresses adulation (and superficially) support for Dalai Lama, China, a historical nation accustomed to outlasting its problems, merely waited for him to die of old age, after which it would simply declare that it has found his new incarnation and try to groom the baby into a more agreeable new Dalai Lama. Time and history are not on Tibet's side.

2. The origin of the Tibetan theocracy

Tibetans as an organized national group made its appearance in Han history and was known as Tufan; the nomadic tribes of Qiang and Di were closely identified with Tibetans and there appeared to be various shared customs, including the swastika symbol; it is probable that some of the nomads settled on the Tibetan Plateau and merged with the native population already there, some time before the Han era. The natives themselves describe a merging of a monkey tribe and a demoness tribe as their own origin. Very little is known about these early people, but the novel Journey to the West's monkey god Sun Wukong, who was born from a white stone, may be what remains of this tribe's legend. During Yu's flood relief work (supposedly taking place around 2000BC), he was supposed to have captured a white furred demon and imprisoned it under a mountain, which appears to be the original story of Sun Wukong's imprisonment under the Five Finger Mountain by Buddha. Yu and his son Qi were both said to have been born from white stones, and Yu's tribe, the Xias, were called "people of the east" in Tibetan books. We can

therefore hypothesize that some branches of the Yu tribe settled in Tibet, while others moved east into China. The Jiang and Ji alliance that established the Zhou dynasty in the next millenium may also be part of the Qiang-Di tribes, and the Zhous were called Dragons people in Tibentan Books. As with other peoples of the time, shamanic tribal elders were influential and selected the chiefs, who combined military and ceremonial functions, but were more like hired managers rather than royalty.

The next thing we know about Tibetan history is that it had a series of kings who descended from heaven, the first one meeting a group of shamans out to search for a king as he came down a mountain path; having convinced themselves that he was indeed what they were looking for, they carried him into the capital on their shoulders and proclaimed him. However, as soon as a king's son reached the age 13 (or, in the books, old enough to ride horse), the reigning king would "return to heaven" allowing the prince to succeed to the throne. This appears to be a form of regicide sacrificing the old king to heaven so that a new, young king can be proclaimed, possibly allowing the shamans to rule through him, a practice known, again, also in Xia history. However, the practice ceased after half a dozen generations because, it is said, the last king of that era, who was on bad terms with shamans as well as some important nobles, died in a duel with a courtier, and quite obviously did not return to heaven. Subsequently, kings were buried in tombs after death, whereas the previous ones left no corpses when returning to heaven and so required no burial. Officially the books say that during the fight the ladder to heaven was cut preventing kings from making their heavenly returns.

By then it was close to the Tang era in China, and Buddhism was taking hold in a large part of Asia - its previous appearance in Tibet made no impact as nobody could understand its books. The conquerer king Sonjanganbu took a princess of Nepal and another one of Tang as wives, both bringing their versions of buddhism. After he passed away however conflicts developing between shamans and buddhists, and between different buddhist camps, intertwined with conflicts between families of nobility and palace factions, gradually led to chaotic conditions. When the royal line died out, the well organized Yellow monk faction eventually won power.

3. Panchan and Dalai

Reincarnation was originally a Hindu concept; in Buddhism it led to the particular form that Buddha returns in many incarnations (including the female version of Guanyin that is commonly worshiped by female devotees in China) and the Tibetan Buddhism belief that great monks are all Buddha incarnations, or Living Buddhas, and are succeeded after death by new births of themselves. Of these the Dalai and Panchan monks are the most important. An early generation Panchan Lama was the teacher of his Dalai contemporary and supported his more worldly pupil for control of the government, thus producing a theological precedence between the two lines. However, in due course the temporal power associated with the Dalai line made it more important than the Panchan line. In effect, most of the time the Dalai led the government, but the Panchan would do so in an acting capacity after a Dalai Lama's death during the new Dalai's minority.

By the time the practice was well established, it was the late Ming dynasty in China. In the five centuries from the decline of Tang, there had been little contact between the two sides, but a link was re-established when succession disputes between different monk factions supporting Dalai claimants required arbitration by an external party. The Ming imperial court was, however, too beleaguered to take much interest, and it was the much stronger Manchurian Qings, who conquered Mongolia, Xinjiang, Taiwan as well as China proper, that used the opportunity to make themselves the final court of appeal of Tibet, thus gaining a nominal sultzainity: the Imperial court provided the Golden Urn used to perform a lottery whenever a succession dispute arises over a great monk position between different new born boys, with the Urn thus becoming the symbol of Chinese overlordship in Tibet. However, while the Qing court and later the Republic of China posted a representative to Tibet, there was no attempt to actually exercise government power.

In the mean time the British established their rule over India, and some adventurous operators began to exercise old colonial practices on Tibet. An expedition to Lasa extracted a treaty granting various concessions, which were however repudiated by the London government. A subsequent treaty demarcated the McMahon line designating the southern Himalayan slopes east of Nepal as Indian territory and extending the northern front of Kashmir into the Tibetan Plateau - there was some doubt whether the treaty was legally signed by Tibetans and in any case it was repudiated by China.

When the Communist government was established in Beijing, it chose to assert the dormant Chinese sovereignty by sending an army into Tibet and extracting the Tibetan government's agreement that it was a self-governing territory of China, while two areas populated by Tibetans, Qinghai and western Sichuan, were incorporated into ordinary provinces. Beijing chose not to dispute the eastern border with India, but extended military control and roadworks engineering over the disputed western territory, which eventually led to a war with India in 1962 - Nehru

overoptimistically thought that the China-India friendship treaty traded Indian recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet for Chinese recognition of the McMahon borders, whereas the fine print merely left the matter unresolved, and the differing understandings of the two sides blew up in the end.

This was the time when young Tibetans actually looked up to China for anti-imperialist leadership and economic modernization, religion, feudalism and colonialism being very much out of fashion at the time. On its part, Chinese communists were seriously in belief of international brotherhood and ideological persuasion, so that even Buddha incarnations can be educated to support national unity and communism. While they had some success with the then youthful Panchen, the younger Dalai turned out to be a harder nut to crack: during World War II he was tutored by a German aviator who was in India at the outbreak and escaped internment by going into Tibet. With silent non-cooperation from the palace, disputes grew between Tibetans and Chinese representatives, with their Tibetan fellow travellers, eager to assert the latest political fashions, till the inevitable climax with the army mobilizing to suppress riots and Dalai escaping to India with his entourage, a government without territory that, 50 years later, still represents to the world a Shangri-la mirage that has little to do with reality.

4. The prognosis

Tibetan government in exile continues to operate, and continues to attract new refugees who make the grueling trek across the snowy Himalayas to join the Living Buddha's little community in India. Dalai Lama continues to draw adulation from Tibetan expatriates and religious followers in any city he visits, occasionally even getting an audience with government chiefs not fearful of Chinese protests, but he is a 75 year old man who would prefer to die at home rather than in exile; for this he would abandon the dream of Tibetan independence, already given up by the rest of the world. More importantly, like other Chinese people, Tibetans have also been infected with the Hollywood-Disney-McDonald consumerism that has take hold of the whole world. China can have its particular adaptation of capitalism, Socialism with Chinese Characteristics; so also can Tibet. If agriculture is hard to develop on the arid and cold plateau and industry uneconomical with its logistic difficulties, Tibet remains the ultimate romantic tourist destination for the world as well as for the rest of China. The liability of visitors to suffer from the altitude disease in the environment of low atmospheric pressure and limited oxygen, only makes the place more attractively challenging to the jaded tourist who has already seen the rest of the world.

This may not be an exciting outcome, but it is a realistic one. It might be the end of a Tibetan dream, but it permits Tibet and the Tibetan people to survive in this harsh and forgetful world, which had once encouraged their aspirations, romanticized them, and even exploited them with ulterior geopolitical motives, and then left them to their own devices.

added on 15 March 2008

the military suppression of Lhasa demos has all but ensured that Dalai Lama will die in exile - despite his statement that he is in favour of the Beijing Olympics, his supposed followers (like the independence advocates in Taiwan) hoped that the Chinese government would be reluctant to generate negative publicity before the games and there is a time window for generating international pressure on China - even Mia Farrow had the idea, and was demanding that China does something obscurely related to Dalfor in Africa - to China, Dalai is either playing a double game, or has lost control of his followers; either way, there is no incentive to be accommodating

judging by how things went since 4 June 1989, China would, if it comes down to this, accept the cancellation of the Olympics than give in; it believes history and economics are on its side; this might be over optimistic, but it cannot be changed

Olympic Torch



Personally I find the Olympic torch procession one of the most corny operations I have seen; however, I guess other people like it, and it probably provides employment to a lot of people too, so I guess I would bow before the tradition, but I also respect the rights of the tibetans and sympathizers to hold protests against it. Whether they are entitled to disrupt the procession is a question of law, to be decided by the authorities in each country.

I watched the China news about the torch leaving Beijing for Kazakstan, then to Turkey; in both (Muslim) countries the procession passed in peace; trouble then erupted in London and Paris: I could see each torch protected by several layers of supporters and police, forming a security bubble around each runner, but the front is open as the torch leads the way, and the protesters repeatedly tried to wrestle the torch away from the holder or knock him/her to the ground, but usually unsuccessfully because the security would block the attempt and wrestle the protester to the ground first. Obviously, if the number of protesters were much larger and they coordinate, with some enticing the security away and others looking for the right opportunity to go for the torch holder, they would have scored more successes. The small number and the lack of attack precision do not bode well for the future protests in other cities. (I believe the numbers would be larger in US cities, but then and security efforts would be tougher too - the US guys are high up on anti terror practice; probably a lot more injuries would occur.)



After the whole torch run is over, how would the Tibetan overseas movement look? probably not very good; the way the protests have been carried out, with onlookers not really understanding what all the violence is about, could only bring discredit to the cause.

added on 9 April 2008

the Olympic torch run was for all practical purpose cancelled in San Francisco - the route was changed that nobody could find it, and the closing ceremony was cancelled; what remained was a series confrontations between pro-run Chinese and anti-run Tibetans and their American friends; there are a lot more Chinese than Tibetans, and even with non-Tibetan supporters including those motivated about Dalfur (seems remote from China, Tibet, Olympics?); the following photo summarizes it rather well



quite so - the whole thing was more a joke than anything else

Those interested can find a series of photos at <http://flickr.com/photos/tingley>

added on 19/4/08

the torch has reached Thailand, having passed Argentina, Tanzania, Oman, Pakistan and India; not much disturbances were allowed to occur, particularly in India where there was practically no public viewing permitted at all; the various governments are not necessarily against Tibetans protesting against China; they just don't want the spectacle they put on for public entertainment to become the setting for public rioting instead

how Australia will handle the situation will be interesting; Australia, Japan and Korea have all forbidden the use of the protection squad sent from China (officially said to be "volunteers" - trained in police action but speaking little English, they often confused friends and enemies and caused more problem than benefit) so what would they do to minimize rioting yet allow freedom of expressions?

to the onlookers of each country holding the torch run, it is clear that there are far more supporters of China that can be mobilized to come and demo than Tibetan supporters; this is a simple number issue that Tibetans would find it hard to overcome - there are just too many Han Chinese everywhere, including in Tibet itself. Further, they are armed with the weapon of western commercialism - McDonald, Starbuck and Disney come with the Han, a tidal wave that has already changed Chinese cities beyond recognition. Calls to preserve Tibetan way of life have been all but drowned out - after all, Han Chinese don't care very much about preserving even their own way of life. A truly hopeless battle.

on another issue: after hard going for more than 10 years, Rupert Murdoch now can see his Chinese prospect improving, because CNN is now in big trouble (BBC was in trouble long before): it was bad enough for Jack Cafferty using the expression "bunch of goons and thugs," but when CNN "apologized" by explaining "we are not attacking the Chinese people, only the government", it became much worse - after all, that was exactly what the Chinese government thought...

the point is, are the news organizations in China to sell news as a product or spread news for its own sake? doing the second will make the first more or less impossible

most people in Asia would be puzzled why the CNN spokesman would consider attacking the government to be less serious than attacking the people, until you remember that at least theoretically a democratic government is the people's servant, so the people are always good, just they might have a bad servant; it shows the wide cultural gap between east and west

added on 25/4/08

the Australian leg went peacefully: 10K supporters turned up, far outnumbering protesters; guess this will be repeated in Japan and Korea, where Tibetan numbers were negligible anyway; somehow the Falungong guys were nowhere to be seen - maybe the cult is losing followers world wide, though it still publishes newspapers (given away free); the Taiwan independent guys have become demoralized by the events in Taiwan but remain strong numerically, but many are actually happy to see Olympics in Beijing and so are doubly not in mood to protest

the Beijing foreign ministry spokesperson, when asked whether the supporters were financially assisted by the Chinese embassy in Australia, gave a diversionary answer: why don't you investigate who is behind the Tibetans? I guess Tibetans actually do have assistance from somewhere, presumably the same guys that support Falungong; many Tibetan activists seem to be doing it full time and do not need to have jobs

added on 1 May

the torch is now in Hongkong for procession tomorrow, and Mia Farrow was allowed entry by immigration officials after being stopped for question (and I guess warning)

I also read that police raided a factory in Canton which was making thousands of Tibetan flags... the owner did not know what these flags were; the person who ordered these probably came from HK and intended to use them for tomorrow's demo...

just a related thought: while neither China nor Tibetans end up looking well from this, the one beneficiary from the problem is Taiwan: Ma got elected just when China would want to avoid any additional unpleasantness, and is

willing to make concessions

added on 24 June

with tight security, the torch rally went through Lhasa without disturbance; in any case, the earthquake sent tibet to the back pages for some time; not sure whether interest would revive in August



西藏的回忆 Tibet Memories

1.

King Sonjanganbo was returning from his morning hunt; ahead, the Podala Palace gleamed in the sunlight - situated high on a cliff, the golden walls of the palace could be seen from miles away on the flat plateau of Lasa.

He looked at the day's haul being carried on the horse behind him: not bad - two mountain goats, a deer, and the rarest of rare, a wild boar; pigs do not take to the cold climate and rough scrubs of Tibetan highlands; in fact, they want tender shoots and roots, almost like humans. Goats and yaks are not as choosy; they eat anything, leaving the better plant material for human consumption.

His wives did not approve of his enthusiasm for hunting: both the Princess of Nepal and the Princess from China were devout Buddhists who neither drank wine nor ate meat, and spent whole days reciting the sutras; it made time spent with them rather slow; in fact he spent little time with either, though by right he should be sharing their beds as often as possible so that his sons would be the grandsons of the Tang Emperor or Nepal King, which would be good for diplomacy. However, it was so much more enjoyable to spend time with Tibetan chiefs in drinking sessions, or those lovely maidens who had not been brought up so strictly.

No, a king's got to do what a king's got to do; however much the princesses might disapprove of the taking of lives, a king's job was to lead men into war, or at least, to hunt, riding on fast horses and shooting arrows. Those peasants who came from the east, up those deep river gauges, or the nomads that came from the west driving their yaks and goats, what do they know about being a king? They can worship the fire, stone, the monkey god, or snakes and dragons, refusing to change; the king has to go with whichever god whose blessing is needed to win, in war or in diplomacy. Tibet has known many gods, and right now, Buddha seems the most powerful, since both the Emperor of Tang and the princes of India worship Him; what choice does the King of Tibet have but to go along as well - but without abandoning any old gods that we used to worship; it would be unwise to offend the old even if one has to take up the new.

And this afternoon he would have to confer with all those chanting Great Vehicle monks who thought they could save everyone else, the scholastic Lesser Vehicle monks who thought each could only save oneself, the swearing shamans who could do those firebreathing tricks, and the dragon worshipers who said their ancestor was that monkey king - about how to decorate the Great Light Temple, built for the Nepal princess, and the Lesser Light Temple, built for the Chinese princess. The fuss they would make about every little detail, and they could never agree on anything so that every little thing had to come before the King in the end.

Yes a great king that knew everything; out in the country, peasants and herders who had not seen the two temples being built were already telling stories that he, using his magic power, constructed the two temples in one night - of course, if the king can command workmen to build what he orders, then the building arose from the king's power; but one night.

And stories about him being the wisest king, that when two women fought over a baby, the king judged the woman who gave up the struggle, for fear of injuring the child, as the mother; that when he was in Chang-an to seek the hand of Princess Wen-cheng, and was given the test of passing a silk thread through a nine-corner pearl, he did it with the help of an ant; that in anticipation of getting drunk at a banquet in the Tang palace, he took a ball of string and unreel it as he went over, so that he could trace his way back at the end. All those stories he already heard as a small child in the nursery and were about great kings or sages of the past, but now had been put on him.

Of course Sonjanganbo did achieve many things; orphaned at a young age, he managed to fight off usurpers, evil ministers, scheming relatives and foreign interferers, rebuilt the Tibetan army and reimposed sovereignty on all those baronial territories. Even the great Tang Emperor had to treat him with respect. But statecraft was such a bore.

2.

Tibetans say they were descended from the union of a tribe of monkeys and a tribe of witches; the monkey, they said, popped out of a stone, while the witch made fire. With fire, we turn bloody, tough flesh into tender, fragrant food, keep savage beasts at bay, burn away vegetation to clear land for planting while making a fertilizing ash, and most important, turn offerings to the gods into smoke, to rise to heaven for them to enjoy; after death, some of the people insist their bodies needed to be burnt so that their souls can rise. But stones were also important; those that stand erect pointing at heaven - surely one could speak to heaven through them? corpses could be covered by a mound of rocks, and those who did bad deeds were punished by being stoned.

Tibet used to have kings that came down from heaven to rule over people, and returned to heaven to make way for their sons who were also gods from heaven. The first king was found by the six shamans from the six tribes, who decided they needed a common king and went out in search. They found him descending the high mountain path, carried him back to the village on their shoulders and proclaimed him. The kings always returned to heaven when their sons were old enough to ride horses, so one need not put up with any one for that long. The Han people to the east of Tibet, and others, even more distant countries further east, did the same thing: heaven would send down a dragon to take their chiefs back up, when their sons were about ready to take over and old kings were no longer needed.

But in Tibet this arrangement soon stopped, when the last king of that dynasty, who upset many people by importing different shamans from the west, and then upset even more people by asking them to leave, had a duel with a courtier and was killed in front of all the watching noblemen and soldiers; he obviously did not go to heaven in the usual way arranged by the shamans; in fact, people say the fight of the two men accidentally cut the ladder that linked heaven to earth, stopping all future kings from returning to heaven; instead, they left behind corpses that needed to be buried in soil, like the Han people did with theirs. This is what they would do with Sonjanganbo, while his soul returned to heaven to be with his ancestor gods, and tribal shamans would chant and burn offerings for all the gods.

Now a new god, maybe the most powerful so far, needed to be included.

3.

"It pleases Sonjanganbo, King, Lord of Lasa, Siasion and Kamba, to decree that the Great Light Temple and Lesser Light Temple shall be decorated thus:

On the front shall be drawn the Diamond-Steel Rod, as wished by the Chanting Monks;

On the back shall be drawn the Praying Wall, as wished by the Scholastic Monks;

On the left shall be drawn the swastika, as wished by the shamans and followers;

On the right shall be drawn the mesh pattern, as wished by the tibetan natives.

So signed and sealed on this Day of the New Year"



Myanma: another forgotten corner: (abridged from SMH)

Such attention is placed on China as a diplomatic pressure point on the rampant Burmese junta. But there is a group of government businessmen - technocrats in Singapore who will also be closely the crisis in Rangoon. And, were they so inclined, their influence could go a long way to limiting the misery being inflicted on Burma's 54 million people. With an estimated \$A3 billion staked in the country (and a more than \$20 billion stake in Australia), Singapore Inc companies have been some of the biggest investors in and supporters of Burma's military junta — this while its Government, on the rare times it is asked, suggests a softly-softly diplomatic approach towards the junta.

When it comes to Burma, Singapore pockets the high morals it likes to wave at the West elsewhere. Singapore's one-time head of foreign trade

once said as his country was building links with Burma in the mid-1990s: "While the other countries are ignoring it, it's a good time for us to go in ... you get better deals, and you're more appreciated ... Singapore's position is not to judge them and take a judgemental moral high ground."

But by providing [Burma's](#) pariah junta with the crucial equipment mostly denied by Western sanctions, Singapore has helped keep the junta and its cronies afloat for 20 years, since the last time the generals killed the citizens they are supposed to protect.

Withdraw that financial support and Burma's junta would be substantially weakened, perhaps even fail. But after two decades of profitable business with the trigger-happy generals and their cronies, that's about the last thing Singapore is likely to do. There's too much money to be made.

Hotels, airlines, military materiel and training, crowd control equipment and sophisticated telecoms-monitoring devices for its secret police — Singapore is manager and supplier to the junta, and the "cronified" economy it controls.

It's impossible to spend any time in Burma and not make the junta richer, thanks to Singapore suppliers' contracts with the tourism industry. Singapore's hospitals also keep Burma's leaders alive — 74-year-old junta leader Than Shwe has been getting his intestinal cancer treated in a Singapore government hospital, protected by Singapore security. Singapore's boutiques keep junta wives and families cloaked in Armani, and its banks help launder their money and that of Burma's crony drug lords.

Much of Singapore's activity in Burma has been documented by an analyst working in Prime Minister John Howard's direct chain of command, in the Office of National Assessments. Andrew Selth is recognised as an authority on the Burmese military. Now a research fellow at Queensland's Griffith University, Mr Selth has written extensively on how close Singapore is to the junta.

Singaporean companies have provided computers and networking equipment for Burma's defence ministry and army, while upgrading the bunkered junta's ability to network with regional commanders — so crucial as protesting monks take to the streets of 20 Burmese cities, causing major logistical headaches for the Tatmadaw, the Burmese military.

"Singapore cares little about human rights, in particular the plight of the ethnic and religious minorities in Burma," Mr Selth writes. Having developed one of the region's most advanced armed forces and defence industrial support bases, Singapore is in a good position to offer Burma a number of inducements which other ASEAN ([Association of South-East Asian Nations](#)) countries would find hard to match." Singapore's Foreign Minister, George Yeo, is the current chairman of ASEAN.

Mr Selth says Singapore also provided the equipment for a "cyber war centre" to monitor dissident activity "This centre is reported to be closely involved in the monitoring and recording of foreign and domestic telecommunications, including the satellite telephone conversations of Burmese opposition groups," Mr Selth writes. Singapore Government companies, such as leading arms supplier Singapore Technologies, dominate the communications and military sector in Singapore. "It is highly unlikely," Mr Selth writes, "that any of these arms shipments to Burma could have been made without the knowledge and support of the Singapore Government." He notes that Singapore's ambassadors to Burma have included a former senior Singapore armed forces officer, and a past director of Singapore's [defence-oriented Joint Intelligence Directorate](#), people with a military background rather than professional diplomats.

When I interviewed Singapore Technologies chief executive Peter Seah at his office in Singapore, I asked about the scale model of an armoured personnel carrier made by his company on his office table. He said ST sold the vehicles "only to allies".

Does that include Burma, I asked, given that Singapore controversially helped sponsor the military regime into ASEAN? Seah was non-specific: "We only sell to allies and we make sure they are responsible." He didn't say how. ST and Temasek don't respond to questions about their activities in Burma.

Singapore is so close to Burma that one of its diplomats there wrote a handbook for its business people there. Matthew Sim's Myanmar on my Mind is full of useful tips for Singaporean business people in Burma. "A little money goes a long way in greasing the wheels of productivity," he writes.

A chapter headed "Committing Manslaughter when Driving" describes the appropriate action if a Singaporean businessman accidentally kills a Burmese pedestrian. "Firstly, the international businessman could give the family of the deceased some money as compensation and dissuade them from pressing charges. Secondly, he could pay a Myanmar citizen to take the blame by declaring that he was the driver in the fatal accident. An international businessman should not make the mistake of trying to argue his case in a court of law when it comes to a fatal accident, even if he is in the right."

Mr Sim says many successful Myanmar businessmen have opened shell companies in Singapore "with little or no staff, used to keep funds overseas". The companies are used to keep business deals outside the control of Burma's central bank, enabling Singaporeans and others to transact with Burma in Singapore.

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