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Precious Animals: State-Wildlife Relations in the Republic of China, 1949-1965

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Precious Animals:

**STATE-WILDLIFE RELATIONS IN THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 1949 -1965**

Kyuhyun Han

Introduction



1. Concept of Precious Animals
2. Comparison of early 1950s, 1959, 1964 precious animal lists

PRC categorization of animals

Harmful Animals

Beneficial Animals

Precious Animals

Then what did it mean to be precious?

→ It changed over time

Precious Animals

International
Exchange Value

Scientific
Research
Value

**Precious
Animals**
(珍贵动物)

Threat to
Extinction
(population
size)

Nationalism

Early 1950s Precious Animals

- Animals Foreign Countries desired
- “economic value”
“exchange value”
“economic animals”
“exhibitory value”
“gift animals”
“world famous”

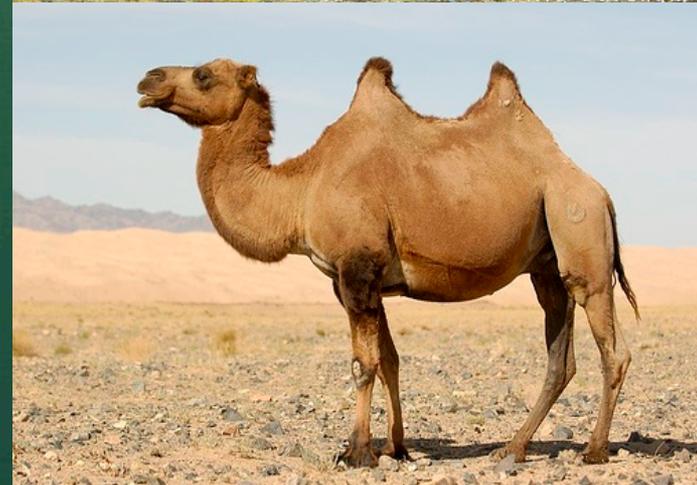


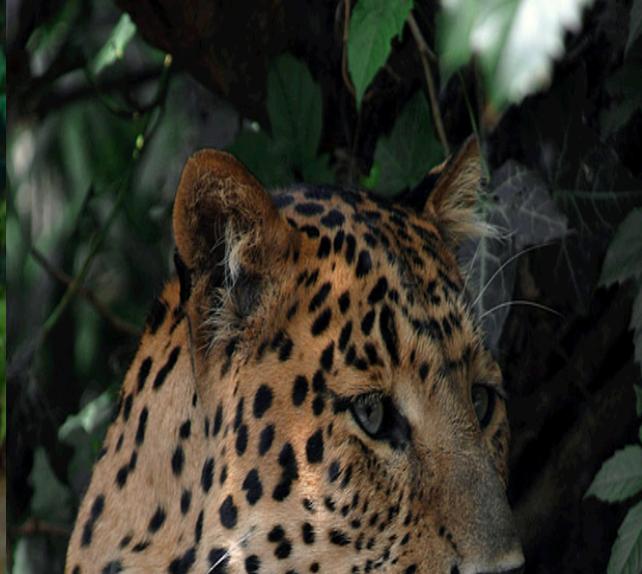
Precious Animal in 1959

- Concern of extinction
- Stronger ties to nationalism
- Precious animals = “**NATIONAL TREASURE**”
- Regulate Export = increased control
 - 1st grade: under completely control of the central government
 - 2nd grade: only used in exhibition and international relations
 - 3rd grade: private exchange allowed but limited

Precious Animal in 1964

- First Grade Precious Animal = **Animals live only in China**
small in number
- China equated animal habitat with national territory
- Bestowed nationality to animals
- Creating “**Chinese animal**”





**Is there another
secret criteria?**



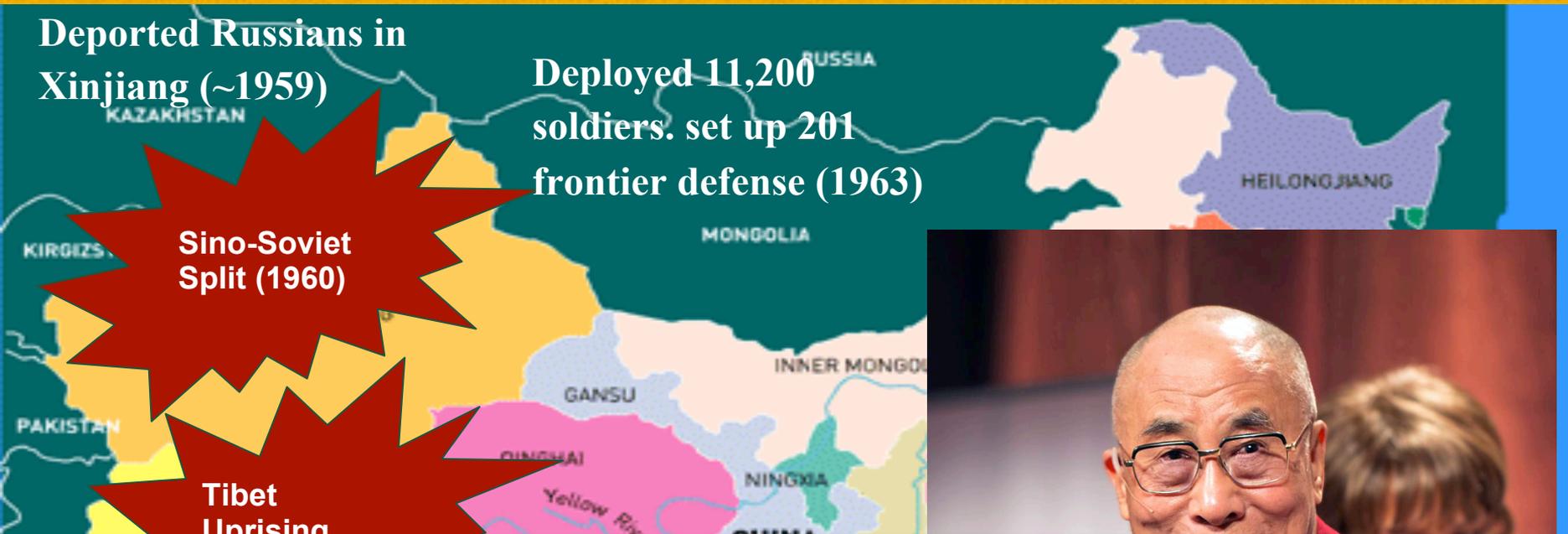
1964 1st Grade Precious Animal Habitat Range

Out of 13 species that were newly incorporated into the precious animal lists, more than half of the new precious animals lived in Qinghai, Xinjiang and Tibet

**What was the reason behind the state's
increased attention to the borderland
wildlife?**

ARKIVE
www.arkive.org

Territorial disputes



Deported Russians in Xinjiang (~1959)

Deployed 11,200 soldiers. set up 201 frontier defense (1963)

Sino-Soviet Split (1960)

Tibet Uprising

From the late 1950s to the early 1960s, China's territorial integrity in Tibet-Xinjiang borders was threatened on multiple grounds

Animals in borderland = weapon to secure territory

Beyond the Giant Panda Centered Frame

What do we miss when we only focus on giant pandas?

1. PRC developed a complicated system encompassing vast regions and a large number of animals
2. Between 1959 - 1964, motivation to secure territorial integrity enabled the state to place more attention to animals in Western borderlands



The end

