



*Tibetan*

*Interviews*

ANNA LOUISE STRONG





Anna Louise Strong with Lachi and Gada

# TIBETAN INTERVIEWS

*by*

Anna Louise Strong

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As we go to press the author is in Tibet, collecting more material for a second volume on the progress of the Reform.

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## CONTENTS

Introduction	1
I. The Runaway Serfs Return	12
II. "My Fathers Were Kings"	36
III. Gods as Rulers	55
IV. Curtain-Raiser to Rebellion	79
V. The Lhasa Rebellion	105
VI. The Dalai Lama Departs	130
VII. The Panchen Takes Over	152
VIII. The Reform Begins	176
 <i>Appendices:</i>	
The Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet	200
The Resolution on Carrying Out Democratic Reform in Tibet Adopted by the Second Plenary Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet on July 17, 1959	206





## INTRODUCTION

When rebellion against China flared in Lhasa, Tibet's capital, in mid-March of 1959, and the defeated rebels fled to India, taking with them the Dalai Lama, known to western headlines as "the god-king," discussion raged around the world, taking in every country typical forms.

Britain neatly sat the fence, saying: "We have always recognized China's sovereignty . . . on the understanding that Tibet has autonomy," a formula permitting advance or retreat in any direction, depending on how "autonomy" is defined. Christian Herter, for the U.S. State Department, went all out in a moral crusade for "the indomitable spirit of man," which seemed in this case to mean the serf-owners' insistence on keeping their serfs. Prayers for Tibet were held on U.S. vessels in the China seas. Committees for Tibetan refugees were set up under names like Lowell Thomas, who in 1949 did a world promotion job for Tibet's independence from China, and General Wedemeyer, a well-known figure in America's last attempt in the forties to keep military and economic hold on China for Washington and for Chiang Kai-shek.

Reactions in India were more complex. In India's northeast provinces, whose border with Tibet is long, there is a large population of Tibetans and a serfdom like Tibet's. Here the upper class furiously fears lest reform in Tibet arouse their own serfs. Other elements in India have long resented the agreement made with China by which India gave up the special privileges in Tibet which Britain had seized. Nehru would find politics easier if across that long, high border remained the living museum of the Middle Ages which Tibet presented, instead of a land reform exploding into modern farms and primary schools. A fairly acrimonious controversy rose for some weeks between spokesmen of China and India, which then somewhat moderated without bringing the rupture between these two great countries for which Washington clearly hoped. But controversy will be kept alive by the Dalai Lama's presence in India, and may again become sharp as the abolition of serfdom proceeds in Tibet.

A striking statement was given on May 6 in an editorial of the *People's Daily* of China, which said:

At present public opinion in many countries of the world is quite vocal about the question of Tibet. This is an excellent thing. The 1,200,000 people living on the roof of the world, to whom no serious attention has ever been paid before, have every right to enjoy the honor of holding the attention of the whole world, and to be enlightened and steeled in the course of world-wide discussions.



This is a statement with which I heartily agree.

My contribution to the discussion comes from the fact that I was present in Peking during the first half of 1959, that I heard the Tibetan deputies speak in the National People's Congress of China and afterwards had exclusive interviews with the top figures in Tibet's present government, the Panchen Erdeni, who is Acting Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region, and Ngapo Ngawang-Jigme, its Secretary-General, who himself was a serf-owner of 2,500 serfs, but pledged to abolish serfdom through compensation to the owners. Further interviews were given me by Chang Ching-wu, representative in Tibet for the Central Government of China, by Captain Yang of the People's Liberation Army, who has been on duty in Lhasa ever since the Agreement between Peking and the Dalai Lama was signed in 1951. I also talked at length with many runaway serfs who had studied in Peking and were now hastening back to Tibet to help the reform. I visited the exhibition on the smaller preliminary revolts that took place in Szechwan, Chinghai and Kansu, and saw the type of air-drops from Chiang Kai-shek and the type of tortures used against serfs. Finally I consulted leading experts on Buddhism.

When I combined these interviews with a study of the news despatches on all sides of the controversy, I felt I had something to report that might help allay tensions and promote understanding among people who need to be friends.

Not all people will become friends through greater knowledge. Basic differences of philosophy exist. But these should not be aggravated or confused by misunderstandings over words. So one must first define some of the terms now loosely used in discussion, terms like "sovereignty," "autonomy" and "tragedy." Strange as it may seem, one must first define "Tibet." For the boundaries of Tibet have changed greatly through the centuries and have been fiercely fought over even in recent decades.

"Tibet," as the Chinese use the term and as I shall use it, is Tibet as it stood in 1911, at the fall of the Chinese empire, and as shown on most maps of this century, whether published in London or Shanghai. This Tibet includes the territory of "U," where the Dalai Lama directly ruled, and the territory of Houtsang, where the Panchen Erdeni ruled. To this Tibet, as mapped in the days of Chiang Kai-shek, the present Peking government added in 1955 a sizable area to the east called Chamdo, which since the last days of the empire had been part of a province called Sikang. Reasons for these changes will be given in subsequent chapters. Here we note only that "Tibet, including Chamdo" has 1,200,000 square kilometers and also 1,200,000 population. The figures are easy to remember: one person to a square kilometer, not very crowded.

When, however, the word "Tibet" is used by promoters of a "Greater Tibet," it includes much more. It may even go back to the days of the Mongol conquest in the thirteenth century, when Kublai Khan, emperor of China, named Pagspa, the learned prelate of Tibet,



“King of the Law in the Western Land of the Buddha” as far as Kokonor. People today may thus use the word “Tibet,” innocently or not so innocently, in different ways. When an Indian lawyer, for instance, accuses China of “genocide” against Tibetans, and claims that China has sent five million settlers to penetrate Tibetan lands, with four million more to follow, he is describing a process of centuries, but is willing that his hearers should think it was done in the past decade by deliberate malice in Peking. Not a single Chinese settler has been permitted in this decade to move to “Tibet, including Chamdo.” But great mixed populations have grown in past centuries and are growing today in the adjacent provinces. The 1953 census, which noted in China some 2,800,000 Tibetans, also noted that only 1,200,000 of these were in “Tibet, including Chamdo,” while a larger number, some 1,600,000, lived in adjacent provinces: Szechwan, Yunnan, Kansu and especially Chinghai.

When the Dalai Lama today asks for a “Greater Tibet,” he is asking for large chunks of these provinces, possibly including the Tsaidam Basin where China’s greatest oil-strike lies. We shall discuss this in subsequent chapters in greater detail. Some things cease to be practical politics. The Pope of Rome might with equal reason ask for all that Europe then once paid tribute through the monasteries to the Holy Roman Empire, or Mexico ask for Texas and California back with their present development and population.

This brings us to the question of “sovereignty” or “suzerainty” which are also disputed words. Is China

“sovereign” or only “suzerain” in Tibet? When Nehru says, with apparent casualness: “We have always recognized China’s sovereignty — or suzerainty,” he is choosing to be ambiguous. The term “suzerain” was introduced by the British, as a means of clouding China’s “sovereignty.” It applies to the relation that existed in the Tang Dynasty, when a king of Tibet married a Tang princess and paid tribute to the Tang. But ever since the thirteenth century, when Kublai Khan made Pagspa “Prince of Tibet,” Chinese have always claimed “sovereignty,” i.e. that Tibet is an integral part of China, with more rights than an ordinary province but without the right of secession.

I shall discuss this sovereignty at greater length in the chapter on “Gods as Rulers.” That the sovereignty was at times loose and even contested can be easily proved, for all of China more than once in these seven centuries broke up into warring dynasties. I note here only three facts, which I shall use again in their related place. First, no nation in all these seven centuries ever recognized Tibet as a separate nation or sent an ambassador to Lhasa. Second, even when the British seized Lhasa and enforced a treaty in the Potala Palace in 1904, the bill for the 750,000 pounds indemnity was sent to the emperor in Peking and collected from him. Lastly, a leading Buddhist expert Chao Pu-chu stated to me: “All incarnations have to have the recognition of the Central Government of China.”

No arguments from the past are final. Especially in our day nations long submerged are born from the



womb of old empires and declare independent life. Is this, then, the case with Tibet? It is the present Tibet that must answer. The long past has interest only as showing the source from which present decisions come. The long past shows a Chinese sovereignty never successfully challenged in seven hundred years. What does the present say?

The first answer from the present was given in 1951 when the Dalai Lama and the Central Government of China signed an Agreement, recognizing the long past of the Tibetan people "within the boundaries of China" and stating Tibet's present "return to the motherland." This has been confirmed by many acts and statements over eight years. It was defied on March 10 by the March rebellion in Lhasa, in which four of the six *kaloons*, the ministers of the Dalai Lama, took leading part and in which the Dalai Lama's own part is still not clear. Was this rebellion a valid demand of the Tibetan people for independence, or was it the attempt of a small clique of serf-owners, both lay and clerical, to perpetuate serfdom and their own power? This question must be part of the substance of this book.

In this context we consider another word over which controversy rages, the word "autonomy" in relation to Tibet. The word "autonomy" is here simpler to define than sovereignty, for it is defined in the 1951 Agreement itself. It is, as we shall see in the chapter "My Fathers Were Kings," a "national regional autonomy under the leadership of the Central Government . . . in accordance with the Common Program." This is not independence, nor half-

independence, nor a basis for a right to secession. It is a guarantee within a sovereign nation for the protection of local rights.

The nature of this autonomy and the extent of its fulfilment, are also of the substance of this book. Did Peking keep its promises? Did the local government of Lhasa keep its promises? On such questions knowledge must be sought and on such questions moral judgments are possible by individuals or groups of individuals within any nation, for any act of any nation is subject to moral review. Such judgment should be well grounded and properly expressed if it is to avoid inflaming war. No political action by a foreign nation is possible unless that foreign nation chooses to deny sovereignty and to intervene.

When questions of "sovereignty" and "autonomy" are settled, a deeper question remains. "Sovereignty" and "autonomy," however important, are only technical questions of man's techniques for attaining his goals. The deeper question was raised by Nehru when he called Tibet "a static society fearful of what may be done to it in the name of reform." And Peking gave its answer in the editorial which said that Tibet's basic reality is not a static, unified society, but 1,200,000 people, of whom 95 percent are commoners and mainly serfs, eager for reform, and that for them, the quelling of the rebellion has "turned a bad thing into a good thing" and opened the gate to hope.

The argument between these views must be carefully considered, for these are two different world views. Many liberals, especially those of the West,

will applaud Nehru's views as both "liberal" and "restrained." These are people in whose philosophy a nation, or a society, is seen as a unit, expressed by a single voice. That voice is the voice of its government; in Tibet it was the *kasha*, the Cabinet of Ministers. If the *kasha* split, two remaining loyal to Peking and four rebelling, then the four-to-two majority is seen as the voice of Tibet, especially when the voice of the Dalai Lama is added. From this view, it is deduced that what happened in Tibet is "a tragedy."

The opposing view sees Tibet not as a unit, expressed by a four-to-two majority of its cabinet, but as a society in acute class conflict, in which 95 percent are commoners while only 5 percent are of the upper class. The 1,140,000, who are 95 percent, are not "fearful of reform" but deeply crave it. The 5 percent who make up the upper class do not all oppose reform as a unit. Some are "progressive," and ready to abolish serfdom; some are neutral and waver, but may be won to agree. Only a few are "die-hards" who cling to serfdom against any offered terms. These must be fought, but they are a small minority.

For the vast majority of Tibetans, in this view, the quelling of the rebellion is no tragedy, but the open door to reform and so to a new Tibet which shall be truly a "Greater Tibet," not through extension of territory but by expansion of production and a prosperous life for all. This view also must be examined carefully, lest the holders of power mistake their own plans for "the will of the people." We must seek, if we can,

for the voice of the great masses of Tibetans, who have never had a voice in these thousand years.

I have talked to many of them, to the Panchen Erdeni, to Apei, the serf-owner, to lamas and ex-lamas, to runaway serfs who have become students, prepared to lead reform. Theirs is not Tibet's full story. There is never a full story. But it is the story as it appears to people in Tibet today who make the Tibet of tomorrow. Certain events reappear in almost every person's story. This creates for me a technical problem, for the same event will appear in many chapters each time from a different view. This difficulty cannot be avoided. For some events — the battle of Chamdo in October 1950, the Agreement signed with Peking in May 1951, the Lhasa Rebellion, launched on March 10, 1959 and basically ended by the counter-attack of March 20 to 23 — these were turning-points in Tibet's modern history and in the lives of every person there. If their appearance more than once impresses them on the reader, he will the better know Tibet. By placing the various interviews in a proper sequence, we may also gain, without too great interruption, a sense of the march of events.

I debated long with whom to begin the story. With the Panchen Erdeni? With Apei, the descendant of kings? With Captain Yang, who lived through all this modern history with his own view? But if Tibet's story is that of 1,200,000 people "living on the roof of the world, to whom no serious attention has ever been paid before," but who have now entered history as its makers, then I should begin with Lachi and



Gada. These were serfs in the Chamdo Area, a girl and a boy, whose initiative led them to run away at the ages of thirteen and fifteen to join the People's Liberation Army, and who now, because of their desperate daring in childhood and their nine years of education, go back to Tibet to help organize their people and their land.

## I. THE RUNAWAY SERFS RETURN

The Central Institute of National Minorities lies well out in the suburbs of Greater Peking, on the road to the old emperor's Summer Palace. A well-known American educator, visiting it with me, said he thought no American university equalled its campus and buildings in beauty. I myself would not go so far. The main buildings, built in 1951, I find indeed unsurpassed in architecture; they follow the old Chinese style with sweeping curved roofs of tile in shining color. On later buildings they had to economize to handle the growing pressure of students: this forced a simpler style and I found it a pity. The trees are still too small for adequate shade; open-air classes crowd under them so closely to get out of the summer sun that they look a bit disorderly. This fault time will remedy. With these few lacks, it is a fine campus and a notable institution.

Founded in the second year of the Chinese People's Republic, it was clearly one of the first priorities. When I saw it in spring of 1959, just before graduation, it had 2,400 students of 47 different nationalities. These figures were given us by Peng Hua-an, director of the general office, as he offered tea in the large reception

room with cream walls and five big divans, set on a cream rug with floral design in rose and blue.

“Ours is a new type of institute of higher learning,” he told us. “The forty-seven national groups live here in equality and mutual help. Each national group is supplied with food not too different from its customary diet. For this we have eight dining-rooms, two different kinds of Moslem diet, one Tibetan and five others. The Tibetans at first all wanted *tsamba*, the parched barley flour that is their staple: but now they also like rice and steamed bread. Each group that wants it is provided with facilities for its religion. We have a special Moslem room and also a room for the Tibetans, furnished with Buddha statues and scriptures. We have here a miniature of the kind of mutual relations that we want to build in our multinational country.”

China has eight institutes similar to this in purpose, Director Peng told us. The others are on provincial scale: this is the central one. It is not very different from the others, but students take pride in it, because it is in Peking, the capital of the motherland. They study first their own language and then the Peking language, which is the national language of China. They study history, politics and current events. They learn especially the history of the Chinese revolution and the policy towards minor nationalities. No technical training for industry or farming is given at the institute: for this some of the graduates go elsewhere. This institute is the first stage in training civil

servants for the local governments of the different nationalities.

“The basic sense of national equality and mutual help between the nationalities is what we try here to instill,” said the director. “Technical help can be furnished from outside for a time: they can acquire technique later. But many of them still have to learn to read and write in their own language.” He added that the institute has a library of 470,000 volumes of which 70,000 are in minor nationality languages. It has also the newspapers and magazines of the various national groups.

“The students,” he said, “usually go back to the place they came from. That is their purpose and ours: to train local leaders.”

The largest national group here, I learned, was the Tibetan. Though Tibetans are only sixth in size among China's minor nationalities, being outranked not only by the Han majority, but by the Chwangs, the Uighurs, the Huis and the Yis, of whom outsiders have rarely heard, the Tibetans have been pouring into the institutes in recent years because of the situation in Tibet. Most of them are runaway serfs, who fled for protection to the People's Liberation Army, or to some of the civilian institutions of the Central Government in Tibet, to escape from servitude. There were 900 of them in this institute, of whom most were in the preparatory department, since they came not knowing how to read and write a word. Some, however, had had a bit of education with the army in Lhasa before coming to Peking. Two hundred were graduating, of

whom half were going to study further: 50 in agricultural schools and 50 in medical schools, intending to work for the farming and the health of Tibetans. One hundred were going back to Tibet, already prepared to help organize the new reforms.

The institute has had a private view of the rebellion in Tibet. Its own history mirrored the changes. The first students that came from Tibet were from the families of nobles. "They came in from 1952 to 1954," said Director Peng, "after the 1951 Agreement. The teachers, of course, were all from noble families in those days. Nobody else had enough education to teach in Tibetan, for serfs had never been permitted education. The first batch of five came to explore: later they joined the rebellion. After 1954, the nobles stopped sending their children. They feared their children would learn bad things from us: also the local chiefs of government in Tibet threatened them."

"What bad things," I asked, "since you permit their religion?"

Director Peng smiled. "We teach the equality and mutual help of human beings. Tibetan nobles did not believe in that. . . . But when the nobles stopped sending their children, we began to get a flood of run-away serfs. At present only about one hundred of the nine hundred are from noble families and about fifty from middle groups such as merchants. The rest are serfs."

I asked how the two groups got on together as students. The director replied that they went through three stages. "Those from noble families at first con-

sider that in all ways they are superior. They resent having to carry their own suitcases, make their own beds, look after their own room. This, they think, is the task of slaves: they are insulted because we expect them to do this. Some never accept it but go home; others accept it at last.

“The serfs at first fear the others and cannot sit at ease in the same room. In the next stage they have less fear but still feel separate and cannot mix. Only after some time and considerable discussion do they reach the stage in which they mix easily as fellow students, criticizing and helping each other.”

The first taste of the coming rebellion in Tibet hit the institute in 1957. At that time Surkong, one of the rebel leaders—he had not yet openly launched rebellion—passed through Peking to visit the Tenth Anniversary of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, which had been established when the Chinese Communists already controlled the north but had not yet established themselves in Peking. Surkong did not visit the institute but secretly got the Tibetan teachers together outside the institute—they were all from noble families—and instigated them to make trouble. . . . They should refuse to learn the Han language or obey any discipline of the institute, but should publicize Tibetan independence and religion. They should also organize the students in that direction.

“There was quite a bit of uproar,” said Director Peng. “We got all the students together and explained the situation, and showed whither this new propaganda



led. Quite a number of the Tibetan teachers left us at that time and went home to organize rebellion. Only one of Surkong's agents stayed till early this year for purposes of spying on us. He went back to Lhasa also before the rebellion broke out."

"Did it upset the institute badly?" I asked.

"Not too much," said Peng. "By that time we had not only the big demand of the runaway serfs for education but also new teachers, with more progressive views."

The runaway serfs, he said, had come fleeing for life and not knowing when they could go back. Until now they could not have gone back to Tibet without danger. They might have been picked up by the Tibetan army or some of the armed retainers of the nobles, and sent back to their masters. Anything then might have happened to them, up to torture and death. But now that the rebellion had openly broken out in Lhasa and been quelled, the way to reform was open, and many of the serfs were going back. Technically they were still serfs, for the laws in Tibet had not yet been changed. But practically, they knew that serfdom would now be soon abolished, and that the new local government of Tibet stood behind them in their freedom. One of the chiefs of the office in Lhasa of the Working Committee had personally come to Peking, to choose graduates who could be useful for the new Tibet. He was taking a hundred of the graduates from the institute back with him, and fifty more from other places in Peking.

I asked Director Peng to let some of the students call on me for longer interviews. So it was that I met Lochang, a girl from Lhasa, and Lachi and Gada, from the Chamdo Area, all of them still technically, but no longer actually, serfs.

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The first who came was Lochang, a girl from Lhasa. She will not yet go back to Tibet, for she still has much to learn. She was small and very dark-skinned, reminding me that Tibetans are not all of one blood but mixed of many tribes. Unlike the Han women, who usually wear trousers, Lochang wore a long gray dress, jumper-style over a bright flowered blouse and under an even more colorful striped apron. Large brassy ear-rings hung in her ears. When I commented on her dress she told me that the institute furnished all students with proper clothes, each for his own nationality.

Lochang spoke the Han language so badly that we had to have two interpreters, from Tibetan to Mandarin to English. The simpler questions she understood in the Chinese "national language" but other questions had to be twice translated. And many questions she did not understand in any language at all. It is not easy, I found, to interpret from serfdom's concepts to those of the modern world.

Our first confusion was about Lochang's family relations. She first said her father was a carpenter in Lhasa and she, with her three brothers, all worked as his helpers. This seemed simple and clear. But

later she said he "was not the real father," and also that her mother "was not the real mother of the brothers." It might have been a case of polyandry, or only a second or third marriage, with the earlier marriages broken by death or by the serfs being separated through different ownerships, as happens in Tibet. I did not pursue it further, for I was not investigating marriage, which tends to be confused among serfs.

One thing Lochang knew precisely. She knew who owned her. She belonged to a monastery two or three days' journey away from Lhasa. She had never seen the monastery and nobody from the monastery had ever seen Lochang. The girl herself had taken care of that. But she nonetheless belonged to the monastery because her grandmother belonged to it, and ownership of girls descends in the female line.

"My grandmother worked in the fields for the monastery," said Lochang. "She died from the hard work. That was before I was ever born. My mother was sickly and could not work the fields. So she got permission to go to Lhasa to look for work. For this she had to pay a tax to the monastery. It was collected on festival days when the monastery sent people to Lhasa to celebrate festivals. Then they collected the taxes from all the serfs they owned who were in Lhasa. When I was born in Lhasa, I was registered at once as the property of the monastery. They paid a birth-tax for me: later every year they paid a tax for me so that I could stay in Lhasa with my mother. My mother paid the tax for me and I stayed out of

sight, so that the monastery would not see me and order me to go back.”

Lochang's father, or stepfather, as the case may be, did not belong to the monastery. He belonged to a noble who also lived several days' journey from Lhasa but in a different direction. The father being a carpenter and the noble having more carpenters than he could use, the man had been given permission to seek work in Lhasa, also on payment of an annual tax to his owner. Lochang's three brothers, descending in the male line, were registered as the property of this noble. If at any time the noble should want carpentry work by the father, more than he wanted the annual tax, he could order the serf to come back to the estate and work. In that case the serf would work without wages but would be given some food. If this took the man away from his wife and children forever, that was not the owner's affair.

All things affecting her ownership or her mother's and father's owner, were known by Lochang very clearly: these facts conditioned her life. She also knew clearly that when her father worked in Lhasa for the local government, the *kasha*, he got no pay in money but he got some food, “usually but not always,” she said. However, he found stray jobs for private people and these had to pay him in money. It was never a high wage. Lochang estimated that when she herself worked from dawn to dark carrying lumber or stone or cement as helper to her father, she got about 12 American cents a day. . . . Lochang was not very clear about money: by the time she had worked the

figure out in Lhasa money and changed it to Peking money and I had changed it into American money, I would not have guaranteed it to a statistician. But Lochang was very clear on the fact that she never had enough to eat and nobody in her family ever had enough to eat, and any time the monastery wanted her mother or the noble wanted her father, they could take them back to work without pay. Even in Lhasa, she knew that her father worked from day to day, never knowing if there would be work on the morrow. Lochang herself never knew if on the morrow there would be food.

Lochang's flight from Lhasa came in 1953. Her mother died in that year. Lochang asked her father to pay the tax for her, and the father did. But on this occasion, when he reported the mother's death and the consequent smaller tax, the agent from the monastery said: "That Lochang of ours must be long since big enough for field work: she's a full seventeen. Send her at once to our western estates to work."

When the father told Lochang, the girl said she would run away. This disquieted the father, who feared he would be punished if the girl escaped. So Lochang decided to run away without telling her father. She was working at the time as a nursemaid in the family of a Han, an employee of the Central Government. The Han family was returning to Chengtu; Lochang went with them, and thence to Peking.

"Did they punish your father?" I asked.

"Maybe," said Lochang. Then she added with optimism. "But maybe not. The monastery was not

his owner and there were many excuses he could make. He could say the Hans took me away, and maybe they will just blame the Communists and not my father." Lochang did not quite enjoy explaining this. This was when she said: "He was not my real father." She added: "Anyway, he is dead now. He did too hard work."

Lochang, one sees, was not a heroic figure and she knew it. She was just a serf, wanting life. Now that she has some education she can tell you that she "wants to work for the Tibetan people" and "do whatever the Party tells me because the Party gave me my education and my life." When she says these words, they sound a bit like a slogan. They do not yet quite sound like a part of Lochang. Lochang is not going back to Tibet yet. She doesn't know enough. An illiterate serf does not become an organizer of her people in a few short years.

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A few days later two other young people came to my room from the Institute of Nationalities. They were Lachi, a girl of twenty-two years and Gada, a youth of twenty-four. Both had come from the Chamdo Area. They had both run away as early as 1950 to the People's Liberation Army. Both had had an earlier initiative and a longer schooling than Lochang. They did not need a special interpreter: they used my interpreter, for they talked the Han language. A breath of energy touched with joy came with them into my study. They told me at once that they were going back to Tibet.





Lachi and Gada tell their stories

The former runaway serfs are off to Lhasa







Apei, deputy from Tibet, addresses the National People's Congress of China



The Venerable Shirob: "As a Tibetan and a Buddhist, I fully support the putting down of the rebellion."

“Tomorrow, with the first train,” said Lachi, who was the easier of the two in self-expression. “It is a great honor to be chosen for the first group.”

Lachi was a small, slight girl in a green dress with pale pink lining at the neck, with eyes clear and direct under thin bangs of hair. She was thirteen when she ran away to join the army, in the Batang area, even before the battle of Chamdo. She has thus had nine years’ knowledge of the new ideas, but she herself had ideas when she began.

“My parents belonged to a big serf-owner, but he did not need their work, so he let them work for a small landowner who had only thirty workers. To get this permission they gave gifts to the big owner every year and also whenever he had a wedding in his family. If he does not like their gifts, he does not permit them. Any time he wants from them free work he orders it. For him they do work without pay.”

“Is there anything at all the big owner gives them for working?”

“He gave them the use of a piece of land,” replied Lachi, “but this land was far away and of bad quality. My parents had no means to work it. So they got permission to work for the small master. It is not very hard to get this permission if the small master lives near by . . . because then the big master can always give orders if he wishes. It is hard to get permission to work a long distance away.”

“We had a big family, twelve people, my father and mother, three brothers, five sisters, an uncle and a cousin. Most of them worked in the fields but my

mother was a house servant. Their master would not accept me to work (she was ten at the time) because he could not use so many. So I worked for another landowner, a woman. The small master paid us some grain, some tea, some salt and a little money but always far below need. So sometimes we got other work in cutting hay or wood for other people who paid us money."

"Did your parents work for the small owner long?" I asked.

"Ever since I remember," said Lachi, "we worked for the small owner for grain and we worked sometimes for the big owner without pay."

"Did you ever get any education?" I asked.

"By custom serfs had no right to education," replied Lachi. "But the big serf-owner had a tutor in his family for his children. This tutor was progressive. Secretly he taught some serf boys in his own room. If this were known, he would lose his job and perhaps even worse would happen. He did not teach me for I could not go to his room. He taught my elder brother to read and write a little: my brother taught a little to me. I did not even learn the whole alphabet. But I learned there was such a thing as education and that there could be a different life than ours."

"What freedom had the serfs, if any?" I asked.

"No freedom," she replied. "The serf must get permission to go anywhere, even for a short absence. The serf must get permission to marry. If he marries, he may be separated by his owner from his family, if the owner wants him to work in another place. The owner



can do anything to the serf, even torture and death. That serfs were killed by owners was not unusual. Serfs also were sold."

"If serfs married," I asked, "did the owner have the right of the first night of the bride?" Lachi had never heard of such a custom, so I explained it. She shook her head.

"With us it was a different way. All pretty serf girls were usually taken by the owner as house servants and used as he wished."

"As concubines?" I asked.

"Not concubines," said Lachi. "Concubines have rights. These were just slaves without rights. The owner uses as he wishes and throws away. Marriage is not permitted between owner and serf. Married serfs can be separated as the owner wishes. The boy child goes with the father and the girl with the mother."

"What happens to children of women serfs by the owner?"

Lachi replied that such children were usually serfs. "But it may happen that a bright boy is liked by the father, who adopts him. Then the mother has no right to him for he becomes the owner's son."

Lachi's younger brother was known as a "bright boy," though both parents were serfs. He was offered a chance in the monastery.

"In our area were two temples," said Lachi. "Every big estate had a temple. If anyone was sick, we went there to pray and give gifts. We also went there to borrow money. The interest was very high. You borrow four dollars and in ten days you must give back

five dollars. Nobody can pay in such short time, so the debt grows and some debts last from father to son and son's son. But once a high lama came to our house and said my younger brother was an incarnation, and could be a Living Buddha. The lamas said this to bright boys. But you had to have money to become a Living Buddha and since we could not give money he was not chosen. None of my brothers went into the monastery."

Lachi broke away from serfdom through the coming of the People's Liberation Army and by her own act. It was in 1950.

"We liberated ourselves where I lived," she said proudly. "First there came all kinds of rumors, spread by the Kuomintang. It was said the Communists killed all old people because they were useless for work, and put all women in brothels for common use. Many people believed this and were terrified. My brother and I did not believe the rumors: his teacher told us differently. Then came underground Communist workers, mostly of Tibetan nationality. They were very different from the Kuomintang. They were kind to old people and to children and they helped the peasants with hay-cutting and harvesting. Later they organized local people and told us we should liberate ourselves. So one night the underground Communists and some of our young people arrested the local Kuomintang officials suddenly and set up our own government. This was late in 1949 before the People's Liberation Army came. The serf-owners were taken by surprise and had to pretend to accept it. Later they organized



rebellion. That was the Khampa rebellion in 1955. When it was put down, the Khampas went into Tibet to do banditry there.”

“How did you yourself join the PLA?” I asked.

Lachi said that after her elder brother helped liberate the locality, he went with other youths to Chengtu for education. He sent word to her to help the PLA when it should come. “When the PLA came, they were different from anything we ever knew. They told us to work for our own liberation and the liberation of Tibet. I always wanted to learn to read and write and I got my parents’ permission to join their school.

“My mistress did not permit. When I told her I wanted to study in their school she called me ungrateful and began to beat me. I yelled for help and the PLA was already in the court. The PLA saved me: I went away with them and never went back.”

Lachi was thirteen when she joined the army. “Wasn’t the work in the army too hard for you at that age?” I asked. She gave me a strange smile.

“When I was ten I had to carry my mistress on my back,” she said. “No work the army gave me was as hard as that.”

“What work could you do that the army needs?” I asked.

“Many things,” replied Lachi. “My first work was after the battle of Chamdo. I went to the hospital to visit the wounded Tibetan prisoners. I was not a regular worker in the hospital: for that work men were used. But I went as visitor to the wounded. They

expected death by torture, for that was the custom where we lived. I told them not to kill themselves and not to fear, for the PLA would not torture them but would treat them well and cure them and teach them and set them free.

“Later I went with the army on the march and went into the villages and explained to the Tibetan people what the PLA was like. Then I became a member of the song and dance ensemble and did propaganda with song and dance. I walked with the PLA all the way to Lhasa. It was a long, hard march through high mountains, sometimes making our road on the way. But the Han comrades took good care of us.

“When conditions were hard, none of the Hans complained. When we camped in a swampy place, and there was a small, dry place, they gave the dry place to their Tibetan helpers and themselves slept in the damp place. When it was a steep, rocky place and there was a small flat place, they gave the small flat place to us. I never had even imagined people like that.

“I saw two Han comrades give their lives for the building of the road to Lhasa. One was killed by an explosion and one by falling rock. They were wounded and did not die at once: they talked before they died. They did not talk of themselves but encouraged the others to go forward. Never shall I forget those men. When I, as a Tibetan girl, have difficulties, I think of them and it gives me courage. For they underwent hardship and death to open a road for the Tibetan people.”

The long march to Lhasa continued Lachi's education. "All along the way I saw the misery in which the Tibetan people live. I saw people living in enclosures of dry grass without even a roof. Winter came and rain and snow and people died. When we entered Lhasa I saw the bad behaviour of the Tibetan army, and also I saw many children begging in the streets. Old people and sick people lay on the steps of the Potala Palace, begging food from passers-by. Some threw them *tsamba* (parched barley, the staple food in Tibet), and they lived a little longer. There was not enough *tsamba* and they died.

"I saw packs of homeless dogs hunting food by day and night in the streets of Lhasa. At night these old, sick people would grasp a dog and hold it to their bodies, trying to keep warm with a wild dog. But I saw the nobles, in fine silks and furs and with many servants, one to carry their tea-pot, one to carry their pipes, and others to carry other things they wanted. So I began to understand that the great misery of the people came from this injustice, that a few nobles have everything while the people cannot even live.

"The PLA sent me to school in Lhasa," Lachi concluded. "Later they sent me to study in Peking. I have studied in Peking three years. Tomorrow I am starting back to Lhasa. For now the rebellion is crushed and serfdom will soon be ended. We must go back to end it.

"I am going with the very first group from our institute. We go to Lhasa first to be assigned our

tasks. For the rebirth of Tibet, for my own people, I will do anything."

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Young Gada was sitting quietly on my divan while Lachi told her story. He was more restrained in manner than she, and a bit older, twenty-four to her twenty-two. He sat quietly smoking a cigarette, a solid, husky youth in white shirt and blue trousers. When Lachi with shining eyes finished her story, he took up his own tale. His life had been tougher than Lachi's: he was fifteen before he got away. He had been many times flogged, once to the verge of death.

"Before liberation," said Gada quietly, "I think I was not much different from a yak or any other draft animal for I could not read or write a word and knew nothing at all. For generations my family belonged to a big serf-owner who had five hundred families of serfs, working both in farming and in livestock. I wore the same sheepskin winter and summer and it was my only garment. It was so old that there was no wool on it any more nor any warmth, but only plenty of lice. I was always hungry.

"Ever since I remember, I wanted to run away and many times I ran. Always they caught me. I did not know how to run away but the owner had armed men who knew how to catch you. The big owners all had their private armies. These were not serfs, but armed men who hunted runaways. That is what the old Tibetan army was mostly used for. Tibet is very large and very wild and many serfs run away and the

armed men know how to hunt them. That is why the old Tibetan army would never become part of the PLA, even though it was promised. They were needed to hunt serfs. All these armed men from many private armies — those are the ones who became rebels now.

“The first time they caught me running away, I was very small, and they only cuffed me and cursed me. The second time they beat me up. The third time I was already fifteen and they gave me fifty heavy lashes, with two men sitting on me, one on my head and one on my feet. Blood came then from my nose and mouth. The overseer said: ‘This is only blood from the nose: maybe you take heavier sticks and bring some blood from the brain.’ They beat then with heavier sticks and poured alcohol and water with caustic soda on the wounds to make more pain. I passed out for two hours. I am twenty-four now, and it is nine years past, but if I take off my shirt or push back my hair, you can see the scars of that beating still.

“When I came to, they had thrown me into a corner and they told me to come back in a week for another beating. But they did not dare beat me again. For the PLA was coming and they were afraid they would be reported to the PLA if they killed me by beating. So the PLA saved me even before it came.”

After the PLA took Chamdo, they settled there for some months while awaiting the negotiations between the Dalai Lama and Peking. They set up in Chamdo a school. “I wanted to go to that school,” said Gada,

“but I was afraid to run away again. So I waited till winter, when farm work is less and they do not watch so carefully. Then I ran away to the Chamdo school and they let me join the PLA and go with them to Lhasa.

“My first impression with the PLA was how differently they treated people. Never had I had proper clothes, but now I had food and regular clothes and a chance to study. Next I saw how hard they worked to build the road to Tibet for the cause of liberating Tibet. Then they worked hard to build housing for the people: they put up buildings where there were none before. All of this impressed me. Still later when they sent me to Peking in 1954, I passed through Chamdo and saw what changes were already in my home area. There were people who always used to be beggars and thieves, because they stole in order to eat. Now these people had work and had become honest folk.

“When I first joined the PLA,” Gada concluded, “it was just that I wanted to revenge myself on the men who beat me. I thought I will become strong in the army and have a gun. But then I learned that it is not just for myself, but a whole system must be changed. . . . And I myself changed from something like a yak to a human being, who can think about life and about the future of Tibet.”

Gada, with nine years of such experience behind him, was also among those chosen to return to Tibet in the first group.

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Next morning I went to the station to see them off. More than fifteen hundred runaway serfs were reported now going back to Tibet: eleven hundred from a school near Sian, four hundred from the Chengtu Institute, and one hundred and fifty-three from Peking.

At the main railway station the platform was crowded, not only with those departing but with many more students and teachers who were seeing them off. As I approached, Lachi ran out of the crowd and seized my hand, and then Gada saw me and came more slowly. They announced to the others who I was and everybody clapped everybody else. They introduced me to their leader, a man named Sung Yi-liang, head of the Lhasa office of the Working Committee, who had come all the way to Peking to help select the ones who were to go.

Both Lachi and Gada had spoken of it as an honor, but more was involved than their honor. The honor of China was involved. Peking had announced that the coming reform would be bloodless, that serf-owners who had taken no part in rebellion would be compensated for their lands and serfs. But Peking knew very well that not all the serf-owners would easily agree to sell out, and that when serfs are suddenly freed, their acts are not easily controlled. Men who have suffered brutally will think of brutal vengeance. Now was the time when every young organizer counted, when people like Lachi and Gada would influence thousands, and perhaps even tens of thousands before the job was done. Now their nine years of training counted. Sung had come to Peking to pick workers

like Lachi and Gada, who had known the torment of serfdom in their own bodies but who had learned to seek not personal vengeance but a brighter future for Tibet.

I asked Sung: "Could any of these have gone back three months ago?" He shook his head.

"They would have been safe in our central offices," he replied, "but they could not have gone safely into the countryside, for the armed retainers of the serf-owners might have caught them."

"And now?" I asked.

"Now they can go safely with only normal caution," he replied. "For the serf-owners concentrated all those armed retainers, both from Tibet itself and from Tibetan areas in the adjoining provinces, and made rebellion. And the armed rebels are beaten and scattered, some to India and some captured, and some hiding out in distant hills. Now these young people can go into the villages. For not only are the serf-owners beaten, but the serfs themselves have awakened, and are ready to greet the reform. Everywhere in Tibet they have seen that the great whips and the torture implements of the owners were confiscated when the PLA, putting down rebellion, swept through the land."

The returning group from Peking was going two days by fast train to Lanchow, thence by local train to Shatung, then by truck to Kermo and Lhasa, a journey of eleven days in all. A few years earlier this trip would have taken months. They were a sturdy, energetic, happy, youthful group, in dark blue and



light blue, in white shirts or dark jackets, with visored caps or no caps, with pig-tails and sun-glasses, and certainly not in uniform.

They pulled me along to see their special cars. From past knowledge of trains in the USSR I expected to find hard wood sleeping bunks. But here were no bunks at all, just hard benches into which they were packed like sardines, bolt upright for forty-eight hours with hardly room to turn their heads. Then nine days more, probably standing up packed into trucks.

"It's great to be young when you start on a long, hard trip," I said, trying to soften what seemed to me the hard eleven days. They stared at me in surprise.

"Hard trip?" exclaimed one. "But the hard times are now behind us. This is a pleasure trip!"

The train pulled slowly out of the station, with the friends of the chosen group running along the platform to shake hands through the windows and ask for letters from Lhasa. As I left the station I thought of a man I had interviewed earlier, Apei the serf-owner, now Secretary-General of Tibet's local government, committed to abolish serfdom. He also had gone back to Lhasa: he had gone by plane.

I wondered how the oppressed and oppressors of more than a thousand years would do this job together. It could not be a simple job.

## II. "MY FATHERS WERE KINGS"

"My fathers were kings in the Tibet area for three hundred years before the political unification. After it, they were nobles and landowners, always holding high government posts."

The speaker was Ngapo Ngawang-Jigme, known more simply in Chinese as Apei. He was Secretary-General of Tibet's new local government as of March 28, 1959. I had picked him out, even before he came to Peking as one of Tibet's deputies to the National People's Congress, as the man most worth interviewing in Tibet. For the two Grand Lamas — the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni — are interesting enough as symbols but without long experience in politics. But Apei, at 49, was seasoned in Tibet's top politics for years.

I might have said, not "years," but "centuries." For when I asked what was this "political unification" and when did it happen, he casually replied: "It was Kublai Khan who took Tibet into China, about 1250 by your calendar. My family's realm remained for a time separate but was soon absorbed. Before that we were kings: since then we are nobles."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Kublai Khan" would be called over-simplification by a meticulous historian, for the absorption was spread over decades, both before and after Kublai. He was the main figure and may stand for his dynasty.

Apei thus traces a thousand years in which his fathers ran government in Tibet, three hundred years as kings in one of its petty warring kingdoms, and afterwards as nobles in the outer fringe of the Chinese empire. The Taichao area, some 160 miles to the east of Lhasa, was their domain. Apei still held, in summer of 1959, 4,000 square kilometers of it, "never yet measured off," he told me, together with 2,500 serfs. These lands and serfs would not be his much longer. "Democratic reform" was on the way, with the abolition of serfdom and the distribution of land to the tiller. Apei not only knew it: he was prepared to engineer it.

"The days of serfdom are over," he told me in private conversation. "Under it the misery of the people is very great." He said much stronger things on serfdom in the National People's Congress, China's supreme organ of state power, to which he came as a deputy from Tibet. I saw him there, in the great Hall of Benevolence with the scarlet and ivory columns, standing aloft on the rostrum in a long robe of gray wool, made Tibetan style, falling gracefully with the left sleeve chastely embroidered while his right arm rose free and emphatic in a balloon sleeve of heavy white silk.

Thus he accused his fellow serf-owners, the ones who had made the rebellion. "They have sucked the blood of the serfs for a thousand years, and now they rebel against the Central Government because it will no longer permit them to go on sucking the blood of the serfs."

Apei, it will be seen, is an orator. He is also experienced in politics: his family has been at it a thousand years and he himself has been in it all his life. He knows when the time has come for change. He also knows that under serfdom, the life even of top nobles is neither very good nor secure in terms of the modern world. You can get more comfort and even luxury from one modern power-plant than from a thousand barefoot serfs. Life under serfdom is, moreover, precarious. In his lifetime Apei has seen both the present and the past Dalai Lama more than once in flight from his capital: he has seen the present Dalai Lama's father poisoned and a regent strangled to death in jail and the richest man in Tibet tossed to his death from the top of Potala Palace together with his son — all over questions of politics. Apei is one of the "progressive serf-owners" who are ready to see serfdom abolished. His own life has made him face the modern world.

Through Apei we can see Tibet not as it looks to the serfs, to Lachi and Gada, but as it looks from the top, from the seats of government down the centuries, by men who know when the time for change has come. We can see through him the march of armies, and the signing of treaties, and the questions of "sovereignty" and "autonomy." These are the concepts in Apei's blood, and the problems in which he took part.

He was commander-in-chief of the Dalai Lama's armies in 1950, and defeated in the battle of Chamdo. He was simultaneously one of the six *kaloons*, the nobles who formed the *kasha*, the Cabinet of Ministers,

through which the Dalai Lama exercised temporal power. He was plenipotentiary for the Dalai Lama to negotiate the famous "1951 Agreement" with Peking, over which controversy now rages. From that time, in almost every formal arrangement made between Peking and Lhasa, Apei took part. When the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region was formed in 1956, he became its Secretary-General. When four of the six *kaloons* launched rebellion against Peking in March 1959, Apei was one of the two who remained loyal to China. He carried the last exchange of letters between the Dalai Lama and General Tan Kuan-san, which are now of historic note. And when on March 28, 1959, Tibet's local government of the six *kaloons* was dissolved by the State Council's orders from Peking, Apei, as Secretary-General of the Preparatory Committee, became the chief executive officer of the new local government in Tibet.

What may have been his last service to his former chief, the Dalai Lama, was made in late April in Peking, when the National People's Congress prepared to elect its officers before adjourning. Debate went on in the caucuses of deputies as to whether the Dalai Lama, already in India, should again be elected as one of the vice-chairmen of the Standing Committee, which is China's chief organ of state between congresses. A statement in the name of the Dalai Lama had been issued from Tezpur, India, on April 18, denouncing China in such terms that some deputies said it was not seemly to re-elect its author.

That was when Apei made his main speech, in which he passionately denounced the Tezpur statement as a forgery. For eight years, he said, he had "served the Dalai Lama as his shadow," and never in public or private had he heard sentiments like those of the Tezpur statement expressed. The statement, he claimed, was not even Tibetan style, but borne signs of having been written in English. It was given to the press, not by the Dalai Lama nor even by his retainers, but by an Indian civil servant. Whatever the Dalai Lama might be reported as saying, in a foreign land among rebels who threatened his life, Apei assured the deputies that the Dalai had been basically loyal to China for these eight years.

It was a strong speech: for a time it helped the Dalai Lama's reputation in China and made it easier for the deputies to re-elect him. It was not, however, borne out by events that followed. Apei's picture of a Dalai Lama loyal to China — in which Apei seemed really to believe — wore thin after June 20 when the Dalai began to give statements to the world press attacking China more strongly than even the Tezpur statement did, and demanding independence for Tibet, and a "Greater Tibet" at that. But Apei had done more than most to preserve for a full two months, the open door of return for the Dalai Lama.

It was shortly after this speech at the congress that Apei gave me the interview I asked. I drove to the large walled compound in which a stately villa served as his Peking residence. The formal exchange of long ceremonial scarves known as *hata*, the Tibetan mode

of greeting which I later used when I met the Panchen Erdeni, was not enforced by Apei. In dealing with modern people, he chose to be modern too. He sat at ease in a western-style suit of soft brown, a lean, lithe man with features gauntly chiselled of cast and color not unlike those of the American Indian. He offered tea and the best chocolates I had had in China. He answered questions fully but tersely, being, like most Tibetans, more reserved than the Hans. The talk had its discouraging quality: it had to come through two interpreters, from Tibetan to Mandarin to English. To lessen this difficulty, my questions had been written in advance and translated: they lay before him in Tibetan.

I had first asked for his biography. He had begun with his ancestors from the days of Kublai Khan. His personal career he sketched more briefly. "To the age of twenty-three I studied, then went into the army and then took government post." I asked what and where he studied. He replied that, there being no universities in Tibet, he had tutors, first in art, then in history, then in Buddhism. Where he picked up the arts of war and politics he didn't say. Nobles in Tibet seemed to be born knowing them.

In 1950 he was made a *kaloon*, one of six ministers who made the *kasha*, the governing body of Tibet. In the same year he was sent to Chamdo as governor and as commander-in-chief of the Dalai Lama's armies. The situation was tense, uncertain. In China, Chiang Kai-shek had fallen: the Chinese People's Republic had been set up in Peking. Its armies were moving on to

take the far ends of the country. They might soon be expected in Tibet. Lowell Thomas had gone to Lhasa in 1949, and done world-wide promotion on radio and television for "Tibet's independence." According to his published book he had discussed with the top nobles in Lhasa the question of American help with money and arms, but "could give no guarantee."

The Dalai Lama himself was only sixteen. His regent was pro-British. His ministers argued the situation and split. Finally in February 1950, they sent a mission to Peking to negotiate, but the mission stopped in New Delhi for nearly a year, for reasons too complex to discuss here. Meantime Apei, with the army, was sent in the other direction, towards Szechwan, to meet by force of arms Peking's advance. The Dalai Lama was taken by his regent to Yatung, a city near the Indian border, where he could await events and slip quickly into India in case of need. Both Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas have been used to this practice: they have thus fled from Lhasa or Shigatse several times in this century as well as in centuries gone.

Chamdo, to which Apei went to oppose the People's Liberation Army, is a place to remember. It was to become a turning-point in Tibet's modern history and in Apei's personal life and career. It was not at the time in Tibet, according to most maps of the present century. It is eastward from Lhasa towards Szechwan about a month's journey by horse in a province you will find marked Sikang. The Tibetans, however, claimed this area, for the population was largely



Tibetan and it had been made into Sikang Province at the very end of the Ching Dynasty. Since the fall of the empire, Tibetan and Szechwan warlords had fought over it in bloody inconclusive combat. Chiang Kai-shek had not been able to pacify it: he had controlled none of China's outlying areas, neither Manchuria, Sinkiang, nor Tibet.

So when Chiang collapsed, the Dalai's armies were sent to hold Chamdo against the expected advance of the People's Liberation Army, known for short as the PLA. In Chamdo in October 1950, Apei, with the Dalai Lama's army, met the PLA and was roundly defeated, part of Apei's forces going over to the side of the PLA. Apei himself expected death as the normal outcome of such a defeat. The PLA surprised him by treating him well and giving him long lectures on the New China's policies towards minor nationalities, such as Tibetans. Apei liked what he heard. He thought it worth reporting to the Dalai Lama. Within a year Apei himself had become Deputy Commander-in-Chief for the PLA's forces in Tibet. If to westerners this seems a sudden turn-about, we note that in China's history defeated generals often joined the victors. Apei had reason to.

It was done in proper order. One should not assume that Apei all at once became a Communist. Not while he still had serfs. From what he told me and from what he says in public, he became convinced of two things. First, that Peking had a strong government and army which had beaten him. Next, that Peking announced policies under which Tibet might develop

in reasonable freedom, peace and security, better than in the past. Apei, as practical politician, decided that Tibetans had a better chance with this new Peking than with an American- or British-financed "independence," bringing the wars of the West to the roof of the world.

Apei's exact words to me were: "The Ching Dynasty left with us a bad impression. The Kuomintang was worse. At first we were very suspicious of this new government in Peking, because of rumors spread by foreigners and by the Kuomintang. There were many agents of the Kuomintang and the imperialists in Tibet in 1950 and we did not know the facts about the policies of the Communists. So I led the resistance to the People's Liberation Army. It was a short fight. I could not resist them. They took Chamdo. By the end of 1950 I began to learn their policies, that they stand for equality and unity of all the nationalities in the motherland. From then on, my suspicions began to disappear.

"In Chamdo the people had suffered long centuries of feudal exploitation and many recent wars. After the victory of the PLA the people's burden lessened. They set up a committee representing all the local people, the nobles and the commoners, the clerical and the lay. They began to mediate the local tribal wars and feuds. They set up a hospital and a school. I began to see that this backward state would change. I ceased to fear the new government in Peking."

When Apei reported these facts to the Dalai Lama, who was in Yatung at the other end of Tibet, the Dalai

Lama ordered Apei to proceed from Chamdo directly to Peking as the plenipotentiary for Tibet to negotiate an Agreement. Two other men from Chamdo were appointed to go with him, two others were to join him from the first mission so long stalled in India. Apei was chief of the joint mission.

"I reached Peking in April 1951," Apei told me. "It was my first trip to Peking. I already knew something of Peking's policies and the trip confirmed what I knew. The other four members of the mission knew less than I did and were more surprised than I by the friendly, equal treatment they gave us in Peking. Negotiations went fast in a friendly atmosphere. We signed the Agreement of Seventeen Articles on May 23. Early in June I started back to Lhasa. Since I went overland, and most of the way by horse, I did not reach Lhasa till the end of August."

We shift now to what went on around the Dalai Lama in Yatung in the two months while Apei journeyed back to Tibet by horse. The Dalai Lama himself told people in Peking later that both British and American agents were in Yatung, discussing with the Dalai Lama's ministers what His Holiness should do. Should he flee into India or return to Lhasa? Should he make war against Peking or negotiate peace? The Dalai Lama told people in Peking that the Americans had offered him arms and money if he would fight the Communists. I do not guarantee this for I have it at second hand, but since Washington has given arms and money to every regime on the edges of China which is willing to fight the Communists, one is not

surprised to be told that they offered it in Yatung.

Then the wire came from Apei that Agreement was reached with Peking whereby Tibet acknowledged its long existence "within the boundaries of China" and agreed to "return to the motherland," while its local government and the powers of the Dalai Lama and income of the monasteries remained unchanged. A representative of the Central Government, Chang Ching-wu, had set out from Peking to report to the Dalai Lama about the Agreement. He would reach the Dalai Lama before Apei arrived, for he would go by plane to India and thence by trail to Yatung.

Chang Ching-wu, whom also I interviewed in Peking, told me that he reached Yatung on July 14, 1951, having been met at the border by two officials and fifteen bodyguards, sent by the Dalai Lama to escort him to Yatung. In Yatung Chang Ching-wu conferred with the Dalai Lama and his ministers and then went on to Lhasa, reaching it on August 8. The Dalai Lama followed him to Lhasa on August 17. Being now seventeen, though not yet of age, he had dismissed in Yatung his pro-British regent and himself taken power and decided not to go to India but to return to Lhasa to hear Apei's full report.

We return to Apei as he reaches Lhasa in late August, after two months' journey by horse. "In Lhasa I reported at once to the Dalai Lama, who had returned from Yatung. He endorsed the Agreement. I also reported to all the officials of the local government, both clerical and lay. They all discussed the Agreement at length and in detail and agreed to it

unanimously. The Dalai Lama then sent a wire to Mao Tse-tung personally confirming the Agreement.”

The Dalai Lama’s wire to Mao Tse-tung is a matter of record. It was sent on October 21, and it read, in part:

The delegates of both parties, on a friendly basis, signed an Agreement on the measures for the peaceful liberation of Tibet. The Tibetan local government and the monks and people of Tibetan nationality are giving the Agreement unanimous support. Under the leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the Central People’s Government, they are actively helping the People’s Liberation Army units marching into Tibet to strengthen national defense, drive imperialist forces from Tibet and safeguard the unification of the territorial sovereignty of the motherland.

Apei continues his story. “After this the Dalai Lama and the local government of Tibet gave me the task of meeting the People’s Liberation Army and installing its units in posts on the national frontier as the Agreement provided. I helped the PLA take posts on the border towards India and Nepal. At the end of 1951 the Tibetan Military Area of the PLA was formed and I became its Deputy Commander-in-Chief, still remaining one of the six *kaloons* of the local government of Tibet.

“In both these posts I continued until last March when the local government of Tibet was dissolved by order of the State Council because of the rebellion.

You will find my work in my report to the congress.”

Since Apei's report to the National People's Congress covers eleven typed pages, I shall not burden my readers with its details. I note, however, that the details of the Chamdo battle, and of the Agreement signed in Peking, would seem to settle some of the questions in the discussion about Tibet that continues abroad.

Peking never “invaded Tibet in 1950” as commonly considered abroad. The PLA entered Chamdo in 1950, then part of Sikang Province, defeated the Tibetan army there and halted eight months until the 1951 Agreement was signed with the Dalai Lama, after which the PLA proceeded to Lhasa by the terms of the Agreement as the “national army of defense.” Chinese, of course, consider that Tibet has been for seven hundred years a part of China and that to enter Tibet itself would not have been “invasion,” but in view of conflicts, claims and counter-claims of the recent years they punctiliously waited in Chamdo, until the Agreement for “peaceful liberation” was signed. Only on the double assumption that Tibet was an independent nation and that Chamdo was part of Tibet could Peking's action in 1950 be called an “invasion.” Both assumptions are made by supporters of the Dalai Lama in India, but neither assumption has been supported by any recognition by major powers or by maps of the past half century.

Chamdo, however, which the Ching emperors cut from Tibet and which Apei again lost to the PLA, was returned to Tibet in 1955 by the National People's

Congress of China. Sikang Province, a late creation of the Ching emperors, was abolished, its eastern part going to Szechwan and its western part to Tibet, with boundary at the Kinsha River, the upper Yangtze. What Tibet twice lost in war, it gained in peace, through the Chinese sense of justice to minor nationalities. Chamdo's actual incorporation into Tibet has been delayed because the formation of the Tibetan Autonomous Region was itself delayed by the *kasha's* opposition. Chamdo, however, is on the committee to form the new Tibet, making speeches and voting with all the others, and its future status in Tibet is already recognized in statistical tables. This little detail shows how difficult are generalizations about Tibet where boundaries have changed often.

A reading of the 1951 Agreement should settle some questions of "sovereignty" and "autonomy." Whatever the past claims, the Tibetans now agreed that they had "a long history within the boundaries of China," and that they would "return to the motherland," recognizing Peking as the Central Government, while Peking recognized that Tibet had "autonomy." The nature of that autonomy is defined in the Agreement itself. It is "national regional autonomy under the leadership of the Central Government... and in accordance with the policy laid down in the Common Program."<sup>1</sup>

Such "autonomy" is not "independence" nor a "buffer state." As already achieved in Inner Mon-

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix for full text.

golia, Sinkiang and Kwangsi, "regional autonomy" includes respect for a region's language, customs and religion. Local people handle local affairs and elect their deputies to the National People's Congress of China. This "autonomy" does not give the right to secession, nor the right to maintain indefinitely a social or economic system that violates the Common Program. This "Common Program" is socialism. Tibet in 1951 agreed to move towards socialism, in its own way and at its own speed but "under the Central Government's leadership."

Specific pledges further defined the "autonomy." Peking agreed "not to abolish the existing political structure," nor the "powers of the Dalai Lama," nor "the income of the monasteries" and not to "use compulsion for reform." The local government agreed to effect reform in its own way, to install the People's Liberation Army as the national army and to incorporate the Tibetan army into it.

Did Peking keep its promises? Did the *kasha*, Tibet's local government, keep theirs?

Apei told me that the Central Government did its part but the local *kasha* did not. The Central Government built three great highways, to connect Tibet with the rest of China. This advantaged all Tibetans, for the easier transport greatly lessened the cost of all consumer goods. "The Central Government," said Apei, "paid high prices to private owners for the land to build these roads, which was never done in Tibet before. The power of the local officials remained as before: officials at all levels kept their posts. No



damage was done to any monastery in the Tibet region.” (To my further question Apei explained that he referred to the period prior to the March rebellion and did not include the time of fighting in Lhasa which will be elsewhere described.)

To implement Tibet's autonomy and unity, said Apei, the Central Government gave Chamdo to Tibet in 1955 and created in 1956 the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region, with fifty-five members of whom fifty were Tibetans, representing the different areas in Tibet. The Dalai Lama was chairman, the Panchen Erdeni was first vice-chairman, a Living Buddha from Chamdo was also a vice-chairman, and Apei himself was Secretary-General. Such a committee should be able not only to draw a constitution for an “Autonomous Region,” but to bring unity of four Tibetan areas between which conflict had existed. These were the area of “U,” of which the Dalai Lama was direct ruler, with the *kasha* as cabinet and some 600,000 population; the area of Houtsang, ruled by the Panchen Erdeni and with 150,000 people; and the newly added Chamdo Area, with 260,000 people, ruled by local lords, but in which had been continuous strife. The Preparatory Committee, with representatives from all these regions, was expected to unify them and mediate strife.<sup>1</sup>

“The PLA behaved like the people's own sons,” said Apei. “They molested nobody and paid for everything

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<sup>1</sup>There was strife between the nobles of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen, and between Chamdo nobles and the *kasha*.

they took. The people of Tibet and some strata of the upper and middle classes, were won by Peking's policy to love Peking and the PLA. But there was a reactionary section of the serf-owners who intended to keep serfdom without change. They delayed reform and hindered even the building of schools and hospitals and roads. They never incorporated the Tibetan army into the PLA but kept it a serf army with nobles as top officers, a heavy burden on the people who had to make the uniforms and boots without pay.'

"Most people," said Apei, "know that the time has come to end serfdom. The demand is urgent for reform. This reform will affect the income of the upper class and of the monasteries. Peking had agreed to provide compensation for former owners. The Central Government was patient: when no reform was begun by 1956, they agreed to wait another six years. This did not satisfy the reactionaries: they wanted serfdom forever. Our serfdom is a very dark system."

How dark that serfdom was, with its floggings and maimings and arbitrary killing of serfs will be left till a later chapter, as will also the account of Apei's part in the Lhasa rebellion, where he carried the Dalai Lama's last exchange of letters with General Tan. I shall close this with the last question I put to Apei. "Now that the rebellion is crushed, with the top rebels fled to India and others captured, how fast will the reform of serfdom proceed?"

Apei smiled. "Tibet will change very fast now. Even in the upper class there are some people in

deep sympathy with the reform. Most of the chiefs of the opposition fled or were captured, and a few are hiding out in the hills. The rebellion and its quelling have opened the way.

“I cannot tell you how fast it will go, for we had little time in Lhasa to discuss it. The Preparatory Committee was given power as local government only on March 28 and we left for Peking on April 8. In those ten days we were all too busy putting down rebels and forming new county governments to plan the reform.

“So what I can say is only my own opinion. The lands of the rebels will be confiscated and their serfs freed; this will take care of part of the problem. Nobles who did not rebel will be compensated; the Central Government has promised this. It will not be too costly for Peking to support Tibet’s nobles on their present living standard. Tibet itself will become prosperous when serfdom goes. I think the arrangements with each will differ and will be determined by consultation.

“My personal view is that the arrangements will be completed and serfdom ended by some time before the end of 1960. We say ‘step by step’ but already the first steps are taken. On the lands of the rebels, the serfs have been told that the harvest they sow this year is their own. This is only an emergency measure to promote the sowing, but it is the kind of measure from which one does not retreat. Already the PLA troops help in the sowing. The great whips of the serf-owners are already confiscated and flog-

ging forbidden, when the PLA men, putting down rebellion, swept through the land. The process for ending serfdom has already begun.”

I mentioned to Peking friends Apei's prediction that 1960 would see the end of serfdom in Tibet. They smiled: “If Apei says it, you can quote it. He is the man who has the job to do.”

Behind their smile there was a touch of reticence that I thought I understood. Apei and the Panchen Erdeni had the job of abolishing serfdom from the top, through channels of government and law and compensation. Some fifteen hundred runaway serfs like Lachi and Gada had the job of abolishing it from the bottom, by organizing the serfs.

For a thousand years no serf dared sit down in the room with a noble or face him directly on the road. How would the two jobs mix? Even in the National Minorities Institute it took time and discussion before students from the two sharply divided classes could work at ease together.

That would be Apei's problem and Tibet's and China's. For all of them the quelling of the rebellion had opened the way.

### III. GODS AS RULERS

When the Dalai Lama came to Peking in 1954 as a deputy to the National People's Congress, thousands of pilgrims flocked from Inner Mongolia to do him reverence. Elsie Epstein told me that she saw them going on trams to the Lama Temple where His Holiness was staying. They came decked in all their wealth in the form of silver and turquoise ornaments — brooches, breast-plates, hair diadems — and they left it all with the Dalai Lama as donation, receiving in return a small red cord His Holiness had blessed.

To get from official Buddhist sources the history of Tibet's Buddhism and the two Grand Lamas in their relation to China, I went to the Temple of Broad Charity in Peking, the center of organized Buddhism in China. It stands somewhat north of the old imperial palace on a street named for the sheep-market to which long ago it led. The temple was built in the twelfth century, a century before Kublai Khan "took Tibet into China." Many times in past centuries it has fallen into disrepair and been again restored. Extensive repairs and redecoration have been done in recent years with contributions from the present Chinese government. It is a rather typical temple with stone

courts and colonnades, which houses also a monastery, many sacred relics and the offices of the All-China Buddhist Association.

The Venerable Shirob Jaltso, seventy-six-year-old Chairman of the Buddhist Association, is a Tibetan who studied theology in Lhasa for thirty-two years, from the age of twenty-one to fifty-three. I met him first at a diplomatic reception, a man of gentle but authoritative mien in robes of orange and magenta who was neatly avoiding the wine and meat sandwiches as a proper Buddhist monk. He agreed to an interview. Later I heard him address the National People's Congress, of which he is a deputy, on the subject of the Dalai Lama's alleged statement in Tezpur, India, which he, in common with most people in China, was ready to brand as a fake. He expressed "profound affection for the people of Tibet," and said: "Now that the Tibetan rebel clique has been put down, the big mountain on the shoulders of the people has been removed."

"As a Tibetan and a Buddhist," stated the Venerable Shirob, "I endorse fully the stand of the People's Government to put down the rebellion thoroughly and dissolve the local Tibetan government that instigated it." He made an eloquent plea to the Dalai Lama: "My revered Dalai Lama, I want to offer you a *hata* (ceremonial scarf) from afar. Free yourself from the grip of the reactionary clique and return to the motherland to join in building the Tibetan plateau into a real paradise on earth. Do not lose the trust the people have placed in you." He pled even with the rebel leaders:

“Some of you have been my pupils and some have been my friends. Now you have betrayed the motherland and turned into my enemies.” He advised them solemnly that “there is no future” in this course but only “deplorable exile” and the “people’s judgment.” He begged them to repent, “for the people are lenient to those who return with sincere remorse.”

Such is the quality of the Venerable Shirob. To foreign readers a special interest may attach to the list he gave of contributions made to Buddhist shrines and temples by the present government of China. He noted: the restoration of the Wutaishan Shrine, which the Japanese destroyed; the restoration of the Gumbum Monastery, birth-place of Tson Khapa who founded the Yellow Sect; the restoration of the Chiatsun Monastery in Chinghai, birth-place of the present Dalai Lama; the restoration of the Yung Ho Monastery in Peking and the Lingyin Monastery in Hangchow; the careful restoring of many Buddhist paintings in caves, especially the caves of Tunhuang. He noted that when the Foreign Minister Chen Yi went to Lhasa in 1956 to greet the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region, he “provided meals for more than two hundred thousand lamas and gave gifts and contributions to the monasteries. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

“Even the merits of the China’s Emperor Liang Wu Ti and India’s Emperor Asoka, known in the annals as defenders of Buddhism, cannot be compared to the

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<sup>1</sup> Most estimates say Tibet has 150,000 lamas. See Chao Puchu below.

boundless merits of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao Tse-tung," was the sweeping praise the Venerable Shirob gave. For most people outside China, this casts an unexpected light on Chairman Mao!

An American friend of mine, however, has seen the Lingyin Temple in Hangchow and was much impressed by the restoration done. "A wonderful temple and a site that is one of the beauty spots of the world," he said. "Chiang's soldiers left it wrecked. . . . The restoration must have cost a million. Tremendous columns of reinforced concrete were erected right through the time of the Korean war when steel and cement were in short supply. The former Buddha was so defaced it couldn't be used, so the Art Institute made an enormous new Buddha in camphorwood, carved by the best artists and handicraftsmen, a work of several years. It must be one of the finest Buddhas in the world. . . . So many of the old statues look like feudal lords or stolid men in a trance, but this is an artist's portrayal of compassion for mankind. The Communists must have set out to make a better Buddha than the Buddhists!"

The caretaker told my friend an anecdote that is too good to omit. Controversy arose between the monks and the artists over the exact position of the Buddha's feet, the monks demanding a pose which the artists said defied anatomy. . . . The question reached Premier Chou En-lai, who asked: "Is this for an art exhibit or a temple?" They replied that it was for a temple. "Then do what the monks ask," said Chou. . . . He carefully scrutinized the model and added: "And



change his hair. Buddha was an Indian. Make his hair like an Indian, not like a Chinese.”

The Chinese, it will be seen, whether religious or irreligious, take pride in their national monuments, and in the authenticity of their Buddhas. If citizens of Buddhist faith need temples, then national pride demands that these be proper ones. There are at times even practical benefits to be had from ancient memorials. The Temple of Broad Charity, for instance, contains as its most famous relic a “Tooth of Buddha,” brought from India in the fifth century. Long ago a Burmese king waged a war in an unsuccessful attempt to get it.<sup>1</sup> When the present Peking Buddhists were allowed to take it on loan to Burma for the 2,500th anniversary of Buddha’s entrance into Nirvana, the goodwill of nations was strengthened by the pomp and the thanks received.

When I came to the Temple of Broad Charity for my interview, the Venerable Shirob was packing to go to Stockholm to answer any questions on Tibet that the World Peace Congress might ask. He referred me to Chao Pu-chu, who could answer my questions just as well and in much less time than the Venerable Shirob, for the latter is fluent in Tibetan and Sanskrit but would have to be twice translated for me, while Chao speaks the tongue of Peking and so needs only a single interpreter. Chao is Vice-Chairman of the Bud-

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<sup>1</sup> Stated by Burmese as occurring in the 11th century. Not noted by available Chinese history.

dhist Association, and Chairman of San Shih Buddhist Institute, the organ of theological research. He led me to a long reception room full of ancient screens and ornamental scrolls, with windows along two walls looking into the temple's colonnades. Over the usual tea, the pale, unsweetened fragrant tea of China, he began a brief survey of Buddhism in the world.

The Fourth World Congress of Buddhists, said Chao, held in 1956 in Nepal, claimed that Buddhism is the religion of 550,000,000 people, about one-fifth the people of the world. It is hard to count Buddhists, however, for they do not join churches. If very religious, they become monks or nuns; if less religious, they come to temples on special occasions. In China, for instance, Buddhism has more followers than any other organized religion, but nobody could state with any accuracy how many Buddhists there are in China. One can, however, state that there are in China half a million Buddhist monks and nuns, of whom 150,000 are in Tibet.

There are two main schools of Buddhism and many variations within them. They differ in ceremonies and in basic theory. The Hinayana school teaches individual salvation, in that men seek in their present lives to become "Arhats," which means "freed from rebirth." This is the religion of much of South Asia, of Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos. The Mahayana school holds the opposite ideal of the Bodhisattva, the soul which, though freed from the chain of transmigration, comes back of its own will to help the world.

“For them,” said Chao, “Nirvana is not the ending of life. They appear again in the world of their own decision.”

The Mahayana school prevails in the northern belt, from Tibet across China, Mongolia and Korea into Japan. It has many sects. In China the main division is based on the language used in the Buddhist Sutras or scriptures. Some use the Han language, some the Tibetan and a few in the south use Pali, or Sanskrit. . . . In all these different groups different ceremonies and even different theories developed through the centuries.

“There is much respect for Tibet as a center of religious learning among all those Buddhists who use the Tibetan scriptures,” said Chao. “This includes Tibet itself and also Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, Mongolia and parts of China. In all these places Tibet is highly regarded as a center of religious learning and books.”

Chao admitted that “the Tibetan form of Buddhism” had been corrupted by many elements of Hinduism “even before it reached Tibet,” and had later added many local Tibetan superstitions. He did not elaborate this, apparently not wishing to criticize any Buddhist sect.

At this point I interrupt Chao Pu-chu to note that other authorities handle “Tibetan Buddhism,” which they call “Lamaism,” far less politely, they say that, however high its theory, its practise is debased by shamanism or “devil-worship” acquired from all the primitive tribes of Asia. Its “oracles” range from the traveling, fortune-telling lamas, both sought and feared by nomad herdsmen, to the great “State Oracle” of Lhasa,

who helps locate new incarnations of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni. After the recent rebellion in Lhasa, secret instructions were found from the rebels to the State Oracle, asking him "to bend" Tibet's past history and religion, in the direction of stressing Tibet's "independence."

Belief in devils reaches the point where, as we shall see in the following chapter, it becomes possible for the chiefs of monasteries, while calling themselves "Living Buddhas," to skin small children alive on the pretext that they are "incarnate devils," and must thus be treated to save the crops and herds. Belief in the sacredness of life, which did not avail to save these children, may be stressed to save lice and even bacteria against the attacks of modern medicine. Both Winnington and Epstein noted, in 1955 when a group of journalists visited Tibet, that many Tibetan medical workers went weekly to the temples to pray forgiveness for their sins in killing bacteria to save the cattle. They told of a physician in the new hospital in Chamdo who scrupulously ignored the lice crawling onto him from his patient.

"If I should make objections," he told the correspondents later, "I would lose the confidence of my patients. They have a religious attitude towards lice." It is on record that Tson Khapa, the founder of the Yellow Sect in the 14th century, won a famous debate in theology by suddenly noticing that his opponent was killing a louse, and by shouting that he heard the cries of the murdered creature from where he sat.

If Tibet's serfdom was, as Apei stated, a very dark serfdom, then many Buddhists in other lands consider the Tibetan form of Buddhism, also called "lamaism," as "a very dark Buddhism."

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I asked Chao Pu-chu if it were true that the Chinese Princess Wen Cheng of the Tang dynasty first introduced Buddhism into Tibet in 641 A.D. Most histories of Tibet begin with their king Sron-tsan Gampo, and there are fascinating fairy-tales told by Tibetans about his courtship of the Princess Wen Cheng. These relate the hard tests which the Tang emperor imposed on the many suitors of the princess and how the young prince from faraway Tibet, with his shrewd advisers, passed all tests and won the lady. We learn that the princess "brought Buddhism to Tibet as her dowry" and also silkworms and many arts and crafts, and built in Lhasa a temple as well as setting up silk culture. Her statue still stands in two of Lhasa's holiest places. Candor compels me to add that the same king also married a princess from Nepal, who also "brought Buddhism as her dowry" and built another temple. The competition in sects and temples in Tibet seems to start from an early day.

Chao Pu-chu, with the smile of a theological expert in dealing with amateurs, said that the princesses were indeed Buddhists, who built temples and created a favorable climate for Buddhism, but they "only brought part of Buddhism," chiefly the doctrine of mercy. Monasteries were not introduced for another hundred

years. Then a monk came from India with "a more complete doctrine" and with scriptures in Sanskrit. For a few centuries the Buddhist religion had its ups and downs. A king in the tenth century "abolished it," but later kings again permitted it. In those centuries people went from Tibet to India to study Buddhism in Sanskrit. By the twelfth century Buddhism sharply declined in India but Tibet itself became a center of Buddhist teaching, the scriptures having been translated into Tibetan.

Buddhism in the Tibetan form now began to spread with the power of the Mongol emperors behind it. No longer in Tibet was it possible for kings to "abolish Buddhism." The Buddhist monks themselves became the kings, and the monasteries spread their rule. This power was given them by the Chinese emperors, beginning with the Yuan, or Mongol Dynasty, about 1250 A.D. When Pagspa, the learned monk of Tibet, helped create an alphabet for the Mongols, the appreciative Kublai Khan named him "Prince of Tibet and Tutor to the Emperor." This confirmed in Tibet the merging of clerical and secular rule and also helped spread the "lama temples" and monasteries into Mongolia and China.

Kublai gave Pagspa a large area for his domain, naming him "King of the Law in the Western Land of the Buddha," as far as Kokonor. It is much as if one said in the Europe of that century: "Ruler of Lands of Christendom to the Northern Sea." . . . Some recent demands by the Dalai Lama from India for "greater Tibet" seem to aspire to the area once given by Kublai.

But history has moved in the seven centuries since Kublai's day.

It is not easy in these modern days of "nations" to think in terms of those old feudal sovereignties. There were no sharp boundaries then on the great plains, deserts and mountains in Asia's wild heart. There were nomad tribes of great variety living by herds, and nomad bandits living by loot; these were not wholly different from each other. Across this vast disorder the monasteries of Tibetan Buddhism marched northward as far as Buriat Mongolia, which is in the USSR today, while the fortified towns of the Chinese empire marched westward to "pacify the barbarian" and protect increasing settlers. Centuries back these two forms of organized life merged through both conquest and appreciation, the Chinese emperors promoting the religious control of the monasteries while prescribing their temporal powers.

The merging of priest with king, by appointment from Kublai, grew in Tibet into a tenacious theocracy, whose power extended wherever its monasteries grew. Far up into Mongolia the tribes became knit in a common religion through scriptures in the Tibetan tongue. Gold piled up through centuries in Lhasa from tribute squeezed from many nomads, only the nearer of which recognized the Dalai Lama as temporal lord, but all of whom paid him tribute through the monks. The similarity with the Holy Roman Empire of Europe is striking. But Tibet's dominance through monasteries lasted down into the present day. In 1927 when I travelled from Ninghsia north through Mongolia, we

met no signs of state power for weeks, but only the dominance of lonely monasteries over lonelier herds-men, until we reached Ulan-Bator and found at its city gate the passport control and customs post, the mark of the modern world. Remnants of monastery rule were seen in the pilgrims from Inner Mongolia who came to the Dalai Lama in Peking in 1954.

It was not merely religion, as the modern world conceives it, that spread from Lhasa to Mongolia. It was a tribute-collecting mechanism. From every monastery the chief, who usually was called a "Living Buddha," made regular pilgrimage to Lhasa, bringing the taxes from the tribes. If he failed to bring enough, he might not live to return home for he might find it hard to get return transport. If he failed to make the pilgrimage, he might be replaced. But the Chinese emperors were overlords, in forms appropriate to the era. Theirs was not always a tight control: it was control over great distances and under feudal forms. There were centuries when China broke into warring dynasties and other centuries in which power was strongly centralized. These conditions affected also Tibet.

All basic changes in Tibet from the time of Kublai, were made or sanctioned by the Chinese emperors, including the institution of the Dalai Lama itself. This institution was formed not in Kublai's day but four centuries later, by the first Ching (Manchu) emperor, who again found Tibet in a state of turmoil and appointed the Fifth Dalai Lama to unify it. He was the first Dalai Lama who thus exercised temporal power.



I asked Chao Pu-chu for the precise status of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni. Could one call them "god-kings"?

"That is a foreign term, distasteful to us," Chao replied. "The Hans use the term 'Living Buddha,' but this also is not quite accurate. The correct term in Tibetan is 'chu-gu,' which in Sanskrit is 'gu-ru.' It means 'revered teacher.' It is applied to incarnated beings who appear in the world of their own will. It is assumed that there are many 'chu-gu': how many, nobody knows."

I supplemented Chao's theology with the news that when I was in Mongolia in 1927, it was said there were a thousand "living gods" in Mongolia, and that Alan Winnington had reported in 1955 that the same number was estimated in Tibet. All heads of monasteries and even lesser dignitaries appeared to be "Living Buddhas." Chao nodded and remarked: "They may not really be 'chu-gu' even if they take the name," a comment to which I would agree.

The Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni, Chao continued, are "chu-gu," similar in essence to all the other "chu-gu" but the chief of all. They are supposed to be incarnations of the two chief disciples of Tson Khapa, the famous monk who in the fourteenth century founded the Yellow Sect, the form now dominant in Tibet. Spiritually the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni are "equal brothers." Since in mortal incarnations one may be born much older than the other, they are also known as "father-and-son," a single word implying a unified being. Whichever is older

helps direct the search for the other and assists at his installation. The two are supposed to be in "harmony." In our temporal world this is not always the case.

Not all Tibetans one meets would think of the Dalai Lama in Chao's abstract theological terms. The Fifth Dalai Lama, the first to make a name in history, "had a revelation" that he was also the incarnation of Chenrezi, an ancient "patron god of Tibet" from long before Buddhism, and that the Panchen had been his teacher. The relations between Dalais and Panchens are too complex to be more than hinted here. The term "god-king" may annoy theologians, but seems not far from the popular Tibetan view.

What mainly distinguishes the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni from other "chu-gu," according to Chao, is "their possession of temporal power. This was given them by the Chinese emperors."

The title "Dalai" is a Mongolian word meaning "ocean": it implies "ocean-like wisdom." It was first applied by a Mongolian king to the "third incarnation" of the appropriate disciple of Tson Khapa, but without giving temporal rule. As formalized by the first Ching emperor for the Fifth Dalai, who was given rule over Tibet, the full title became: "The Dalai Lama, King of the Law in the Western Land of the Buddha, Spiritual Lord on Earth, all-knowing, Holder of the Thunderbolt by Order of the Emperor." The powers implied were terrific, but the emperor was their source.

The Panchen Erdeni was elevated by the second Ching emperor who may have wished to "divide and

rule." He also was given temporal power over an area which differed with different emperors, but which in modern days was only twelve counties to the Dalai Lama's hundred and nine. The Panchen's title combines three languages, "pan" being Sanskrit for "wise," "chen" being Tibetan for "great," while "er-deni" means "jewel" in Manchu. He is thus the "Great Wise Jewel."

Confusion exists abroad as to whether the Panchen is "under the Dalai" or equal to him. The Panchen himself told me that "the two powers are parallel" and that this was stated "by many Chinese emperors." I shall go into greater detail on this in the chapter on the Panchen. Even a cursory view into history shows that at some times the Panchen was more prominent, at other times the Dalai. Emperor Chien Lung favored the Panchen, and built him a summer palace as part of his own imperial summer palace at Jehol, in order to have the benefit of his advice. The French priests who visited Tibet in the nineteenth century, found the Dalai Lamas a mere succession of pitiful infant victims, assassinated by their regent, while the Panchen was the strong man who sent a secret letter to the emperor, got an investigator and had the regent exiled. The prevalent belief in the West that the Dalai Lama is ruler over the Panchen, comes from the British penetration of this century, when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama yielded to British plans and was supported by them, while the Ninth Panchen fled into the interior of China for his life. Since most books on Tibet in this century were either written by British or on their in-

formation, they take the Dalai Lama as the supreme lord.

When I asked Chao about the murders of the Dalai Lamas, he said there was not much evidence on the subject and he clearly did not wish to discuss it. But barely a century ago a regent confessed to three murders<sup>1</sup> and similar events have occurred in later years. The Eleventh Dalai Lama met with sudden unexplained death in Potala Palace at the age of eighteen, the Twelfth died suddenly at the age of twenty. As late as 1947 the father of the present Dalai Lama was poisoned and his first regent strangled in prison in the struggle for power. Much murder has occurred in the high circles around the Dalai Lama as it did in Rome of the Borgia's day.

A feudal theocracy is not the holy thing the West likes to imagine. The religious and political system of Tibet was based on a dark, barbarous serfdom, in which the biggest serf-owners struggled for power. They did not unconditionally respect the Dalai Lama, even though they set him up as god and king. From babyhood they conditioned him to be worshipped by the people, but to take orders from the nobles through the hierarchy, which imposed its conditions, directed his life and even did him to death when they thought it useful. Of all the fourteen Dalai Lamas down the centuries, only two, the Fifth and the Thirteenth, wielded strong political power.

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<sup>1</sup>See chapter on Panchen.

Government by the *kasha*, the Dalai Lama's cabinet of ministers, was complicated. The *kasha* was originally composed of four *kaloons*, nobles both lay and clerical, but the number increased in modern days to six. Its decrees had to be sealed by the Dalai's Secretariat, a clerical body which thus kept veto on everything. Every government post was staffed with two persons, a layman and a clerical; they had to "agree," but the clerical ranked higher. This government handled the affairs of the upper class. Commoners were directly ruled by their masters. A serf-owner had power to cut off the hand or foot or gouge out the eyes of disobedient or runaway serfs. For a serf even to appeal from his master to any other law was a punishable crime.

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Let us hasten down those dark centuries to our present day. I quote from the Venerable Shirob, as he summed up Tibet's historical relations with China's emperors for the National People's Congress, but I sharply condense. "Tibet," he said, "has been one of China's administrative districts for seven hundred years." I here omit interminable feudal shifts of power and note only that "the Fifth Dalai Lama, the first to appear in the political arena, was appointed head of Tibet by the Central Government in the reign of the Emperor Kang Hsi" (1662-1723), that "the *kasha* as local government of Tibet was authorized in the time of the Seventh Dalai by the Central Government under Emperor Chien Lung (1736-1796)," that "the leading position of the Dalai Lama was thus bestowed

by the overall Chinese government then in power and the *kasha* was an administrative organ of the overall government." Thus the Venerable Shirob, from thirty years' study in Lhasa, sums up history.

At the height of Ching power, when Gurkas from Nepal invaded Tibet, both the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni appealed to the emperor for aid. Emperor Chien Lung in 1792 sent an army of 20,000 men who drove back the Gurkas with the aid of the Tibetans, no mean feat at a distance of 1,500 miles without roads. The Tibetans were grateful for this, but other acts of the Chings annoyed them. The early Chings pushed the borders of Chinghai south at the expense of Tibet. The last of the Chings formed Sikang Province, partly from lands that the Dalai Lama claimed.<sup>1</sup>

As the Chinese empire weakened under pressures of Western imperialists, the British pushed into Tibet at the turn of the century. What they took by force, they sought at once to legalize by treaty with China. Thus the Younghusband Expedition in 1904 dictated a treaty in Potala Palace, but turned to Peking to collect the indemnity of 750,000 pounds imposed on Tibet and made another treaty with China two years later to supplement and modify the first. To the end of the empire, China's sovereignty over Tibet went unchallenged.

The claims made today by Tibetan rebels in India that Tibet was "practically independent" after the empire fell, are based on the decades of disunion in China, when warlords ruled various provinces, and when

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<sup>1</sup> See Chamdo in preceding chapter.

Chiang Kai-shek, who rose to power in 1927, only succeeded in unifying part of China, which was almost at once involved in a long war with Japan. Chiang never gained control of Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang or Tibet. Britain used the slogan of "Tibetan independence" in this period to cover her own growing dominance. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama at first vacillated, and then fell in with Britain's plans, and, at least on one occasion, declared severance from China. In this he was not supported by all the nobles or monasteries nor by the Panchen, who fled into exile.

Even in those days of China's weakness and disunity, signs appeared that Tibetans considered themselves part of China. The approval of China's Central Government was still sought to validate the choice of a Dalai Lama or Panchen Erdeni. "All incarnations have to have the approval of the Central Government," said Chao Pu-chu flatly. This was sought both by the present Dalai Lama and the present Panchen.

"When the present Dalai Lama was discovered in Chinghai," continued Chao, "agreement had to be reached with the Kuomintang to install him in Lhasa. When he went to Lhasa, it was with armed escort of Chiang Kai-shek's troops. His formal installation was done by a minister appointed by Chiang, according to the tradition of centuries." When the Dalai Lama recently, after reaching India, began to assert independence from China, a certain man named Cheng Chien sputtered in Peking. He was the general who, under Chiang Kai-shek, formally approved the present Dalai Lama and permitted his elevation as a god!

No foreign power in seven hundred years has recognized Tibet as a separate nation or sent an ambassador to Lhasa. Whatever uncertainties from the period of British penetration might have clouded China's title, were dispelled in 1951 when the Dalai Lama signed the Agreement with Peking, by which Tibet "returned to the motherland" and abjured "foreign imperialists."<sup>1</sup>

Let us not mistake the nature of that Agreement nor its importance for both sides. Whatever the Dalai Lama now says about it, he needed that Agreement for his own status and local government, as much as Peking needed it for the unification of China. The new People's Republic was showing the strength to consolidate the unity that had fallen apart with the empire. And without the recognition of its Central Government, the Dalai Lama faced only exile or endless, fruitless war. Nor can all the wishful thinking of the Voice of America hide the fact that this is still his case.

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Before leaving Chao Pu-chu I went with him into the inner shrine of the temple which contains the most sacred relics. In the middle of the room in a huge glass case, stood the elaborate jewelled receptacle that contained the "Buddha's tooth." Chao stood before it for a moment in an attitude that seemed close to worship. Then he moved quickly to show me the pictures of the "Thousand Buddha Pagoda" that once stood on

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<sup>1</sup>See preceding chapter.



the Western Hills as a shrine for this "tooth," but which the Eight Invading Imperialist armies in 1900 destroyed. Cabinets in the walls were full of ancient Buddhist manuscripts from the Ming Dynasty, using real gold in ornamental design. . . . There were gifts here from Burma, from Cambodia, from Japan and from Nepal.

Two gifts were there in that central shrine from the present Dalai Lama. They were given in 1954 on his visit to Peking. They made an odd contrast. One was a shaft of cloisonné several feet long, which served as a receptacle for what was said to be "a grain of a bone of the Buddha." The other was a framed poem in the Dalai's own hand, in praise of Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

The Dalai Lama likened the brilliance and work of Mao to those of Brahma, the creator of the world, and said that "only from an infinite number of good deeds can such a leader be born." He said:

Your will is like the gathering of clouds, your call  
like thunder,

From these comes timely rain to nourish selflessly  
the earth.

Even through a double translation, it seems that the Dalai Lama has the feeling, the metaphor and the extravagance of a poet. He was happier as that poet than he is today.

## *Hymn to Chairman Mao*

The great national leader of the Central People's Government, Chairman Mao, is the cakravarti<sup>1</sup> born out of boundless fine merits. For a long time I wished to write a hymn praying for his long life and the success of his work. It happened that the Klatsuang-kergun Lama of Kantsu Monastery in Inner Mongolia wrote me from afar, saluting me and asked me to write a poem. I agreed to do so, as it coincides with my own wishes.

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama Dantzen-Jaltso  
at Norbulin-shenfu Palace, 1954

*O, the Triratna,<sup>2</sup> (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha)  
which bestow blessings on the world,  
Protect us with your incomparable and blessed light  
which shines forever!*

(The above is customary invocation preceding a hymn. The poem itself follows.)

*O! Chairman Mao! Your brilliance and deeds are  
like those of Brahma and Mahasammata, creators  
of the world,*

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<sup>1</sup> Cakravarti, a holy, powerful monarch.

<sup>2</sup> Triratna, the Trinity of Buddha, Dharma (the Law) and Sangha, the congregation of believers.

*Only from an infinite number of good deeds can such a leader be born, who is like the sun shining over the world.*

*Your writings are precious as pearls, abundant and powerful as the high tide of ocean reaching the edges of the sky.*

*O! most honorable Chairman Mao, may you long live!*

*All people look to you as to a kind protecting mother, they paint pictures of you with hearts full of emotion,*

*May you live in the world forever and point out to us the peaceful road!*

*Our vast land was burdened with pain, with shackles and darkness.*

*You liberated all with your brilliance. People now are happy, full of blessings!*

*Your work for peace is a white jewelled umbrella, giving shade over heaven and earth and mankind. Your fame is like golden bells on the umbrella, ringing and turning forever in the sky!*

*Our foe, the blood-thirsty imperialists, are poisonous snakes, and messengers of the devil furtively crawling,*

*You are the undaunted roc which conquered the poisonous serpent. To you be power!*

*The cultural and industrial constructions which make the people prosperous and defeat the enemy's armed forces are like a vast sea;*

*These constructions develop continuously until they shall make this world as full of satisfaction as heaven.*

*The perfect religion of Sakyamuni (Buddha) is like  
a Moonlight pearl lamp shining bright.*

*It is like a perfumed pearl ornament which we wear  
without prohibition. O! Of this we are proud!*

*Your will is like the gathering of clouds, your call  
like thunder,*

*From these comes timely rain to nourish selflessly  
the earth!*

*As the Ganges River rushes precious and to all the  
earth*

*The cause of peace and justice will bring to all people  
boundless joy!*

*May our world gradually become as happy as Para-  
dise!*

*May the torch of the world, our great leader, be lit  
forever!*

*(The hymn proper ends here, the following be-  
ing the customary prayer for the realization of  
the hymn.)*

*May the powers of the benevolent Bodhisattvas, the  
resourceful Dharma-Protector, and the truthful  
words of the Maharishis make these good hopes  
true!*

*(Translation made from Tibetan to Chinese to  
English.)*

#### IV. CURTAIN-RAISER TO REBELLION

“Have you seen the Exhibition?” everyone in Peking was asking in tones of mingled interest and horror in spring of 1959. You knew from the tone what exhibition they meant. It would not be the Hungarian Art Exhibition, or the Chinese Traditional Style Paintings, or the Czechoslovak Puppet Films, or the Graphic Arts of Kwangtung, or the Polish Stamps or the Children’s Art Exhibit, all of which were announced in Peking in those months, for Peking has many exhibitions. The tone meant the Exhibition on the Uprisings in Szechwan, Chinghai and Kansu, with the gory details of serfdom, being shown in the Labor Insurance Exhibition Hall.

This exhibition, travelling from city to city, was awakening the Chinese people to what serfdom meant in Tibet. The past had been dark enough in the central provinces of China, under the Empire and the Kuomintang, but not as dark as in Tibet. Now for the first time the instruments of torture were collected and on display, together with the whole skins of small children, who had been flayed alive in the depths of monasteries on the pretext that they were incarnate demons. There were also air-drops of American tommy-guns and radio transmitters, sent by Chiang Kai-

shek in his American-given planes to promote rebellion against Peking. The rebellions were crushed; the evidence was in.

These were the small, preliminary revolts in the Tibetan Autonomous "chous" and counties, in provinces adjacent to Tibet. They were planned and incited from Lhasa by ministers and high clerical officials of the Dalai Lama. After the Dalai Lama's trip to Peking in 1954-55, where he had presented that glowing Hymn To Mao Tse-tung which compared Mao to "Brahma, the Creator," His Holiness had toured many Chinese cities and expressed enthusiasm for "the motherland's great achievements," and patriotic pride in belonging to this mighty People's Republic of China. Then he had gone home by the Szechwan-Lhasa Highway built by the People's Liberation Army, one of the world's highest, hardest and most scenic roads. On the way back, some persons of his entourage dropped off in Kantse Autonomous Chou (district) in Szechwan, on pretext of religious business with the monasteries, and laid the base for future revolt.

Since, later in that year of 1955, a party of two score journalists from a dozen countries journeyed to Lhasa along that same road with an "entourage" of about a hundred interpreters, chauffeurs and other attendants, we have a vivid description from Alan Winnington<sup>1</sup> of what Kantse was like. Kantse Chou is the most westerly 60,000 square miles of Szechwan Province,

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<sup>1</sup> Winnington, *Tibet*, Lawrence and Wishart, London.

with a population of half a million people, mostly of Tibetan nationality. At least one in five of the males was a monk. Its capital, Kantse, was a typical mediaeval town, consisting chiefly of a fortress, a monastery and a market-place. The immediate area around the capital, Kantse county, had 36,913 people by the census of 1953, of whom 17,421 were males, and of these 12,097 were monks. . . . That makes two-thirds of the males monks, but the proportion is probably more concentrated in Kantse County than in the larger area, the Kantse Chou, since men from other districts may enter the monasteries near the county seat. There were forty-nine monasteries listed in Kantse County.

“Kantse’s streets,” writes Winnington, “are full of monks of all ages and classes, wealthy monks in the finest claret cashmere, poor monks in tattered homespun that may once have been dyed, monks of three years old and impudent boy monks. Many of the stalls on the street were conducted by monks, some on their own behalf, some for the monastery. . . . Like every Tibetan town and Tibetan family, Kantse is partly in and partly out of the monastery but that part that is in dominates the part that is out, physically, economically and socially. . . . Kantse Chou has never been reckoned under the rule of the Dalai Lama, but yet was ethnically Tibetan with the same kind of social system in which the lands and herds were owned by the monasteries and the tribal nobility.”

Those unacquainted with the Tibetan monastery system will be surprised both at the tender age of some monks and at the great difference in wealth

among monks. Boys may be put into the monastery by their families while still babies, but a more usual age is around eight, when they are considered old enough to work. Monks from wealthy or noble families keep their status in the monastery and often become heads of monasteries, while the monks from serf families remain lifelong servants within monastery walls.

Kantse, however, was "liberated" in 1950, and changes occurred by the time the journalists passed through in 1955. The area had become a Tibetan Autonomous Chou, or district, under its own chosen council of twenty-three Tibetans, two Hans, one Yi and one Moslem, this being about the proportion in the population. Most members on the council were from the old governing class of nobles and clericals, but there was a vice-chairman who had actually come from a serf family. His name was Sonam, and he had joined the old Red Army of the Communists when they passed through this area in the Long March. He had been educated by them and had come back to his former home as an active organizer.

"Our two biggest problems," he told the visiting journalists, as reported by Winnington, "are clan warfare and *ula*." This last is the unpaid labor which may be required of serfs by anyone who has an order from the government for transport. The peasants to whom this order is presented must at once furnish beasts of burden, or act as porters themselves over long distances, often taking their own food, and standing the loss of any animals that die on the way. . . . Many instances



occurred of serfs who died of starvation while performing this unpaid labor. *Ula* had a long tradition and Sonam said "it was a delicate matter" to tackle. But the governing council of Kantse Chou finally decided to pay for all such labor, since Peking agreed to furnish the cash. No laws had yet been passed in 1955 prohibiting *ula* for the local nobles, but, with the government setting example, *ula* was becoming less.

It took several conferences of clan leaders, monastery chiefs and herdsmen to get general agreement that the clan wars should cease. The Chou government then acted as mediator, and within five years had settled no less than 1,808 conflicts, ranging from two major wars between areas down to ordinary cattle-rustling. Many old family and clan feuds went back so far that nobody now remembered how they had started.

Kantse Chou is a wild area of very high mountains and very deep valleys, where the upper courses of China's greatest rivers lie. Crossing Bird Mountain, a pass 16,600 feet high, two thousand feet higher than the highest mountain peak in the United States, the party of journalists came to De Ge Gonchen, which means "The Big Monastery of De Ge," a town consisting again of a great lamasery, the lord's castle, and the adobe huts of the common folk. Here they met the Lady Janyang Bomo, also known as the Queen of De Ge, since she ruled over 70,000 serfs, mistress of one of the largest of the Tibetan tribes. She told the party: "There are thirty hereditary clan leaders under

me and under them are some eighty smaller leaders. . . . From the thirty, I select . . . my ministers.”

After crossing the Kinsha River, the upper reaches of the Yangtze, which since 1955 has been the boundary between Szechwan and Chamdo, and after crossing three more majestic ranges by passes running up to 15,000 feet, the party finally reached the city of Chamdo, of which we have heard in previous chapters.

The entire area is thus very high, wild country, split by rivers difficult to cross and by breath-taking passes, with a few scattered walled towns where nobles lived in castles, and a very large number of monasteries all over the countryside, dominating a population in which a large proportion of the males became monks. In 1955, a few results were discernible from the new Central Government in Peking. Clan wars were beginning to be mediated, *ula* was discouraged but not abolished, a new highway brought trade and contact with the lowlands, and hospitals had been brought into some of the towns. What was called “the democratic reform,” which meant the recognition of serfs as free citizens, and which would lead up to land reform, giving land to the serfs, was just beginning in Kantse Chou, but not yet in Chamdo, since Chamdo was already reserved as part of the future Tibetan Autonomous Region, and would make its reforms with the rest of the larger Tibet.

It was into such an area that some of the Dalai Lama’s retainers dropped off in late 1955, and organized for rebellion, on two potent slogans: the preservation of religion, and the exaltation of Tibetan nation-

alism. The facts came out much later, after the rebellion was suppressed. They may now be found most graphically in the Exhibition, and most consecutively from the Commission on Nationalities at the State Council. I got the information from both places and also from Chang Ching-wu, representative of the Central Government in Tibet.

In 1955, said a representative from the Minorities Commission, Living Buddha Tze Tsiang went around the southern part of the Chou to organize rebellion, while Gama Ba went around the northern part on the same errand. Two kinds of documents, later discovered, give the nature of the appeal. One was the "Four Rivers and Six Ranges" organization, which promoted the idea of a Greater Tibet, to be organized under and through the monasteries and to include every area where Tibetans lived. When finally the headquarters of this organization was traced to Lhasa, its promoters claimed that it was merely a fund-collecting agency for the Dalai Lama. Under its shelter, however, a conspiracy for rebellion went on.

This appeared from various documents captured at different times and in different places. In the Kantse Chou, in 1957, two documents were found, both of which showed on their face that they had been printed in 1954 in India. They were in Tibetan, and the first was entitled: "For a Tibetan State," and contained the preliminary rules of the alliance which had a "Greater Tibet" as its aim. It was widely distributed among serf-owners. Another document called "Program for a New Republic," called specifically for Tibet-

ans in Szechwan, Chinghai and Kansu to establish a separate Tibetan State.

Another document found on the dead body of a rebel killed during the fighting in Chinghai Province, was a "proclamation" of the "Defend Religion and Anti-Communist Army." This bore a seal of the organization in Lhasa and was addressed to the "same army," in Szechwan, Chinghai and Kansu. It began by announcing that "the present enemy of our religion and the common enemy of all living creatures, the Communist Party, is revealing its original form, the Dobu (name of a species of devil). They are bombing big and small monasteries up from the sky and shelling them from the ground. . . . They slaughter cruelly and without discrimination innocent people. . . . They take children away from their parents and send them to places where their parents cannot see them." . . . The proclamation then announced that "Defend Religion and Anti-Communist Armies are appearing everywhere. . ." and urges the recipients to organize. "We must exterminate these evil people until not even their names remain."

At the time when these proclamations were circulated, not only had no monasteries been "bombed from the sky and shelled from the ground" by the Communists, but the representatives from Peking in the areas inhabited by Tibetans, had not even yet ventured to curtail the vast lands of the monasteries, nor their serf system, nor even enforce rules against their exorbitant usury rates, which often made debtors of entire families for some small loan of grain made

decades ago to a grandfather. The monasteries were still lordling it over the tribes with little hindrance, but their chiefs were sensitive to the approach of a new power which might threaten their rule. As they were later to do in Lhasa, they struck in advance.

The rebellion in the Kanting area (Kantse Chou) broke in winter of 1955-56. At the time there was no force of the People's Liberation Army in the area, but only the local police of the newly organized autonomous counties, which were made up of mixed nationalities. The rebellion took the form of murder of Central Government personnel, and Han citizens. When the army reached any place, they could put down the rebels at once, but the area is large and wild, and the rebels spread over the back country, communicating through the monasteries. As the Szechwan area was cleared, they infiltrated into Chamdo, where they had another hundred thousand square miles of mountains to roam. . . . When beaten in Chamdo, a considerable part of these rebels went into the areas of Tibet nearer to Lhasa and joined the next rebellion under direct Lhasa command. These were the forces known as "Khampas," or "the Sikang troops," and were cavalry, wild, undisciplined, living by loot.

This Szechwan-Chamdo rebellion was "basically suppressed" by the end of 1956. It is estimated that there were some 10,000 at the highest point. A few still left in the hills will probably remain there as long as they are supplied with food from the monasteries or from local nobles. Only when land reform, the freeing of serfs, both outside and inside the monas-

teries, and the subsequent organization of local community governments destroys the food base for outlaws, will the last of them surrender.

“Where did they get arms?” I asked.

“There were at least 50,000 rifles in that area, left from the clan wars and the warlord battles,” my informant said.

I asked whether the Lady of De Ge was personally implicated in the rebellion. This was pure curiosity because I had read Winnington’s account of her and had seen her in 1959, still a deputy to the National People’s Congress of China, and still presumably queen over some tens of thousands of serfs in Chamdo, though her Szechwan areas were “under reform.” I was told that one of her tribal chiefs had taken part in the rebellion but the lady herself was “not implicated.”

The revolts in Chinghai and Kansu came a full two years later. They had no connection with the Szechwan-Chamdo revolt except that all were organized from Lhasa, and under the top leadership of a *kaloön* named Neusha. They all were carried on through the monasteries and the serf-owners, and demanded a separate Greater Tibet, ruled by the nobles and the monasteries. Participants not only had the document of the “Four Rivers and Six Ranges” and the “Defend Religion and Anti-Communist Army,” but also distributed very strong and potent “Curses” against the Communists which were later found pasted in abbots’ prayer-rooms behind mirrors or holy pictures, to be used in the daily devotions.

In Chinghai and Kansu the revolts broke out in spring of 1958, as a protest against the "democratic reform" which had been promoted in the previous winter, and which aroused armed resistance from landlords, pasture lords and monastery chiefs. These revolts were much smaller than the earlier revolt, and had some 2,000 to 3,000 rebels in each. In Kansu the revolt was over by mid-summer, in Chinghai by late autumn, except in a few nomad areas where it dragged into winter. I shall give more details of Kansu in discussing the Exhibition, for I met there and interviewed a former lama who took part in suppressing the revolt.

Here again we note that monasteries were very thick in proportion to population. In Kannan, the Tibetan Autonomous Chou of South Kansu, lamas comprised twenty percent of the total population, while in some counties lamas made up half of all males.

"How far did the democratic reform really affect the life of the monasteries?" I asked at the Nationalities Commission.

In the winter of 1957-58, they told me, the reform only went as far as reducing the excessive land rents and the very high usury which the monasteries charged the peasants and abolishing "feudal privileges." The monasteries previously held their own courts, and passed sentences against people, including imprisonment and torture, not only on monks but on laymen as well. These privileges were taken away in the 1957-58 reform, and monks were made amenable for crimes to the regular county courts. After the rebel-

lion was suppressed, the democratic reform went further and gave "personal freedom" to all the monks.

Formerly, the monks entered the monastery at a very early age, being put into it by their parents. "The monastery really compelled the people to enter their sons in the monastery," said the representative of the Nationalities Commission. "When once they entered, those from families of peasants or herdsmen became slaves for life to the higher lamas, who were usually of the upper class. If they ran away they were caught and brought back to punishment by torture, just like any other serfs. When 'freedom of person' was decreed for the monks, the overwhelming majority of the lamas were extremely glad. Their parents made joyous trips to the monastery to invite their sons home. In many cases they wanted to go back and take part in civil life and in labor on the land."

I asked whether any statistics existed as to the number of monks who thus left the monasteries. No statistics had yet been compiled. However, the very holy monastery known as Gumbum in Tibetan, and as Ta-erh in Han language, which was famous as the birthplace of Tson Khapa, the founder of the Yellow Sect, was reported as still having four or five hundred lamas.

"How many did it have formerly?" I asked.

"Several thousand."

"How do they now live?" I asked.

"They still get contributions from believers; nobody interferes with that. They are also allowed to keep considerable land, which they can work with their



The herdsman accuses: "That lord beat off my hands when I opposed his taking my wife."



Going to the meeting to accuse the pasture lords







A new co-operative at rest interval (Kantse)



"Ma, I want buttered tea."  
Former serf, now member  
of a Kantse co-operative,  
churns the unaccustomed tea



own labor if they wish. Or they can make contracts with local peasant communes to work the land for payment. They cannot exact unpaid labor any more. And if, as in Gumbum, it is mostly the older monks who remain while many of the young and able-bodied leave, the government gives the monastery a subsidy for maintenance.”

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The Exhibition of objects collected from these three minor rebellions showed the Chinese public for the first time the nature of Tibet's serfdom and monastic rule. It was hard for some, and will be still harder for the West, to believe the things I saw in the Exhibition in three large rooms of the Labor Insurance Exhibition Hall. They recalled the exhibits of mediaeval tortures I once, as a tourist, saw in Nuremberg.

The first room bore the prosaic title — “Before the Social Reform.” This was the veritable chamber of horrors. Here was exhibited the contents of a private prison in a monastery in Szechwan. There were handcuffs of many sizes, including small ones for small children; there were instruments for cutting off noses and ears, and other instruments for breaking off the hands. There were instruments for gouging out eyes, including a special stone cap with two holes in it that was pressed down over the head so that the eyes bulged out through the hole, in which position they were gouged out and hot oil was poured into the sockets. The victim usually died, but not always. There were also pictures of blinded victims that survived.

There were instruments for slicing off knee-caps, after which boiling oil was applied there also. Other instruments sliced off the heels or hamstringed men, making permanent cripples. There were instruments for sealing the forehead with a red hot brand. There were various kinds of whips for flogging, with wooden paddles, or with ropes or wires. There were special instruments for dis-embowelling.

Eighteen different ways of torture were here shown by paintings; they recalled things read long ago of the Middle Ages — strange and terrible methods of doing a man to death. He might be tied with ropes, one to each arm and leg and jerked apart by four horses, driven in different directions. He might be roasted alive, tied on a bronze horse with a fire built in its belly; or hung from a gallows with oil on his chest set afire. There is no need to mention more examples of the human imagination at its depraved worst.

There were pictures of victims still living: of a child of two with one eye put out, of two “activists” i.e. workers for the Communists, with noses and upper lips cut off, a woman who had been first raped and then had her nose cut off, a 78-year-old man whose ear was cut off because he refused to join the rebels, another “activist” with eyes gouged out and ears cut off, a cripple with heels cut off and another with hands cut off, these last being still in hospital.

Then came exhibits of an abnormality that made the previous horrors seem by contrast almost normal. These were the full skins of people, mostly of children, taken from their bodies while they lived, though

of course they died in the process. There were quite a number of these.

From Chinghai, the Huangnan Chou, the Lapo Temple, were two full skins of two small children skinned alive by two "Living Buddhas," named Tang Chiu-yen and Lung Tze, both of whom had been arrested, and the second of whom had been executed for his action, though he protested that the little girl, skinned in 1955, had been a "witch." From Szechwan also came skins of a grown man and two small children, from Linglung Temple in Louhao County. When I asked what proof there was that the skins were taken from bodies previously living, I was told that people saw the lama do it, and he said these were devils, who were destroying the herds. A similar skin, this time of a child, came from Long Tsa Temple in Kantse. The witness to the act was one of the lesser lamas, who said he saw the child flayed. Later the chief lama who did the deed was captured and admitted the act, giving the usual reason, that the child was an "incarnated devil." This lama is reported as in prison but not executed for his deed.

One of the more exotic exhibits in this room was the "Sex Diary" of the high Lama Saitze, who had seduced or raped 800 women, in age from 16 to 60, and including two male lamas on whom he put false hair. He kept lists, and descriptions of the various ways of intercourse used with diagrams of the position of the male and female organs. People like that existed also in Italy and France of the Middle Ages and published diaries. I noted that these things were not shown in

Peking as an "anti-religious exhibition," as similar but lesser atrocities were earlier shown in the USSR. They were shown as the "abuse of religion," as evil reactionary deeds "under cloak of religion." The Chinese Communists have many religious people as allies, and are not attacking anyone's "religion" as such.

The second room was devoted to "Armed Rebellion Under Cloak of Religion." Here was the Proclamation of the "Defend Religion and Anti-Communist Armies," which urged people to exterminate all Communists. It had been issued from Lhasa with a seal on it, and was found on the body of a rebel in Chinghai on January 10, 1959. It boasted: "Everywhere in the Tibetan regions exists now this army, and also food, military supplies and clothing come to us from helpers abroad and on Taiwan."

Here was shown a holy picture brought from the Tal Temple in Chinghai, from the room of the Living Buddha Lako, with a curse hidden on its back and the words: "We must unite to kill those who do not believe in God." Many pictures and Buddha statues hid curses and inscriptions like this.

American army and naval equipment, dropped into Kantse by plane from Chiang Kai-shek, was shown in this room. A list of one air-drop in 1957, captured May 1958, included three parachutes, two wireless sets, two hand motors, four military maps, three tommy-guns, a rifle and a dagger, forty rounds of ammunition, and considerable money in silver and in Taiwan paper. I noted a Life Jacket marked "Property Airforce US Army, Hodgman Rubber Co. 1942," and a big yellow

parachute stamped "24 ft diameter, Aerial Delivery container canopy, load capacity 300 lbs max. at 150 m.p.h. (Yellow silk on parachutes was a handy color, for after a secret agent dropped in a tight jacket of U.S. Army issue, he could quickly hide this with a trailing lama robe of yellow silk.) There was other equipment such as a radio transmitter and a signal to guide an air-drop, originating with the U.S. Army, which came into Tibetan Autonomous Districts by air-drop from Chiang Kai-shek.

I was ready to quit the exhibition, for I had my fill of horrors, but I stepped briefly into the third room and then I stayed for more than another hour. It was called "The Rebellion Suppressed." If the keynote of the first room had been horror, and of the second room, conspiracy with foreign powers, the keynote of the third was "Judgment and Recovery" . . . . Here one saw how the common people, even when seeming most helpless, have memory that endures and that one day brings to judgment.

Here was a great double photograph of a mass meeting of a thousand herdsmen on the Kansu plains, hearing accusations. And here were two hands cut off from a shepherd that the shepherd had saved as proof one day of his torment. In 1957, he said, his master owed him 290 yuan and 800 catties of wheat and refused to pay him. So he took a cow from his master and for this his hands were severed at the wrists. Now he brought the shrivelled hands as testimony.

Here were the bloody rags that a mother had saved, so blackened you hardly could see what they were,

till she spoke in the meeting: "This was the only clothing of my son, a herdsman beaten to death by this lord here, twenty years ago." Then she cried out: "I saved them for witness, and all my neighbors know it. He was my only son!"

Here was a large close-up photograph of a herdsman, speaking at the big mass meeting, with arms uplifted to show that the hands were long since broken off at the wrist. But the strong face spoke now neither of pain nor of horror but only of judgment as the man said: "This lord took away my wife and I never again saw her. He beat off my hands when I opposed him. He also beat off the hands of my younger brother, who was weaker than I and who died of shock and loss of blood. My sister died of the terror. My old mother is ill ever since."

One of the attendants at the exhibit, a man in his twenties, seeing my interest, came up to me and said: "I myself was a lama for ten years and I ran away to Lanchow to study and later I went back to help in this reform. You should see how fast the new life grows when you set it free. That rebellion came in April and was basically suppressed in May. All summer we were holding meetings on the prairie first for judgment and then for organization. By October all of Kannan, the Tibetan Autonomous District of Kansu, went into communes. And see what has happened in the six months since."

I looked at a line of pictures that showed triumph. First came the *tatzepao*, the posted statements which people put up to demand a commune. Then came



the meetings, also in clusters on the prairie. Then pictures of what the commune was in spring of 1959, six months after organization. One photograph showed a cluster of large central offices and barns which would have been a creditable big farm anywhere, another showed a big milk truck pulling up to the herds on the grasslands, while women in long Tibetan skirts rather incongruously carried big milk cans on their heads from the cattle to the truck. There was a picture of a milk-powder factory and another where hundreds of eggs rolled off a sorting device into large baskets to be made into egg-powder for export.

It seemed a very prosperous happy commune that had flowered in six brief months after the long, slow, painful years: "What happened to the rebels?" I asked. The young ex-lama looked surprised that I should care to know.

"The Lord Dorje," he said, "the one that beat the woman's son to death, is in jail in Sining. I didn't follow the other cases through." After a pause he added: "I'd like to tell you about my life in the monastery."

"Come around and see me," I invited.

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Chaotzeteh — the syllables are all one name — came to my home a few days later, a young man nearing thirty, in a neat blue suit with white shirt showing when his coat turned back, rather European in his clothes. His first words, as he seated himself and lifted his tea-cup, were anything but European:

“My father and grandfather were both of them lamas,” he said.

I thought this a bit surprising, since lamas are supposed to be celibate, but of course they might have become lamas late in life after raising a son. So I passed it up. But when he went on with the tale of his youth, it was clear that his father was a peasant, tilling “about thirteen stan of land” and raising many daughters and at least three sons. This seemed a rather permanent household for a lama, so I asked about it. He first replied that the grandfather who was a lama, had no real children of his own but adopted those of his brother. After that he began to speak of the lamas as his uncles. It occurred to me that this might be a case of the form of polyandry that occurs among Tibetan peasants and herdsmen, when the woman is wife to a group of brothers, but all children belong to the oldest brother, who also owns the family land. It would be a convenient form for lama-uncles. I didn't press the question, since he clearly preferred to discuss something else.

The legal father with whom he lived had a wife, three sons and many daughters, the exact number being unmentioned because girls didn't count. Of the three sons, the oldest might stay at home, but the others were expected to become lamas. The same thing had happened in his father's generation; he also had been one of three brothers, of whom two became lamas. It also happened with his grandfather. The young Chaotzetch himself was sent into the monastery at the age of eight.

“I was the second son,” he explained simply, “and so I had to go. I had a younger brother who was the third son. He had to go to the monastery too.” It was expected, he said, that the oldest son should marry and keep the family, but the others should become lamas. If a family was lax, the monastery itself kept watch over the matter. “My mother told me that when I was five and six years old, I was three times ill, and the Living Buddha told her I would die unless I became a lama.” That was enough of a hint; the boy was promised to the Living Buddha. At the age of eight, he went.

I assumed at first that the boys were sent to the monastery to save feeding so many at home, but this was not at all the case. In sending the boy, the family had to send also his food and clothing, and an equal amount for his teacher’s food and clothes.

“The family was poor,” he said, “because there were thirteen to feed, counting the old people and the daughters, and only two able-bodied men to work, my father and my older brother. Three rations had to be sent to the monastery, for myself, my younger brother and my uncle. The uncle was teacher for my brother and myself so we did not have to feed another teacher. The family had to send food for three.”

Besides this, he said, they had to pay the chief of the tribe for the thirteen stan of land they rented from him. “We had to pay seven and a half DO — that is a measure — and a silver dollar and a cartload of fodder to the chief. If you cannot pay the whole seven and a half but only pay five DO, then next year

you owe the whole seven and a half over again, and this makes fifteen DO, and this you can never pay. So even if you have no food for the family and no seed for sowing, you pay that seven and a half and you pay the monastery."

I asked what the relation was between the tribal chief and the monastery. Chaotzetch replied: "The monastery has lots of land, and the tribes rent from them, and they pay the monastery half of what is reaped and the other half is for the tribes." It was clear there would not be much after all this subdivision for the actual soil-tilling family. There would be still less when two of the three brothers were taken into the monastery and fed from the family's grain which they did not help produce.

"Now I will tell you my life in the monastery," said Chaotzetch. "I was sent to Chuanting Monastery, in Chuni County of Kansu. It is the biggest monastery of that area, and controlled all the other monasteries. I was there for thirteen years. I worked many hours each day doing services for the big lamas, carrying water, cooking, making tea, carrying vegetables, cleaning the rooms. I also studied the scriptures.

"When they sent me, they stitched a red cloth on my coat shoulder to show that I now belong to the monastery. After that I cannot come home without the lama's permission. In January or February the family sends all the food for a half year; in September the other half. The flour must be already ground, and they send other food, and also the fuel to cook it, both for me and for my teacher. At the Spring Fes-

tival they send the oil, butter, meat, salt, pepper and clothing for the year.

"I rose every day when it was still dark for I had much work to do before the dawn. I must sweep the ground in the compound, and bring water from the hill to make tea for the upper lamas, and do other work like this until it is light enough to see the lines on my hand. Then it is time to read scriptures. We read till eight or nine — the time is not exact because there are no clocks — and then we had our first meal of *tsamba*, which is ground barley parched and mixed with liquid: The big lamas are given butter and oil and salt and pepper and even meat with their *tsamba*. But none of these are allowed to the lesser lamas, not even onions to flavor. It is an offense to God."

After this flavorless breakfast, the student lamas learned scripture. "We recite what we learned yesterday and the teacher gives us new scripture to learn. He flogs if we do not remember. When the sun is at midday we have a rest."

Did they learn to read and write? I asked. Chaotzeteh replied that they learned to read and write the scriptures, which were in "classical Tibetan, not the language of every day." It took a year and a half to learn to read single syllables, then another year and a half to learn the double-syllable words. "After five years we can read the scriptures; after another five years we can write them down."

Chaotzeteh said that he himself was better treated than the poorer lamas were. "Because I had uncles that were big lamas," he said. "The poorest lamas

slept out of doors even in very cold weather, or if the weather was really so cold that they would freeze to death, they were allowed to sleep indoors in a corner of the floor.”

Despite the fact that his own condition was better, Chaotzeteh found it bad enough. He fled from the monastery in 1951. What made him flee and how did he do it? I asked.

“I wanted to leave because of the maltreatment by the upper lamas,” he answered. “Even my uncles cursed and flogged me. Even now I have scars on my body from those beatings. The worse time was when they caught me playing in the main hall of the temple when I was sixteen. I was so heavily flogged that I was laid up for four months from it. Then also I found that there was no truth in the monastery. After liberation I saw society changing around me and wanted to be in it.”

The first contact Chaotzeteh had with the new “liberation” was when the new government sent representatives to speak in the monastery and told the upper lamas not to flog the lesser lamas. “This sounded to me very good.” Then in 1951 the county section head for national minorities came to see him — “he was an old boy chum of mine,” and told him that a school for training government personnel was being opened in Lanchow and that he might like to go.

“I wanted very much to go but I was afraid even to think of it, for they might find out and torture or kill me. I told my friend to keep the news quiet. Twice more I saw him and told him I wanted to go if

it could be done. I went home overnight to see my parents about it — I told the lamas my parents were ill and so I got an overnight permission. My father was against the idea. He said he would rather see me a beggar than an official. He was afraid if I left the monastery they would demand his last son from him to take my place, but if I went as a begging monk, they might not. When my parents had twice refused permission, I decided to run away without telling them. My friend in the government helped me. I went out of the gate before dawn as if on an errand and without any baggage; a car picked me up in front of a house we arranged, and took me out of town towards Lanchow before it was light.”

“Did the monastery do anything about it?” I asked.

“They told my parents to get me back, so I did not dare go home to visit for more than five years. Even when I graduated in 1956 in Lanchow, I did not dare go home. But later I joined the army to put down the rebellion in Kannan. When the rebellion was beaten then I went home from the army. I found that my younger uncle had been arrested as a rebel but my older uncle had come home from the monastery and was taking part in productive labor. He is a member of a commune now.”

Chaotzetch told me what happened to his former monastery. “There were four head lamas there,” he said, “but one of them was only thirteen years old and was sent to Lhasa to study, another was 70 years old and joined the rebellion but he took no armed part, and only read curses against the Communists and spoke

against them, so he was released. A third was not present during the rebellion, and is thought to have gone home like my elder uncle to join in productive labor. The fourth one, named Yilichang, was head of the rebellion for the county and eighty lamas followed him, including my younger uncle. Yilichang and some of the chief fighters went to jail.

“There is a new head of the monastery, named Yang Gang-chu. He didn’t want to stay and be abbot; he wanted to leave and get married, but everybody said, and the government also said, that somebody had to run the place with the four chiefs gone. So he agreed to stay for a time but everyone knows that he is engaged to be married. Many other lamas went home and some got married. Others stayed, but if these are young, they now take part in production, and raise food.”

“Do you yourself now believe any of the Buddhism you learned in the monastery?” I asked. Chaotzeteh gave an emphatic: “No.”

“There was no truth in that monastery,” he added. “I no longer believe in ghosts.”

It is usually the ex-priests who really hate religion. Most Chinese Communists are rather tolerant of old religious habits and even of the Buddha tooth. But the ex-lamas often hate them. Chaotzeteh, on his own proposal, had come all the way to my house and given an afternoon to expose that rather ordinary monastery, to which they had sold his youth.



## V. THE LHASA REBELLION

The March rebellion in Lhasa did not break from a clear sky. It was a storm that smouldered long, giving many thunders of approach. I have many accounts of eye-witnesses and participants, the most complete of which is from Captain Yang King-hwei of the People's Liberation Army, who left Szechwan in 1950 on the long, slow approach to Lhasa, reaching it in October of 1951. He was stationed there eight years and took part in the Lhasa fighting in March 1959. Then he came to Peking for the May Day Festival and stayed over long enough to talk to me. I shall give his experiences from the beginning and supplement them from time to time with comments from other eye-witnesses.

When the captain came to my living-room with two other officers who live in Peking, I was struck by the dark ruddiness of his skin in contrast to theirs. Though Han by nationality, he was burned by the sun of high altitudes and flushed by the extra red corpuscles which develop in those who breathe the high, thin air. He wore a uniform of khaki color, with red collar tabs bearing four silver stars.

"Before we started from Chengtu in 1950," said Captain Yang, "we were given much detailed instruc-

tion as to how to behave in Tibet, both as to the general policy of equality and friendship towards minor nationalities and as to the special ways of behaviour among Tibetans in order to respect their customs. We must not enter their places of worship, neither the monasteries nor the special rooms or corners in private homes where each family keeps sacred objects of worship. We learned enough of the Tibetan language for routine contacts and we learned what forms of greeting are polite to different classes of people. We learned in what places the pouring of water is permitted and where it is forbidden. We were instructed that if we are invited to stop in people's houses, we should not leave without doing some useful work for them, such as drawing water or cutting wood."

"The hardest discipline," said the captain, "was that we must not hunt or fish anywhere within the borders of Tibet. This was a very difficult order for we were hard pressed for food and especially for meat since the trail is very long and we carried our own food very far over difficult horse trails. In Tibet there was a stretch of eight days or so when we saw not a living person; the hills and streams were full of game and fish. But our discipline was strict on this point because of the Tibetan religion. They are against all killing of animals which by their religion is a sin. The Tibetans themselves evade this; even their Living Buddhas have ways by which they permit themselves to eat meat but they do not themselves kill it. This is done by special people who are considered very

low. We could not excuse ourselves in these ways so our discipline was that we must not hunt nor fish.

“While this discipline was hard, it was very useful. Word went ahead of us that a new type of Hans were coming; they called us ‘Sajami,’ which means ‘the new Hans.’ Some called us ‘Buddha soldiers,’ because we did not kill meat. This began to win the Tibetans even before we met them. It affected the battle of Chamdo so that many of the Tibetan Army came over to our side. Later in Lhasa we learned that our reputation reached Lhasa months before we ourselves arrived.”

The battle of Chamdo in October 1950 was a turning point in the lives of many people. We have heard of it already in the story of Apei, who commanded the Tibetan Army there and was defeated, and later won over by the explanation of Peking’s policies. We have also seen its effects in the lives of Lachi and Gada, two former serfs who escaped through this battle to freedom. Captain Yang did not himself see the Chamdo battle. He was leading a rear guard action that went around Chamdo in a detour that took a week. “There was no fighting at all in the places to which I went,” he told me. “In all those posts the Tibetans came right over and began to fraternize. In Chamdo itself there was battle; it was over before I reached Chamdo. I then learned there had been about two days of fighting, and then many of those Tibetans came over too.”

The battle of Chamdo was also a turning point in Tibet’s modern history, for the defeat of the Dalai Lama’s armies there and Apei’s report of Peking’s new

policies, led to the Agreement between Peking and the Dalai Lama which was signed May 23, 1951. The People's Liberation Army meanwhile halted in Chamdo after their victory, awaiting the signing of the Agreement before pushing on over what was then the border between Sikang and Tibet.

"My company," said Captain Yang, "was stationed in the Chamdo Area, about sixty miles west of the city. We remained there some eight months while the Dalai Lama was negotiating with Peking. Not until August 1951, when the Agreement was not only signed, but conveyed to the Dalai Lama himself, and when the Dalai Lama and the representative of the Central Government had both gone to Lhasa and expected us, did our army march."<sup>1</sup>

I asked Captain Yang flatly as I asked all others who had any experience in the matter: "Did any soldiers of the PLA cross the boundary of Tibet until after the Agreement was signed, which invited the PLA to enter as the army of national defense?"

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<sup>1</sup> This period is given more fully in Chapter 2, but the sequence of dates is worth recalling. The Agreement was signed May 23, 1951. Apei left Peking early in June by rail and horse and did not reach Lhasa till late August. Chang Ching-wu, representative of the Central Government, went by plane to India and by trail to Yatung where he met the Dalai Lama July 14 and conveyed to him the details of the Agreement. The Dalai Lama then decided not to go to India but to return to Lhasa, which he reached August 17. Only after this did the PLA cross from Sikang into Tibet.

Captain Yang replied as did all the others: "No, not a soldier went beyond the Chamdo area which was at that time in Sikang Province."

"After crossing from Sikang into Tibet," continued Captain Yang, "we went slowly. There was no wide road but only a difficult and even dangerous horse trail; we built the road later. For eight days we met no people; these are high, wild areas where no people live. Then we began to reach villages. We stopped in every populated place to explain our policies to the Tibetan people. We explained that we were the new national army, a people's army of defense for the frontier, and that we respected their customs and their religion. We explained our Three Disciplines and Eight-Point Regulations, and that we do not take even a needle from the people without paying for it. We had interpreters especially to explain these things in every populated place."

"How did the people meet you?" I asked.

"Everywhere they were very friendly," said the captain. "This did not seem to be on orders from Lhasa, for Lhasa was still far away and there seemed to be no instructions sent. But local chiefs had heard of our policies and knew that we paid for transport. This was unusual; the Tibetan government and nobles expect to get transport for nothing, and this is a heavy burden on the localities and especially on the serfs who have to work without pay. We do not know whether the transport workers we paid were able to keep the money or whether this was taken from them by their chiefs. We only know that our transport was

mobilized without trouble and with friendly remarks, and that we met no opposition along the way. Because of the stops we made to explain to the people, we did not reach Lhasa till mid-October."

"Did they give you any official welcome in Lhasa?" I asked.

"A feast of rice gruel was given us after our arrival," said the captain, "at which representatives from the local government made us speeches of welcome." (Rice is not grown in Tibet and is considered upper class food — *ALS*.) "But behind the scenes they were not so polite. They gave us no fuel to cook with. We had other petty annoyances."

"What was the army's first task in Tibet?" I asked. Captain Yang replied that some detachments were sent to take posts on the frontier, but he himself was stationed in Lhasa and the first task there was to cultivate land in order to produce the army's food. Here they ran into a continuing difficulty. "There is very much waste land in Tibet," the captain said, "but it all belongs to the nobles, the monasteries or the local government and they made difficulties about selling or even leasing any land to us."

"After we bought some houses from the *kasha* at a rather high price, they consented to sell us two pieces of land. Later some of the friendlier nobles agreed to let us use land for which we paid them in grain; we were also able later to lease some land for money. In the third year we succeeded in growing all our own vegetables but we never had enough land to grow all our own grain. We had to bring some of it





"The drive was up Yo Wang Hill, which we took in about three hours."

Rebels come out to surrender







“I was blinded by the rebels for helping repair the P.L.A. highway.”



from interior China, 1,500 miles away. At first this was extremely difficult for the journey was by horse trail, but after we built the new roads in 1954, it became easier. It would of course be much easier to grow it in Tibet.”

“Can Tibet produce enough food for itself?” I asked. The captain replied that Tibet could easily produce enough food not only to feed itself but even to export, “if the productive forces are properly developed,” but under serfdom productivity remains very low.

“The nobles,” he said, “import rice from India at present while the common people are half starved. They have very poor wooden implements and they neither fertilize nor irrigate. They grow chiefly barley and a little wheat. The yield is very low, only 70 or 80 catties per *mou* (eight to nine bushels per acre). Most of this crop goes to the landlord who stores it till it rots. The peasant serfs are hungry and undernourished. In our army fields the soil was no better than elsewhere but we got up to 480 catties of wheat (53 bushels per acre) and 640 catties of barley (70 bushels per acre). This can be done without difficulty with proper implements and some incentive. Serf labor is of course poor.”

“What progress, if any, took place in Lhasa during these years?”

“While we were cultivating land,” replied the captain, “other troops of the PLA built three great highways, a total of 7,000 kilometers, connecting Tibet with Sikang, with Chinghai and with Sinkiang, and linking Tibet’s main cities with each other. We built

in Lhasa quarters for the army and for the Working Committee of the Communist Party. We built two people's hospitals in Lhasa, first a small one, and then a bigger one with a hundred beds. Outside Lhasa, wherever the PLA had a post, there was medical service and we enlarged this to give medical help also to the local population. In Lhasa we built a primary school, a state bank, a post-office, a state trading company and houses for the civilian personnel working in these places.

“During this time many Tibetans came asking for work. There was much unemployment in Lhasa. All the working people belonged to some owner somewhere, but often the owners had no work for them and did not feed them. Then they would get permits from their owners to go elsewhere and seek work; for these permits they paid the owners an annual tax. There were many such people in Lhasa and also many beggars. It was hard to arrange stable work for them because their owners would not agree to their taking steady work, since the owners wished to have the serfs on call. We set up a small woolen and rug factory and trained some people in technical skill. We also had two experimental farms near Lhasa, one run by the army and one by the civilian Working Committee. Tibetans came looking for work on these farms. Others came to the farms to study the technique. The farms were slow in starting because it was hard to get land for them, and for one of them we had to take a dried up river bed which took time to improve. But finally our farms began to produce and the peasants near

Lhasa began to apply new methods in farming, to fertilize and irrigate vegetables and fight pests. Their yield somewhat improved.”

“When did you first notice signs of the rebellion?” I asked.

Captain Yang replied that “ever since the arrival of the army in Lhasa it was clear that some of the upper strata were hostile. In 1953, a top member of the local government named Lokongwa organized a demand that the army and the Hans be driven out, but the Dalai Lama dismissed him and he left Tibet.<sup>1</sup> During these years the people have shown that they want a change, but many of the upper class hinder reform, wishing to keep serfdom. At the beginning of 1958 we began to hear of a secret conspiracy that planned a rebellion. Now the people are giving us the details.”

All sources agreed that the rebellion was headed by a group of the biggest serf-owners and that they had help from abroad, both from India and from Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang’s officials boasted and may have exaggerated the arms they dropped. Connection with India had begun in the British penetration of the first half of the century, at which time a small but important “comprador” type of merchandizing grew up in some serf-owning families. They formed connec-

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<sup>1</sup>This was the man who went to Kalimpong to organize the foreign contacts of the rebellion, and about whom the Dalai Lama has since stated, in June 1959 in India, that he was “forced by Peking to dismiss his prime minister.”

tions with the British, sent sons to British schools in India, and monopolized foreign trade, often at fabulous prices. As Britain's power waned, some of this group still kept the British connection, others transferred to rising Indian capitalists, of the type Peking called "Indian expansionists," still others aspired to connections with America. These last sent the trade mission to the USA in 1947 and later acted as hosts to Lowell Thomas. They promoted an "independent Tibet" in which they should rule under Washington's protection, in the style of Syngman Rhee of South Korea or Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam.

Meantime they built a base in Kalimpong, India, where connections with Indians were nearer and more directly useful than the distant USA. The extent of Indian knowledge of the rebellion was shown by the appearance in the *Statesman* of March 2, 1959 of a detailed prediction of the coming rebellion, which even stated that the Dalai Lama would be taken out of Lhasa March 17, which actually, two weeks later, occurred.

Nor was the help of the defeated landlords from adjacent provinces negligible. Foreign headlines about "suppressing unarmed, peaceful Tibetans" bring grim smiles to those who know Tibet. No feudal land is peaceful, but few so bristle with arms as did Tibet. "Everyone carries a dagger, most men carry swords, and those that have them carry rifles," reported Alan Winnington in 1955. The accumulation of 50,000 rifles in the Chamdo and Szechwan areas from clan wars and warlord conflicts was noted in the previous chapter. To

these out-of-date but still deadly weapons were added the modern American weapons in Chiang's air-drops. Arms were thus plentiful in Tibet for anyone who wished to start a war.

"Why, however, should the serf-owners wish just now to start one?" I asked Captain Yang. For eight years they had managed to block reform, and they had Peking's promise to delay reform till 1962 and then to "consider" another delay. Why should the serf-owners make the first move?

Captain Yang replied that the serf-owners knew that the doom of serfdom was written in the 1951 Agreement, even if delayed. They could only hope to keep serfdom if they broke away from China. Also with every year they saw the common people growing more conscious. Perhaps some of the profits of merchants, who formerly monopolized trade were hurt by the new roads and the new state trade. "But I do not think this the main cause," he said, "for the merchants were not very strong. The main cause was that the big serf-owners wanted to keep on doing what they pleased with the serfs and they felt their dominance slipping day by day."

"Were there signs of open rebellion before March?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," replied the captain. "Air-drops of weapons began in 1958 in the Loka Area south of Lhasa. Possibly this was from American bases in Thailand or from Chiang's forces still in the Burma hills; to fly from Taiwan would be rather far. Disorders increased by those defeated rebels from other provinces, who

were looting the local people in Tibet. We got complaints. We referred these complaints to the *kasha*, which was Tibet's local government charged with keeping law and order.

"In 1958 they also began raiding our transport. We were building a big new power-plant for Lhasa and the bandits raided our lumber-trucks. This also being a matter of local order, we kept referring it to the *kasha* and took no action ourselves."

"What did the *kasha* do?" I asked.

"They always agreed to handle the matter," smiled the captain. "Actually they were fomenting the disorders.

"At the end of February some members of the *kasha* became openly provocative. A *kaloon* named Neusha demanded the right to occupy the State Trading Offices of the Central Government. They refused. Then machine-guns were set up by the Tibetan Army facing the Communist Party headquarters. When we took no notice of this, the actions of the *kasha* grew even more threatening towards the Central Government in the first days of March. The open declaration of Tibetan independence was made on March 10. From then until March 19, the rebels were rallying forces and impressing men into their ranks. On the 19th after midnight, they launched all-out artillery assault on the PLA garrison and on all the civilian offices of the Central Government. The PLA waited until 10 a.m. on the 20th and then went into counter-attack."

Captain Yang drew a rough diagram to show the positions in Lhasa. Personnel of the Central Gov-

ernment were scattered in eight or nine places. The PLA garrison stood somewhat back from the main road that runs from Lhasa city to the Potala Palace; it contained, as the captain recalled, two companies and part of a third.<sup>1</sup> Between it and the road stood the headquarters of the Preparatory Committee and the auditorium where the Dalai Lama was to have seen the theatrical performance on March 10. Across the road was the large compound of the Working Committee of the Communist Party. Besides these were the bank, the post-office, the State Trading Office and the State Transport Services, scattered in various places, with only a few people in each. Like most institutions in Lhasa, they were in walled compounds. Their personnel, though civilian, had had military training and had weapons.

According to Captain Yang and confirmed by others, no response to the rebels' provocative acts was made by any military or civilian personnel of the Central Government in the ten days from March 10 to 20 until 10 a.m. on March 20. Nor did the civilian personnel seek shelter with the army, except for the families of Tibetan employees, who moved from the city to shelter in the offices. In all the compounds, however, they began digging underground shelters against the shelling they knew would come.

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<sup>1</sup> There are no official figures but from all data I can gather, the garrison was less than a thousand on March 10. Official figures for the entire PLA force in Tibet on that date were 14,000, stationed in many widely scattered places. This small number explains much.

I interrupt my talk with Captain Yang to give the sequence of events from March 10 to 20, as recorded in the diary of Shan Chao, a civil servant in the Working Committee across the road. I shall sharply condense.

*Tuesday, March 10.* It is already too warm for a fur coat. At dawn we just slip on sweaters when we go out for the morning exercises. Usually we hear at this time the temple bells and horns from the roof of Potala Palace, calling the lamas to morning scriptures. Things were different today. There was a great deal of coming and going in that direction, including men of the Tibetan Army.

At the broadcasting station they were getting a tape-recorder ready. "The Dalai Lama is coming to a program of music and dance," they said. "Our troupe has been preparing for over a month. We shall record the best events. Shall you want pictures? The Dalai Lama will be sure to shake hands with the best performers." As I went to get my camera I saw the water-cart sprinkling the road to lay the dust for the Dalai Lama's car.

Eleven o'clock came and still no sign of our honored guest. Refreshments were ready; a velvet arm-chair had been prepared. The performers had put on costumes and make-up. Leading people were chatting at the door of the auditorium, awaiting the guest. . . . Then the radio mechanic came rushing in and stammered: "What a disaster! The reactionaries are holding the Dalai Lama in the Norbu Lingka. They are



killing progressives there. People who live near the Lingka are in panic, looking for a place to hide.”

We hurried back to the office. From the gate we saw a group of mounted soldiers coming from the direction of Norbu Lingka. A bloody corpse had been thrown on the back of a horse. The rebels had knifed and stoned to death K.S., a progressive noble . . . and were exposing the corpse to terrify the people. People stood silent by the road with tears in their eyes and lowered heads.

Suddenly I heard someone behind me loading a submachinegun. It was Ngawang Kazang. “What are you doing?” I cried.

“We cannot endure this lawlessness. I want to fight them.”

“Did you get orders?”

“I want to shoot even if I get punished for it,” he said.

It took a lot of arguing to make him put down the gun.

I returned to my office. From the windows I looked with binoculars at the Potala and Yo Wang Hill. The window-sills of the Potala are usually a favorite playground of doves; now rifle barrels glinted from them. Half way up Yo Wang Hill rebel troops had taken position; men were hauling artillery ammunition to the summit.

For ten days the diary shows increasing tension. On the 12th word came of a rebel meeting in Norbu Lingka to which all men of Lhasa were ordered to come on

penalty of fine for the first refusal and death for the second. Orders were issued by the rebels that all Tibetan employees in Central Government offices and all pupils in the school should leave at once, under penalty of death. Half of the staff of the Central Government offices were Tibetans who were being trained to replace the Hans. They now asked permission to bring their families into the compound for protection. "We don't mind sleeping in the court," they said. The families came and were housed in offices and in the auditorium to escape the terror which the rebels were inflicting on the city of Lhasa.

"The bandits are raising havoc through the city," said Shan Chao's diary for March 15th. "The worst atrocity was at the nunnery near Jokhan Monastery; not one of the scores of young nuns escaped being raped. The bandits also broke into many shops and carried off goods. In the afternoon incense was being burned in front of Potala. The rebels were forcing the women to swear to drive out the Hans and 'establish Tibetan independence.'"

On the 16th the diary reports that a tall, dark Tibetan news photographer of the Central Newsreel Studio drove around and made documentary pictures of rebel demonstrations and of fortifications they were digging in various places and of posters that called for the liquidation of the Hans. He also got pictures of a man whose eyes were gouged out by the rebels because he had helped the PLA transport; he was on a stretcher being taken to hospital. Another photograph

showed a man whose nose was cut off for the same offence.

On the 18th word came that the Dalai Lama was missing. "The rebels kidnapped him last night," it was said. Ordinary citizens of Lhasa were coming to the Working Committee to complain that the rebels were "press-ganging people," beating to death on the spot men who refused to join them. A fifty-year-old Tibetan woman came weeping that a gang of rebels broke into her house the previous night, took her son as a "volunteer" and dragged her young daughter out from the bed where she had hid, and raped her.

"Several tents have been set up in our area," reads a significant entry March 19th. "Vegetable sellers and mutton venders who say they can no longer live in the city proper because 'those wolves steal everything.' . . . 'I still want to live to see how many more days those monsters can roam around,' declared an old woman. . . . Word was going around that a large-scale attack would be launched that night against all the Hans. Yet some Tibetans were seeking shelter next to the compounds of these same Hans, to watch for the rebels' end. The diary for March 20 describes the beginning of battle:

It was long after midnight. The weather had turned cold. I put on my overcoat to take a stroll in the courtyard before going on with my editorial work. . . . As I stepped out, bursts of fire came from Norbu Lingka, Potala Palace and Yo Wang Hill. Instantly the whole city resounded with rifle

and artillery shots. I looked at my watch. It was forty minutes past three. The reactionary clique had finally chosen the road to self-destruction.

Everyone was up listening to the guns. People gathered at the dug-out that could be used both for shelter and for broadcasting. The Tibetan woman announcer kept asking: "Why don't we counter-attack? Are our artillery-men asleep?" Nobody could pacify her. When we said perhaps the time had not yet come, she exclaimed: "I think it came long ago."

Nobody went to bed; we sat up till dawn. . . . At ten o'clock sharp our troops launched counter-offensive. Their artillery thundered. People from our offices crowded into the courtyard to look; our Tibetan families even came out with their babies. We urged them into shelter. Our woman radio announcer was elated. Her voice came strong and full of spirit on the loudspeaker.

From our tower we could see the whole city. Our Tibetan staff and their families got busy on their own account sending kettles of buttered tea to the fighting men's positions. They kept asking to join the fighting. They wanted to organize a "shock-brigade" and persuade people they knew among the rebels to come over to our side.

Actually there was no need to be anxious. About three in the afternoon our national flag was run up on top of Yo Wang Hill. From this height our troops dominated the city.

On the 21st the diary reports:

Today civilian personnel went to see the fighting. They came back exclaiming: "What shooting! Our men didn't destroy a thing at Norbu Lingka; they shelled the forts around its wall." They added that the only damage there was done by the rebels who knocked out windows and wall corners for gun emplacements.

Artillery fire now turned towards the Potala. People watching wondered why the shells only hit the rocks at the base. They wondered if the marksmanship was bad. Later we learned that the artillery had orders not to hit Norbu Lingka, Potala or Jokhan. They were shelling concealed pill-boxes outside Potala at its base. Our Tibetan workers were amazed. They thought it a very "polite" way to fight a battle. . . .

On March 22 the diary reports:

At breakfast the call came for everyone to help collect the prisoners. All rebels in Potala and Jokhan had surrendered. They filed past. Some were so obviously impressed into the rebel ranks that they were freed at once. One fourteen-year-old boy, for instance, was crying that "the bandits" had dragged him from his herd of sheep three days ago. . . . We thrust some steamed bread into his pocket and he scampered off home.

"People all over the streets walked again freely today," reported the diary for March 23. "Faces

were all covered with smiles. Practically everyone held a piece of snowy white *hata* (the ceremonial scarf of greeting) but nobody knew who started the idea. When people met us they held the *hata* high and said: "Chuhsidelai." This is not the usual daily greeting. It means: "Good fortune."

The writer's vivid picture of the ten days in which the rebels built up their attack while the People's Liberation Army held its fire cannot of course contain everything that happened during those tense days. It gives what was seen from a single civilian compound and contains nothing about the meetings held in Norbu Lingka, the exchange of letters between the Dalai Lama and General Tan Kuan-san, or the destruction of the ancient mosque in Lhasa city, where the rebels terrorized the Moslem inhabitants. Some of this will be given in the following chapter.

To those who asked, as I myself asked: "Why did the People's Liberation Army wait so long before quelling the rebels, when these were raging through the city, impressing men, raping women, gouging out eyes, I condense answers I had from Captain Yang and others: "The *kasha* was still the lawful government and the people of Lhasa had not yet taken sides. In such situations our strategy is never to start the fighting but to let the enemy start it and continue it until it is fully clear to the people who is the aggressor. Then when we counter-attack, we have the people with us; this wide support shortens the fighting and lessens the casualties in the end. The rebels lost the first battle by their behaviour in Lhasa. We protected

or helped such people as we could reach. But if we had launched attack before they shelled us all night, not only the foreign press but many people in Tibet would say that we were suppressing Tibetans."

"Did not this waiting, especially on the last night, endanger the civilians in the scattered compounds?" I asked.

"Not seriously," replied Captain Yang. "The compounds had walls and the civilians had weapons. The night assault was by artillery shelling. Against this we had dug-outs. Many buildings in the compounds were injured and some wrecked, but the people were in shelter. The only place where the rebels seriously tried to break into a compound was at the Transport Service, which is rather isolated and near a rebel headquarters. Here they made several attempts to storm their way in but were repulsed. Before they followed up their artillery by a general assault on the compounds, we went into the counter-offensive."

Captain Yang then summed up the military aspects of the battle:

"Our orders to counter-attack came for ten in the morning of the 20th, when we had been under artillery shelling from six to seven hours. Our main drive was straight up Yo Wang Hill. The rebels held all the high points in Lhasa and this was the highest. We took it in a little more than two hours. At the same time we took two rebel headquarters near Norbu Lingka; troops for this came from the suburbs. By three or four in the afternoon the main fighting was over.

We held Yo Wang Hill and Norbu Lingka and had taken 3,000 prisoners.

“The rebels then scattered all over the city, some fought in small groups, three or four men sniping from behind walls. Only a few fought stubbornly. Most of them did not want to fight us; they had good relations with us earlier. They had been coerced into fighting. Some shouted: ‘Long live the Communist Party’ when they surrendered. Others fled from the city and fought us later in Loka, still others threw away their weapons and hid in the homes of the Lhasa people. Then the citizens began capturing them and bringing them in.”

“Was there much difference in morale and fighting qualities between the regular Tibetan Army and the new recruits impressed in Lhasa?” I asked.

“Not much,” replied Captain Yang. “None of them had much training or discipline. A serf army is never very good. Few of them really wanted to fight for we had had good relations with all of them until the top rebels began stirring them up. The chief difference was that the Tibetan Army had something of a uniform and better weapons and not such a wide difference in ages. The newly impressed people were taken from the ages of 16 to 60, and given the oldest weapons and pushed forward from the rear. The Tibetan Army had the weapons from the latest air-drops. But in morale they were all about the same.”

Captain Yang estimated the number of rebels who fought in Lhasa as about 8,000; he judged from the number of rifles surrendered or thrown away. The



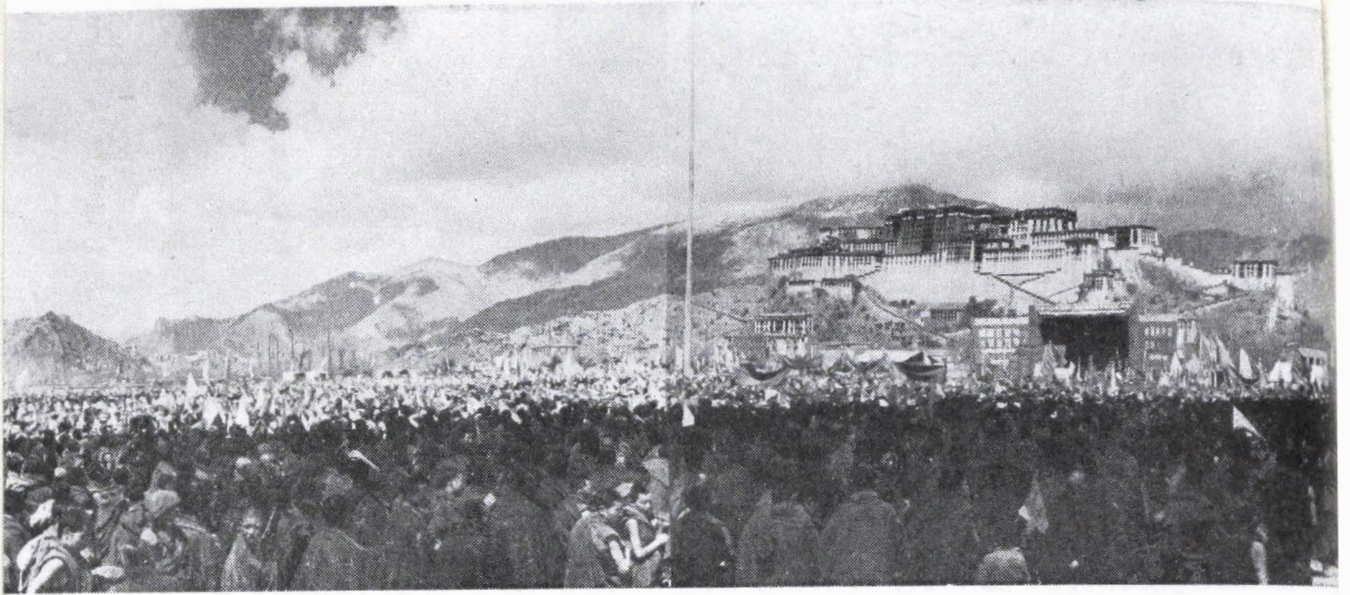


P.L.A. medical worker  
treats wounded captives

Seed given out to peasants the rebels looted







20,000 turn out in Lhasa to hear new plans, April 15



Lhasa demonstration celebrates quelling of rebellion

number of prisoners captured was about 4,000. "When I left on April 13 to come to Peking," he said, "we were carrying on education among the prisoners with meetings and discussions. The Lhasa citizens had seen that the prisoners were not ill-treated, and they were still rounding up captives to bring in."

"What were you personally doing in the three weeks between March 23 when the Lhasa fighting was over and April 13 when you left for Peking?" I asked. "Did you pursue the rebels to Loka?"

"The Loka fighting was done by other detachments," replied the captain. "I was doing relief work in Lhasa, sending out grain to cities and villages where the rebels had looted and where grain was urgently needed both for food and seed. There were also orphans to look after. There were, for instance, four children whose father was impressed by the rebels and whose mother protested and was ill-treated and died. We are caring for them until their father returns; if he doesn't return we shall look after them and educate them.

"I was giving out jobs to hungry Tibetans, to repair the destruction and to continue the building of the new power-plant. By the time I left we had given job relief to 1,300 people. We also organized mobile medical teams to care for wounded Tibetans and for women whom the rebels had raped. We also held meetings among the people to tell what the rebels had done, and to organize the rebuilding of the mosque the rebels demolished and the repair of damage they did to the monasteries."

“What damage had been done to the famous shrines of Lhasa?” I asked. Rebels who fled to India had spread word that these were destroyed. Captain Yang confirmed what Apei had previously told me that this was not the case. The People’s Liberation Army artillery had orders not to hit Norbu Lingka, Potala or Jokhan Monastery, though these were rebel strongholds.

Norbu Lingka is a large walled park, containing many palaces; its outer wall was damaged, as were some houses where the rebels broke out windows and corners to make gun emplacements. “All this is surface damage, easily repaired.”

The holier, more famous Potala Palace was also a rebel base. On the first day of fighting, the artillery demolished pill-boxes around its base but did not hit the palace walls. On the second day, when the rebels still shot on the city from the high slit windows of the palace, they were dislodged by sharpshooters shooting through the slits. ‘This injured some of the side rooms,’ Apei had said, “but this also is slight and easily repaired.”

Captain Yang confirmed this, adding: “The shooting was accurate, and this was an important factor in the victory. What broke the rebel morale more than our fire-power was our discipline, accuracy and restraint.”

“Do you encounter any hostile feeling towards the Hans from the Tibetan people generally?” I asked the captain.

“None in Lhasa any more,” replied Captain Yang. “When we first came eight years ago, there was considerable suspicion of our intentions and even fear. Many people avoided contact with us. Actual contacts during these years broke down suspicions. We have good friends among the people and among the lamas. People showed us friendship at great risk to themselves when the rebels were taking the initiative. The rebels defeated themselves by their atrocities towards the people. When we put them down and restored order, the people began to help us; they were glad to have order. And when we announced that the rule of the *kasha* was over and began to confiscate the whips and instruments of torture, there was considerable expression of joy.”

A month after the fighting, the apple trees were reported in bloom in Norbu Lingka, still under the care of the Dalai Lama’s gardeners. His bodyguards still kept for him his summer palace. In the great Potala, the four huge locks on his jewel and jade cabinets were reported still in place, unopened by any conquering hand.

The Dalai Lama himself was in India.

## VI. THE DALAI LAMA DEPARTS

In Peking they said that the rebels kidnapped the Dalai Lama and took him "in duress" to India. In India they said the Dalai Lama fled from the Chinese and came to India of his own free will. The Dalai Lama himself said opposite things on different occasions, under different influences. Let us not commit ourselves for the moment. Let us begin with facts on which everyone agrees.

The Dalai Lama left Lhasa on the night of March 17, 1959, in the company—willing, unwilling or partly willing—of the leading rebels. They withdrew to the south, towards the Indian border, to an area known as Nanchang and remained there for several days, till the outcome of the battle in Lhasa was known. When the rebels' defeat was clear, the Dalai Lama's party moved rapidly towards India, whose frontier they crossed on March 31.

The world press buzzed with wild stories during the period when the Dalai Lama was absent from contact with newsmen. The more sensational claimed that the Chinese were staging "a man-hunt for the god-king" with 50,000 troops assisted by planes. The fury somewhat faded when the party entered India and gave no detailed accounts of pursuers except for some



observation planes. A suggestion that the "escape was a miracle" accomplished by the merits of His Holiness also withered when it appeared that the travellers had made the journey with normal speed, and when Peking announced his arrival by normal news-item on April 2, a day before Nehru revealed it to the Indian parliament. There was a brief embarrassment as India wondered in what ungodly manner Peking got the news, and hinted at Communist spies. For clearly Peking seemed to be saying: "We know his whereabouts; if you want him, he is yours."

Those of us who followed events from Peking noticed a bit of accurate timing, that seemed to indicate a fairly continuous knowledge of the Dalai Lama's movements, possibly from those observation planes. When the military order to put down the rebellion was issued March 20, it made no political attack on the local government of Tibet. It might still have been possible, when the Lhasa rebellion had been quelled March 23, for the Dalai's party to return, disavow connection with rebellion and state they had only taken the Dalai out of the fighting, and then make peace with Peking. When they chose to proceed to India, Peking dissolved the local government of Tibet by order of the State Council on March 28, just three days before a majority of said government would have been in India, a government-in-exile, possibly issuing decrees from a foreign land.

Peking did this in a manner which preserved the Dalai Lama's position as head of government in Tibet, while getting rid of all his rebel ministers. The Pre-

paratory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region was instructed to take over the functions of local government. This was a committee formed in 1956, amid much pomp and celebration, with the Dalai Lama as Chairman, the Panchen Erdeni as First Vice-Chairman, and Apei, one of the two loyal *kaloons*, as Secretary-General. Its function was to form a new, unified Tibet somewhat larger than the previous Tibet, to combine the lands of the Dalai Lama, those of the Panchen Erdeni, the northwestern Ari district and the recently contested Chamdo Area. The committee had fifty-five members of whom fifty were Tibetans, giving a wide representation of all the areas. It was therefore in a position to create a new, unified and larger Tibet under the Dalai Lama's chairmanship. Due to the opposition of the *kasha*, whose rule the new Autonomous Region would supersede, the work had not advanced.

When therefore the order of the State Council on March 28 dissolved the local government of Tibet but directed the Preparatory Committee to take over its functions and asked the Panchen Erdeni, already Vice-Chairman, to become Acting Chairman "pending the Dalai Lama's absence under duress," all formalities of a continuing government were preserved, with the Dalai Lama still as titular head, even in absentia, and the Panchen Erdeni "acting chairman" in his absence. If the Dalai Lama chose to break free from the rebels and could do it, the road was open for his return to a functioning government of which he still was chief. The *kasha* would, however, be gone.



Peking went even further in keeping for the Dalai Lama a path of return. On April 18 the National People's Congress, the supreme organ of state power, convened in Peking. The Dalai Lama was not only a member of this Congress as a deputy from Tibet, but had been elected by it as a vice-chairman of its Standing Committee, the continuing state power of China. On the day when the Congress opened, a statement was issued in Tezpur, India, and distributed by an Indian diplomatic official, which purported to come from the Dalai Lama. It was a thoroughgoing attack on China and on the Peking government, and was precisely timed to take the world headlines away from Premier Chou En-lai's report to the Congress on the general state of the nation. Friends of the Dalai Lama in Peking, especially the Tibetan deputies, like Apei and the Panchen Erdeni, angrily branded the Tezpur statement a "forgery," and intimated that it had been written by the Indian official or by some of the rebels under Indian advice.

On this assumption, the National People's Congress re-elected the Dalai Lama as one of the vice-chairmen of the Standing Committee, the expressed view being that he was absent "under duress." The way was thus still kept open, if the Dalai Lama broke with the rebels, for him to return not only as chairman of the new local government in Tibet but also as a vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of China.

Whatever olive branches were thus held out to the Dalai Lama, no concessions were made by Peking to suggestions that came from India, that Tibet should

be negotiated in a conference on Indian soil. Peking was adamant on this and did not even answer. However deftly they were worded by Nehru, such suggestions violated a basic principle on which all Chinese agree, including Chiang Kai-shek's regime on Taiwan, that Tibet is a part of China, not subject to interference by a foreign power. If the Dalai Lama had complaints to make, he could still make them as the chairman of the government of Tibet, or as a vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of China's Congress. He could not make them through a foreign power.

So matters stood for three months until June 20. On that day the Dalai Lama gave a press conference in Mussoorie, India, in which was handed out a prepared statement attacking China, the Chinese and the Peking government even more strongly than the Tezpur statement had done. It denounced specifically every act of Peking from 1950 to the present, demanded Tibetan independence and even a "Greater Tibet" with boundaries so ancient and vague that they might be interpreted to comprise a fifth to a fourth part of China. Peking took no official notice of this attack but the press of the world commented that "the Dalai Lama has chosen to slam the door against return."

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Before discussing the Dalai Lama's June 20 statement, let us examine the conditions under which he left Lhasa, as shown by the three letters he sent to General Tan Kuan-san and by the testimony of his attendants and bodyguards who remained behind. For

this is the raw material of history, which will be long discussed and variously interpreted. It is also of interest to psychologists, for it shows a young man who was from babyhood conditioned to accept the rules of his ministers and his hierarchy while also accepting worship from the people, when he is caught in a clash of forces that do not respond to his will.

On March 10, as we saw in the previous chapter, the Dalai Lama was awaited at a morning theatrical performance at the Military Command. When he did not arrive, word came that he was held in his palace by armed men who were "killing progressives." We have already followed events as they developed in the city of Lhasa, from the first appearance of armed men on horseback displaying the corpse of a leading progressive, to the final rout of the rebels. Let us now trace what happened with the Dalai Lama himself.

When the Dalai Lama did not keep his appointment, which he himself had made a month earlier, General Tan Kuan-san, acting representative in Lhasa of the Central Government and political commissar of the military area, sent a note to the Dalai Lama as follows:

Respected Dalai Lama,

It is very good indeed that you wanted to come to the Military Area Command. You are heartily welcome. Since you have been put to very great difficulties due to intrigues and provocations of the reactionaries, it may be advisable that you do not come for the time being. Salutations and best regards,

Tan Kuan-san.

The letter was given to Living Buddha Jaltsolin, reader of the Dalai Lama, who was then conveyed to his own home by an army car. He there took horse and rode to Norbu Lingka, the large walled park in which were many palaces, which was the Dalai Lama's summer residence. He found the outer gate to the park closed and guarded by the first regiment of the Tibetan Army. After waiting an hour and a half Jaltsolin was permitted to enter at five o'clock. He found many armed men circulating inside the Norbu Lingka, but he made his way to the Dalai Lama, whom he found "in a room on the left of the court room."

The Dalai Lama read the letter and then said to Jaltsolin: "They (the rebels) say it is for my safety but actually they endanger me." The Dalai Lama asked Jaltsolin to return to the Military Area Command, "if he had the courage," and report to General Tan the conditions surrounding the Dalai Lama. He expressed grief over the killing of Kanchung Soanamchiatso, the man whose corpse had been exhibited on a horse.

Jaltsolin was detained by the rebels in Norbu Lingka and was unable to leave for a fortnight, until the rebels' defeat. In the intervening days he tried to see the Dalai Lama again but was unable to speak with him. "After March 10," reported Jaltsolin later, "the Dalai Lama could not move freely even inside the Norbu Lingka. Armed rebels kept guard outside his palace. Within the yellow walls was the first regiment of the Tibetan Army; outside were the Khampa people. The door of the palace was closed."

He saw the Dalai Lama once again and from a distance. It was on March 12. "He sat on a high throne, his head lowered, one hand on his temple, very worried and his face had become darker. There were more than twenty people around him." . . . (Jaltsolin listed some of these.) "Some, seeing the Dalai Lama in such sorrow and poor health, feared he might die. They said that at all costs the Dalai Lama must live and that everyone should obey him. But a lama named Yiehsi Dongchu said it was all right for the Dalai Lama to live but not exactly right to obey him. A lama in a yellow robe carried a pistol. There was a lot of clamor. The Dalai Lama waved his hand and sighed deeply."

Jaltsolin himself was frequently threatened during his days within Norbu Lingka. On one occasion the rebel leader Kundelin Chasa sent for him and warned him: "You are friendly with the Hans. We suspect you. Cut off your relations with them." On March 19, two days after the Dalai Lama left, three rebels entered Jaltsolin's room and ordered him to leave Lhasa with them. When Jaltsolin told them that the Dalai Lama had given him a task to do in Lhasa, they left him alone.

Jaltsolin's account of the Dalai Lama's confinement by the rebels is confirmed by many others. Lozong Dorje, a clerical official who attended the rebel meeting March 10 in the Scripture Reading Hall at Norbu Lingka at which Tibetan independence was declared, later reported that this same meeting decided that the Dalai Lama "should not be allowed to move beyond

the upper and lower halls of Tatum Monastery” and that guards were stationed to enforce this. “From that moment,” said Lozong, “the Dalai Lama lost all freedom of movement.” Similar testimony came from Padma Choinpel, one of the Dalai Lama’s bodyguards.

Documents captured after the rebels were driven from Lhasa, also testify to the situation in the palace. A document entitled: “Opinions of the Big Three Monasteries” dated March 11 and signed by twenty-three people, stated that a meeting held in Norbu Lingka on March 10 under the Grand Secretary of the *kasha* had declared Tibet’s independence. The Dalai Lama became very angry and declared that no more meetings should be held in Norbu Lingka. “In the humble opinion of the Big Three Monasteries, though the Dalai Lama became angry when the ecclesiastics and laymen prevented his going out, it was in fact for the good of His Holiness. . . . To hold meetings in the Norbu Lingka may beget doubts about the Dalai Lama’s name. . . . It is, however, harmful to move the meetings elsewhere so the meetings can still be held in the original place.” The “Opinions of the Big Three” also declared that “the Dalai Lama should be instructed not to attend any meetings with the Hans. From now on no joint meetings of Tibetans and Hans should be held, such as the Preparatory Committee.” At the same time it was decided to order the “Oracle” that, in doing “heavenly divination,” the “whole history of the race, the religion, the written and spoken language must be bent to the course favorable to an independent state.”

Similar statements are found in another document discovered in rebel headquarters, the "Opinions of Nangma Khanchen Kanchung," which means all officials of the fourth rank. The Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni being the only persons of first rank, the other Living Buddhas the second, and the cabinet ministers the third, this means officials just below the rank of cabinet minister. Here also it was stated that the Dalai Lama "became angry" but whether this was at the rebellion or at the interference with his personal movements and his scripture reading hall, is not clear. In any case, the officials decided that "it is not good to move the meetings elsewhere as they must seem to be under the Dalai Lama's support."

It was in this situation that the Dalai Lama, unable to send messages through Jaltsolin, sent three letters to General Tan through Apei, who was still a *kaloona*, and known to be working with Peking. Apei told me that he himself could not enter Norbu Lingka, "and if I had been able to get in I would never have got out alive," he said. But lamas and Living Buddhas in the personal service of the Dalai Lama kept in touch with Apei and thus the letters were exchanged between the Dalai Lama and General Tan. The Dalai Lama's first letter was sent March 11, in reply to the letter which General Tan had sent by Jaltsolin on March 10. Since it was short, I give it in full.

Dear Comrade Political Commissar Tan,

I intended to go to the Military Area Command to see the theatrical performance yesterday but I

was unable to do so, due to obstruction by people, ecclesiastical and secular, who were instigated by a few bad elements and who did not know the facts. This has put me to indescribable shame. I am greatly upset and worried and at a loss what to do. When your letter appeared before me, I at once became overjoyed. You do not mind at all.

Reactionary, evil elements are carrying out activities endangering me, under pretext of protecting my safety. I am taking measures to calm things down. In a few days when the situation becomes stable, I will certainly meet you. If you have any internal directives for me, please tell me frankly through this messenger,

Dalai Lama, written by my own hand.

The "messenger" to whom the Dalai Lama referred was Apei, Apei himself told me later that he recognized the Dalai Lama's handwriting at once. Later the Dalai Lama in his first talk with Nehru confirmed that the letters were written by him.

General Tan, on receiving the Dalai Lama's letter, sent a reply on the same day, March 11. In it he informed the Dalai Lama that "the reactionaries are now so audacious as to have openly and arrogantly carried out military provocations." He mentions machine-guns and fortifications set up by the rebels "commanding the highway of national defense," a highway linking Lhasa with the rest of China. He reports that he has sent letters to all the *kaloons* about this, holding them responsible unless the fortifications



“which endanger national security” are at once removed. He asks for the Dalai Lama’s views on this and ends: “Salutations and best regards, Tan Kuan-san.”

To this the Dalai Lama replied with his second letter, dated the following day, March 12. He declared:

The unlawful actions of the reactionary clique break my heart. Yesterday I told the *kasha* to order the immediate dissolution of the illegal “people’s conference” and the immediate withdrawal of the reactionaries who arrogantly moved into the Norbu Lingka under pretext of protecting my safety and have seriously estranged the relations between the Central Government and the local government. I am making every possible effort to deal with them....

The Dalai Lama notes that “a few shots” were fired that morning by men of the Tibetan Army near the Chinghai-Tibet Highway, but that “fortunately no serious disturbance occurred.” He ends: “As to the questions in your letter, I am planning to persuade my subordinates and give them your instructions. Please tell me frankly any instructions you have for me.”

No letters were exchanged on the 13th or 14th. We know from the testimony later given by Jaltsolin, that on the 12th the Dalai was sitting in much distress in a gathering of twenty or more rebels. If this was his attempt to “give instruction,” we know from the “Opinions of the Big Three Monasteries” that he was being firmly disobeyed. On the 14th another meeting was held in the Norbu Lingka of

which we have reports from Padma Choinpel, the bodyguard, and from Thubta Tenba, a clerical official of the fourth rank who attended the meeting.

The fullest account was given by Thubta Tenba who, after the suppression of the rebellion, decided to tell what he knew. "On March 14," he stated, "the *kaloons*, local government personnel, rebels and representatives of the Big Three Monasteries received orders to go and hear a speech by the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama told them that it was he himself who made the date for March 10 at the performance. He said: 'You have created disturbance, killed people, caused bloodshed. All this has saddened me.' He said that the 'Sikang garrison troops' (the Khampas) are not necessary. He said, 'The troops from Sikang fire inside the Norbu Lingka. There is hiss of bullets both in front and behind my living quarters. My life is now in the balance.'"

According to Thubta Tenba, the Dalai Lama raised at this meeting the question of going to India and said that he did not want to go. His words, as reported, were: "Some people think I had better go to India. At one time I went to Yatung. I also went to India year before last. It is impossible for me to live there. All I wish is to live in my own land and enjoy the effect of the cause."

General Tan wrote again to the Dalai Lama on March 15, stating that "the traitorous activities . . . have grown into intolerable proportions." He notes the Dalai Lama's statement that he was trying to handle the situation and says: "We welcome this correct at-

titude on your part.” He adds a significant warning and an equally significant invitation:

We are very much concerned about your present position and safety. If you think it necessary and possible to extricate yourself from the present dangerous position of being abducted by the traitors, we cordially welcome you and your entourage to come and stay for a brief period in the Military Area Command. We are willing to assume full responsibility for your safety. As to what is the best course to follow, it is entirely for you to decide.

General Tan then conveys the information that the National People’s Congress has decided to hold its session on April 17. He ends: “Salutations and best regards, Tan Kuan-san.”

This was an invitation to break with the rebels decisively. The escape might have been difficult. In any event, the Dalai Lama did not try. He replied to General Tan on the 16, expressing thanks for the general’s concern for his safety. He then gave his interpretation of the meeting in the palace on the 14th and his future hopes.

I made a speech to more than seventy representatives of the government officials, instructing them from various angles, calling on them to consider both present and long-term interests and to calm down or my life would be in danger. After these reproaches, the condition took a slight turn for the better. Though conditions in here and outside are

still difficult to deal with, I am trying skilfully to make a demarkation line between the progressive people and those opposing the revolution within the government officials. A few days from now when there are enough forces that I can trust, I shall make my way secretly to the Military Area Command. When that time comes, I shall first send you a letter. I request you to adopt reliable measures. What are your views? Please write me often,

Dalai, March sixteenth.

This was the last communication received from the Dalai Lama in Lhasa. On the following day, March 17, he left Lhasa in the evening, in company with the rebel leaders. Two persons later reported that final period as it appeared, not to the Dalai Lama but to his mother. The first was one of the Dalai Lama's messengers, who told of the mother's distress when people asked how to deal with the rebels' demands for food and fodder and how she replied: "Give whatever they ask. The Dalai has no power now. It is lucky if they leave us our lives." The second report is from a servant of the Dalai Lama's younger brother, who states that just before the Dalai Lama left, his mother was very pale and said to this servant: "There will be war now in Lhasa. I am afraid of gun-fire. The Dalai has no more freedom of movement. If we don't come back, you can return to Daipung Monastery."

Such are the reports of the last days of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa. A month later, when the Dalai Lama

entered India, he stated that he came of his own free will. It was also stated that he had not expected to leave until the afternoon of the 17th, but that two or three shells were fired that afternoon towards Norbu Lingka which fell into a pond.

There is testimony from scores of people in Lhasa that no shells whatever were fired by the People's Liberation Army until March 20. Several people who were in Lhasa throughout that week told me that while random rifle shots from rebels occurred often in all directions, they heard no loud sounds of any kind that afternoon from the direction of Norbu Lingka. No direct evidence thus exists as to what actual or imagined noises or other pressure, induced the Dalai Lama's departure. It is known, however, that his departure on the 17th was predicted in India on March 2 in an article in the *Statesman* and this was the day when he actually left. The coincidence hardly seems to be by chance.

From the evidence of the Dalai Lama's letters and the testimony of his helpers, one may deduce that the Dalai Lama was in considerable distress in that last week in Lhasa and showed anger. Whether he was angry at the rebellion or only at personal inconveniences from the unruly acts of his followers, especially of the Khampas, is not clear. It appears also that the rebels saw in the Dalai Lama an important tool for their plans, which must be preserved. But little veneration seemed shown for his wishes and his words. Was he "in duress," or was he a conscious participant,

even a leader, in rebellion? It is possible that he was both.

In India the environment of the top Tibetan rebels remained around the Dalai, supplemented now by new influences, by Nehru, by the group Peking calls "Indian expansionists," by the Dalai's own elder brothers, one of whom lives in New York, and is assumed, from his words and deeds, to be acting under Washington, another of whom lived in Taiwan until he came to India, and is assumed to have been employed by the Kuomintang. It is among these new surroundings that the Dalai Lama gave his press conference on June 20, and handed out a long statement, which, though he refused to discuss its details and though it was doubtless prepared, in whole or in part, by advisers, must, since given out in his presence, be taken as his own.

The Dalai Lama declares that prior to 1950 Tibet was "virtually independent," with "all rights of sovereignty both internal and external," that the entrance of Chinese troops in 1950 was therefore "a flagrant act of aggression"; that the 1951 Agreement was between "two independent and sovereign states," and his government had not willingly accepted it but had signed "at the point of the bayonet"; that the Chinese, who imposed it, had themselves violated all of its terms; had "undermined the Dalai Lama's authority," and "sown dissension among his people," and "plundered the property of individuals and monasteries."

After this sweeping accusation, the Dalai Lama demands "investigation by an international commission," says he will never return to Tibet until he gets "the

rights and powers” which Tibet had “prior to 1950.” He states that he will not deal directly with Peking, since he does not trust Peking to keep its word, but will only deal through a third power, presumably India. He demands not only independence for the present Tibet but for “Greater Tibet including the provinces of Amdo and Khan.”

I looked on maps for Amdo and Khan and could not find them till I came to a map of a previous century and even there the borders weren't precise. They clearly included large chunks of present-day Szechwan, Yunnan, Kansu, the already abolished Sikang and nearly all of Chinghai, perhaps even the Tsaidam Basin where China's greatest oil-strike lies. Tibetans indeed live in all these provinces, to a total of 1,600,000, which is more than those living in Tibet. But in these other provinces live many more millions of other nationalities, both Hans and Mongols and Huis and still others, who through seven centuries have settled these areas and developed them since the days of Kublai Khan.

The Chinese made no direct reply to the June 20 statement; they had said earlier, at the time of the so-called Tezpur statement, all that they apparently cared to say. The Peking papers had found in their morgues the statements made by the Dalai Lama in the past eight years on anniversaries of the 1951 Agreement, or on the National Day of China, in articles and speeches. They published these side by side with the statement from Tezpur. This was one of the reasons they called it a forgery. Certainly the statements did not sound as if from the same man. I have here no

room for a tenth of the quotations, but I shall give a part.

Where the Dalai Lama now claims a former "independent sovereignty" for Tibet, he wrote less than a year earlier, for October 1, 1958: "The Tibetan nationality living in Tibet is one of nationalities in China which have a long history. The Tibetan people have enjoyed ample rights of freedom and equality." On March 9, 1955, he told the State Council: "The Tibetan nationality is one of the five nationalities of the motherland. . . . These ties go back a thousand years."

Where now he claims that the 1951 Agreement was "imposed at the point of the bayonet" and "at once violated by the Chinese themselves," he wired to Mao Tse-tung in October 1951 that it was "concluded on a friendly basis," and that "the Tibetan local government and the monks and people are giving it unanimous support." Year after year he praised the Agreement on its anniversary in words like these, sent in 1954 by wire to Mao Tse-tung: "In the past three years the units of the People's Liberation Army . . . have correctly carried out the policies of equality of nationalities and freedom of religious belief." Or these, in his message to the army on the same date: "The army units in Tibet have respected religious practise, customs and habits with total fidelity," that "in the three years the People's Liberation Army has never done anything that runs counter to the will of the Tibetan people, ecclesiastical and secular," that "the Tibetan people ardently love the armed forces." Statements like



these have appeared from the Dalai Lama year after year and many times a year. Now he issues in India a statement that completely contradicts all of them.

I discussed with a Peking friend the world press comment that "the Dalai Lama has slammed the door of return." He agreed that the Dalai Lama's return seemed increasingly unlikely, but not yet entirely impossible, since the Dalai had not yet, he said, taken the final step.

The Chinese are slow in coming to final judgments. I have heard many comments about the Dalai Lama in the past three months in Peking. Some have said: "He is a willing puppet of the most reactionary serf-owners." Others: "He has done some good actions. Before he was yet of age, he broke with his pro-British regent and sent Apei to Peking." I have heard diverse views of those last letters to General Tan, whether they were honest outpourings of a youth who thought he could handle the forces of which he was a puppet, or whether they were written in consultation with the rebels to deceive General Tan. . . . But now for a month nobody discusses the Dalai Lama. They discuss the reports of the Panchen Erdeni and Apei and the progress of reform in Tibet. And all they say of the Dalai is: "Do the Tibetans really want him?" or: "With every lying attack and every contradiction, he becomes to the Tibetans less of a god."

One of China's top lamas, who fully supported Peking's order dissolving Tibet's local government, was asked: "What then do you think of the Dalai Lama?"

He replied without hesitation: "I think both the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni very holy. But they are holy only as long as they serve the people."

Because of the wide belief abroad that Peking's army tried desperately to stop him and hold him in Lhasa, I asked Apei directly: "Did you make any attempt to keep the Dalai Lama in Lhasa or to keep him from reaching India?" Apei, as Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the People's Liberation Army forces in Tibet and as the man who carried the Dalai Lama's last letters, is in a position to know.

"None," Apei replied flatly. "We knew that the rebels planned to kidnap him though we did not know the date. We knew on the morning of the 18th by the conditions around Norbu Lingka, that he had gone. We could have stopped it. There are only five roads out of Lhasa and on four of them we had guards automatically, on one to guard a bridge, on two to guard power-plants and on the fourth a barracks. It would have been simple to send orders to the guards on four roads and put a patrol on the fifth. But we could not have stopped the rebels with the Dalai Lama without armed clash, and this might have endangered the Dalai Lama. We made no such attempt."

I did not ask Apei who made that decision. It could only have come from Peking.

Tibet and its 1,200,000 people on the roof of the world are now the story: I recall what I was told on good authority, but I give it without guarantee. When the Dalai Lama was in Yatung in 1950, and his ministers were discussing, together

with agents of many foreign countries, whether he should return to Lhasa or go to India to launch a holy war, it was said to have been the British, long experienced in such matters, who advised that he stay in Tibet, when the Americans were prepared to finance and equip him in war. And one of the reasons the British gave was this: "The Dalai Lama is like a snow man that melts when the snow goes. In Lhasa he has power but outside Tibet he will melt." I personally think the British said it, it is like their cold shrewdness. Whether they did or not, it is true.

## VII. THE PANCHEN TAKES OVER

In the first interview granted for years to any reporter, the Panchen Erdeni, just elevated to power in Tibet, told me that "the abduction of the Dalai Lama by reactionary serf-owners" was "the greatest sabotage of religion in Tibet" and that he hoped for the Dalai Lama's return. Till then, he himself would take over the organizing of an autonomous Tibet "within the framework of a socialist China" and would begin "the democratic reform," including the abolition of serfdom. That was in May 1959 and the Panchen Erdeni's views of the Dalai's return may change with the Dalai's actions abroad and the Panchen's own acquisition of power. A youth who was dispossessed and in exile half of his life, may change when he suddenly reaches the top, as the Dalai Lama also would seem to have changed in his environment abroad. I record it for the record of what the Panchen Erdeni said when his take-over began.

The view commonly held in the West that the Panchen Erdeni is only a poor substitute, even a "fake substitute," for the Dalai Lama, or that in some way he is "under" the Dalai Lama or inferior to him, is incorrect. Another common view, that there are two trends in Tibet, towards China or towards India, and

that the Panchen represents the first and the Dalai the second, was partly correct in part of the present century.

In the theology of Tibetan Buddhism, as we saw in an earlier chapter, the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni are spiritually equal brothers, reincarnations of the two chief disciples of Tson Khapa. If one is considerably older than the other, they are known as "Father-and-Son," a single term implying a unified being. In the sharply defined ranks of feudalism, only the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni had first rank, all other Living Buddhas had second rank, while cabinet ministers had only third rank.

In temporal power the Dalai Lama had much more territory. The amounts have varied with the centuries and cannot be given with accuracy, for provinces and counties were never really measured, and power depended more on the allegiances of nobles and monasteries than on boundaries. In most of the present century, for those who insist on statistics, the Dalai Lama had 109 counties while the Panchen had only twelve. The impression that prevails abroad, that the Dalai Lama was overlord also of the Panchen's counties, comes from the fact that most travellers to Tibet in this century were British or depended on British information. There was a long period when the British backed the Dalai Lama, while the Panchen, fearing for his life, had fled. The Dalai Lama of the early part of the century, the thirteenth incarnation, was one of the few who lived to a mature age and exerted political power. After fleeing alternately to India

and to Peking from the ravages of the period, he finally settled down to make deals with the British, in the warlord period when China was weak. The Panchen, on the other hand, fled in 1924 to the interior of China, and refused to return at British request; he died in Chinghai. The present Panchen, born in Chinghai, did not reach his inherited possessions in Tibet till 1952. Since during this period, from 1924 to 1952, the Dalai's ministers tried to take over the lands of the Panchen, while the British dealt with the Dalai Lama as the lord of all Tibet, travellers naturally reported him as the supreme overlord.

By contrast, the two French priests who travelled to Tibet the hard way in the nineteenth century, on foot over the great plateau, found in 1846-48 an opposite situation, in which the Dalai Lamas were pitiful infant victims while the Panchen was the strong man. In their two-volume account of the journey "Through Tartary, Tibet and China," the "Lazarist priest and missionary apostolic" E. Huc recounts the demoralized condition of Lhasa, where three Dalai Lamas in succession had died in mysterious circumstances before taking power, and where people suspected the regent of murdering them, but did not dare speak out.

In this situation, it was the Panchen who, together with the Dalai Lama's ministers, sent a secret appeal to the Chinese emperor, stating that three Dalai Lamas had died and they feared for the life of the next one, and asking the emperor to send an investigator. The investigator arrived, with the powers of the court of China, took testimony, not without torture, until

finally the regent, not under torture but fearing it, confessed. He said he had murdered all three Dalai Lamas, the first by strangulation, the second by suffocation, the third by poison. He was not executed but given a sentence of life exile. Even this mild sentence caused a minor war in Lhasa, for the "Lamas of Sera," being partisans of the regent, stormed 15,000 strong into the city, armed with lances, clubs and shot-guns, besieged the dwellings of the *kaloons* who had reported the regent, tore one *kaloon* to pieces and broke into the prison where the regent was confined. The methods of feudal rebellion seem fairly similar to those in Lhasa of the present year.

It was clearly the Panchen at that time who took the initiative in protecting the child Dalai Lama. The same Panchen was promoting a dream of empire which testified to his virile imagination if not to his political sense. When Living Buddhas and other high lamas came on pilgrimage to his palace at Shigatze, he signed them up in a secret conspiracy, according to E. Huc. He said that in his next incarnation, he intended to be born in the north, whereupon spiritual powers would help him annihilate the Hans, make alliance with the Mongols and then conquer the "lands of the Rus" (Russia), combining them all in a great Buddhist Empire on the style of Genghiz Khan. It was a dream even bigger than the "Greater Tibet" of the present Dalai Lama, and equally far from practical politics. The Panchen, however, was realistic in an aspect that counted. While the great empire was deferred to his next incarnation, he collected for it in this.

It will be seen that feudal rulers who are also gods have extravagant dreams, but their actual power, as well as their relation to each other, has depended on the state of the Chinese empire, the decisions of its emperors, the allegiances of nobles and monasteries, and the maturity and personality of the various Dalai Lamas and Panchens. The present Panchen Erdeni is in similar case. After a quarter century of exile — fourteen years' exile of his predecessor and thirteen of his own, he was returned to what may be called his "ancestral lands" by a short paragraph in the 1951 Agreement between the Dalai Lama and Peking, a paragraph almost nobody else would observe.

The Agreement provided that the "status, functions and powers" of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni should remain unchanged. Then, in paragraph 6, it was stated that this "status, functions and powers" means those of the 13th Dalai Lama and the 9th Panchen Erdeni "when these were in amicable relations with each other." That simple phrase turned back the clock to the time before the Ninth Panchen fled into exile from the British and from the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, and thereby gave the seat at Shigatze and the area known as Houtsang to the present young man. A later action in 1956, made him the first Vice-Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region, of which the Dalai Lama was Chairman. Still later when the Dalai Lama went in March 1959 to India, the order of the State Council made the Panchen the Acting Chairman, and therewith, the chief of local government in Tibet.





The author asks Panchen Erdeni about future reforms





Sacred objects checked in Lhasa. They are all there

Poor lamas in Jokhan Monastery smile at "freedom of person"





The Panchen Erdeni Chuji-Geltsang, to give him his double title and family name, is a young man of twenty-one. But the Panchen, like the Dalai, has "advisers." And Chinese have experience in these matters for several thousand years.

His take-over of power was handled in very proper order. On March 28, as the Dalai Lama and his ministers approached the Indian border, the State Council of the Central Government of China dissolved the local government of Tibet and asked the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region to take over its functions. The Dalai Lama, who was chairman of this committee, being "absent under duress," the Panchen Erdeni, who was first Vice-Chairman, was asked to serve as Acting Chairman, pending the Dalai Lama's return. The Panchen accepted by wire from his castle in Shigatse. Thence he journeyed in state to Lhasa to become Acting Chairman for Tibet.

On April 5 at 3:10 in the afternoon, the Panchen's car arrived in Lhasa and drew up in front of the great Daipung Monastery, where dignitaries of army and state and religion waited to welcome the youth. The younger folk presented flowers, the older men of standing exchanged formally the ceremonial scarves known as *hata*. The Panchen was then conducted to a "new palace" in the Shirtsit Lingka, or Park, while throngs of people burned pine needles and prostrated themselves as he passed. It was noted that he passed by the great Potala Palace and the Norbu Lingka Summer Palace, the palaces of the Dalai Lama, which two weeks earlier had served as forts for the rebels, and

which now lay gleaming in the sunlight. A correspondent noted: "The willows in Norbu Lingka are turning green."

A week of whirlwind recognition followed for the Panchen. A banquet on the 6th by political and military chiefs, with songs and dances of Tibet as program, was followed on the 7th by ceremonial visits to Jokhan and Ramogia Monasteries, for which the Panchen had two "Living Buddhas" as attendants. He worshipped and recited Sutras for two hours in each monastery. Correspondents from Peking used the occasion to note that the various sacred objects were still in place, especially the gold statue of Buddha brought to Lhasa by the Princess Wen Cheng of the Tang dynasty in A.D. 641, that thousands of Lhasa citizens prostrated themselves when the Panchen passed, and that the Panchen, speaking to the assembled lamas in the monasteries, assured them that "the Central Government has always respected religion in Tibet and will always continue to do so."

Only after all this mutual recognition, by political and military chiefs, by the lamas and the people, did the Panchen open on the 8th the first session of the Preparatory Committee, as the new local government under his acting chairmanship. His keynote speech noted that "all nationalities of the motherland" must take the road to socialism and carry out reforms, but "the time, the stages and the methods of reform should be decided in conformity with the specific conditions of each nationality." The morning after this declaration, the Panchen left by special plane for Lanchow,

where he was formally welcomed by the dignitaries of Kansu Province, thence by special train to Sian, where the chiefs of Shensi Province gave him a banquet and so to Peking to be greeted at the station by a throng of lamas and Buddhist leaders, including the Venerable Shirob Jaltso, and another throng of political personages, including Chou En-lai, the Premier of China. . . . It was a highly satisfactory launching for a young man.

I saw him speak in the beautiful Hall of Benevolence of the Winter Palace, addressing, in robes of gold brocade, the session of the National People's Congress. He declared himself "incensed" by the "so-called statement" of the Dalai Lama released in Tezpur, and said that its ideas "were contrary to everything the Dalai Lama had said for eight years," that its form "was not even in Tibetan usage" but was "clearly imposed by foreigners." This brought a tart rejoinder from Nehru, who found the Panchen's ire unseemly. Deputies of the Congress, however, told me that the Panchen was so angered by the Tezpur statement that calmer people had to work on him to restrain his comments within the bounds of decency.

Such anger was natural. Foreign intrigues, from the direction if not from the action of India, had caused the previous Panchen to die in exile, and kept the present Panchen from his home for thirteen years. Yet behind the anger with which he championed the Dalai Lama's "patriotism" and expressed hopes for his return, he would have been either less or more than human if he had failed to feel some personal triumph in the sud-

den heights to which he, through the Dalai Lama's absence, had attained.

My request for an interview was granted even before he made the speech to the Congress, but the interview itself delayed. This did not surprise me, for the Panchen was far, far better employed. I followed in the press his triumphs. Pictures showed him boating at a Sunday picnic given him by sundry chiefs of government in the old Summer Palace of the emperors; other pictures showed him at a banquet given by the Ministry of Defense. He was shown received by Mao Tse-tung and the secular chiefs of China, all exchanging *hata* in Tibetan style though Mao seemed to have a quizzical gleam in his eye. Then the aged and famous Chu Teh, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Congress, tendered the Panchen a banquet at which Peking and Szechwan operas were performed.

Nor was the Panchen's spiritual role forgotten. Between these political festivities he was received at the Temple of Broad Charity with tolling of bells and burning of incense. He prayed before the sacred "Buddha tooth," and sprinkled before it spring water and barley from Tibet. He then mounted the holy throne in the temple hall and read "the three principles of the Dharma" to an audience of monks in orange and wine-red robes, sitting cross-legged on the floor.

At the Lama Temple the reception was even bigger, for this is his own form of Buddhism, where scriptures are read in Tibetan. More than a thousand monks and nuns turned out, with "Living Buddhas" coming

from Inner Mongolia. Here his approach was hailed by the blowing of conch shells and horns so big that each had to be supported by two lamas. Cymbals and drums were struck, incense burned, white powder spread on the floor in "auspicious" designs, and a long yellow carpet laid for His Holiness to walk on to the temple hall where he "recited Sutras to more than a thousand people."

Impressed by these reports of pomp and circumstance, I wondered what was the proper way for me to greet the Panchen. Since even Mao Tse-tung gave him a *hata*, perhaps I also should buy one. I phoned the authorities who had arranged the interview. They told me not to bother. I couldn't buy the right kind of *hata* anyway, they said, since these were hardly obtainable outside Tibet. Moreover the ceremony of exchanging *hata* was complex and depended on the exact feudal status of the participants. The forms were changing. If Chairman Mao had exacted a ceremony in the ancient manner, the Panchen would have had to kowtow and hit his head on the ground nine times, as fixed by former Chinese emperors. The mutual exchange by dropping them over the other's outstretched arms, the way Mao had done with the Panchen, was, I learned, the greeting of equals. When the big delegation of journalists visited Tibet in 1955, the *hata* were dropped on their bowed necks, which showed their status pretty high but not as high as the Dalai Lama or Panchen Erdeni. What form was proper for an American woman writer, this had no precedent because it hadn't happened. Better let the

Panchen's secretaries work it out; they would supply whatever was needed.

So at three on a May afternoon I entered the large walled compound and the villa reserved for the Panchen and was received first by his secretaries in a very long, formal audience room, the same in which the assembled heads of Buddhism, under the Venerable Shirob, had done homage to the Panchen two weeks earlier. The secretaries gave me a white silk scarf some ten feet long rolled up from both ends into a double roll, and instructed me in its use. They then took the roll back and gave it to my interpreter. *Hata*, I learned, is used by the top strata of society and carried by "retainers." My interpreter and I—she was now my "retainer" went upstairs to the Panchen's personal sitting-room.

Sunlight streamed through the yellow silk drapes of two sets of double windows into a cream and yellow room. The overstuffed divan and arm-chairs of pale yellow were set on a large cream Chinese rug with an appliqued design of green leaves and deep pink roses at the corners. The walls were cream. A few large antique porcelain vases stood on the floor in proper places while rarer porcelains and jades were exhibited on the glass shelves of a mahogany cabinet. Near the door stood a highly modern long-and-short-wave radio. A low coffee-table, set with tea-cups, fruit and candies, was centered between the divan and the arm-chairs. It was a friendly room.

Into the room came a youth in a golden orange brocaded robe with sash of pale yellow, whose bare



head was clipped so close that the dark hair seemed a neat, tight cap above bronzed skin. We rose; I extended my hands for the *hata*, palms up and close together. My interpreter placed the *hata* on them with the double roll upward. I moved my hands outward with a flick that sent the scarf unrolling on both sides to the floor. The Panchen received the scarf on his outstretched hands; his secretary whisked it away. Another secretary gave him another *hata*, which he then similarly presented to me.

This, in the *hata* ceremony, is the greeting of equals, which begins to be the fashion now. Four years ago, the correspondents were shown in Tibet that their status was lower than that of the dignitaries they greeted. But now, Mao Tse-tung having given an "equal" greeting to the Panchen, he did the same by me. Democracy, even in Tibet, advances. The Panchen, in fact, went even further. As my interpreter reached to take from me the *hata* the Panchen had presented, the young man thrust his right hand under the scarf and gave me a Western style hand-shake, saying: "How do you do?" in more-or-less English. Everyone smiled.

Despite the informal beginning, the conversation went slowly. Double translation, from Tibetan to Madarin to English, takes time and loses much. The Panchen's direct manner helped and so did the fact that my questions were written beforehand, and lay before him in Tibetan as he replied. We began with his personal biography of which there have been conflicting reports. Because of the double translation, I

shall avoid quoting exact words, except where he repeated them for emphasis.

He was born, he said, in 1938 in Chinghai Province outside Tibet. In 1944 he was recognized as the reincarnation of the previous Panchen. Other candidates were proposed but on due consideration by several oracles and Living Buddhas, choice fixed on him. For several years more, however, he remained outside Tibet.

“The reason lay in the indifference of the *kasha*, the local government under the Dalai Lama,” he said. “They neither recognized me nor refused to recognize. They were indifferent.” (I did not ask whether this was because the *kasha* had designs on his territory; the question didn’t seem necessary.)

The recognition by the Central Government of China, which for centuries has been necessary for the lawful installation of Dalais and Panchens, was accorded by the Kuomintang in 1949. The “conferring of titles” was done on August 10, 1949, in a Chinghai monastery by a representative sent from the Kuomintang. Soon after this, the Kuomintang itself lost its title to Chinghai, being driven out by the People’s Liberation Army. When the Chinese People’s Republic was inaugurated on October 1, 1949, the Panchen soon wired his support of the new government and received its recognition as Tenth Panchen in return.

Since the Panchen at the time was only eleven years old, one assumes he had in Chinghai some shrewd advisers who saw how the political wind was blowing in China faster than Washington did. If the Panchen’s detractors say, as they do, that this makes him a “Com-

munist puppet," his supporters say that it shows him close to the loyalties of the people of China, including the Tibetan part of the Chinese people, large numbers of whom live in Chinghai. Also the fact that he grew to be eleven before he was ordained a Panchen Erdeni probably means that he knows a bit more of the lot of the common folk than does the Dalai Lama, who was taken into the great Potala Palace at the tender age of four.

The political sense of the Panchen's advisers was quickly rewarded. In 1951, when the Agreement was signed between the Dalai Lama and Peking, one of its clauses, as we have seen above, restored to the Panchen Erdeni his "status, functions and rights," as they had been in the days of the Ninth Panchen before the estrangement and exile. A single flick of the pen in the new Peking, did what long years of effort by the previous exiled Panchen had been unable to do.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Historical note. The Ninth Panchen fled to Inner Mongolia on November 15, 1923, and thence to other parts of China. The Thirteenth Dalai then took over the Panchen's power and was reported ill-treating his people. In 1929 the Panchen approached the Kuomintang and asked for help to return. He was invited to Nanking to confer with representatives of the Dalai. The KMT gave the Panchen a title; this annoyed the Dalai's representatives and recriminations broke the conference. In 1933 the Panchen sent representatives to Lhasa. The Dalai agreed that he might return. After preparations the Panchen started back but when he got as far as Yushu in Chinghai, he was held because the *kasha* would not permit him to come accompanied by Kuomintang officials and soldiers. The Panchen, believing his life not safe if he went unaccompanied, decided to stay in Chinghai. He died there December 1, 1937.

The present young Panchen told me that he himself had gone to Peking in 1951, and discussed the details of the Seventeen Articles before these were signed by the Dalai Lama's envoys. Again his advisers showed shrewdness. For through this new Agreement, the Panchen came in early 1952 to the palace of Shigatze and the lands of Houtsang, from which his predecessor had been forced in 1923.

Both the present Dalai Lama and the present Panchen came to Peking in 1954 as deputies to the National People's Congress. They remained for several months. Mao Tse-tung personally took pains to bring the two young men together, the Dalai then 20 and the Panchen just 16, in the interests of Tibetan harmony. For the first time these two "spiritual brothers" became personally acquainted. People who saw them together in Peking say that they seemed to relax in each other's company, each having for the first time an equal companion with whom he could be informal, but that when their retainers were around, which was most of the time, there was a terrible problem of precedence.

"We held several consultations about the future organization of the Tibetan Autonomous Region," the Panchen told me. "We did considerable work together on this. That is why I feel that I know the Dalai Lama's views. He expressed much pride in the achievements of our motherland, as he saw it in visiting many Chinese cities."

Quickly the Panchen concluded his brief biography. In 1956 when the Preparatory Committee was formed, the Dalai Lama became Chairman and the Panchen

first Vice-Chairman. In this past March 1959, when the Dalai's ministers led rebellion in Lhasa and were beaten and fled to India, the Panchen became "Acting Chairman pending the Dalai Lama's return," which put him in charge of the local government of Tibet.

"More than this about my life would take too long to state," concluded the Panchen.

What studies did the Panchen have to prepare for his life's duties, I asked him. He replied that "before liberation" he studied only the Tibetan language and the Buddhist Sutras in that language. "These are still my main study," he said. "The Buddhist classics are extensive; their study takes many years. I have in them two tutors. Since liberation I also study politics, especially the works of Mao Tse-tung and other government leaders. These works also are extensive and take time."

In response to my query about his previous political power as Panchen, he replied that he "had the responsibility of leading the *Kanpo Lija*, which in my territory has similar powers to that of the *kasha* under the Dalai Lama." He denied, what many foreign writers have claimed, that his territory was "under the Dalai Lama and under the *kasha*." "The authority is parallel and separate," he declared. "Many Chinese emperors have so stated." There was no hesitation in the Panchen's claim. One may add that various Chinese emperors recognized various arrangements, which adds to the complexity of any statement about politics in Tibet. The Thirteenth Dalai certainly usurped many functions of the exiled Panchen.

I asked him about the "period of estrangement," those recent years when the Panchens were in exile. He replied that this was due to foreign imperialists who wished to "divide and rule."

"In earlier times all Dalai Lamas and Panchen Erdenis were on good terms," he asserted, with what seems over-optimistic retrospect. "The British imperialists sought disunity in Tibet and many high officials of the Dalai Lama worked with them. Because of their activities the former Panchen had to move to Chinghai. The estrangement began in the last years of the Ching Dynasty and grew worse under the Kuomintang. It was ended by Chairman Mao. The return of Tibet to the motherland and the ending of foreign extraterritorial rights, laid the base."

I pressed the subject for it is an important point abroad. "It is said that two trends exist in Tibet, one towards China and one towards India and that you represent the first and the Dalai the second. Is this true?"

"That is a foreign way of putting it, and incorrect," replied the Panchen. "Two such groups actually exist, but the division is among the different nobles under the Dalai Lama. The great majority of the Tibetan people, both lay and ecclesiastic, recognize that Tibet has long been part of China, and they especially incline towards China now, when the present Central Government has a good policy towards minor nationalities. This was the case with all the former Panchens and myself. Until now it has been the position also of the Dalai Lama and of many of his nobles. But

some of his ministers and high nobles have always leaned towards the imperialists. These are the ones who took the Dalai Lama to India.”

I asked the Panchen Erdeni what changes had taken place in Tibet since 1951, the year when China's Central Government began to send in representatives and personnel, both army and civilian.

“All reform was held back by the *kasha*,” replied the Panchen, “and yet there was considerable change. A net-work of highways was built, connecting Tibet with the rest of China, and linking Tibetan cities. Transport thus became easier; prices of goods went down. Some factories were built, some schools and hospitals, two experimental farms, two power-plants and many houses. The government also gave seed loans to peasants without interest and also many tools. But the social system was not changed. Serfdom continued as before.”

In response to my question the Panchen admitted that when seed was given to the peasants it had sometimes been taken from them by their owners, and the tools had also sometimes been removed. “But in all this the consciousness of the people greatly increased,” he said. “They demand democratic reform. Now that the *kasha* is removed and the rebellion put down, these reforms will take place. I wish to see them quickly for they will swiftly raise the standard of living in Tibet.”

How rapidly, I asked, did the Panchen think the Tibetan Autonomous Region could be set up and serfdom abolished?

“Very soon,” he replied, “because of the strong demand of the people.” He added that “when the democratic reform is completed, then we shall study how soon the time will be ripe for socialist change.” The words were a trifle bookish; his critics in the West would say he was just repeating the slogans. But they were the words by which nearly seven hundred million people were living, including several million Tibetans. Should a youth of twenty-one, immersed in the Buddhist Sutras, be asked to invent his own?

Some practical details he mentioned. The lands of the rebels, he said, would probably go directly to the serfs that work them. Already these serfs were promised the harvest they now sow. The final division of lands would have to be more carefully worked out, but would probably follow much the same lines of what this spring was an emergency measure to expedite sowing. “Lands of the upper class who took no part in the rebellion will be paid for,” he stated, “the Central Government is now considering various ways. It will be done after consultation with the owners.”

I had a final question about the “theocracy.” Would this be abolished by “the democratic reform”? The Panchen did not recognize the word “theocracy” despite Tibet’s long experience with the form. In going through two interpreters, from English to Mandarin to Tibetan, “theocracy” got lost on the way. So I made it simpler, and asked what changes he foresaw in the relations between religion and the state.

To this the Panchen Erdeni replied that the Preparatory Committee is a state organ and has no power



over religion and cannot change religion in any way. In changing the state, no doubt changes will come in the relations between the state and religion, the form and extent of which cannot now be foreseen. Since the present Chinese government gives religious freedom and even compensates monasteries for losses suffered in the democratic changes, he thinks one need not fear.

I wondered if he really knew what he was facing. How fast his monasteries would decline when once the monks and nuns were free to leave without recapture and flogging. In every place it has happened, in Inner Mongolia, Kansu, Chinghai and Szechwan; when freedom is permitted in the monasteries, they decline. The buildings are handsomely kept by the Central Government's aid, but the gifts of butter for the lamps from believers and applications of young men to become lamas, fall off. I should not myself like to have the job of recruiting monks and nuns for even the most beautifully redecorated monastery in the China of today. . . .

I did not press the Panchen Erdeni with the question. He would have to face it soon enough. I liked this young man of twenty-one who had come in gold brocade from the Middle Ages to give me a hand-shake that affirmed the modern world. I thought he was probably closer to the needs of the Tibetan people than the Dalai Lama was, just because of his years of exile among Tibetan peasants in Chinghai and the shorter time he had been handled by a council of serf-owners. I wished him well in improving the people's

lot in Tibet and I hoped he might go down in history with laurels to his name.

Besides I had been told that the Panchen already knows that Tibet's long decline in population and consequently in strength, is considered to be due to the large number of its males who enter the lamaseries and engage neither in production nor in responsible reproduction, and also to the widespread syphilis that has followed like a destroying plague wherever the lamaseries went, in Mongolia and Tibet. I had been told that he was concerned over this. These are his problems now, as they are Tibet's, along with serfdom, and questions of health and farms and schools. He had enough problems for a youth of twenty-one. Must he also be asked to reconcile the doctrine of the eternal evil of this earthly life, this wheel of change, with the modern Chinese zest for life?

But he would have many more and better advisers than any Panchen Erdeni or Dalai Lama had before. I thought of all those runaway serfs, who were now returned students going back to Tibet.

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I took leave of the Panchen decorously and left him, hoping that this young man would know how to relate himself to all that other young life now expanding eagerly across his land.

Two evenings later I went to see a modern Chinese opera which concerned two Tibetan tribes on the grasslands, in blood-feud with each other, with a girl of one tribe and a man of the other in love. The old

Romeo and Juliet story, with the Tibetan plateau for back-drop and with the People's Liberation Army coming to unite the lovers, more successfully than did the ancient friar. Costumes and dances were brilliant; the snowy peaks above lush mountain meadows made me positively homesick for Tibet.

As the curtain rose for the second act a stir came in the audience just below the balcony where I sat. The people nearby broke into applause. A youth in orange robes, followed by a small retinue, was taking his seat in the central orchestra. The Panchen Erdeni had come to see the show.

It was a good show; he seemed to enjoy it. At the end when the colorful crowd of herdsmen, chiefs and women took curtain call against the back-drop of snowy peaks, the Panchen went on the stage to shake hands with the actors, and posed in the midst of them for news flashlights. The audience, already leaving, turned back in the aisles to look. He was a young man having a very good time, the most colorful figure there.

My thoughts flashed to the other young man, his "spiritual brother," whose appointment to see another show of song and dance in Lhasa became signal for rebellion, and of how he had waited in his summer palace, held by armed rebels, while the news-photographer waited at the theater. I thought of him in India, making disputed statements. I wondered if the two young men would ever work together again.

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A crowd of more than a thousand saw the Panchen off at the railway station, when he left on May 25 for

Tibet. The station and the special train were decorated with red lanterns and silken banners. The Venerable Shirob came with a throng of orange and magenta robed lamas; government dignitaries saw him off and also Tibetan students.

Then news began to flash from all the homeward stations, showing that the Panchen was busy on his job. On June 4 he was in Chinghai at the famous Gumbum Monastery, birth-place of Tson Khapa, whose disciple the Panchen presumably was in the tenth incarnation. He took part in a ceremony in front of the noted "eight pagodas," restored to their original grandeur last winter by repairs for which Peking gave aid. Lamas burning incense and holding flowers chanted the "Sutra of Auspices" for his arrival. Preceded by musicians, he walked slowly through the ancient temple, presented a thousand butter-lamps to the statue of Tson Khapa and seated himself on the throne beside the statue, sprinkling spring water and barley from Tibet. He offered a *hata* to Tson Khapa's statue and to the statues of all the other Panchens, all standing in this place. He was given gifts in return: forty-three ancient Tibetan manuscripts, three "longevity Buddhas" and a small silver pagoda.

He was also entertained by the heads of government in Chinghai Province and the Communist Party leaders there.

In Lhasa great crowds met him with many lamas carrying religious banners. In a park near Potala Palace he passed three hundred Young Pioneers in red neckties having a picnic. When he had left Lhasa two

months earlier the medical teams were helping the wounded and the women the rebels had raped. Order had been restored in the interval. People were working peacefully and work had been given to all the former unemployed in making new construction, and two hundred thousand pounds of seed grain had been distributed to peasants on the outskirts whom the rebels had looted.

As the young Panchen Erdeni passed to the suburbs to his new palace, he saw the fields green with the new grain.

## VIII. THE REFORM BEGINS

Even before the Panchen returned to Lhasa and before the arrival of the hundreds of former serfs now coming back from Institutes in Peking, Sian and Chengtu to help the reform, Lhasa began to throw off fetters of the past. The first weeks after quelling the rebellion went to giving medical aid to the wounded, seed to the looted peasants and rounding up stray outlaws, activities already noted by Captain Yang in an earlier chapter.

Action by Lhasa's citizens was launched by a mammoth mass meeting on April 15 in the square below the Potala Palace. Twenty thousand people came, the biggest turn-out Lhasa had ever seen. The crimes of the rebels were related and the new policies discussed. During the round-ups and searches, data had come to light on that "Four Rivers and Six Ranges" organization. Claiming to be a fund-collecting mechanism for the Dalai Lama, it was an organ of military sabotage, with military detachments. It collected the air-drops of weapons from foreign sources, wrecked roads, ravaged villages, raided trucks, and ambushed PLA men and Central Government personnel on errands in the countryside. More than once it had encircled

and threatened the offices of the Working Committee in various parts of Tibet.

Life now buzzed around the building of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region, a rather imposing new building in old Tibetan architecture with gold roofs and cornices. For three years the *kasha* had impeded its action; during the rebellion its members and employees had all been threatened by the rebels and ordered on pain of death to break off relations with the Hans. The Committee had now become Tibet's local government — its membership had always been ninety-five percent Tibetan, representing all Tibet's areas. Members were coming from Chamdo in the east, Ngachuka in the north, Yatung in the west, to discuss plans for the Committee's third anniversary.

The swift growth of primary schools was perhaps the first sign of the change that came with the quelling of rebellion. Two primary schools had previously been established in Lhasa by the Central Government but had never been filled, for upper class parents feared the *kasha's* disapproval while serf children courted a blow on the head from the master's overseer if they were caught carrying books. As soon as the rebellion was beaten, fifteen hundred registrations poured into these schools, far more than they could handle. A third primary school was quickly opened to care for the surplus. Six hundred applications at once were made there, again more than the school could take. Plans were under way for a fourth school but meantime fourteen "special schools" were

set up by the Lhasa people themselves, some part time, some full time, in which youths of twenty sat side by side with seven-year-olds to learn to read and write. By June this number was to grow to twenty-three special schools, and a total of five thousand people attending school in Lhasa, where before the rebellion there had been only a thousand pupils.

The Film Projection Team meantime made plans for mobile motion pictures, first in Lhasa and then elsewhere in Tibet. Such showings had been discouraged in the past by people who threw rocks at the projectors or even shot at the operators. Now motion pictures could be shown in peace.

Word from the Loka Area, where the rebels had had a main base for a year, and had badly looted the people, showed that here also education was booming. In Chetang, the main city, there had been a primary school established by the Working Committee; its enrollment trebled swiftly as soon as the rebels were gone. In Zongrin, on the mere suggestion of a school, the local people at once hunted premises, found carpenters who volunteered to make classroom desks and benches, and enrolled eighty percent of the children of school age. A new song in Loka ran:

*The kasha was the worst thing,  
The best thing was its downfall.  
No more suffering, beating, cursing!  
No more hated ula labor!  
The sun of happiness has risen.*

Many of the children now coming to school were so stunted that, even at thirteen, they were as small



as a normal child of nine, yet they had old, wizened faces. Many of them had been born in dirty stables and cow-pens, with resultant heavy mortality from infection of both mothers and children. When their parents were doing forced labor, they would sometimes dig a hole in the ground to put the child in, or tie him to a tree with strips of cow-hide. They had had little normal, healthy life.

Lopu Drangdeng, in Primary School No. Two of Lhasa, came from two parents who had been beaten to death because they failed to do the labor given them. The child had become a child slave, but had managed to run away in 1956 and come to the school where they took him in. Chiangba Drurga, a little girl, had seen her father tortured to death when she was four years old and her mother had died two years later. She had begun to work as a slave at the age of six. With the quelling of rebellion and the flight of her master, she came to Primary School No. Three, which gave her lodging and food.

By May people everywhere were asking: When will the reform begin? Workers coming to the committees for employment were pouring out their stories. Serfs and household slaves came to express determination to free themselves, asking: What shall we do? Members of the upper strata also came, volunteering to be the first to carry out the reform on their manors. All through May and into June, groups from the Preparatory Committee and the Working Committee, together with reporters from Peking papers, toured towns and countryside of Tibet on various missions. The Work-

ing Committee was giving out interest-free seed loans to peasants who were asking more seed than before, since their masters would not any longer take it away. But all these travelling groups, whatever their mission, also made social studies and held meetings, collecting from the people information and opinions and demands.

“The masters always told us that misery was our fate, our *karma*,” said many serfs, “because of sins done in a former life. Now we know that the misery came from serfdom and must be ended.”

A serf called Kalzang-tawa, who had run away from his village to Lhasa, said: “My father died of exhaustion. I could not pay the rents and I fled. Only a few households remain in my home village, for the old system brought them all to ruin. I want the reform so that I can go back home to work the land.”

Another named Lozong-routen said: “Long ago my grandfather was ill and borrowed 50 *khal* (1,375 lbs) of grain. He paid on this debt many years and so did my father and so did I, but they still say I owe 1,600 *khal* (22,000 lbs) because of the interest. Usury is a deep pit that you never get out of. That old way must change.” There were many such complaints of debts. In some areas ninety percent of the serfs were hopelessly in debt to the masters for whom they had continuously worked. Tsering Wongdi, a serf of the Gerden Monastery in Dechen Dzong, said his family had suffered under a growing debt for nine generations and it kept growing all the time and was now 13,500 *khal* (182 tons).

In Gyantse the Working Sub-Committee got thirteen collective letters from serf peasants on the north bank of the Nyangchu River. One of them said: "Usury, corvée and levies are the three chains that bind us hand and foot for generations. Until these are broken, we are chained."

In the area of Dongka Dzong near Lhasa, serf peasants were singing aloud a song they had formerly sung when the master couldn't hear:

*O, Dentzen, my father, pray tell me  
Whence comes this heavy debt on my back?  
I never saw a grain of the barley.  
Such misery, such misery,  
O, when shall we stand up?*

Behind the song was a local story of a peasant named Dentzen who once borrowed a single *khal* (27 lbs) of barley and the debt grew to 600 *khal*, so Dentzen fled and his wife died and his seven-year-old son was seized as slave for the payment. The son, when he grew up, wrote the song.

From many areas came reports that in 1956, when the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni spoke at the inauguration of the Preparatory Committee in Lhasa, and promised reform, the news had spread through Tibet rapidly, and meetings of peasants had been held to hail the idea. Peasants had sent collective letters to the Dalai Lama, signing it with their fingerprints. When the Central Government agreed to postpone reform till 1962, the serfs had been much upset. Then, as the rebellion built up, the masters

began to threaten that serfs who even spoke of reform, might have their eyes gouged out or their noses slit or their whole family killed. Now that the worst serf-owners had rebelled and been beaten, the peasants began to hope again. They wanted to see some action.

The first action in the direction of satisfying these demands had been the emergency order by the People's Liberation Army, that on all the rebels' estates this year the crops should go to the cultivators without any deductions for rent or taxes. This had been widely hailed and was very successful in stimulating the cultivation, the immediate end for which it was designed.

In mid-May a Hsinhua correspondent reported on a 450-mile tour made with a team of the Working Committee, and gave especially a vivid picture of the Loka Area, where the rebels had had a main base where they received the air-drops from abroad.

"Loka," he wrote, "is a large rectangular area along the Tsangpo River, reaching to the border of India and Bhutan. It is sometimes called the granary of Tibet for it is more fertile than other areas, with good valley soil and large pasture lands, and many mountain streams suitable for irrigation and for water-power. We found the barley three or four inches high, and the peasants were weeding and irrigating, working in groups. Enthusiasm was very high, both because of seed loans from the Military Control Committee and because so much of the land here belonged to the serf-owning rebels, and on these lands the crops would all go without rent or taxes to the cultivators.

As we zigzagged through mountains, to a height of 16,000 to 19,000 feet between the valleys, we found rich mineral deposits, gold, silver, mica, sulphur. Many people, however, lacked even enough clothes to cover themselves, and many houses had been burned to the ground by the rebels before they left.

“For the year past, the rebels had turned this area into a hell. In Cheku Dzong they exacted from the people 5,000 *khal* of grain, 2,000 *ko* of butter, 200 head of cattle and many horses and much fodder. When the peasants could not deliver these things, the rebels tortured and killed people to make examples. They thus killed a peasant named Dorje, and threw his body on a much-travelled bridge for everyone to see, forbidding its burial for a week. At a place called Tsachinatse, all the one hundred and seventy women, both young and old, had been raped by the rebels. The people of Loka Area hated the rebels with a bitter hate.”

Stories of the previous fighting had been picked up in Loka by this correspondent. In Chetang, the political center of the area, the Working Committee had been under attack at intervals since August 1958. “Three heavy attacks had been made on the Working Committee and on the PLA garrison there. At that time the PLA did not fight back, but reported it to the *kasha*, which the rebels took as a sign of weakness. From January the rebels besieged the Working Committee and PLA. During all this period our people lived only in the tunnels and brought drinking water at night. They held on thus for seventy-four

days with some casualties until finally the State Council's order permitted the counter-attack."

The PLA took only ten days to put down the rebels in the Loka Area, but the correspondent does not state whether this was done by the forces already in Loka alone or with the aid of reinforcements from Lhasa. From other sources I judge it was the latter. The correspondent noted that, as in Lhasa, order was quickly established with the aid of the local population, and that the PLA helped the peasants with the ploughing — which had been delayed by the fighting — carried fertilizer to the fields and sent mobile medical teams to treat the people.

Amazing tales were told of the capture of rebels with the help of the local people. An old herdsman, over fifty, walked thirty miles to tell the PLA that thirteen rebels were hiding in a temple near his home. He then insisted on guiding the army back. When they reached the temple together, the old man shouted to the hidden rebels: "The Liberation Army never kills those who surrender." All the thirteen came out without firing a shot.

The morale of the rebels was so reduced that two soldiers of the PLA who lagged behind their detachment because of sore feet, came upon a band of ninety-six rebels, and picked off the leader with a rifle. The rest of the band not only then surrendered without fighting, but allowed themselves to be disarmed and then waited all night without guards while their two "captors" took two of the lesser leaders and went off to find the army. They located their detachment at

midnight, and reported the capture. Next morning other soldiers went back with the two lesser leaders of the rebels and found the "captives" patiently waiting to be picked up and given the regular meals that would presumably follow.

In Lhasa from the middle of May people began to clean up the city. Age-old garbage heaps were removed, stagnant pools were drained or filled. Women made beautiful designs with white and yellow sand at the street corners. These symbolized good fortune but they also warned people: "This is not your privy or garbage dump."

To the west under Luli Bridge was a stagnant pond, known as the dirtiest, most evil-smelling place in Lhasa. In 1955 a road was built from Jokhan to Norbu Lingka which divided the pond in two, and new houses appeared on that road. But the smell remained. After the rebellion was crushed, the Military Control Committee called on people to cultivate waste lands. People in the western area decided to clean up those ponds. Nearly a thousand people organized for it. They filled the ponds with earth and made an acre and a half of vegetable garden. It was operated under a joint committee, the vegetables going to those who worked. The smell was now that of spinach, cabbage and radishes. People came for walks at twilight to enjoy the place.

In early June over 1,500 graduates from Institutes for National Minorities arrived in Lhasa. Most of them were former serfs who had run away, been educated and were now coming to help the reform. They all

applied for work in the hardest places. Most of them were sent out to work among the people in the outlying areas of Tibet, in Loka, Gyantse, Shigatse, Ngachuka, and Chamdo. All over Tibet hundreds of Peasant Associations had already organized to manage their own affairs. They were helping the PLA establish order, they reclaimed waste land, they repaired or built reservoirs. The sown area was reported far greater than in previous years. Everywhere the weather had been favorable and crops were doing well.

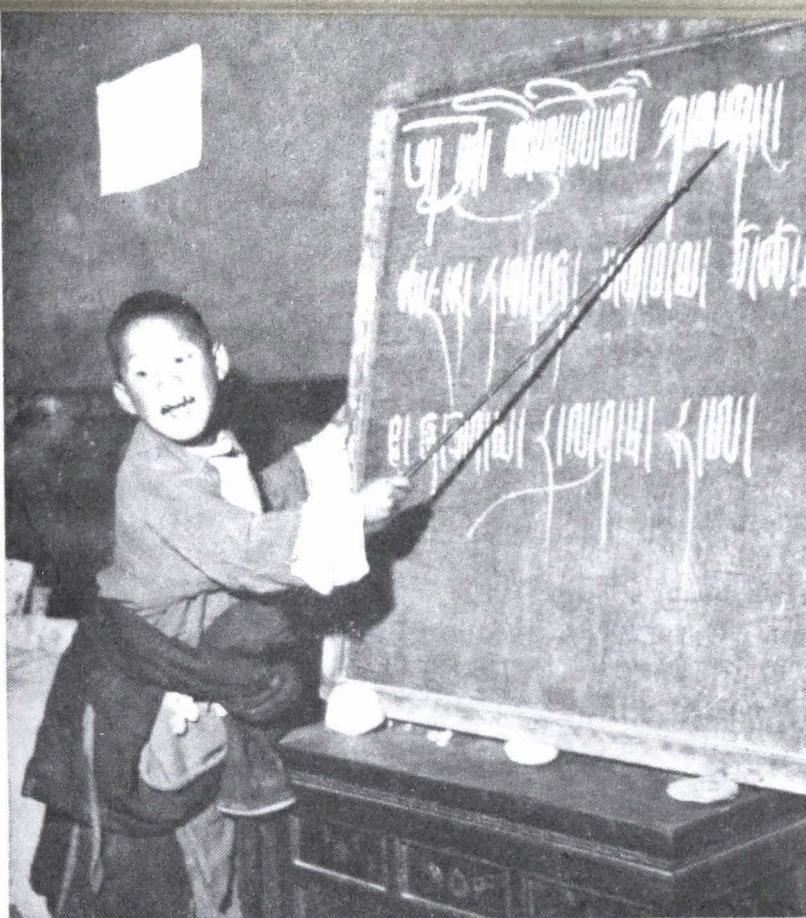
“The Tibetan people have begun to free themselves from the shackles of serfdom,” the Panchen Erdeni wired on June 17 to Mao Tse-tung and the leaders of the Central Government. He had returned to Lhasa a few days earlier. He said he was “much impressed by the lively, joyous spirit that has emerged in towns and villages during the two months’ absence.” When he had left Lhasa to go to Peking in early April in many places the ecclesiastical and secular people were still suffering from the burning, killing, rape and plunder by the rebels, and in some places still fighting. In the interim order had been restored, many children of peasants and herdsmen were entering schools, many poor and homeless had been given jobs. County people’s governments had been set up in several counties. The Tibetan people “were becoming masters in their own house.”

“All this,” he concluded, “is of course just the beginning.”

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Child beggar whose father was pressed to death for debts enters Lhasa Primary School No. 3



Lhasa makes vegetable gardens from stagnant pools, May 1959







Lingka festival in Lhasa, June 22, 1959

With the Panchen Erdeni's return, plans began to move towards the next session of the Preparatory Committee. Its members and chief employees had already been touring the country and talking with monks, laymen and progressive personages as well as with serfs. They had been making social surveys and collecting people's views on reform. In late June, the last reports from all areas reaching Lhasa were wired to the Peking press.

"Lhasa. June 20. Lhasa has taken on a new look in these three months. The former rubbish-strewn Parkor has been cleaned and levelled into a broad half kilometer length of street. The three and a half kilometer road from Jokhan to Norbu Lingka, which the rebels destroyed, is now repaired. Men and women carrying butter offerings and turning prayer-wheels can be seen on their way to Jokhan. The buildings, pavilions and lawns at Norbu Lingka are all intact.

"Ten buildings suffering varying degrees of damage during the rebellion, including some used by rebel leaders as forts, have now been repaired. The residents themselves have cleaned up the streets and lanes; the garbage and waste that used to lie in the streets has all been taken away. Five big vegetable gardens are growing on sites of former garbage heaps and stagnant pools. Over 1,400 jobless people were given jobs in the city by the middle of May. In the former slums of "untouchables" there are hardly any ragged tents left; these poor folk either got jobs and housing in Lhasa or went back to their villages to work on the land.

“Besides the three regular primary schools and one middle school, twenty-three special schools have been organized by the people. Formerly only one thousand children got schooling; now five thousand children and adults are studying. . . . Amateur song and dance ensembles have been formed with over two hundred participants.”

Next comes report from the Loka Area.

“Chetang. June 22. Peace and vitality are everywhere in this Loka Area, for a year the lair of the rebels. Blossoming rape flowers are golden on both banks of the Tsangpo; in the valleys the barley sprouts. Houses the rebels destroyed for firewood have been rebuilt with PLA help. Many local men, who were impressed into the rebel forces and captured by the PLA, have been freed and have returned home to work. The serge handicraft industry which the rebels forced to a standstill, has resumed on government loan of raw wool. The ferries on the Tsangpo are very busy with the trade that stopped during the year the rebels were here. Incomplete figures show that over one hundred and fifty tons of grain, over 70,000 tea bricks and large quantities of yak butter and salt were supplied to the poor as relief or at low prices.

“A ceremony was held here for a serf to move into a new house. Potse, the serf, lost his house in the following manner. When the rebels held the area, the bailiff from the monastery tried to grab Potse’s daughter, and the father helped the girl hide. For this, the bailiff led a group of rebels to tear down Potse’s house and take all his grain. After the rebels were driven

out, the Military Control Committee gave Potse grain and built him a new house.”

Here is a report that came from Yatung in mid-June.

“This town, four hundred miles by car southwest of Lhasa, gives an impression of deep patriotism. Seventy years ago, Yatung was the first town that fought the British invaders. They are still proud of it. An eighty-nine-year-old man told in detail how they fought them, with knives, arrows and home-made shot-guns. He said: ‘I myself killed several invaders.’ Yatung has only 966 families, and of these 300 people already are organized in groups discussing the democratic reform, and the relation of serfdom to the misery of the Tibetan people and to Tibet’s long decline.”

Chamdo reported, that city to the east where in 1950 the first contact of Tibet with the People’s Liberation Army began, “Barley and wheat are a foot high, and in colder areas at higher altitudes, the potatoes are growing well. Many villages have opened virgin land and planted it to crops. The area of irrigated land has been extended by repairing old ditches and making new ones. In the pastoral areas, the herdsmen are busy milking and making butter; special attention is being given to the young and the females in an effort to double the herds.

“This ancient city, after a long stagnation, has trebled in size since it was liberated in 1950. Then it had only one narrow, shabby street with some forty or fifty shops and stalls that closed usually in early afternoon. Now a new city much bigger than the old is built on the opposite bank of the Lantsang River,



with bank, department store, book stores, a central hospital, a veterinary service, and schools. Since the quelling of the rebellion and the beginning of reforms, many new applications are coming into the schools. It is planned to double the number of pupils this fall."

These accounts appeared in the Chinese press about the same time when a news report from Europe said that an Indian lawyer was indicting China before the "International Association of Jurists," for the crime of genocide against the Tibetan race and religion. Most of the people I knew in Peking laughed.

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The newsreel turned to the young Panchen Erdeni as he rose on June 28 to deliver the chairman's address at the second plenary session of the Preparatory Committee. The first session had been held on April 8, when rebellion had just been put down, and the Committee had formally assumed the local government of Tibet. Now, at the second session, they were to begin the "democratic reform." It was just eleven weeks, but to most of the people in this ancient land which Nehru called "a static society, fearful of what might be done to it in the name of reform," it now seemed the reform was slow.

The eleven weeks had been busy ones. Reports from all the land had been collected. Order was everywhere basically restored. Everywhere the weather was good and crops were reported thriving. In the Himalayas the barley ripened on terraced fields while in Takun the harvest had begun. Everywhere the children

poured into the schools and the peasants and herdsmen were organizing, and demanding reform. The Committee now could take account of hundreds of new Peasant Associations which were expressing their views, and also of many section meetings in Lhasa, in which, before opening the plenary session, the members had met with people of all classes to discuss the proposed reforms. Six hundred people of all social strata attended the plenary session as observers. The presence of one hundred of the serfs, now the new working class, sitting down among the nobles, was a new thing in Tibet's long history.

The Panchen began by listing the achievements in eight years since liberation: more than 7,000 kilometers of highway built, two power-plants in Tibet's main cities, several small industries "laying a base on which the Tibetan people can build industry of their own"; interest-free seed loans to the amount of 1,553,000 yuan (a yuan is 40 cents) and farm implements given free to a million yuan. The first modern hospitals built, the first public schools, the first veterinary help for the herds.

The old social system, however, still remained, because the previous local government failed to keep its pledges or to meet the people's demands. They had made rebellion and been quelled. The unfinished task must now be done.

"The manorial lords are still serf-owners. The revolution will be a bloodless one. The policy is to buy out all the upper class except those that took part in

armed rebellion. The livelihood of the others will be guaranteed and their political status assured."

The reform would be in two stages. The first stage would be the stage of the "*san fan* and the *shuang chien*," the "three abolitions and the two reductions." The rebellion, the system of forced labor, and the personal servitude would be abolished; rents and interest would be reduced. When this was accomplished, the second stage would be the redistribution of land.

The Panchen's statement on monasteries was awaited with special interest, for the monasteries own about one third of the land in Tibet. How would the Panchen handle the monasteries, on whose ancient domination his own status was based?

"They also possess manorial rights and are serf-owners," said the Panchen. "It would not be beneficial to religion if the serfs of the nobles are emancipated while the serfs of the lamaseries remain in bondage. Genuine religion must not retain the stigma of serfdom." He noted that "by the Constitution of China, everyone in the lamaseries enjoys the right of a citizen on coming of age. He may become a people's deputy, hold government post, engage in social activities or in productive labor." In the past, the Panchen noted, the internal rules of the lamaseries sometimes violated these constitutional rights of citizens.

"The lamas should be given freedom of person and recognized as citizens," said the Panchen. These were revolutionary words. They would rally all the poor



lamas and challenge all the chiefs of monastic rule in Tibet.

“Freedom of person” for the lamas meant that all those hundreds of thousands of monks who had been put into the monasteries in childhood, were free to leave if they chose. They would not be held by compulsion or by flogging. Those words would split the monasteries right down the middle. The Panchen himself, on his way back to Lhasa, had stopped at the great Gumbum Monastery in Chinghai and must have seen that in this birth-place of the Yellow Sect, the thousands of former lamas had been reduced in a year to a mere four or five hundred by this permission of free choice to the monks.

In his final words the Panchen spoke of the famous Tson Khapa, founder of the Yellow Sect, who was called “the Reformer” and who said: “Our religion teaches the deliverance of all beings.” All beings — that means the mass of the common people. “If a small number of evil-doers are permitted to harass the people, can this be called ‘the deliverance of all beings’?”

“Things keep changing and developing,” concluded the Panchen. “What I have said is inspired by a true love for our religious teaching and in the interests of the broad masses of the people of Tibet.”

It was a striking speech for a young man of twenty-one. I wondered how many people would notice what seemed to me a significant choice of words. The Panchen did not speak of love for “religion,” but of love for the “religious teaching.” He was facing the great

cleavage between the teaching and the institution, that reformers have faced down the ages. He was choosing the teaching of the compassionate Buddha and letting the institutions go. How the heads of the monasteries would hate him! How all the slave lamas would love him! Could he hold to that line against the most ancient, stubborn theocratic machine on earth? If he could, he would be in history a greater reformer than Tson Khapa. He would be a creator of a new Tibet. But could even the Panchen keep those thousand "Living Buddhas" in line with the teaching of the first Buddha?

The Panchen Erdeni, however, was not alone; he was only one of the new creators. Our old acquaintance Apei — Ngapo Ngawang-Jigme, to be formal — gave the political measures in greater definition, as a politician can, who is used to the technical job for centuries. In the first stage of reform, he said, the rebel remnants will be suppressed, the practice of forced labor (*ula*) abolished, and the serfs regain freedom of person. The lands of the rebels are confiscated. On lands of other manorial lords, the rents are sharply reduced, "on consultation" in each case, but with the general rule that the tillers get eighty percent of the crop after deduction of seed. Ancient and usurious feudal debts are abolished, but not ordinary commercial loans.

In the second stage of the reform, the lands and productive means of the manorial lords will be bought out in a manner that will not reduce their living standard nor their political status.

The old divisions of Tibet, said Apei, are based on nobles' manors and are inconvenient for government. Tibet would now be divided more rationally into seven areas: Shigatse, Chamdo, Takun, Loka, Gyantse, Ari and the municipal district of Lhasa. The old regime would be abolished in the villages, where Peasant Associations would for the time exercise local government. Commerce would be safeguarded and law-abiding private merchants protected.

Apei spoke more harshly of the monasteries than had the Panchen. "The Tibetan people believe in religion," he said, "but they hate the monasteries that cruelly oppress them. Within the monasteries there is also a rigid division of rank. The poor lamas are merely slaves in a monk's robe." In the future, religious belief and practises in the monasteries would be respected, but feudal exploitation and feudal privileges would cease.

The Living Buddha Pebala, a representative from Chamdo, supported the Panchen's position in the discussion. "All feudal privileges that give the monasteries power to oppress the people must be abolished, as contrary to religious freedom and the Constitution and not conforming to religious doctrine. 'Happiness to all living things' is the basis of the Buddhist doctrine, but the bad political system that infiltrated into the temples has made the people hate them."

In the presence of many serfs, for the first time listening in on government, Sampo Tsewong-rentzen, a big landowner and, with Apei, one of the two loyal *kaloons*, stated: "We aristocrats have in the past op-

pressed the working people and we must admit our guilt. We have gratitude for the arrangement by which the Central Government not only guarantees our living standard but our political standing.”

The plenary session closed on July 17, after three weeks' discussion and after the adoption of the resolution on the “Democratic Reform.”

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Across the roof of the world the news of the decision spread like wild fire to every corner.

In Lhasa crowds gathered in the streets as young Tibetan publicists explained the resolution. They danced and sang in the streets. In villages near Lhasa, serfs who had ceased to be serfs burned pine wood as an auspicious symbol, played stringed instruments and danced lion and yak dances.

Tserin Droma, a household serf of Surkong, the big rebel leader, declared: “Fifty years I toiled for that lord like an animal, sleeping up against a privy, with only half a bowl of barley a day for food, and no tea or salt given. Now we will never again be oppressed.”

In the Loka Area, in Chetang people shouted: “Every sentence is what we wanted to say.” In Gyantse, they thronged the streets around a newly installed wire hook-up, listening to the resolution by broadcast. Peasants en route with donkeys laden with firewood, halted on the way to listen.

“I feel I am dreaming,” exclaimed Pundo, a woman serf over sixty. “Can such good news exist on earth?”





"Crops to the Cultivators" on Lhalu's confiscated manor

Loka peasants in support of the "three abolitions," anti-rebellion, anti-*ula*, and anti-servitude







Herdsmen thank P.L.A. medical team for help with animals

Often I thought of killing myself for misery. Now I want to live for a taste of this free life.”

Lhami, another serf, recounted the decades in which his father and he had paid instalments on a debt incurred by his grandfather to Pala, the rebel leader, but the debt was larger at the end than at the beginning. “Now I and my descendants are forever free.”

Ngachuka reported for the northern grasslands: “The news is especially welcome here. People have been demanding it ever since the rebellion was quelled.” Solang Tsedrub, a herdsman, said: “Usury, that old wolf that devoured so many lives, is dead!” Then he told how five years back he had borrowed half a sack of parched grain from the livestock-owner, and was still in debt, though his own poor livestock had been taken for it. “What a wolf,” he cried again, “is dead!”

An aged herdsman named Ngawang said: “Whenever I heard dogs at night, I feared some noble was coming to demand *ula* from me, or some soldiers of that old Tibetan Army to molest my daughters. Now I shall fear no more, being free!”

Trashi, of Ngachuka, said that he was torn between happiness and pain. “Just two years ago I had to sell my two children to pay a levy.”

Upper strata people also began to express favorable views. Forty tribal chiefs in the Ngachuka area pledged in a meeting to support the democratic reform. The Karchung Tserin Dondrub, whose manor was burned by the rebels because he refused to join them, said: “I was born an aristocrat but I fully support the

democratic reform and express heartfelt thanks at the policy of buying us out.”

Support for the Panchen’s position began to come also from the monasteries. In Sera Monastery, one of the Big Three of Lhasa that has determined politics down the centuries, the Kansu Lhundrub-thbkhae declared: “Serfdom must of course be abolished in the monasteries. It would be absurd to keep it when it is abolished for the secular nobles.” He also scoffed at the ideas expressed abroad that Tibetan relics and monasteries are being destroyed. “They are slanders,” he said. “The Central Government has pursued to the letter its protection of religious belief even after the rebellion.”

In Demong Ladrang Monastery in Lhasa, Living Buddha Demong stated that the rebel artillery had shelled his monastery, and praised the policy of religious freedom of the Central Government.

In Palchhoe Monastery in Gyantse, the high-ranking lama said: “By our religious teaching it is impermissible for lamas to exploit people by usurious loans” and added that he “fully supported” the democratic reform. Sangngag Thutob, another lama in the same monastery, added: “For the purity of our religion and the observance of religious discipline, we must abolish the feudal privileges of the monasteries and restore their real purpose, which is to carry on religious activities.”

This support by the monastery leaders was only a trickle yet, but it would be encouraged to grow.

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It was just three months, almost to a day, since the Dalai Lama had crossed into India with the rebel leaders, leaving Tibet to the Panchen Erdeni and to Peking. His palaces in Lhasa were still held in his name by his own servants, but from what he was saying and doing, it seemed every day less likely that he would ever come back. There was said to be a prediction that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama would be the last one; he seemed acting to make it true.

People in Tibet were moving fast and with every day the gulf between them and the Dalai Lama's actions was growing. They would forget him in the urgency of their own great affairs. Some day it would occur to them to make that great thirteen-story Potala Palace, with the dungeon of scorpions for punishment in the cellars and the gold and jewel-encrusted tombs of the "bodies" of past incarnations filling many floors, into one of the greatest—as it would also be the highest—of the museums of the world.

The Tibetan people would still be here. For the first time in a thousand years the conditions had been established for their survival and growth. They would expand to develop all corners and resources of the world's high roof. They would have the strength of all China behind them, with modern ways of health and of industries and farms. They would show their children all the tortures in museums and tell them hero stories of our present day.

## Appendix I

### The Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet

The Tibetan nationality is one of the nationalities with a long history within the boundaries of China and, like many other nationalities, it has performed its glorious duty in the course of the creation and development of our great motherland. But over the last hundred years or more, imperialist forces penetrated into China, and in consequence also penetrated into the Tibetan region and carried out all kinds of deceptions and provocations. Like previous reactionary governments, the Kuomintang reactionary government continued to carry out a policy of national oppression and sowing dissension among the nationalities, causing division and disunity among the Tibetan people. The local government of Tibet did not oppose the imperialist deceptions and provocations, and adopted an unpatriotic attitude towards our great motherland. Under such conditions, the Tibetan nationality and people were plunged into the depths of enslavement and suffering.

In 1949, basic victory was achieved on a nation-wide scale in the Chinese People's War of Liberation; the common internal enemy of all nationalities — the Kuomintang reactionary government — was overthrown; and the common external enemy of all the nationalities — the ag-

gressive imperialist forces—was driven out. On this basis, the founding of the People's Republic of China and of the Central People's Government was proclaimed. In accordance with the Common Programme adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Central People's Government declared that all nationalities within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China are equal, and that they shall establish unity and mutual aid and oppose imperialism and their own public enemies, so that the People's Republic of China will become a big fraternal and co-operative family, composed of all its nationalities; that within the big family of all nationalities of the People's Republic of China, national regional autonomy shall be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated, and all national minorities shall have freedom to develop their spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their customs, habits and religious beliefs, while the Central People's Government shall assist all national minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural and educational construction work. Since then, all nationalities within the country, with the exception of those in the areas of Tibet and Taiwan, have achieved liberation. Under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government and the direct leadership of various higher levels of people's government, all national minorities are fully enjoying the right of national equality and have established, or are establishing, national regional autonomy.

In order that the influences of aggressive imperialist forces in Tibet might be successfully eliminated, the unification of the territory and sovereignty of the People's Republic of China accomplished, and national defence safeguarded, in order that the Tibetan nationality and

people might be freed and return to the big family of the People's Republic of China to enjoy the same rights of national equality as all the other nationalities in the country and develop their political, economic, cultural and educational work, the Central People's Government, when it ordered the People's Liberation Army to march into Tibet, notified the local government of Tibet to send delegates to the central authorities to conduct talks for the conclusion of an agreement on measures for the peaceful liberation of Tibet.

In the latter part of April 1951, the delegates with full powers of the local government of Tibet arrived in Peking. The Central People's Government appointed representatives with full powers to conduct talks on a friendly basis with the delegates with full powers of the local government of Tibet. As a result of these talks, both parties agreed to conclude this agreement and guarantee that it will be carried into effect.

1. The Tibetan people shall unite and drive out the aggressive imperialist forces from Tibet; the Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the motherland — the People's Republic of China.

2. The local government of Tibet shall actively assist the People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defence.

3. In accordance with the policy towards nationalities laid down in the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Tibetan people have the right to exercise national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government.

4. The central authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet. The central authorities also

will not alter the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama. Officials of various ranks shall hold office as usual.

5. The established status, functions and powers of Panchen Erdeni shall be maintained.

6. By the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama and of Panchen Erdeni are meant the status, functions and powers of the 13th Dalai Lama and of the 9th Panchen Erdeni when they were in friendly and amicable relations with each other.

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

8. The Tibetan troops shall be reorganized by stages into the People's Liberation Army, and become a part of the national defence forces of the People's Republic of China.

9. The spoken and written languages and school education of the Tibetan nationality shall be developed step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.

10. Tibetan agriculture, livestock raising, industry and commerce shall be developed step by step, and the people's livelihood shall be improved step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.

11. In matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the central authorities. The local government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and when the people raise

demands for reform, they shall be settled by means of consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet.

12. In so far as former pro-imperialist and pro-Kuomintang officials resolutely sever relations with imperialism and the Kuomintang and do not engage in sabotage or resistance, they may continue to hold office irrespective of their past.

13. The People's Liberation Army entering Tibet shall abide by all the above-mentioned policies and shall also be fair in all buying and selling and shall not arbitrarily take even a single needle or thread from the people.

14. The Central People's Government shall conduct the centralized handling of all external affairs of the area of Tibet; and there will be peaceful co-existence with neighbouring countries and establishment and development of fair commercial and trading relations with them on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territorial sovereignty.

15. In order to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the Central People's Government shall set up a military and administrative committee and a military area command in Tibet, and, apart from the personnel sent there by the Central People's Government, shall absorb as many local Tibetan personnel as possible to take part in the work.

Local Tibetan personnel taking part in the military and administrative committee may include patriotic elements from the local government of Tibet, various districts and leading monasteries; the name-list shall be drawn up after consultation between the representatives designated by the Central People's Government and the various quarters concerned, and shall be submitted to the Central People's Government for appointment.

16. Funds needed by the military and administrative committee, the military area command and the People's Liberation Army entering Tibet shall be provided by the Central People's Government. The local government of Tibet will assist the People's Liberation Army in the purchase and transport of food, fodder and other daily necessities.

17. This agreement shall come into force immediately after signatures and seals are affixed to it.

Signed and sealed by:

Delegates with full powers of the Central People's Government:

Chief Delegate:

*Li Wei-han*

Delegates:

*Chang Ching-wu*

*Chang Kuo-hua*

*Sun Chih-yuan*

Delegates with full powers of the local government of Tibet:

Chief Delegate:

*Kaloon Ngapo Ngawang-Jigme*

Delegates:

*Dzasak Khemey Sonam Wangdi*

*Khentrung Thupten Tenthar*

*Khenchung Thupten Lekmuun*

*Rimshi Samposey Tenzin Thundup*

Peking, May 23, 1951

## **Appendix II**

### **The Resolution on Carrying Out Democratic Reform in Tibet Adopted by the Second Plenary Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet on July 17, 1959**

The Second Plenary Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet fully approves the reports delivered by Panchen Erdeni, Acting Chairman of the Preparatory Committee; Chang Kuo-hua and Ngapo Ngawang-Jigme, Vice-Chairmen of the Preparatory Committee. The session unanimously maintains that the existing social system in Tibet is a reactionary, dark, cruel and barbarous feudal serf system and only by democratic reform can there be emancipation of the people and economic and cultural development in Tibet and thus the building up of the foundations for a prosperous and happy socialist Tibet. The carrying out of democratic reform in Tibet was affirmed in the Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet signed by the Central People's Government and the former Tibetan local government early in 1951. This task could not be realized during the past eight years owing to the many-sided obstruction and sabotage by the former local government and the upper strata reactionary clique in Tibet in an attempt to preserve their feudal rule.

Over the last eight years, the central authorities always adopted an attitude of patient education towards the



reactionary clique of the upper strata in Tibet and patiently waited for them to see reason. The reactionary clique, however, not only failed to show any sign of repentance but went to extremes by staging the armed rebellion on March 10, 1959, betraying the motherland and the people and undermining the national unity. The rapid putting down of the armed rebellion has brought them shameful defeat and also brought Tibet to a new stage of democratic reform. On the one hand, the dens of the armed rebels have already been destroyed; the reactionary clique of the upper classes has become completely isolated among the people and their traitorous, criminal activities which have brought calamities to the people are bitterly condemned by the people; and the reactionary former Tibetan local government has been dissolved. On the other, the broad masses of the working people are resolutely demanding the carrying out of democratic reform; the patriotic, progressive elements of the upper classes are actively supporting the reform; and local Tibetan cadres have grown up in large numbers. This shows the conditions are ripe for the realization of democratic reform in Tibet.

The current central tasks in Tibet are: to wipe out the remnant rebellious elements thoroughly, mobilize the masses fully and carry out the democratic reform throughout Tibet. The session maintains that the peaceful policy adopted by the central authorities for carrying out democratic reform in Tibet is entirely correct, that is, the policy of "buying out" as regards the land and other means of production owned by the estate-holders who have taken no part in the rebellion, and the method of consultation at the top and of mobilizing the masses at the base.

In accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet, the democratic reform should be carried out in two stages. The first stage consists of mobilizing the masses, and campaigning against rebellion, the *ula* (corvée) system and slavery and for the reduction of rents and interests. This will lay the foundations for the next stage, the redistribution of land.

The session unanimously holds that in order to fulfil the tasks mentioned above, the following policies must be carried thoroughly into effect at present:

1) In the agricultural areas, the policy of "the crop to the tillers" is to be followed as regards the land of the three kinds of estate-holders — the *kasha*, the monasteries and the manorial landlords — including their agents, who have taken part in the rebellion. As regards the land owned by those estate-holders (including their agents), who have taken no part in the rebellion, the rent is to be reduced, with 20 percent of the farm produce given to the landowners and the remaining 80 percent to the tillers. The *nangzan* must be liberated (*nangzan* is a manorial slave of a Tibetan feudal manorial landlord. He does unpaid forced labour for the manorial lord and his offspring also work as manorial slaves, without personal freedom — *Ed.*). The treatment of persons as chattel is to be abolished and the relationship changed to that of employer and employed. All debts owed by the working people to the three kinds of estate-holders before the end of 1958 are to be abolished; the interest rates for the debts assigned to the working people in 1959 by the manorial landlords who have taken no part in the rebellion are to be reduced.

2) In the livestock breeding areas, the herdsmen and the working livestock-owners must be relied on and all the forces that can be united must be united with to

facilitate the protection and breeding of the livestock, wipe out the rebels and rapidly stabilize social order. Livestock-owners who have taken no part in the rebellion still retain their animals. The animals of livestock-owners who have taken part in the rebellion are to be tended by the herdsmen now tending them and the income thus accrued will belong to the herdsmen. At the same time, the policy of benefiting both livestock-owners and herdsmen is to be pursued. Exploitation by the livestock-owners is to be reduced so as to increase the income of the herdsmen. The question of debts is to be handled in the livestock breeding areas in the same way as in the agricultural areas.

3) The policy of protecting the freedom of religious belief, protecting the patriotic and law-abiding temples and monasteries and protecting the historical cultural relics must be strictly adhered to in the democratic reform as in the past. A campaign must be launched in the temples and monasteries against rebellion, feudal prerogatives and exploitation. The policy of "buying out" is to be followed in dealing with the land and other means of production of patriotic and law-abiding temples and monasteries. The livelihood of the lamas is to be arranged for by the government. Subsidies will be given where the income of the temples and monasteries is not sufficient to meet their proper spending.

To mobilize the masses fully is the key to the success of the *san fan* and *shuang chien* campaign<sup>1</sup> and the democratic reform. In the process of the work, the poor

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<sup>1</sup>The *san fan* (3 anti's) are anti-rebellion, anti-*ula* system and anti-slavery. The *shuang chien* (2 reductions) are reduction of rents and reduction of interests.

peasants and farm labourers must be relied on, the middle peasants must be firmly united with and all those that can be united must be united with, to deal resolute blows upon the rebels and the reactionary elements who put up resistance against the reform and to thoroughly abolish the feudal serf system. When the masses are fully aroused, peasants' (herdsmen's) associations are to be organized. During the period of the democratic reform, the peasants' (herdsmen's) associations below the district level will exercise the functions and power of government at the basic level in the countryside.

The Regulations Governing the Organization of Peasants' Associations, Simple Rules Concerning Rent and Interest Reduction, Scheme for the Readjustment of Administrative Divisions and other documents will be drawn up in accordance with the policies mentioned above and will be published separately by the Preparatory Committee.

This session is one of historic significance for Tibet. Great and strenuous tasks are lying before us. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the Tibetan people, both lama and lay, must unite together and work hard for the building of a democratic, socialist new Tibet.

