

# Tibet

## *Historical Introduction*

During the thirteenth century, Tibet became part of the Mongol-ruled Yuan dynasty of China (1279-1368), when it was conquered by the Mongol Mongke Khan. (For more details see the paper from the Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, September 1992, Beijing: "Tibet – Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation", part I.) China's Ming dynasty (1368-1644) replaced the Yuan, and proceeded to rule Tibet as the Yuan's successor state. The Qing dynasty (1644-1911) reconquered Tibet, and never relinquished it, despite British efforts to prise it away when Britain ruled India. When the Qing gave way to the Republic of China in 1911, the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama unilaterally declared Tibetan independence. The Chinese Republic soon disintegrated into the warlord era, when Tibet, and many other regions or provinces of China, assumed *de facto* (though not *de jure*) self-rule. In 1913-14 Britain organized the Simla Conference, and proposed a division of areas occupied by Tibetans into Outer Tibet (the present Tibet Autonomous Region, TAR) and Inner Tibet (the four Chinese provinces where Tibetans live in compact communities amongst other ethnic groups). The Dalai Lama indicated his willingness to sign the Simla Accord of 1914, which recognized Chinese suzerainty (but not sovereignty) over Tibet. (Tom Grunfeld, October 12, 2005: "Reassessing Tibet Policy", at [http://fpif.org/reassessing\\_tibet\\_policy/](http://fpif.org/reassessing_tibet_policy/)). However, neither the Beijing government dominated by warlords, nor the Nationalist government under Chiang Kai Shek, recognized the independence of Tibet. As successor states of the Qing dynasty, both the Nationalist Republic of China (ROC) and later the Communist People's Republic of China (PRC) continued to regard Tibet as part of China. But during the warlord era and World War II, the governments claiming to rule China had no spare capacity to enforce Chinese control over Tibet. After years of civil war between the Communists and the Nationalists, the Communist Party of China (CCP) emerged as the victor in 1949 and established the PRC, which as a strong central authority was able to unite all of China and reassert Chinese rule over Tibet.

As an aside, it may be noted that Outer Mongolia, another border region of China, had a different fate.

The exigencies of World War II enabled the Soviet Union to pressure Chiang's government to sign a Sino-Soviet treaty in 1946 that recognized the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) as an independent state (Reischauer, Fairbank and Craig, p72). Since the independence of Mongolia was a *fait accompli*, the PRC, as an ally of the Soviet Union, made no attempt to re-take Outer Mongolia.

Before proceeding with the main discussion of the Tibetan situation after 1949, it is useful to consider the nature of the traditional society of "Old Tibet".

## **Old Tibet**

The ruling class of high-ranking lamas, hereditary nobles, and government officials (mostly nobles and monks) made up less than 5% of old Tibet's population, but they owned all of Tibet's farm land, pastures, forests, mountains, rivers and most livestock. (China's White Paper on Tibet in 1992: "Tibet – Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation".) The great majority, or 90%, of the population were serfs, who were tied to their estate-owning masters, providing the estate owners with a permanent labour force that could neither strike nor quit, as in a free market context. It was not unusual for the work (corvee) assigned to them to absorb from 50% to 70% of a serf household's annual work days including weekends, leaving very little time for themselves. A Chinese survey before the "Democratic Reform" showed that the 81 able- and semi able-bodied serfs were assigned 21,260 corvee days of work per year for the Dalai Lama's Regent Dagzhag who owned the Darongqang Manor. The total number of working days including weekends for 81 people is 29,565 days per year. The difference between the two figures is 8,300 working days, the

amount of time all 81 serfs had to work for themselves to eke out a living during that year. This meant that each serf had only 102 days of the year to work for himself or herself.

While the household slaves worked inside their masters' homes, the agricultural serfs served their masters by growing and transporting their crops, gathering their firewood, raising their animals, carrying out their building repairs, and providing transportation for them on demand, all without payment. (Michael Parenti, "Friendly Feudalism: The Tibet Myth", updated and expanded version, January 2007.) A serf could not go anywhere without the master's permission, and the same applied to marriage. Historical records showed that serf-owners could trade and transfer their serfs to others, use them as mortgage for debt, or present them as gifts. (China's 1992 White Paper on Tibet.) Treated no better than slaves, their masters had no need to provide for their maintenance, or care for their health or survival as an expensive piece of property. The serfs had no chance of obtaining an education. Pretty serf girls were usually taken by their owners as household servants and used as they wished. Serfdom was hereditary: children born to serf households remained serfs. The only ways to escape serfdom were to become a monk or nun, or to run away. In addition to serfs, slaves, and owners of these two categories of people, there was a small number of free peasants, 10,000 or so people from middle-class families of merchants, shopkeepers, and small traders, as well as beggars numbering in the thousands. (Michael Parenti, "Friendly Feudalism: The Tibetan Myth", updated and expanded version, January 2007.) There was little social mobility within this class structure, although some Dalai Lama reincarnations were found in peasant families.

The serfs were heavily taxed throughout their lives. They were taxed on the birth of each child, on marriage, for every death in the family, for planting a tree in their yard, for religious festivals, for being sent to prison and upon being released, for being unemployed, and for travelling to another village to find work. When they run out of money, the monasteries lent them money at 20 to 50 percent interest. Some debts were passed down through the generations. This system forced the serfs to toil incessantly and yet still to suffer hunger and cold.

It also enabled the monasteries, big noble families, and other secular estate-owners to accumulate great wealth. For example, Drepung monastery, in the Tibetan capital Lhasa, was one of the largest landowners in the world. It had 185 manors and 300 great pastures, supported by the labour of 25,000 serfs and 16,000 herdsmen. The wealth of these great monasteries was controlled by a few high-ranking lamas, while most of the ordinary monks lived modestly. The Dalai Lama himself lived a life of luxury in the 1,000 room, 14 story Potala Palace. One secular example was the commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army, who owned 4,000 square kilometres of land and 3,500 serfs.

This highly exploitative system of socioeconomic inequality was codified into law that divided the people of Tibet into three classes and nine ranks. (China's 1992 White Paper on Tibet.) People who committed the same crime from different classes and ranks were treated differently. The law on compensation for injury stipulated the cutting off of the hands or feet of a servant who injured his master, while a master who injured his servant was only required to take responsibility for the medical treatment of the servant's wound. The worth of the lives of top-ranking people, such as a prince or a leading Living Buddha, were measured in gold according to the dead body's weight;

whereas the lives of people of lower rank, such as women, hunters, butchers, or craftsmen had the value of a straw rope only. (China's 1992 White Paper on Tibet.)

Estate owners of old Tibet had private prisons, and fearsome punishments awaited serfs who ran away or openly resisted their masters' demands. These included slicing off noses, gouging out eyes, pulling out tongues, cutting off hamstrings or limbs. In 1959, Anna Louise Strong visited an exhibition of torture equipment that had been used by Tibetan serf-owners. (Michael Parenti, "Friendly Feudalism: The Tibet Myth".) On view were instruments for carrying out the above-mentioned punishment and handcuffs of all sizes, including those for children. There were also hot brands, whips, and special tools for disembowelling. The exhibition showed photographs and testimony of thieves, who suffered blinding, crippling, or amputation. There was a shepherd who had had his hands severed after he took away one of his master's cows, because his master had refused to pay him a reimbursement in money and in wheat. A herdsman who objected to his wife being taken away by his lord also had his hands broken off. A woman who was raped was shown with her nose sliced off. When travelling in Tibet in the 1960s, Stuard and Roma Gelder interviewed a former serf, Tserch Wang Tuei, who stole two sheep belonging to a monastery. He lost his faith after a holy lama ordered him to be blinded in both eyes and his hands mutilated beyond use, as punishments for this offence.

This oppressive class system was buttressed by Tibetan Buddhism, which taught that the circumstances of each individual life were determined by his/her karma. The present miserable lives of the lower orders were the result of their having behaved wickedly in their previous incarnations. If they accepted their present lot in life as a karmic atonement, their next existence

might be better. The rich and powerful could look upon their good fortune as a reward for being virtuous in their past lives.

Westerners who held romantic notions of old Tibet propagated a false idea that since its people lived in accord with the laws of karma, there was no need for a police force. In fact, there was a small professional army used mainly for maintaining the social order, protecting the property of the estate owners, and for hunting down runaway serfs.

Before the people of the modern West fell heavily under the spell of the idea promoted by the Dalai Lama and his fellow exiles that the Tibet they had left behind was a “society dedicated to peace and harmony”, and one that “enjoyed freedom and contentment”, a number of English visitors to Tibet bore witness to a very different old Tibet. These people appear to have had no reason to paint either a rosy or a grim picture of that country, other than what they actually did encounter. In 1895, Dr. A. L. Waddell described the people there as living under an “intolerable tyranny of monks and the evil superstition they had fashioned to terrorize their people.” In 1904, Percival Landon called the Thirteenth Dalai Lama’s rule “an engine of oppression.” Around that time, Captain W. F. T. O’Connor wrote that “the great landowners and priests...exercise each in their own dominion a despotic power from which there is no appeal.” He further observed that Tibetan rulers “invented degrading legends and stimulated a spirit of superstition” among the common people. (Ibid.) In 1937, Spencer Chapman wrote, “The Lamaist monk does not spend his time in ministering to the people or educating them...The beggar beside the road is nothing to the monk. Knowledge is the jealously guarded prerogative of the monasteries and is used to increase their influence and wealth.” Charles Bell, a British Tibetologist, who wrote *Portrait of a Dalia*

*Lama: The Life of the Great Thirteenth* in the 1940s, drew attention to the harshness of Tibet's criminal code. The following quoted passage describes how it had been enforced: "In addition to fines and imprisonment, floggings are frequent, not only of people after they have been convicted of an offence, but also of accused persons, and indeed witnesses, during the course of the trial. For serious offences, use is made of the pillory as well as of the cangue, which latter is a heavy square wooden board round the neck." (Xinhuanet news: "Full Text: Development and Progress of Tibet.") He went on to say that murderers and repeat offenders were likely to be punished with mutilation of the body, as mentioned above.

For hundreds of years competing Buddhist sects in Tibet engaged in brutal and bloody sectarian strife, and the then Dalai Lama's Gelug (Yellow Hat) sect was no exception. (Michael Parenti, "Friendly Feudalism: The Tibet Myth", updated and expanded version, January 2007, available in <http://www.MichaelParenti.org/Tibet.html>.) On the subject of religious strife, a Western devotee of Buddhism found old Tibet "much more like Europe during the religious wars of the Counter-reformation" than a Shangri-La of "Tibetan lamas and their followers living together in mutual tolerance and non-violent goodwill." (Ibid.) The Canadian Tibetologist, Tom Grunfeld, saw striking parallels between Tibet and Medieval Europe. In old Tibet, religious violence and economic exploitation were closely related, with economic exploitation generating much of the violence. It was a repressive theocracy of extreme privilege and poverty.

We turn now to describe the situation in Tibet following 1949.

## **Tibet from 1949 to 1959**

Before the leaders of the victorious PRC resorted to force in taking over the government of Tibet at Lhasa, they endeavoured to persuade the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan aristocracy to accept terms that would once more subordinate Tibet to a modified form of indirect rule from China's central government at Beijing, while leaving them a high degree of autonomy. (Melvyn C. Goldstein, "Tibet, China and the United States: Reflection on the Tibet Question") The Tibetans resisted the Chinese pressure, and instead tried to enlist the support of Great Britain, the United States and India to help them to keep the status quo. However, no help was forthcoming from these countries. The lack of progress in the initial round of talks between the PRC and Tibet prompted the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) to move into Tibet in October 1950 to engage the Tibetan army at Chamdo (Gamdo) in battle. The Chinese victory and the threat of further military action forced the Dalai Lama's government to send representatives to Beijing to negotiate terms.

In Beijing the Tibetan representatives were presented with the "Seventeen Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" which the Chinese central government had drawn up. To the Chinese the crucial term was the acceptance by the Tibetan ruling elite of China's sovereignty over Tibet. In order to facilitate Tibet's "return to the Motherland", Beijing gave permission to the Dalai Lama and the officials of the existing Tibetan "local" government to exercise "national regional autonomy" and to rule Tibet unchanged. In addition, the Tibetans were given assurance of freedom of religious belief and protection for their monasteries. The terms on reform and on development of Tibet's economy were to be carried out by the local government in accordance with the local conditions and people's demands, without compulsion from the Chinese central authorities. By accepting the agreement, the Dalai Lama's government would have to cease their practice of having official diplomatic relations with other countries. (The full text of the agreement is available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/zhuanti/tibet%20facts/163877.html>.) The most



controversial point was the disbandment of the Tibetan army and the stationing of the PLA in Tibet. (Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State*, University of California Press, 1989, pp. 765-769.) The Seventeen-Point Agreement which was offered to the Tibetan ruling elites, and which allowed them to continue to own over 90% of the land of their region with the serfdom intact, had to be considered an extremely accommodating and liberal document for Maoist China, which was at that time undertaking land reform all over China. After the agreement was signed and sealed by representatives of both the Chinese central government and the Tibetan local government on May 23, 1951 in Beijing, the document was forwarded to the rulers of Tibet.

The Dalai Lama and his officials first heard about the signing at Yadung, a small Tibetan town near the Indian border, from where they could easily escape to India, if need be. (Melvyn C. Goldstein, "Tibet, China and the United States: Reflection on the Tibetan Question"). A debate on the agreement gave rise to two main factions: one for rejecting it and fleeing to India; the other for accepting it and returning to Lhasa. The United States government also became involved in the debate in connection with its policy of containing China. The U. S. government not only attempted to persuade the Dalai Lama to denounce the agreement and escape to India; it also gave him the choice of moving to the U.S. with a few hundred of his leading officials. Since the U.S. did not give him a clear commitment to support Tibet as an independent country, and to aid Tibet militarily in a substantial way, he did not take the U. S. advice. In the end, the Dalai Lama accepted the opinion of the majority of Tibet's secular and religious elites and returned to Lhasa in August 1951. In the autumn of 1951 Chinese troops also moved peacefully into Lhasa. The Dalai Lama's return with his officials to Lhasa, to rule Tibet under Chinese sovereignty, could only be construed as his government's confirmation of the Seventeen-Point Agreement with China.

After what appeared to the leaders of the Chinese government as Tibet's acceptance of the Seventeen Point agreement, they were satisfied that Tibet had been incorporated into China without further military action. Being assured of their freedom to practice their religion and manage the affairs of their region, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan aristocracy had apparently accepted the new regime, and they worked cooperatively with Chinese government for several years. The following letter, purportedly written by the Dalai Lama, that had been sent to Beijing as a telegram on October 24, 1951 supported this view.

“The Tibet Local Government, as well as the ecclesiastical and secular people, unanimously support this agreement, and under the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Central People's Government will actively support the People's Liberation Army in Tibet to consolidate national defence, drive out imperialist influences from Tibet, and safeguard the unification of the territory and the sovereignty of the Motherland.” (Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 90.) This state of relatively untroubled relationship between Beijing and Lhasa lasted to the mid-1950s.

But the situation was patently unstable. On the Chinese side, some of the PLA generals found it intolerable to allow serfdom to continue. (Melvyn C. Goldstein, “Tibet, China and the United States, Reflections on the Tibetan Question”.) They would have begun to introduce land reform in Tibet had it not been for Mao's restraining hands. On the Tibetan side, although the Dalai Lama was personally in favour of modernizing reforms and working with the Chinese government to achieve compromises on Tibet, he could not control the Tibetan aristocratic hardliners, who were hostile to any reform that would touch the system of serfdom. Being determined to preserve their existing privileges absolutely intact, they had started to plot armed rebellion secretly from 1952 onwards. (See Goldstein. Also China's White Paper on Tibet in 1992: “Tibet – Its Ownership and

Human Rights Situation”). Still endeavouring to make his gradualist Tibetan policy work, Mao made a last-ditch attempt to save it in 1957 by reducing the number of Han cadres and troops in Tibet, and by promising the Dalai Lama in writing that China would postpone socialist land reform in Tibet to 1960 or even beyond, depending on local condition. (Goldstein. China’s White Paper on Tibet in 1992: “Tibet-Its Ownership and Human Right Situation”). However, during a high tide of collectivization in China, Party Secretary Li Jing Quan in Sichuan started reforms in Tibetan-inhabited areas of that province towards the end of 1955. This move triggered a bloody Tibetan uprising in China that spread to other Chinese provinces and eventually to Lhasa in 1959.

The Chinese government reacted at first to the Tibetan revolt with great restraint: it urged the Tibetan “local government” to “punish the rebels and maintain order” instead of mobilizing the PLA to smash it. (China’s White Paper on Tibet in 1992: Tibet—Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation.”) The U.S., on the other hand, was quite ready to aid the Tibetan rebels, supplying them with weapons and ammunition through overland clandestine shipments and by air-drops. The CIA also trained Tibetan Rebels in Guam and Hale Camp in Colorado, and sent them back to the Tibetan parts of China to conduct guerrilla warfare there. The climax of the rebellion was an elaborately planned uprising in Lhasa on March 10, 1959, when the rebels took over control of the area where the Dalai Lama resided, as a prelude to spirited him away to their base at Shannan, and then to India should their movement fail.

After the Dalai Lama left Lhasa, about 7,000 Tibetan rebels endeavoured “to wage a full-scale attack on the Party, government and military institutions” there on March 20, 1959. “Driven beyond its endurance”, the PLA responded, and it did not take long for the PLA to crush the Tibetan rebellion. “With the support of patriotic Tibetan monks and lay people” the PLA put down

the rebellion in Lhasa completely in two days. Not long afterwards, the rebel stronghold in Shannan fell and “armed rebels forces who fled to other places were dissolved”.

The prompt dissolution of rebel forces in other areas seems to provide substance to the Chinese claim that they had significant support in fighting the rebels from the Tibetans themselves. After all, since 90% of ordinary Tibetans had been serfs owned by aristocratic families and monasteries with no human rights to speak of, would they have been averse to the freedom and land promised by the Chinese regime? Some Western writers also reported that the revolt engineered by the ruling elites - the lamas, the nobles and the Tibetan army - had little support from the ordinary Tibetans. (Michael Parenti, *Friendly Feudalism: The Tibet Myth*) They believed this was a reason for its failure. Not having been able to retain a foothold in Tibet, the rebel guerrilla forces were helped by the CIA to set up a base in Mustang Nepal. (Melvyn C. Goldstein, “Tibet, China, and the United States: Reflections on the Tibet Question”. China’s 1992 White Paper.) Over the next decade, small armed bands of Tibetan exile forces continued to harass Chinese outposts in Tibet until the U.S. government under President Nixon ceased to support the Tibetan separatists (Goldstein). Without U.S. support, the Nepal-based Tibetan military operations against China broke down within a few years.

The failure of the Tibetan rebellion brought the Dalai Lama and many Tibetan aristocrats, with the help of the CIA, to India in the fall of 1959. With Nehru’s permission, they settled in Dharamsala, where they founded a Tibetan government in exile in the early 1960s with the Dalai Lama at the head of it. Safely ensconced in India, the Dalai Lama’s establishment repudiated the Seventeen Point Agreement with China, set up offices in some countries, and published journals and books promoting the cause of Tibetan independence. (China’s White Paper on Tibet in 1991: “Tibet— Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation.”)

The flight of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan rebel forces to India led the Chinese government also to renounce the Seventeen Point Agreement, ending thereby Tibet's special status as a theocratic traditional political entity within the Chinese Communist state. (Melvyn C. Goldstein, *Tibet, China and the United States: Reflections on the Tibetan Question*".) Since the Chinese government was committed to establishing an egalitarian society, it promptly emancipated the slaves and abolished the serf system. (China's 1992 White Paper.) It was a fitting move for a government striving to establish an egalitarian society throughout China at that time. The old Tibetan codes together with the harsh punishments and the private prisons were all done away with. The government also introduced land reforms that abolished ownership of the means of production (land, tools, farm animals) by former serf-owners, for the benefit of the poor serfs and slaves of the region. (China's White Paper on Tibet in 1992: *Tibet—Ownership and Human Rights Situation*".) Farmlands belonging to the serf-owners involved in the armed rebellion were seized and distributed freely to landless serfs and slaves. The lands of serf-owners, who did not join the rebellion, were redeemed by the state before redistribution. Tibet's heavy corvee taxes and usurious practice on loans became a relic of the past.

### **Tibet from 1959 to 2008**

Before the transition to direct Chinese rule in 1959, Tibet had a very underdeveloped economy. The basic tools for agriculture were wooden ploughs and yaks. In 1952 each mu of land (15 mu equals one hectare) produced only 80 kg of grain on average. This worked out as 127 kg per capita. The region had only 9.46 million livestock. Transport of goods and mail depended on human and

animal power, trekking through difficult and dangerous roads. Modern industry was non-existent. Apart from a few chain constructions left from the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644), there were no bridges across Tibet's big Yarlung Zangbo River. The lone 127-kw hydropower station in the region supplied electricity intermittently. The majority of the people, being serfs or slaves, lived in poverty, because of the backward economy and the highly exploitative institutions. Before 1959, only 20,000 people resided in Lhasa proper, Tibet's capital, and on the outskirts of the city poor people and beggars squatted in some 1,000 tattered tents. Since convicts were not fed by the authorities, "prisoners" in handcuffs and wooden cangues begged in the street.

After 1959, Beijing and the local Tibetan government decided their top priority was to develop agriculture and animal husbandry, and they realized that it had to be done in a way that was compatible with the local conditions. There was improvement in livestock breeding. (Michael Parenti, *Friendly Feudalism: The Tibet Myth*.) New strains of barley, wheat and varieties of vegetables were introduced together with better irrigation. The effective pursuit of this policy, together with the financial and material support of the central government, led to total grain output increasing from 180 million kg in 1959 to 315 million kg in 1966, averaging an 8.3 percent increase per year. During the same period, the numbers of cattle grew from 9.556 million to 18.175 million, a 90.2 percent rise. The standard of living of the ordinary Tibetan thus began to improve.

In 1965 China established the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), which made Tibet a provincial-level division of China. Routine administration is carried out by a People's Government, headed by a Chairman, who is generally an ethnic Tibetan. The Chairman acts under the direction of the regional Secretary of the CCP.

Meanwhile, the U.S. continued active campaigning in favour of Tibetan independence, and the issue was taken up by the United Nations, which passed resolutions in 1961 and 1965 that supported Tibetan's claim to self-determination, and roundly condemned the PRC for triggering events that violated fundamental human rights and freedoms. (Melvyn C. Goldstein, "Tibet, China and the United States: Reflections on the Tibetan Question".) The U. S. thus internationalized the Tibetan issue before the time when the government of mainland China had joined the U. N. The Tibetan exiles' hope that the U.S. would continue to press for international support for their cause and help them to retake their country was dashed when the Nixon administration adopted a policy of rapprochement with China from 1969 onwards. As the U.S strove to improve relationships with China, the Tibetan question was not allowed to be an impediment to America's larger geopolitical interests. Without U.S. support the Nepal-based Tibetan exiles' military operations against China collapsed a few years after 1969. In any event, the Tibetan exiles' activities and the U.S. efforts on their behalf made no impact whatsoever on the situation inside Tibet.

When Mao unleashed the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the attack against the "Four Olds" was seriously destructive of Tibetan monasteries, religious relics, manuscripts, books and other treasures of old Tibetan culture. Local officials, and other Tibetan elites whom the Red Guards disapproved of, experienced similar treatment as their counterparts in China, suffering beatings and humiliations on being paraded in public with dunces' hats. Until this movement ended in 1976, it was a disastrous decade for the people of Tibet as elsewhere in China.

Like other parts of China, the destructive storm of the Cultural Revolution wrought havoc on Tibet and the people there. After Deng Xiaoping became China's paramount leader in 1978, he saw unity and tranquillity within China, and peace with countries abroad, as necessary conditions for China to embark on its reform program. For this reason, he wanted to reduce tension between the Tibetans and the Han Chinese, as well as between China and the West over the Tibetan issue. From the late 1979 onwards, his government was ready to make amends to the Tibetans. It was prepared to treat Tibetans who took part in the 1959 uprising with generosity, and reverse the verdicts against Tibetan officials from the Cultural Revolution period. (Vogel, 2011, p. 515.) Tibetans were permitted to visit relatives abroad, and visas were issued to groups of Tibetans living abroad to visit Tibet. The Tibetans were again free to practice their religion. A special fund of more than two hundred million yuan was set aside to repair and renovate the millennium-old Jokhang Monastery and a large number of other religious centres. (China's White Paper on Tibet, 1992.) Forty million yuan was allocated to renovate the Potala Palace. A great deal of effort was made by officials to retrieve Buddhist statues and religious articles lost during the Cultural Revolution, and to distribute them to various monasteries and temples.

In addition, Deng tried to reconcile the Tibetans to his regime by persuading the Dalai Lama, whom the deeply religious Tibetans revered as the Bodhisattva of Compassion, or worshipped as a god, to return to China. (Vogel, 2011, pp. 514-515.) Deng hoped that the presence of Dalai Lama might help to reduce the antagonism of the Tibetans towards the Communist officials. Following this line of approach, Deng invited the Dalai Lama's Mandarin-speaking second oldest brother, Gyalo Thondup, to Beijing and expressed his hope that the Dalai Lama might return to China to have a look at Tibet, and remain in China if he wished. Deng also told his guest that apart from the



question of total independence, all other issues could be discussed and resolved. (Melvyn Goldstein, "Tibet, China, and the United States: Reflections on the Tibet Question") After this meeting, it was arranged for the Dalai Lama to send fact-finding delegations from Dharamsala as his representatives, to observe the condition of Tibet in 1979 and 1980.

From the information supplied by local Tibetan officials, Deng had reason to believe that after two decades of socialist construction since 1959, Tibet had achieved sufficient economic development to give the delegates of the Tibetan exiles from Dharamsala a positive impression of the conditions there. (Vogel, 2011, pp. 514-516.) Unfortunately, Deng had been misled by the local officials, especially considering that the Cultural Revolution had ended only three to four years before then. The Tibetan exiles found their people living in poor conditions with minimal economic development. (Melvyn Goldstein, "Tibet, China and the United States: Reflections on the Tibetan Question.") They also witnessed a great deal of evidence of destruction of the Tibetan religion and monastic way of life. Contrary to Deng's expectation, the Tibetan exiles were not well impressed with the conditions in Tibet. Their findings, and the expressions of support from the Tibetans in China to the Dalai Lama, served only to bolster their confidence in their cause. They responded by criticizing the regime's treatment of the Tibetans.

Faced with this setback, Deng sent the party's General Secretary Hu Yao Bang, a liberal-minded reformer, to Tibet to investigate and to see what needed to be done in 1978 (Vogel, 2011, p.516.) After spending a week observing conditions and interviewing local officials, Hu made a remarkably conciliatory speech in front of five thousand local officials, expressing contrition and accepting responsibility on behalf of the party for having "let the Tibetan people down." Then he

proceeded to outline ways to improve the situation for the Tibetans in the future. Among his proposals were: giving Tibetan regional autonomy full play, reducing their economic burdens by exempting Tibetans from agricultural and livestock taxes for a few years, promoting Tibet's rapid economic development through a flexible policy that took into account the local conditions, making vigorous efforts to revitalize the Tibetan culture, education, and science, together with assigning a majority of local official positions to Tibetans, and enjoining Han officials working in Tibet to learn to speak and write in Tibetan. (Melvyn Goldstein, "Tibet, China and United States: Reflections on the Tibetan Question".) This policy replaced one that emphasized hard-line assimilation, by one with a much softer approach that paid close attention to Tibetan's ethnic sensitivity.

Hu Yao Bang sincerely believed in a conciliatory policy towards Tibetans. He tried hard to build a good relationship with them and to redress the wrongs that had been done to them during the Cultural Revolution. After his visit, many of his proposals were implemented. Han officials were ordered to learn the Tibetan language and to listen to the views of the Tibetan people. (Vogel, 2011, pp. 516-517.) The percentage of Tibetan officials in Tibet went from 44.5% in 1978 to 54.4% in 1981, reaching 60.3% in 1986. The new policy supported the revival of Tibetan culture and religion and the use of Tibetan language in the TAR. Signs in Tibetan appeared in front of shops and offices. (Melvyn Goldstein, "Tibet, China, and the United States: Reflections on the Tibetan Question".) Monasteries were reopened with new child monks recruited to keep the old tradition going. The people of Tibet returned to practicing their religion on a massive scale. This policy also aimed at raising the standard of living of Tibetans through the building of infrastructure and other measures to speed up economic development in Tibet. A Chinese army's monopoly of

producing goods sought by Tibetans was broken up, and local companies ran by Tibetan civilians were permitted to make these products. (Vogel, 2011, p. 517.) Hu's efforts did contribute to improving the lives of some Tibetan people. In the 1980s, the Tibetans enjoyed far greater autonomy than they did in the 1960s and 1970s. The region sent a substantial number of delegates to the National People's Congresses. When the one-child policy was imposed on the Han Chinese in 1981, Tibetans and all non-Han ethnic minorities were exempt.

Hu's policy of rapprochement represented a further effort made by Beijing to win the Tibetans' trust and to induce the Dalai Lama to return to China, within the framework of Tibet remaining a part of China. With this policy in mind, Hu met the Dalai Lama's brother Gyalo Thundrup on July 28, 1981 in Beijing with a five-point proposal outlining how the Chinese government hoped to build its relationship with the Dalai Lama. The proposal stressed the central government's sincere welcome to the Dalai Lama's return with his followers to China. It tried to assure the Dalai Lama that he would enjoy the same high political status and living standard as before.

However, Hu's attempt to resolve the Tibetan issue ended in failure. Han officials, both local and in Beijing, found that Hu's approach undermined their authority to maintain the political order. (Vogel, 2011, pp. 517-518.) They had real concerns about monks taking advantage of the increased freedom to organize separatist movements with foreign support. Official resistance developed against Hu's policy. His approach failed also because the Tibetans, particularly the exiles, were still not satisfied with the best the CCP leaders were willing to offer them. (Ibid., p. 518.)

Apparently, both Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yao Bang underestimated the Tibetan exiles' unwillingness to strike a deal with China short of independence. It is worth remembering that the voices of the Tibetan exiles in Dharamsala belonged mostly to Tibet's former ruling elites: the aristocrats, high lamas, and civil and military officials. As we have seen above, after fleeing from Tibet, China's socialist revolution stripped them of their power, positions, and the estates they once owned. The Dalai Lama himself, who headed the traditional Tibetan theocracy, also suffered similar losses. Understandably, they were an extremely angry and intransigent group of people for the leaders of the CCP to deal with. The Chinese leaders felt that allowing the Tibetan language, culture and religion to flourish, and helping the Tibetan economy to develop, should constitute a sufficiently attractive package to the Dalai Lama and his fellow exiles. But these Tibetans found the Chinese offer deeply disappointing, because they only wanted to discuss with the Chinese the subject of turning Tibet into an independent country to be controlled by them. (Vogel, 2011, pp. 514-519.) After two decades of vilifying the CCP rulers as bestial, untrustworthy oppressors devoid of honesty and humanity, they could not conceive of returning to China under the CCP rule. Furthermore, returning to China would mean giving up the chance for independence for future generations of Tibetans in the so-called "Greater Tibet."

A brief digression is necessary here. What constituted the "Greater Tibet"? The territory of "Greater Tibet," as conceived by the exiles, apparently stretched from the TAR to southern Xinjiang and the Hexi corridor in the north, to central Gansu and central Sichuan in the east, and to central Yunnan in the south. (China's white paper: "Tibet's Path of Development Is Driven by an Irresistible Historical Tide," available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-04/15/c\\_134152612.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-04/15/c_134152612.htm).) According to this scheme, "Greater Tibet" would include the TAR, all

of Qinhai, half of Sichuan, half of Gansu, and a quarter of Yunnan, an area greater than one quarter of the total territory of China! The fact that the areas in these provinces where the Tibetans lived had never been governed by a Tibetan Dalai Lama did not discourage the exiles in Dharamsalam from claiming them. Historically there had never been a “Greater Tibet.” The Chinese government believed this idea was a legacy British colonialism. When Britain ruled India, the British made various attempts to take Tibet away from China, including the Simla Conference mentioned above. This conference was a failed British attempt to induce the Chinese Republican government that succeeded the Qing dynasty to give up Outer Tibet. Putting the Inner and Outer Tibet together would constitute the “Greater Tibet” claimed by the Dalai Lama and his fellow exiles. (Melvyn Goldstein, “Tibet, China and the United States: Reflections on the Tibetan Question”.) More Tibetans had been living for centuries in these Beijing-controlled provinces than in the TAR. Were the TAR alone to become independent, there would be several million Tibetans living in China in Chinese-ruled provinces.

Since ceding control of the TAR, let alone “Greater Tibet,” was not on the table for negotiation as far as the Chinese government was concerned, and since the Tibetan exiles were not prepared to make any compromise on the issue of independence, the two sides could not possibly make any headway in their negotiations in 1982. (Melvyn Goldstein, “Tibet, China and the United States: Reflections on the Tibet Question”.) After trying so hard to effect a rapprochement with the Dalai Lama and his followers, Beijing was deeply disappointed by the unwillingness of his representatives to discuss specific matters relating to his return to China. While the negotiations were going on, the Tibetan exiles continued to attack China, charging the country of genocide in Tibet, an accusation the Chinese found slanderous; even some Western scholars on Tibet found it

unwarranted. Opponents of Hu Yao Bang's policy of moderation toward Tibet considered the exiles' continuing attack on China during a friendly negotiation as a manifestation of the exiles' insincerity, and the Dalai Lama's duplicity. (Melvyn Goldstein, "Tibet, China, and the United States: Reflection on the Tibetan Question".)

Faced with this impasse, Deng put the matter of persuading the Dalai Lama to return to China on the back burner. Instead, he tried to pursue a policy of accelerating Tibet's economic modernization as a national priority. (Vogel, 2011, p. 519.) Richer provinces were encouraged to give Tibet financial assistance, and officials knowledgeable about the economy were sent to Tibet to promote economic development there. Tibet was opened to more trade and links with other provinces. Deng's ultimate goal was to win the support of the Tibetans by raising their standard of living through economic modernization. Attempts were also made to foster the goodwill of Tibetans by allowing them more freedom to express their culture and practice their religion. (Vogel, 2011, p. 519.) A side effect of this policy was the presence of more Chinese tourists and merchants in Tibet. (Vogel, 2011, p. 519.)

Deng's frustration with the lack of progress in talking with Dalai Lama's representatives did not prevent a new round of negotiations between the two sides in 1984. At this point, the Dalai Lama's representatives explicitly rejected Hu Yao Bang's five-point proposal, and demanded instead the creation of a demilitarized "Greater Tibet" with a political status exceeding that of the "one country, two system" offered to Taiwan. (Melvyn Goldstein, "Tibet, China and the United States: Reflections on the Tibet Question".) This was a non-starter as far as the leaders of China were concerned, and the proposed visit by the Dalai Lama again failed to materialize.

In 1985 and 1986, when the liberal-minded Hu Yao Bang was still in power as the party General Secretary, the internal drive to develop Tibet economically continued, as did the ethnically sensitive policy of allowing the Tibetan cultural and religion to thrive under predominantly Tibetan cadres. Wu Jinghua, a minority from the Yi nationality, was appointed party secretary of the TAR. Wu showed respect for Tibetan culture, wore Tibetan dress on holidays, and supported the use of the Tibetan language. In this atmosphere, an increasing number of Tibetan exiles were visiting Tibet, and most Tibetans who went abroad to visit relatives returned. If the Chinese policy did not manage to win the hearts of the Tibetans in China, it might have appealed to their stomachs, as the material life in Lhasa as well as in the countryside showed tremendous improvement. This development aroused the fear of Dalai Lama and his followers that the Chinese might actually succeed in wooing the Tibetans in China to accept the status quo.

In 1986 and 1987, the Dalai Lama and his fellow exiles responded to this challenge by launching a new political offensive, an “international campaign” with the aim of securing Western political and economic leverage to force Beijing to yield to their demands. They also wanted to give Tibetans in China the hope that the Dalai Lama was about to succeed in getting help from powerful Western countries to settle the Tibetan issue in his favour. Because the executive branch of the U.S. government since the time of President Nixon had stopped supporting the cause of Tibetan independence in favour of détente with the PRC, the Dalai Lama focused instead on winning the support of the American Congress. He also made appeals to European leaders, European governmental forums, Western NGOs and influential individuals, such as writers and film stars, and believers in Tibetan Buddhism.

Looking upon China as a potential rival, if not also an adversary, the U.S. Congress was more than willing to take up the Tibetan issue, which offered plenty of ammunition to criticize the PRC with allegations of abusing the human rights and restricting the religious freedom of the Tibetans. In September 21, 1987, the Dalai Lama made a carefully crafted political speech, his first before the U.S. Congressional Human Rights Committee, laying out an argument from the Tibetan exiles' point of view that Tibet had been an independent country "invaded" and "illegally occupied" by China. The Dalai Lama also made serious charges against China on human rights violations, such as that the Chinese had inflicted a "holocaust" on the Tibetan people. To resolve the "Tibet issue", the Dalai Lama offered his own Five Point plan, which called first of all for the withdrawal of Chinese forces from all Tibetan settled areas. Next, he asked the Chinese government to reverse the population transfer policy which he said threatened the very existence of the Tibetan people, though there were very little evidence of such a policy. Other "points" concerned respecting Tibetan's fundamental human rights, restoring and protecting Tibet's natural environment, abandoning China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping nuclear waste, and beginning earnest negotiation on the future status of Tibet.

The Dalai Lama's speech was well received in the U.S. Congress. The House of Representatives adopted a bill that condemned China for human rights abuses in Tibet, instructed the president to express sympathy for the Tibetan people, and urged the government of the PRC "to actively reciprocate the Dalai Lama's effort to establish a constructive dialogue on the future of Tibet". The Chinese government was also urged to release all political prisoners in Tibet. The House bill was passed by the Senate and signed by President Reagan into law in the form of a Tibetan amendment in the Foreign Relations Authorization Act (1988-1989).



From then, on the U.S. Congress has watched China closely on its activities in Tibet, and has continued to pass resolutions that denounce China for violating the human rights and restricting the religious freedom of the Tibetan people. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and other U.S. government funded organizations have regularly produced reports and press releases that feature China as an oppressive country that curbs the religious freedom and abuses the human rights of the people there. (See annual reports from the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom on China and Congressional-Executive Commission on China, on the Web.)

As regards the U.S. media, major U.S. newspapers, such as the New York Times and the Washington Post, and broadcasting stations like CNN, the Voice of American and Radio Free Asia, all formed a chorus elaborating their government's views on China. The U.S. effort to project China onto the world stage as an oppressor of the people in that country gave China an image problem in the U.S. and other Western countries. From the Chinese point of view, the Voice of America and Radio Free Asia also undermined China's unity and stability by broadcasting the Dalai Lama's pro-independence messages in Tibetan and Mandarin to that region. Both of these media organizations received U.S. Congressional funding. The U.S. Congress also continued to put pressure on the executive branch of the U.S. government to be more proactive on pressing the Chinese government to act on its resolutions and demands relating to Tibet, through diplomatic negotiations and economic and trade sanctions. (See various annual reports on China from the Congressional Research Service, and those produced by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour on human rights practice in China.)

Besides responding to pressure from the Congress, the action of the executive branch of the U.S. government towards China was also governed by many other considerations. For example, in 1994, the Clinton administration decided to renew China's most-favoured-nation trade status rather than yielding to the strong lobby inside Congress that urged the U.S. government to link the renewal to China making "overall significant progress" on human rights. (*The Tech*, online edition, "Clinton Grants China MFN, Reversing Campaign Pledge", by Ann Devroy, *The Washington Post*, Washington, available at <http://tecdh.mit.edu/V114/N27/china.27w.html>.) Defending his decision, President Clinton argued that the U. S. had to see its relations with China in broader terms than just human rights. Washington had many reasons for wanting to maintain good working relations with Beijing. Geopolitically, China had a crucial role in preventing nuclear proliferation and in maintaining stability on the Korean peninsula. The two-way trade between China and the United States did not benefit China alone. The U.S. export of \$8 billion a year to China around that time sustained 150,000 jobs. As the world's fastest growing economy and the most populous nation, U.S businesses expected China to become a massive market for their phones, electronics and a myriad of other products in the decades to come. However, Clinton did make a small concession to pressure from human rights activists by imposing a ban on the imports of guns and ammunition from China.

The Dalai Lama's capacity to move the U.S. Congress to support their cause in the late 1980s raised the hope of the Tibetan exiles. They saw this as the beginning of a new U.S. foreign policy to seek proactively a settlement of the status of Tibet in their favour. (Melvyn Goldstein, *Tibet, China and the United States: Reflections on the Tibet Question*.)

The Dalai Lama's activities in the U.S. were closely followed by Tibetans in Lhasa, who listened to the Chinese language broadcasts of the Voice of America and the B.B.C. Tibetans could also pick up clues from the Chinese official media that attacked these activities. On September 27, less than a week after Dalai Lama's first speech in Washington, nationalistic monks from Drepung monastery in Lhasa mounted a political demonstration in support of his proposal and Tibetan independence. After going around central Lhasa several times with nothing happening around them, they marched on the main road to the offices of the Tibetan government, and were arrested there. Four days later, on October 1<sup>st</sup>, a group of 20 to 30 monks demonstrated in Lhasa, demanding the release of the arrested monks. The police beat them and quickly took them into custody. Soon a crowd of angry Tibetans gathered outside the police headquarters, demanding the monks' release. Before long the situation escalated into an uncontrollable riot. The police station and a number of vehicles and shops were burnt down, and some 16 to 20 Tibetans were killed, after the police fired at the crowd.

The Chinese leaders in Beijing were shocked by the riot and the anti-Chinese anger of the Tibetans, particularly as they had been pursuing a moderate policy of catering to Tibetans' ethnic sensitivity. They felt especially piqued by the fact that the occurrence of the riot would appear to the world as a confirmation of Dalai Lama's claim of the existence of appalling conditions in Tibet, when many improvements had been made in that region (these will be detailed in a later section). Some key senior cadres in Tibet saw the riot as a vindication of their contention that the moderate "ethnic" approach was dangerous, and could lead to the CCP losing power in Tibet. The local officials' reports critical of this overly soft policy were conveyed to Beijing. The new Party Secretary, Zhao Ziyang, who took over from the deposed Hu Yao Bang in 1987, convened a larger Politburo

meeting to discuss Tibet. The Politburo decided that part of the problem was that Beijing's policy on Tibet had not been carried out properly because of too much "leftism", a criticism that angered many senior officials in Tibet. It also drew the conclusion that its past policies had been too liberal. This marked the beginning of Beijing's retreat from the moderate policy towards Tibet.

In the months following the riot, monks and nuns continued to stage small demonstrations, and the police managed to arrest them without triggering riots that would draw unwanted world attention. As 1988 began, the question arose as to whether to hold the Great Prayer Festival following the celebration of the Tibetan New Year on February 8. During this festival, many thousands of religious Tibetans would come to Lhasa to witness the assembly of almost 2,000 monks in the Central Cathedral in Lhasa to pray together for several weeks. Because of the high risk of younger monks trying to instigate another riot, many older monks advised the government to conduct the 1988 Prayer Festival at their own monasteries rather than in the Central Cathedral in Lhasa. Hoping to show the world that Tibetan religious activities continued to take place normally, Beijing decided to hold this festival in the Central Cathedral in Lhasa. Party Secretary Wu Jinghua of the TAR announced that he was going to attend the Prayer Festival in Tibetan dress, as he had in the past. He also tried to assure the Tibetans that paying attention to their ethnic sensitivity was still a priority of his government, rather than only economic development. The authorities also sent the Panchen Lama, the number two lama, to make concessions to the monks to pacify them. On January 26, 1988, they set free 56 monks as a gesture of goodwill, leaving 15 in custody. At a big meeting of monks at the Drepung monastery, the Panchen Lama announced that the government was willing to allocate 2 million yuan (\$500,000) in reparations to the three Lhasa

monasteries (Drepung, Sera and Ganden). These efforts, even with the help of the Panchen Lama, failed to win the cooperation of the monks.

The reason for this was that some of the militant nationalistic monks wanted to demonstrate their support for Dalai Lama's initiative. Without sufficient understanding of the workings of the U.S. political system they and other religious Tibetans were expecting the U.S., as the world's greatest military power, to use force to coerce China to accept Tibet's independence. With (as they believed) independence just around the corner, they were not going to be assuaged by small conciliatory gestures from Beijing. Even though the Prayer Festival went well for several weeks without mishap, on March 5, 1988 before the festival ended, the provocative behaviour of a few defiant monks ignited another terrible riot in Lhasa. The subsequent arrests and clamp-down served only to alienate the people of Tibet against the ruling authorities.

The support of the U.S. Congress for the Dalai Lama's position on Tibet, combined with the demonstrations of the monks and public rioting in Lhasa, led the exiles to conclude that their strategy of internationalizing the Tibet issue was a fruitful approach. The Dalai Lama was encouraged to bring more pressure to bear on China to force it to yield to his and the exiles' demands. This was still in the spring of 1988. The Chinese government announced that if the Dalai Lama would publicly give up the goal of independence, he could come back to live in Tibet (rather than Beijing). The Dalai Lama responded to the Chinese proposal in June 1988 in an address to the European Parliament in Strasbourg with a proposal of his own. He would return to Tibet, if "Greater Tibet" were to become a self-governing Western-style democracy with its own constitution and the right to decide on all affairs relating to Tibet and the Tibetans. Realizing at

last that independence was not a realistic goal, the Dalai Lama's Strasbourg proposal did not seek independence. He told the Chinese that he was ready to negotiate with on the basis of this proposal, and his team of negotiators included a Dutch national as legal advisor.

Now the Dalai Lama had shrewdly thrown the ball back into the Chinese court. If Beijing refused to discuss a proposal for a democratic Tibet with total autonomy just short of complete independence, it would reinforce the negative Western views of the PRC. Considering China's internal situation, the regime could not possibly permit Tibet to have a Western-style democracy without allowing other parts of China to have the same. Then there was the demand on China to cede all Tibetan settled areas in the four Chinese provinces where the Dalai Lama and his predecessors never directly governed. These areas as a part of "Greater Tibet" would be ruled by the Dalai Lama on his return. With 55 ethnic minority groups scattered over large parts of China, accepting such a proposal would be tantamount to allowing China to be broken up. This was not an idea to be contemplated by anyone who cared about China. Given the Chinese leaders' known sensitivity to Western interference in their country's internal affairs, the inclusion of a Dutch national as legal advisor on his team of negotiators was needlessly provocative. Although Dharamsala presented these proposals as a conciliatory gesture, the Dalai Lama did not make any really significant concession from his previous demands. The Chinese regarded these proposals as an indirect form of independence, and rejected them without any discussion with the opposite side. Having retreated from the demand for complete independence, the Dalai Lama and his fellow exiles considered this proposal as the "middle way". This remained as their firmly held negotiating position with China, and they were not prepared to make any further concession from this position. The result was a gridlock between the two sides. In December 1988, a third bloody riot occurred

in Lhasa, ostensibly precipitated by monks demonstrating in support of the International Human Rights' Day, but more likely by their anger at Beijing's rejection of the Dalai Lama's new initiative.

From the middle of the 1980s, a tragic sequence of events started to occur repeatedly in Tibet. It usually began with a major political move by the Dalai Lama with foreign backing in the West, followed by the emboldened local Tibetans agitating against Beijing rule, which then led to crackdowns. (Vogel, 2011, p. 522.)

The Dalai Lama's activities, in the U.S. and Western Europe, as the principal driver for Tibet's independence or total autonomy, did not entirely discourage Beijing from making a further attempt to attract him to return to China for a visit. In early 1989, the unexpected death of the Panchen Lama, gave Beijing the opportunity to invite the Dalai Lama to come to China to attend the memorial service for the Panchen Lama. The invitation was issued by the Buddhist Association without any preconditions in order to avoid political connotations. Beijing hoped that away from the unruly militant nationalists at Dharamsala, the Dalai Lama might be more agreeable to work on more realistic and mutually acceptable solutions on the status of Tibet. After the Dalai Lama and his officials declined this invitation, Beijing abandoned the hope that the Dalai Lama would play a construction role in solving the Tibet question. (Melvyn Goldstein, "Tibet, China and the United States: Reflections on Tibet Question")

At this point, Beijing began to see that its liberal policy towards Tibet had not made the Lhasans appreciative or cooperative with those who tried to pay attention to their ethnic sensitivity and

serve their interest. Instead, it seemed to have increased their nationalistic feelings, leading to disturbances and riots that weakened Beijing's position. This perception led the Politburo to shift to a more hard-line strategy that no longer looked to "win over" the current adult generation, who were regarded as "hopelessly reactionary". Enhanced security measures were adopted to prevent the on-going minor demonstrations from escalating into riots. However, these measures did not prevent the Lhasans from doing their daily businesses, going where they wished, meeting friends, and inviting monks for religious services as long as they eschewed political separatism. From then on, even more emphasis was put on modernizing the Tibetan economic and society rapidly, and increasing the standard of living of the people of that region. Efforts were made to train higher level Tibetan cadres, and to create a "modern" better educated Tibetan elite. Evidently, Beijing placed its hope on the emergence of new generations of better educated and less religious Tibetans, who would feel more comfortable living in China as the home of a multi-ethnic nation. While Tibetans were free to dress, speak, write, and practice their religion as they had done traditionally, Beijing was no longer committed to preserve the cultural distinctiveness of Tibet by isolating it from the rest of China. Like other ethnic minorities in China, Tibetans still enjoyed special subsidies, and preferential treatment in family planning and education, but Beijing had ceased to make any effort to preserve the demographic homogeneity of Tibet as it had done under Hu Yao Bang's leadership. (Ibid.)

This strategy appeared to be successful in preventing riots, improving Tibet's economy, and shifting some Tibetans' attention from politics to taking advantage of the new economic opportunities. Rioting had been largely avoided during the 1990s and 2000s until the time near the Beijing Olympic Games. Some Tibetans separatists saw this as an opportunity to call the world's attention to their cause once more. Tibetan exiles and their Western supporters, such as the



Hollywood actor, Richard Gere, urged an international boycott of the coming Olympic Games. The idea was rejected by President Jacques Rogge of the International Olympic Committee, who told the Associated Press that “a boycott would not solve anything and would penalize the innocent athletes”. Although China did not declare martial law this time, stringent security measures kept the lid on possible disturbances for a while.

### **The 2008 Tibetan Unrest**

The 2008 Tibetan unrest was triggered by groups of Tibetan monks who had demonstrated for several days in Lhasa, starting on March 10, as gestures of support for demonstrations organized by Tibetans in other parts of the world to commemorate the 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the failed Tibetan uprising against Beijing rule in 1959. (The Guardian, Jonathan Watts in Beijing, “Hundreds of Monks Protest in Tibet”, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/mar/11/china>.) Crowd control efforts and arrests by the local authority increased the tension that set off rioting by thousands of Lhasans on March 14, 2008. (Smith, Warren W. Jr., *Tibet’s Last Stand?: The Tibetan Uprising of 2008 and China’s Response*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008, pp. 1-10 Wikipedia, “Protests and Uprisings in Tibet since 1950”.) James Miles, the *Economist* correspondent, reported violent attacks against Chinese-owned properties, and a large number of Chinese-owned shops were destroyed by fire. (Kerry Brown, *Hu Jintao*, pp. 57-58.) According to Miles, “the riot police response was tame”, but Tibetan exile groups described the crackdown as brutal. (CNN, March 20, 2008, “Transcript: James Miles interview on Tibet” in Wikipedia: the “2008 Tibetan Unrest”.) Officials there reported to Xinhua, the Chinese state media, that 10 people were killed, all of whom were innocent civilians, such as shop owners and hotel employees, while Tibetan separatists in India claimed over 100 unconfirmed deaths. (*BBC News*: “China Set Tibet

Protest Deadline”, available in <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7297911.stm>.) In the end, there were an estimated 22 dead and 325 injured, mostly Han, although Hui Muslims were also targets of attack. (Wikipedia, “2008 Tibetan Unrest”.) The total damage was estimated at \$40 million.

The 2008 Tibetan unrest was not confined to Lhasa. It spread to Tibetan areas in the neighbouring provinces of Gansu, Sichuan, and Qinghai. (Wikipedia, “Tibetan Unrest”.)

In addition to protest movements and riots inside Tibet and China, forces loyal to the Tibetans in exile also organized attacks on between ten to twenty Chinese embassies and consulates in other countries. (Wikipedia, “Tibetan Unrest”.)

On March 24, 2008, the Olympic Torch Relay began its 21-nation, 137,000 km, 129-day run after the lighting of the torch in Athens. In many cities along the European and North American route, such as London, Paris and San Francisco, supporters of the Tibetan exiles turned out to block the torch bearers, and to stage protests against the Beijing Olympic Games. (Wikipedia, “2008 Summer Olympic torch relay.”) In the later segments of the relay, overseas Chinese and foreign-based Chinese nationals staged counter-protests, and in many countries the supporters overwhelmed the protestors. There were no major protests in the Latin American, African, and Western Asian legs of the torch relay.

*Beijing’s Response and Analysis of the Origin of the 2008 Lhasa Riot*

The rioting led to many arrests and the deployment of several thousand People's Armed Police to maintain order. (Kerry Brown, Hu Jintao, pp. 57-58.) Under the world's watchful eyes, and frequent Western allegations that the PRC violated the human rights of the Tibetans, the authorities tried to be careful in the manner in which they handled the riots and the rioters. At a press conference after the March 14 riot, Qiangba Puncog, governor of the TAR, expressed his indignation over the Dalai Lama clique's distortion of what had happened, and denied the use of lethal force. "Throughout the process [security forces] did not carry or use any destructive weapons, but tear gas and water cannons were employed," he said. ("Governor denies use of lethal force in Lhasa riot, indignant over Dalai's lies", Xinhuanet, 2008-03-07.) "We did so in order to maintain social stability, to defend the nation's legal system and to safeguard the people's fundamental interest." After describing how brutally the mob had acted, he said that the police exercised restraint throughout.

Gaisang Doje, deputy head of the criminal tribunal of the Lhasa International People's Court, said the trials of the people involved in the March 14 riots proceeded according to law. ("Rioters in Lhasa unrest receive fair trials, sentences," Xinhuanet, 2009-02-20.) The proceedings were conducted in Tibetan, and the court provided translations between the Tibetan defendants and the Han judges and lawyers. Defence lawyers were assigned to suspects who could not afford to pay. Judges and lawyers considered that the trials and sentences of the suspects were fair.

The Chinese authorities blamed the disturbance on the Dalai Lama clique. (See "Premier: ample facts prove Dalai's role in Lhasa riot, door of dialogue still open", Xinhuanet, March 18, 2008.) Premier Wen Jiabao told reporters at the press conference that there were ample

facts and evidence to show that “the riots in Lhasa were organized, premeditated, masterminded and incited by the Dalai Lama clique.” According to the report of China’s Ministry of Public Security, the Dalai Lama clique, after 40 years of exile, saw the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games as “the last chance” to launch the “Tibetan People’s Uprising Movement” within and outside China, should China fail to submit to their demands. (See “China publishes evidences of Dalai clique’s masterminding of riots”, Xinhuanet, 2008-04-02.) From May 2007 onwards, many meetings were held among international Tibetan secessionist organizations, in India and elsewhere, to plan sabotage activities in Tibetan-inhabited areas before the Olympics. By January 2008, these Tibetan secessionists issued a “Declaration of Tibetan People’s Uprising Movement” and posted it on the internet. They also announced their intention to launch it as a massive ongoing movement on March 10. Tibetans around the world and in Tibet were asked to take to the streets on March 10, organizing attacks on Chinese embassies and staging hunger strikes and massive protests. The Chinese believed the Dalai Lama fanned separatist sentiment when he was in India between February 3 and 10, 2008.

Defending China’s actions in curbing the riots, and asking for international understanding given the worldwide publicity on the Lhasa riots, a Ministry of Public Security spokesman said that “the ‘Tibetan People’s Uprising Movement’ plotted by the Dalai Lama clique is intended to sabotage the peaceful, stable and unified social situation in China, and to use the Olympic Games to put pressure on the Chinese government, thus achieving their political aims.” He continued: “the word ‘uprising’ means to overthrow the present regime through armed force and violence. So, I wonder, is there any country that allows such an ‘uprising’ against the central government? Is there any country that tolerates such activities wantonly instigating the subversion of a state regime?”

*Ethnic Tibetan Leaders' Responses to the Unrest*

Many high-ranking ethnic Tibetan civil and religious leaders also denounced the “uprising”. The 11<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama Gyaincain Norbu condemned the lawless riot in Lhasa, and expressed his support for the government’s effort to ensure the safety and stability of that city. (See “11<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama condemns Lhasa riot,” Xinhuanet, 2008-03-16.) Chairman Qiangba Puncog of the TAR government also voiced strong condemnation of “the ‘separatist sabotage’ plotted and organized by the Dalai Lama and his splittist clique.” (“Tibetan gov’t chairman condemns separatist sabotage by Dalai clique”, Xinhuanet, 2008-03-15.) According to media reports, after the Lhasa riot, the Dalai Lama made his remarks about “rule of terror” and “cultural genocide” in connection with the current regime in Tibet. Legqoi, deputy director of the Standing Committee of the Tibetan Regional People’s Congress, dismissed these remarks as “downright nonsense.” (“Tibetan officials refuted Dalai’s ‘rule of terror’ remarks,” Xinhuanet, 2008-03-16.) Contrasting the conditions of the life of serfs and slaves in Dalai Lama’s old Tibet, he said that “the Tibetan people only started to manage their own affairs after regional autonomy was inaugurated in 1965”. According to him, contrary to the so-called ‘cultural genocide’, Tibetan culture has thrived. He said: “There are 161 cultural sites in Tibet, including 35 on the list of state-level protection. We have 1,700 well-protected temples. Monks and the public enjoy full religious freedom.” “If the Dalai separatist group would not spoil (the stability in Tibet), Tibet would be in its best period of development in history”, said Lhasa Mayor Doje Cezhug. “Nowadays, Tibetan people have been living a modern life while enjoying the development of traditional Tibetan culture.” “The state has decided to invest \$570 million yuan from 2006 to 2010 to renovate 10 cultural relics sites, including the Jokhang Temple, and we can say Tibetan culture has never been so flourishing as today,” said Chairman Qiangba Puncog of the government of TAR.

### *The U.S. Government's Response to the Tibetan Unrest and Chinese Responses*

As we have seen, the U.S. government, either the executive branch or the legislative or both, had been taking the side of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exiles against the PRC in the struggles between them. On March 28, 2008, the U.S. Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, released a statement saying that the International Olympic Committee made a mistake in awarding the 2008 Summer games to China because, in her opinion, the Chinese government had not lived up to its commitments to improve the human rights situation in Tibet. (Pelosi Statement on 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, March 28, 2008, press release, Washington, D. C.) The following provocative remarks were also in the statement:

“The Olympics should provide for more opportunity for free expression, not less. When the Olympic torch passes through San Francisco next month, I support the rights of individuals and groups to make their views known about the actions of the Chinese Government. As I said in India last week, where I met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, if freedom-loving people throughout the world do not speak out against China's oppression in Tibet, we will have lost our moral authority to speak out on behalf of human rights anywhere in the world.”

Her statement angered some Chinese netizens, including Chinese students studying overseas, who posted their response to it on the internet. (*Tibetalk*, “Lhasa riot reports show media bias in West”, March 25, 2008/April 4, 2008.) One believed Pelosi's remarks moved many so-called freedom loving people throughout the world to disrupt the Olympic Torch Relay. Another expressed shock at her “HUGE hypocrisy” for not speaking out against human rights violations in her government's conduct in the Iraq war, in which the death toll of 4,000 soldiers on the U.S. side contrasted starkly with the estimated one million Iraqi civilian deaths.

The Tibet unrest moved the U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to introduce, on April 3, 2008, the House Resolution 1077, which began by stating that the “peaceful demonstration” of Tibetan monks and nuns in and around Lhasa to mark the 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a historic uprising against Chinese rule was blocked by the Chinese authorities using “excess force.” (H.Res.1007 – 110<sup>th</sup> Congress (2007-2008).) It called on “the government of the PRC to end the crackdown in Tibet and enter into a substantive dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama to find a negotiated solution that respects the distinctive language, culture, religious identity, and fundamental freedoms of all Tibetans, and for other purposes”. It asserted that six decades of Chinese repressive policy, especially after 2005, had increased Tibetans’ resentment and eroded their ability to preserve their distinctive language, culture, and religious identity. In recognition of the Dalai Lama’s outstanding moral and religious leadership, and his advocacy of non-violence, the U.S. Congress awarded him the Congressional Gold Medal in 2007. It accused the Chinese government of impeding the access of international journalists to Tibet, and of distorting reports of events surrounding the Tibetan protests. It also accused the Chinese government of using propaganda during the protests to demonize the Tibetans, thus inciting ethnic nationalism and increasing tension.

The U.S. resolution led the head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of China’s National People’s Congress (NPC) to call it “rude interference on China’s domestic affairs”. (“U.S. House anti-China resolution criticized, China.org.cn. Also available at [http://www.china.org.cn/china/Lhasa\\_Unrest/2008-04/13content\\_14943506.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/china/Lhasa_Unrest/2008-04/13content_14943506.htm).) A statement was released in his name on April 13, 2008, expressing the Chinese government’s strong indignation and firm opposition to the resolution passed on April by the U.S. House. The statement asserted that the resolution proposed by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had made groundless

accusations concerning the local Tibetan authority's lawful handling of severe crimes that occurred in Lhasa, Tibet. Urging the members of the U.S. House to respect truth, it reiterated that the incidents were definitely not "peaceful demonstrations" as characterized by the U.S. resolution, but violent riots premeditated, masterminded, and instigated by the Dalai Lama clique, who sought to separate Tibet from China and tarnish the Beijing Olympic Games. As we have seen, the Tibetan local authorities did not "use excessive force" against the rioters, as the resolution claimed. The Chinese statement advised "certain members of the US House of Representative to respect truth, renounce political bias and double standards, respect norms on international relations, stop wrong words and actions interfering into China's internal affairs, hurting the emotions of the Chinese people, and undermining China-U.S. relations". The statement stressed the fact of international recognition of Tibet as a part of China. It maintained that the Chinese people have firmly resolved to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to maintain social stability and ethnic unity in Tibet, and never to yield to any external pressure.

### *The U.S. and other Western Media Reports on the 2008 Tibet Unrest*

The reports of the U.S. media and those of some other Western countries on the 2008 Tibet unrest showed a customary bias that aroused criticisms by Chinese officials and netizens. (Tibetalk, Lhasa riot reports show media bias in West. "Chinese ambassadors criticized biased reporting of Lhasa riots in Western Media.", [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn), 2008-03-28.) The American Fox News website published a photo with the caption "Chinese troops parade handcuffed Tibetan prisoners in trucks", while the photo was actually about Indian police dragging someone away. (Tibetalk, Lhasa riot reports show media bias in West.) Pictures of baton-wielding Nepalese police clashing with Tibetan protestors in Kathmandu were featured on the website of the Washington Post and Germany's Bild newspaper, N-TV, and RTL TV as Chinese police. An ambulance bearing a red



cross symbol was shown by the BBC with the caption saying “There is a heavy military presence in Lhasa”. CNN.com showed half of a picture of Chinese military trucks, cutting off the other half that showed a crowd of rioters throwing rocks at the trucks. A Chinese netizen wrote on <http://www.huanqiu.com>: “To Tarnish China’s image, the West is doing whatever they can, no matter how mean and vicious”. Another reacted with the remark: “Any news about China has to be negative so that they will believe it – from ‘poisonous toys to poisonous dumplings’. Some foreign media have a particular interest in bashing China over human rights and pollution. They turn a blind eye to all progressive changes.” The Chinese Ambassador, Fu Ying, said that “the biased coverage of the riots by some Western media served to mislead the public, hurt the Chinese people’s feelings and cause some foreign leaders to make wrong political judgments”. (“Chinese ambassadors criticize biased reporting of Lhasa riots in Western media, [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn), 2008-03-28.) She went on to say that China’s embassy in Britain “has lodged solemn complaints to the media organizations concerned, and have already received apologies from some of them”. The Chinese Foreign Ministry’s, and the U.S. embassy’s, complaints led President Jim Walton of CNN to apologize for the remarks of its commentator, Jack Cafferty, who said in a live show that “Chinese products are junk” and that “the Chinese are basically the same bunch of goons and thugs they’ve been for the last 50 years. (“CNN president apologizes for Jack Cafferty’s remarks on China” at <http://www.chinaembassy.org.nz/eng/xw/t435475.htm>.)

There was no evidence of official Chinese complaints of biased reporting on the 2008 Tibet unrest against media organizations in other parts of the world. Official Chinese statements tended to stress the expressions of support China had received from the governments of a majority of countries of the world on this matter.

## **The Dalai Lama, the U.S. and China**

Since the Dalai Lama's escape to India with the help of the American CIA, the Chinese government has found him a formidable opponent. He combined the role of an astute politician with that of a Buddhist holy man, at a time when Buddhism was becoming increasingly popular in the West. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exiles, who wanted to return to rule an independent Tibet, actively sought Western governments' support to force China to agree to their demand to give up all the areas in China where there was a concentration of Tibetans. Those who adhered to the line that China invaded and occupied an independent Tibet by force, had a habit of ignoring the historical fact that Tibet's incorporation into traditional China's dynastic polity started with the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty (1279-1368). They tended to view China as a violator of the human rights and religious freedom of the Tibetans, and ignore the many positive developments initiated by China in Tibet, which will be described in more detail below.

While the Chinese government maintained the position that Tibet was strictly China's domestic concern, the U.S. government, looking upon China as a new Cold War adversary, pursued a policy of making Tibet an international issue. Over the years, the U.S. endeavoured to keep the "Tibet issue" alive in the eyes of the world, undermining China's national security and soft power by featuring China as an oppressor of the Tibetans. Having seen the usefulness of the Tibet issue as a tool against China, the U.S. political leaders cultivated the Dalai Lama as an important ally. In addition to helping the Dalai Lama and giving the Tibet-related issues an enormous amount of propaganda and publicity, the U.S. authorities also supported the cause of Tibetan separatism financially. Besides the U.S. Congressional grant to the Dalai Lama through the National Endowment for Democracy, the Dalai Lama's administration acknowledged the fact that it had

received \$1.7 million a year from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) since the 1960s. (*Wikipedia*, 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama).

The Dalai Lama's activism, and his unique capacity to win support for the cause of independence for Tibet, was welcomed by anti-Chinese forces in the United States and other Western countries. Western media propaganda, including hagiographic films about him, together with his personal charisma, the appeal of Tibetan Buddhism, and the romanticization of his homeland, made him into a celebrity among celebrities in the West. Leaders of Western and Japanese governments were keen to receive him, often skirting around objections or protests from the Chinese government. Although his Chinese critics saw some of his fans as sinophobes, they did recognize that not all Dalai Lama enthusiasts in the West were anti-Chinese. He received many prizes from various Western governmental and other institutions. (*Wikipedia*, 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.) The U.S. awarded him the Congressional Medal in 2007 over "furious objections" from the Chinese government. (Brian Knowlton, "Bush and Congress Honour Dalai Lama", in the *New York Times*, October 18, 2007, Washington) The overwhelming U.S. support for him, and the cause of the Tibetan exiles, did not blind him from seeing the mixed motives of the U.S. government's actions. In 1995, when asked by a CIA officer to comment on the CIA Tibetan program, the Dalai Lama replied that "the U.S. Government had been involved in his country's affairs not to help Tibet but only as a Cold War tactic to challenge the Chinese" (*Wikipedia*, 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.)

Among the prizes the Dalai Lama received, the one that drew most notice from the world was the Nobel Peace prize awarded to him in 1989. The Nobel Peace Prize enabled the Dalai Lama to emerge from obscurity as a relatively unknown Tibetan monk during the 1990s onto the world

stage, as a symbol of peaceful resistance against an Eastern oppressive regime, namely China. Since that time invitations for lectures and speeches began to pour in.

People in the West may not be aware that many well-known figures opposed to the government of the PRC have been nominated for or awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Those who were nominated for this prize from China included the one-time jailed advocate for democracy, Wei Jing Sheng, and the head of Xinjiang separatist organizations, Rubiya Kadeer. (*The Diplomat*, Rubiya Kadeer.) Those from China who were given the Nobel prize were the afore-mentioned Dalai Lama, the leading spokesman for Tibetan separatism, and Liu Xiaobo, a prominent Chinese advocate for democracy and human rights. In 2008, the year of the Beijing Olympic Games, when the Chinese authorities were extremely nervous about possible troubles from Tibetan and Uyghur separatists, Liu came out with a highly-charged political initiative, the Charter 08, that urged the government of the PRC to transform itself into a Western-style democracy through political reform. Liu's Charter 08 was modelled on former Czech President Vaclav Havel's Czech Charter 77, which was used, with covert U.S support, to destabilize the Soviet Union. (F. William Engdahl, "The Geopolitical Agenda behind the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize".) Liu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, and the Dalai Lama and Vaclav Havel were among his nominees for this prize. (F. William Engdahl, "The Geopolitical Agenda behind the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize", October 2010.) Engdahl argued that the Nobel Peace Prize was used by governing elites of the United States, the world's hegemonic power, with the support of their compliant NATO allies, Norway in particular, to "break China's stride to become a sovereign and leading world economic factor". In the eyes of these powerful U.S. elites, China must be "cut down to size", and be made to "lose face" in the eyes of the eyes of the world.

Since the Cold War has ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union, why has the U.S. continued to target China in such an aggressive way? Engdahl attributes it to the Wolfowitz Doctrine and China's rise. The Wolfowitz Doctrine refers to the post-Cold-War U.S. strategic policy that aimed to ensure that no rival superpower would be allowed to emerge in Western Europe, Asia, or the territory of the former Soviet Union. (Patrick E. Tyler, "U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Ensuring No Rivals Develop: A One-Superpower World", available at <http://work.column.edu/~amiller/wolfowitz1992.htm>, *New York Times*, arch 8, 1992.) China's rapid economic expansion and political independence was perceived by the powerful American establishment that controlled the U.S. politics, military, media, and business corporations as a threat to the hegemonic position of their country. (F. William Engdahl, "The Geopolitical Agenda behind the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize", October 2010.) Not that China actually threatened war against America: its continuing dynamism was considered threatening to the U.S. global dominance. As a result of the perceived China threat, the U.S. endeavoured to foster an anti-China international climate of opinion, using Tibet-related issues and violation of certain Western values as geopolitical weapons.

What did the leaders of China know about the U.S. involvement with Tibet? How did they look at and respond to the U.S. policy and actions relating to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exiles? China's rulers from Deng Xiaoping (who started the reform and opening-up policy in 1978), to Jiang Zemin (1989-2002) and Hu Jintao (2002-2012) all tried hard to keep on good terms with the U.S., and treated their U.S. counterparts as strategic partners. How did they cope with the U.S.

attacks on China in connection with the so-called “Tibet Issue”? Did they really believe the intense activities in the U.S. Congress and State Department concerning Tibet, its exiles and the Dalai Lama, about the religious freedom and human rights of the Tibetans in that region.?

An article published by the Human Rights Society of China (HRSC) with the title of “Looking into U.S. Support for Dalai Lama Clique’s Separatist Activities” in 2015, the year that marked the “50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the peaceful liberation of Tibet”, told a story of the U.S. government’s instigation and support of ethnic separatist activities started by Tibetan aristocrats to split Tibet from China since the 1940s. ( “Article Blasts U.S. for Backing Dalai’s Separatist Activities”, available at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/premade/13640/report7.htm>.) It reviewed the history of U.S. support for Tibetan separatist forces from that time onwards to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with evidence based on U.S. publications. This article showed what the Chinese authorities knew about the U.S. policies and actions related to Tibet and the Dalai Lama, and gave their comments and responses.

The Chinese discovered that, in 1951, the Truman administration had secretly tried to persuade the young Dalai Lama to leave Tibet for exile, hoping that he could galvanize opposition to China’s new Communist regime. They also knew that during the 1950s and 1960s, the CIA had played a crucial role in arming, training, planning, supplying and providing logistical support for the Tibetan rebels, and in aiding the Dalai Lama and his cohorts’ escape to India. During the 1970s, the U.S. administration under President Nixon felt a need to improve relations with China, and as a result the Dalai Lama was given the cold shoulder for almost a decade. (Ibid. available at <http://es.chineseembassy.org/esp/zyxx/t1130567.htm>.) Here the Chinese did not fail to see that

U.S. geopolitical interest trumped the rhetoric of religious freedom and the human rights of the Tibetans during that time. (Ibid. Melvyn C. Goldstein, *The United States, Tibet, and the Cold War*”, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 3, Summer 2006, pp. 145-164.) They also noticed that in 1979, when the Dalai Lama was allowed to visit the U.S., he was able to arouse the opportunism of the anti-Chinese elements in the U.S. Congress to use the so-called Tibet issue as an important part of their strategy to “contain” China. (“Article Blasts U.S. for Backing Dalai’s Separatist Activities”, available at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/premade/13640/report7.htm>.) Since that time, the U.S. government has supported the separatist clique in a “flagrant way”, so the article claimed, and it has also mustered the support of anti-Chinese forces in other Western countries in an attempt to undermine China’s stability on the pretext of the “Tibetan issue.”

More recently, the Chinese authorities noticed that the United States and other Western countries launched vicious attacks on China by distorting facts relating to the actual conditions in Tibet and China’s policies towards that region. “Under the disguise of promoting negotiations”, these Western countries intensified their support for the Dalai clique, resulting in growing separatist activities. From a *New York Times* report they found out that the Dalai Lama had increased the frequency of his visits to the U.S. from once every two three years from 1979 to 1994, to once a year or more from 1994 onwards. Since the Dalai Lama’s meeting with President George H.W. Bush in 1991, U.S. presidents and other high U.S. officials made a regular practice of convening with him every time he visited their country, despite China’s strong objections to such meetings.

In addition to pointing out the high-profile support of the White House for the Dalai Lama, the HRSC article showed that the Chinese regime was also painfully aware of the activities of the U.S. Congress and State Department that aided and abetted the “Dalai Lama clique”, by attacking China’s policy on Tibet in a number of ways. The U.S. House of Representatives and some state legislatures adopted many bills advocating “Tibet independence”, and they held hearings on “Tibetan issues”. One amendment that was passed in 1987 by the House went as far as accusing China “of occupying Tibet through use of force and ruling the region through violence”. In 1991 the U.S. Senate adopted a resolution describing Tibet as “an occupied country”. Between 1994 and 1997, the U.S. Congress became involved in the third World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet, a Tibetan separatist initiative to drum up world support for their movement. The third World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet, hosted by the U.S. Congress in 1997, passed the Washington Statement on Tibet, which “emphasized the convention’s recognition of the Dalai Lama and his government as the sole legitimate representatives of Tibet and the Tibetan people”.

The HRSC article pointed out an intensification, by the late 1990s, of anti-Chinese rhetoric and actions by the U.S. Congress using the “Tibet issue” as a pretext. In 1999 alone anti-Chinese elements in the U.S. House of Representative proposed more than 70 bills against China and over 50 hearings on Tibet, during which representatives of the “Dalai Lama clique” were often given the opportunity “to spread rumour in favour of the separatist forces”. In 1998 the U.S. State Department appointed two senior officials as special coordinators for Tibetan affairs in connection with the two newly formed representative offices of the Dalai Lama in Washington and New York. Like the U.S. Congress, the U.S. State Department also publicly attacked China’ policy towards Tibet, and exerted pressure on China while indulging the Dalai Lama clique’s separatist activities.



In addition, the article accused the State Department of vilifying the Chinese government authorities through its Annual Reports on Human Rights and on International Religious Freedom. It also accused the U.S. government of using non-governmental organizations, which were actually supported by the U.S. government politically or financially, to advocate “Tibetan independence”, under the pretext of human rights, religious freedom, and democracy. The U.S. media were also used by the U.S. government, through its political influence or financial power, to publicize and support the Dalai Lama’s separatist activities. (*People’s Daily*, May 25, 2001: “Article Slams U.S. for Backing Dalai’s Separatist Activities”, available at the [http://en.people.cn/english/200105/25/eng20010525\\_71013.htm](http://en.people.cn/english/200105/25/eng20010525_71013.htm).) The granting of the Nobel Prize to the Dalai Lama was viewed by the Chinese regime as an anti-Chinese political tool to internationalize the “Tibet issue”

On the international scene, China had for decades taken the position that the Dalai Lama was a political exile, who had long been engaged in anti-China separatist activities under the pretext of religion, and China had been voicing diplomatic objections to any country receiving the Dalai Lama. (News / Asia: “China Opposed to Foreign Nations Welcoming Dalai Lama” available at <http://www.voanew.com/content/china-opposed-to-foreign-nations-welcome-dalai-lama/2631448.html>.) The claim that Tibet was an independent country, invaded and occupied by China, rested on such flimsy historical ground that no country in the world, including the U.S., ever recognized Tibet as an independent country officially. (Melvyn C. Goldstein, “Tibet, China, and the United States: Reflections on the Tibet Question”.)

An American expert on Tibet, Professor Tom Grunfeld of SUNY/Empire State College, has questioned the effectiveness of the ambivalent U.S. policy on Tibet, and argued for a reassessment

of it and a change to a more realistic one. (A. Tom Grunfeld, “Reassessing Tibet Policy”, October 12, 2005, available at [http://fpif.org/reassessing\\_tibet\\_policy/](http://fpif.org/reassessing_tibet_policy/)). In his view, Washington’s policy ignores Tibet’s complex history, is driven by domestic politics, and besides being inherently contradictory, has done little to help resolve the Tibet issue. The China-bashing this policy had invoked led him to write, in another article, that “publicly humiliating and bullying China, a burgeoning world power, is not a rational policy even if it makes the China-bashers feel good”. (*ORIGINS, Current Events in Historical Perspective*, A. Tom Grunfeld, “An Effective American Policy on Tibet?”, November 5, 1997, available at <http://origins.osu.edu/history-news/effective-american-policy-tibet>.) He compared President Clinton’s appointment of a “Special Coordinator” to oversee American policy in Tibet to Beijing appointing an official to look into white police brutality against blacks in America. (A. Tom Grunfeld, “Reassessing Tibet Policy”, October 12, 2005, available at [http://fpif.org/reassessing\\_tibet\\_policy/](http://fpif.org/reassessing_tibet_policy/).) Actions like this by the U.S. White House, and the Tibet-related bills and amendments passed by the U.S. Congress, might well serve the domestic political purposes of assuaging the Anti-Chinese politicians and Tibet lobbyists in the U.S., but in Tibet, these U.S. acts only served to strengthen the hands of the Chinese hard-line officials, whose policy tended to be politically repressive and restrictive with regard to religious practices. Radio Free Asia’s broadcasts to Tibet, that roused Tibetans to engage in their brave but futile struggle against Chinese rule, also tended to bolster the authority of the Chinese hard-liners. In his opinion, the international campaign for Tibet, especially the U.S. involvement in it during the decade from the mid-1990s, had worsened the conditions for Tibetans.

Professor Grunfeld pointed out that during the 1980s, the moderate elements had effected policies that encouraged the use of the Tibetan language, promoted Tibetan culture and built or reconstructed more temples than had previously existed in some regions before 1951. Their

policy undoubtedly benefited the Tibetans. They also made serious attempts to persuade the Dalai Lama to return to China to consolidate this policy with them. It was only after the Tibetans inside Tibet agitated for independence in response to the Dalai Lama and his U.S.-led Western support for this cause, that the CCP hard-liners on Tibet won the argument and had their policy implemented in the late 1980s. He urged the U.S. to adopt a new foreign policy: one that would involve the U.S. government in reaching out to the moderate officials in the Chinese government, by portraying Tibet as well as China in a more realistic fashion, by inviting Tibetan officials to Washington, and by not pandering to the Tibet lobby. He also advised the U.S. to “acknowledge the significant gains in personal freedom for the vast majority of Chinese citizens”, and to “place human rights complaints in the larger context of current Chinese society”. He believed that “more realistic policies can help bring about a peaceful resolution of the Tibet issue, which is in the interests, and to the benefit, of Tibetans, Chinese, and ultimately, the whole world”.

If the U.S. policy-makers on Tibet were really concerned about the human rights and religious freedom of the Tibetan, they should have followed the advice of Professor Grunfeld. If securing the Chinese government’s trust and cooperation were high on the agenda of the U.S. foreign policy, the U.S. government would have taken into account China’s objection to the U.S. policy on Tibet. Neither Professor Grunfeld’s plea for a more effective U.S. policy towards Tibet, nor years of Chinese official representations against U.S. support for the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan separatists, had any impact on the U.S. policy towards Tibet. With its protests having fallen on deaf ears, the frustrated Chinese government nevertheless still continued to press the U.S. government to change its policy on Tibet, with statements like “the U.S. support for the Dalai

Lama clique's separatist activities has seriously hurt the feelings of the Chinese people, particularly that of the Tibetans, and has become an important factor hindering the smooth development of Sino-U.S. relations". ("Article Blast U.S. for Backing Dalai Lama's separatist Activities", available at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/premade/13640/report7.htm>.)

As China's economic power grew globally, high government officials of liberal democracies like Denmark and Norway stopped receiving the Dalai Lama, and South Africa and Russia would not even give him a visa to enter their countries; but the U.S. continued to keep the Dalai Lama in the limelight. ("No One Likes the Dalai Lama Anymore", By Mint Press News Desk, September 6, 2014, available at <http://www.mintpressnews.com/one-likes-dalai-lama-anymore/196250/>). In March 2014, the Dalai Lama was invited by the U.S. Congress to deliver the opening prayer of the Senate in addition to other speaking engagements. (Time, "Dalai Lama Gives Prayer on Senate Floor", available at <http://time.com/14056/dalai-lama-senate-prayer/>) Chinese officials' angry objections did not prevent President Obama from receiving the Dalai Lama many times during his tenure, the latest being in February 2015. (Jethro Mullen, *CNN*, "Obama, Dalai Lama meet despite China's appeal", February 21, 2014, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2014/02/20/world/asia/china-us-dalai-lama/>. *BBC*, "China media criticize Dalai Lama-Obama Meeting, February 6, 2015, available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-31159993>)]

Why do the U.S. policy-makers persist in pursuing a Tibet policy that offends their Chinese counterparts, undermines the Sino-U.S. relationship, exacerbates ethnic tension and worsens the situation regarding human rights and religious freedom in Tibet? What are the U.S. objectives?

The Chinese officials concerned have come to the conclusion that the “Tibet issue” together with the Dalai Lama has been and still is used as a “weapon against China” by some Western countries, the U.S. in particular, to “contain” China, to thwart its development, to destabilize it, and to cut down its territory, not to mention spoiling its image. (“Article Blasts U.S. for Backing Dalai’s Separatist Activities”, available at <http://www.imprc.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/premade/13640/report7.htm>). F. William Engdahl, a well-established American - German historian and writer on politics and international relations, concurred with this Chinese view. (F. William Engdahl, “The Geopolitical Agenda behind the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize”, October 2010.) According to Engdahl, after the U.S. became the world’s sole superpower at the end of the Cold War, it had the strategic goal of preventing any new superpower from emerging anywhere in the world to rival the U.S. as the one and only superpower. China became a target of U.S. containment because of its rapid rise, and the U.S. determination to prevent China from becoming a rival superpower.

The Chinese officials concerned with American reports on Tibet have complained that the U.S. government and media have ignored objective facts on the improvements on the standard of living and other positive developments in Tibet, and aired the voices of those who have reasons to malign China. (“Article Blasts U.S. for Backing Dalai’s Separatist Activities”, available at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cegov/eng/premade/13640/report7.htm>.) The result of a survey by an American professor of history has reportedly shown that the ratio of stories published by the newspaper *USA Today* in favour of the Dalai Lama and those explaining China’s position was 10 to 1.

Although the Chinese government has characterized the Dalai Lama as “a political refugee” engaging in activities of splitting China and destroying national unity under the camouflage of religion for many years, it has continued, for decades, to meet his representatives and to conduct dialogues with them. Since the Dalai Lama and his followers would not accept anything short of their proposed “middle way” – the package of demands, referred to above, for negotiation with the Chinese government - and since the Chinese found their key demands highly objectionable, the negotiations had not produced any satisfactory outcome for either side. One of the items China objected to strongly was the demand for “a highly degree of autonomy”, or “true autonomy” for the “Greater Tibet” area. The Chinese saw that the acceptance of the Tibetans’ demand would lead to the creation of “a state within a state”, a situation that would contravene China’s Constitution and undermine China’s sovereignty and national unity. (The State Council Information Office of the PRC issued white paper: “Tibet’s Path of Development is Driven by an Irresistible Historical Tide”, April 2015, Beijing.)

Another knotty issue between the two sides involved the Dalai Lama group’s demand for the complete withdrawal of Chinese military forces from Tibet to make Tibet into a “demilitarized zone”. (Ibid.) Such a move would also make Tibet an “international zone of peace” and a buffer between China and India. The Chinese held the position that their central government’s decision to station troops in any part of China is connected with the need for national security and an expression of national sovereignty. In their view, the Dalai Lama group’s opposition to the stationing of Chinese troops in Tibet was a “clear evidence of its intention to seek complete independence”. Its proposal to turn Tibet into an international zone of peace and a buffer between

China and India was seen by the Chinese side as an attempt to move Tibet into the international arena. They stood firmly on the position that Tibet was strictly China's internal affair.

The Chinese concerned characterised the idea of "Greater Tibet" as "sheer fantasy" that had neither basis in China's history nor suited China's national conditions. Historically, it had been common for one single ethnic group to be living in many different administrative areas, and for many ethnic groups to be residing in a single administrative area. In the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau region, the area where the "Greater Tibet" was to be located, more than a dozen ethnic groups, including Han, Hui, Tibetan, Monba, Lhoba, Qiang, Mongol, Naxi, Tu, Salar, Lisu and Yasu, had lived amongst each other for centuries. The idea of a "Greater Tibet" covering a quarter of the total territory of China, and controlled by extremely nationalistic Tibetans, raised concern among the Chinese, who endeavoured to build a multi-ethnic nation on the principle of inclusiveness and equal treatment of all ethnic minority groups, with elements of positive discrimination in favour of the ethnic minorities. Considering that the Dalai Lama group had demanded that the Chinese central government prevent further migration into Tibet, and return the Hans who had migrated into Tibet back to China when it did not even control the affairs of Tibet, the Chinese could not possibly leave the fate of millions of Hans and other ethnic groups living in the so-called "Greater Tibet" area in the hands of such chauvinistic Tibetans.

With the Dalai Lama group clinging on to the "middle way", which the Chinese government rejected as contravening China's Constitution and encouraging separatism, many years of negotiation between the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government have achieved nothing. Shortly after the Dalai Lama gave up political power and resigned from the Central Tibet

Administration (CTA) that governed the Tibetan exiles in India in 2011, his “private” representative announced his resignation to the Chinese government, and informed the Chinese concerned that from then on they would have to negotiate with the Tibetan government-in-exile. The Chinese government has never negotiated with the Tibet government-in-exile, which they regard as illegal and without any right to represent Tibet. It has negotiated with the Dalai Lama, the most influential religious leader of Tibet, not as someone who represented the people there politically, but as a private person, with the hope of persuading him to return to China. His return would appease the deeply religious people of Tibet and weaken the separatist movement. The 76 year-old Dalai Lama’s retirement from politics in 2011 marked the end of the dialogue between the two sides.

Anticipating his eventual abdication from power, the aging Dalai Lama decided to foster democracy to the extent of having a democratically elected Prime Minister to lead the CTA. In 2001, Samdong Rinpoche, a Harvard educated Tibetan exile was elected Prime Minister of the CTA. Having devolved power to the secular, elected head of the Tibet government in exile, the Dalai Lama and his followers in exile hope to continue their struggle to keep the so-called “Tibet issue” in the international limelight. (Chok Tsering, “Socio-Political and Economic Conditions of Tibetan Refugees in India: A Case Study of Dharamsala”, published on October 31, 2011. Available at <http://www.vifindia.org/article/2011/october/31/Socio-Potilical--and-Economic-Conditions-of-Tibetan-Refugees-in-India>: A Case Study of Dharamsala.)

Another subject anticipated by the Dalai Lama and all interested parties, including the Chinese government, has been his death and reincarnation. Because a Dalai Lama’s successor was



normally a baby chosen from a Tibetan community in China after the predecessor's death, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exiles were afraid that the Chinese government would make sure that it chose the present Dalai Lama's successor. In order to avoid such a situation, the Dalai Lama issued a statement in September 2011 raising the possibility of ending the institution of the Dalai Lama, meaning that he might decide not to undergo reincarnation to become the Fifteenth Dalai Lama. There were suggestions that he might change the traditional practice by appointing a successor during his lifetime. However, should he decide to reincarnate, he asked his followers to carry out his written instructions, and not to recognize candidates chosen for political ends by the PRC. More recently, on September, 7, 2014, the Dalai Lama told the German Newspaper, *Welt am Sonntag* that: "We had a Dalai Lama for almost five centuries. The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama now is very popular. Let us then finish with a popular Dalai Lama". According to a 2015 Reuters report, China would not agree to the ending of this institution by the present Dalai Lama, and might choose his successor. (*Business Insider*, Ben Blanchard, *Reuters*, March 9, 2015, "China really wants to choose the Dalai Lama's next incarnation", available at <http://www.businessinsider.com/r-china-says-dalai-lama-profanes-buddhism-by-doubting-his-reincarnation-2015-3>.)

*Have the Dalai Lama's activities in the West done any good to the Tibetans in China?*

If the Dalai Lama, with U.S. help, had not made Tibet into an international issue, the more sensitive and circumspect policy of the moderate Chinese faction towards the Tibetans might have continued to be enforced there. The anti-Chinese propaganda from the Dalai Lama group,

broadcast with U.S. help from abroad, emboldened the monks and their supporters to stage not just peaceful protests but violent riots and “uprisings”, that included violent attacks against the persons and properties of the Hans and Huis living in their midst. Was such communal violence good for community relationship among the ethnic groups in that region? It must have inflamed ethnic hatred, and made it more difficult for the different ethnic groups to live in harmony. It is worth noting that the Tibetans, Hans and Huis and many other ethnic groups had lived peacefully for centuries in the Qinghai-Tibet plateau region.

Another harmful consequence of the monk-induced unrests was the inevitable crackdown by the governing authorities. The challenges to the security and stability of the Chinese state posed by these Tibetan separatists, as we have seen, strengthened the hands of the hard-liners whose policy tended to be more restrictive and controlling, making life less pleasant for the inhabitants there.

Lastly, the local authorities in Tibet found a self-immolation guide written by a Tibetan exile, Lhamo Je, who had been a member of the CTA parliament, to encourage Tibetans in China to burn themselves to death in order to discredit the Chinese government. (The State Council Information Office of the PRC, “Tibet’s Path of Development Is Driven by an Irrisistible Historical Tide”, April 2015, Beijing, available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-02/15/c\\_134152612.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-02/15/c_134152612.htm).) Self-immolation began in 2009 by a monk in a monastery in the Sichuan province; by 2016, over one hundred Tibetans resorted to it. Following such acts, the Chinese authorities would blame the Dalai Lama group for inciting the Tibetans to self-immolate, while the U.S. government would lecture the Chinese authorities concerned on what the Chinese should or should not do in Tibet, and on ways to improve their relationship with the Dalai Lama. The

Chinese would respond with diplomatic protests against U.S. interference in their country's internal affairs. The Dalai Lama characterized self-immolation as a non-violent act, and said positive things about it as a form of self-sacrifice. Is self-immolation a healthy social development among the Tibetans? From the standpoint of the welfare and wellbeing of the Tibetans in China, the consequences of the activities of the Dalai Lama and his fellow exiles, together with the U.S. policy on Tibet, have been harmful to the Tibetans in China.

### **Tibet up to 2014: Modernization and Development**

Over the years, the Information Office of the State Council has published a number of “white papers” on Tibet covering a range of topics. A government “white paper” is normally an authoritative report that informs the readers about a complex issue, and presents the issuing body's point of view on the matter. The facts in these papers on Tibet can be, and sometimes have been, scrutinized, analysed, and cross-checked by Western scholars and researchers on Tibet, and they should not be dismissed as propaganda. Although the full texts of many of these are available on the web, they are more likely to be read by researchers and scholars on Tibet rather than the American general public.

In this section, a picture of Tibet up to 2014 will be given, using the information gleaned from the white papers with the following titles: “Development and Progress of Tibet” published on October 22, 2013, “Tibet's Path of Development Is Driven by an Irresistible Historical Tide” published in April 2015, and “Successful Practice of Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet” published in

September 2015. Together these white papers provide a comprehensive overview covering the economic development, the political organization, the cultural and religious landscape, the social changes and the environmental situation of Tibet from 1959, the end of the Dalai Lama's theocracy, to 1965, when the Tibet Autonomous Region was officially established, to September 2015, three years after the transfer of power from Hu Jintao to China's present leader, Xi Jinping.

### *Economic Development*

On the economic front, because China's central government made developing Tibet a priority, from 1952 to 2012 it allocated 454.34 billion yuan to Tibet, a sum equivalent to 96% of accumulated fiscal expenditure of the local government. More funding was in the pipeline for infrastructure building and other projects from 2011 to 2015. The central government also mobilized 17 provincial and municipal governments to enter into a pair-up support program to provide additional revenue for Tibet's development. Since Tibet's old economy had been based on agriculture and animal husbandry, the initial push was to devise ways to stimulate production in these fields with modern tools and the application of science and technology. Grain output grew 8.3% annually from 1959 to 1966, and the number of cattle increased by 90.2% during that period. While growth in agricultural and animal husbandry products has continued to the present, Tibet's drive toward economic expansion has been wisely combined with considerations for environmental sustainability and protection. Farmland and grassland have been regularly allowed periods for recuperation.

Since the introduction of modern industry into Tibet in the 1950s, Tibet now has over twenty modern industries, which include energy, textiles, food processing, folk handicrafts, traditional

Tibetan medicine, building materials, machinery, and chemical and light industry. In its industrial development, Tibet has reined in highly polluting ones and fostered those especially suited to the local conditions. The total industrial output in Tibet has shot up from \$1.4 million in 1956 to 10.591 billion in 2012. Retail sales have increased over 400-fold from 89 million yuan in 1965 to 36.451 billion yuan in 2014, an annual average growth rate of 13.1%. The total volume of Tibet's foreign trade grew from US\$4 million in 1951 to US\$3.424 billion in 2012, a 12.1% annual rate of growth. Tibet has become a very popular tourist destination. In 2013, Tibet received 12.91 million tourists, including 220,000 from overseas.

Tourism and modern industry cannot flourish without a modern system of transportation. With no roads fit for a car before the 1950s, by 2014 Tibet had developed a comprehensive modern transportation system with roads, railways, aviation facilities, and pipelines for oil. Highways radiating from Lhasa run to Sichuan and Yunnan in the east, Xinjiang in the west, Qinghai in the north, and India and Nepal in the south. Every township and county and over 99% of administrative villages in Tibet are now accessible by road. The extremely challenging feat of building the 1,956 km (1,215 mi) Tibet-Qinghai railway that connects Lhasa and Xining and many major Chinese cities was completed in 2006. Since then, the line between Lhasa and Shigatse has been built. Air lines operating in Tibet connect Tibetan cities with 33 cities in China and the world.

Through economic development, Tibet's GDP had increased 281-fold from 327 million yuan in 1965 to 92.08 billion yuan by 2014. Since 1994, the GDP of Tibet has grown at an average rate of 12.4% annually to 2014, registering 20 consecutive years of double-digit growth.

### *Improvement in Conditions of Life*

By 2014, the per capita disposable income of rural residents, i.e., farmers and herdsmen, reached 7,359 yuan, representing an average rate of 10.9% increase annually, while that of urban dwellers saw a 10.7% average annual rate of increase to 22,016 yuan. This figure was about 39 times that of the urban dweller in 1978, which was 565 yuan. The higher per capita income of the urban dweller signifies that Tibet is not an exception to the income inequality between the rural and urban residents found elsewhere in China. Like other parts of China, the movement of the rural population into cities was also occurring in Tibet. There was 9.48% of urbanites in the 1982 census, whereas in 2010 the figure reached 22.67%. The 2006 low-income housing projects, in connection with the initiative of building a new socialist countryside, provided 27.8 billion yuan towards the construction of 460,000 units of low-income dwellings, to house 2.3 million members of households of farmers and herdsmen by the end of 2013. The move to provide safe modern houses, with per capita living space of about 30 square meters to Tibet's rural residents continued. Since then, 8.809 million yuan was allocated to build 66,076 more houses. The average living space per person for urban residents was about 43 square meters. The 2006 to 2014 "Campaign to Develop Border Areas and Improve the Lives of the Peoples" relocated poverty-stricken families in Tibet from small, dark, adobe houses, where they lived alongside livestock, to more suitable modern houses. Poverty-relief projects have benefited 2.6 million people in Tibet in 578,000 households. The living standards of the Tibetans have undergone substantial and historic improvements. The growth in their per capita income and the improvements in their housing alone would support that claim. The overwhelming majority of the people of that region have now left behind centuries of poverty, and are enjoying a relatively comfortable life. Because Tibet started from a very low base,

there is still a gap between per capita GDP of Tibet and the richer parts of China, a gap the authorities hope to narrow.

While millions of people are still in living in places without electricity in developing countries in Africa and Asia, India included, 100% of the local population in Tibet had access to electric power. This was the result of the modernization drive that equipped Tibet with a new energy system that combined hydroelectric, geothermal, wind, and solar energy sources to generate 1.28 million kw of electricity by 2013. The regional authorities proactively installed massive gas pipe networks to provide heating to almost all urban areas of Lhasa, relegating the burning of dung a thing of the past. Almost 240,000 farmer and herdsman households were provided with biogas. The region also made efforts to ensure the safety of drinking water.

In addition to these essential utilities, the TAR has established modern postal services and a modern telecommunications network that combines nearly 97,000 kilometres of optical cable lines with satellite and the Internet to help Tibet to be linked to the rest of China and the world. The number of households using the Internet reached 2.177 million. The Internet and mobile phone coverage in farming and pastoral areas has topped 65 percent. Many farmers' and herdsmen's households have become well-off, building new houses, and buying cars, refrigerators, radios, televisions, computers, washing machines, motorbikes and mobile phones. A 2012 survey found that for every 100 urban households in Tibet, there were 27 cars, 16 motorcycles, 86 refrigerators, 129 colour televisions, 63 computers, and 88 washing machines. These consumer items are now a part of a Tibetan's daily life.

### *Educational Attainments*

In the sphere of education, Tibet now has a modern educational system with 9 years of compulsory education for all counties in the region. It leads China in providing all school-age residents with 15 years of free education, from three years of preschool to senior high school. Children from farmers and herdsman families and the urban poor are helped with free food and boarding schools. The enrolment of preschool children has reached 60%. Illiteracy has been largely eliminated among young and middle-aged Tibetans. Education in both the primary and the secondary schools in the TAR is bilingual; courses are taught in both Tibetan and Chinese. Vocational schools and institutions for higher education offering Ph.D. programs are also available in Tibet. Tibetan high school graduates are welcome to attend higher educational institutions in other provinces in China, some of which have special provisions for students from Tibet.

### *Culture and Entertainment*

In areas of culture and entertainment, the TAR has eight public art centres, five public libraries, three museums, and cultural activity centres or stations in most counties and towns. The 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2011-2015) has allocated 1.5 billion yuan for a cultural facility construction project to increase the provision of libraries and books, museums, and cultural activity centres and stations for the cities, towns and villages in the TAR. The 5,609 rural libraries and 1,700 monastery libraries provide books to all administrative villages and monasteries. This region has 10 professional dance ensembles and Tibetan opera troupes, 20 county-level art troupes, and more than 350 amateur performing groups staging shows for public entertainment. While traditional cultural activities are thriving in Tibet, modern facilities for culture and entertainment have now become widely available. A broadcasting network for radio and television covers about 95% of



the region in 2015. While both Tibetan and Chinese are used in radio and television broadcasting, there are also Tibetan only programs. Films dubbed in Tibetan are also available.

Publishing and printing are thriving in Tibet. In addition to the Tibet People's Publishing House and Tibetan Ancient Books Publishing House that bring out printed books, a majority of them in Tibetan, in 2014 audio-visual and electronic book titles are starting to be published. Recently computer coding for Tibetan characters has been developed and is being used increasingly. Of newspapers and magazines, Tibet publishes 14 Tibetan-language newspapers and 10 Tibetan-language magazines. Now Tibetans, even in remote rural areas, can read books and newspapers, listen to the radio or watch TV for news and entertainments, and get all kinds of information from the internet.

The authorities in Tibet are taking the preservation and protection of Tibet's cultural heritage seriously. They have allocated resources, and set up organizations for this purpose. There are 4,277 designated cultural relic sites and 2.32 million items of Tibetan cultural relics being protected and preserved. The Potala Palace, the Norbulingka and Jokhang Temples have been put on the World Heritage List. There are organizations to salvage, collate, and study Tibet's cultural heritage. They have published collections of Tibetan folk music, dances and other art forms. The State List of Valuable Ancient Books includes 158 titles of Tibetan books. Tibetan opera and the Gesar epic have been included among UNESCO's Masterpieces of Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

### *Customs, Tradition and Religion*

On matters relating to customs, tradition, and the practice of religion, the Chinese government asserts that “it respects and protects the right of all ethnic groups in Tibet to live and conduct social activities according to their own traditional customs and folkways; it respects and protects their freedom in attending normal religious services, performing sacrificial rituals, and taking part in major religious festivals.” Tibetans are indeed free to practice their religion, worship in their temples, perform rituals, and celebrate religious and customary festivals, of which there are many. The authorities keep Tibet’s temples and monasteries in repair, and provide the monks and nuns with social security and financial subsidy. However, the absence of the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s paramount religious leader, from Tibet, together with his separatist drive abroad, create trouble for the regime in connection with controlling the behaviour of some of the monks and their sympathizers. Partly for this reason, the regime restricts the number of monks, and prohibits the display of portraits of the Dalai Lama in public places. Historically the Chinese state had always regulated religion if it saw a need to do so, and many peasant rebellions began under the cloak of a religious movement to gather support. The current Chinese regime took the stand that while it supports the freedom of Tibetans to practice their faith, it is against the use of religion as cover for seditious activities. The security apparatus of the state can be expected to move against those who attempt to do so.

### *Employment and Social Welfare*

With regards to employment and social welfare, Tibet has maintained a high rate of employment as a result of economic growth, educational improvement and the region’s proactive employment policy. The registered urban unemployment rate was 2.5% in 2014.

In recent years, a social security system has been set up for both urban and rural residents in Tibet. It includes five major insurance types that cover unemployment, medical, maternity, work-related injury, and endowment. The social endowment insurance is essentially a pension for elderly rural residents and non-working urban residents. Monks and nuns have medical insurance and social endowment insurance coverage. (Nanzhi Wei, “China’s Social Protection System of the Elderly”, September 9, 2010, available at <http://www.booksandideas.net/China’s-Social-Protection-System.html>.) There is a system of “five guarantees” for food, clothing, medical care, housing, and funeral expenses for the poorest in society. China’s social security system is the largest in the world, and it is a work in progress.

As we have seen, over 90% of the people in Tibet, who were serfs or slaves, had no medical provision before 1959. In 2014, a medical and health network that integrated traditional Tibetan and Chinese and modern Western medical practices has been established in Tibet, covering all cities and villages, with Lhasa as the centre. Tibetans in urban areas have medical insurance. The region has 71 county hospitals and 678 township clinics that provide free basic medical services to members of the households of all farmers and herdsmen. There are 3.79 hospital beds and 4.08 medical workers per 1000 residents. The average life expectancy of people in Tibet has risen from 35.5 years in the 1950s to 68.17 years in 2014.

### *Environmental Protection in Tibet*

Because polluting industries have caused a lot of environmental damage in many areas in China, both the central and the regional governments are determined to do a better job to protect Tibet’s pristine environment, while carrying out economic development there. Severe constraints have been imposed on industries that cause pollution or consume excessive amount of energy. The

authorities concerned have laid down laws and regulations, allocated special funds and implemented plans for projects on conserving and improving Tibet's ecological environment.

The planned and implemented projects include protection of forests, the natural grasslands, the wetlands, and wild animals and plants under threat, in addition to conservation of water and soil, construction of nature reserves, control of desertification, and substituting green and clean energy in agricultural and pastoral areas. Tibet now leads the country in protection of many species of wild or indigenous plants and animals. Tibet has 47 nature reserves, covering 413,700 sq. km. or 33.9% of the total land area of the entire region. The ecological reserves and parks there effectively protected the biodiversity and the wildlife of Tibet. Instead of burning wood, Tibet's source of energy is now mostly green and clean. A special fund has been set up to protect Tibet's drinking water sources.

While forests are shrinking in other parts of the world, the forests in Tibet have grown. From 1965 to 1992, 70 million trees have been planted there. A policy of sealing off some hillsides against felling to conserve the trees or to plant trees to restore forests, has been enforced. There were 6.32 million hectares of forests in Tibet in 1992, and in 2014 the area covered by forests had grown to 14.7156 million ha., or 11.98% of the region. Grassland has been systematically conserved, using methods such as limiting the number of animals on pastures according to size, and allowing time for the grassland to recover after a spell of grazing. An eco-compensation scheme has been initiated recently to provide financial rewards to farmers to avoid felling natural forest, and to herdsmen for protecting grassland. This appears to be a sustainable approach for the use of grassland. By the end of 2012, out of a total 85.11 million ha of nature grassland, 69.1 million ha was ready for grazing. Desertification has declined between surveys.

Tibet has become a leader in building an ecological culture in China. Some of its prefectures have been enlisted as Ecological Cultural Demonstration Areas to take the lead in carrying out independent environmental monitoring, enforcing laws on environmental protection, and in making improvements on the system of controlling pollutant discharge, in addition to establishing a system of accountability for environmental damage. This would open up the possibility of other impoverished border areas with ethnic minorities to use Tibet as a model in their approach to ecological conservation and environmental protection.

Surveys and evaluation by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and other organizations show that Tibet's air, water, soil, radiation and ecological environment are all in good condition. Its forests, lakes, grasslands, wetlands, and wildlife are all being effectively protected. The air is so clean in Tibet that the content of pollutants in its atmosphere is said to be similar to that of the North Pole. Tibet's major river and lakes have not been polluted by human activities. Tibet's soil has not been markedly changed during the 30 years from 1979 to 2009.

### *The Political Institutions and Practices in the Tibet Autonomous Areas*

On the political front, when the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) was officially established in 1965, the law that discriminates in favour of ethnic minorities in areas where they live in compact communities came into operation officially. The main organs that govern Tibet as one of five of China's self-governing regions are the People's Government of the TAR (the executive branch) and People's Congress (the legislature), and they also act as the local arms of the central government in Beijing. The PRC Constitution requires the authorities concerned to train large

numbers officials at various levels as well as skilled workers in various professions and trades from the local ethnic minority groups. There is a law that stipulates that the head of an ethnic minority region, prefecture or county has to be a member of the ethnic group that exercises regional autonomy in the area concerned. The Civil Servant Law gives preferential treatment to Tibetans and other ethnic minority applicants for positions in the civil service in the TAR. Currently there are around 70% ethnic Tibetan cadres or officials in the TAR.

As regards Tibet's legislature, all persons at or above 18 in all ethnic groups in China have the right to vote directly for (and to be elected as) deputies to the people's congresses at the county and township levels. The deputies of the National People's Congress, the level that represents Tibet in the National Government, are elected by the deputies of the people's congresses of the regional, prefectural, county and township or village levels successively. In the TAR, an overwhelming majority of deputies normally came from the Tibetan and other ethnic minority groups. For example, in 2012 they accounted for more than 93% of the four levels of deputies. The voter turnout rate for elections at these four levels in 2012 exceeded 94%. The majority of the chairpersons of the standing committee of the TAR regional people's congress are normally Tibetans. As of 2012, the Tibetans are in the majority representing the TAR on the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the organ for multi-party cooperation and political consultation. Since 1993, Tibet began to implement a law for election of village committees as a way towards exercising community-level democracy and self-governance. During the seventh general election of village committees in the TAR, 88.7% of the registered voters voted. So it seems that the Tibetans are enthusiastic about participating in democratic elections, despite the limitations. The TAR seems to be structured in such a way as to

enable Tibetans to be the dominant group in managing the affairs of the TAR. They seem not to be a disadvantaged and oppressed people, as the Dalai Lama and his fellow Tibetan exiles would like the world to believe.

In addition to preferential treatment in the political sphere, Tibetans and all other minorities receive preferential marking in national university entrance exams and civil service exams. Urban Tibetans can have two children whereas Han Chinese city-dwellers have been allowed only one until the modification of the one-child policy in 2015. There has been no limit to the number of offspring to rural Tibetans.

### *The Demographic Situation in Tibet*

The Dalai Lama and some Westerners have clung to a fear that the Chinese policy of opening up Tibet for development from the mid-1980s will lead to a flood of Han Chinese migrants who will overwhelm and marginalize the local Tibetans in their traditional homeland. Scholars and researchers, including those in the West, who have investigated and analysed the demographic situation in Tibet, have shown that the feared situation has not materialized. (Rong Ma and Naigu Pan, Beijing University, “The Tibet Population and Their Geographic Distribution in China”, available at <http://www.case.edu/affil/tibet/booksAndPapers/tibetan.population.geographic.dist.pdf>.)

Historical demographic data of the Tibetan-inhabited areas in China are very limited. Qing administrative records show a figure of 957,150 Tibetans ruled by a Dalai Lai together with a Panchen Lama in 1737. If those living outside the control of the monasteries are added, the

population figure would reach 1,340,000. Since then, there had only been estimated figures that varied widely, until an official census was taken in 1953.

It is significant to know that, before the serfs and slaves in Tibet were freed in 1959, the population in this region had been stagnant. In fact, those who have looked into the figures came to the conclusion that Tibetan's population had declined to 800,000 by 1900. The suggested reasons for this situation were economic backwardness, high infant mortality, prevalence of venereal diseases, poor medical care for the majority of the people, the severely cold climate, and the large proportion of monks and nuns in the total population. Before the 1950s, monks reportedly made up a third of the total Tibetan population.

In 1953, the population in the region ruled by the Dalai Lama as reported by his government was around 1,000,000. The people in the region which became the TAR in 1965, was entirely Tibetan in 1953. Since more than 50% of Tibetans had normally been found living outside the TAR, the total number of Tibetans in China must be roughly double that number. Indeed, the 1953 census recorded a total of 2.77 million people living in all of the Tibetan-inhabited areas in China.

What constituted the total Tibetan-inhabited areas? It was the TAR, which was ruled by the Dalai Lama before 1959, plus the 10 Tibetan autonomous prefectures and 2 Tibetan autonomous counties scattered in the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai. Traditionally the Hans constituted the largest group after the Tibetan living in these Tibet-autonomous areas.



For example, in 1953, there were 430,000 Han, 220,000 Hui, in addition to Mongolian, Qiang, Yi and other ethnic groups living in these areas.

The much improved economic situation and living conditions, together with better medical care, have led to a significant increase in the population of Tibetans in China. Let us first look at the population growth of Tibetans in the TAR. Between 1953 to 1982, the year of another official census, it increased from around 1 million to 1.786 million. (“Population Structure and Changes in the Tibet Autonomous Region—An Analysis of the Recent Census Data”, a paper presented at the International Conference on “Tibet Autonomy” at Harvard University (November 28-29).) From 1982 to 2000, another year of official census, the number of Tibetans in the TAR again increased, this time from 1.786 million to 2.427 million. Sometime between 1953 and 2000 some Hans and Huis and other minority groups came into the TAR. However, during the period from 1953 to 2005, the percentage of the total population of the Tibetans here has remained within a narrow range from 94.4% to 96.4%. The Tibetans in the TAR have not been swamped by migrants, including Han Chinese, from other parts of China.

The population of all Tibetan-inhabited areas, not only in the TAR, has increased. Let us examine the increases in the number of Tibetans versus those of the Hans in all Tibetan-inhabited areas from 1982 to 2000.

Table X. Population Changes in All Tibetan Autonomous Areas in China (in Millions)

Year	1982		1990		2000	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%

Total population	5.571	100	6.320	100	7.204	100
Han	1.473	26.4	1.584	25.1	1.492	20.7
Tibetan	3.625	65.1	4.274	67.7	5.011	69.56

As we can see from the Table above, the total population grew, with increases in both the Tibetan and Han populations during this period. The growth in the Tibetan population was a matter of natural increase of birth rate and life expectancy. The increase in Hans is complicated by the fact that in addition to the natural increase of those with local residential registration, there have been people migrating into and out of Tibet from other areas of China. The fact that the percentages of Han Chinese decreased from 26.4 in 1982 to 25.1 in 1990, and again to 20.7 in 2000, indicates a net migration of Hans out of the Tibet autonomous areas during that period. The figures show that the Tibetans have not only remained the majority in the Tibet autonomous areas as a whole throughout this period, but their percentage versus others has increased from 65.1% to 69.6%.

The demographic study above also shows that between 1982 and 1990, the population of Tibetans has increased by 648,800, and then by 737,513 between 1990 and 2000. During the 18-year period, the average annual rate of growth has been 1.82%, a higher rate than China's national average (1.27%). The average life expectancy has increased from 35.5 in 1951 to 68.17 in 2013. (China's white paper: "Development and Progress of Tibet", available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/bilingual/2013-10/22/c\\_132819679\\_6.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/bilingual/2013-10/22/c_132819679_6.htm).) (The accuracy of the Chinese census has improved since the first two in 1953 and 1964. The accuracy of the third in 1982 and fourth in 1990 has been approved by demographic experts around the world.)

What were the reasons for the decrease (or sometimes fluctuation) of Han migrants in Tibet? Over the years the state has invested in a large number of infrastructure-building projects in Tibet. Sizable numbers of Hans (engineers, managers, and skilled workers) were arranged by the state to

come to Tibet for this purpose, and they would most likely have left Tibet after the completion of these projects. (“Population Structure and Changes in the Tibet Autonomous Region – An Analysis of the Recent Census Data, a paper presented at the International Conference on “Tibet Autonomy” at Harvard University (November 28-29, 2007), available at <http://www.case.edu/affil/tibet/tibetanSociety/document/TAR-census2.pdf>.) There were, to be sure, economic migrants – business people in food services, retailing, tourism, transport, and workers in these fields - who were mostly Hans and Huis from neighbouring areas, who came to take advantage of economic opportunities as Tibet became modernized. They were not likely to sink roots, since it was difficult for them to obtain local residents’ registration in Tibet. They operated almost exclusively in urban areas, especially in Lhasa, because agricultural land in Tibet was all assigned to local Tibetan farmers and herdsman. This type of migrant might well move away from Tibet if and when better opportunities appeared elsewhere in China. Apparently, from the 1980s, some Hans have been leaving Tibet for the higher income coastal areas of China. The above types of migrants into Tibet provide us with the reason for the fact that a large proportion of the Hans in Tibet are working age males.

Although traditionally Hans, Tibetans, and some other ethnic groups have resided together in the Tibet autonomous areas outside the TAR, which was 100% Tibetans before 1953, later some Hans did manage to establish themselves as residents in the TAR. Among these some might have been permitted to register as local residents and settle permanently in Tibet. For instance, in 1982 and 1990, there were respectively 91,720 and 81,217 Hans with registration to reside in the TAR. (Rong Ma and Naigu Pan, (Beijing University), “The Tibetan Population and Their Geographic

Distribution in China”, available at <http://www.case.edu/affil/tibet/booksAndPapers/tibetan.population.geographic.dist.pdf>.),

They were likely to have been highly-qualified people, such as doctors, teachers, cadres, workers with special skills, needed for local services and economic development.

Even though Tibetans remain the majority in the Tibetan autonomous area as a whole, the recent large increase in tourism might have attracted many Hans and Huis into Lhasa to provide services catering to this industry. The Public Security Bureau of Lhasa estimated 0.1-0.2 million temporary migrants in urban Lhasa around 2000s. (“Population Structure and Changes in the Tibet Autonomous Region – Analysis of the Regional Census Data, a paper presented at the International Conference on “Tibet Autonomy” at Harvard University (Nov.28-29, 2007, available at <http://www.case.edu/affil/tibetSociety/document/TAR-census2.pdf>.) There were 154,818 international tourists and 2,357,285 domestic tourists visiting the TAR in 2006, providing total earnings of 2770.0 million yuan. They are bound to visit Lhasa, which had a population of 0.55 million in 2008. During the tourist seasons, Lhasa must have given the appearance of being swamped by non-Tibetans, even though Tibetans remain the largest group of permanent residents there.

Interestingly, population movement in connection with Tibet is not just a matter of Hans and Huis moving into Tibet autonomous areas. During the recent decades, as the Tibetans become better educated and acquainted with professional, managerial and trading skills, they could and did move to other parts of China to find employment or business opportunities. In 1990, there were 319,152 Tibetans living and working outside the Tibet autonomous areas in China, and in 2000 there were 404,588, an increase of 26.8% in 10 years. Could this be a trend?

The demographic studies strongly contradict the Dalai Lama's sensational claim that the PRC committed genocide against the Tibetans in China, killing 1,200,000 of them. (China's white paper, "Tibet – Its Ownership.") A Western historian on Tibet wrote that the Dalai Lama claimed that there were 7.0 - 8.0 million Tibetans in China in 1962, and 6.0 million Tibetans in China in 1987, when the Han population in Tibet reached 7.5 million. (Rong Ma and Naigu Pan (Peking University), "The Tibet Population and Their Geographic Distribution in China", available at <http://www.case.edu/affil/tibet/booksAndPapers/tibetan.population.geographic.dist.pdf>.) Since his government reported the total population of the part of Tibet he ruled as 1,000,000 in the 1953 census, and since the total of Tibetans in all of China stood at 2.77 million at that time, he should have been aware that the population of Tibet – actually not growing much until he left Tibet in 1959 - could not possible reach 7.0-8.0 million in 14 years. The census figure of the Han population in Tibet in 1982 was 1.47 and in 1900 it was 1.58, so the Dalai Lama's figure of 7.5 million in 1987 was a gross exaggeration. Did His Holiness provide these patently false figures as evidence for the genocide he claimed to have been carried out by the Chinese government in Tibet?

### **The Present Situation of the Tibetans and Their Future: a Review**

As long as China remains a stable and united entity, the Tibetans have no options other than accepting the status quo of being a part of the multi-ethnic nation that China is today. Whatever motives outsiders may attribute to the Chinese, the government of the PRC has invested heavily in Tibet, and made a great deal of effort to develop an extremely poor and backward western border region, where the Tibetans are concentrated, providing the area with much needed infrastructure,

modern housing, lighting and heating facilities, and a modern transportation and communication system. Previously, over 90% of the population in this large and thinly populated region had no educational and medical facilities; now schooling and medical treatment are available throughout Tibet. The development of industry in Tibet has been done with attention to environmental protection. Improvements in agriculture and animal husbandry have been made with consideration for conservation. Tibet's GDP has taken a great leap, so has the Tibetans' standard of living, though there remains an income or wealth gap between the poorer areas of Tibet and the richer parts of China, a situation the Chinese are aware of, and have promised to make efforts to address. The living conditions of the Tibetans have been greatly improved.

Under the present regime, the population of Tibet has reached a historic high, growing at a rate higher than China's national average from 2.77 million in 1953 to 6.28 million in 2010. (Wikipedia: Demographics of China. Note 8: "National Bureau of Statistics of China: China's Statistical yearbook 2011, chapter 3, Population".) Contrary to the propaganda of the Dalai Lama group suggesting that the Tibetan autonomous area has been overrun by Han Chinese, Tibetans remained the majority population in the region as a whole. Since domestic tourists are beginning to visit Tibet in millions during the recent decade, Lhasa might give the impression of being swamped by Han Chinese during the tourist season. With improvements in health and living standards, the life expectancy of the Tibetans has doubled from 35.5 years in the 1950s to 68.17 years in 2015. Most Tibetans now have medical insurance, social security and other welfare provisions. With the farmers and herdsmen in rural Tibet fully self-employed, and an urban unemployment rate at 2.5%, the Tibetans are relatively secure economically.

With so much poverty in developing countries, where infrastructures, jobs and many physical and material benefits of life that the Tibetans now enjoy are absent, the positive developments and modern transformation of Tibet, with a healthily growing and longer-living population, are no mean achievements. Unhappiness and despair with their lot in life has driven waves of migrants to escape poverty, persecution, or military conflict, and to leave their homeland to seek a better live elsewhere. It is significant that apart from some dissident monks and nuns, Tibetans have not left China in droves over the years as economic migrants or political refugees, after the 80,000 or so Tibetans rebels who followed the Dalai Lama to India in 1959. Since the positive developments in Tibet were unhelpful to their cause, the Dalai Lama and his cohorts as well as their Western supporters largely ignore them. They and their Western supporters have continued to malign China, propagating the myth of traditional Tibet as a peaceful, harmonious, happy and non-violent society, and alleging that the regime in China has been guilty of committing “cultural genocide” in this “paradise of religion and contentment”. (CBS News, March 16, 2008, “Dalai Lama accuses China of committing cultural genocide in Tibet”, available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/china-accused-of-cultural-genocide/>.) To counter this unfortunate image, China issued “white papers” informing the world of its policy, as well as the efforts already made, to keep Tibet’s tradition, culture and language alive, and to preserve its old temples and cultural relics. China’s official publications have often been viewed as propaganda in the West. The Western media is much more inclined to propagate the Dalai Lama’s side of the story than China’s.

*The Reality in Tibet According to Open-minded Western Researchers*

Aggrieved by what they perceive as Westerners' refusal to recognize the reality in Tibet, the Chinese concerned with Tibetan affairs are pleased to discover that some serious and open-minded Western scholars are making it their business during recent years to find out what the present as well as the past Tibet was really like, through field investigations and the examination of historical documents and records. What they write might help the Western public to develop a new perception of Tibet, and perhaps also influence some Western governments to alter their Tibetan policy in relation to China.

Ingo Nentwig, a German Sinologist and Ethnologist, has come to the conclusion that Tibetan separatists and gullible Western journalists have given the Western public an image of traditional Tibet that is far from reality. ("True Tibet in eyes of Western Scholars" available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/14c\\_135187579.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/14c_135187579.htm).) According to him, old Tibet was a "society dominated by poverty, misery and violence, ruled by a degenerate system of political tyranny, an institutionalized embodiment of systematic injustice and inequality." He dismissed the Dalai Lama's accusation of cultural genocide against China as "nonsense". In his opinion, since "the Han Chinese is the largest among the 56 ethnic groups in China, it's normal for China's modernization to have more or less some Han cultural elements". He also believes that "the encounter of a variety of cultures actually benefits and inspires cultures of ethnic minorities". Noticing that China Tibetology Press published the Tibetan Tripitaka, a massive collection of 232 volumes of classic Buddhist scripture in 2008, after more than twenty year's collation by experts, he acknowledged this as an example of what the regime has done "to protect and promote ancient Tibetan culture". He discovered that before the 1950s Tibet had few books other than religious classics, and now there are a variety of Tibetan publications including



philosophical classics, Western literature and modern scientific works, and he regarded this as an improvement. Having a broader view of culture than just religion, Nentwig said optimistically: “Tibetans now have perfect conditions to enjoy a full-blown spiritual life in their own language.” In his opinion, preservation of any culture for its own sake could lead to its decay. For the Tibetan culture to encounter and exchange with the cultures of other ethnic groups, including the Han Chinese, might help the Tibetan culture to survive and prosper in the long run.

The Belgian Tibetologist Andre Lacroix noticed the big improvements in the standard of living and the indisputably huge progress made in the Tibetan region. He found the Qinghai-Tibet railway an impressive win-win project, because it has opened up areas isolated for centuries to external exchanges, and improved the economy there. In his view, Tibetan culture is much less threatened than many minority cultures in the world. He was aware that the Tibetan language is mandatory in primary school, and he believed that “there is a real willingness by the Chinese government to protect Tibetan culture.”

Albert Ettinger, a scholar and teacher from Luxembourg, is bringing out two new books on Tibet: *Freies Tibet? (Free Tibet)* in 2014 and *Kampf Um Tibet (Fight for Tibet)* in 2015 after six years of intensive research. (Xinhuanet: “Interview: Dalai Lama distorts picture about Tibet: Luxembourg scholar” available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-07/02/c\\_134375697.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-07/02/c_134375697.htm).) Ettinger has found that German publications on Tibet, including school textbooks, have been transmitting Dalai Lama and Tibetan separatists’ fictitious narrative on Tibet uncritically. (Ibid. “True Tibet in eyes of Western scholars”, available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/14/c\\_135187579.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/14/c_135187579.htm).) He became “angry to see the

Dalai Lama and his disciples trying to poison the minds of youngsters and demonize China”. As a result, he decided to carry out deep fact-based research to find out about the reality concerning Tibet. His motivation to write the above books was to introduce objective facts about Tibet to the Western readers, and to show them the real Tibet.

In the course of Ettinger’s work, he has found that the lies made up by the Dalai Lama group “involve every aspect of old and new Tibet – social and living conditions, the religion and certain historical events. Their falsification of history includes: ethnic Tibetans existed as an independent state since 127 BC; Tibetans used to live happily and peacefully without need for any army or police; China annexed Tibet by military force in 1951; the Seventeen Point Agreement was forged in 1951; Tibetan resistance is non-violent; China attempted to make the Tibetan culture and language perish; China wanted to exterminate the Tibetan people; and the sole goal of the Tibetan government-in-exile is to achieve “real autonomy”. (Global Times interview, June 25, 2015: “Luxembourg scholar explodes myths about Tibet Independence”, available at <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/929005.shtml>.) He confirmed that the Dalai Lama has used the fight over Tibet to damage China’s reputation, and that the Dalai Lama and the U.S. have worked together to weaken China’s political and economic status in the world. “Propaganda against China has never ceased”, said Ettinger. The efforts of European scholars like the above-mentioned should help the Western public arrive at a more realistic and objective view of Tibet’s past and present situation, and of what China has done there.

While China has not been deliberately destroying the culture and tradition of Tibet, or transferring a large number of Hans to upset the dominance of the Tibetan population in the TAR as its

opponents have claimed, Tibet has changed and will continue to change through modernization and greater exchanges with the world outside. Two Western scholars, who conducted a detailed study of Tibet's economy at the end of the twentieth century, came to the conclusion that Tibet's culture has weakened, not from being part of China, but from being modernized and being drawn into global commercial exchanges. (Colin Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*, Routledge Curzon, London and New York, 2003., p. 61.) Not only Tibet, but also the densely settled Han provinces in China, as well as its other ethnic autonomous areas, have not been immune from changes brought on by the process of modernization and globalized commercial and other exchanges.

### **The Future of Tibet and Tibetans**

In our rapidly changing world, it is safe to say that the long-term future for any people in any area of the world is uncertain. In the foreseeable future, it is certain that the era of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama will come to an end through his death, and the U.S. will lose a highly active and visible political ally with whom to discredit China using the Tibet issue. Without the Dalai Lama, it will be more difficult for the Tibetan exiles to stir up monks inside Tibet to initiate anti-government marches and riots. Furthermore, how long can these exiles who left their homeland more than half of a century ago claim credibly to represent the Tibetans inside China? As external pressure on the Tibetans inside China to revolt lessens, a more quiescent situation in the TAR might well encourage the return of a more liberal or moderate Chinese governmental policy concerning that region, and such a development would help to reduce tension among the different ethnic groups

there. Finding itself less threatened, China might well relax its tight security measures in Tibet to some extent, while continuing to develop Tibet economically and socially.

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama has expressly rejected anyone chosen under Chinese rule to succeed him; however, Beijing seems determined to find a Tibetan child in China, with the cooperation of pro-government Tibetan clergy, and following the religious rituals and historical precedents, to assume the role of the Fifteenth Dalai Lama. (The New York Times, Edward Wong, July 1, 2010 “China Asserts Role in Choosing Dalai Lama”. [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/02/world/asia/02dalai.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/02/world/asia/02dalai.html?_r=0).) Having, like the current Panchen Lama, grown up in the CCP-controlled Tibet, the new Dalai Lama would be likely to support Tibet’s status quo in adulthood. Although it is impossible to predict whether the Tibetans in China will accept the spiritual authority of the Dalai Lama’s successor found in China, the new Dalai Lama will be most unlikely to enjoy the theocratic political power or the iconic status of the current one.

Fair-minded Western scholars recognize the fact that Tibet is prospering within a united China, and its people are free to practice their religion and lead a normal life like people elsewhere. (*Global Times*, Luxembourg scholar explodes myths about Tibet independence, 03/25/2016. Available in <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/929005.shtml>. Tom Grunfeld, “Reassessing Tibet Policy,” October 12, 2005, available at <http://fpif.org/reassessing-tibet-policy/>.) The Tibetan silent majority might not be as opposed to the political status quo as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and his anti-Chinese supporters would like the world to believe. The Chinese government will continue to base their policy towards the Tibetan minorities on the belief that separatism tends to decline as

ethnic autonomous areas become more economically integrated with the rest of China, and as the living standard of the Tibetan people continues to improve. (Colin Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*, Routledge Curzon, London and New York, 2003.) Because of old Tibet's economic backwardness, a gap continues to exist between the living standards of the Tibetans, especially those in the rural areas, and the people in most other parts of China. According to the TAR Vice-Chairman Hao Peng, the central government has committed itself to address the inequality of income and opportunities between the Tibetans and Han Chinese. (*The Independent*, Clifford Coonan in Lhasa, 30 June 2010, "China takes softly-softly approach in effort to boost Tibet's economy", <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-takes-softly-softly-aapproach-in-effort-to-boost-tibets-economy-2015160.html>.) The pursuit of this policy will further improve the living conditions of the Tibetans.

In the foreseeable future, the Tibetan autonomous area will remain a part of China and its economy will continue to grow, like that of China's as a whole. As the externally instigated Tibetan unrest diminishes, one could expect the Tibetans to live peacefully amongst the Hans and other ethnic groups, especially in the four provinces neighbouring the TAR. After all, the Tibetans had lived peacefully for centuries amongst the Hans and other ethnic groups in these areas. Urbanization will continue in Tibet like elsewhere in China. Further improvement of the living conditions of the Tibetans will enable their population to continue to increase. While some more Han and Hui businesses might move to Tibetan urban centres to serve the burgeoning tourist trade, their number will likely to be limited, because many of these people will have difficulty adapting to living in the thin air and the harsh climate of this region. Moreover, even if they wanted to stay, the government might make it difficult for them to get official residents' permits to settle permanently

in Tibet. For these reasons, Tibetans are likely to remain the predominant population of the TAR. Lastly, but not the least important, is the likely continuation of the new trend of better educated Tibetans moving to other parts of China for employment or business opportunities. Modernization and globalization are increasing inter-regional population mobility in China. The teaching of the Chinese language, and the emphasis given to education in Tibet, is enabling the Tibetans to join this trend.