

Foreword

The Information Office of the state Council of the People's Republic of China issued a White Paper on 23 May 2004 on "Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet". We have made a careful study of this latest White Paper.

The White Paper contains much ultra-rhetoric and obviously there are number of issues where we disagree with the views presented in it. Periodic White Papers on Tibet cannot hide the true sad state of affairs in Tibet. Instead they undermine the efforts to promote mutual confidence and trust.

There is strong expectation amongst Tibetans and international friends of Tibet for a befitting response by the Tibetan leadership in exile to the latest Chinese White Paper. We fully understand their sentiments and concerns. However, we have decided not to response publicly to their document at this point of time.

This decision has been taken in the larger interest for finding a resolution to the issue of Tibet through dialogue. From the time of the reestablishment of our direct contacts, we took the decision to give the highest priority to the process of dialogue and reconciliation and refrain from any act that may hamper the process. We, therefore, resolved to handle this matter in a responsible and cool-headed manner.

Obviously there are two different views and versions -a Tibetan and a Chinese- of issues relating to Tibet. We need to recognise this reality. It is our firm belief that these differences need to be reconciled through dialogue and negotiations and not imposed. It is the basic approach of His Holiness the Dalai Lama not to dwell on the past, but to look forward to the future and seek a relationship that ensures genuine friendship, mutual understanding and respect between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

We have made it clear to the Chinese leadership that we would like to go forward with the process started in the September 2002 by having the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama visit China again. When that visit takes place the envoys will continue to take up the issues of concern to the Tibetan peoples.

The approach of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to resolve the issue of Tibet is gaining increasingly wider international support and appreciation. As recently as 15 June 2004, the European Commission in the public statement, while welcoming the two visits to China of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's envoys, called for '...the strengthening and deepening of this ongoing process'. The EU statement further said, 'The only realistic way to find a lasting solution to the question of Tibet's is through dialogue between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese authorities

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Introduction

On 23 May 2004, the Information Office of the People's Republic of China's State Council issued a policy White Paper which effectively indicated that Beijing is not interested in discussing the issue of Tibet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. 'The destiny and future of Tibet can no longer be decided by the Dalai clique. Rather, it can only be decided by the whole Chinese nation, including the Tibetan people', said White Paper, entitled Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet.

Harsh in tone, economical with facts, and oblivious to the aspirations of the Tibetan people, the White Paper goes back to the pre-1979 Maoist era, when Beijing's propaganda machinery unabashedly insisted that China had brought democracy to 'benighted' land of Tibet, where the Dalai Lama and his government had allegedly perpetrated the worst imaginable crimes against the people.

The White Paper admonished His Holiness the Dalai Lama for demanding substantive autonomy for his homeland, saying that the constitution of the People's Republic of China already enshrines autonomy for Tibetans and all other ethnic minorities.

What the White Paper does not say is that the interpretation and implementation of the Constitution are the monopoly of the Chinese Communist Party. It fails to mention that a growing number of Chinese scholars are pointing out the continuing exploitative and repressive nature of their government's rule in Tibet. It is precisely for this reason that in 1980, Hu Yaobang, the then Communist Party Secretary of China, said that the Communist Party had let down Tibet. He also recommended a number of reforms to ensure real autonomy for the Tibetan people, who had set their hopes on him. Unfortunately, Hu's policy failed to garner support from the vested interests in Lhasa and the hardliners in Beijing alike, and soon thereafter, his political power was removed.

The Chinese White Paper would have us believe that today Tibet is governed democratically, that universal adult suffrage is a fact of political life, and that every citizen who has reached the age of 18 has the right to vote and stand for election. It claims that in 1961 the first democratic general election was held in Tibet, and that since then Tibetans have continued to elect their leaders.

If these claims were true, His Holiness the Dalai Lama would not be living in exile today. Instead, he would be able to declare that the Tibetans in Tibet are happy and that he now has no reason to continue his struggle in exile. Similarly, we would not be hearing reports of Tibetans being condemned to long prison terms for possessing the photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, or for shouting 'Tibet is independent' and 'Long live the Dalai Lama'. Also, the 15-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, whom His Holiness the Dalai Lama named as the Panchen Lama's reincarnation, who would not be under house arrest for the last ten years; neither would Tenzin Delek Rinpoche be facing the prospect of execution without a fair trial.

The sad reality is that Tibet continues to be ruled as an oppressed colony of China, where the concept of democracy is a far cry from reality. It is a region where people do not remember having elected their leaders, much less committed to the profanity of 'standing for election'. The most powerful position in Tibet is that of Communist Party Secretary, a post which no Tibetan has ever been held. All the Party Secretaries of Tibet have been appointed from Beijing; and for this post, a fair election, or any election for that matter, is simply unthinkable.

China's White Paper claims as usual that Tibet became part of the territory of China in the 13th century. This claim is based on historical relationship – primarily with China's Mongol or Manchu rulers with Tibetan lamas and, to a lesser extent, with Chinese rulers

and Tibetan lamas.

The main events cited by the Chinese Government occurred centuries ago during the height of Mongol imperial expansion, when the Mongol emperors extended their political supremacy throughout most of the Asian and larger parts of Eastern Europe.

It is not disputed that at different time in it's long history Tibet came under various degree of foreign influence: that of Mongols, the Gorkhas of Nepal, the Manchu emperors of China the British rulers of India. At other times in its history, it was Tibet, which exercised power and influence on its neighbors, including China. Moreover, the relationship with Mongol, Chinese and Manchu rulers, to the extent they had political influence, was personal in nature and did not at any time imply a union or integration of the Tibetan state, with or into, a Chinese state. It is important to note that both the Mongols and Manchus were foreign powers who exercised their control over China for a very long period. By this very logic of China's claim over Tibet, it would be justifiable for Mongolia to lay claims over China!

The readers of China's White Paper will be struck by the scant attention its authors pay to Tibet's modern history in the decades before 1949. This is because, from 1911 to the completion of the Chinese occupation in 195, there is no evidence of Chinese authority or influence in Tibet to support China's claim. It is well known that the history of a nation is often a victim of wrong interpretations by the parties with vested interests. Yet, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama often states, it is best to leave history for historians to decide. Beijing has published several White Papers on Tibet in the past, and it will continue to bring out more in the future, but these cannot hide the true state of affairs in Tibet. Instead, they undermine the efforts to promote mutual confidence and trust between the two sides. As long as the PRC does not do anything concrete on the ground to back its claims, it will neither be able to reduce tension in Tibet, nor sound convincing to the international community.

What we hope to see in the future are some concrete measures to improve the lot of the Tibetan people in Tibet, rather than grandiose projects to lure more and more Chinese settlers in Tibet. If the Chinese government makes sincere efforts to respect the aspirations of the Tibetan people, we are sure our people are capable of appreciating it. Moreover, an appreciation from the grassroots level in Tibet would be worth more than any number of White Papers Beijing may produce.

17-Point Agreement and Sovereignty of Tibet

The White Paper recently issued by the State Council of Chinese Government claims:

'The situation in Tibet is entirely different from that in Hong Kong and Macao. The Hong Kong and Macao issue was a product of imperialist aggression against China; it was an issue of China's resumption of exercise of its sovereignty. Since ancient times Tibet has been an inseparable part of Chinese territory, where the Central Government has always been exercised effective sovereign jurisdiction over the region. So the issue of resuming exercise of sovereignty does not exist.'

Sovereignty over Tibet was the very purpose for which China signed the 17-Point Agreement with Tibet. This was clear from the fact that China did not sign such treaties with any other nationalities under its rule. It is true that situation of Tibet is entirely different from that of Hong Kong and Macao, Chinese territories occupied by foreign powers and returned to China under the 'one country, two systems formula'. In fact, Tibet deserve more than what China granted to Hong Kong and Macao, because of Tibet's unique historical status and distinct culture. Even the 17-Point Agreement, though forced upon the Tibetan people, clearly displayed Tibet's separate political status from that of China. For instance, article 1 of the 17-Point Agreement states that 'the Tibetan people shall return to the family of the Motherland –the People's Republic of China'. This very language of Tibet's return to the 'Motherland' is an admission that Tibet was separate from China, residing outside the domain of the so-called 'Motherland'. It clearly indicates in itself that Tibet was not part of the PRC before the agreement was signed.

That Tibet was an independent country historically is amply evident from Tibetan historical sources as well as works of Tibetologists, researchers and scholars of the world who agree with unanimously to this contention. The International Commission of Jurists endorsed the fact that 'at least prior to 1950, Tibet remained an independent country'.

As Warren Smith Jr. writes in his book, *The Tibetan Nation*, 'Despite the Chinese Communists' attempt to construe the 17-Point Agreement as an internal affair, the 17-Point Agreement has some of the characteristic of an international treaty. The very necessity of a treaty between Tibet and China is indicative of their separate political status. No other region of PRC required such an instrument of incorporation.'¹

¹*Tibetan Nation, A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations*, Warren W. Smith Junior, Harper Collins, 1997, p 303

17-Point Agreement and 'One Country and Two systems'

The White Paper argues:

'It is thought-provoking that the Dalai clique, disregarding the fact that the Tibetan people have become masters of their own affairs and enjoyed full democratic rights and extensive economic, social and cultural rights, has constantly attacked Tibet's regional ethnic autonomy, in the international arena, as being "devoid of essential contents", and proposed the institution of "one country, two systems" and " a high degree of autonomy " in Tibet, after the model of Hong Kong and Macao. This agreement is totally untenable'.

In reality, from the very beginning, the practice of Regional Autonomy in Tibet based on the 17-Point Agreement was in the line with the 'One country, Two systems' approach. The Tibetans were promised a high degree of autonomy by the 17-Point Agreement, ' One country, Two system' as a term was not used at that time, but the agreement heralded the beginning of actual implementation of the policy of ' One country, Two system' and a ' high degree of autonomy'.

All the important legal documents – including the 'Common Programme' (it carried the weight of a constitution) adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in 1949 and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China adopted by the first-ever National People's Congress held in 1954 – declared that the People's Republic of China is '...the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants, which is in essence the dictatorship of the proletariat...'.

However, the case of Tibet is totally different. Based on the 17-Point Agreement, the Chinese government recognised the special characteristic of Tibet, and Tibet was hence given the right to maintain its traditional systems. Therefore, it is very clear that China had implemented a policy of ' One country, Two systems' at that particular time. Needless to mention, in accordance with the provision of the 17-Point Agreement, Tibet had the right to enjoy high degree of autonomy. It must also be clarified that when the 17-Point Agreement was concluded, the parties concerned did not set any timeframe on it, which means that its validity is for an indefinite period of time. It is, thus, very clear that the policy of 'One country, Two systems, and ' high degree autonomy" implemented by the Chinese Government in Tibet at that time was not temporary or transitional from the legal standpoint.

The 17-Point Agreement and Democratic Reforms

After facing defeat in the battle against the Communist intruders and failure to obtain assistance from the international community, the Tibetan government was compelled to sign the 17-Point Agreement on 23 March 1951. Article 1 of the agreement shows Tibet having lost its sovereignty, and articles 2, 3, 4, 11 and 15 deal with the status of Tibet after its complete integration with the People's Republic of China.

According to the agreement's main articles listed above, Tibet lost its sovereignty only in terms of the fact that foreign and military affairs were brought under the control of the Chinese government. Tibet was, however, to enjoy the right to exercise the national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People's government (Article 3); maintain its existing political and social systems (Article 4). Whatever reforms were needed in the Tibetan social system, and when and how these were to be undertaken within the above-mentioned framework. Otherwise, it would lead to the violation of article 4 to 11.

Article 15 of the 17-Point Agreement says that 'In order to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the Central People's government shall set up a military and administrative committee and the military area headquarters in Tibet.' Clearly, the only responsibility of the military and administrative committee was to implement the Agreement. Hence, it did not have any power or right to administer Tibet itself.

The 17-Point Agreement thus reduced the status of the Tibetan government to a local government, taking away its right to foreign and security affairs. However, it continued to maintain other existing power pertaining to Tibet. In other words, apart from undermining Tibet's sovereignty, China hoped – with the ratification of the 17-Point Agreement – that the Tibetan people would themselves reform the 'feudalistic' nature of Tibetan society, which it deemed different from Chinese society. But Tibetans were given the right to maintain their existing systems and whatever reforms were needed would be carried out only after consultation with them. However, the sad reality is that the Chinese government violated all the rights and power granted to the Tibetan people as stipulated in the Agreement in the name of 'Democratic Reforms'.

The so-called 'Democratic Reforms' were actually a part of the campaign unleashed by the PRC under the title: 'Cooperative' and 'Commune System' in 1956 and 1958 respectively. These 'Democratic Reforms' were enacted in contradiction of the very Articles stipulated in the 17-Point Agreement.

Although the Agreement talks about the need for reforms, yet it also says these would not be imposed upon the Tibetan people. It stated that the demands for the reform raised by the Tibetan people should be settled by means of consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet. Throughout China, however, the campaign for establishment of 'Cooperatives' began in 1955. In a foreword to a book titled *The Height of Socialist Campaign in Rural China*, Mao Zedong wrote, 'the campaign for establishment of "Cooperatives" would be completed in 1956, and all socialist reforms would be achieved before 1959 or 1960. With this background, the campaign for the 'Collectivisation' was carried out in Tibet under the pretext of 'Democratic Reforms'.

These reforms showed scant respect for the Tibetan people's right to private property, or to practice their religion, which was looked down upon as an enemy. The very foundation of the survival of religion was shaken to the hilt. As such, the Tibetan people expressed their deep objection to these reforms.

Addressing the meeting of the establishment of the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet, (PCART) in Lhasa on 22 April 1956, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said:

‘... Recently, the news of reforms that will be carried out or are being carried out in the neighboring provinces after having consultation with them, have reached Tibet, and some of the people already express reservations or fear at this. There are also some ill-intentioned deceitful people who spread rumours and make trouble by asserting their evil belief that after the establishment of the ‘PCART’, reforms must be carried out in Tibet...’

‘... Tibet has no other way out to than to embrace socialism. However, there is huge gap between socialism and today's reality in Tibet. Therefore, reforms must be carried out gradually.. The development processes, including when and how these reforms should be carried out, requires to be determined taken into account the overall situation or realities. Moreover, these reforms must be done only after consultation with the leading personnel and the people of Tibet. They should not be imposed and arbitrarily decided. Chairman Mao has said this many times to the Tibetan delegations...’¹

Similarly, the Panchen Lama – speaking about his desire to experiment with the ‘Democratic Reforms’ in his region- said in the same meeting:

‘Regarding the issue of reforms in Tibet, we the Tibetan people ourselves should decide on it, and the higher-level government should only provide us leadership and assistance. They must not at all decide on our behalf and exercise arbitrary power’.²

Despite repeated appeals based on the 17-Point Agreement by both His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama that China should not impose reforms in Tibet without the consent of the Tibetan people, their voices were not heard. As the Chinese document footnoted below records: ‘As far as the reforms are concerned, the Tibet Work Committee recognised at that time that they were legally decided by the meeting of the PCART, and soon after the conclusion of the meeting, propaganda was intensified hoping that all works in Tibet must be in conformity with reforms’.³

The Chinese officials in Tibet could not have misunderstood everything. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama’s position in the PCART had been undermined, as the Chinese government had started sending reinforcement of Chinese troops and cadres into Tibet in January /February 1956, before the establishment of the Preparatory Committee. When ‘Democratic Reforms’ was withheld temporarily in 1957, there were already about 100,000 Chinese in Tibet: about 50,000 Chinese troops and 50,000 cadres.⁴ In March that year, the ‘Work Teams’ were dispatched to the Karze region

¹ Tibet's Democratic Reform: Series on the History of Communist Party in China's Tibet, Edited by the Committee for the Compilation of the TAR Communist Party's Historical Document, TAR People's Publishing House, Lhasa, August 1995, p 49

² Ibid., p50

³ Ibid., p 8

⁴ *Suppression of Rebellion in Tibet*, Committee for Compilation of the History of the TAR Military Area Headquarters and Communist Party, TAR People's House, Lhasa, August 1995, p 1 says: ‘When “Democratic Reforms” was temporarily withheld, the Chinese Government reduced 92% of the Chinese cadres and 70% of the troops from Tibet’; and Tibet's Democratic Reform: Series on the History of Communist of Party in China's Tibet, August 1995, p 10 states: ‘There were only 3,700 Chinese cadres employed in Tibet and more than 30,000 troops were reduced from the area.’

of Kham to gain the experience of 'Democratic Reforms'.⁵ It is thus very clear that long before the establishment of the PCART, the Chinese Government had decided to carry out the reforms. Nevertheless, the Tibetan people raised their voice against the Chinese policy of rendering ineffective the 17-Point Agreement by introducing in Tibet the 'Collectivisation' campaign under the guise of 'Democratic Reforms'.

In the areas to the east of Drichu in Kham region, the Chinese Government began their campaign to establish 'Cooperatives' by arresting all the local Tibetan leaders under the pretext of inviting them to various kinds of meetings. However, the Tibetan people – in order to protect their religion and property – objected to the campaigns by violent protests. Under these circumstances, the Chinese government was pushed to the point of desperation to release all the arrested Tibetan leaders, and men were sent to advise the Tibetan people to stop their protests.

The areas to the west of Drichu in Kham region were under the direct administration of the Chamdo Liberation Committee. In Chamdo, the fourth National People's Congress was convened in May 1956. The Chinese government hoped that the NPC, whose members were appointed according to their wishes, would willingly support the 'Democratic Reforms', but the participating members voiced their disagreement. This, however, provided the PRC with the pretext to claim that 'Democratic Reforms' were actually requested by the Tibetan people.

Due to the opposition expressed by both the Tibetan government and the people, the Chinese government had to temporarily postpone the 'Democratic Reforms', and His Holiness the Dalai Lama got permission to travel to India and attend the function of the 2,500th Death Anniversary of the Lord Buddha. One can understand briefly, from the Chinese documents themselves, the opposition expressed by the Tibetan people. For example, a directive issued by the Chinese government to the Chinese people in Tibet on 4 September 1956, stated that '... regarding the 'Democratic Reforms', if we do not step back, and then carry out the reforms insistently, then we might lose the Tibetan people's faith in us and revolt may also break out...'

Another official Chinese documents issued on 14 May 1957 reports:

' In the meeting of the PCART last year, this issue (Democratic Reforms) was broached, and from the attitude and suggestions of the representatives of the various region of Tibet, it is very clear that the condition are still not ripe in Tibet for "Democratic Reforms". Not only the high-ranking [Tibetan] official's object to this in reality, but it also lacked the fundamental support of the Tibetan people...By raising the banner of nationality and religion, the high-ranking officials might influence the Tibetan people, thus they will be able to sustain their rule and systems inimical to the progress of the Tibetan nationality. This is the reality before us. The issue is not just about the high-ranking people, it is about the Tibetan masses.'

Under these circumstances, the Chinese government followed a policy of leniency in Tibet, and declared that it was going to postpone the 'Democratic Reforms' for six years. In reality, the very policy of the Chinese Government of not carrying out the 'Democratic Reforms' was in contravention of Article 4 and 11 of the 17-Point Agreement, because according to these articles, it was not up to the Central government to make this kind of policy decision, but up to the local Tibetan government.

⁵ *Tibet's Democratic Reform: Series on the History of Communist Party in China's Tibet*, August 1995, Foreword

Strong opposition from the Tibetan people dashed the Chinese Government's hope of soliciting popular support from for their campaign to introduce 'Commune Systems', a campaign they started in 1958. Therefore, they forcefully implemented reforms in Tibet, thus violating the 17-Point Agreement.

The Panchen Lama bore testimony to this. While addressing the meeting of the Tibet Autonomous Region Committee of the National People's Congress on 28 March 1987, he said: 'In 1958, when I was in Qinghai Province, I heard that an internal Party document revealed that the revolt must first to be encouraged. If it was still not happening, pressure must be exerted to cause the revolt. And then suppress them. Thus, the issue of nationality and religion should be decided from the very root of it.'

Again on the 4 June 1958, when Mao heard the news of the Tibetan people's protest in Qinghai province, he said: 'In Tibet also, there could be a mass revolt. Therefore, we must be prepared for it. The bigger the agitation, the better it is.' This clearly sent a message to the Chinese leaders in Tibet how they should make the lives of the Tibetan people miserable. It also becomes very clear that this gave them the power to do anything they wanted, even if it meant violation of the 17-Point Agreement. Under these circumstances, in less than one year, His Holiness the Dalai Lama had no other choice but to flee his country and seek refuge in India.

Although the Tibetan people continued to express outright opposition to the 'Democratic Reforms', Mao Zedong, soon after His Holiness the Dalai Lama's escape to India in March 1959, said:

'The Central Government sees that in this battle to "Suppress the Rebellion", we must mobilise the masses with a decisive mind to carry out the "Democratic Reforms". Our slogan should be the "Suppression of Rebellions", and not "Democratic Reforms". The "Democratic Reforms" should be implemented along with the "Suppression of Rebellions".'⁶

Mao knew that the people's protest was growing, but he tried to evade the situation by deceiving them.

Thus the Chinese Government – under the pretext of the 'Democratic Reforms'- violated the religious and individual freedoms of the Tibetan people, including the right to ownership of property. It also violated the 17- Point Agreement and took complete control of Tibet. Not only were Tibet's existing administrative and social structure altered, but the very foundation of the religion and culture of the country was torn into pieces.

⁶ *Tibet's Democratic Reform: Series on the History of Communist Party in China's Tibet*, Edited by the Committee for the Compilation of TAR Communist Party's Historical Document, TAR People's Publishing House, Lhasa, August 1995, p 68

His Holiness the Dalai Lama: Titular Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the Autonomous Region of Tibet. (PCART)

Although the so-called Preparatory Committee of the Autonomous Region of Tibet was established in 1956 and His Holiness the Dalai Lama was appointed its chairman, the committee did not enjoy any real power. His Holiness was a mere representative of the Tibetan people, and all the power rested in Chinese hands. Moreover, the basic policies were framed and regulated by the Tibet Work Committee, whose power was in the hands of Chinese members.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama writes in his autobiography, *My Land and My People*:

‘ Twenty of the members (although) they were Tibetans, were representing the Chamdo Liberation Committee and the Committee set up in the Panchen Lama's Western district. These were both purely Chinese creations. Their representatives owed this position mainly to the Chinese support, and in return they had to support any Chinese propositions though the Chamdo representatives did behave more reasonably than the Panchen Lama's. With this solid block of controlled votes, in addition to those of the five Chinese members, the committee was powerless, a mere facade of the Tibetan representation behind which all the effective power was exercised by the Chinese. In fact, all the basic policy was decided by another body, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in Tibet, which had no Tibetan members.’

In his 70,000 Character Petition submitted to the then Chinese premier Zhou En Lai, the 10th Panchen Lama wrote:

‘The PCART was the highest governing body in Tibet under the direct administration of the China's Tibet work Committee. But it (PCART) was not able to produce effective results, since there were no proper exchange of views between the Tibet work Committee and PCART on all important matters. Beside, there was a lack of coordination between the two committees.’

Despite the signing the 17-Point Agreement under duress on 23 May 1951, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, with the sole intention of benefiting the Tibetan people, made all attempts to resolve differences and co-exist with China for eight years, from 1951-1959, but there were no positive responses from the Chinese government. Instead, China violated each and every article of the agreement and, beginning from eastern Tibet, implemented a series of repressive policies in Tibet to root out the Tibetan national identity. Under such circumstances, His Holiness the Dalai Lama realised the fact that it was hardly possible for him to work towards coexistence with China, and was compelled to take the major decision of leaving Tibet.

Soon after arriving into exile in India, in a press statement issued in Tezpur, Assam, on 18 April 1959, His Holiness the Dalai Lama stated that the 17-Point Agreement had been signed under pressure from the Chinese government. Then, on 20 June 1959, he issued another press statement from his new headquarters in Mussorie, in which he repudiated the 'agreement', describing it as having been forced upon Tibet by invasion, threat and deceit.

In fact, Mao Zedong himself, in the Directive of the Central Committee of the PRC on Policies for our work in Tibet issued on 6 April 1952 admitted:

‘[Not] only the two Silons (i.e. prime ministers) but also the Dalai and most of his clique were reluctant to accept the Agreement and are unwilling to carry it

out.... As yet we do not have a material base for fully implementing the agreement, nor do we have a base for this purpose in terms of support among the masses or in the upper stratum.¹

Therefore, the White Paper's assertion that 'the Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet the Dalai clique attacks is the very regional ethnic autonomy for Tibet which the 14th Dalai supported and whose preparation he was involved in' is to falsely accuse His Holiness the Dalai Lama of double standards, and is totally untrue.

¹ *Selected Work of Mao Tsetung*, Vol.5, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1977, p.75

Regional Ethnic Autonomy: a Farce

The White Paper claims that the 'Democratic Reforms' cleared the way for regional ethnic autonomy in Tibet and that the Tibetan people have become 'masters of their own affairs'. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Tibetans have little or no say in running their own affairs. All the decisions of the administration are taken by the Chinese Communist Party through its Regional CCP. The only participation allowed for the Tibetan people in the government is to rubber stamp Communist Party decisions. Communist Party members dominate key government posts and only a few important appointments are held by trusted non-party members.

For instance, in his memoir *A Tibetan Revolutionary: The Political Life and Times of Bapa Phuntso Wangye*, the first Tibetan member of the Communist Party, even before the 1949 Chinese invasion of Tibet, he narrates an important conversation with Hu Yaobang in late 1983:

‘...It is critical that we do not criticise or stigmatise nationality officials for making comments or suggestions that further the interests of their nationality... We cannot have close unity among the nationalities in China, I said, if there is no equality and if Tibetans and other minorities have to subordinate their views and identity to those of the Han Chinese... Second, I said, it is not enough just to appoint officials from the minority ethnic groups. These officials have to have real power and authority, not just fancy titles. Everywhere, there are complaints that minority officials were and are under the thumbs of their Han colleagues, who do not pay much attention to their viewpoints. This situation reached its peak during the Cultural Revolution and has remained largely unchanged since then. It cannot continue like this. Minority officials must have dominant power and decision-making authority in their regions. Equality means that minorities have the basic power to control their areas and their lives.’¹

The so-called general election of 1961 referred to in the White Paper was a farce. The new Chinese masters pre-determined the candidates based on their loyalty and class background. The Tibetans were then told to vote for a certain number of candidates. As far as the Tibetans were concerned, the Chinese might as well have appointed the officials without going through the farce of the elections.

True, some sort of voting does take place for lower-level administrators. But this does not mean people can vote for anyone of their choice. The list of candidates comes down from the Communist Party leaders. Often, there are three to six candidates, from whom people have to elect one. For the Tibetan, this sort of election is meaningless; the Chinese might as well make a direct appointment and spare people the agony and humiliation of having to go through the ludicrous farce of voting.

Tibetans on the plateau do not hold any key positions- even within the 'TAR' Communist Party. The Secretary of the 'TAR' Communist Party is the most powerful position in the 'TAR, and this post has been held only by Chinese since 1959 (Zhang Guohua, Zeng Yongya, Ren Rong, Yin Fatang, Wu Jinhua, Hu Jintao, Chen Kuiyuan and now Guo Jinlong). There is racial discrimination against the Tibetans. When Chen Kuiyuan was transferred from the 'TAR', Raidi, a Tibetan who ranked number two in the communist hierarchy, should have been appointed in his place. However, Guo Jinlong, a Chinese, who had ranked number three, was promoted over Raidi's head to top the 'TAR' administration.

Ironically, senior Tibetan leaders like Phagpalha Gelek Namgyal and Ngaboi Ngawang Jigme, named by China as examples of Tibetans holding government posts, belonged to families of what the China calls feudal class from whose clutches China boasts of having liberated the Tibetans. These leaders have long reached the age of retirement, but are still in the government holding titular posts.

¹ *A Revolutionary: The Political Life and Times of Bapa Phuntso Wangye*, Melvyn C. Goldstein, Dawei Sherap and William R. Seibenschuh, University of California Press, Berkeley, p.308

Chinese cadres much junior to them in experience, age and service years have bypassed them and have won key posts in the government. The highest post ever held by a Tibetan on the Chinese Political hierarchy is that of Vice-Chairman of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. None of the Tibetans mentioned above has so far become the Chairman of these two political bodies.

Whatever position a Tibetan occupies in the Chinese bureaucracy in Tibet, he always has "junior" Chinese official "under" him who exercises the real power. China continues to transfer many Chinese cadres to Tibet, upon whom they rely heavily to govern Tibet. The fact that the Tibetan leaders are often the targets of insult and humiliation is amply clear from the following three incidents:²

1) A Senior Tibetan leader narrated:

'With a critical smile on his face, Panchen Lama spoke in one of the meetings of the "TAR" Party leaders: "Both Ngabo and I are supposed to be the Vice-Chairmen. People refer to us as the leaders of the country. However, in reality, there is a United Front Department's section head, who always monitors us". And by pointing to a Chinese present in the meeting, "he is the section head".

Discomforted by these words. The Chinese man asked the Panchen Lama, "Why do you say so?"

"I spoke the truth. For many years, people like you who hold the post of a section head always monitored us leaders of the country. Is not that true?". The Panchen Lama replied". And the entire gathering laughed!

2) In one of the meetings of the Presidium of the sixth National People's Congress, the Panchen Lama was declared a 'white man', after withdrawing all the 'black' charges against him. The Panchen Lama thanked for the gathering and said, 'Despite the fact that the "hat" of being opposed to the Party and the Government was being continued to be put on my "head", I remained the Vice-chairman for many years'.

'As a Vice-chairman, although supported by many leaders for the Central Government, I had to fight tooth and nail to obtain a simple permission to visit my "fatherland", from which I was estranged for 20 long years. And yet as if a very powerful enemy was looming before them, a first-degree control was exerted upon me,' he continued. 'It may sound like an absurd tale but it is a fact'.

3) Another senior Tibetan cadre reminisces:

He had earlier been a Vice-Premier and also a member of the Politburo. This Chinese leader - then having the post of a Vice-chairman - always used to criticise the Panchen Lama for appearing in meetings, clad in Tibetan traditional Costume. The Panchen Lama always tolerated him and at times ignored him.

One day, the Panchen Lama could not tolerate, and rebuked, 'You have not wore the Zhong Shan³ costume that you needed to wear. You are dressed in western outfits with a tie around your neck. Why do you have to be so pompous and unhappy about me wearing the dress of my own "nationality"'.

² Sources withheld for confidential reasons

³ A Costume named after Sun Yat Sen, the man who established the National Government in China after topping the Manchu Dynasty.

‘To speak out the truth,’ he continued, ‘ you intend to destroy the customs and attributes of our nationality.’

‘You should understand that you cannot contemptuously force us on certain issues. You cannot actually do it. For example, the Vice-chairman, Sai Fudan, sitting next to you, has a high nose and sunken eyes. Can you forcefully make him look like you?’

In a 1971 report titled, *Chinese Policies towards Minorities: An Essay and Documents*, Henry Shwarz clearly mentions that the so-called regional national autonomy practiced in the minority regions of the PRC is not a real autonomy, but a highly centralised form of governance to the exercise control over the minority peoples. Shwarz writes:

‘ Autonomous area also intermesh with regular administrative units in such a way that, no matter how large, autonomous areas always come under the control of higher-level governments which are staffed wholly by Chinese. Even the autonomous regions cannot escape this control, as they are directly answerable to the central government in Beijing. According to Article 2 of the General Program of the People's Republic of China for the Implementation of the Regional Autonomy for minorities, adopted on 9 August 1952, “the autonomous organ of each autonomous area is a local government led by the government of next higher level, under the unified leadership of the central government.

‘...The specific political and administrative rights of regional autonomy in minority areas, as specified in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, include proportional representation in congresses and governments, management of finances, organisation of public security forces, and the formulation of statutes governing the exercise of autonomy in minority areas. All of these rights, however, are subordinate to national programs, laws, and regulations. For instance, article 70 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, adopted on 20 September 1954, states that “ the organs of self-government of all autonomous regions, autonomous chou⁴ and autonomous counties exercise autonomy within the limits of the authority prescribed by the constitution and by law. The organs of self-government of all autonomous regions, autonomous chou and autonomous counties administer their own local finances within the limits of the authority prescribed by law. The organs of self-government of all autonomous regions, autonomous chou and autonomous counties organize their local public security forces in accordance with the military system of the state. The organs of self-government of all autonomous regions, autonomous chou and autonomous counties may draw up statutes governing the exercise of autonomy and other special regulations suited to the political, economic, and cultural characteristics of the nationality or nationalities in a given area and submit any such statutes and regulations to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for approval.

‘ Thus the rights to manage local finances does not include any share in the decision-making on national economic and financial plans. Local security forces are totally subordinate to the ‘unified military system of state’ (Article 70 of the PRC Constitution). Statutes drawn by the minority areas are subject to approval by the Central Government.

‘ Above all, it should be noted that these rights can be exercised only in the government. As in all communist countries, the government in China is wholly subordinate to the Party. The Constitution of the Party, however, not only fails to mention any rights and privileges of its minority members, it declares emphatically that there is no room in the Party for regional autonomy.’⁵

⁴ Chinese for 'prefecture'

⁵ *Chinese Policies towards Minorities: An Essay and Documents*, Henry G Shwarz, Western Washington, 1971, p16 and 17

During the Cultural Revolution (1966- 1976), autonomy existed in name only. The 1975 Constitution even deleted the provisions concerning nationalities' rights to develop their languages and maintain their cultural customs and traditions.⁶

Since 1978, the Chinese government tried to re-establish and improve regional autonomy. In the 1980s, the state Council abolished the people's commune system. With the arrival of Wu Jinghua as regional party secretary of the 'TAR', and with Dorje Tsering as a regional government leader, a limited cultural liberalization took place between 1985-1988.⁷

However, since 1989, the CCP has adopted a tough policy towards Tibetan secessionism, which has undermined efforts to implement true autonomy. The break up of the Soviet Union and 'peaceful evolution' in Eastern Europe were an alarming precedent for China. The PRC's official press claimed that the Dalai Lama's supporters harbour a 'hidden motive': 'They want to take advantage of (turmoil) to split China. To be frank, they want to bring another 'Bosnia-Herzegovina' in China! But China is not Yugoslavia.'⁸

The Chinese White Paper justifies the Regional Ethnic Autonomy through its constitution and other tributary laws, which in reality, do not come into effect, and hold little significance. China's Communist Party, as in any other Communist regimes, holds the strings to the implementation of all its laws and the constitution. It is the Party that issues directives to all the government functionaries as to how the laws are to be implemented. Even the National People's Congress, China's so-called parliament, has no real legislative powers, but is a mere subservient to the Party.

In his address to the third session of the fourth 'TAR' People's Congress on 27 July 1985, 'TAR' Party Secretary Wu Jinghua said:

' ... As some of the laws that need to be adopted are not adopted in time, some people fear that the policy might undergo frequent changes, This thinking is very strong in some regions as before. There are no legal safeguards as well when it comes to developing relations with the Provinces and Cities - particularly, with the overseas compatriots and foreigners. Therefore, I am not at all comfortable. Needless to mention, under these circumstances, that there is no guarantee as far as the "opening up" of Tibet to the outside world, and generating more activism within the country, are concerned...

'... Keeping in view the actual situation inside of Tibet, we must begin the legislative work of the "TAR" and adopt a regional law that would not only suit Tibet's characteristics but also have an impact when implemented. Firstly, Tibet being Regional National Autonomy is a quality in itself. Moreover, Tibet is Regional National Autonomy with special characteristics - one that possesses many distinctive features when compared to other Regional Autonomies

such as Inner Mongolia or Xinjiang or East Turkistan. While addressing the Second Work Forum on Tibet, the Party Chief Hu Yaobang identified two special regions and one of them is Tibet. He also expressed his hope that we must begin from the actual situation inside Tibet. At the National level, there are many laws such as the Constitution and Laws on Regional National Autonomy etc. These are all in general laws. General laws are to decide upon general issues. Having only the general law is not enough. We still need regional laws such as the Autonomy regulation and Separate regulation etc. Only then can the implementation of the Constitution and other laws of the country be guaranteed, and autonomous rights realised. For example, the Central Government's policy on nationality, religion and united front works is a very clear. These are also incorporated into the Constitution of the country as well as the Law on Regional National Autonomy. However, if these are to be implemented in Tibet, it must go in tandem with the regional laws of Tibet. We need to frame laws: laws on religious freedom; laws in respect for the customs and habits of nationalities; laws on the use and improvement of nationalities' language; laws on development of education and nurturing of cadres among the nationalities; and also laws on preservation and promotion of tradition and culture of the nationalities. In this regard, not only the specific laws are required, but they must also be accompanied with detailed implementation procedures. If these things are there,

then the policies of the party will be stable and sustainable. The general public will also be comfortable. The unity among the nationalities and integrity of the “motherland” will be ensured, and the common development and progress of the nationalities guaranteed...

‘...One of the primary responsibilities of the People's Congress is to formulate laws. If a new Tibet is to be developed- highly civilised and socialist democracy-then importance must be given to the work of the People's Congress and efforts must be made towards it. Some of the comrades recognise the People's Congress to be a “decision-making device by raising hands” and a “rubber stamp”, while the role of it's members to simply “welcome and raise hands, and to draw a mark”. They also recognise that “the Party's job is to write letters, the government's to perform duties and that of the People's Congress’ to find faults”. There are others who recognise that it hardly matters whether the People's Congress exists or not. Seen from this viewpoint, it shows four things clearly: First, there are many among the responsible people in the various levels of the People's Congresses and their Standing Committees who do not wish to perform the work of the Congress. Second, some of the counties have not held their Congresses for certain years, which is unlawful. Third, the strength of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress is too small. It is heard that in the Standing Committees of the People's Congresses of some counties, there is only one person working for it. Fourth, some of the comrades working for the People's Congress do not actually have the working knowledge of the Congress.

‘Whether the notion that “ all powers lie with the people” holds true or not will be decided by how well the People's Congress functions, and effectiveness of the Congress in reality. It is also a primary objective to decide whether our Government has a “life-effect” in it or not. Our “ TAR”, People's Congress is not just an autonomous body; it is also a body, which wields the highest authority of the people in the “TAR”. It further indicates the representation of the wide spectrum of the nationalities, various levels of the administration, organizations, regions etc. The flawlessness in the working system of the “TAR” People's Congress and it's effectiveness are important issues which show if the system of Regional National Autonomy is practically implemented in Tibet...’⁹

In his address to the forum of the heads of the County-Level People's Congress of Nyingtri Prefecture, and the meeting of the Party cadres above the County, Prefecture and Municipality levels on 8 November 1989, the Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the “TAR” People's Congress, Namgyal, said:

‘The document No.20 proposes to raise the status, and identify the effectiveness of the various levels, of the People's Congresses and their Standing Committees. The reason is, as some comrades have pointed out in the forum, that there are some people who ridicule the People's Congress by saying: the Party has the power, the Government has the money, the People's Congress has the hand and the political Consultative Conference has the mouth. What is most obvious is that the People's Congress is regarded as an office that does not have any work, an old people's office, an office from the outward appearance only’.¹⁰

⁶ Yao Junkai, *Shixing minzu quyue zizhi, cujin xizang fanrong changshen* (Implement Regional Autonomy, Promote Tibet's Prosperity), *Xizang minzu xueyuan xuebao* (Shehui Kexueban) (Journal of Tibetan Nationality Institute) Social Sciences), No.3, 1995, p 18

⁷ Solomon Karmel, *Ethnic Tension and the Struggle for Order: China's Policies in Tibet*, Pacific Affairs, Vol.68, No 4, 1995,p 486

⁸ Ibid, p 494

⁹ Issue 2, *Bulletin of the People's Congress* ' Proceedings, an internal Chinese-language publication, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Tibet Autonomous Region, 15 August 1985

¹⁰ Issue 1, Ibid., November 1985

The Tibetans in Tibet do not have any autonomy in the true sense of the word. For instance, article 10 of section 1 of the Law of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy of the PRC states: 'Regional Ethnic Autonomy is practiced in areas where people of minority nationalities live in compact communities; in these areas organs of self-government are established for the exercise of autonomy.' Article 2 the law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy reads: 'Regional autonomy shall be practiced in areas where minority nationalities live in concentrated communities.' In reality, Tibet has been turned into a colonial territory where the Chinese Government pursues the same old colonial policy of 'divide and rule'. The three provinces of Tibet, U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo were divided into eight parts, and much of these areas were incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan, and Gansu. Therefore, China's contention that the Tibetan people have become the masters of their own affairs is nothing but an attempt to manipulate the international community's opinion in its favour and to justify their rule over Tibet.

Furthermore, China's autonomy system has its fundamental limits. When ethnic nationalities have no voice for the boundaries of the autonomous regions, their self-government rights are already restricted. When a perceived stability question arises, autonomy is sacrificed. In 1994, Beijing circulated a resolution reaffirming the leading position of Han Chinese cadres in the Tibetan Government and Party organisation, and demanding that Tibetan cadres' links with the Dalai Lama be cut off.¹¹ In China, the concept of a unitary multinational state is underpinned by consensus that the 'supreme value of the day' is stability.¹²

As regards the entrenchment of the autonomous rights of the minorities within the People's Republic of China, Heberer argues, 'A greater degree of autonomy also requires a broad separation between the party and state apparatus. As long as the Communist Party can claim absolute power, and as long as party instructions can contravene government decisions at every level as well as laws themselves, a legal vagueness prevails and autonomy can at any moment be abolished.'¹³

¹¹ Liao, *The Recruitment*, p 59-60

¹² Lucian Pye, *The State and the Individual: An Overview Interpretation*, The China Quarterly, No. 127, 1991

¹³ Heberer, *China and its National Minorities*, p 52-53

Tibetans are forced to Denounce their Spiritual Leader and Denied the Right to Practice Freedom of Religious Belief

The Chinese White Paper is full of false claims about its implementing religious freedom, and cultural protection and promotion, as per the law of 'Regional Ethnic Autonomy'. The White Paper alleges:

' Since the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region, a number of regulations on the protection of cultural relics have been promulgated and implemented. Altogether, some 300 million-Yuan have been used to renovate and open over 1,400 monasteries and to give timely repair to a large group of cultural relics. From 1989 to 1994 especially, the Central People's Government allocated 55 million Yuan and a large quantity of gold and silver for the first-phase maintenance project of the Potala Palace. From 2001, the state has also earmarked 330 million Yuan for the second-phase maintenance project of the Potala Palace and the maintenance of two other great cultural sites of Norbulingka and Sakya Monastery.

'...Traditional festivals such as the Tibetan New Year, Sakadawa(Anniversary of Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment and Death) festival, Ongkor (Bumper Harvest) festival, and Shoton(Yogurt) festival, and many religious celebrations in monasteries are observed, while accepting different kinds of national and international festivals that have been introduced in recent years.

'...At present, there are over 1,700 venues for Tibetan Buddhist activities, with some 46,000 residents monks and nuns; four mosques and about 3,000 Muslims; and one Catholic Church and over 700 believers in the region. Religious activities of various kinds are held normally, with people's religious needs fully satisfied and their freedom of religious belief fully respected.

'The transmission lineage system of reincarnation of a great lama after his death is unique to Tibetan Buddhism, and this has been respected by the state and governments at all levels in Tibet. In 1992, the State Bureau of Religious Affairs of the State Council approved the succession of the Living Buddha of the 17th Karmapa. In 1995, according to religious rituals and historical conventions, the Tibetan Autonomous Region completed the whole process of the search for and confirmation of the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama through drawing lots from a gold urn and the honouring and enthronement of the 11th Panchen Lama, and reported it to the State Council for approval...'

These are nothing but lies. To respond, it is inevitable for us to look back into history. China first agreed to and then disregarded its own stipulations. For example, according to article 7 of the 17-Point Agreement signed under duress on 23 May 1951:

' The policy of freedom of religious belief laid down in the Common Program of the Chinese Political Consultative Conference shall be carried out. The religious beliefs, customs and habits of the Tibetan people shall be respected, and lama monasteries shall be protected. The central authorities will not effect a change in the income of the monasteries.'

And article 11 of the first chapter of the Law of Regional Ethnic Autonomy enacted in 1984 states:

'...The organs of self-government of national autonomous area shall

guarantee the freedom of religious belief to citizens of the various nationalities. No state organ, public organisation or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion...'

Moreover, neither one of the above two documents were signed unconditionally by the Tibetans and their government. These documents were disposed of the dustbin of history. The PRC had laid down its own conditions, and it was their duty to respect them. But, in fact, ever since China's forceful occupation of Tibet, as regards the 17-Point Agreement and subsequent formulation of laws, all documents were prepared by Chinese themselves, and they were the ones who violated them.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, after assuming political responsibility at the age of fifteen, opened Tibet's door to reforms. His first step was release all prisoners and revive Tibet's political, social, cultural identity. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in consultation with the Kashag and the National Assembly (mimang tsongdu), laid the foundation for the uniform view of Tibet's government officials in introducing political reforms. For this purpose, a Reform Committee was formed, headed by a Kalon (Minister) and comprised of around thirty members, including two Tsidrungs (Account Secretaries), lay and monk officials, and representatives of the three Great monasteries of Tibet.

The Reform Committee developed an effective plan for improvements in the political, financial, social, cultural, administrative and religious fields. It even had plans for restructuring the system of taxation. But, sadly, there was a fear of Chinese aggression on the one hand, and of incurring China's displeasure in the other. The latter was due to the Chinese's fear that their own reforms would be overshadowed if the Reform Committee implemented its changes successfully, and they even tried to disrupt the Tibetan reforms. Thus, in April 1956, the Chinese set up the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet (PCART), whose real power rested in the Chinese-controlled Tibetan Affairs Committee.

In the areas to the east of Driчу in Kham province, and in the Amdo regions of Domed, reforms were forced onto the people. Properties were seized, monasteries destroyed, and individuals loyal to the Lhasa Government arrested. China's true picture becomes clearly visible to the people who rose up against the Chinese. Many people had to leave their native towns and flee to Lhasa. The Democratic Reforms proved fatal to the political identity, financial stability and freedom of the Tibetan people.

Then the suspicious incident occurred when the Chinese invited His Holiness the Dalai Lama to a dance performance at a PLA military base in Lhasa. The Tibetan people viewed it as a conspiracy to abduct His Holiness the Dalai Lama, because His Holiness was told not to be escorted by his bodyguards. As a result, the Tibetan people rose up in multitudes against the Chinese communists, as their spiritual and political cause and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's life were being threatened. This eventually led to the peaceful National Uprising of 10 March 1959, which was crushed in the name of 'Suppression of Rebellion'

In addition to those, who lost their lives fighting battles against the Chinese, many Tibetans who had taken part in violent protests were imprisoned and their properties seized. This was because the Democratic Reforms were thrust upon the Tibetans people at a time when the suppression of the rebellion campaign was at its peak. They included government officials, abbots and former abbots of monasteries, businessmen, local leaders and elderly people, and managers of productive agricultural units. In short, a bulk of moderately wealthy Tibetan people were targeted. Therefore, the Panchen Lama, said: ' The revolt in Tibet was vast, involved

a large number of people, and lasted for a very long time.’

Today, Tibetan Buddhism is viewed as an important field of psychological study, having the potential of competing with modern sciences. China is a communist nation and strongly influenced by Marxist ideologies. Marxists do not believe in worshipping god, which is unworldly. Religion, according to Marxist, is an illusion and against their outlook on the world and nature. They believe that religion is something that will disappear completely from the face of the earth when socialism and communism will have achieved the ultimate victory. A government with such an attitude can never promote and safeguard religion. The ‘religious’ policy of the new Chinese leadership that ‘religion should be in conformity with socialism went against the religion itself. In 1954, Chairman Mao, during his last meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, reiterated that religion was poison, and that it would hinder the flourishing of the nation and progress of the nationalities. This was and still is the real stand of the Chinese government towards religion.

Communist China forced the 17-Point Agreement upon the Tibetans, Moreover, in 1954 Democratic Reforms started to be implemented. In 1964, China launched two other campaigns: ‘Four Cleanings’¹ and the ‘ Three Greater Educations.’² The fallout of these campaigns came in the form of large-scale destruction of monasteries, temples, and religious artifacts. Particularly since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 to the adoption of the liberalization policy by the Chinese government in 1979, even the word, ‘ religion’ was restricted, let alone practicing any. Tibet was virtually turned into a hell on earth. During that period, China could not hold the annual meeting of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, so the issues of nationalities and religion could not be raised. It is pertinent here to quote what even the Chinese indoctrinated Panchen Lama had to say in his 70,000 Character Petition submitted to Premiere Chou En Lai on 18 March 1962:

‘In relation to formal Democratic Reforms in the monasteries, the existing policies were the “ Three Anti’s”³, and in order that these could be perfected, the “ Three Setting Accounts” were implemented. But during specific implementation, the first task was opposing religion under the so-called “eliminate superstition” slogan; the second task was destroying statues of the Buddha, Buddhist scriptures and stupas; the third task was making monks and nuns return to secular life by any means possible. These were taken as the principal tasks, and the “Three Anti’s” and “ Three Setting Accounts”⁴ become the tools and strategies for realising these three tasks. The nature of the campaign became “ killing an innocent sheep is more impressive than killing a guilty wolf”. Consequently, when by any means possible monks and nuns were gathered together in the Great Prayer Hall or in a large room. They were tightly controlled, they studied intensively, and they were forcibly mobilised to carry out mutual criticism both day and night, and a high tide of acute struggle was stirred up. Those who publicly displayed their religious belief were given all types of labels including “ superstitious elements” and “disliker of the revolution”, and the unbearable and the inexplicable struggle attacks were carried out against them.

¹ Cleaning up Politics, ideology, organisation and economy

² Education on class, socialism and patriotism

³ Opposition to the rebellion, *corvee* labour and salary

⁴ Setting the accounts of political persecution, of oppression between different ranks and of economic exploitation

On the other hand, when the monks were asked whether or not they wished to go back to secular life, if they asked to remain as monks, they were told " You still have not been educated, you have not done away with your superstitions" and were violently struggled against, and many of them were put under surveillance or locked up. Under these circumstances, unless you were made out of iron, there would be no way to ask to remain as a monk. Thus, sixty and seventy years old monks also asked to go back to secular life and return to their families. These people had no way to start a family, and also had no strength to engage in production, and they did not want to leave the monastery where they had spent the first half of their lives; this was common knowledge. The fact that these people had no alternative but to go back home is sufficient to prove that serious problem had arisen, namely that they could no longer live in the monasteries.

In some of the monasteries, work team drew up a list of monks, and compelled those monks to go back to their families and return to secular life; even more seriously, they went so far as lining up monks on one side and lining up nuns and secular women on the other side, and forcing them to select someone from the other side... Concerning the return of monks and nuns to secular life, they enforced adoption of all types of measures without any foundations, and because of this the majority of Tibet's monasteries had no monks and nuns living in them, and where there were some people living in there it was only very few, and what is more, the standard of their religious accomplishment was low. Although this situation had arisen, some people still said, " Tibet has carried out Democratic Reforms, the broad masses of monks and nuns have obtained their liberation and their right of religious freedom, they have voluntarily gone back to their family and returned to secular life, that's why there are so few monks left in the monasteries" This statement does not fit what is acknowledgement in the thinking of more than 90% of the Tibetan people, including myself.'

When the 'Democratic Reforms' was being carried out, some greedy and power-hungry monks denounced religions as if they were caught in the frenzy of madness, and had severely beaten up other monks. Because of this, they were recognized by the Chinese cadres as the 'brave followers' of the revolutionary campaign. When the campaign was concluded, the cadres presented these monks as nominees for the leading posts of the 'Democratic Management Committees' of the monasteries, and the other monks were forced to elect them as their leaders. At that time, some people- either due to ignorance or fear of expressing the truth- had no other choice but to elect these 'activists' as leaders of the 'Democratic Management Committees'. Except for a few 'Democratic Management Committees', about 90% of them were rejected and opposed by the monks. Although the Government propaganda machinery makes strong claims of religious freedom in Tibet, yet in order to practice religion in the true sense of the word, there must be a community of monks and nuns, devotional objects, scriptures, monasteries, etc., which were completely destroyed by the Chinese government. This is akin to asking a person to eat when the food is before him has been taken away.

Before ' Democratic Reforms', there were more than 2,500 large, medium and small size monasteries in Tibet. After 'Democratic Reforms', only 70 or so monasteries were kept in existence by the government. This was a reduction of more than 97% ! In the whole of Tibet, in the past, there were about 110,000 monks and nuns. Of those, possibly 10,000 fled abroad, leaving about 100,000. When the ' Democratic Reforms' was concluded, their number in the monasteries was reduced to 7,000 or 93% fall. In the eastern Tibetan provinces of Kham and Amdo, the situation was even worse. For example, in Amdo province 98% to 99% of the monasteries were

destroyed, and the powers to manage the remaining few monasteries were transferred into the hands of those who opposed religion in a reckless rage. Thus, these monasteries became a place for opposing religion rather than practicing it.

In February 1979, the Chinese Communist Party began to loosen their hold and had just managed to remove the tag 'the implementing agent of the Capitulationism' from the various sections representing the United Front Work Department, the Nationalities Affairs Commission and Religious Affairs Bureau, which did not always fall in line with the Party policies. In 1982, the first ever meeting on religious affairs since the establishment of the communist regime in China was convened, wherein a decision was taken to include some clauses on religious freedom in the Constitution. This, generally speaking, heralded throughout China a period of some relaxation in religious and nationality policies. Tibet enjoyed a relative freedom during that period, as some monasteries were reopened and rebuilt. And since 1980 Tibetans also had the opportunity to join monastic institutions by enrolling themselves as monks and nuns.

Throughout China, and especially in Tibetan areas, relatively more liberal policies on religious freedom were implemented soon after the conclusion of the third session of the eleventh plenary session of the Party Central Committee, held from 18-22 December 1978. This resulted in reopening of monasteries and temples that had been closed down because of strict restrictions imposed in the past by the PRC. Some of the monasteries that did not engage themselves violent retaliations against the Chinese troops were also given opportunities to renovate under specific conditions.

In 1982, the Chinese Communist Party convened a meeting in religious affairs that adopted a policy to unshackle the monasteries, religious activities and religious figures who were otherwise convicted on grounds of false and baseless legal suits during the 'Democratic Reforms' of 1954, the campaigns of 'Four Cleaning' and 'cultural Revolution' etc. This was the outcome of an exercise they undertook to sum up the positive and negative deeds towards freedom of religion and religious activities since the founding of the communist regime in China. Also in 1982, following an amendment in the clauses related to religious freedom of the Constitution during the fifth session of the fifth National People's Congress, China launched a huge propaganda on the freedom of religion, and some leniency was practiced as far as religion was concerned. This not only gave some hope to those engaging in religious activities, but even in society itself, it became visible that some sort of religious freedom was really enjoyed by the people.

In 1980, the Chinese government convened the first Work Forum on Tibet, which revoked its earlier policy of ultra-leftism and adopted new policies with regard to Tibet. Particularly, after witnessing extreme poverty amongst Tibetans during their fact-finding visit to Tibet in June 1980, Hu Yaobang, the then Secretary General of the Communist Party, and others, made certain comments that were based on truth and facts. Hu said, 'Has the money sent by the Central Government for Tibet's assistance been thrown into the Yarlung River? Tibet in reality is backward and under extreme poverty.'

Acknowledging the true situation in Tibet, the Chinese government convened two Tibet Work Forum meetings in 1980 and 1984 respectively- recognizing the especial characteristics of Tibet- and introduced eight points in the propaganda documents of the above two meeting:

- 1) the true situation inside Tibet must be understood;

- 2) the methods, responsibilities and policies of the Chinese government with regard to Tibet-related works must be wholeheartedly accepted and supported by the Tibetan cadres and population;
- 3) policies that do not conform to the above must either be amended or postponed;
- 4) biased, ordinary, obstinate and arbitrary decision by the cadres must be prevented;
- 5) there must be supervision on to respect Tibet's language and traditional custom;
- 6) policies of regional national autonomy and freedom of religion shall be made more effective;
- 7) leftist policies and cases of unjust and wrongful accusation shall be cleared of, and the implementation of policies shall be ensured;
- 8) if the unique and special characteristics of Tibet are not recognised, Tibetan people would engaged in separatism.

Thus, Tibet did enjoy some real benefits and relative freedom during that period but, unfortunately, Hu Yaobang could not stay in power very long. One of the causes for his downfall was even attributed to the liberal policies he has initiated in Tibet, a fact recognised by the Tibetan people, as he was widely considered a good leader in Tibet. This destroyed the hope that Tibetan had placed on Hu to protect their interests. The leftists in Tibet and China were then able to stage a comeback that led to the end of liberal policies in Tibet.

In a secret document issued among the members of the communist party in February 1989, Hu Jintao, then Party Secretary of 'TAR', wrote:

' In Tibetan society, religion and religious personnel occupy high status. Therefore, in order to make effective decisions regarding Tibet-related works, first all of it is necessary to reduce the influence of religion and the status of religious personnel.'

Although the document came to light that same month, deliberations and the nature of its decisions existed for a long time. Coincidentally or not, on 28 February 1989, two days before the document was issued, the tenth Panchen Lama died under mysterious circumstances. For Tibetans and the Tibetan race, this was not a normal occurrence, but a loss of a great leader who had made immense contributions to Tibetan Buddhism and national identity. Since then, the unexplained death of the Panchen Lama has left a dark patch amongst the religious personnel and Tibetan cadres who have become completely intimidated. It was a classic example of what the Tibetans call, 'killing the goat to scare the lamb'. It was widely believed amongst the Tibetans that Hu Jintao's tenure in Tibet earned him a direct promotion to the central committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

Regarding China's position on religious freedom, at the end of 1990, the State Council of the People's Republic of China convened a meeting on religious affairs and made public after the end of the meeting a so-called, 'notice of the communist party and the state council to effectively carry out some religious activities'. In the notice, it was mentioned that religious activities had to be checked, reformed and guided by law to achieve stability and development of the country. The decisions taken at the above meeting were soon propagated by the Chinese government through its various media channels. It warned:

'Religious freedom does not mean unlimited religious activities. Religious personnel and believers are citizens of the country first.. The basic interest of the people should be placed on top and everyone should take responsibility to

abide by the constitution, laws, regulations and policies. Religious activities should be carried out within the benefits and responsibilities prescribed by the Constitution, laws and regulations. Nobody is allowed to oppose the leadership of the communist party and socialism by using religion, and religious activities should not obstruct the disciplines of the society, work and livelihood'.

Since then, China's attitude towards religion and its earlier position on it has undergone an unimaginable changes for the worse.

In January 1994, the State Council of the People's Republic of China passed Order No. 144 of the PRC, which issued directives about controlling religious activities in and outside the country, and stipulations on control over religious activities were issued in the form of Order No.145. Immediately afterwards, the Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council geared itself to implement Order No. 145 and issued a list of areas for religious activities. The Order imposed conditions for areas to be registered for conducting religious activities, requiring that they have: a permanent place, name and regular resident devotees practicing a religion; a committee comprising of the resident devotees to control religions activities; officials responsible for the administration of religious activities or persons who are administratively responsible as per the proper practice of religion; and a lawful source of finance. If the aforementioned conditions were not fulfilled, or if there were any stark discrepancies, the areas of religious activities could face postponement or cancellation of their registration. Illegal ownership of land, violation of town planning laws, seeking private practice of religion and independent activities by the disguised religious personnel, and engaging in superstitious activities such as making offerings to divine spirits and demons under the grab of religion was to be strictly prohibited and denied registration by the various organs of the government.

In the 'TAR', the Chinese government, in line with the above decisions, immediately made public' suggestions of the TAR with regard to the areas of religious activities', 'practical suggestions of TAR regarding the annual investigation work on area of religious activities', and 'TAR's temporary implementation methods on regulation of religious activities'. According to this, monasteries and temples were not only put into investigation list, but also strict restrictions were imposed on the number of monks and nuns and on building and renovating new monasteries.

On 20 July 1994, CCP and the State Council of the PRC held the so-called third Work Forum. The meeting reviewed the policy of 'opening up liberalisation' initiated in 1979, and formulated policy decisions with regard to politics, religion, cultural and economy for the next five years. During the meeting, the then Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party, Jiang Zemin, bluntly said: 'The Communist Party will take responsibility for the mistakes of the past in Tibet.' What he really meant was that the liberal policies Hu Yaobang implemented in Tibet were a blunder. The decisions of this meeting led to the comeback of the brutal policies and cruel practices of the leftists in Tibet.

The decisions taken in this meeting were made public by 'TAR' deputy party secretary Raidi during the sixth session of the seventh standing committee meeting of the 'TAR' communist party held on 4 September 1994. The policy document adopted in that meeting had ten articles, which were about the Chinese government's political, economic, religious and external propagandas strategy over Tibet in the new century. The five-point policy and strategy to oppose His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to impose more severe restrictions on religious activities were made particularly clear in that document. This five-point policy stated that the instability in Tibet was due to the separatist activities of the 'Dalai clique'; that the Dalai clique, supported by the

international anti-China forces, maliciously intend to bring Tibet's independence; and that the international anti-China forces, by using the Dalai clique's demand for so-called independence, create disturbances in China and hold malicious intent to split China. The policy adds:

'To safeguard the stability of Tibet is not just to achieve peace and happiness in Tibet, but more important than this is to safeguard the unity of the Motherland and sovereignty of the nation, and to crush the malicious intent of the western anti-China forces who aim to westernise and split China.

'As such, our struggle against separatism in Tibet should be viewed from that level, and all should accept that it is necessary to carry out this struggle and understand its real purpose and meaning. We must expose the true face of the Dalai clique. As far as Dalai is concerned, although he enjoyed some popularity amongst the monks, nuns and religious people, yet Dalai and Dalai clique revolted against the country and fled abroad, where they have become tools of anti-China international forces. The real nature of Dalai clamour for so-called "Tibet independence", "higher degree of autonomy", "Greater Tibet" etc. are to oppose the Chinese Communist Party, reject socialism, split the Motherland by overthrowing the people's government, destroy the unity of nationalities and revive the old age Tibetan society. Although Dalai sometimes speaks beautifully to deceive the people, yet he hasn't stopped activities aimed at splitting the Motherland so far. Nor has he denounced Tibetan independence. Therefore, his real face must be exposed. The main aspect of the struggle against separation in Tibet is to struggle against the Dalai clique. We can't complete our struggle against separatism if we fail to crush the serpent's head.

'The struggle between ourselves and Dalai cliques is neither a matter of religious belief, nor a matter of the question of autonomy, it is a matter of securing the unity of our country and opposing splittism... No one should be careless about it. This is a life-and-death struggle, and of course it is not an ordinary issue but an important issue. The Standing Committee of the TAR Congress and the judicial organs should carry out thorough investigations in order to find out problems in the ways we deal with our struggle against splittism, and seriously analyze those problems in the law. If there is anything not yet mentioned in the law, the judicial administration should give their views quickly and establish laws and regulations to fight against the splittists so that the laws and regulations become more effective...

'As 'striking relentless blows' is one of the important elements of the Comprehensive Management of Public Security, the judicial organs should organize local public security organizations to solve their own main problems by having focal places to deal with and focal points to solve. We must rely both on the relevant public security offices and on the vast numbers of masses in dealing with public security work.'

The document continues:

'Our officials at various levels and, in particular, those above the county levels should recognise the nature, essence, conduct, policy and strategy of this struggle. They must display a clear attitude towards this struggle, and must not be careless. This is a life and death struggle, and of course it is not an ordinary issue but an important issue. We must accept that most of the monasteries and monks in Tibet are patriotic and abide by the law. At the same time, we have to realise that the Dalai clique, by using religion, has carried out splittist activities in Tibet. In recent times, due to loosening of control on monasteries, the number of monks risen dramatically, and some monasteries have become important

bases for the Dalai clique to carry out its splittist activities in Tibet. A small number of illegal monks and nuns have taken the lead in creating disturbances. Religious institutions are centres of learning where monks and nuns spend their lives. However, instead of analysing and propagating religion in monasteries, monks and nuns engage in splittist activities, which is contrary to the essence of religion and religious institutions. Focusing on the Dalai clique's evil hopes of "changing the direction of one monastery as equivalent to changing the direction of one territory of China", the regional, county and township government must strictly reform, and can even close down, monasteries engaging in splittist activities and clinging to these evil hopes. Monks and nuns not reformed by education sessions should be dealt with by the law enforcing agencies. Unless approved and allowed by the Nationality and Religious Affairs Bureau of the TAR, no one should be permitted to build new monasteries and recruit monks and nuns in the monasteries. Monasteries should strictly follow the ceiling on the number of monks to be allowed in them, and expel the monks exceeding that limit.'

The document further adds:

'In recent years the Dalai clique, with the hope of instigating rebellion, has stepped up their intrusion in the ranks of our cadres, working people and intellectuals. And some of our community party cadres express faith in religion and engage in religious activities, while some cadres and leading party officials hang objects bearing religious symbols on their housing walls, build shrines and alters and keep Dalai photos in their houses. Some cadres after being deceived by the Dalai clique's evil nationalistic idea view the people and their activities from the outlook of nationalistic feelings. Some corrupted cadres participate in reactionary organisations, collect and send secret information to the Dalai clique and engage in splittist activities. Some teachers, by using teaching profession as a platform, propagate the idea of Tibetan independence amongst their students. Some cadres, because of not having firm stands, are unable to fight the disturbances created by the splittists. Some cadres and officials send their children to schools run abroad by the Dalai clique... these are not issues of nationality and religion and it clearly indicates that some of our cadres do not have firm stand on certain issues, and the entire institutional system is "unclean". This year, although TAR Communist Party has decided to carry internal scrutiny yet its accomplishments at various level were not uniform; some of the party institutions' views on these scrutiny works were not perfect and therefore failed to produce effective results.

'Since cleaning up the institutions and emphasis on development are directly related to the success and failure of our struggle against separatism, the cleaning up and scrutiny work must be carried out properly in various levels of the party and government institutions. The law enforcing and monitoring agencies at the various levels must put emphasis on establishing party traditions and instilling loyalty among the cadres. Along with striking hard on economic embezzlement, there should be a clean bureaucratic system as well as a strict compliance with the political discipline. These must be considered as the principal work and emphatically adhered to by all. All party cadres, and in particular the party leaders, can neither keep Dalai photos and alters in their houses, hang objects bearing religious symbols, nor send their children to schools run abroad by the Dalai clique. Those cadres who do not abide by the above instructions and who continue with their old practices will not be granted promotion and those who are in the leadership positions and holding important posts will then be resolutely transferred or sent to other places. Those committing serious crimes shall be dealt with as per the party and government laws. Those who oppose the

party and country, and unlawfully escape abroad to surrender before the Dalai clique will be expelled from their respective disciplines. Those who involve in splittist activities and uphold rigid 'reactionary' stands will be dealt in accordance with the law. Those who visit foreign countries to meet their relatives and do not return in time will be terminated from their respective jobs'.

With regard to administration and control of the monasteries, the documents says:

11

'Ceiling must be placed on the number of monks in the monasteries, and emphasis must be particularly put on to control monasteries regularly creating troubles. Democratic Management Committees are the basic institutions assisting the government to exercise control on monasteries. As such, the members of the DMC should be carefully elected and its leadership powers must be given to those patriotic and law abiding religious personnel. Emphasis must be given on educating the monks and nuns about the patriotism and the laws of the country. Based on the stipulations of the States Council with regard to the identification of the reincarnated lamas, we must prepare detailed implementation strategies, taking into account the actual situation inside of Tibet. In this regard, we must work very hard, keep all the powers within ourselves and prevent the Dalai clique's attempts to interfere in the recognition of tulkus and guiding the monastic institutions.'

The immediate result of China's above decisions is the brutal suppression of Tibet's religious activities and the Tibetan people's right to freedom of religion. On 14 June 1994, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in accordance with Tibetan religious traditions, recognised Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, a boy born in occupied Tibet's Nagchuka region, as the reincarnation the previous Panchen Lama. The Chinese government not only refused to accept Gendhun Choekyi Nyima as the true reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, but also detained him, his parents and Chadrel Jampa Trinley Rinpoche, the abbot of Tashi Lhunpo monastery. Their whereabouts are still unknown.

In April 1996, the Patriotic Re-Education Work Committees were established in Tibet's monasteries. These were led by government cadres and permanently reside in the monasteries. Besides, photographs of His Holiness the Dalai Lama were banned from being displayed, and police stations were especially opened in big monasteries. Thus, severe restrictions and obstacles were imposed on daily religious activities, reinforcing once again an enormous repression in monasteries. It was like a second Cultural Revolution in Tibet.

According to reports received from Tibet and, in particular, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy's annual report of 1999, in 1996 work teams were sent to six regions and one city in the 'TAR', investigating 261 monasteries, and expelled 1,432 monks and nuns under the false allegations that they had opposed China's patriotic re-education campaigns, expressed absolute faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama and took part in previous peaceful demonstrations in Tibet. Among those expelled monks and nuns, some were below the age of 18. The report also mentioned China propagating patriotic re-education campaigns not just in the 'TAR', but also in traditional Tibetan areas of Kham and Amdo, which are now incorporated into Chinese provinces.

The 1999 TCHRD annual report further states that in April 1996, the Chinese work team arrived at Dhondupling Monastery located in Dechen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan province, and propagated patriotic re-education campaigns, and in September 1997 work teams went to Arig Monastery, Sichuan province and expelled all but 30 monks of 250 residing in the monastery. In the same year, the work teams

arrived at Choekhor monastery, Karze County, and expelled 40 out of 100 monks residing in the monastery. Moreover, work teams expelled 200 out of 500 monks from Jakyung monastery.

In May 1997, work teams expelled 150 out of the 380 monks residing in the Dakar monastery. Chaptsa county, Qinghai province. In May 1998, work teams expelled all 11,000 monks, except for 300, of Darthang monastery, Golok district. In March the same year, work teams expelled 110 monks from Dongru, monastery, Sichuan province, and ordered that out of the 2,300 monks residing in Kriti monastery, only 600 will be allowed to stay. In 1999, work teams expelled 40 monks from Bora monastery, Sangchu County. All in all, between 1996 and 1999, 541 monks and nuns were arrested and 11,409 were expelled from various monasteries in Tibet. The aforementioned oppressive incidents were recorded not only by the Tibetan exile administration and people, but also corroborated by Amnesty International, Asian Human Rights Watch and the US State Department in their respective annual reports.

In 1996, the Chinese government established 'Work Teams' in the monasteries throughout Tibet, and launched a series of campaigns under the title of 'Patriotic Re-Education', 'Strike-Hard', 'Cleaning', 'Reforms', etc. They prepared six 'educational documents:

- 1) The Guidebook for Education on Tibetan History as part of 'Patriotic Re-Education,
- 2) The Guidebook for Education on Campaign Against Splittism,
- 3) The Guidebook for Education on law,
- 4) The Guidebook for Education on Religious Polices,
- 5) The Guidebook for Education on Situation and Policies, and
- 6) The Guidebook for on Moral Conduct of the Citizens.

All these documents contain nothing more than the usual distortion of facts and propaganda materials churned out by the Chinese government. What is more disheartening from the religious devotee's point of view is that they vilified His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the strongest possible way by putting forth various kinds of criminal allegations against him. In short, these educational documents are devoid of any spiritual content; they contain atheist elements aimed at undermining Tibetan Buddhism.

Since the unleashing of the 'Patriotic Re- Education' campaign to this day, the Chinese Government made sure that the administrative powers of the monasteries rested in the hands of those people who were loyal to them. As a result, the so-called officials of the 'Democratic Management Committees' were mostly pro-Chinese. Thus, they were able to bring these monasteries under the tight control of the Party workers. Moreover, it must be pointed out here that the religious figures - such as lamas or tulkus, abbot, Geshes, etc, who are instrumental in the preservation, management and promotion of Tibetan culture and religion in general, and Tibetan Buddhism in particular - continue to be estranged from their monasteries, disciples and devotees. A campaign was also simultaneously launched to stamp out these religious figures by levelling various kinds of criminal charge against them or by isolating them. To cite few examples:

- 1) After the mysterious death of the 10th Panchen Lama in January 1989, the young Panchen Lama, Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, and Chadral Rinpoche Jampa Trinley, the abbot of TashiLhunpo Monastery, were arrested in 1995. Their whereabouts are still unknown.
- (2) On 24 October 1999, the Chinese Government arbitrarily arrested Geshe Sonam Phuntsok of Karze in Kham province. He still suffers under critical conditions in a

Chinese prison.

(3) On 18 April 2001, the so-called 'Work Teams' of the Chinese Government raided Serthar Buddhist Institute. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, the abbot of the Institute was arrested on 24 May 2001. Strict restrictions were also imposed on him for carrying out his regular spiritual activities. In June that year, the Chinese Government destroyed more than 2,000 monastic dwellings of the Institute, and out of more than 10,000 disciples, including Chinese, 8,400 were expelled from the monastery. On 7 January 2004, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok suddenly died under mysterious circumstances in a military hospital in Chengdu.

(4) On 7 April 2002, Tulku Tenzin Delek of Lithang in Kham province was suddenly arrested and given a deferred death sentence. His condition is very critical now. Many other high lamas who have made great contribution to the Buddha Dharma and Humanity- including Gungthang Rinpoche, Cheshoe Rinpoche and Alag Shardong from Amdo province - died after suffering enormous hardships. As a result if the continued suppression of religious freedom in Tibet, Agya Rinpoche and the 17th Karmapa Rinpoche- on whom the Chinese Government had placed high hopes- were compelled to flee the country and seek asylum in the free world outside the PRC.

No matter what laws and regulations were adopted in Tibet by the Chinese Government- including that of the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy- it becomes amply clear from the above facts that they are used only as a facade of religious freedom enjoyed by the Tibetan people. These brutal policies and strategies of the Chinese Government are not only in contravention of the relevant clauses on religious freedom of the Chinese Constitution, but they are also a gross violation of Article 11 of Chapter 1 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy, which states that '... no state organ, public organisation or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion, nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion...'

In December 2001, the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council convened a national-level meeting on religious affairs. Speaking at the meeting about their future work, Jiang Zemin emphasis that, for the stability of the country, it was important to further tighten the control over religious affairs: 'Since earlier times, the religious issues was never an isolated issue. It is intermingled with the history of politics and, economy, culture and nationality, and their actual contradictions. Therefore, it is very complex issue.' It is thus very clear that China still continue to practice its brutal policy in religious affairs.

The Chinese Government exercises its rule over Tibet through the three power-holding bodies: 1) Various levels of Party institutions, 2) Various levels of the Government and 3) Various levels of the National People's Congress. The political system of China is a highly centralised form of governance, with all the powers concentrated in the Party. The Government and the National People's Congress are accountable to the Party and not vice versa. Seen from this system, the power to govern the whole of Tibet is vested in the Party leaders and Party institutions. In such a communist political system, there is no way one could yearn for his freedom of religion to be safeguarded. We can understand this very clearly from the New Era's 10- Point Basic Outlook and Policy on Religion of the People's Republic of China.⁵ They are

- 1) Religion must go through the process of first taking birth, then flourishing and ultimately dying away. It will not persist long in the socialist society. Therefore, it should neither be exterminated nor caused to flourish by exerting administrative power.

- 2) It is stipulated in the Constitution that the citizens have the freedom to believe in, or not to believe in, religion.
- 3) We must propagate Atheism.
- 4) The State must, in accordance with the law, exert strict control over religious affairs and the exercise of the right to protection of regular religious activities. However, it must use religion to strike hard and stop indulgence in unlawful activities.
- 5) The State must recognise religious contradictions as the primary contradiction existing within the people. Under specific conditions, however, it must identify the two contradictions leading to adversaries, and tackle them appropriately.
- 6) We must ourselves carry forward our cause and develop religious ties with the outside world in equal footing. At the same time, the hostile western forces must be prevented from using religion to sneak into the society. No western religious organisations or individuals shall be permitted to interfere in China's internal religious matters.
- 7) The Party and State must recognise the patriotic religious organisations as a bridge to develop relations with the devotees, and efforts must be made to develop a common front thereof. In order to achieve this, all those efforts or activities directed towards doing so must be supported.
- 8) The patriotic religious personnel must be viewed as an important tool to protect unity among the public devotees and the stability of the society, and these leading personnel must be trained systematically in all institutionalised manner.
- 9) One must actively direct religion in conformity with the socialist society. Religious workers and public devotees must develop citizen's common perception, and with combined efforts of loving the nation and religion, carry out activities within the parameters of the established laws, regulations and policies.
- 10) All religious organisations and workers must protect and promote the glory of the law, people's interest, unity of the nationalities and integrity of the nation.

Wang Lixiong, a leading Chinese Scholar of Beijing, is not only popular among the Chinese leaders but also among the Tibetan exiles for his extensive work on Tibet. He has personally visited different parts of Tibet several times and conducted research on the actual situation inside Tibet. In his article of 3 February 2003 entitled 'The Role of Tibetan Buddhism and its Destruction'; he talks in great detail about how the three political strategies of the Chinese Government destroyed Tibetan Buddhism:

- 1) Although the heads of the monastic institutions in Tibet have the right to perform divinations, rites, consecrations etc, for the public, they are viewed with suspicions by the Chinese Government, and face strict restrictions on their activities. For example, Angag Tashi (Tulku Tenzin Delek) became a leader of

⁵ Jiang Zemin's statement during the meeting of the heads of the National-level United Front Work Department held in 1993

the hearts of the public as a result of his good work; he lived with the public and intermingled with them, went to different villages and conducted teachings, and advised the public in accordance with the Buddhist Dharma. The Chinese Government put restrictions on the movement and social activities of these popular and dignified spiritual leaders or highly realised lamas, because if these lamas were allowed to carry out their social work, then they might gain the respect of the public and become popular leaders. This, they fear, will undermine the dignity and popularity of the Chinese Government. For instance, Angag Tashi was arrested for establishing a school for the orphans without acquiring permission from the Chinese Government. The school he established was taken over by the Chinese Government and later closed down because of their failure to manage it efficiently. What we can discern from Angag Tashi's fate is that if these spiritual figures became the leaders of the hearts of the people, then the force it carries can easily spiral beyond the control, and undermine the image of the Chinese Government. For example, when Angag Tashi stood up against the Forest Department for felling of trees, the people in the locality surrounded the officials of the Forest Department and criticised them. Again, when Angag Tashi escaped into the hills, tens of thousands of people submitted a signed petition to the Government. There is little doubt that all these incidents became the source of added concern to the Chinese Government.

- 2) ...Those spiritual figures who cling to the cause of religion and do not agree to becoming a puppet in the hands of the Government such as Angag Tashi and Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok were struck hard by the Chinese Government. They are even tried in the court to send a warning to the rest of the religious community. Earlier, when Chardral Rinpoche of Tashi Lhunpo monastery informed the Dalai Lama about his findings of the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, in accordance with the spiritual tradition, he was sentenced to eight years imprisonment. The moderate ranking lamas, who remain silent and do not create trouble, became the subject for applying their United Front policies. They enjoy certain benefits but the 'stick' always hangs over their heads. Those who only pursue personal benefits, are adept at sycophancy, have completely abandoned the religious cause, and are willing to become a puppet in the hands of the government, are given all sorts of benefits, and they are offered important positions in the National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Some are also given high appointments in the Government. (For example, after a mediocre tulku from Nagchu region of 'TAR' hurled criticism against His Holiness the Dalai Lama in various public gatherings, he was made a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. In their attempts to woo other lamas into their folds, activities of such lamas are facilitated by the Chinese Government.)
- 3) The power to elect and appoint the heads of the monastic institutions lies with the Chinese Government. All the appointment -whether it is a lama, tulku or head of a monastery - must seek approval of the Chinese Government; even the nominations are directly prepared by the government. By seizing these power, Tibetan Buddhism was, on the one hand, made to depend heavily upon the Chinese Government, while on the other hand, China hopes to gradually install their own appointments after the incumbent spiritual leaders die, and ultimately take control over all the spiritual strongholds of Tibetan Buddhism by making them a puppet in the hands of the government. In order to achieve this goal, the Chinese Government nurtures important spiritual leaders in the state-run Buddhist institutions in Beijing and elsewhere, and according to the needs of the Government, they are brainwashed thoroughly. Consequently so, the Buddhist institutions such as the Serthar Buddhist Institute, which are not under the

control of the government, are strongly condemned

It becomes very clear from the above facts that the Chinese government exercises strict control over the leaders and monks of Tibetan Buddhism. As a consequence, the heads of the monastic institutions are distanced from the essence of Buddhism. Buddhist doctrines such as the vinaya still exist. However, whether or not Buddhism retains any respect or not, self-evaluation of any breach of vinaya vows depends upon the faith of the individuals themselves. As far as the heads of monastic institutions are concerned- recognised and nurtured by the Chinese Government according to their needs- it is doubtful how much faith they do have in, and how pure is their outlook on Buddhism. Buddhist philosophy in general and the Buddhist concept of the combination of method and wisdom in particular is very admirable. However, based on their needs, the community of corrupted monks can explain or interpret the contents of these doctrines in whatever way they want. Instead of upholding Buddhism, these monks would rather find fault with it for their personal gains.

Today, the Chinese Government boasts that the Tibetan people enjoy the right of religious freedom. However, the destruction caused to Buddhism due to China's religious policy today is more than during Mao's period, if not the same. Mao's policy was to physically destroy religion, but it survived. Since religion was rooted in the hearts of the people, it could not be destroyed by any outside force. But unfortunately, the current religious policy of the Chinese Government is that of corrupting the community of monks and nuns they have handpicked, and eliminating the rest, thereby attacking the spiritual foundations of Buddhism. This is a serious threat that may eventually lead to the 'death' of Buddhism in Tibet.

The latest White Paper boasts that the Chinese Government spent a large amount of money on construction and renovation of monasteries, especially on protection of Tibet's heritage and cultural relics. 'Since the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region, a number of regulations on the protection of cultural relics have been promulgated and implemented. Altogether, some 300 million yuan has been used to renovate and open over 1,400 monasteries and to give timely repair to a large group of cultural relics. From 1989 to 1994 especially, the Central People's Government allocated 55 million yuan and a large quantity of gold and silver for the first-phases maintenance project of the Potala Palace. From 2001, the state has also earmarked 330 million yuan for the second-phases, and for the maintenance of the two other great cultural sites of Norbulingka and Sakya Monastery,' it says.

More than 6,000 monasteries were destroyed in Tibet after the Chinese occupation. Now, construction and renovation works are being carried out, but who were the destroyers of these monasteries? China has failed even to mention a single name of the destroyers in its White Paper. Moreover, the great majority of monastery renovation works carried out in Tibet are financed through large amount of money donated by the pious devotees to the monasteries and temples. It is indeed shameful that China still claims merit for these works. If Chinese Government really wants their claim of protecting Tibet's religious freedom to be accepted by all, then it must reviews its wrong policies by weighing both the sides of the coin, and accept the reality as it is. Otherwise, the hope of producing milk by churning water will neither bear fruit, nor will we let it.

Tibetan Language

Language is one of the most important considerations for any parties entering into an autonomous arrangement, which even the Chinese Government recognises. For instance, article 4 of the constitution of the PRC states, '... The people of all nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and to preserve or reform their ways and customs.' Further, article 10, chapter 1 of the law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy says, 'The organs of self-government of national autonomous areas shall have guarantee the freedom of the nationalities in these areas to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and their freedom to preserve or reform their own folkways and customs.'

However, Wang Feng, the Deputy Head of China's United Front Work Department, dwelled in language in his report on the issue of minority nationalities in the national-level meeting of the United Front Work Department in 1959:

'The task of developing new alphabets, phonetics and other lingual reforms for the minority nationalities is an important duty of our socialist cultural revolution... Henceforth, the duty is to basically complete the responsibility of reforming the scripts of the minority nationalities two or three years'.

'The task of developing new alphabets, phonetics and other lingual reforms for the minority nationalities must uphold the unity and integrity of the Motherland and help in the exchange of socialist cultural among the nationalities... There are also many, who prefer to not using the language borrowed from the Chinese. These wrongful attitudes should be criticized and rectified appropriately.'

'Today, Chinese is generally the most commonly used language to facilitate intercourse between the nationalities. Therefore, the cadres of the minority nationalities and the general public should study the Chinese language.... in the schools of the minority nationalities, Chinese language should be introduced right from the primarily level.'

'In some regions, in accordance with the aspirations of the people and on voluntary basis, Chinese language should be used directly to eradicate illiteracy.'¹

This was the PRC's fundamental policy on language, which they implemented throughout the regions of Tibet. In pursuance of this policy, between 1959 and 1979, the Communist campaign to destroy the 'Four Olds'² targeted Tibetan language for elimination. In 1980s, however, Beijing took some positive steps to promote literacy in Tibetan language and devised an education system that answered the Tibetan People's needs.

Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, the Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the 'TAR' People's Congress, addressed the meeting of the Lhasa people's representatives during the third session of the fourth 'TAR' People's Congress on 19 July 1985. The representatives were discussing over the work report presented by Dorjee Tsering, the Chariman of the 'TAR' People's Government. Ngabo stated:

' In the Government work report, not a word has been said on the issue of Tibetan language and the issue of making more efforts on educational works.

¹ This report was carried in the documents published by the United Front Work Department, Qinghai province in November, 1995

² Old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits

This is inappropriate. Although Tibet is a region of nationality autonomy, not enough attention has been given on the use of the nationality language. Eight years earlier, I had spoken about it many times. The Panchen Lama had spoken about it more than I did. Still, nobody is paying attention. I heard some years ago that some people were talking about trying to completely destroy the Tibetan language completely within fifteen years. The hub of giving importance to the work of using nationality language hinges on the leadership: the Party and the Government of the region.³

In 1987, the 'TAR' People's Congress in Lhasa passed legislation making Tibetan the medium of instruction at primary school, and stipulating that Chinese language should be introduced only from age nine. The legislation promised to set up Tibetan-medium junior secondary schools in the 'TAR' by 1993 and to make most university course available in Tibetan shortly after 2000. But this policy remained unimplemented due to an acute shortage of funding and, later, due to the lack of political will. As a result, the Tibetan language continued to be marginalized, causing concerns for its very survival among many Tibetans.

In 1988, the late Panchen Lama, while addressing the first meeting of the China's Institute of Tibetology in Beijing, commented:

' The land, which managed itself well for 1,300 years, from the seventh century, lost its language after it was liberated. Whether we remained backward or made mistakes, we managed our life on the world highest plateau by using only Tibetan. We had everything written in our own language, be it Buddhism, crafts, astronomy, poems, logic. All administrative works were also done in Tibetan. When the Institute of Tibetology was founded, I spoke in the People's Palace and said that the Tibetan studies should be based on the foundation of Tibet's own religion and cultural. So far we have underestimated these subjects. ... It may not be the deliberate goal of the Party to let Tibetan culture die, but I wonder whether the Tibetan language will survive or be eradicate.' ⁴

In 1992 Professor Dungkar Lobsang Trinley- one of modern-day Tibet's leading cultural and intellectual figures, who was also recognized by the Chinese leadership as a ' national treasure'- said that ' in spite of Tibetan being declared the first language to be used in all government offices meetings, and in official correspondence, Chinese has been used everywhere as the working language.' This state of affairs, he argued, resulted in Tibetans losing control over their destiny. Professor Dungkar went on to say:

' All hope in our future, all other developments in Tibet, cultural identity, and protection of our heritage depends on this (Tibetan language). Without educated people in all fields, able to express themselves in their own language, Tibetans are in danger of being assimilated. We have reached this point.'

Dherong Tsering Dhundup, another scholar in Tibet, raised a similar concern conducting a detailed survey of the status of Tibetan language in many parts of Eastern Tibet, now part of China's Sichuan province. In his report, published in the early 1990s, Dherong wrote that out of the 6,044 Tibetan party members and officials in the nine districts forming Karze Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, only 991 were

³ Issue 2, *Bulletin of the People's Congress Proceedings*, an internal Chinese-language publication, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Tibet Autonomous Region, 15 August, 1985

⁴ *Kunsik Panchen Rinpoche' i ka-tzom che-drik*, Department of Information and International Relations, Dharamsala, p 84, 1999

literate in Tibetan. Similarly, the majority of the 25 Tibetan students in one class in Dhartsedo could not speak Tibetan at all. Dherong cited three principal reasons for this. The first, he said, is the Chinese Government's chauvinistic policy, which accelerates the process of Sinicization; the second is the notion that Tibetan being a worthless language in today's society; and the third, the inferiority complex suffered by Tibetans. Which hampers their initiative to protect their own language.

Elaborating on Beijing chauvinistic policies, Dherong wrote that the socialist era calls for joint efforts to promote all nationalities, and not wipe out any particular nationality. The Chinese constitution guarantees each nationality freedom to manage its own education, science, culture, health and hygiene, and the right to protect the nationality's cultural heritage. However, these constitutionally enshrined rights, he argued, had never been fully implemented for Tibetans:

'The failure to promote significance and use of the nationality language, in the effect, represents a slight on the nationality. If Chinese is used as the lingua franca to the neglect of the nationality language, if all are Sincized through the policy of nationality chauvinism, and if the nationalities are pushed to... assimilate into one another fir the purpose of helping to bridge economic and cultural disparities, this is totally against the provisions of the constitution regarding the freedom to use and promote one's language.'

In 1993 a special committee- the 'TAR' Guiding Committee for Written and Spoken Tibetan- was set up to implement the 1987 legislation on education. At the inaugural ceremony of the Guiding Committee, 'TAR' Deputy Party Secretary Tenzin commented, 'There is conclusive evidence that nothing can substitute the effect of using Tibetan language to raise educational quality and to improve the nationality's cultural level.'⁵

In 1996 Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, Abbot of Serthar Buddhist Institute in Karze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, wrote:

'Actually, the Tibetan language has no value in present-day Tibet. For instance, if a letter were mailed with an address written in Tibetan, it wouldn't reach its destination even within Tibet, let alone outside. In the case of travels, no matter how literate a person is in Tibetan, he would not be able to know the bus timing or read the seat number in his ticket. Even if one has to look for hospital or a shop in the county headquarters or a city, the knowledge of Tibetan is useless. A person who knows only Tibetan will find it difficult even to buy daily necessities.'

' If our language is useless in our own county, where else will it have any use? If the situation remains like this much longer, the Tibetan language will become extinct one day. ... Rare in Tibet are schools where one can study Tibetan language and culture.... Moreover, parents have developed the habit of not sending their children to school. This is because the primary school teaches Chinese rather than Tibetan. Even if the students learn Chinese and graduate from the middle school, there is no employment scope in Tibet. They end up herding cattle and working in the fields. There is, of course, a slight opportunity for learning Tibetan. But the parents know that Tibetan language is useless in day- to-day life. Therefore, they have no motivation to send their children to school.'

⁵ *TIN Review* No.26, 1997

' ...In the cities and county headquarters there are serious cases of people being unable to speak Tibetan, although both their parents are Tibetan. Many of them have lost their Tibetan characteristics. Moreover, Tibetan officials cannot speak pure Tibetan. One-fifth or two-third of the words they use are Chinese. That's why ordinary Tibetans can't understand their speech.'⁶

These critical observations went unheeded. Instead, a number of retrograde steps were taken in 1996 in line with the recommendations of the Third Work Forum on Tibet. The budget for Tibetan academic and literary publications was drastically reduced. The Guiding Committee was disbanded and its senior members transferred to the Regional Translation Bureau. Pilot projects for the extending Tibetan medium education to secondary schools, along with four experimental classes, met a similar fate. Around the same time, Tibetan language courses at Lhasa's Tibet University were discontinued and lecturers were ordered to rewrite textbooks to expurgate their religious content.

The situation deteriorated further in 1997 when the 'TAR' Deputy Party Secretary Tenzin disclosed a decision to make Chinese mandatory for Tibetan students right from primary school.

In a meeting with James Sasser, US Ambassador to China, Tenzin said that the 1987 policy was 'impracticable' and 'not in conformity with the reality of Tibet', and that 'the decision to allow grade one to three boys and girls to be taught only in Tibetan language will do no good to the children's growth.' In the same vein, 'TAR' Deputy Secretary Raidi stated that 'an ethnic nationality which studies and uses only its own spoken and written language definitely is an insular ethnic nationality which will have no future or hope.'⁷ Within a decade, the 1987 legislation had been revoked.

Beijing's policy to undermine Tibetan language and culture is implemented in all regions of Tibet-not only in the 'TAR'. Zhou Yong- Kang, Communist Party Secretary for Sichuan province (which incorporates larger parts of Eastern Tibet), said at a meeting of China's National People's Congress in March 2000 that the teaching of Tibetan in schools was 'a drain on government resources.'

⁶ Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, *Thunderous Secrets to the People of the Snowland in the 21st century*, Serthar Thekchen Choeling, Golok, Tibet, 1996

⁷ *Xinhua*, 9 March.1999; SWB 10 March 1999

Economy: Tibet Prospers, Tibetans Don't

China claims that 'the Tibetan people have full decision-making power in economic and social development.' This, if true, would be welcomed and duly acknowledged. Today, China justifies its continued presence in Tibet by saying that it has developed and modernized Tibet. We do accept that pre-1959 Tibet was not a perfect society, and did have its shortcomings and weaknesses. Nevertheless, it is a fact that Tibet, both under the thirteenth and the present Dalai Lama, had initiated reforms, and Tibet was undergoing changes- slowly but steadily - and moving towards a more liberal and equitable society. If today China has built roads, schools, hospitals and many modern buildings, we should understand that Tibet would have carried out these developments in any case, at its own pace, with or without Beijing's help.

The Constitution and Law on Regional Autonomy are quoted profusely in China's latest White Paper in autonomy in Tibet. Under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party, there is the Constitution and many other laws, including the law on regional autonomy, but governance, or constitutional governing, is the key issue. The National People's Political Consultative Conference have always been only symbolic. This is validated by the fact that His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in spite of holding high posts and his sincere attempts to compromise and work within the laws and agreements thrust upon him by China, found China reneging on every promise and agreement. After eight years of sincere attempts to work with the Communist Party he had to finally escape into exile in 1959.

We acknowledge that fact that China has built roads, telecommunications, hospitals and new buildings in the past forty years in Tibet. It is true that in the towns and urban regions construction is taking place everywhere, as confirmed by the accounts of media and visitors to Tibet.

In its White Paper, China has made claims and quoted statistics to project how much Tibetans have benefited, and today have become 'master of their own affairs', with China's help. Based on findings of independent observers and testimonies of Tibetans escaping into exile, there is a huge gap between their accounts of the current situation in Tibet and what is presented in China's White Paper.

Here it needs to be stressed that if Tibetans were genuinely enjoying all the rights and benefits of development in Tibet, there would be no need for Tibetan exiles to complain and speak out on behalf of the majority of Tibetans living inside Tibet. The purpose of this document is neither to tarnish China's image, nor to score mere political points.

Seeking truth from facts is key today, and for this to happen there is a need to look at reality with open eyes and mind. The experiences of the Cultural Revolution and collectivisation are close enough to remind us that suppression of truth can do unimaginable harm to a society and its progress.

The following section attempts to look closely at the claims of social and economic development made in the 23 May White Paper. Neutral and independent sources and

Chinese sources are quoted below (to suggest that these figures and facts are neither doctored by a few exiles in Dharamsala nor offered for the sake of propaganda) to understand the reality in Tibet with regard to social and economic development.

Improvement in living Standards

We do accept that Tibetans have made progress since 1978-80, when de-collectivisation was carried out in Tibet. It should be noted that Tibetans suffered extremely during the Cultural Revolution and collectivisation, a period during which all of China also suffered, but not mentioned in China's White Paper so far. Surveys and observations by independent researchers indicate that poverty is still pervasive in Tibetan region. For example a survey conducted in three counties of the 'TAR' states:

'...However, despite these improvements, because conditions during the communal period in Tibet were poor, the current level of development and the standard of living in rural Tibet are still limited. Compared to rural eastern China, Tibetans clearly have a long way to go, even in the better-off areas. For example, [in 2003] none of the 13 villages we studied had running water in houses, and only the village immediately adjacent to a county seat had a running water tap for the village. Similarly, only that village had electricity. None of the areas had improved dirt roads, let alone the paved roads...'¹

China's May 23 White Paper on autonomy quotes many statistics, but the reliability and accuracy of official statistics in China is a serious concern also shared by former Premier Zhu Rongji. We truly hope that Beijing does not allow the practice of official reporting during the Cultural Revolution and collectivisation, when exaggerated production figures generated at all levels of government caused extreme hardship to the general masses- the peasants and workers- and resulted ultimately in hindering China's march towards progress. For example, the above survey questions the accuracy of official statistics on poverty:

'... Moreover, roughly 14% of sample households were poor by our criteria, and another 28.5% fell into the category of lower-middle households (which we defined to mean that they have difficult time meeting their basic subsistence needs) ... And, in Medrogonkar, 47.2% of the households reported they were not producing enough grain for their own subsistence from their land. By contrast, government statistics for China as a whole report that less than 5% of the rural [areas] was below the poverty line...'

One aspect of the region's economy that is reminiscent of the 1960s is the heavy burden of extraction of surpluses from the rural population, in the form of taxes, charges, fees and unpaid compulsory labour. The same survey confirms the practice of tax in the form manual labour:

'... There have also been increases in taxation and fees for services previously provided free by the government, e.g., salaries of local leaders and health care. All individuals 18 to 60 years of age are required to provide 20 days of free labour annually.'

Yet, the 23 May White Paper claims:

' Another example is that Tibet is the only place in China to enjoy a preferential taxation policy at a rate three percentage points lower than in any other part of China, and where farmers and herdsman are exempt from taxes and administrative charges...Also, farmers and herdsman receive free medical care, and their children go to school with board and lodging free of charge...'

¹ Goldstein, et. al., *Development and Rural Change in Tibet: Problems and Adaptations*, Asian Survey, Vol.XLIII, N. 5, September/October 2003

Although these exactions are not counted in official statistics, there is consistent evidence from social science researchers and interviews of Tibetan farmers and nomads who escaped into exile, the Tibetans experience the cadres as rent seeking, and sometimes even predatory. As the central state downshifts responsibility for financing local services to users, and requires cadres operating local commodity marketing bureaus to finance their own salaries from local revenues, the pressure on nomads and farmers intensifies.

This leaves Tibetans doubly disadvantaged, suffering both from its interior location, and, within Tibet, from the urban bias of the state investments on which the 'TAR' economy depends in the absence of adequate internal revenues. For these reasons, it is the Tibetans who are most disadvantaged, as they are the rural population whose livelihoods are compromised by rent-seeking officials, yet, who must pay up front for basic human services such as healthcare and education, in the absence of any responsibility taken by the government beyond the most local level.

Tourism

‘ In 2003, Tibet received 928,600 visits of tourists from both home and abroad, and the total income from tourism made up 5.6% of the GDP in Tibet. By the end of 2003, there were 22 telephones for every 100 people in Tibet, with the total number of fixed and mobile phone users reaching 601,700’, claims the White Paper. The revised Guidelines for International Development Projects and Sustainable Development in Tibet released on 14 April 2004 (available online at www.tibet.net) acknowledged the potential of tourism. The Guidelines have expressed concerns about the present system of the mass packaged tourism controlled by a few state-owned enterprises and based on economic exploitation of Tibetan culture; this largely excludes Tibetans, although they are best able to explain and interpret their own cultures, even from employment as tour guides.

As of now, the 'TAR' government has fired all Tibetan tour guides who have studied in India and returned to serve in Tibet. Today, in spite of the large population of young Tibetans, non-Tibetans from different provinces in China are being sent to Tibet to act as tour guides.

Tourism in Tibet can employ Tibetans not merely as cooks, room attendants, drivers and waiters, as at present. The potential is great if Tibetan culture, landscapes and sacred places are understood as the core of that attracts visitors. Tibetans are uniquely able to interpret and present Tibet, not as a superficial, exotic spectacle but as a rich cultural encounter that meets the needs of visitors for a different and authentic experience.

Environment

The latest White Paper continues:

' Attention has been given to ecological improvement, and 18 state- and provincial-level nature reserve have been built, covering 33.9% of region's total land area, effectively protecting Tibet's fragile plateau ecology and the living environment in the urban and rural areas. At present, the ecology in Tibet basically maintains its pristine state, and it is the place where the environment is best protected in China.'

The response to China's White Paper on the environment of 10 March 2003, Tibet: State of the Environment 2003, acknowledges the fact that Beijing and Dharamsala share a common interest in protecting the environment of Tibet. In the same report, we have stressed two key aspects on environment protection: to involve and employ Tibetans in the conservation effort work and to effectively implement the legislation passed on environmental protection. The report has expressed strong reservations about the wisdom and implementation of China's present development policies on the Tibetan plateau. Major projects relating to dam building and hydropower generation, land reclamation, settling nomads and fencing of grasslands, afforestation, conversion of farmland to grasslands and forests - all sound impressive on paper. But experts both within and outside China question whether these policies are well thought-out, appropriate, and can benefit both China and Tibet in the long term.

Education

The White Paper states:

' The old Tibet had no school of the modern types, and the attending rate of school-age children was less than 2%, with 95% of young and middle-aged people being illiterate. By the end of 2003, Tibet had 1,011 schools of various types and levels and 2,020 teaching centers, with a total of 453,400 students, the enrolment proportion of primary schools rising to 91.8% and the illiteracy rate dropping to less than 30%. Since 1985, the Central Government has established Tibetan classes /schools in 21 provinces and municipalities, training up to 10,000 college and secondary technical school graduates.'

It is true that old Tibet lacked modern education. Nonetheless, before 1959 there were several Tibetan medical colleges all over Tibet; and also secular education schools, which can be categorized into three groups:

- 1) Government-run schools like Tse Loddra dating back to the 7th Dalai Lama's reign,
- 2) Monastery-run schools like Mindroling School, dating back to the 5th Dalai Lama's reign; and
- 3) Private-run schools like Kyirey or Tharpaling School, Nyagrong Shak School, Gyantse Phala School, Phagri Surkhang School, and Khache or Muslim School.

According to Jang-ngopa Ngodup Dorjee,¹ there were at least 70 schools in the U-Tsang region only[alone] before 1959. In 1913, during the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama, the first batches of four students were sent to study at Rugby school in Britain. After completing their studies, they returned to serve the Tibetan government. Among the four, Rigzin Dorjee Ringang, who studied electrical engineering, introduced electrification [electricity] for the first time into the city of Lhasa.

China has established a modern educational infrastructure in Tibet, and its effort at establishing schools and imparting education are acknowledged. However, there are concerns about many aspects of the education policy that is being implemented in the Tibetan region. We fear that the overriding goal of Beijing's education policy in Tibet is to instill loyalty to the 'Great Motherland' and the Communist Party. Speaking at the 'TAR' Conference on Education in Lhasa in 1994, the then regional Party Secretary, Chen Kuiyuan, said,

'The success of our education does not lie in the number of diplomas issued to graduates from universities, colleges ... and secondary schools. It lies, in the final analysis, in whether our graduating students are opposed to or turn their hearts to the Dalai clique and in whether they are loyal to or do not care about our great motherland and the great socialist cause...'²

¹Naga Sangye Tendhar, *Punda-ri-ka Offering: An essay on development and changes in Tibet's literary world during the reign of Ganden Phodrang. The 360th Founding Anniversary of Garden Phodrang .The 360th Founding Anniversary of Gaden Phodrang: Future Direction Vol.1*, p 329-420, Department of Information and International Relations, Dharamsala, 2002

² "TAR' Party Secretary, Chen Kuiyuan, " Speech on Education in Tibet," Fifth Regional Meeting on Education in "TAR", 26 October 1994

In the 1990s, the 'TAR' was allotted more money for education as a result of the region having been declared a Special Economic Zone. And in 1994 Beijing adopted a compulsory education policy for the 'TAR'. But the budget allocated for education went mostly to state-run schools (shung- tsuk lobdra), where Chinese students predominate. Schools in rural areas- where the majority of Tibetans live-continued to be neglected Qun Zeng, Vice-director of the Education Commission of the 'TAR' said:

' There are too many people-funded schools, too many lower classes, too high a proportion of school dropouts, and few complete the primary school. For instance, there are a total of 2,800 primary schools in the region, of which 1,787, or 74.5% are people-funded primary schools with crude facilities and low-quality teachers, and which can operate no more than the first or second grades of schooling. Of the 500 or so currently-existing government-run primary schools, more than half can operate no more than first grades of schooling owing to limitations of facilities and teachers. There are only 100 or so complete primary schools actually capable of operating the six grades of elementary education, and most of these are situated in cities and townships above the county level, whereas few are to be found in the agricultural and pastoral districts. There is, on an average, fewer than a single complete primary school for each of 897 townships in the region, with the result that only about 60.4% of school-age children are in school- the lowest rate in all China.'³

Beside, with the massive influx of Chinese immigrants on the plateau, the linguistic and cultural needs of the Chinese children have influenced the education system- particularly at secondary and university levels- so that the Chinese language has eclipsed Tibetan as the medium for schooling.

Furthermore, what the authorities fail to admit is that the 'TAR' and other Tibetan areas of Amdo and Kham are still at the bottom of China's education index- lower even than Guizhou, China's most backward province.⁴ According to China's Fourth National Census of 1990, only 0.29% of Tibetans had a college-level education; 1.23% senior-middle schooling; 2.47% junior-middle schooling; and 18.52% primary school education. China's national average was 1.42% with college level education 8.04% senior middle school, 23.34% junior middle school, and 37.06% primary school education.

The census report showed that 62.85% of the productive population (between the age group of 15-40) was illiterate or semi-literate and 84.76 % of the women in the work force were illiterate or semi-literate. Among Tibetans employed in the 'TAR' public sector industries, 80% were illiterate or semi-literate.⁵

In the late 1990s, more than one third of Tibetan secondary students from the 'TAR' were sent to China for education. In Beijing's Tibet Middle School alone, there are nearly 1,000 Tibetan students- 760 in junior and 200 in secondary programmes.⁶ Students sent to China undertake seven-years courses; they return home only once for vacation. The aim of sending Tibet's brightest youths to China is to groom them as tools for China's political control in Tibet.

³ *Chinese Education and Society*, July/August 1997, vol.30, issue 4

⁴ UNDP's *China Human Development Report*, 1997

⁵ *Chinese Education and Society*, July/August 1997, vol.30, issue 4

⁶ *South China Morning Post*, 21 March 2001, "Education on the Move", R.J.Michaels

Tibetans rightfully resent this as a policy aimed at undermining their identity and culture. The late Panchen Lama stated that educating Tibetan children in China would only have the effect of alienating them from their cultural roots. Similarly, a Tibetan official in the 'TAR' said that the aim of setting up 'Tibetan secondary schools in central China is to assimilate the next Tibetan generation.'⁷

By 1994 there were 13,000 Tibetans enrolled in 104 schools scattered across 26 Chinese provinces. The majority of these are normal Chinese schools with special classes designated for Tibetans. However, 18 of them are full-fledged 'Tibetan Secondary Schools'; three of them- based in Beijing, Chengdu and Tianjin-have junior and senior secondary programmes, while the remaining ones have junior secondary programmes only. Seven-five % of Tibetans graduating from these junior secondary schools were send to technical secondary schools.⁸

Such an elitist education programme consumes a large portion of the 'TAR' annual education budget while rural Tibet's allotment does not even provide for adequate basic education. Between 1984 and 1991, the 'TAR' spent 53 million yuan on Tibetan secondary students in China.⁹ In 1994 alone, the "TAR' fixed a budget of 1,050 yuan on each Tibetan secondary student in China.¹⁰

Performance in modern education in Tibet lags far behind what the exile Tibetans, who came empty-handed to India in 1959, have achieved in the field.

The exile Tibetan community today has 87 schools with an enrollment of 30,000 students, constituting of 85% of the school-age children. Today, education in exile has produced medical doctors, administrators, Ph.Ds., M.Phils, engineers; post graduates teachers, journalists, social workers, lawyers, computer programmers, etc. This is due mainly to the support of the Government of India, which, in contrast to Beijing, takes no credits for its role.

In addition, there are over 200 monasteries and nunneries in exile with around 20,000 monks and nuns. Today, Tibetan children as young as five years old risk their lives crossing the Himalayan Mountains to receive a decent education in India. The state of education on Tibet is best summed up by the following findings of Goldstein in his colleagues through the survey of three counties in 'TAR'

'...Still another area where rural Tibet lags behind is in education. Although improvement is clearly being made, and the majority of children now go to school for some period of time, 19.4% of children aged 7 to 15 had never been to school (69.4% were females); only 17.3% of individuals who had ever gone to school had completed primary school (six years). Furthermore, only 7.1% had gone beyond primary school. Given the rapid modernisation of Tibet's economy, it could be argued that rural Tibetans were not getting adequate education for competing effectively in the new market economy...'¹¹

⁷ Internal Party Discussion Paper, 1995, quoted by Catriona Bass in *Education in Tibet-Policy and Practice since 1950*, Zed Books, London, p.151

⁸ *Beijing Review*, 7-13 August 199; Xinhua in SWB, 2 August 1994, quoted in Bass's *Education in Tibet: Policy and Practice Since 1950*, p.150

⁹ *Xizang Ribao*(Tibet Daily), 28 February 1991

¹⁰ *Xinhua*, 2 March 1994; SWB 4 March 1994

¹¹ Ibid 1

Health

The White Paper claims:

' Medical and health-care conditions have improved markedly. Now, there are 1,305 medical and health institutions in Tibet, with 6,216 beds and 8,287 medical personnel, the number of beds and medical personnel per 1,000 people being higher than the national average. The people are now much better assured of their health than before. Infant mortality rate has dropped from 43% before 1959 to 3.1% and the average life span of the Tibetan people has increased from 35.5 years to the present 67 years. Tibet's population has grown from 1.1409 million before 1951 to the present 2.7017 millions, of whom the numbers of the Tibetan rose from 1.2087 million in 1964 to 2.5072 million in 2003, making up over 92% of the region's population.'

After the reforms of 1979, there has been a noticeable improvement in health care facilities, at least in urban areas. The status of health in Tibet, particularly among children, is clearly revealed in the findings of the survey conducted between 1993 and 1996 by the Tibet Child Nutrition and Collaborative Health Project. The project found evidence of chronic malnutrition and severely compromised health status:

' 52 % of children examined showed signs severe stunting (low height-for-age); over 40% of the children showed signs of protein energy malnutrition; and 67% were diagnosed with clinical rickets (a bone disease most frequently caused by vitamin D deficient)'.¹

The health service in Tibet is highly skewed in favour of urban dwellers, who are predominantly Chinese. At present, the quickest way in Tibet to become destitute is to fall ill. The inhabitants of agricultural and pastoral areas have to travel for a whole day or so by horse or yak to county capitals or larger towns for treatment. Even in urban areas, admission to an in-patient department in a government hospital demands a deposit of 500 to 3,000 yuan-an unreasonable sum for ordinary Tibetans, whose average annual per capita income now is 1,258 yuan (about US 151.56).²

In 2002, AusAID in its report Water and Primary Health Care for Tibetan Villagers says:

'In the same period, the GOPRC [Government of People's Republic of China] had a program aimed at reducing poverty in Tibet, which health indicators suggested, was significantly poorer than all other regions in China. Primary health care was not well developed, with only one out of 71 counties [in ' TAR'] having met national criteria for primary health care. Access to well-serviced health facilities in rural areas was poor.'

¹ International Child Health, October 1996, Vol. VII, No, pp.99-114

² News from China, Embassy of the PRC, New Delhi, "Market Economy: Prerequisite to Tibet's Modernisation", 22 November 2000

Development Policy in Tibet: Local Needs/ Autonomy vs Top Down Approach

Although China's constitution and regional autonomy law allow the Tibetans to decide development priorities and strategies based on local features and needs, development policy is actually determined outside 'TAR' by Beijing and others. A report, Economic Dimensions of Autonomy and the Right to Development in Tibet, by a Canada-based human rights organisation says:

'...development policy in the TAR is largely determined outside the province by Han Chinese in Beijing, the coastal provinces, and certain key centres in western China, such as a Chengdu, Chongqing, Xi'an and Lanzhou. These latter western Chinese cities play a dominant role in the governance of the Tibetan areas outside the TAR, divided up between Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan. Although policy making may contain elements of philanthropy, it is easy for development strategies and their implementation to reflect the priorities of the core regions of China rather than the actual development needs for the Tibetan areas...'¹

Further, the same report says:

' In other words, the most obvious beneficiaries of current subsidization in the TAR have been state-related, most likely determined by priorities decided in Beijing...

Because most of the large construction projects are contracted to out-of-province companies, related investment and wages have very low circulation effects due to their considerable leakage from the local economy. In other words, money goes in and goes out, without much turnover to benefit local production or demand... Many officials privately admit that in the end, eastern enterprises may benefit more from western development than the western province themselves... Differences in education levels between locals and migrants are key factors determining such outcomes. The education gap between the Tibetan areas and the rest of China is so great that even as education slowly improves in Tibet, the current demands of polarized economic growth outpace the limited skills formation within the local workforce. Migrant workers fill the shortfall... The government counters that as the Tibetan workforce becomes more educated or skilled, it will naturally come to fill the roles currently taken by the migrants. Nonetheless, in the light of labour market segmentation and exclusion, this hypothesis simply cannot be taken for granted unless the ethnicity of exclusion is clearly acknowledged and addressed by affirmative and pro-active policies to support Tibetan workers and businesses...'

China's approach to development in Tibet so far has led to chronic dependence on not only subsidies but also on non-Tibetan labour; and no tangible transfer of skills to Tibetans can be seen after 40 years.

Exclusion of Tibetans in the present state-led economic growth is aptly described in the following testimony:

' Tibet's rapid employment and income growth has been primarily in the modern urban sector, and has been driven by a dynamic, even cut-throat private sector in which Han and Hui Muslim populations have been dominant. This urban-oriented

¹ Available online at: <http://www.dd-rd.ca/site/publications/index.php?lang=en&subsection=catalogue&id=1361&page=10>

growth has contributed to rapidly increasing income disparity between urban and rural areas, and between Han and Tibetan populations...'²

In the private industrial and commercial sectors in urban areas too, non-Tibetans dominate the business. A 1999 report published by Lhasa Industrial and Commercial Bureau shows that, 'outside household enterprises' in the private industrial and commercial sector in Lhasa Municipality numbered 8,193, forming 74% of the total enterprises, while in the same sector, Tibetan household enterprises numbered 2,986 i.e. 26%. In terms of their sales revenue, these outside enterprises had total sales of 606.6 million yuan, 81% of the total sales volume, and Tibetan enterprises had 146.4 million yuan, or 19% of the total.

For most rural inhabitants in 'TAR', the economy has literally stagnated in the midst of very rapid growth in selected industries, notably urban construction, and services. The primary sectors, where the Tibetans dominate, has been clearly neglected and has not benefited from the rapid economic growth that has occurred in few enclaves of Tibet. The state has failed to invest in rural productivity, or to ensure rural development. Today's rural Tibet has few linkages to the modern subsidized urban economy. If this is development, it is a distorted and selective form of development that is bound to exclude many and privilege the few.

Under the PRC Constitution and regional autonomy law, minority or ethnic autonomous regions were explicitly created to preserve minority cultures and benefit minorities. But present development policy and strategies implemented in the Tibetan region, as discussed in the preceding section, continued to exclude and marginalize the majority of the Tibetan population. Beijing's present model of economic development, where only rapid development, with the door to Tibet being open to all Chinese without restraints, needs to be rethought to include preferential treatment for jobs, contracts and development of skills for Tibetans- a legitimate right under the regional autonomy law. This approach is analogous to the model being used in China's dealings with more advanced Western companies, where a combination of preferences and constraints are used so that the less skilled group- the Chinese- has time to catch up and compete.³

Based on the China 2000 Census, it is evident that demographic transition has already taken place in 'TAR' in the mid-1990s. The fertility rate for Tibetans in 'TAR', according to the 2000 census, is 1.83, which is below the population replacement rate of 2.1. However, the Tibetan population of young people in 'TAR' is very large. The implication in the light of the accelerated economic growth in 'TAR' is to prioritise the development of skills of the Tibetan young population so that they could participate meaningfully in the economic development of Tibet instead of encouraging large numbers of non-Tibetans to move to Tibet.

² Arthur Holcombe, *Testimony to the US Congressional-Executive Commission*, 10 June 2002

³ Goldstein, et. al., *Development and Rural Change in Tibet: Problems and Adaptations*, Asian Survey, Vol.XLIII, N. 5, September/October 2003

Feudal Serfdom: A Chinese Creation

China has also, as always, tried to justify its invasion and occupation of Tibet and the repressive policies it imposes there by painting a dark picture of traditional Tibetan society, saying that the Tibetan people are have been liberated from ' medieval feudal serfdom' and 'slavery'.

It is true that traditional Tibetan society - like most of its Asian contemporaries- was backward and badly in need of reforms. However, it is completely wrong to use the word ' feudal' from the perspective of medieval Europe to describe traditional Tibetan society. Tibet before the invasion was far more egalitarian than most of the Asian countries of that time. As Hugh Richardson, who spent a total of nine years in Tibet as British India's last, and independent India's first representative, wrote in *Tibet and its History*: ' Even communist writers have had to admit there was no great difference between the rich and the poor in [pre-1949] Tibet.'

The Tibetan policy prior to the Chinese invasion was also not theocratic as the White Paper claims. The system of rule was referred to as *choesi-sungdrel*, which describes a political system based on Buddhist tenets of compassion, moral integrity and equality. According to this, the government must be based on high moral standards and serve the people with love and compassion, just as parents care for their children. The Dalai Lama, head of both the spiritual and secular administration, was discovered through a system of reincarnation, which ensured that the rule of Tibet did not become hereditary.

Every administrative post below the Dalai Lama was held equally by monks and lay people. Although lay officials hereditarily held posts, those of monks were open to all. A large proportion of monks official - particularly those who rose through the ranks to the highest positions- came from non-privileged backgrounds, often from far-flung areas of Kham and Amdo. This is because the monasteries offered equal opportunities to all to rise to any monastic post through their own scholarship. A popular Tibetan aphorism says: "if mother's son has knowledge, the golden throne of Gaden [the highest position in the hierarchy of the Gelugpa School of Tibetan Buddhism] has no ownership."

The peasants, whom the White Paper calls 'serfs', had a legal identity, often with documents stating their rights, and also had access to courts of law. Peasants had the right to sue their masters and carry their case in appeal to higher authorities. Throughout Tibetan history, the maltreatment and suppression of peasants by estate-holders was forbidden by law as well as by social convention. Starting from the reign of Emperor Songsten Gampo in the seventh century, many Tibetan rulers issued codes based on the Buddhist principle of ' Ten Virtues of the Dharam'. The essence of this was that the rulers should act as parents to their subjects. This was reflected in

Songsten Gampo's code of 16 general moral principles, and the code of 13 rules of procedure and punishment issued by Phagmodrupa in the 14th century, and revised by the Fifth Dalai Lama in the 17th century.

There were some punishments, sanctioned by law, in the past, which included mutilation such as cutting off a hand or foot and putting out an eye. Such punishments were never lightly used, but decreed only in cases of repeated crime. Flogging was the principle punishment. Even in the 19th century, although the power to inflict mutilation existed in theory, it was only rarely put into practice. Capital punishment was banned in Tibet, and physical mutilation was a punishment that could be inflicted by the Central Government of Lhasa alone. In 1898, Tibet enacted a law abolishing such forms of punishment, except in the cases of high treason or conspiracy against

the state. The 13th Dalai Lama issued a regulation conferring on all peasants the right to appeal directly to him in case of mistreatment by estate holders.

All land belonged to the state, which granted estates to monasteries and to individuals who had rendered meritorious services. The state, in turn, received revenues and services from estates holders. Lay estate holders either paid land revenues or provided one member in each generation to work as a government official. Monasteries performed religious functions for the state and, most vitally, served as schools, universities and centres for Tibetan art, craft, medicine and culture. The role of monasteries as highly disciplined centres of Tibetan education was the key to the traditional Tibetan way of life. Monasteries bore all expenses for their students and provided them with free board and lodging.

The largest proportion of land in old Tibet was held by peasants who paid their revenues directly to the state, and this became the main sources of the government food stocks, which were distributed to monasteries, the army, and officials without estates. Land held by peasants was hereditary. A peasant could lease it to others or mortgage it, and he could be dispossessed of his land only if he failed to pay the dues either in kind or labour, which was not excessive.

Small sections of Tibetan population, mostly in U-Tsang (Central Tibet), were tenants. They held their lands on the estates of aristocrats and monasteries, and paid rent to the estate holders either in kind or by sending one member of family to work as domestic servant or agricultural labour. Some of these tenant farmers rose to the powerful position of estate secretary. (For this, they were labeled by the communist Chinese as 'agent of feudal lords'). Other members of these families had complete freedom. They were entitled to engage in any business, follow any profession, and join any monastery or work on their own lands.

Foreigners like Charles Bell, Hugh Richardson, and Heinrich Harrer, who lived and worked in independent Tibet, were impressed by the average standards of living of ordinary Tibetans, which they said was higher than in many Asian countries. Famine and starvation were unheard of in Tibet until the Chinese invasion. There were, of course, years of poor harvests and crop failures. But people could easily borrow from the buffer stock held by the district administration, monasteries, aristocrats and rich farmers.

When the 14th Dalai Lama assumed the throne, he continued a Reform Committee to introduce fundamental land reforms, but, as mentioned earlier, the Chinese communists, fearing that these could take the wind out of their sails, prevented His Holiness the Dalai Lama from carrying out his proposed reforms.

Democracy in Exile

In 1959, after his flight to freedom, the Dalai Lama re-established his government in India and initiated a series of Democratic Reforms, and a popularly elected body of people's representatives, the parliament-in-exile, was constituted. In 1963, detailed draft constitution for future Tibet was promulgated. Despite strong opposition, the Dalai Lama insisted in the inclusion of a clause empowering the Tibetan parliament to revoke his executive powers by a majority of two-thirds of its total members in constitution with the Supreme Court, if this was seen to be in the highest interest of the nation.

In 1990, further democratic changes were introduced by increasing the strength of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD)- the defacto parliament - from 12 to 46. It was given more constitutional powers such as the election of Kalons (ministers), who were previously appointed directly by the Dalai Lama. The Supreme Court Commission was also set up to look into people's grievances against the Administration.

In 2001, the Tibetan parliament, on the advice of the Dalai Lama, amended the exile Tibetan constitution to provide for the direct election of Kalon Tripa (the Chairman of the Cabinet or Kashag) by the exile population.

Looking to the future Tibet, in February 1992 the Dalai Lama announced the Guideline for Future Tibet's Polity and the Basic Features of its Constitution, wherein he stated that he would not 'play any role in the future government of Tibet, let alone seek the Dalai Lama's traditional political position'. The future government of Tibet, the Dalai Lama said, would be elected by the people on the basis of adult franchise.

Conclusion

The White Paper calls on the Dalai Lama to 'look reality in the face' and to relinquish the idea of independence for Tibet. If Chinese ever cared to listen to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, it would have long known what its 'splittist clique' attempt to convey. For almost a quarter of a century His Holiness the Dalai Lama has rarely missed an opportunity to bring forward his 'Middle-Way Approach', which proposes only genuine autonomy, and not independence, for Tibet. This has been widely hailed by the international community as the most practical and conciliatory approach towards resolving the Tibet issue.

Beijing asserts that 'the destiny and future of Tibet can no longer be decided by the Dalai Lama and his clique'. It is obvious that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the political and spiritual leader of Tibet, who represents the aspirations of the Tibetan people living in and outside Tibet. Therefore, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has the duty and responsibility for guiding the future of Tibet- a responsibility which he cannot avoid, and which is recognised not only by the Tibetan people, but also by the whole world.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is called 'a splittist and separatist' by China, was the very person who first brought forward the idea of 'association' with China, and who is still committed to seeking a negotiated solution to the Tibet issue within the constitutional framework of the People's Republic of China.

Responding positively to Deng Xiaoping's proposal of 1979 that 'Except independence, all other things can be discussed and resolved', His Holiness the Dalai Lama outlined the 'Middle-Way Approach', according to which if all Tibetans were to enjoy a genuine autonomous status, Tibet would then remain within the framework of the People's Republic of China. It has been over 24 years since then, and he has been sincere and consistent in his advocacy of this policy. To achieve genuine autonomy for all the Tibetans of Cholkha Sum- the three traditional provinces of Tibet- His Holiness the Dalai Lama proposed the Five-Point Peace Plan in 1987, and the Strasbourg Proposal in 1988, in which he openly addressed the demands and aspirations of Tibetan people.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Central Tibetan Administration in exile, and the Tibetan people will firmly stand by and work for the realisation of genuine self-rule for the three provinces of Tibet on the basis of the 'Middle-Way Approach'.

Furthermore, no matter how long it takes, we will continue to carry on our non-violent struggle to keep the issue of Tibet alive. We in exile have the determination, strength and programmes to preserve and promote Tibet's religion, culture and language, which represent the core of the Tibetan identity.

Based on the special characteristics of the Tibetan people, Tibetans should decide what sort of self-rule they must have to suit their needs. Whatever the Central Chinese Government dictates will not be acceptable to the Tibetan people, and Tibet should not be compared with other areas.

Without clinging to past events, the future roadmap of Tibet should be on the basis of the vision of the Tibetan people. That should be understood by the Chinese nation's central and local government as a historical need. We are convinced that only on this basis will the question of Tibet be resolved.

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