TIBET: NO LONGER MEDIAEVAL
Edited by Jin Zhou
Text by Zhu Li
Designed by Li Yuhong
Published by Foreign Languages Press, Beijing

Tibet is a part of China that is much talked about but little understood. For centuries it was sealed off from the outside world not only by the Himalayas but also by feudal barriers. In modern times, misinformation about the region and even deliberate misrepresentation of conditions and events there have added to the confusion.

This book, based on first-hand observations, interviews, and research, is designed to give the reader a clear and accurate picture of this fascinating "Roof of the World" where 1.8 million people live.

After a brief account of Tibet's historical background, the author describes its development in recent decades. The old Tibetan regime - feudal serfdom in its cruelest form - survived essentially unchanged for centuries, right up until the democratic reform

(Continued on the back flap)

Front cover: Women in Lhasa's suburbs prepare to welcome the central delegation headed by Hua Guofeng on the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region, 1975.
TIBET:
NO LONGER MEDIAEVAL
Foreword

VERY few countries in contemporary history have undergone such a tremendous and profound social transformation in so short a time as China since 1949. The changes in the Tibet Autonomous Region in the southwestern part of the country are among the most remarkable and the contrast between past and present most striking.

Tibet is 1.2 million square kilometres in area, one eighth of all China. Averaging 4,000 metres above sea level, it occupies most of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, otherwise known as the “Roof of the World.”

Some 1.8 million people, of whom over 90 per cent are Tibetans, live in the region. The rest belong to the Han, Moinba, Lhoba, Hui and other nationalities.

Northern Tibet is one of China’s famous pastoral areas. The valleys in the south are agricultural as well as pastoral. The mountains and gorges in the southeast contain vast virgin forests.

The plateau has tremendous water resources, including some of Asia’s famous rivers: the Yarlung Zangbo (upper Brahmaputra), the Nujiang (upper Salween), the Lancang (upper Mekong) and the Jinsha (upper Changjiang). There are many lakes rich in aquatic life. The region also has vast mineral and geothermal power resources.

In spite of its breathtaking beauty and rich natural resources, for centuries Tibet remained a hell for most of its inhabitants. Priests and aristocrats combined political and religious rule in a feudal system even more barbarous than that of early mediaeval Europe. All the land and most of the livestock were owned by three types of manor lords: the local government, the monasteries and the nobility. Government officials, upper-class lamas and aristocrats, with their agents, made up only 5 per cent of the population, wielding all power in Tibet and living high at the expense of the people. Serfs, on the other hand, who constituted 90 per cent of the population, owned no land at all; they were kept in bondage by their lords. Seventy to 80 per cent of the products of their back-breaking toil were seized through corvée, rent, taxes and usury. The household slaves, 5 per cent of the population, were pure chattels, the most down-trodden of the social strata in Tibet.

Few areas in the world were as backward economically and culturally as old Tibet. Serfs worked the fields with primitive tools. What was left to them out of the harvests was at best barely enough for a meagre supply of food and seed, and often not
even that, Industry did not exist. Even matches and nails were imported. There were no modern roads. Transport was by pack animals or on human backs. Illiteracy was prevalent in over 90 per cent of the population. Widespread semi-starvation, recurrent epidemics and lack of medical care, and the fact that about a quarter of the inhabitants were lifelong celibates in the monasteries, caused the population to decline in the last several centuries. With 2 million people in the early 1730s, Tibet had only 1.2 million in the first years after its liberation in 1951.

It was the victory of the Chinese Revolution that enabled Tibet to shake off serfdom and move gradually towards socialism.

Tibet's transformation was achieved through three major steps.

The first was the peaceful liberation of Tibet in 1951 after an agreement on the measures to achieve it was signed by the Central People's Government and the Tibetan local government.

The second step was the democratic reform that went hand in hand with the suppression of an armed rebellion in 1959. In this great mass movement, the centuries-old serf system was uprooted. The million serfs stood up and became the masters of the land.

The third step was the gradual socialist transformation of agriculture, herding, commerce and handicrafts carried out after the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1965. People's communes were gradually set up in all agricultural and pastoral areas, and measures were taken to expand the newborn modern industries.

In the meantime, regional autonomy for the nationalities has gradually been introduced. Great attention has been paid to the training of Tibetan and other minority nationality cadres, the development of Tibetan culture and the use of the Tibetan language.

Only two decades away from serfdom and barely on the road of recovery from the “cultural revolution,” Tibet today remains poor and undeveloped, and the people there continue to lead a hard life. Nevertheless, they are as buoyant and hopeful as ever, realizing that with the “gang of four” no longer in the saddle, things are changing for the better.

Since 1980, great efforts have been made to heal the damage created in Tibet during the “Cultural Revolution.” A recent decision concerning Tibet made by the Party's Central Committee calls for the full exercise of regional autonomy under the unified
Some land in Medog County is only a few hundred metres above sea level. Bananas, sugar-cane and other subtropical plants grow there.

People who have been to Zayu or Medog in the southeast would never agree that Tibet is "barren" or "desolate." Zayu's main crops are rice (shown in the picture opposite), wheat and barley.

leadership of the central authorities, including the right to modify or reject any policies or directives not suited to Tibet, the easing of controls in matters of economic policy and an effort to lighten the burden of the masses. The implementation of such a decision will undoubtedly speed up Tibet's construction and improve the livelihood of the people.

In the following pages, readers will get some glimpses of Tibet, its magnificent landscapes, its miserable past, its progress in various spheres after liberation and, most important, the confidence and revolutionary optimism of the people as they build their future.
Opposite: A boiling spring at Yangbajain, north of Lhasa. Few areas in China can match Tibet in intensity and variety of geothermal activity. Its rich electric power potential has begun to be tapped.

Left: People of Neda County survey what they call their “solid reservoirs.” Mountain snows and glaciers provide inexhaustible water for Tibet’s farms and pastures.
Overleaf: Tibet, with its many rivers and lakes, has a quarter of the water resources of all China. This is the Nyakha Cascade on the Yarlung Zangbo River.

Left: An aerial view of Nam Co Lake, the biggest on the plateau, with the Nyainqentanglha Range in the background.

Right: Tibet’s virgin forests, mainly located in its southeastern section, rank third in area among those in all China. They include almost the entire range of Northern Hemisphere trees, whether of the tropical, temperate or frigid zones.
Damoqeg, north of Lhasa, is one of Tibet's main pastoral counties.
On the threshing ground of a production team in Olga People's Commune, Shangri County.
CONTACTS and exchanges between Tibet and the rest of China began in ancient times. They increased particularly after A.D. 641 when the Tang Dynasty emperor, Tai Zong, gave Princess Wen Cheng in marriage to King Songzain Gambo, who was the first to unite the Tibetan tribes.

History records that the princess brought, besides her dowry, a great many books on medicine, building construction and handicrafts. Persons skilled in these fields and in farming accompanied her. The arrival of such people is specifically recorded in the marriage in A.D. 710 of the Tang Princess Jin Cheng to King Chide Zuguain (Tridesogdan).

Then came the formal “Uncle and Nephew Alliance” between the Tang Emperor and the Tibetan King Chiralbajain (Tri Ralpachen), which was signed in Chang'an (now Xi'an) in 821 and again in Lhasa the following year. A stone tablet bearing the text of this alliance still stands in Lhasa.

Through such channels, and through growing trade and other contacts between the Han and Tibetan nationalities in places where they lived near each other or intermingled, techniques for making farm tools and paper, weaving, brewing, pottery, husking and milling grain came to Tibet. So did many elements of astronomy, calendrical science, medicine and pharmacology. In the meantime the Han, living largely in the interior provinces and constituting the great majority of China’s population, absorbed many Tibetan elements into their own culture, such as certain Tibetan pastimes and customs and styles of dress and adornment. Thus, many Han women liked to style their hair in a peak and dab their faces with ochre ointment. Among other things, a type of polo was introduced from Tibet and spread quickly.

In the mid-13th century, during the early period of the Yuan Dynasty, the central government of China appointed Pagba (Pagspa), then head of the Sa’gya lamaist sect in Tibet, to be ruler of the region as one of China’s administrative areas. It was at this time that Tibet officially became part of China. The central authorities checked on the work of local Tibetan officials, levied taxes and corvée, and set up relay post stations and military outposts. A number of high lamas in Tibet went to Beijing (Peking) and other places to become officials in both the central and local governments. The unification of China under the Yuan monarchy brought about a new period of active cultural exchange between the various nationalities of the country. Stupas built in the Tibetan style during this period, still standing

The Potala Palace, built in the 7th century and rebuilt in the 17th, is an architectural wonder that shows the talents and skills of Tibet’s working people. Many statues and murals there, as well as some aspects of the architectural style, attest that contacts between Tibet and China’s interior were already strong in the Tang Dynasty.
in Beijing and other places, are among the obvious signs of that exchange.

Through all the subsequent changes in dynasties, social conditions, government and state systems in the following seven centuries, Tibet has remained an inalienable part of China over which the central authorities have exercised sovereignty.

During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), administrative and military systems instituted in areas inhabited by national minorities (including Tibetans) in Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan were introduced into Tibet. By about 1460, tributary missions from Tibet to the Ming court averaged three to four thousand persons every year, an indication that the relationship between the central and local authorities became increasingly close.

China’s last feudal dynasty, the Qing, further centralized the administration. A special bureau in charge of Tibetan and other border region affairs was established in the central government. Resident High Commissioners were posted to Tibet. They had extensive powers in handling administrative, military, foreign, judicial and financial affairs and in deciding, in consultation with the Dalai Lama, on the appointment and removal of local officials, subject to final approval from Beijing in case of the senior ones.

The Opium War of 1840, which marked the beginning of more than a hundred years of imperialist aggression against all China, brought British expansion into Tibet as part and parcel of that aggression. There were open invasions in 1888 and 1904 and “creeping” alienation of border areas in Tibet continued through most of the first half of the 20th century.

Less widely known were Czarist Russia’s intrigues against Tibet, noted and condemned by Lenin himself. In the second half of the 19th century, Russia sent many agents and spies into Tibet in the guise of explorers, scientists, travellers and theologians. They did not limit themselves to collecting information. One, Dorjic, became the assistant tutor of the Thirteenth Dalai after many years of “religious studies” in the Zhaihunge Monastery. He tried hard to induce the Dalai to break China’s unity and become the vassal of Czarist Russia. This was part of the rivalry between Russian and British imperialism for the possession of Tibet. Kuropatkin, Russia’s war minister, wrote in his diary in 1904 that the ultimate annexation of Tibet, along with China’s northeast, was an obsession with Czar Nicholas II.

The present-day leaders of the Soviet Union are trying to cover up Czarist Russia’s secret manoeuv-
In A.D. 641, Emperor Tai Zong of the Tang Dynasty gave Princess Wen Cheng in marriage to Songzak Gampo, the Tibetan king. The retinue of the princess brought to Tibet the productive skills, science and culture of the Han, the majority people of China. Above, statues of King Songzak Gampo and Princess Wen Cheng set up for worship in the Potala Palace. They are among the few existing relics from the original building of the 7th century.

Beam support in the Potala, evidence of the introduction of Tang Dynasty architecture into Tibet.
Painting by Yan Liben (A.D. 607-673), a famous Tang Dynasty artist. It shows Emperor Tai Zong granting an audience to the envoy sent by King Songzayan Gambo to seek a Tang princess in marriage.
Erected in A.D. 823, this stone tablet before the Zuglakang (Jokhang) Temple in Lhasa bears the text of the "Uncle and Nephew" alliance concluded between the Tang emperor and the Tibetan king in the 9th century. It reads in part: "Uncle and Nephew have conferred and agreed that their government be one and that there be great harmony."
The new script created for the Mongolian language by the talented Pagha at the behest of the Yuan emperor in 1269.

In the 13th century, the Yuan Dynasty government posted high-ranking resident officials to Tibet and appointed Pagha, leader of the Sa'gya Sect of Tibetan lamaism, to take political and religious charge of the region. Since then, Tibet has officially been part of China. This mural painting in Degen Pogbang Palace near Xigaze (Shigatse) shows Pagha being received in audience by Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan Dynasty, at the foot of the Linpan Mountains in the summer of 1253.

Gold seal granted in 1326 by the Yuan Dynasty to the Tibetan nobleman Soinam Zangbo upon his appointment as “King of Bainang,” originally a small tribal state.

With the unification of China under the Yuan monarchy, the paper currency issued by the new central government was also used in Tibet. This currency note of the mid-14th century was discovered in 1919 in Sa'gya Monastery, 150 kilometres southwest of Xigaze. Contemporary scholars consider that this huge lamasery may have been the site of a bank.

Imperial edict issued in 1373 by the Ming Dynasty court ordering protection of religious services in the Campu Temple (in present-day Doilungdegen County).
Ming imperial edict issued in 1413 ordering that a noble named Zholgi inherit his father's headship of Tibet's local affairs, and granting him the title, “Wise and Powerful General.”

In 1407, the Ming emperor conferred an honorific title on a Tibetan high lama named Halima and put him in charge of Buddhist affairs for all China. Left: Gilded bronze Buddha brought into Tibet for Halima in 1413 by Hou Xian, a special envoy of the Ming emperor. Above, an imperial document explaining the gift of the bronze Buddha.
In 1652, Emperor Shun Zhi of the Qing (Ching) Dynasty granted an audience in Beijing to Losang Gyaco, the Fifth Dalai, on whom he conferred the title “Dalai Lama” the next year. Detail of a painting in the Potala Palace showing the audience.

Gold seal given to Losang Gyaco when he received the title of “Dalai Lama” in 1653.

By a decree of the Qing Dynasty government in 1792, new successors to the Dalai or Bangen (Panchen) were to be chosen by drawing lots from this golden urn under the supervision of the dynasty’s High Commissioners.
In 1793, Emperor Qian Long of the Qing Dynasty decreed that High Commissioners posted in Tibet should be responsible for all administrative, judicial, financial, military and foreign affairs of the Tibet region. This is a copy of the imperial decrees in the Tibetan language.

Official report asking for appointment of a new “kaloon,” the second highest post in the former Tibetan local government, to replace Gnga Banjor who died in 1804. The report was submitted to Cebake, a High Commissioner posted in Tibet by the Qing court, and was signed by Living Buddha Jerung, acting as regent.

Kuominhong document conferring a posthumous title on the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1934.

Official seal and certificate issued by the Kuominhong government conferring an honorific title on the Living Buddha Razheng in 1935.
Gyangze fort where the Tibetans fought bravely against British invaders in 1914. It is now a national monument.
In 1949, when China’s War of Liberation was approaching victory, the imperialists wanted to grab something for themselves out of the imminent downfall of the Kuomintang regime. They set out to separate Tibet from China—a century-old design—by engineering an “expulsion of the Hans” in which all Kuomintang officials in Tibet were suddenly ousted by the local Tibetan authorities. In the spring of 1950—as a prelude to imperialist-backed “independent” status for the region—they manoeuvred the local Tibetan authorities into sending a “good-will mission” abroad.

During these intrigues, the Tibetan local government went against the interests of the Tibetan people by refusing to respond to the call of the central authorities for the peaceful liberation of the region. It bought large quantities of arms and ammunition abroad, and massed its feudal troops to block the entry of the People’s Liberation Army.

In July 1950, Living Buddha Getag, a Tibetan patriot, then Vice-Chairman of the Provincial People’s Government of Xikang (adjacent to Tibet), prepared to go to Lhasa to persuade the Tibetan local government to negotiate. Fifteen years before, Getag had been impressed by the policy of national equality and respect for religious beliefs of the Chinese Red Army during its world-famous Long March, given it sympathy and support and made friends with its commander-in-chief, Zhu De. In August 1950, Getag was poisoned by imperialist agents in Qamdo (Chamdo) on his way to Lhasa, arousing popular indignation throughout the country.

In October 1950, the PLA crossed the Jinsha River and liberated Qamdo, crushing a force of imperialist-backed local Tibetan troops. In April 1951, a Tibetan delegation headed by Ngapo Ngawang Jigmi came to Beijing for talks. On May 23, 1951, the Agreement of the Central People’s Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (known as the Seventeen-Point Agreement) was concluded. Its main provisions were:

The local government of Tibet was to unite the Tibetan people, drive out the imperialist forces and assist the PLA to enter Tibet and consolidate national defence. Under the unified leadership of the Central People’s Government, the Tibetan people had the right to exercise regional autonomy. Tibetan troops were to be reorganized by stages into the PLA and become part of the national defence force of the People’s Republic of China.
Chairman Mao Zedong at a banquet given in May 1951 to celebrate the signing of the agreement between the Central People's Government and the Tibetan local government on measures to achieve the peaceful liberation of Tibet. On his left, Ngapoi Ngawang Jigmi, chief delegate of the Tibetan local government. Lower left, the Han and Tibetan versions of the agreement.
Offering "hatas" (ceremonial silk scarves of respect and welcome) to Zhang Guobin, commander of the PLA troops entering Tibet.

Distributing leaflets on the policies of the Chinese Communist Party with regard to nationalities.
Free medical service for the common people was introduced for the first time in Tibet's history.
A PLA man buys dried yak dung, Tibet's main fuel, from a local Tibetan. The seller knew that he would get a fair price. For this was one of the strict requirements enjoined on all military personnel by the “Three Disciplines and Eight Points of Attention,” drawn up by Chairman Mao himself.

The local government of Tibet was to carry out social reforms of its own accord. The central authorities were not to alter the existing political system in Tibet and officials of various ranks would continue to hold office. The religious beliefs, customs, and habits of the Tibetan people would be respected. The economy and culture of Tibet would be developed step by step and the people’s livelihood improved gradually in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet. The Central People’s Government would handle all external affairs concerning the Tibet region.

To implement the agreement, the incoming cadres and the PLA continued westwards and arrived in Lhasa in October 1951. Their strict discipline and implementation of the Party's national and religious policies as well as of the agreement itself made a deep impression on the people. Although short
or food because of transport difficulties, the ... allowed no hunting or fishing by its inhabitants where the hills and rivers were full of game and fish, since the killing of animals was believed by local customs and religion. Officers and men would rather sleep in the open than risk shelter in a ... They paid tribute for what they bought, or for anything they had damaged. Their Princess and helplessness soon won them goodwill and support. Tibetan people who came into contact with them called them "new Hans," in contrast to the vacuous rulers of past times who had practiced manifold discrimination and oppression. They received the new arrivals warmly. In Lhasa, ever more people attended a welcoming rally. Even...
A men building roads on precipitous slopes. Today, four trunk highways link Tibet with the rest of the country.
Weeping, a young woman serf complains to the PLA about her wrongs at the hands of the rebels.
THE Central People’s Government adhered strictly to the Seventeen-Point Agreement.

It neither altered the political system of Tibet, nor changed the status and authority of the Dalai Lama or the functions of the local officials, including those who had collaborated with imperialists but now showed willingness to sever such connections. Construction of highways, factories, farms, schools and hospitals and the development of trade were carried out only after full consultation with representatives of Tibet’s upper social strata.

However, some people from these strata, while pretending to comply with the agreement, did everything they could to obstruct its implementation. They slandered the People’s Liberation Army and stirred up trouble in Lhasa when the Tibetan Military Command was established there in February 1952. They persecuted peasants and herdsmen who worked on new construction projects, accepted state loans, or merely received medical treatment from incoming doctors. Refusing to reorganize Tibet’s local troops as required by the agreement, they smuggled in weapons from abroad and actually doubled this armed force between 1951 and 1959. In every way, they obstructed and sabotaged preparations for setting up the Tibet Autonomous Region.

In view of the overall situation at that time, the central authorities decided not to carry out reform in Tibet before 1962. At the Supreme State Conference held in February 1957, Chairman Mao himself announced that social reform in Tibet, as provided for by the Seventeen-Point Agreement, had definitely to be implemented, but that the timing could only be decided by the great majority of the people of Tibet and their leading public figures when they considered it practicable — there should be no impatience.

However, those from the upper strata who opposed the Seventeen-Point Agreement were actually bent on perpetuating their feudal serf system. Flouting their obligations under the agreement, they said openly that there would never be any reform.

On March 10, 1959, they colluded with imperialists and other foreign reactionaries, openly discarded the Seventeen-Point Agreement, unleashed an all-out armed rebellion, and proclaimed their separatist aims.

The rebellion was quickly put down by the PLA, although in Lhasa and some other places they were outnumbered by the rebels. The Tibetan people helped the PLA in many ways — serving as guides.
or scouts, repairing roads and bridges damaged by the rebels, transporting food supplies and ammunition, and fighting shoulder to shoulder with the troops.

Many patriotic individuals from Tibet’s upper strata, including Banqen Erdini, Ngapoi Ngawang Jigmi, Pagbalha Geleg Namgyal, voiced their opposition to the rebellion and gave full support to the government’s decision to quell it.

The rebellion backfired. Its suppression ultimately accelerated the democratic reform which soon swept all Tibet.

The reform in the agricultural areas was carried out in two stages. The first consisted of the “three againsts” and “two reductions,” that is, against rebellion, corvée and servitude, and reduction in land rent and interest on loans. In the second stage, the land was redistributed. Meanwhile, the movement of the “three againsts” and “two benefits”
Local people help carry supplies for the PL.1 during the serf-owner rebellion.

(benefit for both the herdsman and the herd-owner) was launched in the pastoral areas.

To understand what democratic reform meant to Tibet's million serfs, one must know their sufferings and hardships under the old feudal system.

For most of the year, they worked like beasts of burden on manorial estates. They were paid nothing and had to bring their own food and farm tools. This agricultural toil, with numerous other compulsory labour services in transport, housing construction, and so on, was exacted in return for the small plots of land which the serfs were allowed to use. But these allotments yielded very little because of the poor quality of the soil, and because the serfs — with so little strength left after working for the manor — could not take proper care of them. Serfs working on some estates could spend a little more time on their own allotments, but usually had
PLA units start off in pursuit of the fleeing rebel forces.

People of Lhasa celebrate the suppression of the rebellion.
Democratic reform was carried out simultaneously with the suppression of the rebellion. Moved beyond words, this young woman ex-serf is allotted a farm animal — something undreamed-of before.
to pay rent in kind and in money besides performing corvée.

Taxes "as numerous as the hairs on a yak" were levied not only by the local government but by the monasteries and the aristocracy as well. They vied with each other in introducing a variety of new taxes, with the result that the catalogue changed with the time, place and collector. The most common were the birth tax, poll tax, and tax on any cattle, sheep or even chickens a serf might possess. Compulsory gifts also had to be offered to celebrate the promotions, marriage or retirement of local officials.

In a word, one way or another most of what the serfs and herdsmen produced went to the serf-owning classes.

Usury was another shackle on the serfs in their perpetual bondage. Exorbitant interest rates and outright deception caused the debts of the serfs to mount up from year to year, and often from generation to generation. Before the democratic reform in 1959, over 90 per cent of Tibet's serf households were in debt.

Serfs had no freedom of person; house slaves were simply chattels. Both could be sold, bartered, mortgaged, gambled or given away. Floggings and whippings were everyday occurrences. For more serious offences, punishment could be savagely cruel: gouging out the eyes, cutting off the nose, severing foot tendons, or chopping off arms.

One can well imagine how enthusiastically the million serfs greeted the quelling of rebellion which paved the way for eliminating all these evils. At mammoth rallies in Lhasa, Shannan (Loka), Qamdo, Ngari and many other cities and areas, the serfs denounced the abhorrent feudal system and demanded democratic reform. The reform was officially decreed in July 1959 by the Preparatory Committee for Establishing the Autonomous Region of Tibet.

Feudal servitude and all its cruelties were outlawed. The innumerable taxes were abolished. In the agricultural areas, the policy of "harvests to the tillers" was adopted for the lands of serf-owners who had rebelled. Towards those who had not rebelled, the policy was initially one of rent reduction. Eighty per cent of the harvest went to the tillers, the rest to the serf-owners, instead of the other way round. House slaves were emancipated and became hired labourers. All debts to serf-owners were cancelled except those incurred in 1959 to non-rebels. On such loans, the interest was greatly reduced.
Paying the birth tax to a manor registrar, who inscribes the infant as a serf for life.

At meetings everywhere, people poured out their sufferings under the feudal serf system. A herdsman blinded by the rebels tells of his horrible experience.

Carrying officials on their backs — one of the many compulsory labour services extorted from the serfs.
Homeless sick child on a street corner.

Chained prisoners begging in the street.

The standing cage, one of many ways in which the manor lords tortured the serfs.
The second step was land distribution. Here again, a clear distinction was made between rebel and non-rebel serf-owners. The land and other means of production of the rebel exploiters were confiscated and distributed among the peasants. Those belonging to the non-rebels were bought over by the state and then distributed. Serf-owners obtained an equal share in the distribution.

In the pastoral areas, the livestock of rebel herd-owners was confiscated to become the property of herdsmen. Animals owned by non-rebel herd-owners remained in their hands, but they had to reduce their exploitation so that the herdsmen's income increased. Such livestock gradually came under collective ownership through purchase by the people's communes when these were set up in Tibet.

Democratic reform was also carried out in the monasteries, where the ruling high lamas had themselves been serf-owners, oppressing and exploiting not only the serfs and herdsmen on the ecclesiastical estates, but the poor lamas as well. Feudal oppression, exploitation and privilege were replaced by democratic management by committees consisting primarily of poor lamas. Government was separated from religion. The freedom to believe in religion, or not to, was strictly protected.

One might ask: How did the Party manage to gather the huge staff necessary to carry out the reform which came so soon and spread so quickly across the plateau? The groups sent by the Party's Working Committee of Tibet, the Preparatory Committee for Establishing the Autonomous Region and the PLA, were of course the leading force. But the staff was mainly comprised of Tibetans themselves. When the rebellion broke out, there were already 10,000 Tibetans studying in Beijing, Chengdu and other places, many of them serfs who had run away from their manorial lords. Of these, several thousand were returning to help the reform. Within Tibet itself, "activists" were emerging in great numbers from among the serfs and slaves. Democratic reform was not only taking care of the immediate tasks at hand, but affecting the entire future of Tibet.

The completion of democratic reform in 1961 opened a new chapter in the region's long history. After more than a thousand years of feudal serfdom, Tibet was carried by this huge mass movement to the threshold of socialism in less than three years.
Planting a boundary mark with her family's name written on it on their newly acquired land.
Venerable serfs get the title deeds to their land.

Six serfs and slaves, tested in struggle against the serf owner rebellion and for democratic reform, being admitted into the Communist Party.
Tibetans cast their votes—enjoying democratic rights for the first time.
HOSE paupers can't even manage their tsamba bags,” Tibet’s serf-owners used to say of serfs who, together with the house slaves, made up 95 per cent of the population. In the old society, every serf had to bring his own bag of tsamba (parched barley or bean flour, a staple food in Tibet) when doing corvée for his lord.

Today, some of the Tibetans abroad harp on a different tune. Posing as champions of the Tibetan people’s rights, they allege that, in the new society, “all top jobs are denied them [the Tibetans], because they supposedly cannot be trusted.” This appeared in leaflets distributed by some of these people abroad a couple of years ago.

What are the facts?

The Tibet Autonomous Region Committee of the Chinese Communist Party is the highest leading Party organ in Tibet. It has seven secretaries. Three of them are Tibetans. Tibetan and other minority nationality cadres at county and higher levels now number about 1,000. Communist Party membership exceeds 40,000. With the transfer of large numbers of Han cadres back into the interior, it is expected that within the next two or three years, Tibetans will account for more than two-thirds of the total number of cadres working full-time for the state.

Training cadres of the minority nationalities is a consistent policy of the Chinese Communist Party. Chairman Mao long ago pointed out, “Without a large number of communist cadres of minority nationalities, it would be impossible to solve the national problem thoroughly and to isolate the minority nationality reactionaries completely.”

The Party began training Tibetan cadres during the Long March of the mid-1930s, when the Chinese Red Army entered the Tibetan-inhabited areas of Sichuan Province after crossing the Dadu River. It put forward the slogan “Down with corrupt Han officials and reactionary chieftains!” and distributed the cattle, butter, clothes and other property of these oppressors to the local poor. Because the Red Army stood for the interests of the oppressed and exploited, and not only proclaimed but also practised a policy of unity and equality among all China’s nationalities, two thousand young Tibetans joined its troops. Unfortunately, many were enlisted into the Fourth Front Red Army which suffered heavily from the misleadership of the splinter Zhang Guotao, and most of the Tibetan soldiers were dispersed and lost. Only a handful arrived in Yan’an (Yenan). These were trained first in the Central Party School and later in the Minority Nationalities Institute.
Premier Zhou Enlai with Tibetan artists, Beijing, June 1963.
They became New China’s first generation of Tibetan cadres.

Losang Cuchim, a vice-chairman of the regional people’s government, joined the revolution in 1950 when he was 21. His parents were originally from the Qamdo area in Tibet. Finding life intolerable at a serf-owner’s manor, they ran away to Batang near the Jinsha River in Sichuan Province. He was apprenticed at 15 as a carpenter-serf — learning to fix windows, doors and make simple furniture. He would have spent the rest of his life doing carpentry for his lord had there not been the Chinese Revolution. The People’s Liberation Army, which arrived in Batang in 1950, wanted to either enlist some young Tibetans or send them away to study. Losang Cuchim thought going to study in one of the interior provinces would be too far from home. So he chose to go to Tibet with the army. He soon distinguished himself by his devotion to the revolutionary cause, his intelligence and hard work. He got many promotions and quickly became one of the younger leaders of the autonomous region.

Siddar, 44, was a blacksmith from boyhood. People in this craft were on the very lowest rung of Tibet’s social ladder. When ordered to make stovepipes for a manor-house, he had to wait at the door to have them measured by a house slave, since a blacksmith was forbidden inside. An active fighter in the democratic reform movement, Siddar soon became an advanced worker in Xigaze (Shigatse). He took part, along with other delegates from China’s minority nationalities, in the 1963 National Day celebrations in Beijing and was received by Chairman Mao. Today he is a leading member of the Xigaze Prefectural Party Committee and Chairman of the Prefectural Trade Union.

People like Losang Cuchim and Siddar, who began their revolutionary careers in the 1950s, belong to Tibet’s second generation of cadres. Many of them now hold leading positions at county, prefectural or regional level. For most of them, the first tempering in the storms of revolution was their participation in the suppression of the rebellion in 1959 and the subsequent struggle for democratic reform. This generation also includes activists in the democratic reform of the early 1950s in the Tibetan-inhabited areas of neighbouring provinces.

Jamyang Dainba, 35, is representative of the thousands of cadres working at grass-roots level. Born a serf in Bomi in eastern Tibet, he never saw his father who had been press-ganged into the feudal Tibetan army. His mother died when he
The training of Tibetan cadres began with the Chinese Red Army’s world-famous Long March in the mid-1930s. Right: Young Tibetan participants included Yan Bao (Yanggna Yans), standing second from left, now Secretary of the Tibet Regional Party Committee and Chairman of the Regional People’s Government, and Yang Dongyue (Naqpa Tshangsho), sitting in front, now vice minister in charge of the State Nationalities Affairs Commission, and Zhao Xi (second from left), Secretary of the Qinghai Provincial Party Committee. They were photographed in Yushu soon after the end of the march. In the picture on the upper left, Wang Vapang, in Lhasa for the 10th anniversary of the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1955, watches an outdoor performance with Yan Bao (centre) and others. Bottom left: Yang Dongyue with Rendri, of the new generation of Tibetan cadres, also a secretary of the Regional Party Committee, at a meeting of the Third People’s Congress of the autonomous region in 1965.
The ex-serf Basang (right) has become a leader of the autonomous region.
was six, and though himself so small, he had to look after a baby in a Tibetan army officer's house. In 1957, a school was set up in Bomi — one of the few early ones initiated in Tibet by the central authorities. To pretend support for it, but not wishing to send members of his own family, the officer ordered Jamyang Dainba to go to the school — in the same way as he would send a house slave to perform corvée for him. From there Jamyang Dainba went to the Southwest Nationalities Institute in Chengdu. Later he helped build the Nyingchi Match Factory where he is now a leader.

These and other ex-serfs and slaves are the true rulers of Tibet. They come from the people, rely on them, and have their trust.

Lhamzhub Gyazo, one of the many Tibetan technicians trained after liberation, was recently made an engineer owing to his outstanding contributions in Tibet's geological work.

Como, of Mainba nationality, elected several times to China's National People's Congress, is a vice-chairman of the Tibet Women's Federation.
With “hatas” and “qingke” wine, Lhasa residents give a traditional send-off to Cering Lhamo (second from left) and other deputies to the Fifth National People’s Congress held in Beijing in 1978. She is the Party secretary of the Gyerba Commune in Nedong County and a leader of the entire Tibet Autonomous Region.
In 1961, Cering Lhamo (first from left) and several other former house slaves in Nedong County formed one of Tibet’s earliest and most famous agricultural mutual-aid teams.
HOW did Tibet achieve its socialist transformation? What deviations occurred in the course of the transformation and how are they being corrected? These questions will be answered in this chapter.

After the democratic reform, the emancipated serfs warmly responded to Chairman Mao's call to "get organized." They began forming mutual-aid teams to help each other out in supplying manpower, farm implements and draught animals on the basis of exchange.

To ensure that they could concentrate on production on their newly acquired land, rebuild and boost the rural economy, and savour the fruits of the democratic reform, the Party decided that over a period of time only mutual aid should be promoted and there should be no hurry with higher forms of cooperation.

The Party gave active leadership, and the government financial and material help. Even before the reform, several million yuan had been distributed in relief to help impoverished serfs to get on their feet. From 1959 to 1964, 7.6 million yuan were distributed in loans at nominal or no interest. These enabled mutual-aid team members to buy huge amounts of grain (largely improved seed), many thousands of working and breeding animals, and over 100,000 farm tools. By 1964, there were over 20,000 mutual-aid teams, embracing 91 per cent of the farm households in the region.

Higher efficiency, a mass experience in mutual aid and a fiery zeal for work soon boosted production to a new level. Tibet's grain output in 1964 was 46 per cent higher than in 1958, the year before democratic reform. In the same period, livestock increased by 16 per cent.

In the years of the mutual-aid teams, as production quickly rose, the people's livelihood witnessed a marked improvement. This was because the policies then adopted were suited to the actual conditions in Tibet.

In 1965, the year of the inauguration of the autonomous region, Tibet began the socialist transformation of its agriculture and animal husbandry by setting up people's communes. By 1970, more than a thousand communes had been organized, and by August 1975, they had been established throughout the region.

The communes were built by merging the mutual-aid teams roughly on the scale of a xiang (township). Like other communes in China, they were not only economic collectives, but also basic
units of rural state power exercising the functions and powers of the former xiang governments.

The transition from individual to socialist collective ownership of the means of production in Tibet took place within the framework of the commune. One of the methods was for the land, draught animals and farm implements to be pooled as shares, on which dividends were paid for several years. A second method was for all means of production except land to be transferred from individual to collective ownership through purchase. These were paid for in instalments out of a special fund to which all working members contributed on a per capita basis. The state paid the contributions for the poorer members.

As distinct from communes in other parts of China, which have three levels of organization, those in Tibet have only two — the commune and the production team (the intermediate level — the brigade — is omitted). This is due mainly to the vastness of the region and its scattered population. The average Tibetan commune, though covering a much larger area than a commune in the interior, contains far fewer villages and no more than 100-200 households. A village in north China generally has enough people to form several production teams, which in turn combine into one or more brigades. By contrast, the average Tibetan village has only enough households for a single team or a small working group.

The completion of socialist transformation of agriculture brought farm machines into Tibet. An increasing number of communes have tractors and other major farm machines. Many production teams have walking tractors and threshers. This has helped to boost production.

In the towns, there has been a parallel process — the socialist transformation of handicrafts and private commerce. Ex-serfs working in handicrafts first organized themselves into mutual-aid teams and in 1955 into 400 co-operatives. Some of these were later merged into bigger ones. With far greater
resources and more labour power, many co-operatives were able to expand production by renovating or improving equipment and technique.

Socialist commerce operating through a regional network of state shops and supply and marketing co-operatives has long since dominated the market. Socialist transformation of private business has been completed in the main.

During the "cultural revolution," however, certain "left" deviations appeared in the course of Tibet's socialist transformation and continued to remain.

For example, the superiority of the people's communes in being "bigger in size and of a more developed socialist nature" was unduly stressed, although in view of the backwardness of Tibet's rural economy and its scattered population, a more flexible policy should have been adopted in commune management. Similarly, because of Tibet's vastness and the diversity of its numerous localities, great flexibility should have been allowed in the designing of production plans and in other economic activities. But in fact, communes and production teams were all subject to a rigid, centralized control and enjoyed no autonomy. Since commodity economy remains at a low level in present-day Tibet, rural communities are still to a great extent self-sufficient units. Under such circumstances, there should be fewer restrictions on land and animals owned by individual households. But during the "cultural revolution", privately-owned plots, trees and animals and household side-line occupations were all criticized as "tails of capitalism" and even confiscated in many places. Such deviations have had a seriously damaging effect on both Tibet's overall economy and its people's daily life.

To overcome such deviations with a view to promoting production and improving people's livelihood, the Tibet Regional Party Committee and the Regional People's Government have adopted a series of measures in accordance with the new Central Committee decision concerning Tibet made in 1980.

These include, among other things, the following:

- the full exercise of autonomy by the production team — peasants may grow what they wish without outside interference;
- the reduction in size of production teams which cover an unmanageably large area, with each team containing no more than 20-30 households;
- the expansion of privately owned plots which may comprise 5-10 per cent of the cultivated land of each production team;

The people of Lhasa celebrate the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region.
Smaller minority nationalities in the rural areas have completed collectivization in the same way as the Tibetans. Young women commune members of Lhoba nationality in Mainling County read a newspaper during a work-break in the fields.

assistance to commune members in raising more of their own livestock without specific restrictions in type or number of animals;

the encouragement of side-line occupations and handicrafts — whether run by the commune, production team or individual households.

To combine socialist orientation with a flexible economic policy characterized by the relaxation of controls will bring the initiative of the cadres and masses into full play. There are already signs that the new measures will succeed in achieving their aims.

Living in Tibet south of the Himalayas, the Sherpa people used to serve the Tibetan serf-owners as porters. Now they lead a better life as commune members.
Right: People of Deng minority in the forest area of Zayu County have also been organized in communes. In the past, driven into the deep mountains, they had to farm by the primitive "slash and burn" method.
NATURAL conditions in Tibet are vastly different from those in China’s interior. About 70 per cent of the farmland is 3,000-4,100 metres above sea level. Tibet has a short frost-free period, a changeable climate and an uneven precipitation. Droughts, hail, frosts and windstorms are frequent and pose a constant threat to crops.

The serfs refuse to remain slaves of nature. They have performed such feats as cutting through cliffs or tunnelling mountains to harness rivers or lakes for irrigation—usually with pickaxes, chisels and sledgehammers as their only tools. They have built thousands of reservoirs and storage ponds high in the mountains and many irrigation canals on steep slopes. In old Tibet, only a small proportion of the farmland was irrigated, as opposed to two thirds of the land in the present day.

Progress has also been made in many other aspects of Tibetan farming. The overcoming of ancient superstition and the spread of scientific farming is one of the major achievements. One can cite numerous examples to illustrate such progress. When members of the Red Flag Commune in Damxung County decided to breach a nearby lake to irrigate their pastures, a one-time serf-owner spread the myth that this lake was “a concubine of the Nyainqentanglha Range.” He said, “Breaching it will enrage the mountain god and all Damxung County will be destroyed.” Some people began to waver. It took much patient explaining on the part of the local Party branch to drive away their fears. Afterwards, everyone pitched into the irrigation project.

Through their actions and studies, more and more people challenged the ideas of “fate” and “divine power” and took their stand with science. This change in world outlook has led to reforms in Tibet’s farming methods, which in turn help to change the minds of still more people.

New-type ploughshares, which have replaced the old wooden ones, make deep ploughing possible—a job further eased by tractors, which many communes and all state farms now possess. More and more threshing is done by machine rather than in the old way—treading by yaks. Weather forecasts, in addition to measures for the prevention of hail and other natural disasters, help to reduce crop damage. The killing of pests, no longer tabooed as sacrilegious, is done with insecticides and by other scientific methods. Cross-breeding of Xinjiang (Sinkiang) sheep with certain local breeds brings more and better wool. In some communes, weak
or sick cattle are strengthened by feeding them a soup made from fish meal — impossible in old Tibet where fish, though abundant in rivers and lakes, were worshipped as water gods and hence seldom caught.

While Tibet has achieved some successes in farming, valuable lessons can be drawn from mistakes made in the past decade and more. The mistakes are a result of the implementation of inappropriate policies which violate economic as well as natural laws.

For instance, for a long period of time, the slogan “taking grain production as the key link” has been mechanically applied in Tibet where livestock raising has always occupied a place of extraordinary importance. Animal husbandry was neglected and the result was a shortage in the supply of such daily necessities as butter, meat and other animal products, as well as a slowing down in the development of Tibet’s economy as a whole. Now, by opposing mechanical copying and stressing the need to adopt measures suited to Tibet’s conditions, the new decision of the Party’s Central Committee has helped to correct the undue emphasis on grain production and boost livestock raising.

Another outstanding problem in recent years has been an inordinate expansion of winter wheat areas at the expense of Tibet’s barley, bean and oil crops. Though it normally produces a higher yield than other grains, wheat is not favoured by the Tibetans as a staple food. This will be remedied by respecting the autonomy of the production team and readjusting the state’s purchasing price for barley and other crops.

Correcting mistakes in economic policies, as was described in this and the last chapter, has opened up wide vistas for Tibet’s agriculture and animal husbandry.

The potential of Tibetan agriculture is by no means insignificant. While the region has certain physical disadvantages, there are also factors highly favourable to the growth of barley and many other crops — sufficient water sources, a cool summer and autumn, abundant sunlight (an annual average of 3,000 hours, much more than most places in China), strong radiation, and a great variation of temperature from day to night. With a more intensive application of scientific farming over wider areas, Tibet will steadily increase the yield of its crops. Animal husbandry can also be substantially expanded by improving pasture management and development, and by stepping up irrigation and pest control in the grasslands.

Opposite: Cattle-dips, introduced in many places, are effective in combatting parasitic diseases.
Cross breeding of "qingke" barley at Yamda Commune, Daliangdegen County. The Regional Institute of Agricultural Science and other similar institutions take the lead in scientific farming. Over 2,000 communes and production teams have formed their own scientific research groups.

Opposite: Building a big reservoir at Dangzhab State Farm, northeast of Lhasa. Every year the state allocates large sums to finance rural capital construction and other development in Tibet.

Villagers in yak-skin boats on the Yarlung Zangbo River. With the spread of scientific thinking, the age-old Tibetan taboo on fishing has been abandoned.
Commune members in Lhasa suburbs deliver grains to the state's purchasing station. To lighten the burden of the peasants and herdsmen in Tibet, their farm products can only be purchased or exchanged on a bargaining basis with no tax or purchase quota shall be required of them in 1981-83.

A rural scene in autumn.
Dorzho, leader of the Red Flag People’s Commune, Nagqu County, an advanced unit in Tibet’s pastoral areas.
These hand-operated milk separators, though elementary compared with modern equipment, are a big advance over the formerly universal wooden churns.

Yaks, which still play an important part in Tibet's economic life, are an indispensable means of transport and provide meat, milk, hides and hair.
Joy over a good crop. In old Tibet, apples were found only in the gardens of aristocrats and were generally small and hard. Good apple strains have been spread since liberation. Today, Lhassa Prefecture alone produces 700,000 kilogrammes each year.

Hot-houses set up by a factory in Nyingchi provide many fresh vegetables for its workers. Many factories, mines, government organizations and army units grow their own food.
This daily activity among the Tibetans, is still mainly brought in from the interior provinces. But Tibet, for the first time, also grows its own tea in Zara, Pemch and elsewhere.

The workers and members of Han nationality, these young people from the Changjiang valley have come to Tibet. With the training of Tibetan cadres in large numbers, the great majority of them will be transferred back to the interior provinces within the next three years.
SOLAI, meaning industry, is a new word in the Tibetan language. It was introduced only in the early 1960s. Old Tibet had no industry at all. Apart from a tiny electric light plant built by the British near Lhasa to serve the aristocracy, the nearest thing to an industrial enterprise was a mint attached to the local Tibetan government, where a few dozen serfs struck silver and copper coins by using primitive methods.

Though the mechanism of the wheel was widely applied in Tibet, it was confined to prayer-wheels. There was no wheeled transport, nor were there cart roads, let alone highways.

Peaceful liberation in 1951 created conditions for ending industrial as well as social backwardness in Tibet. But with the old rulers still in control of local affairs, it was an uphill struggle. Proposals to build this or that enterprise were turned down as violating “sacred” mountains or waters. Mining was tabooed for similar reasons.

Today, only two decades after the reform, Tibet has some 200 small and medium-sized industrial enterprises. They include power plants, coal mines, chemical works, construction material factories, lumber mills, a woollen mill, match factory, paper mill, printing houses, leather factories and food processing plants. Industrial output accounts for a quarter of the total value of the region’s production (including industry, agriculture and animal husbandry). The days when people had to exchange a sheep for a few boxes of matches have disappeared forever.

The Nyingchi Woollen Mill is Tibet’s largest industrial plant. Pioneered by Shanghai workers, it now has several hundred Tibetans among its workers and staff members. It produces woollen cloth, knitting wool and blankets in about 200 specifications.

Apart from a few factories which were moved bodily into Tibet from the interior like this woollen mill, most were built on the spot by the joint effort of the local people and incoming workers, with equipment from the inland provinces. The Ngaqen Hydro-electric Power Station, with home-made equipment installed jointly by Han and Tibetan workers, was put into operation in 1960 and has remained ever since the main source of power for Lhasa. Besides this and other power stations in major cities, there are a few hundred small ones in the region, ranging in capacity from a few dozen to 200 kilowatts, many of them built by communes and production teams.
Many other plants in which Tibetan workers and technicians form the great majority have developed from handicraft co-operatives. The Lhasa Loom Machinery Plant, for example, arose from the merger of two co-operatives, one of which repaired bicycles, while the other made farm tools and kitchenware. Today it turns out threshers, winnowing machines, and spare parts for tractors. It also does repair and major overhauls on tractors.

In modern transportation, four trunk highways now connect Tibet with the rest of the country. Two regular airlines, one through Chengdu and the other through Lanzhou, link Beijing with Lhasa. A highway connecting Tibet with Nepal, a friendly neighbour of China, was opened in 1967. Within Tibet, a highway network with Lhasa as the centre now reaches almost all seventy-two counties.

With industry, a new class has come into being in Tibet — the working class. At present, there are over 40,000 workers of Tibetan and other minority nationalities.

Various methods are used to train Tibet's workers and technicians. On-the-job apprenticeship is widespread. Some study in part-time schools attached to factories. Thousands have been sent to industrial colleges and factories and mines elsewhere in China. Many have become leaders at the factory or shop level.

The main problem in developing Tibet's industry is that some of the handicrafts have been neglected while certain industries which have no source of raw materials have been established. With recent readjustments, textile and other light industries, handicrafts, and hydro-electric and other power industries now have priority.

At present, Tibet's handicraft industries are receiving much attention. Articles for everyday use among the Tibetan nationality, such as rugs, aprons, butter-ten urns and yak saddles, will be produced in greater numbers and variety to meet ever-increasing demands.

As elsewhere in China, there are some units in Tibet which are doing much better than the rest. They have been raised as model examples. One of these is the Gyagya Highway Maintenance Section in Xigaze Prefecture. At an altitude of 1,600-1,800 metres above sea level in most places, and with a temperature going down to 40°C below zero, its 126 men and women workers have fought heroically to keep their 178-kilometre section of the road open to traffic the year round. They worked hard to improve the quality of the road and, without requesting any additional labour power or investment,
Upper left: Over this highway from Qinghai and three other truck roads, huge quantities of goods stream into Tibet from China’s interior.
Lower left: On the Sichuan-Tibet Highway in winter.

Lhasa airport. Only two and a half hours’ flight, on regular schedule, from Chengdu in Sichuan Province. What a contrast with the old days when only one return journey was made each year by yaks!
Ngari, the sparsely populated high plateau in western Tibet, has become accessible by bus. Highways now serve almost all of Tibet’s 72 counties.

re-routed and rebuilt sections totalling 90 kilometres. Vehicles now cover it almost twice as fast and consume only half the fuel. Moreover, they have planted grain and vegetables on eight hectares of newly opened, comparatively low-lying land and raised a few hundred pigs and sheep. A water mill installed by the workers grinds barley for both the local population and their own needs. They have become wholly self-sufficient in vegetables and fodder, and partly so in meat and fuel. All the workers have moved into new houses built by themselves, with thick walls of tamped earth to keep out the severe cold.

At a national industrial conference in 1977, a drilling team composed mainly of Tibetan workers was highly praised for successfully sinking Tibet’s first high-temperature steam well in a pasture-land north of Lhasa in late 1976. This was an important step towards utilization of the region’s rich geothermal power resources. The heroism displayed by the workers in averting a disastrous blow-out won them the honoured title of “The Heroic Well-Drilling Team of the High Plateau.”

Imbued with this spirit, typical of Tibet’s young but highly politically conscious working class, the new Tibet is on its way to greater industrial achievements.
A printing house in Nyingchi turns out three million books, mainly in Tibetan, every year. In old Tibet, over 90 per cent of the inhabitants were illiterate. Printing was done by wood block, mainly in the big monasteries.
The Ngagoe Hydro-electric Power Station in Lhasa.

The Qamdo Hydro-electric Power Station.
Tibet's first generation of coal-miners.

The Lhasa Cement Works.
Carpet-weaving is an ancient craft in Tibet. In recent years, carpets have been produced in greater variety, better quality and with higher efficiency.

Overleaf: Tibet used to export thousands of tons of wool each year in exchange for foreign goods, largely luxuries for the aristocracy. Today, this large woollen mill at Nyingchi makes some 200 products used by all.
If snow-capped mountains turned to butter,
Still only nobles would eat it,
If rushing rivers turned to milk,
The poor would not get a drop to drink.
Oh, Yarlung Zangbo River!
All your torrents from the melting snows
Cannot wash away our grief and woe.

High as they are,
The Himalayas have a summit.
Long as it is,
The Yarlung Zangbo has a source.
And the Tibetan people's long suffering
Must have an end.
Now the Communist Party has come,
Bitter will turn to sweet.

No one knows who composed this Tibetan folk-song. It may have been a serf, in whom the sympathy and helpfulness of the PLA for the poor and oppressed kindled hope for the future. There are many such moving songs, but before the democratic reform they could only be spread cautiously from mouth to mouth.

Today, Tibetan songs that come from the hearts of the people are broadcast daily over Radio Lhasa and the new ones spread quickly throughout the region. Some of the best have been collected and published in both the Tibetan and Han languages. Outstanding Tibetan singers have been recorded.

Tibet's national culture and art have developed vigorously since the people came to power. (This, of course, does not apply to the years of the "cultural revolution" when the "hundred flowers" withered away.) Feudal elements have been sifted out, but national artistic forms are used and developed to present contemporary themes reflecting the life and spirit of new, socialist Tibet.

The region now has a well-trained contingent of professional singers, dancers, instrumentalists, composers, choreographers, playwrights and song writers. Working mainly in eleven professional art troupes at the regional and prefectural levels, they draw inspiration from, and give guidance to, some 1,500 amateur groups at the grass roots. Cultural life is further enriched by over 600 film projection teams, hundreds of bookstores and book-selling agencies, evening schools and newspaper-reading groups.

Education has developed rapidly since the democratic reform. In old Tibet, schools were scarce, with pupils only from aristocratic and rich merchant families. Total attendance at the time of liberation was less than 700. Today, there are 240,000 pupils
and students in Tibet’s several thousand primary schools, scores of middle schools and vocational schools and 4 colleges—a nationalities institute, a normal college, an institute of agriculture and animal husbandry, and the newly established medical college. Every year, hundreds of young people go to study in colleges and universities in China’s interior. Even the Lhoba and Dong people, who lived under primitive conditions in the old society, now have college graduates of their own.

In contrast with the past, these are quite impressive, but one cannot deny that Tibet still has a long way to go in spreading education. Even the consolidation of the present gains is no easy task. For example, there have been too many school dropouts in recent years. This is particularly true of the rural areas. The reason is obvious: the average Tibetan is still rather poor; he cannot afford to let his children stay in school for long—he needs them as breadwinners as soon as possible. A fundamental change in this situation will be brought about only when most Tibetans become much better off.

Public health work has also made much headway in the last two decades. Although Tibet had a vast treasure-house of traditional medicine, its whole medical establishment consisted of only one hospital of Tibetan medicine and one small clinic, both in Lhasa, as well as some individual practitioners using traditional herbs. These few practitioners, scattered in monasteries and among the people, also served mainly the upper strata and the rich. Free medical care for everyone has been the policy since the peaceful liberation of Tibet. But due to obstruction from serf-owners, poor communications and the then limited resources, it could at first reach only a small proportion of the people. Thanks to the democratic reform, and to the concern and help of the central authorities over the years, free medical service is now available in every corner of Tibet. Every county town has a hospital, every district a clinic, almost every commune a health station, while production teams have their own barefoot doctors, health workers and midwives trained in modern methods. Special groups have been organized to unearth, sort out and study the treasures of traditional Tibetan medicine.

Much stress is laid on the training of medical personnel of the local nationalities. They now account for more than a third of Tibet’s 6,000 regular doctors and other professionally trained medical workers. In the meantime, more than 1,000 young people are studying in Tibet’s nine medical schools, and another 1,000 training in hospitals.
A yak race.

Getting ready.
The principles of putting the stress in medical work on the rural areas and “prevention first” are being followed. Epidemic diseases are under control. Smallpox, venereal disease and typhoid fever were all rampant in old Tibet. (In Lhasa alone, 7,000 people died of smallpox in 1927 and 4,600 died in typhoid epidemics in 1934 and 1937.) All have long since been wiped out. The old savage practice of sending people who contracted smallpox and other epidemic diseases into far-away mountain caves, where many would die of illness or starvation, is now a bad memory. It comes up only in the teaching of class struggle in medical schools and training courses.

Tibet’s population declined by 40 per cent in the 220 years preceding the democratic reform which began in 1919. Since then, the Tibetan populace has been increasing at an annual average rate of over 2 per cent. It has grown by more than one-third, from 1.19 million in 1919 to 1.63 million in 1978.

Top: Watching a popular local drama on a Lhasa street at the Tibetan New Year.

Above: In the home of a Lhasa resident during the festival. Visitors are served traditional holiday foods.
At a commune rally to celebrate good harvests in the outskirts of Lhasa.
Top: Surveying the source of the Yarlung Zangbo River in Zhongba County, as part of a multi-purpose scientific survey of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau by 400 scientists in 1975-80.

Above: Passing through an uninhabited area on the northern grasslands.

Opposite: Dinosaur fossils, recently unearthed in Qamdo Prefecture, indicate that 140-160 million years ago, it consisted of a shallow sea and lowland with a hot, damp climate.
New Chinese mountaineers started climbing Mount Qomolangma on May 27, 1975 after setting up a campfire at the peak. This was the second time a Chinese team had ascended the world's highest peak from the northern slope.

Bathed in sunlight, Mount Qomolangma crowns the "Roof of the World" like a golden cupola.
Tibetan children.

Learning electronics in a Lhasa middle school.
Learning Tibetan in a primary school.

Students at the Tibet Institute of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry in Nyingchi attend a class in veterinary acupuncture.
Top: A medical team from Beijing making its rounds in faraway Ngari. Over 1,700 medical personnel from coastal and interior provinces came to work in Tibet in 1973–78.

Left: Surgeons of the Beijing team operating on an old herdsman.

Above: In a hospital in Lhasa, Tibetan babies are no longer born in stables or cowsheds, as many were in the old society.
In the long years before liberation, the real face of Lhasa was hidden from the outside world. Only a tiny number of foreigners had reached it, some on imperialist errands. Writers (including some who had not been there at all) described its golden-roofed Potala Palace and lamaseries or even simply imagined a "holy city" in a mystical Shangrila. Those who did not close their eyes to the squalor and horrors that went with its "glamour" failed to indict the cause: the feudal serf system.

In fact, the old Lhasa was one of the unh holiest places in the world, riddled with parasitism, class oppression and disease, its streets filthy, its common people ragged, hungry and illiterate. It is the revolution that has brought real health and beauty to Lhasa, and transformed it in two decades into a producer-city that belongs to the people, capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region of China.

In today's Lhasa, with its scores of factories and enterprises, workers and staff form a third of the urban population which now exceeds 100,000. A far cry from the time when a quarter of its people were beggars and vagabonds, and a third were monks and nuns, while a couple of thousand handi crafts men were the city's only producers.

The brothels and gambling houses are gone. So are the foreign-owned fancy shops that supplied the richest families, clustered here from all over Tibet, with imported luxuries ranging from the highest-grade British cloth to the costliest Swiss watches and Parisian perfumes. Today, a multitude of state-run and co-operative shops serve the common citizen. The goods they sell are made increasingly in Tibet itself. And thousands of items, brought from other parts of China, are available at practically the same prices as in Beijing or Shanghai, as transport costs are covered by the state. The main buyers are ex-serfs and slaves, who, until liberation, were themselves bought and sold as "talking animals."

The city has grown greatly since the peaceful liberation of Tibet, and particularly the democratic reform of 1959. New floor-space added in these two decades is ten times that built in the city's previous thirteen centuries. Twenty kilometres of tree-lined, asphalted roads link the old town with new factory and residential areas.

Four large hospitals and many clinics provide free medical service for all. A handsome building in the Tibetan style is rising in the centre of the city as an addition to the Hospital of Tibetan Medicine. In form and content, it is an example of how the good part of Tibet's cultural heritage is preserved and developed today.
No longer are illiteracy and ignorance the lot of the great majority of the Lhasans as they were under serf-owner rule. Then, only some 300 children, all from the privileged strata, were attending school in the city. Today it has a score of primary schools, a dozen middle and vocational schools, and a teachers’ college. Pupils and students total 15,000.

Radio stations and The Tibet Daily, which circulates 70,000 copies throughout the region in two editions, Tibetan and Han, report and analyse events at home and abroad. Tibetan dramas, modern plays and song-and-dance performances are put on by professionals and amateurs at Lhasa’s Cultural Palace, Films are screened in several cinemas and clubs. In the spacious stadium, football, basketball and ping-pong are played, and regional sports tournaments held.

The Potala Palace, former winter residence of the Dalai Lama and headquarters of the Tibetan local government, now stands with glory unmarred as a monument to the talents and skill of the Tibetan people who built it. Constructed entirely of stone and wood, this 110-metre high, 13-storeyed edifice is an architectural gem. First erected under King Songzain Gambo, who united the tribes on the plateau at the beginning of the 7th century, it was later damaged by fire, and wrecked in internecine warfare. In the mid-17th century, it was rebuilt, with 3,000 craftsmen and 7,000 serfs and slaves toiling at the task daily for fifty years. Among the innumerable treasures of the palace is a mural painting, vivid and realistic, of the scenes of this labour.

The Zuglakang (Jokhang) Temple, 100, is ancient, striking and surrounded by legend. Covering 20,000 square metres, the magnificent, gilded-roofed, four-storeyed structure dates back to the 7th century. Wen Cheng, the Tang Dynasty princess who was married to the Tibetan King Songzain Gambo, is said to have helped in choosing the site, planted a willow tree that still stands before the gate, and brought here the bronze statue of the Sakya Muni Buddha, once considered the holiest in Tibet.

Both the Potala and the Zuglakang are national historic sites, protected by the state. Large sums have been allotted, and great care taken, to preserve, repair and renovate them. In the new Lhasa, where the decadence of the past has been cleared for the building of the future, the handiwork of the people of ancient Tibet stands in resplendence.
The new building added to the Regional Hospital of Tibetan Medicine, Lhasa,
A new commune building in the outskirts of Lhasa.

In the well-stocked department store in Lhasa, purchases are made by people who were themselves sold as young girls only two decades ago.
Joyous crowd on a festival day.

Children run after a water-cart for a splash.

Going around the new city.
Boating on Dragon King Lake, a former pleasure ground of the nobility, now a people's park.

Enjoying a holiday in Norbu Lingga Park.
A skilled painter and his son renovate a statue of the Sakyamuni Buddha in the temple.

Overleaf: The gilt-roofed Zuglakang Temple with the Potala Palace in the background.
The Potala with stone steps leading to the top.
Old mural in the Potala portraying its construction. Servants doing forced labour climb up the hill, carrying huge logs or heavy rocks. Monks busy building the walls. Yak-skin boats loaded with building materials are struggling with the torrents. At upper left, a reef falls from a high wall to its death beside the stone steps.
Detail of the ornaments on the hall gate.

One of the main halls of the Potala.
THE policy of the united front, a strong weapon in the hands of the Communist Party of China, has been successfully applied in Tibet. Its principle is to unite all possible forces to strike at the major enemy.

Through the Seventeen-Point Agreement on the peaceful liberation of Tibet signed in May 1951, the Party established an anti-imperialist patriotic united front with Tibet’s ruling upper strata headed by the Dalai Lama, thus frustrating imperialist designs for detaching Tibet from China.

Guidelines for work in subsequent years were given by Chairman Mao as follows:

“We must do our best and take proper steps to win over the Dalai and the majority of his top echelon and to isolate the handful of bad elements in order to achieve a gradual, bloodless transformation of the Tibetan economic and political system over a number of years; on the other hand, we must be prepared for the eventuality of the bad elements leading the Tibetan troops in rebellion and attacking us, so that in this contingency our army could still carry on and hold out in Tibet.”

After some years, that eventuality did come about. Nonetheless, the united front based on the Seventeen-Point Agreement not only played an
important historical role, but continued to develop after the suppression of the 1959 rebellion. It then became a people’s democratic united front which was anti-feudal as well as anti-imperialist, and embraced all members of the upper strata who supported the suppression of the rebellion and accepted the democratic reform.

Many of the upper strata, in fact, had refused to have anything to do with the rebel conspiracy. They included such high-placed persons as Langdun Gunga Wangquq, nephew of the Thirteenth Dalai and a former silon, highest-ranking administrative official in the local Tibetan government; Gaxoiba Qogyi Nyima, a former kalon, senior official next to silon; Lhunzhub Tabkyai, a member of the ruling council of Sera Monastery, one of the biggest in Tibet; and Dege Gaisang Wangdui, regimental commander in the Dalai’s army.

Some not only held aloof from the rebellion but firmly opposed it. Among these was Ngapoi Ngawang-Jigmi, a senior official who had headed the Tibetan delegation that negotiated the Seventeen-Point Agreement. Today he is Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the People’s Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region, and Deputy-Commander of the Tibet

---

Pagrihna Gege Nang yai, a well-known Living of Qamdo and now a vice-chairman of the National of the CPPCC (Chinese People’s Political ative Conference), casts his vote in the election of the Third Tibet Committee of the in December 1977.
Military Area. Another was Pagba Ghe Gek Namgyal, Living Buddha of Qamdo, who had a great deal of temporal and clerical power in his area before liberation. He is now a vice-chairman of the National Committee of the CPPCC (Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference) and also of the People’s Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Others who opposed the rebellion did so at the cost of their lives. Pagba Ghe’s brother, Kanlung Sonam Gyalo, also a Living Buddha and a member of the Preparatory Committee for Establishing the Tibet Autonomous Region, was among those murdered by the rebels.

Hundreds of personages from Tibet’s former upper strata come within the scope of united front activity. Many do research in archives, historical studies, editing and translation. Some engage in scientific experiments in agronomy or horticulture. They go on regular tours to see socialist achievements in Tibet and elsewhere in China. Their children have the same opportunity to go to schools and universities as those of the working people. Many have become workers, teachers, technicians and cadres.

Patriotic high lamas are also among the united front figures. In the big monasteries, some have been elected to the democratic management committees, consisting mainly of former poor lamas who are regarded as working people. Freedom of religious belief is protected under the Constitution. Religion is practised by those who wish to do so. Monks and nuns who want to return to secular life may also do so freely, and many of the younger ones have become workers or cadres.

The united front work in Tibet, however, has not been free from mistakes, nor the implementation of the Party’s policy free from interference. During the “cultural revolution,” the correct policies of the Party, including the policy on religion and on nationalities, were trampled underfoot. Patriotic elements from the former upper strata were taken for class enemies. Many monasteries and temples were seriously damaged or even completely destroyed, as in the case of the Gaden Monastery, one of the major three in Lhasa. A lot of work is still being done to correct such mistakes.

In the summer of 1979, many members of Tibet’s former upper strata went to Beijing to attend the second session of the Fifth National Committee of the CPPCC, which marked a new expansion of the revolutionary united front of the Chinese people. At this meeting, Banjen Erdini was elected Vice-Chairman of the National Committee, a post he held until September 1980 when he was elected Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress.
Caroline Quigya Nyima (first from left), a former senior official of the Tibetan local government, and other members of Tibet's former upper strata doing historical research on the cultural relics at the Lhasa Temple.

Tibet's serf-owners are being eliminated as an exploiting class. As individuals, however, they are educated and helped to become useful citizens of socialist society. United front work not only mobilizes all positive factors but turns negative factors into positive ones in the service of socialism. Tibet's new people's government, supported and defended by all patriotic forces, first of all by the emancipated serfs, is lenient towards former enemies who cease their hostile activities and come over to the side of the people. Since 1963, rebel leaders and their lieutenants who have shown willingness to mend their ways have been successively released. Tulku Dantser, one of the four former chief secretaries of the Dali, was among the first to be released. He is now a vice-chairman of the Tibet Committee of the CPPCC. Others released include Tshulku Tsewang Doje and Rampa Nyima Wangpo, senior officials of the former Tibetan local government who were active in the 1959 rebellion. In November 1978 and March 1979, the last of the former rebels in jail, including several senior commanders of the rebel forces, were set free as an expression of leniency, with their livelihood ensured, and their civic rights restored.

Tibetans who escaped abroad during the 1959 rebellion but afterwards returned have been welcomed back and given an opportunity to serve
Prayers in a Lhasa mosque. Many of the city’s 800 Hai residents are practicing Muslims.

Opposite: In November 1978, the last of the former rebel leaders and their higher subordinates, including several senior commanders, were set free. Many wept with joy on receiving their certificates of release.

their country and people. Among the best known were Doje Pamo, Tibet’s only female Living Buddha, now a vice-chairman of the Tibet Committee of the CPPCC, and Bomda Yanpei, a senior official and prominent merchant in old Tibet who held a similar post until his death a few years ago.

Doje Pamo had been coerced by the rebels to go to India at the time of the 1959 rebellion. Her unhappy experience there made her reflect on many past events. In 1957, when she had gone to Beijing as a member of a Tibetan youth delegation, she was warmly received by Chairman Mao. She always cherished this memory and the encouragement he had given her. She had also been deeply impressed by China’s achievements in socialist construction in the interior provinces. She became nostalgic and decided to return. Back in Beijing, she was feted by Premier Zhou Enlai and welcomed at various meetings.

The united front policy of the Party was further elaborated by Ngapoi Njwang Jigmi, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, in April 1977 in his talk to a Japanese delegation which had just visited Tibet. He said:

“With regard to the Dalai who fled abroad during the 1959 rebellion and those who escaped with him, our Party’s consistent policy is: All patriots are welcome, whether they come forward early or late. So long as they sincerely return to the embrace of the motherland and stand on the side of the people, the government and people will certainly make appropriate arrangements for their well-being.”

In January 1979, a reception committee for returned and visiting Tibetan compatriots from abroad was set up in Lhasa. Many well-known personages as well as Party and government leaders of the region were on the committee. At the inaugural meeting, Basang, Secretary of the Regional Party Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Regional People’s Government and also of the Reception Committee, stressed that all Tibetans abroad, including the Dalai Lama, would be welcome to come back, whether on a permanent basis or just for a visit. She elaborated on the idea that all patriots belonged to one family. She pointed out that the Party’s policy was one of “letting bygones be bygones,” that no one would be marked down for his past misdeeds, and that people with meritorious services to their credit would be rewarded. Other speakers expressed the hope that compatriots abroad would return to join their families and make contributions towards building a new Tibet as well as a modernized, united China.
Facade of the Great Prayer Hall of the Zhaiyung (Drepung) Monastery, Lhasa.
Partial view of the Zhaxilhnobu (Trashi Lumpo) Monastery in Xigaze.

Giant Buddha — 26 metres high — at Zhaxilhnobu.
II

The Role of the Army

"JINGZHOI mami yagbo dog!" ("The Liberation Army is truly good") This is how the people of Tibet refer to the People's Liberation Army and is indicative of the fact that the PLA in Tibet stands firmly with the people and serves them wholeheartedly.

Guarding China's southwestern frontier against foreign aggression and attempts by serf-owners at restoration, the PLA is not only a fighting force, but an important force for political work among the masses and in production.

When PLA men marched into Tibet in 1950-51, they were the main force in building the two highways into Tibet from Sichuan and Qinghai. Working at elevations from 3,000 to 5,000 metres and crossing precipitous mountain ranges and turbulent rivers, their job was extremely arduous and dangerous. After overcoming great hardships at tremendous sacrifice, they completed the highways in 1954. The Tibetans called the highways "golden bridges of happiness," for they linked Tibet more closely with the rest of China and hastened the economic and cultural development of the region.

Besides this material link, another of immense importance was being built, the link that united the thoughts and feelings of the PLA fighters and the Tibetan serfs.

With thousands of road-builders coming from many parts of Tibet, person-to-person contacts between the Chinese Communist Party and Tibetan serfs were possible for the first time. Working side by side with the serfs, the troops brought them new concepts and ideas.

But more effective than any words were the actions of the PLA. They cared for the serfs as they would have for their own brothers, and provided the sick and injured with free medical treatment. The serfs were also paid wages — something previously unknown — and the PLA men taught them new working methods to raise their labour efficiency and hence their earnings. Moreover, the PLA insisted on putting the money in the hands of the serfs rather than going through the serf-owners or their stewards who had sent them. In many cases, this prevented their wages from being seized.

In 1954, when a group of Tibetan road-builders living on a river bank were suddenly cut off by a flash flood, two PLA fighters went to their rescue. After six hours the Tibetans and all their belongings had been moved to safety. But the PLA men who had been standing all the time in the icy water were frozen numb and it was the Tibetans who helped them to their tents and covered them with their
own clothes. Some warmed the soldiers' frozen feet with their own bodies. When work on the highway was completed and the time came to part, both fighters and serfs wept.

Their experience in road building made the serfs realize that the PLA led by the Communist Party was a new type of army working in the interests of the poor, that the proceeds from labour should go to the toiler instead of the exploiter, and that a social system such as Tibet's was wrong and had to be changed.

This new political awareness, fostered and treasured by the Communist Party, turned into a material force that helped to bring a conclusive victory for the PLA when the serf-owners rebelled in 1919.

Since then, the PLA in Tibet has continued its fine tradition of shouldering three simultaneous tasks — fighting, mass work and production.

At various stages of the Tibetan revolution, the PLA sent large contingents of officers and men to join the hundreds of work teams in all major struggles. These included the democratic reform in 1959-61 and the socialist transformation of agriculture through the universal organization of the people's communes in 1970-75.

The army has made a great contribution towards building a prosperous, socialist countryside. From 1973 to 1977, the armymen put in 1,260,000 workdays to help expand production. They dug 500 kilometres of irrigation canals, collected and carted 6,000 tons of manure, and helped with harvesting, sowing and other farm work on 6,000 hectares of land.

No remuneration was taken for any of this work. Not only this, but the PLA units often gave good strains of seed as gifts to the communes and helped them to repair or improve their farm implements.

To meet part of their own needs and lighten the burden of the people, the PLA units started reclamation projects as early as 1951 when they had just entered Tibet. Arriving at their garrison sites, they began preparing to raise their own food. Many army units have established their own farms and vegetable plots. Quite a few officers and men have become skilled agiro-technicians. When they evolve some improved farm method, they make a point of explaining it to the local people. The army units in Zayu, for example, formed a special work group to teach scientific farming. By giving short-term courses, and working together with the commune members on experimental plots, they quickly spread their skill in rice-growing throughout the county. This, plus the wide application of improved seed,
helped to more than double the county’s grain output within a few years.

There are also several large army-run farms which produce considerable amounts of grain for the state. The Penbo State Farm, one of the biggest, delivered 32,000 tons of grain to the state in 1971-72.

But the PLA’s contribution to the development of Tibet has not been limited to highway construction and agriculture. Among other things, it runs some fairly-sized factories which help train Tibet’s technical force as well as accumulate more funds for its industrial progress. The PLA sends out scores of mobile medical teams to various parts of Tibet and an average of 800,000 consultations take place each year. In addition the army has trained 1,000 barefoot doctors for the farming and pastoral communities in recent years.

Though in spirit and style of work the army remains the same as it was when it first marched into Tibet, there is now a marked difference in its composition. Every year, large numbers of young Tibetans apply to join the army, though recruitment is kept down so as not to drain labour from agriculture. An annual average of 1,000 were enlisted in the last few years. There are about 900 Tibetan and other minority nationality officers on active duty in the region, including some at army and divisional levels. Tibet’s strong and large militia, which contains one in ten of the population, has also been trained by the army.

The influx of young people of local nationalities has made it easier for the army to strengthen its ties with the people. All army personnel are encouraged to learn from the people in various ways and to vie with each other in observing discipline and doing good deeds for the people. They seek supervision over their behaviour by inviting local people to give their criticisms. Ex-serfs and slaves who suffered most in the old society are invited to give talks to the young soldiers, so that they will never forget the terrible past.

Today, a handful of exponents of Tibet’s feudal servitude are still trying hard to impair the image of People’s China by attacking the role of the PLA in Tibet, in spite of the fact that their lies have long been exposed by the truth.

Twenty years ago, Anna Louise Strong, the famous American writer and journalist, made the following observations after visiting Tibet five months after the outbreak of the 1919 rebellion:

Arraymen lend a hand in piling up wheat sheaves.
"The rebellion was thus seen to be no ‘national conflict,’ but an uprising by serf-owners who were unable to mobilize followers. But if it failed to become a civil war, even dragging in finally the intervention of foreign powers, as the rebels clearly intended, in a war to separate Tibet from China, this was because Beijing’s strategy was based not only on arms, but on careful political planning, and especially because in the eight years after the 1951 Agreement, Beijing had built support among the people of Tibet."*

This support had been built largely by the PLA under strong Communist Party leadership.

Tremendous changes have taken place in Tibet since then. The age of serfdom has long ended. Socialism has come to stay. Tibet now has a more developed economy and a more consolidated local political power, supported by a people much more united and politically awakened than ever before. And behind it stand the Chinese people in all other parts of the motherland, which has grown in strength with the years. Any attempts to change the present course of Tibet will be futile.

* In this quotation, “Peking” has been changed into “Beijing” according to the newly adopted scheme for the Romanization of names of Chinese places and persons.
that began in 1959. This followed in the wake of an abortive rebellion by serf-owners involving the flight of the Dalai Lama and many other members of Tibet's former ruling class events that have been widely misunderstood abroad.

The democratic reform that swept over Tibet emancipated 95 per cent of the population that had lived in virtual slavery. It paved the way for the socialist transformation of every aspect of the old feudal society: social, political, economic, cultural, educational and medical.

The progress that has been made in the last two decades and more has enabled this region, formerly one of the most backward not only in China but in the entire world, to leave mediaeval serfdom far behind and enter the socialist era.

Abundant photographs illustrate the close relationship between Tibet and the rest of China, portray the culture and traditions of the Tibetan people, and depict the diverse aspects of their life.

Also available in French, German, Spanish and Hindi, in paperback only.
I have found the pictures and text of absorbing interest. They confirm, and fill out, the things I saw in this beautiful and re-awakened region of China on three visits over two decades. For those unable to go, or who have yet to go—as some no doubt will in coming years—it is a good introduction.

[Signature]