

Introduction

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From textbooks and school curriculums, to state holidays, public monuments and more, managing the ways in which the past is remembered—and in turn what is meant to be forgotten—is a fundamental but always contested element of nation making and remaking. In the United States, for instance, recent years have witnessed intense clashes over the treatment of the American past and its relationship to the present. Even in a single-party authoritarian state like the People’s Republic of China (PRC), in which the ability of civil society to openly debate sensitive issues is more restricted, various forms of ‘unofficial memory’ circulate just below the surface of state historiography. This is no less true for non-Han ‘minority nationalities’ in China such as Shawa Tsering, the Tu (Monguor) author of what Hannibal Taubes usefully translates as an ‘auto-narrative.’ In these contexts, however, popular commemorations of the past that clash with official remembering take on added degrees of danger. Since its establishment in 1949, the PRC has claimed to be a multi-nationality state (Ch. *duo minzu guojia*) brought together through centuries of common struggle against feudalism and imperialism to form one large socialist family. This foundational myth papers over the uncomfortable truth that the current boundaries and demographic diversity of the PRC were created through Manchu Qing imperial conquest during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and then through reconquest by the armies of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the mid-twentieth century. Erasing that history of conquest and colonialism has remained among the most consistent emphases within state discourse ever since, and any suggestion otherwise is often met with fiery condemnation (against those outside China’s borders) or state violence (against those within).

It is this subtext that makes *The Thousand-Household Commander’s Winding Road* such a unique and important document. Sebastian Veg writes that ‘in authoritarian contexts’ such as China, the contest to control ‘memory and history’ is one in which ‘the main opposition seems to run between state historiography and popular commemoration.’¹ Shawa Tsering’s account blurs the lines between the two. A variation of a peculiar form of state-sanctioned historical remembering known in China as *wenshi ziliao*, it offers a rare, perhaps unprecedented, ‘official’ glimpse into the Amdo region from the late 1930s straight through to the end of the twentieth century, providing descriptions of important events and people in greater detail than can be found in other first-person accounts published in China. And while it was produced through state machinery, as Rubie Watson reminds us, official histories ‘never precluded the active construction and transmission of unofficial pasts.’² In several subtle but meaningful ways Shawa Tsering’s tale challenges some of the fundamental discursive pillars upon which the post-Mao narrative of Amdo’s incorporation into China rests.

Wenshi Ziliao and Narratives of Nationhood

Simply meaning ‘cultural and historical materials,’ *wenshi ziliao* are geographically, administratively, and often thematically organized collections of first-person testimonials, biographies, and (more recently) short ethnographic or historical studies published in irregular serial editions. The genre grew out of an initiative introduced by then Premier Zhou Enlai, who in 1959 invited delegates

¹ Veg, “Introduction,” 4.

² Watson, “Memory, History, and Opposition,” 2.

to China's Third People's Political Consultative Conference who were over sixty years of age to record their recollections of the 'pre-Liberation' period. Pointedly, these were not intended to be scholarly studies conducted by professional researchers, but 'living material of blood and flesh' that reflected what the author 'personally experienced, personally saw, personally heard' (Ch. *qinli, qinjian, qinwen*).³ Particularly in a political context in which expertise was often looked upon with suspicion, as Alice Travers writes, "Through presumed "raw testimony," the editors aimed to guarantee the veracity of their interpretation of history based on personal experience and "lived stories."⁴ Although contributors were urged to 'seek truth from facts' (Ch. *shishi qiushi*), from the start *wenshi ziliao* were meant to serve, never challenge, the state's monopolization over which historical interpretations were valid. In this sense, *wenshi ziliao* conform to what Veg, borrowing from Pierre Nora, refers to as a 'state ritual,' a state-sanctioned method of 'sacriliz[ing] the past.'⁵ They are, in the words of Uradyn Bulag, intended to be a 'technology of power' through which both the authors and their subjects are 'disciplined, performing a subjectivity dictated by a greater force, the CCP.'⁶

Between 1960 and the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, when production of *wenshi ziliao* temporarily came to a halt, across China *wenshi ziliao* committees published more than 54,000 articles in twenty-three serialized volumes, including the first four volumes of the *Qinghai Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* (*Selection of the Qinghai Cultural and Historical Materials*).⁷ Carefully adhering to Premier Zhou's mandate (both spoken and unspoken), these early volumes in Qinghai focused overwhelmingly on personal testimonies to the brutal, exploitative rule of the 'Muslim warlord' Ma Bufang and his family prior to 1949, including by collecting eyewitness accounts of the violence committed against Tibetan and other ethnocultural communities, as well as commemorating the valor and sacrifices made by the Red Army during its two Long March-era incursions into Qinghai. *Wenshi ziliao* thus became one cog in a much larger regime of propaganda intent on legitimizing the new order in large part by amplifying in carefully scripted ways the violence of the old society.

Watson writes, 'Under state socialism the past was read from the present, but because the present changed (leaders, plans, and lines of thinking came and went), the past also had to change.'⁸ By the time *wenshi ziliao* production started up again following the death of Mao Zedong, political needs and thus the goals of history writing had been altered. In the first phase of *wenshi ziliao* publication, the 1949 'liberation' of Qinghai had been treated as the last act in a grand historical drama. The reader is led to believe that following the final curtain both the individual protagonists and the 'people' go on to live happily ever after.⁹ This, of course, is not what happened. Instead, China under Mao experienced a series of wrenching political, economic, and social campaigns that transformed the lives of its inhabitants in profound and in many cases tragic ways. After Mao's death, the new leadership faced a crisis of legitimacy that required it to 'define itself against the previous Maoist policies of radical socialism while re-affirming the Communist Party's uninterrupted historical continuity as national liberator.'¹⁰ Most famously, in 1981 Mao's successors issued the official verdict on the Cultural Revolution, declaring it to have been a decade-long leftist deviation 'responsible for the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the Party, the state, and the people since

³ Ningxia, *Wenshi ziliao*, 43-4; Liu, "'Sanqin' chutan," 57-60.

⁴ Travers, "The Production of Collective Memory," 116.

⁵ Veg, "Introduction," 3.

⁶ Bulag, "Can the Subalterns Not Speak?" 97, 98.

⁷ Chang, "The 'Wenshi Ziliao' Collection," 103-4.

⁸ Watson, "Memory, History, and Opposition," 1.

⁹ Weiner, "The Aporia of Re-remembering," 47-9.

¹⁰ Fromm, "Producing History," 5.

the founding of the People's Republic.¹¹ Millions of people persecuted during the excesses of the Maoist period were rehabilitated. These included intellectuals, artists, scientists, and entrepreneurs, all groups that would be vital to China's economic development; also among the first to be exonerated were figures like Shawo Tsering, pre-1949 'minority elites' who under the CCP's United Front policies of the 1950s had served as crucial intermediaries between the new Party-state and non-Han communities.

The United Front is a concept initially developed under Vladimir Lenin and the Comintern that allows Communist parties to ally on a temporary basis with non-Communists in order to advance socialist revolution. Most often associated in China with the two United Fronts struck between the KMT and CCP in the years prior to 1949, by 1949 it had become the theoretical justification and bureaucratic instrument for bringing nonproletarian elements, including among 'minority nationalities,' into the political process in preparation for the final transition to socialism. In places like Amdo, which from the Party's perspective were physically remote, economically undeveloped, culturally backward, and linguistically foreign, the United Front primarily referred to a period of indeterminant length in which class struggle would be suspended. Instead, traditional elites such as Shawo Tsering were brought into the new regime. Using the charismatic authority, local knowledge, and existing relationships afforded by their indigenous positions, the intention was that they would serve as both a conduit between the CCP and non-Han communities and a mechanism through which to implement the Party's nationalities policies. Promising political autonomy, ethnic equality, and economic development, CCP leaders in Qinghai confidently predicted that this United Front approach would lead to the 'gradual,' 'voluntary,' and 'organic' integration of the Amdo region and its people into the socialist state and Chinese nation. Instead, the United Front was undermined by a revolutionary impatience that demanded more immediate paths to socialism. As policies emanating from Beijing radicalized in the second half of the 1950s, this led in 1958 to pastoral collectivization, attacks on religion, a massive rebellion, and its brutal pacification.¹²

After Mao's death, the Dengist regime quickly acknowledged the damage done to nationality unity (Ch. *minzu tuanjie*) by the abandonment of the United Front in favor of more coercive and assimilationist methods of state making and nation building. The CCP sought to repair that damage in part through a largely rhetorical recommitment to the United Front and the promises made to minoritized peoples in the earliest years of the PRC. *Wenshi ziliao* became one of the main venues in which this discursive act was inscribed. In 1980, delegates at the Third National *Wenshi Ziliao* Work Conference (the first since 1965) reaffirmed the principles that Zhou Enlai had based the project on twenty years earlier—including his insistence that authors should document only what was personally experienced, seen and heard—with one major adjustment. No longer were *wenshi ziliao* only to document the period up to the CCP's 1949 seizure of power. Now they were to include material on the 'post-Liberation' period up through and initially including the Cultural Revolution (soon after, the regulations were changed to make the Cultural Revolution off limits). Additionally, for the first time that I am aware, instructions specifically emphasized the importance of collecting material on 'minority nationalities.'¹³ Three years later, expectations for this second wave of *wenshi ziliao* were made more explicit. National leaders told local compilers to collect the stories of those who had been instrumental in founding 'new China' when 'all nationalities, all classes, and all political parties' united to destroy 'imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism.'¹⁴

¹¹ "Resolution," 41.

¹² Weiner, "The Aporia of Re-remembering," 45-6.

¹³ Ningxia, *Wenshi ziliao*, 44-5.

¹⁴ *Gannan wenshi ziliao bianji weiyuanhui*, "Gaoju aiguo zhuyi qizhi," 2.

Buoyed by these pledges and manned in large part by now elderly rehabilitated cadres and indigenous elites, between 1979 and 1989 fourteen additional volumes of the *Qinghai Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* were published. At first, the plurality of individual articles continued to document the horrors of the old society under Ma Bufang's rule. Beginning with an account of the monk-educator and former vice governor Sherap Gyatso published in 1981, however, they increasingly included biographical or autobiographical accounts of life after 1949. This culminated in 1989 when to mark the fortieth anniversary of the founding of New China and new Qinghai, a 'commemorative anthology' was published completely dedicated to the province's 1950s United Front leaderships. That same year national leaders celebrated thirty years since Premier Zhou launched the *wenshi ziliao* project by emphasizing the genre's continued importance for national reconstruction, including in non-Han areas where it 'helps the people understand the place and importance [of minority nationalities] in the great family of the motherland.' Yet, Beijing also made clear the 'sensitivity' with which the recent past needed to be handled in these regions. Therefore, even as editors were told 'to accurately handle the relationship between the United Front and historical reality,' and once again to 'seek truth from facts,' they were instructed to favor rough sketches over detailed accounts and to ensure that nationality unity always remained the overriding message.¹⁵

Over the next twenty years, dozens of prefectural- and county-level *wenshi ziliao* were produced across Qinghai. In Shawo Tsering's home region of Huangnan (Tb. Malho), between 1992 and 2010 eight volumes of the *Huangnan Wenshi Ziliao* were published. The first four were produced under the guidance of general editor Zhao Qingyang, who also authored or co-authored (in some cases under thinly-disguised pseudonyms) a disproportionate number of its individual articles. These early issues documented the lives and contributions of the region's important United Front figures, including many that appear in Shawo Tsering's auto-narrative, among them the Tenth Pañchen Lama (the fourth volume is entirely dedicated to his 1980s visits), the Shar-tsang lama, his brother Gelek Gyatso, chieftains Gyelwo Dorjé and Wagya (Bagyel), and Tongren's first Party secretary and United Front leader, Du Hua'an. But not Shawo Tsering.¹⁶ As per Party instructions, these life stories do not end in 1949, but carry over into the early-PRC, and, upon inspection, all follow a similar narrative arc:

'While not whitewashing the pre-1949 careers of these members of the indigenous elite, the stories that appear in *wenshi ziliao* and parallel post-Mao publications tend to focus on their post-Liberation political epiphanies. These paths toward redemption were not always short or straight. They could be marked by doubt, intrigue and even violence. Yet, the end result was always the same: a moment of realization followed by a career of dedicated service to the Party and the people.'¹⁷

These are salvational stories that connect the personal to the national; they offer explanations for national unity that elide conquest and colonization by focusing instead on the reaffirmation of a timeless nationality unity through the redemptive stories of individual exemplary protagonists.

Like other 'state rituals,' however, these stories are notable not only for what they say, but what they leave out. Although to my knowledge no explicit instructions to this effect were officially

¹⁵ *Huangnan wenshi ziliao bianji weiyuanhui*, "Wenshi ziliao gongzuo zhinan," 5-6, 20-2.

¹⁶ A short overview of *The Thousand-Household Commander's Winding Road* appears in volume 7 (2010). However, the bulk of the summary is of the early sections of the book, describing the history of the Tu commanders, with only a couple pages devoted to Shawo Tsering's life story. The author is Zhao Shunlu (see below).

¹⁷ Weiner, "The Aporia of Re-remembering," 61-2.

issued, what is immediately striking about Qinghai's second-generation *wenshi ziliao* is their near unwaveringly avoidance of anything more than a passing mention of the period from the 1958 Amdo Rebellion until the start of the reform period.¹⁸ Sometimes in the introduction or conclusion, and at least in one case a footnote, a sentence or two might allude to 'mistakes,' thin code for the arrest, torture and in some cases death of these celebrated individuals. Yet, when the story picks up again many years later, the focus is never on those mistakes or on the absence itself. Instead, it is on a second act of redemption in which the protagonist is rehabilitated by the state and resumes his (and occasionally her) role as either a living or posthumous embodiment of national unity.

Shawo Tsering's Winding Road

The Thousand-Household Commander's Winding Road helps fill in some of that blank space but, at least on the surface, does little to challenge the state's overall narrative. Like those of his contemporaries, Shawo Tsering's account is a story of salvation and perseverance. A child in the pre-1949 period, he seems unaware of the exploitation caused by his political class' monopolization of Qinghai's political, economic, and social resources. Under the CCP's guidance, however, he reforms his worldview and with the conviction of the newly converted dedicates himself to serving the People and the Party as a United Front official. Like most Amdo elites, in 1958 Shawo Tsering falls victim to the 'leftist storm' that engulfs all of China, but he never gives up his faith in the Party. After the fall of the Gang of Four, the CCP rewards Shawo Tsering through his political rehabilitation and the opportunity to serve the state and society through appointment to positions in the local government, thereby reaffirming the correctness of both the 1950s United Front and the policies of the Reform era, and reenforcing the notion of an unending nationality unity.

What then about Shawo Tsering's account is significant? In his study of *wenshi ziliao* in China's Northeast, Martin Fromm argues that the state's political need to mobilize 'local memories for national reconstruction provided the very conditions for the expression of individual subjectivities.'¹⁹ Nowhere in the Qinghai *wenshi ziliao* are these subjectivities expressed so extensively as in Shawo Tsering's auto-narrative. Some of this is length. Shawo Tsering's auto-narrative numbers almost one hundred published pages. By comparison, Zhao Qingyang's 1994 treatment of the Seventh Shar-tsang lama, a much more significant figure both in terms of his local prestige and his importance for the CCP's United Front efforts, is fourteen pages. And this is relatively lengthy compared to the space Zhao devotes to other figures who cross Shawo Tsering's path: five to Gelek Gyatso, four to Gyelwo Dorjé, and four to Wagya; the Rongwo Nangso Trasho Namgyel's own *wenshi ziliao* 'auto-narrative' is fourteen pages long.²⁰ Rather than the relatively clipped, fragmented stories generally found in *wenshi ziliao* contributions, in which each episode is clearly chosen to make a political point, Shawo Tsering is freer to recall the past in ways that are more familiar to the genre of memoir, and can stray from orthodoxy in nuanced ways.

What initially struck me is the story's remarkable if still brief look into elite politics and society in the decade prior to the Communist takeover. It becomes clear, for instance, how close, almost incestuous, were the relationships between the royal houses and monastic institutions of eastern Amdo. More surprising is the relatively neutral manner in which Shawo Tsering describes Ma Bufang's

¹⁸ The main exception is the biography of Sherap Gyatso noted above. The early publication date may help account for the discrepancy. See Weiner, "Aporia of Re-remembering, 56.

¹⁹ Fromm, "Producing History," 2.

²⁰ See *Huangnan Wenshi Ziliao* 2 (1994).

position within this web of elite power. For instance, Shawo Tsering's recollection of his time at school in Xining is not the first to appear in a *wenshi ziliao*. All the way back in 1964, Chöbum Gyel, grandson of the Atsok chieftdom's headman Changsem, claims that his stay in the capital was part of Ma Bufang's plot to control Amdo by propping up pretenders to local rulerships.²¹ Thirty years later in 1994, the Rongwo Nangso Trashi Namgyel likened his own time sequestered in Xining to human collateral meant to assure the compliance of his family.²² By contrast, Shawo Tsering describes Ma and his stay in Xining in far more ambiguous and not so out-of-the-ordinary terms. He finds Ma to be somewhat affable, school to be a bit of a drag, but life in the big city to be interesting. Compared to his small village it must have been an exciting time.

Moreover, while most accounts produced in China note that the PLA was met by cheering throngs as it approached Xining in September 1949 (surely accurate), here we get a brief taste of the fear that pervaded the streets and the chaotic situation in the countryside as the old regime crumbled. And not just from Muslims who would seem to have had most to lose from a CCP victory, but also from Tibetans and others who were purported to be the primary victims of the Ma family's forty-years rule. This is not to suggest that Ma Bufang's reputation is in need of rehabilitation. After all, he and his family committed tremendous acts of violence against many Amdo communities. But, as I have argued elsewhere, it is evidence that frontier societies such as existed (and to a degree still exist) in Amdo were complex, layered, and often do not conform to positivist assumptions such as those brought to the region by the CCP about intra-ethnic solidarity and inter-ethnic enmity. Quite the opposite, following Fromm, Shawo Tsering's story should not be read as being filled with either objective facts or rigid propaganda, but "situated historical truths."²³ What emerges between the cracks in the strictures that govern the genre is a complex subjectivity that provides fleeting hints of how a young, idealistic and privileged youth might be drawn to the Communist project in the 1950s and how as an older man, even after suffering for two decades in such devastating ways, he still could find a degree of solace, redemption, and purpose working within that regime.

Of course, the most compelling section in which these 'historical truths' must be situated is the middle portion in which Shawo Tsering describes the previously unspeakable decades that followed the 1958 Amdo Rebellion. Despite some striking inclusions, other than transgressing this heretofore silent taboo the narrative appears to follow state orthodoxy fairly faithfully. For example, although Shawo Tsering is wrongly arrested for participating in the uprising, there is no defense of the rebellion itself, which officially continues to be considered an armed counterrevolutionary insurrection. What has since been quietly admitted by the state is that 'mistakes were made during the "expansion" of the pacification struggle.' This is precisely the reasoning Shawo Tsering uses to explain how he first finds himself unjustly on the wrong side of the political divide and it is the official reason he and many of his contemporaries would be vindicated twenty years later.²⁴

Still, there are many small, almost microscopic chips in the official façade to be found in this section. Rather than point to each, it may be more useful to consider how in its entirety Shawo Tsering's story subverts the post-Mao regime's explanation for the violence committed against minority communities in the Maoist period. Here, the Cultural Revolution, which looms so large in Dengist explanations, is at worst a continuation of the repression Shawo Tsering suffered since 1958. He is most victimized during the pre-Cultural Revolution Four Clean-ups and Socialist Education campaigns, movements which—unlike the Cultural Revolution—were firmly under the control of the

²¹ Qieben Jia, "Xinghai Aquhu buluo," 17-8.

²² Zhaxi Anjia, "Yi Wo Jiefang," 243-4.

²³ Fromm, "Producing History," 2; see also Travers, "the Production of Collective Memory," 133.

²⁴ See Weiner, "The Aporia of Re-remembering," 67; Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 201-2.

CCP leadership including Deng Xiaoping himself. Pointedly, Shawo Tsering never blames the Party. Instead, injustices are caused by a series of bad actors or unfortunate events. Yet, despite the title of the chapter, Shawo Tsering mostly refrains from attributing his troubles to a 'leftist wind.' In the narrative, this changes only as the Maoist period is coming to an end. Perhaps it was done subconsciously, but the effect is to mimic the manner in which the new leadership retroactively labeled the Cultural Revolution a period of leftist deviation. In this sense, Shawo Tsering's 'unofficial memory' sits in quiet competition with a 'state historiography' that considers the Cultural Revolution the principal point of rupture in minority-state and minority-majority relations, and by extension exonerates the Dengist leadership, most of whom were purged during the Cultural Revolution.

Finally, as Taubes notes, it is worth asking who should be assigned authorship for this fascinating volume. According to a clarifying note at the very end of the account, the story was orally dictated by Shawo Tsering, recorded and arranged by Zhao Qingyang, and the full text was composed by a third man, Zhao Shunlu.²⁵ In the end it is probably folly to try to parse whose hand is heaviest and where. More useful, perhaps, is to wonder why this unique source was produced when it was, and for what reasons. Zhao Qingyang in particular deserves our attention. Zhao was born in Gansu province in 1937. Following a stint in the army that left him with unspecified injuries, in 1960 at the peak of the Great Leap famine he was assigned to Huangnan prefecture, where he worked in Shawo Tsering's home village as a Party cadre on the Nyentok People's Commune. Zhao does not mention meeting Shawo Tsering at the time, or vice versa. However, unlike the vast majority of his Han colleagues, Zhao apparently learned Tibetan. He also seems to have taken a genuine interest in local history, culture, and art. At the very least, Zhao must have known of the last Tu Commander. Moreover, as leader of a production brigade during the Four Clean-up and Socialist Education campaigns, it is worth wondering if in telling Shawo Tsering's story he is also recording part of his own history. In early 1966, Zhao became Huangnan correspondent for the *Qinghai Daily*. It is unclear what happened to him during the Cultural Revolution. There was violent conflict for control over the paper in late 1966 and early 1967, and circumstantial evidence suggests he became one of the campaign's many victims. However, like so many of the stories Zhao himself would later document, this period is absent from his biographical sketches.

After reemerging in the early Reform period, Zhao would dedicate the rest of his life to documenting regional history and culture, including editing the *Survey of the Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture* (Ch. *Huangnan Zangzu Zizhizhou Gaikuang*)²⁶ and writing several books on local art and folk stories. As noted, he also served as general editor and a principal contributor to the first four volumes of the *Huangnan Wenshi Ziliao*. Zhao retired in 1997, but, in his own words, soon after 'realized it would be very meaningful if I helped some retired old minority nationality cadres with rich experiences write their memoirs.'²⁷ First, he aided one of the region's earliest Tibetan Party members, a man known in Chinese as Lalang Dangzhi, compose his life story. Their collaboration resulted in a volume entitled *My Life's Journey* (Ch. *Wo de Rensheng zhi Lu*), which was published for internal circulation (Ch. *neibu*) by the Huangnan *Wenshi Ziliao* publishing house. If it could be located, it would be fascinating to compare this memoir of a Tibetan Party member and activist to Zhao Qingyang's next, and perhaps last, significant project: Shawo Tsering's *The Thousand-Household Commander's Winding Road*.

²⁵ Zhao Shunlu's relationship to Zhao Qingyang is unclear. However, he has followed in the older Zhao's footsteps as an editor and primary contributor to later volumes of the *Huangnan Wenshi Ziliao* and as an editor to a revised edition of the *Survey of the Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture*.

²⁶ Huangnan Zangzu Zizhizhou Difangzhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui, ed. *Huangnan Zangzu Zizhizhou Zhi*.

²⁷ Zhao, "Wenshi ziliao gongzuo diandui," 61.

In 2006, Zhao began to collaborate with Shawo Tsering on ‘a comparatively detailed record of his complicated and bumpy life experiences.’²⁸ Work was completed in the watershed year of 2008. By then, Shawo Tsering would have been among the last-remaining of the Huangnan region’s original United Front figures, and perhaps we should take Zhao at his word that his intention was simply to help preserve for posterity the story of the last hereditary Tu commander. Regardless of intentions, by finally including the missing twenty years between 1958 and 1978, Shawo Tsering and Zhao’s story serves as a coda to the post-Mao narrative of Amdo’s integration into the PRC.

By the time their story was published in 2010, the Reform period was giving way to what would become the New Era (Ch. *xin shidai*) of Xi Jinping. Spurred in part by uprisings across the Tibetan Plateau in 2008—the first of which may have occurred in Tongren²⁹—followed by ethnic riots in Xinjiang’s capital Urumqi in 2009, what has become known as a ‘second-generation ethnic policy’ soon began to circulate within elite Chinese political and academic circles. Proponents argue that the nationality framework upon which the PRC was founded, one that promised unity through the recognition and promotion of diversity, is the reason many non-Han people have yet to embrace their identity as loyal Chinese citizens, and could even lead to Soviet-style collapse. This was countered by members of the old, entrenched nationality establishment, of which both Shawo Tsering and Zhao Qingyang could be considered (minor) members. Under Xi Jinping, the integrationists appear to have seized the upper hand. Recently Xi has called for ‘a newly imagined community of the Chinese nation of shared destiny’ that threatens to negate the life experiences of a previous generation of people like Shawo Tsering and Zhao Qingyang.³⁰ As Zhao notes elsewhere, the winding road trod by Shawo Tsering ‘relatively concretely reflects the experiences and lessons of the Party’s nationality United Front policies.’³¹ If so, the timely publication of Shawo Tsering’s life story may serve as a monument to not one but two bygone eras.

²⁸ Ibid., 63.

²⁹ See Makley, “Ballooning Unrest,” 45-6.

³⁰ Bulag, ‘Minority Nationalities,’ 65.

³¹ Zhao, “Wenshi ziliao gongzuo diandui,” 63.

把总千户沧桑

སྡེ་དཔོན་ཚོལ་པ་ཚོའི་རྒྱལ་ཁྲིལ་གི་མི་ཚོ།

The Thousand-Household Commander's Winding Road³²

夏吾才郎自述

ཤ་ཡོ་ཅེ་རིང་གི་རང་རྒྱལ།

The Auto-Narrative of Shawo Tsering

Translated from the Chinese by Hannibal Taubes.



Shawo Tsering

1932-2015

Photo ~ 2008

³² Narrated orally by Wang Shawo Tsering, Tu Commander of Nyentok Village in Tongren. Recorded and prepared by Zhao Qingyang 赵清阳 and edited and expanded by Zhao Shunlu 赵顺禄. Originally published in 2010 by the Historical and Cultural Documents Committee of the Huangnan Prefecture Political Consultative Conference 黄南州政协文史资料委员会, via Hengxiang Printing Company LTD 恒祥印制有限责任公司, Xining 西宁, PRC.

Translator's Introduction

I saw Shawo Tsering once, via an entirely serendipitous series of events. In the summer of 2013, I was wandering rather aimlessly through the northeast borderlands of the Tibetan Plateau, ostensibly looking for Ming-dynasty (1368-1644) fortifications. In an old walled village called Nyentok, I was invited in for tea by a painter of Tibetan *tangka* religious icons named Rinchen Cham. That afternoon there was to be a ceremony at the temple to the god Erlang (Tb. *Rilang*) on the hill behind the village, part of great 'serpent-dances' (Tb. *luröl*) festivals of the sixth lunar month. My unremarkable-seeming host Rinchen Cham, I discovered, was in fact the village deity-medium (Tb. *lhawa*).³³ Seated before the god's statue in the temple that afternoon, Rinchen Cham began to pound his drum, shake, growl and shout, and then, as the deity possessed him, leap and turn and pace. Finally, he burst out of the temple room, still banging his drum, and set out at a run down the hill, followed by a crowd of men and boys bearing the god's statue in a palanquin. We jogged across the busy highway, went in beneath the concrete hulk of half-built apartment-blocks, and finally came down to a spring in the summer grass. There they bathed the statue and anointed the heads of the villagers. Then, with Rinchen Cham still drumming in the lead, we processed the god through the streets of the village, stopping at the houses of the old nobility – first the headman of a sub-hamlet called Nyentok Lakha, then a hundred-household head (Ch. *baibu*, Tb. *gyapön*), and finally to the home of the thousand-household commander (Ch. *qianbu*, Tb. *tongpön*).³⁴ The ceremony ended at this last house, with seemingly half the village crowded into the courtyard, burning incense, chanting prayers, and making prostrations.

The thousand-household commander himself was a tall, severe old man, frail with age but still broad-shouldered, frowning seriously at the arrival on his veranda of his people's god. A few years later, in unrelated circumstances, someone handed me a copy of this man's life story in Chinese, and I learned that his name was Shawo Tsering.

The text calls itself an 'auto-narrative' (Ch. *zishu*), which is not precisely an autobiography. The book describes its own creation thus: "These personal experiences were narrated orally by [Shawo Tsering] himself and recorded and put in order by Zhao Qingyang. The final text was composed (Ch. *bianxie*) by Zhao Shunlu."³⁵ Zhao Qingyang was a prolific local historian working for the Chinese Communist Party (CPC), and Zhao Shunlu may be his son. Thus, while the first-person narration is undoubtedly based on Shawo Tsering's statements, the book as printed is a co-creation with these two Han Chinese editors. In awareness of this fact, when I refer to 'Shawo Tsering' in the present tense below (as in, 'Shawo Tsering says...'), I refer not to the historical human being who passed away in 2015, whose 'true' sentiments and statements are after all unknowable, but to this notional narrator or narrator-function established by the text.³⁶ (The reader should also be aware that 'Shawo Tsering' is a relatively common name in the area; the chieftain-cadre Shawo Tsering should not be confused with

³³ For early descriptions of the Luröl, see Epstein and Peng, "Ritual"; Stuart, Banmadorji, and Huangchojia, "Mountain Gods"; and dPal ldan bKra shis and Stuart, "Perilous Novelties." For the Lhawa deity-mediums, see Rino and sNying bo rgyal, "Deity Men;" for a recent treatment of these mediums and the politics surrounding them, see Makley, "The Battle for Fortune," 67-104. For an introduction to and ritual schedule of Nyentok village where this takes place, see Roche, "Notes on the Maintenance of Diversity."

³⁴ For the 'hundred-household' and 'thousand-household' heads in the context of north-eastern Tibet, see Gray Tuttle, "An Overview of Amdo." For the ancient Inner Asian roots of this system, see Atwood, 'Encyclopedia of Mongolia,' 139-40.

³⁵ (Ch. *Geren jingli you benren koushu, Zhao Qingyang jilu, zhenli; quanwen you Zhao Shunlu bianxie*. 个人经历由本人口述，赵庆阳记录、整理，全文由赵顺禄编写。) Xiawu Cailang, *Bazong qianbu cangsang*, 166.

³⁶ The terminology of course is Foucault's; see "What Is An Author?"

several other individuals of the same name who have been written about in English.³⁷) The original book contains a forty-page introduction that gives a scholarly account of the history of the Mongolic- and Sinitic-speaking Tu people in Tongren, of whom Shawo Tsering's family were the hereditary leaders; I have not translated this here.

The whole book project took place under the auspices of the 'Materials on Culture and History' (Ch. *wenshi ziliao*) program of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and thus the text represents an ostensibly 'official' and state-sanctioned account of events. Although the text does discuss with unusual frankness the Maoist cataclysms between 1958 and 1978 and Shawo Tsering's personal anguish during this period, its narrative ultimately and explicitly serves the Chinese state by participating in a broader narrative in which the catastrophes of Mao's reign were an aberration now long-ago corrected, and in which the fundamental legitimacy of PRC rule on the Tibetan plateau is never questioned. In what scholar Uradyn Bulag calls the 'oral-history regime' that is modern China, individuals like Shawo Tsering are required to publicly perform their loyalties to the CPC, which are then disseminated to bolster this pro-state historical discourse.³⁸ The reader should consult Benno Weiner's introduction above for a more detailed discussion of this genre of official CPC life-writing, the career of the interviewer-compiler Zhao Qingyang, and the political context of the text's creation.

One subset of this translation's potential readership, those who see the object of their interest as 'China' or 'Maoism,' will see nothing particularly strange about such a text appearing in English. Another subset of this translation's potential readership, those whose intellectual or political allegiances lie with 'Tibet,' will see the pro-CPC loyalties of Shawo Tsering and his interviewers as disqualifying them from trust or sympathy, and the translation of this official text as rank propaganda. (Lest anyone underestimate the prevalence of this second viewpoint, I note that this translation was rejected by one prominent Tibetological periodical with the pointed suggestion that it should be published in 'a PRC journal.') I emphatically do *not* dismiss this second position. Given the genocidal mass-incarceration of Üyghürs ongoing as I write this in 2022, as well as the steadily worsening surveillance, arrest of dissidents, and total lack of press freedom across the Tibetan plateau and in the PRC generally, it at very least behooves me to explain below why I have chosen to amplify a pro-Communist account such as this.³⁹

At the time when I originally read it, several aspects of the text struck me as worthwhile simply as historical testament on many of the important events of 20th century Qinghai. As mentioned above, perhaps most striking is a detailed and emotionally wrenching account of Shawo Tsering's experiences between 1958 and 1978, during which he was imprisoned and persecuted, and almost his entire family was killed. There are also interesting sections on the pre-Communist lay and monastic leadership, and lively aperçus of multiple important historical personalities of 20th century China and Tibet, including general Ma Bufang, monk-educator Sherap Gyatso, the 10th Panchen Lama, premier Zhou Enlai, and many others. The hereditary chieftain Shawo Tsering was employed for most of his life as a government official, and the text details his leading roles in establishing a modern school system in Huangnan (Tb. Malho) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture after 1949, which would become one of the best Tibetan-language school systems in the PRC. The text also discusses his work after the Reform

³⁷ The best-known Shawo Tsering is a master-painter who assisted the famous artist Zhang Daqian in his study of Dunhuang murals, and from the 1980s on became something of a doyen of Repkong art; see Fraser, "Sha bo Tshe ring," Stevenson, "Art and Life," 199, etc. Another Shawo Tsering is found at Rino and sNying bo rgyal, "Deity Men," 51 and throughout.

³⁸ Bulag, "Can the Subalterns not Speak?" 104 and throughout. A recent monograph on the 'Materials on Culture and History' is Fromm, *Borderland Memories*. For studies of these publications in the Tibetan context, see Weiner, "The Aporia of Re-remembering" and Travers, "The Production of Collective Memory."

³⁹ At the time this goes to press, the most up-to-date studies of the mass-detention of Üyghürs will be Byler, et. al. ed., *Xinjiang Year Zero*, and Clarke ed. *The Xinjiang Emergency*.

and Opening in 1978, including the rebuilding of the same Huangnan school system, the re-opening of monasteries, the adjudication of pasture disputes, etc. Perhaps most unexpectedly, the text contains a genuinely touching tale of teenage love, long separation by the tides of fate and war in 20th century Qinghai, and a bittersweet reunion in the 1990s.

I originally began translating Shawo Tsering's story in 2016 to use as a teaching text for an undergraduate lecture on 20th century Tibet. I hope that the full translation will be useful for the same purpose. The narrative is concise and clearly written, and unusually among such accounts, it gives equal weight to the pre-Communist, Maoist, and post-Maoist time periods. It is also problematic in precisely the sort of way that makes a text useful for classroom discussion. The complex co-authorship and politically performative nature of the text should serve to remind students, as scholar Charlene Makley does, that 'oral history is a fundamentally dialogic practice, itself taken up as a genre by historians' interlocutors and shaped by others' notions of credibility, and kinds of subjects, timespaces, and projects.⁴⁰ Moreover, students in a class on Chinese or Tibetan history should be exposed to the forms of moral-historical discourse produced by the CPC for and about itself, and have an understanding of how those Chinese, Tibetans, and others who serve the PRC justify themselves as ethical actors. For better or for worse, people like Shawo Tsering made China and Tibet what they are today, and they will shape these nations' futures; their experiences are correspondingly important. Students should be schooled in the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' necessary to read such texts, including the ways that subtle forms of criticism and dissent are coded within the 'public transcript' of authoritarian states.⁴¹ In point of fact, Shawo Tsering himself explicitly warns us to read his own words critically. Of a speech he was forced to make in 1978, he comments: 'In fact human affairs are always like this. You can't say what you want to say, and you must say what you don't want to say - this is what's called "words that violate the heart" (Ch. *wei xin zhi yan*).'⁴²

Educators looking to create reading lists or students looking for sources might want to pair this text with related memoirs from the same time and region by Naktsang Nülo, Arjia Rinpoché, Pema Bhum, and many others from around the Tibetan world, or with the essays and primary sources in Barnet, Weiner, and Robin's edited volume *Conflicting Memories: Tibetan History under Mao Retold*.⁴³

A third point about the worth of this text for translation requires a bit of cultural and historical background.⁴⁴ Shawo Tsering was born in a place called Tongren in Chinese and Repkong in Tibetan. The old Mongolic name for the river that flows there and therefore the valley itself seems to have been Türgen, and it's possible that present Chinese name derives from this.⁴⁵ Tongren is located in what is now Qinghai Province of the PRC. The narrow valley forms a trespass between the Chinese, Tibetan, Mongol, and Islamic worlds. To the north and east are the rolling terraced hills of the loess or 'yellow earth' (Ch. *huangtu*) plateau, stretching into Gansu, Ningxia, and Shaanxi provinces, inhabited for millennia by Chinese-speaking farmers. To the south and west are the bleak high-altitude

⁴⁰ Makley, "I Will Never Forget That Day," 313. For a more extended discussion, see Makley, "Speaking Bitterness," 43-45 and throughout.

⁴¹ The concept of 'hidden transcripts' within public modes of acting comes from James Scott; see Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*. For analyses using this concept in the Tibetan context, see Turek, "Milarepa in a People's Commune," 526 and throughout, and Sudbury, "Apparitions of Red Horses," 211.

⁴² Xiawu Cailang, *Bazong Qianhu Cangsang*, 131.

⁴³ Naktsang Nülo, *My Tibetan Childhood*; Arjia Rinpoche, *Surviving the Dragon*; Pema Bhum, *Six Stars with a Crooked Neck*.

⁴⁴ For introductions to Tongren/Repkong from a Tibetan perspective, see Yangdon Dhondup. "Reb kong," and Sonam Tsering, "The Historical Polity."

⁴⁵ Taubes, "The Four Forts," 23. Tongren means "common benevolence." The county was established in 1929, and various theories now exist to explain the new name, including that it was a corruption of "Tu people" (*turen*), that it referred to the ethnic diversity of the area, etc. See for instance Niu Ruchen, ed. *Zhongguo diming youlai cidian*, 401.

steppes of the north-eastern Tibetan Plateau, the region traditionally known in Tibetan as Amdo or Domé. While today strongly culturally Tibetan, historically this region has seen long periods of domination by Mongolic peoples, and many Mongols and speakers of Mongolic languages remain in the area. The complex fracture-zone of mountains and valleys between these highland and lowland cultural-ecological zones also has large and ancient populations of Sunni Muslims with significant Sufi traditions, including speakers of both Sinitic (Chinese), Bodic (Tibetan), Mongolic, and Turkic languages.

In this geographically varied and culturally diverse borderland, Shawo Tsering belonged to an ethnic group known by a variety of names, including Tu, Monguor, Mongghul, Hor, Gyahor, Dordo, etc.⁴⁶ While ‘Monguor’ (< Mongol) is usually taken as an endonym, the specific branch group of which Shawo Tsering’s family were the hereditary leaders do not now use this name, and thus for simplicity I refer to the entire group as ‘Tu’.⁴⁷ Most of the roughly 300,000 Tu speak one of several related Mongolic languages and trace their own ancestry to the conquest of the area in the 13th century by the troops of successors to Chinggis Khan.⁴⁸ When the Yuan dynasty collapsed in the 1360s, individual Mongol units submitted to the Chinese Ming Dynasty and were enrolled in the Ming border armies. On the Sino-Tibetan border, these groups became known as *tuda* ‘native Tartars,’ and eventually just *tu* ‘natives.’ The Chinggisid Mongols had used a decimal system of ‘hundred-households’ (Mg. *ja’un*) and ‘thousand-households’ (Mg. *mingghan*) to organize fighting men under their rule, although even at their inception these units mostly formalized pre-existing social groups and did not represent exact census numbers.⁴⁹ Chinese states would continue until 1949 to recognize both Tu and Tibetan local lay leadership under ‘hundred-’ and ‘thousand-household head’ titles, as well as with the titles *tusi* ‘native official’ and *bazong* ‘commander.’⁵⁰

Shawo Tsering’s group, the Tongren Tu, seem to have originally served in the Mongol imperial postal stations (Mg. *jam*, Ch. *zhan*, Tb. *jam*) that led from lowland city of Hezhou (modern Linxia) across the high plateau to reach the river-valleys of Central Tibet (Tb. Ü-tsang). Like many elite Tu families, Shawo Tsering’s ancestors took a Chinese surname, in this case Wang. Styling themselves the ‘Tu Commanders’ (Ch. *Tu bazong*), as thousand-household heads they commanded four fortified military farms (Ch. *tuntian*), which became known locally as the ‘Four Forts’ (Ch. *Si zhaiqi*, Tb. *Tretsi zhi*).⁵¹ Rinchen Cham’s yearly deity procession described above traces the leadership of this ancient social unit through the streets of Nyentok, the uppermost of the Four Forts; many of the old military communities of the Sino-Tibetan frontier, whether they identify today as Tu, Tibetan, or Han Chinese, have similar ritual-political practices.⁵² Thus Shawo Tsering’s career as a local cadre in Tongren was in

⁴⁶ For a concise introduction to the Tu, see Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia*, 551-52. The classic English-language study remains Schram, *The Monguors of the Kansu-Tibetan Frontier*, as well as the Russian-language studies of Grigoriy Potanin (for partial translations, see Potanin, “On the Shiringols,” and “Mangghuer Folktales”).

⁴⁷ Wu, “Bonan,” 325.

⁴⁸ Much ink has been spilt over the ‘origins’ of the Tu people; the other main theory is that they originate with the medieval Tuyuhun/Azha people of the northern Tibetan plateau. Suffice it to say here that most Tu groups call themselves “Mongol” (i.e. “Monguor”/“Mangghuer”), that their genealogies trace their own origins to the Mongol Empire/Yuan Dynasty, that their languages descend from the Middle Mongolian spoken in that empire, and that the earliest unambiguous textual references to the Tu as a group are from the early Ming dynasty, directly after the Yuan Dynasty’s fall. For an overview of the Tu ethnogenesis debate and their appearance in early sources, see Cui Yonghong et al., “The Origin of the Monguor.” For the Tu languages and their relation to Middle Mongol, see Janhunen ed. *The Mongolic Languages*, xvi. For Tu written records of their own origin, see Schram, *The Monguors*, 623-95.

⁴⁹ Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia*, 139-40.

⁵⁰ See Schram, *The Monguors*, 195-96.

⁵¹ For a study of this community and its early history, see Taubes, “The Four Forts.”

⁵² See footnote one for sources on the *luröl* in Tongren, which are now legion. For accounts of very similar practices among the Tu in other parts of Qinghai, see Stuart and Hu Jun, “That All May Prosper”; Roche, “Nadun,” esp. 33-47

some sense simply the continuation of a centuries-old political relationship. Nor was this relationship unusual in its time and place: for non-Chinese leaders on the Sino-Tibetan frontier, mediating for their communities with the Chinese state in this way was, in Benno Weiner's phrase, 'both their prerogative and responsibility.'⁵³

Nevertheless, the Four Forts were not a monolith, and their relationship with the Chinese state was never simple or easy. The Tongren Tu allied with Tibetans in a major rebellion against the Ming in 1378-9, and in 1729 a 'Tu Commander' named Wang Rapten was executed with little pretext by Qing generals, an event that continues to loom large in the folk memory of the Tongren Tu today.⁵⁴ The Four Forts at one time or another have included speakers of Mongolic, Sinitic, and Bodic languages, among whom were practitioners of Islam, Chinese popular religion, and Tibetan Buddhism of the Sakya, Nyingma, and Geluk sects. Despite this centuries-long diversity, the Islamic half of the Tongren Tu community was violently forced out of the valley during the Great Northwestern Rebellion of 1862-77, and are now formally recognized as a separate nationality (Ch. *minzu*) called the Bao'an.⁵⁵ Today, the inhabitants of the Four Forts identify strongly with their Tibetan neighbors, to the point that many reject the label of 'Tu' entirely.⁵⁶ Almost all of them speak fluent Amdo-dialect Tibetan, especially since their own languages have no written script. Thus in Shawo Tsering's narrative, he functions for all intents and purposes as Tibetan, and his Tu ethnicity is only rarely remarked on by those he meets.

The last two decades have seen the rise of a 'critical Tibetan studies,' which examines the processes of invention, homogenization, and erasure by which the Tibetan 'imagined community' is constructed.⁵⁷ To summarize an argument I have made elsewhere, much of Tongren's history is a relatively recent construction of this sort, fueled by the mystique of historiographical *terma* 'discovered texts,' whether oral or written, and with roots in the narrative practices of lay and Buddhist Tibetan lineage writing, Western anthropology, and Chinese Communist political performance, not to mention a thriving trade in forged historical documents.⁵⁸ The result in some cases is a sort of historiography without any actual historical sources, all in pursuit of a past that is ideally local, non-state, authentically Tibetan, potentially subversive – in short, subaltern. Tibetan bookstores in Tongren in the 2010s sold such Tibetan-nationalist pseudo-histories by the dozen, usually with the fairly open project of Tibetizing Tongren's past in the face of rapid Chinese cultural, political, and economic encroachment,

for an overview and literature review. Summer festivals involving palanquin processions, deity-medium possession, communal dances, and the propitiation of deities understood to be serpentine fertility gods (Ch. *long*, Tb. *lu*) and/or historical military leaders (Ch. *jiangjun*, Tb. *makpön*) were also once widespread among Han Chinese in the region, although little has been written about them in English. A paradigmatic example, much discussed in Chinese scholarship, is the festivals of the 'eighteen dragon spirits of Taozhou and Minzhou' (*Tao-Min shiba longshen*). See for instance Wu Mu and Xu Guoying, "Cong Taozhou qiushen fengsi" for citations and a cogent historical analysis of the relationship of these festivals to the old garrison communities of the Ming-Tibetan border.

⁵³ Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 42.

⁵⁴ Taubes, "The Four Forts," 22-27 and 37-44. For folk-narratives about Wang Rapten (also called Pelchen Topgyé), see Blo bzang sNyan grags, "The Origin of gNyan thog Village"; sKal bzang Nor bu et al. "A Ritual Winter Exorcism," 192.

⁵⁵ See Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia*, 33-4; Battye, "Beyond Majority-Minority Relations."

⁵⁶ Roche, "Does Ideological Clarification Help Language Maintenance?" 118.

⁵⁷ See for instance Shneiderman, "Barbarians at the Border," or for a more recent overview, Hillman, "Studying Tibetan Identities." Scholar Gerald Roche has written a number of papers about the marginalization and erasure of Tongren Tu community in the face of what he calls the 'necropolitics' of Tibetan and Chinese nationalisms; see for instance Roche, "Lexical Necropolitics." The term 'imagined community' originates with Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

⁵⁸ For the profusion of forged historical documents in Tongren, their effects on the burgeoning local history movement there, and their relationship to the construction of Tu and Tibetan identity, see Taubes, "The Four Forts," 13-15 and throughout. See also Makley, "Speaking Bitterness" for the resonances of both Maoist and Western anthropological oral-history practices in contemporary Amdo society.

as well as the awkward fact that many of the Tongren's most prestigious and lucrative cultural industries are based in the historically Tu villages of the central valley floor.⁵⁹ Western scholars, taking these books' claims of otherwise-unattested local knowledge in good faith, have echoed many of these narratives.⁶⁰

To some extent, all this is because other potential forms of historiography have been violently precluded by the CPC, which guards its archives closely. Shawo Tsering had to collaborate with Han-Chinese Party-historians Zhao Qingyang and Zhao Shunlu to write his own story, with its long introduction about the early history of the Tongren Tu, in part because his own ancestors' carefully-kept trove of documents had all been thrown into a fire in 1966 by agents of the same Party. More to the point, to write his own unauthorized life-story would have put him and his family in real political jeopardy.⁶¹ Thus superficially at least, *The Thousand Household Commander's Winding Road* falls into a historiographical tradition countervailing to the one described above, which is Chinese nationalist or at least statist, and seeks Tu and Tibetan history principally in the voluminous documentary record of these peoples' interactions with Sinophone bureaucracies. And yet Shawo Tsering's co-narrative can also be read as a continuation of a very old tradition of local political rhetoric that mediates between these historiographical chronotopes, in which hegemonic Chinese 'ethnography' and dialogic Tu 'auto-ethnography' (to borrow from both Mary Louise Pratt and Charlene Makley) are strategically employed to justify the civilizational relationship between the Tongren Tu community and the Chinese state, and to articulate and legitimate grievances as breaches of that contract.⁶²

All of this is simply to note that if Shawo Tsering's narrative is constructed within a particular discursive space and political teleology, it is hardly unique or unprecedented in being so, nor is this ethno-political narration ever simple or monologic. And by its final pages, the book has revealed itself as an extended plea to a Sinophone audience not to allow the catastrophes of Mao's reign to happen again – in this moment, the composite narrator Shawo Tsering speaks with a moral and historical authority that is both Tu, Tibetan, and Chinese.

Finally, a note about translation conventions. The original text of the book is written in Chinese, without Tibetan equivalents. Thus all of the Tibetan names in this text are reconstructed with a greater or lesser degree of guess-work from the original Chinese. (E.g., the text calls Shawo Tsering's grandfather *Cailangdangz̧bou*, which is a relatively standard transliteration of the common Tibetan name Tsering Döndrup. Other cases are less clear.) I have worked with a scholar from Tongren who wishes to be identified as Rikpé Yeshé to reconstruct as many of these words as possible, but those names

⁵⁹ This is especially true of the *tangka* religious-icon painting industry, today heavily associated with one of the Four Forts called Sengge Shong/Wutun, the inhabitants of which are officially classified as Tu, and who speak a heavily Tibetized form of Chinese (Janhunén, *Wutun*, 11-12). See also footnote 18 about the *luröl* festivals, which are now marketed for foreign and domestic tourists as a uniquely Tibetan 'shaman festival.' Makley, *The Battle for Fortune*, 153-95, provides a nuanced case-study of how Tongren local historiographical projects are created in defense of Tibetan village sovereignty against disruptive state-led development.

⁶⁰ A good example are the two Tibetan-language genealogies of Shawo Tsering's family. While these documents may preserve some earlier material, they are not attested prior to the 1990s, and at least one of them passed through the hands of a notorious document forger named Lönchö Tselo. Shawo Tsering himself seems to have found these accounts of his family history highly questionable (see Xiawu Cailang, *Bazong qianhu cangsang*, 40). These two documents were then amalgamated by a local monk into a history of Nyentok monastery published in 2000, which has since been summarized and partially translated in English (Blo bzang snyan grags, "The Origins of gNyan thog Village"). See Taubes, "The Four Forts," esp. 39-44 for an analysis of these texts. Many other examples could be given.

⁶¹ Xiawu Cailang, *Bazong qianhu cangsang*, 40.

⁶² This argument is made at length at Taubes, "The Four Forts," esp. 15-16 and 45. For Pratt's term 'auto-ethnography,' see "Arts of the Contact Zone," 35. Makley explains her use of Bakhtin's terms 'dialogic' and 'chronotope' at *The Battle for Fortune*, 34-46.

for which no obvious Tibetan original can be found are given in Chinese Pinyin in *italics*. For ease of use and relative standardization, I have used THL Phonetics to transcribe the Tibetan words; the reader should be aware that this system is based on Lhasa pronunciation and thus distorts how these words would sound in Shawo Tsering's native Amdo dialect. For those readers who wish to consult the Chinese characters and the proper Tibetan spellings reconstructed from them, a full list of all names and terms is appended at the end of the text.

To avoid arbitrary decisions about the 'correct' names for complex, overlapping multi-ethnic spaces, and reflecting the fact that the translated book is, after all, written in Chinese, I have given all of the place-names in their Chinese forms as they appear in the text, *unless* the Chinese is a transliteration of a Tibetan original. (E.g., I write that Shawo Tsering was born in Tongren in Qinghai Province, not Tunrin in Tsongön Province or Repkong in Amdo Province, but I call his home village Nyentok not *Niandubu*. Of course, which name is 'the original' is sometimes difficult to know.⁶³) This leads to some infelicities and at times results in Tibetan places being called by Chinese names, but it seems less confusing and truer to the original text than any alternative. Again, all of the place-names with Chinese characters and Tibetan equivalents can be found in the appendix.

Everything in the text is translated here, and nothing not in the text is added. I have however inserted some paragraph breaks, and made a few small re-arrangements involving quotation marks and the order of the narrative. The Chinese language does not grammatically separate reported speech from direct quotation, and the text takes a seemingly rather loose approach to the use of quotation marks. In some cases, I have added these in where it seems impossible to do otherwise, but with or without quotation marks, the reader should approach all such dialog with an appropriate suspicion. In a few places I have taken the liberty of re-ordering the sentences to achieve a smoother narrative flow; all of these changes are very minor and in no way effect the tone or plot. The one place where I have made major changes is in the denouement to the third chapter, where I have re-arranged several episodes to maintain a clear chronological order. In this case I have indicated the original page-ranges in footnotes.

In order to make Shawo Tsering's text comprehensible for students and a general readership, I have included some broad-strokes historical notes at the start of each chapter. For the same reason, I have primarily cited English-language sources, unless the information cannot be found in that language. I am grateful to all the Tu, Tibetans, Chinese, and foreigners who assisted me in Tongren and elsewhere, and I am grateful to Mark Czeller, Benno Weiner, and Hannah Theaker for proof-reading this text before its publication. All mistakes (and I'm sure there are mistakes) in the translation or explanatory notes are my own.

⁶³ See for instance Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 69-72, on the murky origins of the county name Zeku/Tsekhok.

Chapter One: A Childhood of Many Difficulties

This section covers the period from the beginning of the twentieth century to the Communist victory in 1949. After the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and the formation of the Republic of China, the central government in Beijing and then Nanjing had little direct administrative power in the Tibetan regions. The Tibetan Ganden Podrang state, based in Lhasa and headed by the Dalai Lamas, had become de-facto independent in 1913, and had used British-trained troops to hold its own against Chinese forces to the north and east. Meanwhile, the Chinese border regions were controlled by a succession of regional military leaders with loose alliances to the Republican state. For Tibetans, the most consequential of these were the governments of Liu Wenbui (1895-1976) in Sichuan and the Chinese Muslim (Ch. Hui) generals based in Qinghai and Gansu, especially brothers Ma Qi (1869-1931) and Ma Lin (1873-1945), and Ma Qi's son Ma Bufang (1903-1975). Nominally divided between the Ganden Podrang and the Chinese warlord regimes lay the vast, remote highlands of Tibetan Kham and Amdo, a patchwork of valley kingdoms, monastic estates, and nomadic confederations, each with its own internal politics and complex relationships to the powers around it.⁶⁴

Two historical figures who appear in Shawa Tsering's narrative are especially central to the history of 20th century Amdo as a whole. This first is the Muslim general and provincial governor Ma Bufang, who remains to this day a controversial figure in Qinghai, reviled especially in official PRC historiography and among Tibetans.⁶⁵ The governments of both Ma Bufang and his father Ma Qi were marked by frequent, bloody campaigns against various Tibetan groups, including Labrang Monastery, the Golok nomad confederations, and the troops of the Central Tibetan Ganden Podrang state.⁶⁶ Ma Bufang also sent troops eastward to support the Nationalist Party (Ch. Guomindang/Kuomintang) in its war against the Japanese and Communists. In Shawa Tsering's account, we see aspects of Ma Bufang's militarist politics in the boy's wide-eyed encounter with the American airman Claire Lee Chennault, commander of the volunteer 'Flying Tigers' airforce, and a key supporter of the Nationalists' war against Japan.⁶⁷

At home, Ma Bufang allied with the modernist and Chinese nationalist Ikhwan (Ch. Yihewani) sect of Sunni Islam and undertook a vigorous policy of state- and nation-building, including major infrastructure projects and military conscription.⁶⁸ A centerpiece of these policies was education, with modern state schools established across the province. Tibetan and Mongol populations were required to send fixed quotas of children to these schools, where they would be educated in Chinese and then employed as state or military translators, administrators, etc. The most prestigious of these institutions was the Kunlun Middle School (Ch. Kunlun Zhongxue) in the capital city of Xining, founded to provide modern education to the children of the Chinese Muslim elite, but also accepting politically connected students of non-Muslim nationalities.⁶⁹ This school system and its legacy play major roles in Shawa Tsering's life story. Ultimately, Ma Bufang would be defeated in the summer of 1949 by the Communists under general Peng Dehuai (1898-1974). He fled the country, leaving his troops to survive as they could under the new regime.

The second figure who plays a central role in Shawa Tsering's life story is the Tibetan monk, reformist educator, and modernist politician Sherap Gyatso (1884-1968). Born in a valley just north of Tongren, at the age of twenty-one Sherap Gyatso joined the 'monk-stream' (Tb. dragyün), the centuries-old flow of young provincial monks who traveled to Lhasa to enroll in one of the three great monastic 'universities' of the ruling Geluk sect. In 1917, Sherap Gyatso earned the highest award of the Geluk educational establishment, the Geshe Lharampa degree, as well as the praise and

⁶⁴ For an introduction to this region and period from the perspective of Chinese state policy, see Lin Hsiao-ting, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier*. For a perspective from the Central Tibetan Ganden Podrang state, see Tsepon Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons, Vol 2*, esp. 857-918. For an ethnographic account of Amdo written during the period in question, see Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Frontier*.

⁶⁵ For an introduction to the Muslim generals of the north-west, see Lipman, "Ethnicity and Politics." The most in-depth treatment of Ma Bufang in English remains Hunsberger, "Ma Pu-fang in Chinghai Province."

⁶⁶ Haas, "Qinghai Across Frontiers," 47-92; Horlemann, "Victims of Modernization?"

⁶⁷ Pohl, "Chennault, Claire Lee."

⁶⁸ Hunsberger, "Ma Pu-fang in Chinghai Province," 69-189; Haas, "Qinghai Across Frontiers," 268-9.

⁶⁹ Haas, "Qinghai Across Frontiers," 155-312; Yangdon Dhondup, "Roar of the Snow Lion," 34-8.

patronage of the progressive Thirteenth Dalai Lama. After the Dalai Lama's death in 1933, Sherap Gyatso left Central Tibet for India, and traveled thence by sea to China, where he lectured at universities and attended Nationalist Party political events. In 1939, he returned to his home village in Amdo to found an academy that taught both Buddhism and modern subjects, attracting students by, among other things, the promise that they would not be drafted into Ma Bufang's armies. As Shawa Tsering's narrative relates, after the Communist victory in 1949, Sherap Gyatso became a staunch supporter of the new government. He was made vice-chairman of Qinghai province in 1950, the president of the Chinese Buddhist Association in 1953, and was elected the vice-president of the World Federation of Buddhists in 1956 and again in 1961. Although Sherap Gyatso survived the uprisings and reprisals of 1958, during the Cultural Revolution the octogenarian would be denounced and beaten by Red Guards. He died of his injuries in November 1968.⁷⁰

In Shawa Tsering's narrative, his encounters with Sherap Gyatso between 1949 and 1958 were transformative, presenting to the young chieftain a model of a distinctly Tibetan Buddhist modernity that emphasized nationalist education as the key to Tibet's future. Sherap Gyatso and Shawa Tsering refer to this as 'cultural knowledge' (Ch. wenhua zhishi), probably a translation of Tibetan rikné, 'culture,' 'learning,' 'science.' Sherap Gyatso's reformist vision, along with his willingness to ally with the Chinese Communists, would shape the rest of Shawa Tsering's life.

A few other figures, somewhat less well-known outside of Tibetan Amdo, play important roles in the story. The two highest positions of the traditional Tibetan 'combined religious and secular authority' (Tb. chösi zungdrel) in Tongren were the Rongwo Nangso family of chieftains and the Shar-tsang (also called Driüchen) lama lineage of Rongwo monastery. In 1945 the Nangso Jikmé was succeeded by his brother Trashhi Namgyel (1923-1998), who served in the county government after the Communists arrived, but would be arrested and imprisoned in 1958.⁷¹ The Shar-tsang lama Lopzang Trinlé Lungtok Gyatso (1916-1978), the seventh in his lineage, likewise received a government position under the new regime, but would be arrested in 1958. He died in prison, only months short of official rehabilitation in 1978.⁷² Another powerful lay leader in the valley was Dorjé (1899-1974), who Shawa Tsering usually refers to as the 'thousand-household head Gyelwo Pönpo,' 'the chieftain [Tb. pönpo] of Gyelwo village.' Dorjé too would be arrested in 1958, and spent the rest of his life in prison.⁷³

A final figure of importance is the third Aröl-tsang lama, Lopzang Lungtok Tenpé Gyeltsen (1888-1959). Originally a minor reincarnation lineage based at Rongwo, the third Aröl-tsang is best known for founding a Geluk monastery in 1923 at the holy mountain and meditation site called 'The White Cliff Monkey Fortress' (Tb. Drakkar Trel dzong). Within decades, this monastery had developed into one of the largest and most prestigious institutions in Amdo.⁷⁴ The Aröl-tsang lama would also be imprisoned in 1958, and died the following year. In Shawa Tsering's narrative, all of these figures represent traditional forms of Tibetan and Buddhist authority, albeit authorities willing to work within the Chinese Communist state, and cautiously supportive of modernizing social reforms.

Shawa Tsering's own position amidst these forces and personalities is complex, and his statements are sometimes difficult to reconcile. Although his home in Tongren was geographically close to the Ma family base at Xining, it was protected by high passes and difficult river crossings. Shawa Tsering's family was close to the leading Tibetan family of Tongren, the Rongwo Nangso, and the teenage chieftain was betrothed to, and would later marry, the Nangso Trashhi Namgyel's sister. Nevertheless, the 'Tu Commanders' authority seems to have been contested even within their own village, and Shawa Tsering claims that despite appearances, they were so poor as to be at times borrowing money to feed themselves. Under such circumstances, it's possible to read the boy Shawa Tsering's virtual 'adoption' by Ma Bufang in

⁷⁰ See Stoddard, "The Long Life of rDo-sbis dGe-bshes Shes-rab rGya-mtsho"; Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists*, 202-20; Sonam Dorje, "Sherab Gyatso."

⁷¹ Stevenson, "The Role of Traditional Tibetan Tribal Leadership," 8-11; Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 35, 192, and throughout.

⁷² Stevenson, "The Role of Traditional Tibetan Tribal Leadership," 11-14; Tsering Namgyal, "The Seventh Rongwo Drupchen," and Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 192 and throughout.

⁷³ Stevenson, "The Role of Traditional Tibetan Tribal Leadership," 2, 17; Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 36-7, 192, and throughout.

⁷⁴ Gruschke, *Cultural Monuments*, 91-2.

early 1949 as a ploy to elevate the historically pro-Chinese Tu-ethnicity Wang family as a counterbalance to the Tibetan nobility of Tongren. Although Ma Bufang was defeated and forced into exile by the Communists later that year, the Chinese state would continue to patronize the young Tu headman Shawo Tsering as a political and cultural power-broker in Tongren.

Inheriting the Position of the Tu Commander

My grandfather Tsering Döndrup, called in some documents Tsering Dorjé, was probably the seventeenth in the line of the Tu Commanders. According to what my elders told me, he died of illness at the age of over sixty. My grandmother was named Khari. She spent most her time working around the house and in the fields. Around 1923, when my father was nineteen years old, he inherited the positions of the Tu Commander and the thousand-household head, and the responsibility of governing the Four Forts. It is said that during the time that the Ma Family warlords controlled Qinghai, my father was very close to the brigadier Trawo who was under their command. Gyelwo Pönpo one told me, 'Your father, myself, and brigadier Trawo were all very close, we were good friends.'

During that period, a group of wealthy people in Nyentok village, led by a hundred-household head named Tenpa, was in conflict with my father for power. This conflict gradually became severe. One day during a *sang* fumigation ritual in Nyentok monastery, a fight broke out between the two sides. My father, seeing that the battle was going against him, hid in the Dharma-Protector Chapel. He was discovered by his enemies there and stabbed to death. This instigated further unrest among the people, and the entire village united and killed the chief among his murderers, whose name was Pelgyé. After this the situation calmed down again, but from that time on the two factions were in a feud. Later, in order to keep the peace in the region, the great Shar-tsang Lama of Rongwo monastery, the Nangso, and Gyelwo Pönpo all came forth to bring a resolution. They caused the opposite faction to give our family some wealth in restitution, and in this way the affair concluded. My father's murder took place around 1938; I was five years old.

My mother's name was Nyingmo. She was born in Nyentok village. She spent her time at household chores and agricultural work. In the difficult times around 1960 she was to pass away, at the age of forty-six years.

After my father's death in 1938, the position of the Tu Commander over the Four Forts and the thousand-household seat was empty. The government of each of the forts was controlled by the hundred-household head of that village. In our village, Nyentok, the hundred-household head and thirty village elders jointly undertook the governance of the village.

In the autumn of 1942, when I was nine years old, I was coronated in a ritual as the hereditary Tu Commander. Overseeing the ritual were the Rongwo Nangso Jikmé, Gyelwo Pönpo, and Gelek Gyatso, the administrator of the Shar-tsang Lama estate at Rongwo Monastery. The ritual took place in the courtyard outside the front gate of my house. I remember that the leaders of each of the Four Forts arrived carrying fine *khatak* silk-scarves and other valuable objects as gifts, followed by a great mass of people come to attend the festival of my taking office. Wanggyel, the headman of Wutun village, came to attend the ritual with ten other people representing the villagers of upper and lower Wutun, as well as Gyeltsangma and Horgya. Lhatsé Gyel, the headman of Kasar, came with another ten people. Tamdrin, the headman of Gomar village, came with several dozen representatives to attend. Rongwo monastery, Chuma, Sakyil, Shabrang, and other villages all sent a few delegates. The Rongwo Nangso Jikmé presided over the great festive ceremony. He gave a speech overflowing with warmth, and all the crowd of other representatives at the festivities gave me their congratulations.

I remember that I sat on a treasured throne covered with red silk, in the center of the courtyard facing south. Over me was a curtained tent with a floral pattern. To the left and the right of me were the Rongwo Nangso, Gelek Gyatso, and Gyelwo Pönpo. In front of me, to the left and right were each of the village headmen, and the courtyard beyond was filled with a throng of people come to attend the festivities. In the middle of the courtyard was placed a long table, which was covered with plates of boiled sheep and yak meat, fried bread-cakes, rice liquor, bowls of rice, sweet *droma* roots, and other delicious dishes. On the ground were spread the hides of the slaughtered sheep and yaks, and on the head of each animal was draped a pure white *kbatak* scarf. This is how I was coronated in the position of the Tu Commander and thousand-household head of the Four Forts, the last inheritor of this position in history.

A song is sung among the Tongren Tu: 'When you eat fatty lamb, do not forget the benevolence of the grassland. When you drink milk tea from Songpan, do not forget the benevolence of the cows. When you drink liquor made from highland barley, do not forget the benevolence of the fields.' That I was able to receive the post of the Tu Commander and thousand-household head was all due to the work of one individual, my maternal grandfather Khemchok. At the time he was sixty-four years old, and very influential within our village, an elder who received great respect from everyone. His family was comparatively wealthy. Whenever anyone had difficulties, he would always generously provide assistance, whether giving grain or money, and he never asked for it back. In our village there was a poor man named Sönam who once told me, 'Once when our family was in such difficulties that we hadn't even enough to keep a pot boiling, one morning before we'd got out of bed we heard a knock on the door. It was your maternal grandfather, who had brought us a bag of flour. He said that when he hadn't seen any smoke from our house in the morning, he'd known that we had nothing to eat, and so brought us over some flour. That bag of flour truly saved all of our lives.' There was another poor man in our village named *Hesang*. My grandfather set him to watching the mill, and when he was unable to watch the mill, he gave him various chores to do around the house. His descendants frequently told me that my grandfather was a benefactor who'd saved all of their lives.

Besides farming, my grandfather also was a trader, who would sell wool and yak skins to Linxia, and this was the reason his household was comparatively well-off. After my father was killed, all of our family's affairs were managed by him. He put a great amount of effort into having me recognized as the Tu Commander, frequently visiting the Shar-tsang Lama, the Rongwo Nangso Jikmé, and the Gyelwo Pönpo, entreating them to act as impartial judges and to quickly confirm me as the Tu Commander and Thousand-Household Head of the Four Forts, and to restore my family's traditional political status. At the same time, my maternal grandfather Khemchok together with the Rongwo Nangso Jikmé traveled together to Xining specially to pay their respects to Ma Bufang, the chairman of Qinghai Province. There my grandfather reported my family's situation, and once again asked that Ma Bufang would act as an impartial judge and restore my family to its previous position. Ma Bufang issued a letter of appointment, granting me the title of the Thousand-Household Head of the Four Forts, as well as granting me flour and fodder enough for one person and one horse, to be granted once a month. Thus through the diligent work of my grandfather, I was able to attain the position of the Tu Commander. The pity was that a month before the ceremony to confirm me in the position, this elderly man also departed this world.

After his death, my uncle Tenpa Lhagyel, at the time a monk in Nyentok Monastery, took up the task of supporting me. He took great care of me, and over a long period he warmly and seriously taught me all variety of ancient laws and regulations and cultural knowledge. He lectured to me on history, ancient tales, and all the moral lessons of being a person in this world. Under his teaching, I quickly matured. My uncle commanded a certain respect at Nyentok monastery and among the people of the village. He not only had a deep understanding of the Buddhist teachings, but also was a great

painter. One after another, he had created beautiful *tangka* icons for the famous monasteries of Kumbum, Rongwo, Tsanggar, Ragya, *Rongke*, and Labrang, as well as painting for the Aröl-tsang Lama at Treltzong Monastery. After I had been coronated in the Tu Commander position, because I was still quite young and did not understand many things, many important tasks were beyond my abilities to complete. Thus many difficult problems were decided by his plans and scheming - at the time it really felt like what they call, 'governing from behind the curtain.' But it was he who placed me up on the throne of the Tu Commanders, and he persisted in teaching me cultural knowledge, and insisted that I study the methods to solve all types of situations.

My uncle was a person of great foresight. He felt that just learning to read Tibetan was not enough, I also had to study the knowledge to be found in the Han Chinese language. In order that I might learn Chinese, I was sent to the Rongwo Nangso Jikmé, to whom my uncle also introduced a Chinese man of letters of the surname Hán. I studied with this teacher for one year, which allowed me to pick up the Chinese language at an early age, as well as to learn a certain amount of Chinese cultural knowledge. This was in my thirteenth year. After that, from 1946 to 1948, I studied for three years in the central elementary school of Rongwo Town. My three-year career in reading would benefit me my whole life, and this was also the greatest help and act of benevolence that my uncle ever gave me. In all the decades of my life, I have always felt that my uncle was the first guide in my life. At the start of my life, he not only taught me the Tibetan language and the Buddhist scriptures, he also sent me to study the Chinese language and Han knowledge, which has been of deep benefit to me my whole life. To be a person, and even more so to be employed as an official, a person especially needs cultural knowledge. Only with this would he be able to complete his official duties, use his power for good, and do good deeds. An illiterate, or a person with only shallow cultural knowledge, will never achieve great things.

Entering Kunlun Middle School

In the first lunar month of 1949, the Rongwo Nangso Trashī Namgyel, Gyelwo Pönpo Dorjé, and the great administrator of the Shar-tsang estate Gelek Gyatso, as well as my uncle Tenpa Lhagyel prepared a great quantity of gifts and set out for Xining to wish a happy new year to the chairman of Qinghai Province, Ma Bufang. They brought me along as well, in order that I could be presented to chairman Ma, and ask him to watch over me and help me develop in my studies. The provincial chairman Ma met us in the guest rooms of his official manor, and happily acquiesced to their entreaties, saying, 'Don't worry about this. I will certainly watch over this young man's education!' These elders from Tongren had brought Ma Bufang a rich selection of gifts, including silver coin, jewelry, silks, incense, fox furs, lambskins, and other expensive objects, plus thirty head of good horses. At the time, Ma Bufang looked as if he was over fifty years old, a tall and strong man, with a thick beard. He had a sense of humor, and was jovial when he spoke to us. When he was finished talking with my elders, he stood up and took my hand, patting it familiarly, and said, 'My clever boy! Let's have him sent to the Kunlun Middle School, he'll study well there!' And he immediately took up the telephone and made a call to Ma Yulong, the vice principal of Kunlun Middle School, telling him, 'A little official has come to us from Tongren! Let's have him at the Middle School, and send him to the "Little Masters' Class".'

On the second day, my uncle brought me to the Kunlun Middle School to register. In those days, the Kunlun Middle School in Xining was located where the May First Club and the provincial Military Headquarters are located now. It was a very large space, with cafeterias and dormitories all

within the school. Among the students were Hui, Han, Tibetans, Mongols, and Tu, although the largest numbers of them were Hui and Han.

The school had a 'Little Masters' Class,' which was composed of the children of Ma Bufang's military administration and of other wealthy families. People also called it the 'Nobility Class.' These children in the Little Masters' Class were extremely naughty, and some were genuinely impossible to control. Not very long after I arrived, a large number of these students were sent down into the ordinary classes. After that, there was only the son of principal Ma Yulong, Ma Bufang's illegitimate son Ma Yizhong, the provincial education bureau Liu Chengde's son Liu Fuquan, plus myself. The four of us received special treatment together in the Little Masters' Class. We would eat together, although we would attend common classes separately according to our ages. The Little Masters' Class also had a servant, who would serve us food, fold our blankets, lay out our bedding, and sweep the floor. We ate very well. Each morning when we got up we would drink milk, and after we'd finished our morning self-study sessions we would eat breakfast, with two cooked dishes and a bowl of broth, or often four cooked dishes and broth. After this we would separate out to attend common classes.

Students in the common classes ate badly. Sometimes they were fed horsemeat, which no one liked. At mealtimes a giant pot of rice would be set at the center of the courtyard. The older and bigger students would eat it all up, while the younger, less brave students would be forced to the back where they'd drink only a weak broth. For this reason they frequently would go hungry, and be forced to buy noodles outside the campus. The strange thing was that the school had no detention hall. Every night, a few of the naughtier students would be pulled in to be beaten and scolded. In the dark until the third watch we'd hear the sound of their sobbing and yelps. When I first arrived at the Kunlun Middle School I was very positive, but after a while I came to feel that the days there were very difficult to bear.

One day that summer, the provincial chairman Ma Bufang accompanied the American air-force commander Claire Lee Chennault to visit our school. In the school offices, Ma Bufang introduced Chennault to my situation. Speaking through a translator, Chennault said to me, 'In not too long, you should come to America to study! I'll help you.'

At hearing this, Ma Bufang said to me, 'Did you hear him? Study well, and soon you'll study abroad in America. And while you're at it, make sure you don't take a Tibetan wife, better that you marry one of our Hui girls!'

Chennault had a close relationship with Ma Bufang. Not long after I met him, he flew an immense gray horse over from America, and after that he brought Ma Bufang an expensive sedan car. The car was colored green, and ran smoothly without any noise. Ma Bufang owned three sedan cars, and thirty trucks. In those days, the formal departmental head of the provincial government, as well as the military generals and brigadiers, were commonly seen riding around on officially provided German-manufacture 'Three-Gun Brand' bicycles.

In May 1949, the First Field Army of the People's Liberation of Army liberated Xi'an, the main city of the Guanzhong region. In June they began the campaign towards Fufeng and Mei Counties, lifting the barrier for the liberation of the entire Great Northwest. After the Fufeng and Mei campaigns, the PLA was splitting the mountains and upturning the sea, with a force of a coiling wind stabbing through clouds, racing thousands of miles at a time, furiously advancing with swords held high. At Guguan and Guyuan they achieved the victory called 'Pursuit East of the *Long* Mountains,' and all of the different army routes began marching on Lanzhou, the most important town in the West.

Xining city had early on caught the whiff of cannon fire. On the main streets and small alleys, everything was in chaos. Not a few of the students attempted to escape the city, and some of these were captured and even thrown in jail, where they were beaten. Because Ma Bufang had been spreading

propaganda about the evils of the Communist Party, when we heard that the People's Liberation Army was marching towards Xining, the atmosphere was extremely tense, and everyone was afraid. I remember that at the time there were over three thousand students in the school, and they were all like birds scared up by bow-shot, not knowing what to do, or where to go.

A Refugee at Treltzong Monastery

By August of 1949, the Chinese People's Liberation Army was soon to liberate all of China, and the force of the Guomindang was already spent. Ma Bufang's circle, which had controlled Qinghai for more than forty years, had received a mortal blow at Lanzhou. Their main force had been overwhelmed by the People's Liberation Army, and defeated divisions were escaping in all directions. In Xining, it was as the expression, 'before rain comes from the mountains, wind fills up the house' - everyone was worried, everyone thinking about the future. Especially those who had money or high position were so frightened they couldn't get through the days, trying to move their wealth to safety and planning paths of escape.

My uncle had guessed from early on that the People's Liberation Army would be liberating the Great Northwest. That summer, even from my first day at Kunlun Middle School, my uncle, the Rongwo Nangso, Gelek Gyatso, and Gyelwo Pönpo took me to see Pelzang and ask him to take care of me. Pelzang was the thousand-household commander from Kangtsa in the Qinghai Lake region, who was at that time in Xining. He had a close relationship with Ma Bufang and his group, and owned a courtyard house in the city. He invited me to come and enjoy myself at his house every week, and from that time I on did; they would always fill me up with meals of 'finger-food' mutton on the bone. I got to know him and his family from this time on.

One day in that August of 1949, I met Pelzang at Huangguang in the city. He told me that the Communist People's Liberation Army would soon be fighting its way towards us, and I needed to move out of the city quickly. I should come that evening to their house, bringing nothing, and I would flee with them back to their home-region of Kangtsa. That evening when I arrived at their house, everything in the courtyard was in chaos. They were busy shifting around all different types of property in an extreme hurry. They told me that a motorcar was coming to transport their things, but by the morning the car still hadn't arrived. Anxious to be gone, they asked me to have a look at what was happening at Huangzhong Mansion. I found the man there at the mansion, and they were able to send a truck to Pelzang's door. They packed everything they had in. Among their belongings in the truck were over a hundred rifles and above ten thousand bullets. With them was also traveling the wealthy Xining businessman Liao Eting, as well as seven or eight people in his family, who also had not a little property to pack into the truck.

After we'd hurriedly loaded everything in, we set out west. The road was terrible, and the truck was little faster than a horse cart. We arrived at Haiyan County on the shore of Qinghai Lake around the time lanterns were being lit. That evening we stayed with the family of the headman of the Dazhi, named Tekchok. We spent about five or six days there, each day listening for news from Xining. Pelzang said that if the Communists didn't come to Xining we'd return there, and if they did, we'd flee further west to Kangtsa. Five or six days later came reliable word: the People's Liberation Army had already entered Xining city.

We continued on along the shore of Qinghai Lake to Kangtsa. Because the truck had returned to Xining while we were staying with the Dazhi chieftain, the road ahead was difficult. Pelzang hired a cart with big wooden wheels for the onward journey. Some of us rode horses and the others walked, while the women and children sat on the cart. Tekchok also sent some men to guard us along the way,

so that together there were over twenty in our Party. We were scouting the way as we walked, and we traveled extremely slowly. It took us about six or seven days to walk from Dazhi (at *Sanjiaocheng*, 'Three Corners Fort,' the modern Haiyan County seat) to Kangtsa.

When we arrived we stayed in the Kangtsa monastery. Everyone was busy stowing away their furniture and baggage, and nobody paid attention to me. After about half a day someone came to find me, leading a horse. I was taken to the foot of the Amyé Bayan Mountains, where I stayed with the Hundred-Household head named Sangdak. I spent about half a month there. It was a purely nomadic area, and people there all lived in tents. At that time I was still a student who understood nothing about the world, and had little sensitivity to the political situation.

In the hundred-household head's family were two sons and four daughters. The eldest and second-eldest daughters had already married out of the house. The third daughter Tsedar Kyi was very beautiful, as well as clever and lively. She was extremely kind and caring towards me. She was older than me by about a year, and already betrothed to someone else, although she'd not yet married. At that time I was already betrothed to the young sister of the Rongwo Nangso Trashi Namgyel. Every day, however, Tsedar Kyi would take extremely good care of my living arrangements, whether I was eating, drinking, getting up, or going to sleep. When I woke up she would fold the covers of my bed and give me water to wash my face. She would even carry over my tooth-brush and tooth-paste.

She often asked me, 'After you go home, will you come back and see me?'

I would say, 'If course I will come.'

She would ask me again, 'And if you don't come and see me - what should I do?'

And I would swear an oath, 'If I don't come and see you, may I be struck dead!' It really did seem that she liked me, even truly loved me. But we were both already betrothed, there was no way we could have become husband and wife.

After I had spent over a month [sic] with Tsedar Kyi's family, my uncle came to take me away. When she heard that I would be leaving, she was heartbroken. My uncle stayed for three days, and all those three days she cried, as if it were raining straight for three straight days. The night before we were separated, we spent in a little room in the monastery there. Neither of us was sleepy at all, and our talk flowed out like the endless waters of the Yellow River. We talked through the whole night until dawn, not even knowing what we were talking about, just hating that the night was so short. We only talked, nothing else happened between us. The next morning when it was time to leave, she walked along with us for stage after stage. My uncle again and again told her to go back, but she was unwilling to turn around and leave. When we'd gone a long way, we could look back to see Tsedar Kyi sitting on the ground with her face in her hands, sobbing there alone. I heard that after I left, she became sick from longing, and wouldn't drink tea or eat any food, as if she'd lost her soul.

In my life this was one story of true and bright love - many decades have gone by since, and even now it is painful to remember.

My uncle had come to find me in September 1949. He told me that the situation in Tongren was bad, and that we should first go to stay for a while at Trel dzong monastery in Xinghai County. We would ask the great Aröl-tsang Lama there to cast our fortunes, and when the social situation improved we could return home. Therefore from Kangtsa we went on by horseback, fording the Buha River, then through Gonghe and Xinghai to finally reach Trel dzong monastery. Ma Bufang's defeated soldiers had scattered along the route, and for that reason during daylight we would hide in secluded places, and travel secretly onward by night. When we reached Trel dzong my uncle entrusted me to the Aröl-tsang Lama. I was to stay there in safety. I would study Buddhist scriptures with the Lama and learn some culture. My uncle stayed there for several days then returned towards Tongren.

I stayed in Trel dzong for about half a year. This period was an important threshold in my life. During this time I came to observe and better understand the culture of Tibetan Buddhism and the serenity of monastic life.

Trel dzong Monastery is located in the middle of the Drakkar Trel dzong mountains of Xinghai County, one of the four famous ranges of Amdo. The mountains here are tall and beautiful and command views of great distance. The Drakkar cliffs look like a recumbent elephant taking a drink, with the trunk hanging down into the *Qiemo* valley in front of the monastery. The mountains are cut through with valleys and ridges, riddled with many caves, green pines and ancient cedars, luxuriant and beautiful. According to legend, the Nyingma master Padmasambhāva, the Gelug founder Tsongkhawa, and the first of the Shar-tsang lineage Ganden Gyatso all came here and left their traces. Even today there are ancient sights filled with the sense of mystery, for instance the 'Auspicious Slope,' the 'Hoof-print of the Wish-Fulfilling Sow,' the 'Padmasambhāva Meditation Cave,' the 'Dharma Throne of Tsongkhawa,' the 'Cave for Scripture Chanting,' et cetera.

Although the monastery was founded fairly late (in the 1920s), the power of the Aröl-tsang Lama was very great. This power had grown greatly in recent years, with the support of Atsok thousand-household commander Changsem, the hundred-household commander Sölo, the Shabrang thousand-household commander Tsegé in Xinghai, as well as the Arik headman from the Qilian named Namkha Tsewang, Pelzang in Kangtsa, and the administrator of Tsanggar Monastery, Dündül. By the time of the Liberation, it had already become the largest Geluk monastery and Buddhist cultural center of the Huangnan region. The main building in the monastery was the spectacular prayer hall with a hundred pillars, which could vie with that of Ganden Monastery in Central Tibet for beauty. There were many Buddha-images, scriptures, and stupas inside, and it could compete in fame with the Six Great Monasteries of the Geluk sect.

During the time I spent at Trel dzong, I also had the chance to meet the 'Geshé of Dobi,' the great teacher Sherap Gyatso (1884-1968), whom I had long revered from afar. He had also arrived at Trel dzong as a refugee. He and the Aröl-tsang Lama were friends, and not long after he arrived, Aröl-tsang Lama took me to see him. After the Aröl-tsang explained my situation in detail to Sherap Gyatso, during the time I was at Trel dzong, he frequently met with me. He was a venerable man of even temper and vast learning, a great master of Buddhist learning. He told me, 'To be a chieftain is a small thing. To study cultural knowledge - that is a great thing.' He told me of his difficult years as a youth seeking an education, and he taught me that I absolutely must study cultural knowledge. He told me, 'The main reason that us Tibetans have become backwards is because we haven't been able to grasp hold of scientific cultural knowledge. For this reason you must study cultural knowledge. Only when you have scientific cultural knowledge, can you have real knowledge, can you have ability, can you achieve great things, can you make people respect you.'

One evening when he and I were speaking together, a People's Liberation Army unit arrived suddenly at the monastery. Among them was one with the surname Chen, who had previously studied Tibetan from Sherap Gyatso, and was his disciple. This PLA soldier surnamed Chen was from Sichuan. He brought the news: General Peng Dehuai had sent a letter from Xi'an, asking the master to go to Xi'an for a meeting. There was also a unit of soldiers with them. This was the first time I had ever seen the People's Liberation Army. They talked and laughed, with a peaceful and friendly demeanor, very familiar and easy to approach. They gave me an image of Chairman Mao as a gift, and told me some stories from the Revolution, and left a good impression on me. Sherap Gyatso planned to take me to Xi'an and send me to school there, but the decision was Aröl-tsang Lama's to make. The Aröl-tsang said, 'I will do a divination, and see whether this is auspicious, then decide whether or not he will go.' According to the results of his divination, going to Xi'an would be very auspicious. However, others objected that if I were to go to Xi'an I would have no way to contact anyone in

Tongren, and for this reason I never went. Sherap Gyatso told me that after I returned to Tongren, I should apply myself to study and books, and learn cultural knowledge. Aröl-tsang agreed to this plan.

Returning Home with the Aröl-tsang Lama

After the great master Sherap Gyatso left Treltzong Monastery around April, the great reincarnated lineage of Rongwo Monastery, the Shar-tsang Lama, received a commission from the standing committee of the North-Western Military Committee to form a delegation to travel to Central Tibet for talks intended to bolster peace. They intended to travel the next year, or 1950. The Aröl-tsang Lama planned to travel onwards to Tongren in order to see the Shar-tsang Lama off. Just at this time, my adoptive father Tendzin arrived leading horses to bring me back to Tongren. At the start of April 1950, we left Treltzong together with the Aröl-tsang Lama, traversing the lands of the Atsok clan of Qinghai and fording the Yellow River to Mangra at Karmo Yangchil. Then we passed across the grasslands of Zeku. All along the route, the sight of the Tibetan masses worshipping the Aröl-tsang Lama was very impressive. Whenever we arrived at a location, before we had even properly stopped, the Aröl-tsang Lama would begin rubbing the heads of devotees and granting blessings.

Watching the emotions of these people, I began to have a sense of the Aröl-tsang Lama's influence in society and of his personal magnetism. The Aröl-tsang Lama was formally the third incarnation of the lineage based at Rongwo Monastery in Tongren, named Lopzang Lungtok Tenpé Gyeltsen. He was born in Tongren in 1888, and would pass away in 1959. He was a famous patriotic religious figure of Qinghai; after the Liberation he would take the position of the vice-chairman of the provincial Political Consultative Committee, as well as the standing director of the Chinese Buddhist Association. In order to fulfil the wishes of his previous incarnation, the second Aröl-tsang Lama, Lopzang Lungrik Gyatso (1808-1886), in 1923 he traveled to Treltzong Mountain and established Treltzong Monastery. He promoted lecturing, debating, and authorship, and took Buddhist scholarship very seriously. During the time he was the abbot of Treltzong Monastery, every year he would invite famous scholars from Drepung Monastery in Central Tibet, as well as Labrang Monastery in Gannan, and Ta'er [Tb. Kumbum], Rongwo, and Tsanggar Monasteries in Qinghai Province. In this way Treltzong Monastery was made a place of great scholarship, and became famous far and wide.

As we arrived together to Tongren towards the end of April 1950, we passed through the place south of the valley known as Chukhok. Here the Aröl-tsang Lama noticed fields of opium planted along the road, and became very angry. He preached to the crowds come to greet him on the road, 'It used to be that when I returned home, all I could smell was the scent of burning incense in the temples. Now I come back to find no scent of incense, but that instead you've planted these fields of opium!' In a great meeting of the people there, he told them: 'I am very hurt to see all this opium here. The stench of this opium has ascended even to heaven, and all the gods and Buddhas and Bodhisattvas there have become dizzy by the smell and fainted. For this reason all the gods, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas hate opium - please eradicate it at once!'

Meeting Again after a Long-ago Parting

From September 1949 to April 1950, just under the space of one year, heaven and earth had experienced two great revolutions. The dark clouds of the old society still covered us over, but the light of the New China was now rising. In this period of change between two great social systems,

black clouds rolled over, rumors rose from all quarters, all society was in turmoil, with a desolation of soldiers and the chaos of cavalry. That I, who had experienced so many vicissitudes during this year, should at last have returned safely to my home, can be counted as my great luck.

Before I arrived back in Tongren, I had heard that many rumors were being told about my fate there. Some said that I had been killed by the People's Liberation Army, and even claimed to have seen my body and severed head. Others said that Ma Bufang had taken me away to Taiwan, and many other such rumors. The minute I returned home, all of these rumors were dissipated - when my family and the other villagers saw that I had safely returned home, they were overjoyed. My family were so happy that they were all shedding tears, some so overcome with emotion they could not even wail. They told me, 'You've returned safely - it's all thanks to the works of High Heaven, and the protection of the Buddhas and the god Erlang!'

That evening, my mother spent the entire night sitting beside me, staring at me intently with great emotion, at last reunited after a long parting, her feelings extremely high. In the middle of the night I awoke several times, and saw her there seated in a state of great excitement. I told her to sleep, to get some rest, but she said she wasn't tired. For her, to see her son who had so early lost his father's love, and had lately experienced so many adventures, it must have felt as if she had so much to say, but she was so happy that she didn't know from where to start. Today her son had finally returned home unharmed, she could finally relax, and all the worries and rumors of the last year were suddenly swept aside. Accompanying her in guarding my sleeping self was my maternal grandmother, and they sat together there until the sun came up.

My mother asked me if I had experienced any dangers in the outside world, whether I had been forced to fight, whether I had been hungry, whether I had been cold. I narrated to her everything I had experienced on my journeys. I told her of passing the Lunar New Years at Treltzong Monastery. Usually we lay people should offer silk scarves to the monks and lamas, but my teacher had had me sit upon a throne and told the monks to offer silk scarves to me. When my mother heard this story, she was both startled and overjoyed.

During that time, my family's situation was very difficult, and they were completely dependent on my uncle's financial assistance. I thought that always making others pay for me was no way to pass my days, and that I should resolve to improve my family's situation. For this reason, I borrowed ten silver *yuan* from a wealthy man in our village. In those days a single sheep was worth three silver *yuan*, while a yak was worth ten or fifteen. One silver *yuan* could also buy four or five kilos of butter. I used the money I'd borrowed to buy meat, grain, and butter, in order to temporarily alleviate my family's penurious situation. We had irrigation water and about half a hectare of land, but the harvest was always weak, and we never got more than a hundred kilos of grain out of it, which was not enough to eat in a year. Sometimes we would take the sour pears in our orchard and bring them to Rongwo town, where we could exchange them for sheep stew to drink. In those days I didn't dare tell anyone outside our family how poor we were - it really was what they call, 'slapping your own face until the swelling makes you look fat.' Everyone always thought we were rich; they would call me '*pön truke*,' which means in Tibetan, 'Little Official.'

Chapter Two: Setting Out on the Revolutionary Road

This section covers the early Maoist period, between the Communist victory in 1949 and the uprisings and famines of 1958-9. While elsewhere in China during these years former landlords and the upper classes were brutally suppressed and often killed outright in the process of land reform, in Tibetan areas such people were incorporated into the Communist state under the banner of the 'United Front' (Ch. Tongyi zhanxian) policies. 'Feudal' chieftains like Shawa Tsering and the other lamas and noblemen of Tongren were designated 'democratic figures' (Ch. minzhu renshi), and their authority was subsumed into the new administrative structure.⁷⁵ Young, progressive, and invested with traditional authority, a native Tu and Tibetan speaker who was literate in Tibetan and Chinese, Shawa Tsering must have appeared to the Communists as a crucial linguistic and cultural bridge to the complex societies of Tongren. Much of Shawa Tsering's narrative in this period is concerned with various types of propaganda and nation-building efforts, including intensive party training and indoctrination sessions for new cadres like himself, as well as 'ideological work' (Ch. sixiang gongzuo) undertaken by him and others to bring the doubting masses over to the new Communist regime.

A central part of this early-Maoist period 'work,' as it was all across China, was promoting adult literacy and establishing a state school system. Here we see the cadre-bureaucrat Shawa Tsering at his most earnest, credible, and sympathetic, laboring with great determination to bring modern education, or what Sherap Gyatso had called 'cultural knowledge,' to the skeptical Tu and Tibetan people of Tongren. As scholar Janet Upton has noted about such schooling elsewhere in Amdo in the 2000s, while the explicit content of this Communist education promoted identification with the new People's Republic of China, the implicit content was a sort of modernist Tibetan cultural nationalism, emphasizing the need for Tibetan-language literacy and scientific education as a means of unifying and developing the nationality (Tb. mirik, Ch. minzu).⁷⁶ At least according to this narrative, one of Shawa Tsering's proudest achievements was prompting the monk-educator Sherap Gyatso to translate the Chinese national anthem into Tibetan so that it could be sung in these schools.

Benno Weiner points out that CPC 'Historical and Cultural Documents' accounts of ostensibly 'feudal' non-Han leaders who supported the Communists after 1949 have a markedly eschatological tenor, characterized by 'sin' and 'liberation.'⁷⁷ In Shawa Tsering's narration, he 'receives cleansing by two sages' (Ch. shouling liangwei xianxian muyu).⁷⁸ One of these 'sages' has already appeared in the form of Sherap Gyatso, now reborn as a vigorous pro-PRC propagandist. The other is Trashit Wangchuk (1926-2000), a Khampa (East Tibetan) who joined the Communist forces during the Long March, became one of the earliest Tibetans to receive Party membership, and during the 1950s served as the vice-secretary of Qinghai province.⁷⁹ Two other important figures in Shawa Tsering's story are Du Hua'an (1916-2006), a Sichuanese Long March veteran who would become Party secretary and United Front director in Tongren, and Bagyel (1904-1995), a Tibetan chieftain who became an early and officially celebrated Communist supporter on the nomadic grasslands.⁸⁰ Shawa Tsering's narrative journey towards 'liberation' climaxes in his 1956 interview with premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976), a scene that perfectly encapsulates the mixture of cult of personality, religious fervor, patronizing cultural essentialism, Marxist developmentalism, resource-colonialism, and rhetorical CPC assumption of the imperial mantle that characterizes the Chinese Communists and their relationship with Tibet.

Nevertheless, Shawa Tsering's account is not entirely sycophantic. As is typical in such PRC publications, he refers to negative or politically sensitive events obliquely, and criticizes state actions by praising people or policies that he

⁷⁵ For a detailed study of the United Front in Amdo during this period, see Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, esp. 43-160. For a study of a comparable Amdowa principality during the Maoist era, see Sutton and Kang, *Contesting the Yellow Dragon*, 223-76.

⁷⁶ Upton, "The Development of Modern School-Based Tibetan Language Education," 309.

⁷⁷ Weiner, "The Aporia of Re-Remembering," 66.

⁷⁸ 受领两位先贤沐浴. *Xiayu Cailang*, Bazong qianhu cangsang, 85.

⁷⁹ Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 200.

⁸⁰ Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 71; Qing Yang, "A Battle-Tested Democratic Figure."

feels resolved such problems. We know from other sources that multiple anti-Communist rebellions were active in mountains around Tongren during this period, involving Tibetans, Mongols, Turkic-speaking Salars, and Chinese Muslims. While the PRC attempted to negotiate the surrender of these forces under the banner of the 'United Front' policies, major military operations in the area continued until the spring of 1953, and more violence would follow later in the decade.⁸¹ This forms the background to Shawa Tsering's careful statements that Huangnan Prefecture was seen as a 'Little Taiwan,' or that he had to return early from study in Lanzhou for fear of 'unpredictable consequences' arising from Tongren people's mistrust of the Communists.

Taken in context, Shawa Tsering's most trenchant critique concerns the value of the United Front policies, and the Party's disastrous mistake in abandoning them after 1958. He couches his criticism in the politically 'safe' context of the national "unified purchase and sale" (Ch. tonggou tongxiao) policies put into place in 1953, in which agricultural communities were expected to sell grain to the state at artificially low prices.⁸² Shawa Tsering describes how he worked to explain these policies to the headmen of the Four Forts, the settlements under the Wang Family Commanders' traditional control, ultimately convincing them to willingly give up their grain. The implied critique is of the heavy-handed tactics employed elsewhere; ultimately such repressive attempts at collectivization and grain requisition, as well as the abandonment of the CPC's conciliatory United Front alliance with traditional leaders such as Shawa Tsering, would lead to the catastrophic uprisings and famines of 1958-62.

I Participate in Government-Building Work

In January 1950, the Qinghai Province People's Government was established, and in May of that year the old Red Army soldier and the first Tongren County Committee chairman, Du Hua'an, together with the Vice-Chairman Li Deyuan and a body of soldiers arrived in the valley to establish a new government. One day the Rongwo Nangso Trashhi Namgyel sent someone to find me. After he'd arrived in my home, he said: 'Cadres from the Communist Party have already arrived in Tongren. I went to pay them a visit, and they were not such bad people. I'll take you to meet them today, so you can get to know each other.' We rode on horseback together to Rongwo town, arriving at what had originally been the house of the merchant firm Dexinghai, where they were staying in the merchants' courtyard.

At the first meeting, Chairman Du warmly shook my hand, after which Trashhi Namgyel explained my story. Chairman Du told me many things about revolutionary ideals and the domestic situation. He was very serious, but with a very peaceful air about him. All the time I was thinking, Ma Bufang said that the Communists would kill people without blinking an eye, how evil they were and so on, and yet Chairman Du speaks so politely and honestly. Perhaps it's just that they've sent a particularly good individual? At last Chairman Du said, 'The Tongren area will need to erect a Tongren County People's Government. Now we are actively making preparations, and although you are young, you've received some education, and you "have culture." Therefore, you will be put in charge of education in Tongren. After the Tongren County People's Government is properly set up, you will be responsible for education and sanitation in the county.' After he'd got done speaking of important affairs, he graciously invited Trashhi Namgyel and I to eat lunch, along with Li Deyuan and others. Although we just ate stew and steamed buns, in my memory this meal was wonderfully delicious, and even today I remember it as if it had just happened.

Chairman Du's words at this time gave me great comfort and encouragement. Previously I'd felt that I hadn't finished school, that our family's economic situation was dire. My heart felt empty,

⁸¹ Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 43-65.

⁸² For the 'unified purchase and sale,' see Wemheuer, *A Social History*, 103-6, and Shue, *Peasant China in Transition*, 214-26. For peasant resistance to these policies, see Li Huaiyin, "The First Encounter."

and I didn't know how we'd manage to get through the years to come. But after the conversation with Chairman Du, I felt much more secure. Today when I think back, this was my first step on the revolutionary road, and Chairman Du was my guide on the path. After this, I considered myself a member of the People's Government.

Not long after this conversation, we began busy preparatory work. In those days we would have many meetings, seemingly every day, and sometimes the meetings would last two or three days. By then the war to 'Resist America and Assist Korea' [i.e., the Korean War] had broken out, and our main work consisted of propaganda against America and for Korea, encouraging all types of people to donate money and goods to the war effort. In those days many affairs of government had been neglected and were awaiting our efforts, and we were extraordinarily busy, taken up all day with surveys and research, interviewing the masses, solving various issues, writing reports, such that we had almost no time to rest. But I still feel that in that period of my life I was most full of energy, my spirit for work the highest, my thoughts most lively, and my mood most excited. I regret only that my life has not contained more such periods.

I Receive Cleansing by Two Sages

In the year 1950, in order to assist all areas in erecting People's Governments, to protect the social order, to make propaganda in the 'Resist America and Assist Korea' effort, to guide all nationalities to peaceful and happy livelihood and production, and to create a new home, the provincial leadership sent down large groups of soldier-cadres to all areas. At the same time, they also sent large numbers of minority-nationality cadres and upper-level individuals to salute and express sympathy with those so mobilized. Of the ones who were sent to Tongren, the Lama Sherap Gyatso and comrade Trashi Wangchuk left the deepest impression on me, and their teaching had a great effect on my development. Not long after Du Hua'an and Li Deyuan arrived in Tongren, Lama Sherap Gyatso, who was at the time the vice-provincial head of Qinghai Province, made a visit to Tongren. When his car reached the banks of the Yellow River at Xunhua there was no longer any motor road, so it was necessary for us Tongren people to carry the Shar-tsang Lama's palanquin down to the ford on the Yellow River to meet him. Because I had known Sherap Gyatso for a time at Trel dzong, I also went together with them to meet him. When he arrived at Rongwo he stayed in Rongwo Monastery. There he asked me, 'What are you doing these days?'

I told him, 'I'm involved with revolutionary work, we're now in preparation to erect the People's Government of Tongren County.'

He said, 'You never finished school! You haven't read much, and you're still a child. And you're doing what work?' He was always very direct and honest in his words.

After Lama Sherap Gyatso arrived in Tongren, he began very intense propaganda work. Soon he called a great meeting, which took place in the square in front of the main scripture hall of Rongwo Monastery. He set up a great throne, and sat on it giving lectures for the entire morning. Over twenty thousand cadres, monks, and lay people arrived to listen to his speech, a meeting the like of which had never been seen in Tongren, before or after. The main content of his speech was 'Resisting America and Assisting Korea,' but he also spoke about some particular recent cases of local people spreading rumors to make trouble, and how these rumors could be refuted and avoided. He said that the Communist Party and the Eighth Route Army had completely defeated Chiang Kai-shek's eight-million strong army. The stragglers and remnants who might remain were nothing but dew upon the grass or a mist on the earth, unable to do the slightest harm to the Communist Party or the People's Government!

He further said: 'General Peng Dehuai invited me to Xi'an, and asked me, why did you run away when our troops arrived? I told Peng Dehuai that I'd heard that the Communist Party would destroy the Dharma and annihilate the Buddhist Teachings. We wouldn't be allowed to read our scriptures, and for this reason I fled to a monastery to pray. If I hadn't run and you had killed me, what then? Peng Dehuai patted me on the shoulder and told me to relax, the Communist Party will always keep to the policy of freedom of religious belief. When I heard this, I was greatly overjoyed. I believe that we can't go wrong by following the Communist Party, and I resolved to return in order to propagandize their policies. Only by protecting the Communist Party, by loving our fatherland, by opposing imperialism, can we live out our years happily! I hope everybody will listen to what the Communist Party has to say - the Communist Party cannot be escaped, nor can it be driven out. If the Communist Party was not good, would I have come here to propagandize their policies and work for them in front of everyone?'

After the great assembly, Lama Sherap Gyatso held separate lecture sessions with all levels of society, and via these large and small meetings, deeply implemented the very important propaganda programs of 'Resist America and Assist Korea' and 'Protect our Home, Defend our Country.' During that time, the public security situation of Tongren was not good. The provincial government had criticized us, calling Tongren a 'Little Taiwan.' Lama Sherap Gyatso used these large and small lecture meetings to speak with the important people of the valley, reiterating and explaining the central government's policies. He patiently worked with all levels of society, cautioning everyone to carry out the commands of the People's Government, strengthen our faith in socialism, protect the social order, strive to develop production, and generally made a great contribution to the peace and unity of Tongren. The common people all said: 'Lama Sherap Gyatso wouldn't say such things if there wasn't a certain amount of truth in them. He is a man of learning, and his words should be believed. From today onwards, we firmly resolve to follow the Communist Party.'

In those days one of our important tasks was opposing the anti-Communist elements in Gansu and Qinghai. When I discovered that an anti-Communist saboteur from another area had gone to hiding in our village Nyentok, I immediately reported it to Chairman Du. This counter-revolutionary agent thus fell into the net of the law.

Not a few days after Lama Sherap Gyatso arrived, Trashi Wangchuk, the old Red Army soldier and vice-secretary of the Provincial Committee, also arrived in Tongren to inspect our work. One day when I was visiting Secretary Du, he told me that an old Red Army soldier had arrived from the provincial headquarters, a cadre from the Long March, a Tibetan comrade of great abilities. Secretary Du brought me in to meet comrade Trashi Wangchuk. When we arrived, Trashi Wangchuk was sitting by the stove, reading documents. Secretary Du gave him an introduction to my situation, and he stood up and warmly shook my hand as if he'd known me for years. Trashi Wangchuk said to me happily, 'It's good that you've come. I was just thinking to go find you.'

He explained: 'Today among the people there are bad characters spreading rumors to make trouble, and we must be careful that "all beneath Heaven" does not fall into chaos. You need to stand firm!' He further lectured to me about the provincial and national situation, explaining that most parts of the country were now liberated, and most places now had functioning county-level and higher governments; the situation was generally very good. Chiang Kai-shek hoped to use America to invade Korea as a stratagem to attack Mainland China, but it was simply a daydream that he could defeat the Communist Party in this way. First, we had no need to fear, and second, we should resolutely struggle against open and hidden counter-revolutionary saboteurs, and in particular finish off such people who were located in Gansu and Qinghai provinces.

After we finished talking about work, Trashhi Wangchuk asked me about my birth year, my family's situation, as well as whether or not I had married. I told him that I was engaged, although not yet married, to the younger sister of the Rongwo Nangso Trashhi Namgyel. Trashhi Wangchuk told me, 'Don't forget to tell me when you get married! I will be the host at your wedding and do it well - it's a post-liberation wedding, and thus you'll have to do it in the new style.' Listening to him speak, I felt very joyful. He was not only talking about work matters with me, but he was also paying attention to my marriage, so personally important to me - I felt extremely moved.

Trashhi Wangchuk and Sherap Gyatso were close friends with each other. They did their work hand-in-hand, with very good cooperation. One of the two was an old Red Army soldier, who spent his time speaking about the glorious traditions of the Party, telling tales of the revolutionary history of Communist Party members and their lives of struggle. He told us about the reactionary controlling classes, and their cruel oppression and ethnic prejudice, as well as the advantages of the socialist system, so that the people of all nationalities would be masters of their own homelands, which was very moving to everyone. The other of the two was a great Buddhist Lama, who spoke about the Party's policies of freedom of religious belief, about compassion, about the kind and beneficent moral teachings of Buddhism. He also spoke of patriotism and love for Buddhism, and the consistency of harmony between nationalities. Sherap Gyatso would emphasize: when religion and the laws of the country are in conflict, we must follow the law, and prioritize the benefit of the country. In that era, he really performed an irreplaceable service in dispelling doubts and illuminating the masses. Under their tutelage and the hard work of those involved in erecting the government, they were able not only to stabilize the social situation in Tongren, but great numbers of people were moved to donate money for the 'Resist America and Assist Korea' effort. For instance, the headman of Gyelwo Village donated a hundred sheep, while the Shar-tsang Lama and Trashhi Namgyel both gave a great amount of silver, taking the lead for the Tongren common people and those of all nationalities and social statuses.

I Become a Married Householder

I was married on the fifteenth day of the twelfth lunar month of the year 1950, amidst shouts of congratulations from my friends and relatives. According to the custom of the times, I had an arranged marriage between two people of equal social rank, with the couple's parents in-charge. When I was eight years old (the winter of 1941), my maternal grandfather had me betrothed. The bride-to-be was from the Rongwo Nangso family, the power-holders in Tongren, the controller of the twelve tribes of Tongren, and greatest headmen of our area. The bride's father was called Sanggyé Bum, the former Nangso headman. At the time that she was betrothed, the bride's elder brother Jikmé was the Nangso. Our family had the hereditary position of the Tu Commanders and thousand-household heads, court officials who had kept their government robes and caps already for many dynasties. Although in the times of my father and grandfather we had suffered disasters, and our fortunes were in decline, nevertheless in the eyes of everyone around us we still retained the reputation of a great family.

I remember that the ceremony of the betrothal was very grand. The headmen of the Four Forts all came, and each of the Forts sent a few well-respected elders, in total over thirty people. Everyone first ate breakfast at our house. Then they all set out gravely for the Nangso's residence for the formal betrothal, some riding horses, others riding mules, bearing silver and silk clothes of many colors as gifts. According to the custom, I did not ride with them. That afternoon when they returned, they were very happy, beaming with joy - I knew that the betrothal had been successful.

Although the actual marriage took place after the liberation, and yet it clearly bore the mark of feudal society. In people's understanding, it in fact became the political marriage of the great headmen of Rongwo Nangso and the Commander of Nyentok Village, and the alignment of the political power of these two houses. After my maternal grandfather passed away, a number of our family's affairs were in fact managed by the Nangso. After the betrothal, I frequently went to their house. They treated me very kindly. The Nangso had a little stove in his house, and he would often invite me to eat with him there. He also frequently stayed in the Nangso's mansion at Rongwo Monastery, and they invited me there sometimes to enjoy myself.

My father-in-law Sanggyé Bum had two wives. The senior wife had only given birth to one son, while the junior wife had three boy children and four girls; the later Nangso Trashi Namgyel was one of these. Thus my wife was the youngest of seven brothers and sisters.

The fifteenth day of the twelfth lunar month was in those days considered an extremely auspicious date. After that day had been chosen for my wedding, we sent a man to Xiahe and Linxia in Gansu, who spent over two hundred silver dollars to buy coral necklaces, earrings, silks, and other gifts. What's more, for the bride we had made a new skirt and robe from good lambskins, and lined each item of clothing with otter fur. On the night of the fourteenth, myself and a few other youths went to my father-in-law's in order to receive the bride-to-be. The town of Rongwo was then just a big village, but on the next morning, a great number of people came out to see the bride off. There were thirty people in a procession of riders, as well as thirty more women carrying fired loaves of bread, everybody magnificently dressed, a really splendid sight. From Nyentok village came about a hundred people to welcome the bride to our door. Everyone was singing welcoming songs like, 'The New Bride Comes Riding a Bright Star, and a Ten Million Stars Come to Meet Her,' and others of that sort. At the door to our courtyard we laid out a red carpet. We set off fireworks, burned incense offerings, had scriptures read by monks, bowed down to the ground, and made other ceremonies, and with this we began the great wedding banquet for the new couple.

On the day that I was married, the people's political consultative conference chairman Trashi Wangchuk had an engagement and was not able to attend as he'd promised, but he specially sent his secretary and security officer to send me a gift of a brocade placard, as well as silk scarves, tea, and other gifts. The brocade placard had four characters written on it, signed with the name 'Trashi Wangchuk' at the bottom. The characters were written on golden silk with red brocaded borders, eight feet long, and extremely beautiful. The secretary of the county committee of Tongren Du Hua'an, as well as the vice-secretary Li Deyuan and others all sent me similar plaques. These were rectangular, with characters written on red silk boarded by green brocade; they also sent me tea and other gifts. Gyelwo Pönpo Dorjé, the great Shar-tsang lama of Rongwo Monastery, as well as the great Rongwo administrator Gelek Gyatso all sent gifts. My relatives in the villages, as well as the leaders of the Four Fortresses all came one by one to offer their congratulations.

At the time, my wedding was considered a very grand affair, very stylish, and was a great public sensation, a piece of news that everyone was talking about on the streets. At the time, I felt very satisfied and lucky. Truly it was as the poem, 'In previous years I had not enough happiness, but this morning my heart has no bounds / The spring wind achieves its aim, and the horses' hooves are quick - in one morning I have seen all the flowers of Chang'an.' That the marriage could be conducted in such a splendid manner was all thanks to my uncle, so like a father to me - to achieve this he'd put in not a little labor. Because both families attached great importance to this marriage, and were very satisfied by the outcome, we really felt afterwards that we had united to form one family. My father-in-law especially quite liked me. On the third day after the marriage he gave me a very important gift - a handgun. He sent me back to Nyentok village with it accompanied by a few tough young men.

As for my new wife, in my memory she was not especially beautiful, or at least she would not stand out, but within her there was goodness and loyalty, and we loved and cared for each other, gave birth to children and raised them up, and for a few years we walked together in the spring of life. Sadly though, 'Old Man Heaven' was not to give us a marriage that would last 'as long as heaven and earth.' She would cruelly depart from this world in the midst of that 'man-made disaster' of which we all know. This is an affair that has made me agonized and ashamed and which I have never been able to forget.

I Become the Head of the Educational Affairs Section of Tongren County

In August 1949, the old head of Tongren County Tsering Gyel had traveled to Xunhua to surrender to the People's Liberation Army. The Xining City Military Control Commission deputized him as the temporary county head, at the same time deputizing the Rongwo administrator Gelek Gyatso, the Nangso Trashhi Namgyel, and Dorjé the thousand-household head of Gyelwo as counselors. In December of the same year, Tsering Gyel was removed from office, and the Qinghai Province Military Administrative Commission confirmed Trashhi Namgyel as the deputy county head, with Dorjé as his deputy vice county head. At the same time they established a few administrative offices and five sub-county district governments. The third district government was established in Nyentok Village. The district head was Zhao Zihua, while the secretary was Li Quanguai, and they employed eight other people.

Because of the reactionary propaganda of Ma Bufang, the masses were very afraid of the Communist Party cadres. When they were sent out into the villages the people were unwilling to accept them, and they found it difficult to find food or accommodation. I invited them into my house, and set them up to stay on the second floor there, as well as assisting them in beginning their work. My initiative set a good example for the broader masses, and received praise from the county government. I was soon made head of the Educational Affairs Bureau of Tongren County, paired with a Han vice-head named Zhang Xingxu who had been sent out for this purpose. He was very highly educated, and we had a good relationship, with him providing great help to my work.

Before the Liberation, education in the Tibetan regions was conducted mainly through monasteries. Thus when I became head of the Educational Affairs Section, in all of Tongren County there were only two schools, one elementary school located in Rongwo town and another at Bao'an. Because of the influence of the old society, the Tibetan people were extremely resistant to the idea of creating schools, believing that the minute their children stepped into the school, they would become Han Chinese. Thus they would belong to Ma Bufang and be conscripted into his army and taken away. For this reason the common people would choose paying fines over sending their children to school. This influence made it very difficult for us to erect a school system, but we had to establish one no matter what the opposition, the county committee and government were very resolute on this. I myself had great faith in the program of building schools.

After thorough research, we decided first to establish four schools at the centers of government for those four of the five sub-county areas that were in agricultural areas. In this way we could set a standard, and gain practical experience. Erecting schools necessitated a base-level of material resources, but where would the money for these schools come from? Where would we get principals and teachers? Where would we get students? This was just after the Liberation. The whole county government was in very difficult financial straits, and there was no possibility of them suddenly finding enough money to build schools. Trashhi Namgyel and the other headmen were able to give

some money, but it was still ‘a cockleshell on the open sea,’ very far from being enough for our practical needs.

After racking my brains, I went to the Shar-tsang Lama and reported to him our difficulties in building schools, in order to test his attitude towards erecting a school system. I told him, ‘Now the government has ordered us to erect schools, but is this really a good idea?’

The Shar-tsang Lama told me, ‘Building schools is good. Children must study cultural knowledge - only learning Buddhist scriptures won't do.’ Afterwards he did some work among the headmen and common people of Tongren, ordering everyone to fully support the school project. Through this work of his, social opposition to the schools lessened, and many people began to support it.

At the beginning we had a shortage of classrooms, so we used *mani-khang* shrines in villages for this purpose. Many of these temples had no benches, so students would sit on the floor during class. Some villages piled up stones to make tables for the students to write on. We required each village to send ten students; because many of the boys had been sent to the monasteries, mostly we received girls. The teachers were mainly defrocked monks or *benbenzi* [Nyingma-sect lay-practitioners] who had never gone into the monastery to begin with. They were able to teach Tibetan letters and simple math. In each village, we chose one woman with good thinking and experience with children, who would cook for the children in the school and take care of them. In those days it was fairly common to use financial rewards to lure children into the school - according to reports, many students were encouraged into school with money gathered from the village. The village would promise that any family that sent children into the school would be exempt from any local financial or labor levies. Instead, these costs and duties would be distributed around the rest of the village.

We were particularly short on music teachers. I specially went to the provincial government to ask Sherap Gyatso to translate the National Anthem into Tibetan in order that it could be brought back to Tongren. I used our winter break to teach all the schoolteachers to sing it, and then they taught it to all the students in the village schools. In those days I very much liked singing the National Anthem - after the lyrics were translated, I explained to all the teachers the meaning of the words, and they explained this meaning to the students, and in this way they were all able to function as elementary school music teachers.

There was a man named Zhang Zhen from Bao'an, who had served in the pre-Liberation army. He was well-educated, and spoke good Tibetan. He would frequently interpret for us, and served as the Education Affairs Bureau document clerk and accountant. We had a very good relationship with him, and we frequently used our free time in the evenings to practice written and spoken Chinese with him, asking him to explain places in our teaching texts which we were unable to understand. Through him my Chinese level made some improvement, and when documents arrived from above I was usually able to understand them.

In 1953, the provincial government established a Youth Congress and a Qinghai Province Youth League. I was chosen to be the director of the Youth League, and attended the Youth Congress as a representative of Tongren. At the Congress meeting, I got to know the provincial Nationalities University principal Dorjé Gyeltsen, as well as the Provincial Nationalities Song-and-Dance Troupe leader and director Sönam Rinchen. They both had great abilities in Tibetan and Chinese; I admired them. I frequently sat next to them there, and learned much from them. In those days I was very interested to study, and never felt embarrassed to ask anything. Later on our Huangnan Prefecture opened its own Youth Congress, and by vote established a Huangnan Youth League, in which I was elected standing director. My faith in our work and in the education projects had only increased.

The county had resolved that a Central Tibetan Elementary School would be established in Rongwo town. In order to complete the basic work of erecting the school, I led Bandé Khar, the

headman of Nyalung, plus Du Xuzhong, a cadre in our department, as well as two hundred workers up into the Changlung forest area to fell wood for the school. We then rafted the timber down the Gu River to Rongwo town. After a year of busy work, we finally erected the first all-levels school in Tongren County. After this Central Elementary School was finished, we selected bright students from all of the four school areas and implemented a formal boarding school. The students both ate and slept at the school, as well as the teachers, cooks, and the principal. After this all the major villages in the county erected village-level elementary schools, in total thirty such schools. The county in total had more than 1400 students and over forty teachers, with nearly sixty percent of school-aged children enrolled. The experience of Tongren in building a school system was an encouragement to the entire province, and we became recognized as a county with an advanced education system.

Over the whole process of building this school system, we had worked according to the directives of the Central Government. In Han Chinese areas, the government had instituted rapid literacy classes and illiteracy-elimination programs. In the Tibetan areas, our winter school sessions were mostly illiteracy-elimination. During the periods of agricultural work, we would hold these in the evenings, while in the slack periods we would have them during the day. I would frequently go down into the villages to 'catch' villagers for the illiteracy-elimination sessions. We would put on a lantern-slide show called, 'The Story of the Old Woman who Studied Culture.' The story was about an old household woman who would study by writing Chinese characters in the dirt as she cooked, and would also study while she rested from working in the fields. I would explain the story of the lantern-slide show in Tibetan, until everyone in Tongren knew it. The show had very good propaganda results, and received commendation from the provincial government. We also made some theatrical performances and toured them in the villages. After the performances there would always be some groups, either from among the lay masses or from the monasteries, who would bring out some money to donate to our education efforts - these funds were used to pay for pens and notebooks. This type of efforts made our county-level illiteracy-elimination project very colorful and effective. In the whole project of building schools, the Tibetan, Han, and Tu cadres all cooperated very well, causing me to experience for myself the truth of the maxim that none of us could do without the other.

In the summer of 1952, the organization sent me to establish schools in the lands of the Hor Tribe of Zeku (in those days Zeku was under the administration of Tongren County). Because the government had no horses, I rode my own horse, piled up with baggage. Accompanied by the Han cadre Wang Jun and my fourth maternal uncle Tengyel, we set off together for Hor. From Tongren to Hor is over a hundred kilometers, a journey of three days. Just as we arrived there we came upon the Hor headman Bagyel and the Hor Monastery's lama Lhagyel at assembly in the monastery, and so we reported to them the orders to establish a school here. Bagyel very much supported the idea. He told me, 'You're a young leader from Tongren. In the old society, such a person would have never come up to our lands. Now you've come here to build schools, and I welcome you.' He made many such very polite speeches to us. I thought - as long as he's happy, we'll have an easy time building schools.

It was our luck that all the great and small chiefs of Zeku were at the assembly, and we were able to gather some concrete information on them. We decided to follow the model of the schools we had set up in the agricultural areas, recruiting two teachers from among the lesser *benbenzi*, and borrow an empty room in the monastery for a classroom. We chose over twenty young boys from the nomad families nearby the monastery, some of whom were already seventeen or eighteen years old. After a few busy days of such work we had successfully established an elementary school at Hor. I distributed the textbooks and notebooks we had brought up to the students and they began to hold classes. I also taught them to sing the national anthem. The lama Lhagyel sang with them - the tones he usually used to chant scriptures sounded quite good singing the anthem. He was quite interested in the school

project. He took up the part-time post of the principal, while the headman Bagyel took fuller responsibility for solving any problems that arose at the school.

We spent nearly two months at Hor, until the school there was fully established. On that vast grassland we broke the virgin wilderness to build that school, and raised for the first time the five-star red flag of the People's Republic of China, and sang for the first time the Tibetan version of the national anthem. Seeing this, my heart was truly filled with an inexpressible joy. In the autumn of that year, we returned to Tongren. When we were about to go, the headman Bagyel gifted us with large amounts of yak meat, mutton, and butter. The establishment of the elementary school at Hor was a good start at establishing schools in the herding areas, and we gained precious experience from it. It also helped dissipate the worries of those who were unwilling or afraid of building schools, once they had seen the benefits of having children study cultural knowledge.

At the same time as we were using all our strength to open schools, I was also actively assisting relevant departments to train cadres. In 1954, the Organizational Department of the Prefectural Committee began organizing a cadre training class for new cadres working in Tongren, Zeku, Chentsa, and the prefectural organizations. The topic to be studied was Party policy and contemporary politics, to be taught mainly by those comrades in charge of each work unit. Myself and the prefectural Women's Federation director Drölma Tso were jointly in charge of translation and mentoring.

At that time, there were some Tibetan cadres whose lifestyle was quite free and dissolute, and who lacked organizational discipline. Some of them engaged in improper relations between the sexes in the evenings, and then slept through their classes during the day. We engaged in strict criticism and teaching towards them, and helped them reform their mistakes and bad habits. We also cared for their life needs, frequently asking after their situations, sometimes getting up two or three times at night to see those who were sick to the hospital. Through this teaching, the unwholesome habits of these people were reformed, and they experienced a certain degree of ideological awakening.

Just at the time that this training session was going on, the first draft of the constitution of the People's Republic of China was promulgated, and so we made the study of this constitution the central task of our students' training. At the time there was no Tibetan version, and so we translated it and explained it orally, and asked the Han cadres to explain those parts where we couldn't understand the meaning. We used both Chinese and Tibetan to draw up a synopsis for propaganda lectures. First, we gave this to the student cadres, and then after studying it for half a month, they became the backbone of lectures given in villages and hamlets. In those days our level of spoken and written Chinese was not high, and there were many parts of the constitution which we didn't understand well. Thus I frequently consulted the Han cadre Jiang Kunsheng who was teaching one of the classes. Especially on issues related to the 'nationalities question,' I often asked for his instruction, and derived great benefit from it.

Because I was very willing to shoulder work responsibility, and because I frequently prepared classes deep into the night, I was praised by our organization. We held these training classes for two sessions, and in total over two hundred people were able to attend them. Through this training, everyone experienced a certain degree of ideological awakening. We took the first steps in understanding Party policies and organizational structures, and we learned why we needed to attend revolutionary work activities, and what the primary tasks of a cadre were. Later on, many of these comrades became the backbone of our prefecture's minority-nationality cadre teams, and not a few of them became township heads, township Party secretaries, county heads, or secretaries of county Party committees.

Studying at the Northwestern Institute for Nationalities

In the spring of 1953, the organization sent me to the Northwestern Institute for Nationalities in Lanzhou for advanced study. Also sent from Tongren to study along with me were the lama of Tsenmo Dzungkar Monastery named Jikmé Sherap, the thousand-household head of Mepa named Nyingkar Gyel, Pönpo Tsenden of Wutun (who would later become the head of the third sub-county district), the headman of Gönshül named Chöpel, and the headman of the 'earthen houses' at Dowa named Shawo Tar. Altogether from Qinghai province there were over a hundred of us. Each of the five provinces of the northwest formed a brigade of students, and we became one of these, in which I took the responsibility of being the brigade-head.

In those days the conditions at the school were difficult. The rooms were very old and small, and there were not enough classrooms to go around, and so on sunny days we held class in the courtyard, and took turns using the big event-hall. Two interpreters alternated orally translating the course content. The entire institute had three or four thousand students, and each class had a different course content. We principally studied politics, Party history, the Opium Wars, the Northern Expedition, the Long March of the Red Army, the War against Japan, and the War of Liberation. We had no textbooks, all of it was oral lectures, and we took notes as we listened. There was one old comrade from Ledu County who was already over fifty, and he had no education, and did not know a single written character. When I saw that he was also taking notes, I was curious to see how he did so. In his notebook he was drawing sickles, axe-heads, spear points, as well as some crosses and lines - only he could understand his own notes, nobody else could make sense of them. And yet he studied with great success, and remembered all of it.

During the time I was studying at the Nationalities Institute, Wang Feng, who was a secretary of the Gansu Province Standing Committee, and jointly the principal of the Nationalities Institute, as well as the director of the Northwestern Department Nationalities Committee, came from Xi'an to Lanzhou specially to resolve the pasture disputes in Qinghai and Gansu provinces. Historically, the people of Gengya in Xiahe county of Gansu province and the Gyelwo tribe of Tongren County in Qinghai province had feuded over pastures. This had resulted in many incidents, including the deaths of not a few people. The two sides had opposed each other for many years, and their mutual hatred was strong. In order to strengthen the unity of the nationalities, Wang Feng specially travelled up there to resolve this. After the resolution, he came to the Nationalities Institute and called a great assembly of the teachers and students to strengthen the battlefield position of the minority cadres. All of us were to resolutely put away our divisions, strengthen our unity, study hard, and become excellent students, in order to make an active contribution to the building of the Great Northwest. His speech was 'as water pouring down from a high gable,' and gave great encouragement to the students.

After about seven months studying at the Northwestern Institute for Nationalities, we were to graduate. I had worked with great diligence, delving deeply into the study problems, and had got a great amount of knowledge out of it, understood many principles, and my thinking had matured greatly. Around this time, the institute leaders came to speak with me, and asked me to stay at the institute to continue my studies. When I heard this, I was extremely pleased, and agreed to stay, so that I could 'return to the womb and exchange my bones' and be thoroughly reformed, and thus become an entirely new person. But my classmates would not agree, since they felt that we had come to study together, and that we should return together, otherwise they wouldn't know what to say to people at home. It was also the case that in society some people still did not trust the Communist Party, and if I were to not return from Lanzhou, it might have unpredictable consequences. Thus in the end I did return to Tongren.

Those seven or eight months of study in Lanzhou had a very great influence on my life, and were a turning point for me. They had an especially great influence on reforming my ideas about feudal privileges, and strengthening my resolve to walk the road of socialism with the Communist Party. From that point onward, I proactively gave up those feudal privileges that my family had retained from long ago. For example, every household in Nyentok was required to give our household one *sheng* of barley each year, which was called *trelné* or 'tribute-grain.' When villagers got married, they were also required to give our household presents, for instance a *kbatak* silk scarf, or a bottle of alcohol, or a *tsangra* (mutton loin), or seven steamed dumplings. The grass growing at the borders and corners of the fields was first harvested by our family, and only afterwards were other families allowed to cut it. Our family's livestock was allowed to graze the edges of the fields after harvest, and other families' livestock were not allowed to enter the fields. During the harvest time, our family's barley was gathered first, and others' afterwards. When our monastery welcomed a high lama, I was allowed to ride into the lama's courtyard, but no others had this privilege. Every year when Rongwo monastery held its great Mönlam Prayer Festival, I was allowed to ride into the monastery wearing a sword, while none others were allowed to do so in the vicinity of the monastery. When Nyentok monastery held ceremonies in the first month of the year, I would wear the official's cap and robe gifted to my ancestors by the imperial court, and walk in front of the lama leading the way. We had received all these traditional privileges because we were customary officials appointed by the court.

After I had acted of my own volition to do away with these feudal privileges, my close friends all opposed it, saying: 'If you cancel these customs which are left from your forerunners of old, what power be left to you?'

I told them, 'Revolution! Revolution means to sweep away all these privileges. We must do things according to the directives of Chairman Mao and the policies of the Communist Party. Now we live in the new society of socialism, not the old society of feudalism, and we are all equal and the same. None of us have special privileges, and there is no differentiation between high and low, rich and poor.'

Some people just couldn't understand it – they even suspected that I'd [secretly] joined the Party. Other people even asked me, 'If the Communist Party collapses, will you go with the Communist Party then?'

I would tell them: 'The Communist Party is truly working for the benefit and happiness of the masses. It will never collapse. I'm not afraid to "eat any bitterness" for the Communist Party!'

In those days many of my friends did not understand me, and some of them were quite against me. But still I listened to the Party's leadership, worked hard to reform my own worldview, and resolved to do away with a variety of bad habits. Among the masses this caused quite a response, and in the end it won people's praise and approval. For this reason, I deeply learned from experience why in those days the Party and government so valued the work of the United Front. This was without a doubt completely correct, as decided by the historical circumstances of those times. By working on the upper level of people, they could induce the great body of the masses to follow, and in this way across an entire region they could quickly open up the situation and get work done.

Our experience learning to requisition grain from the Forts are a typical example of this. In the autumn of 1953, myself and comrade officers Lü Shu and Yang Yaozu went to requisition public grain from the Four Forts. In those days, public grain was levied according to the size of the fields, which had been assessed previously. One *sheng* of grain (roughly 7.5 *jin* / 3.75 kilograms) was levied from one *mu* of land (1/16th hectare). We began at Gomar and Kasar villages, where things went smoothly, but when we got to Wutun we met with trouble, with everyone giving us different excuses not to hand over the grain. Liberation had just occurred, and the ideological awakening of the people was not very high, and there was relatively high resistance to any sort of program of work. The

headmen especially had complex feelings on these matters. Thus to work with the masses we had first to work on the headmen, and once we had success the headmen, most of the masses would follow them. We did careful research, and then once again explained the policies to the headmen, and undertook patient propaganda work and teaching. Once we had done this work with the headmen, under their leadership, we were able to smoothly complete our grain requisition tasks. Our outstanding success in this task was due to the way we had amply implemented the United Front policies. For this reason, I believe that the United Front is not only one of the 'Three Jewels' of our past initiatives, but is an important experience for doing any sort of work in minority nationality areas today.

An Interview with Premier Zhou Enlai

One day in April 1956, as I was attending the representative committee of Huangnan Prefecture, a telegram was suddenly received from the provincial capital, asking me to go to Beijing to attend the second national Nationalities Educational Work Conference. Five people would represent Qinghai in this conference, led by Director Feng of the provincial bureau of education. Other comrades who worked in education from minority-nationality areas in Central Tibet, Xikang, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia would also be attending.

We stayed in Beijing's Orient Hotel and the conference lasted for twenty-five days. Usually we had meetings in the morning, and went out sight-seeing in the afternoons. We visited the Forbidden City, Beihai Park, Coal-Hill Garden, the Great Wall at Badaling, the market at Wangfujing, as well as factories, schools, etc. During the conference I made an exemplary statement on the educational development situation of the minority nationality regions on the distant borders, and together with the conference representatives received applause many times. During the conference period, we also met with experts on the nationalities question from the Soviet Union, and we held several events to welcome them.

At one point during the conference, at midday someone came to notify us that we should put on our minority-nationality costumes and at two-thirty o'clock be at Beijing Hotel to attend an important event. One of the young ladies who worked at the hotel told us with great enthusiasm that from her experience, it was probable that the central leadership would want to meet us, and that we should be sure to wear our nationality costumes. That afternoon after three o'clock, we were let into a great event-hall at Beijing Hotel. About an hour later, Director Yang of the Bureau of Education told us that originally Chairman Mao had intended to meet us, but he had gone to Qingdao, and so today premier Zhou Enlai would meet us instead. Because there were too many people for him to shake their hands one by one, he would only shake the hands of a few. I had the honor of being selected as one of the four representatives whose hand he would shake, and so I was placed in the front row.

After ten minutes or so, everyone suddenly stood up: 'The premier is here! The premier is here!' The premier had a very lively countenance, and was wearing a cloth suit. He extended his hand and asked where I was from, and whether I was from the provincial capital or the counties, and how many people lived there. I told him that I was from Tongren in Qinghai, and that our entire county had 40,000 people. He said, '*Aya!* That means your school enrollment has reached sixty percent, how excellent!' As he spoke he vigorously shook my hand, telling me, 'Historically, your Tibetan emperor Songtsen Gampo was even more capable than the Han Chinese.' He also told me that over the ages we Tibetans had defied the emperors, but that the emperors also deserved some credit, for they ushered in the tides of history that had united China. This was certainly a step forward, and thus we should have a twofold view of the emperors. He also told me that the Tsadam desert in Qinghai was

a platter of treasure, and that once it was opened up for development, its contribution to the nation would be very great. With emotion, he told me that Chairman Mao had said that China was, 'a broad land with an elegant heritage.' The 'broad land' part referred to the minority nationalities, while Han Chinese had greatest population. The 'broad land' and the 'elegant heritage' had to be united into a single family. All nationalities must unite, and together build the nation, and walk together towards glory, wealth, and strength. As he said all this, he was continuously shaking my hand, so that all the other representatives envied how long the premier had shaken my hand.

Finally, the premier had a photograph taken with all of us as a souvenir. The news of our meeting premier Zhou was reported with text and photos in every major newspaper and magazine. When the conference was over and I returned to the county seat at Tongren, everyone was very excited, and they all congratulated me that I had the honor to stand out at this conference, and that Tongren's school building and enrollment ratings had received the praise of Premier Zhou. They felt that this was the glory of all the cadres and teachers, and the glory of the people of all nationalities in Tongren. This conference confirmed me in my faith that I should apply myself to the work of education.

Becoming the Vice-Director of the Huangnan Prefecture Bureau of Culture and Public Health

In March 1957, the people's government of the Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture appointed me vice-director of the Bureau of Culture and Public Health. The bureau director was named Liu Xinshou, an old cadre from Shaanxi, who was very diligent in his work and responsibilities. At that time the number of people who constituted our organizational strength was very low, with one bureau consisting of only five or six cadres. For this reason the burden of our work was very heavy - one person would do what today would be done by one or two entire offices. And yet everyone worked with great energy, and however exhausted we became, no one ever 'complained to heaven and earth.' Most importantly, I feel that our leaders at every level were at the front of the charge, leading us in our labors, setting a forward example for everyone, a model of hard work. Although I was a 'democratic figure,' I would often hold myself to the standard of a Communist Party member, and goad myself on with the example of our leader cadres. With great vigor and earnestness, I strictly upheld all the policies and discipline of the Party, and worked hard to complete the work tasks given to me by the Party, and tried never to be slipshod.

During the period when I worked at the Huangnan Prefecture Bureau of Culture and Public Health, I was still working on my own original trade: nationalities teaching work. By that point, over the course of several years of building schools, all of the relatively large villages in each county of the prefecture had already built elementary schools, and some places had already got full six-year primary schools. However, the facilities of these schools were usually very spare, with not enough classrooms, and many problems involving the lack of qualified teachers. This problem of qualified teaching staff was the first problem we needed to solve in order to improve and develop the teaching work of the prefecture. In 1957, having got the authorization of the prefectural standing committee and government, we established the Huangnan Prefecture Minority Nationalities Teaching School. We moved the principal of the Rongwo Town central Tibetan elementary school, Takla Gyel, to the post of principal of the new college. Li Gönpo, Jamyang, Tao Peiliang (a Han Chinese) and others were teachers. From the elementary schools in the various townships and villages we chose a hundred or so of the best students as the first class.

This was the first entry-level teacher training school in Huangnan's history, with the basic task of training elementary school teachers for the entire prefecture. With the care of the Party and government, this school was to develop and grow large, and in 1978 it was upgraded to a mid-level teacher training school. Within these few decades it was able to train a great number of people's teachers, and became the central bastion for this work in Huangnan. The over ten thousand students who were trained here have not only filled the need for teachers in Huangnan, but they have also filled the ranks of cadres and technicians, and they have made a great contribution to developing Huangnan's cultural knowledge and technological industries. I did very little work for them, but as one of the founders, I feel proud and satisfied. If cultural education is not developed, then that country, that region, that nationality will be forever backward, it will be subject to invasion, it will not be able to raise itself among the forest of advanced peoples in this world - the meaning of 'scientific education to rejuvenate the nation' is in this.

Chapter Three: I Experience the 'Leftist' Storm

This chapter covers a roughly twenty-year period between 1958 and early 1979, during which Chairman Mao propelled the PRC through a series of political and social cataclysms of extraordinary scale and destructiveness. Shawa Tsering's narrative focuses on his own personal experiences, assuming a readership with a basic knowledge of the main political campaigns of this period, and of events specific to the Tibetan regions. For this reason, it's worthwhile to briefly review the history of the PRC and Tibet during this period.

The Chinese conquest of the Tibetan plateau had originally come with a set of formal guarantees of autonomy. The best known of these was the 1951 'Seventeen Point Agreement,' in which the PRC assumed paramount control over Central Tibet, but allowed the Dalai Lama's Ganden Podrang government to continue to exist, promising to respect Tibetan religion and adopt social reforms only gradually.⁸³ In parts of the Tibetan regions not subject to the Ganden Podrang – that is, Amdo and most of Kham – functionally similar policies took the form of the United Front and the 'Three No-s': no class struggle, no wealth distribution, and no assigning of class labels.⁸⁴ The narrative of the previous section takes place in this context, in which the 'feudal' chieftain Shawa Tsering and the Tu and Tibetan villagers of Tongren remained relatively sheltered from the full onslaught of Maoist social transformation.

These guarantees began to come apart with the 'Socialist High Tide' (Ch. Shehui zhuyi gaochao) campaign of 1955-6, in which roughly 90% of China's farmers were forced into agricultural cooperatives. While these policies were never fully carried out in the Tibetan regions, attempts at collectivizing the nomads produced violent uprisings in 1956.⁸⁵ The decisive break came in 1958-9, when Mao led China into the 'Great Leap Forward' (Ch. Da yue jin), a campaign of forced collectivization, agricultural and industrial experimentation, and anti-Rightist political purges that resulted in the deaths of perhaps thirty million people, the greatest famine in human history.⁸⁶ As these policies were rolled out at full-force in Kham and Amdo, the Tibetan plateau rose up in general if uncoordinated revolt, which was then crushed by the People's Liberation Army.⁸⁷ While reliable statistics are hard to find, some areas of Amdo plausibly lost over a third of their population to warfare, starvation, or deportation to 'reform by labor' (Ch. laogai) camps.⁸⁸ Even official communiques from the 1960s admit that Qinghai province as a whole saw a population decrease of something like ten percent.⁸⁹

Another result of the rebellion was the end of the relative special status of Tibetans within the PRC and the decapitation of the pre-Revolution Tibetan social order. The Dalai Lama and much of the Central Tibetan aristocracy fled to India, while most of the indigenous lay and religious leadership of Kham and Amdo were either killed in the fighting or purged and sent to prison camps. Shawa Tsering gives a unique description of what appears to be an entrapment maneuver similar to Mao's 'Hundred Flowers Movement,' in which the non-Han leadership of Amdo was summoned to Xining city at the start of the unrest in 1958, encouraged to criticize government policies, and then arrested

⁸³ A general history of the Chinese Communists in Central Tibet is Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows*. For a narrative of the Central Tibetan government up to the 1949 revolt in Lhasa, see Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, Vol 2, 989-1105. For the Seventeen Point Agreement, see Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, 737-72. A useful general introduction to Communist policy and campaigns in the Tibetan regions is Smith, "The Nationalities Policy."

⁸⁴ Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 203-5.

⁸⁵ Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 121-45; Wemheuer, *A Social History*, 100-3.

⁸⁶ For the Great Leap Forward in general, see Wemheuer, *A Social History*, 120-160; Gray, *Rebellions and Revolutions*, 304-23; Yang, *Tombstone*, etc.

⁸⁷ Due to difficulties of archival and interview access in the PRC, the 1958-9 rebellion in Amdo remains highly understudied. The best overall account is now Li Jianglin, *When the Iron Bird Flies*. See also Robin, "Révolte en Amdo en 1958," and "Events of Amdo '58"; Li Jianglin, *Tibet in Agony*, 45-67; Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 161-202. For a first-person narrative of this fighting, see Naktsang Nulo, *My Tibetan Childhood*. For the general revolt across Tibet and its aftermath, see Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows*, 164-318. For the political narrative of this period between Lhasa and Beijing, see Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, Volume 3 and Volume 4.

⁸⁸ Li Jianglin, *When the Iron Bird Flies*, 359, 376-77.

⁸⁹ Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 190.

en-masse shortly afterwards. Almost all monasteries in the Tibetan regions were either radically downsized, fully closed, or physically destroyed during this period.⁹⁰ To give a sense of the scale of this cataclysm in Shawa Tsering's home county of Tongren, according to an official county yearbook published in 2001, in October 1958 all monasteries in Tongren were closed, and 3328 out of 3680 monks were defrocked. Between 1960 and 1962, the population decreased from 42,380 to 29,515, or almost a third.⁹¹

Since the end of the Maoist period, the verdict in official PRC historiography has been that the famines of the Great Leap Forward were caused by natural disasters and debt to the Soviet Union. The military suppression of the 1958-9 Tibetan rebellion has never been repudiated, but the pacification is admitted to have been improperly 'expanded' (Ch. kuodahua), resulting in a higher-than-necessary death toll and the imprisonment of many innocent people.⁹² Shawa Tsering's statements bow to the Party line in this respect, but his assessment of this 'expansion' is given force by the fact that, while imprisoned himself, he was given the task of reading out the verdicts and sentences. While in this section the disasters of the Great Leap are carefully called 'natural,' in the preceding section he has already told us that his wife would perish amidst 'that "man-made disaster" of which we all know' (Ch. nage rensuozhouzhi de 'renwei zaihuo').⁹³

In 1961-2 a slight thaw took place, including the limited re-opening of certain monasteries and the release of some prisoners. However, none of those persecuted during the 1958-9 revolts would be formally exonerated until after Mao's death in 1976.⁹⁴ In Shawa Tsering's narrative, he is released in 1961, but when he speaks to his former superiors about appealing his verdict, he is immediately thrown back in prison for attempting to 'seize back confiscated property' (Ch. daosuan).

With its indigenous leadership decimated and its special status abolished, Tibet's history from 1959 to ~1979 becomes that of the PRC generally. The next major campaign was the 'Socialist Education Movement' (Ch. Shehuizhuyi jiaoyu yundong), also known as the 'Four Cleanups Movement' (Ch. Siqing yundong), between 1963 and 1966. The 'Four Cleanups' represented an attempt to restore party order by attacking grassroots corruption and 'capitalist roaders,' often in practice those cadres and intellectuals who had opposed Mao's disastrous policies during the Great Leap Forward. For this purpose, huge work-teams were sent down into the countryside to surveil rural cadres and rectify the 'Four Uncleans' (Ch. si bu qing), those who had transgressed in politics, economy, organization, or ideology.⁹⁵ Another Maoist enumeration important to Shawa Tsering's experience was the 'Four Categories of People' (Ch. si lei fenzi): landlords, rich farmers, counterrevolutionaries, evil-influencers, and sometimes an added fifth category of rightists.⁹⁶ All of these politically undesirable designations (or in the popular Maoist terminology, 'hats' [Ch. maozi]) implicated relatives and even friends, often with brutal consequences, as in the case of Shawa Tsering's family. The characteristic technique of such campaigns was 'struggle sessions' (Ch. douzheng), mass rallies in which class enemies would be brought out for criticism, abuse, and beatings, sometimes with fatal results. While the 'Four Cleanups' campaign is today a little-remembered interlude between the cataclysms of 1958-9 and 1966-8, in Shawa Tsering's telling it seems to have formed a relatively continuous period with what followed.

The Great Cultural Revolution (Ch. Wenhua da geming, 1966-76) represents a complex power play unleashed by Mao and radical leftists against more moderate wings of the Party, intertwined with a sort of mass hysteria that swept the country in 1966-8. These early years were characterized by immense rallies and intense violence by groups

⁹⁰ Li and Akester, "When did the Destruction of Tibet's Monasteries Actually Begin?"; Slobodník, Martin. "Mao versus Buddha," 125-6, Li Jianglin, *When the Iron Bird Flies*, 192-216.

⁹¹ Tongren xian zhi bianzuan weyuanhui ed., *Tongren xian zhi*, 40 and 205. The yearbook attributes most of this decrease to emigration from the county, but why almost one in three people chose to emigrate, or where they went, is never explained.

⁹² Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 200-2; Li Jianglin, *When the Iron Bird Flies*, 388-89.

⁹³ 那个人所周知的“人为灾祸” Xiawu Cailang, *Bazong qianbu cangsang*, 91.

⁹⁴ For a rough chronology of the post-revolt period in Amdo, see Yangdon Dondup and Diemberger, "Tashi Tsering," 214-15, and Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 181-202.

⁹⁵ Wemheuer, *A Social History*, 178-86; Walder, *China Under Mao*, 189-93; Gray, *Rebellions and Revolutions*, 324-27.

⁹⁶ Wemheuer, *A Social History*, 30.

of student 'Red Guards' (Ch. Hongweibing). This violence could be directed against traditional 'class enemies,' but also against Communist authority figures such as teachers and senior cadres, as well as against rival Red Guard groups. By fall 1967, Mao had moved to clamp down on the increasingly anarchic Red Guards, many of whom were sent to the countryside 'to learn from the peasants,' but the struggle sessions and propaganda campaigns continued until Mao's death in 1976. In Tibet, the partially re-opened monasteries were once again closed, religious figures were persecuted, and most religious buildings or objects that had survived until that point were destroyed.⁹⁷ In point of fact, much of this tempest seems to have blown above Shawa Tsering's head. Especially by the later years of the Cultural Revolution, he describes the village struggle sessions as perfunctory, scheduled performances, with most of his neighbors bearing him no actual ill-will.

Chairman Mao died in September 1976. After a complicated power struggle, Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) and allied moderates seized power, announcing that the Party would 'bring order out of chaos' (Ch. boluan fanzheng). In December 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CPC officially repudiated the Cultural Revolution and commenced the political liberalizations and economic restructurings known as the 'Reform and Opening' (Ch. gaige kaifang). An important slogan of the era was that 'practice is the sole criterion of truth,' meaning an end to the ideologically-driven decision-making, persecutions, and political campaigns of the Maoist era. Economic development, not class warfare, became the guiding principle of the CPC. Political 'hats' were taken off, communes were gradually re-privatized, religion was again openly practiced, prisoners were released, and contact with the outside world once more became possible. Those formally convicted of 'crimes' during the Maoist period were encouraged to appeal their cases, and many were fully exonerated and restored to their previous positions with back-pay.⁹⁸ In Amdo, Shawa Tsering's old mentor Trashi Wangchuk was instrumental in spurring the CPC to rehabilitate those who had been persecuted in connection to the 1958-9 uprising; here we see him personally intervening to help Shawa Tsering clear his name.⁹⁹

The reader should note that the original text of this politically sensitive section shows signs of heavy editing and at times feels somewhat garbled. In a few places one suspects that Shawa Tsering has mis-remembered dates. I have slightly re-arranged the narrative to maintain a clearer chronological order of events; I indicate the original page-ranges in footnotes.

I Suddenly Become a Counter-Revolutionary

From ancient times until now, only uncertainty is certain, and our rising and falling has no constancy. For the greater part of my life, happy coincidences have come with sudden downfalls, and happiness and pain made a pair. Talking about it now - the two ends of my life were comparatively good, and the middle part was full of catastrophe. But perhaps this is what people call fate.

In the spring of 1958, I went to Xining to attend a policy research group held by the Provincial Party Committee. A month later I was part of a lecture series for religious figures. This study class had about two hundred students, and the period of study was comparatively long, continuing until the start of August. The attendees at the policy research group had all been 'democratic figures.' At the start of the session, openness was called for, and the monks and democratic figures of all other classes were invited to criticize the Party and the government. After some time, the wind suddenly changed direction, and those religious figures who had just recently offered criticisms were themselves pulled

⁹⁷ For the Cultural Revolution in Tibet, see Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows*, 360-422; Goldstein et. al., *The Cultural Revolution in Tibet*, esp. 11-58; and Tsering Wooser, *Forbidden Memory*, throughout. Accounts of the Cultural Revolution in general are many; see Wemheuer, *A Social History*, 193-77; Gray, *Rebellions and Revolutions*, 324-80, etc.

⁹⁸ Wemheuer, *A Social History*, 278-315; Gray, *Rebellions and Revolutions*, 381-429.

⁹⁹ Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution*, 200-1; Li Jianglin, *When the Iron Bird Flies*, 388.

out and criticized. Large-character posters were put up against them, and very quickly the atmosphere became tense.

One day around this time I went to my master Sherap Gyatso's house. He told me that his mood was dark. He'd heard that there was revolt in Gannan, soon to be revolt in Xunhua, seeds of revolt in Huangnan... Had I heard anything? I told him that I hadn't heard anything at all.

Another day on the street I ran into Trashi Wangchuk. He told me: 'The situation in Huangnan is bad. You need to be cautious, make sure of your position. Write a letter to your family, make sure those people who've made trouble in the past are careful, and draw a clear line between yourself and any evil people.' I quickly wrote a letter home, warning my relatives and friends not to listen to rumor, and to obey the government. I also told them to take out the handgun that I'd kept in a box at home and hand it over to the government.

That August when I returned to Huangnan Prefecture, I immediately heard that the Shar-tsang Lama (who was at the time the Prefectural Head), Trashi Namgyel, and other 'democratic figures' had all been arrested. I realized that in a moment the atmosphere had become extremely tense. Relationships between people had in a moment become quite different from before. Many familiar people had turned their faces a hundred and eighty degrees around from me. They ducked and dodged, put on a strange attitude, as if they were afraid to talk to me; all of them dealt with me as if they were clearly hoping to avoid me. I had heavy trepidation in my heart - had something happened? The organization suddenly wouldn't allow me to live in the house where I'd previously stayed. They arranged a room for me and some of the others who had returned from the study group - we slept on the floorboards. That evening, the headman of Dönnyin named Bandé Cham, the headman of Zho'ong Lakha named Gendün, the headman of Hornak named Champa Gyatso, as well as Druksé Gyel and myself all went to see the vice prefectural-head Chen Chengyin. He allowed us to give a brief report of the results of our study, but responded to us very coldly, and then sent us out.

On the morning of the second day, as we were eating breakfast, my younger uncle came to visit me. He said: 'People like us, who've risen a bit in society, now they're arresting some of us, struggling some of us, probably you too will be taken into the villages to be struggled. You should go back and see your mother. Just don't go now, see what's happening in the organization first.'

After a little while, the vice prefectural-head Chen Chengyin's representative Liu Yufu arrived to tell us that there was someone at the gate to see me. We went out to the gateway of the prefectural government and saw that there were four or five people, village soldiers from Nyentok, who'd come to seize me. In a moment they'd bound me up, dragged me to the Nyentok village headquarters, and shut me up in a little room there, where I was watched over by a guard.

When dinnertime came, my mother and wife Trashi T'so came to bring me food. They told me, "The struggle sessions during this movement are intense. Reverend Lopzang Drakpa was beaten to death. Tonight they might struggle you, what should we do?"

I said, "When a person comes into this world, he should meet all sorts of situations. Don't worry too much about it." That evening the village soldiers and some activists took a rope and bound me up in the office of the production brigade. All of the people in the village, men and women, young and old, were gathered together to struggle me.

However, the commune secretary Shi Yiyuan had heard beforehand that I would be struggled. He appeared and warned the crowd: 'In tonight's struggle we can't hit him! If anyone strikes him he'll be responsible for what happens. If anything happens, we'll expose it with another struggle!'

During the struggle session, one of the activists swore at me, saying that I had sent the letter home from Xining to cause a revolt. When I heard this I was furious. I demanded that he take this supposed revolt-causing letter out and show it to everyone. He told me, 'You're still stubborn!' and while cursing me more, he struck me once. Right then there was a poorer man from the village named

Drukgyel, who was glaring at him, clearly not approving of what he was doing to me. Some people then said, 'Drukgyel doesn't approve that we criticize Shawo Tsering. Let's pull him out as well and struggle him at the same time!' They dragged him out and began struggling him as well, and some of them laid him on the floor and began punching and kicking him. The whole struggle session lasted more than an hour, and when it was over they locked Drukgyel and me in a room in the commune headquarters courtyard. The next evening a mob once again arrived to struggle me in a mass rally. The main issues were to have me confess that I'd written a letter urging revolt, and to prosecute me for oppressing and exploiting the poor.

On the third day they took me to be locked up in the detention center at the Tongren County police station. After that nobody came looking for me. Imprisoned in the detention center were cadres, members of the common people, monks and laity. Some wore handcuffs and shackles on their feet, others were just locked up. Some of them were brought up to face charges every day, but nobody brought me up, nobody even asked after me. I could hear nothing of the outside world. Several times I asked the police officers why I had been arrested. Some of them would say, 'Your situation will be dealt with later.' Others said, 'We can't attend to your situation right now. What are you in such a hurry for?' After a while when they saw me they'd just avoid me, afraid that I'd ask them something.

One day not long after I'd been locked up there, a cadre named Xin Jiazhang from the inspection office came to the detention center to pick me up to help him. When he saw that I was handcuffed, he asked the detention center workers to take them off. He took me to a wool-processing factory, which was at the time being used as a temporary prison. I was to call out the names of the imprisoned one by one. In his hands he had a sentencing book. He would call out a criminal, and then check the name and crime.

To some of these criminals he would attach new crimes. People would honestly say, 'I also stole a sheep.'

Xin Jiazhang would say, 'The Communist Party is looking for rebel elements, not for people who stole a few sheep.' A great number of people were shut up in this wool-processing factory. Most of them were sentenced to fifteen or twenty years, at minimum ten.

At that time my uncle Tenpa Lhagyal was also in jail, working as a cook for the prisoners. He would bring me tea to drink from the kitchen. He told me that during the struggle sessions he was beaten very severely. When I told him that I hadn't been beaten during my struggle session he barely believed me. He asked me, 'Since you're a criminal, how have they dragged you out here to do this job?' I told him that I was only helping out. I assisted them in this way for about four or five days. When we'd cleared up one lot we'd send them off to Xining in chains and start on the next. At the time I understood that many of these people had only performed some common religious acts like burning *sang* smoke offerings or worshipping the Buddha, but they had been arrested as rebels. In Qinghai history, this resulted in the great expansion of the pacification of the rebellion, and produced a large number of wrongful convictions and false cases.

I was imprisoned from 1958 to 1962. For four years, nobody came to ask about my case. Day and night, I thought back and remembered everything I'd done since the liberation. There hadn't been one single action against the Party or against the people. What crime had I committed? I thought about it a hundred times but there was no way to understand it. At the time I wanted to be judged quickly so that I could leave the prison. That way I would be sent to a reform-through-labor camp where at least I could learn a skill - idleness can drive a person mad.

In the spring of 1962, someone came to review my case from the prefectural inspection office. They asked me, 'How did you get in here?'

I asked them in reply: 'That's exactly what I wanted to ask you. Why did you arrest me? What crime have I committed?'

The second question they asked me was, 'What status are you?'

I asked them in reply: 'You would know that better than I. The Party and government's policy towards herding areas is to not divide their property, not to create class struggle, and not to separate them up by class status. Tongren County is classified as a herding area, nobody has divided us up by class status. What status would you say I am?'

It seemed that this visit they were just getting a sense of me. They asked me two questions, I asked them two questions in reply, neither of us answered the others' questions, and then they turned around and left.

After that inspection, roughly in June of the same year, Warden Zhang of the detention center told me: 'You're being released. Get your things and go home.'

I asked him, 'You're releasing someone who's been locked up for four years. There's no verdict, you're not giving me any documents, how am I supposed to explain it to my family in the village when I go back?'

He said, 'What verdict do you want?'

I told him, 'I've been innocently locked up here for four years, all you tell me is these few words, and you send me back with my hands empty. You're not giving me any process, what kind of procedure is this?'

He said, 'That has nothing to do with me. You can tell them whatever you want when you go back.'

Thus, helplessly, I was let out from the gate of the detention center. I was carrying my blanket and my affects, and walked dispirited back to Nyentok. When I arrived I saw many people on the street. Some of them barked away from me, not daring to show their faces. Some of them burst into tears, asking me, 'You've come back? You've come back alive, that's good enough!' What was strange was that not a single relative came out to meet me. I thought they must have all gone to work, and didn't know that I was returning that day.

Entering into the door of my house, I was assaulted by a foreboding feeling and a sense of strangeness. There was no trace of any other family members. At home there was only my twelve year old sister and a distant relative, a poor or lower-middle peasant named Jikmé Rongwo. Crying, they told me in detail what had happened to my family.

In those four years, my family had experienced unimaginable change. In 1959, my three sons all contracted infectious measles. They were not able to see a doctor. One after another they were carried away by the god of death. In 1960 a natural disaster occurred. There was no grain harvest. During the hardships of that time, my mother, wife, and little brother all left this world. Another younger brother had only been able to escape starvation because he was studying at the prefectural teachers' college.

My little sister recalled to me the scene of my mother's death: When my mother died, my sister was laying in her arms, but how my mother died, how her body was carried away, these things my sister was unable to remember. After my mother's death, my sister had become an orphan, begging for food every day at the doors of village houses.

When I heard how each member of my family had cruelly perished, when I saw the scene of cold desolation before me, all of my spirit collapsed. It was as if I'd suddenly lost consciousness, and become a man made from wood. I spent over a month at home. Many people from the village came to see me, telling me how my family had died, as well as who else in the village had passed away, so and so, and so and so, and on and on.

In fact, some of these people had arrived to sound out [my political situation]. Around that time, Du Hua'an, who was serving as the United Front work director of the Provincial Committee, had come to Huangnan for a work inspection. One day I went to tell him what had happened to me. Before that I had never cried in front of anyone else, but that day in front of my old leader I couldn't help but shed tears of grief. It was as if I'd met one of my kin, there was so much in my heart I wanted to tell him.

After I told him all of the injustices I'd experienced, he said to me: 'Now the situation has changed. In the provincial committee courtyard people have put up big-character posters against *me*, saying that Du Hua'an is an old counter-revolutionary. Now with people writing such things, saying this and that, what am I to do? However it is, I'm not a counter-revolutionary. It doesn't matter what they say, I'm not afraid. After you go home, forget your worries, put down your burden, set your attitude straight, and work hard. I'll tell the relevant departments about your situation. I believe you're not a bad person. Once they've figured it out they'll give you a verdict.' After I'd heard this, on the road home my mood was much better. I thought, if even someone like Du Hua'an, an old fighter from the Red Army, could be accused of being a counter-revolutionary, then someone like me doesn't count for anything. Any accusation at all might come falling down on my head. But I firmly believed that, as the Tibetan saying goes, 'You can paint a horse white, but you can't change the color of gold.' Black can't become white and white can't become black - someday my situation would be resolved.

Not long after I saw Secretary Du, according to the traditions of our people, in the fifth lunar month we celebrated the Duanwu festival, or in the Tongren Tu language, *Ewa Hanglang*. Many people came over to my house to bring me dumplings. Bringing dumplings at the time had two purposes. One was to wish me happiness for the holiday, the other was to find a chance just to see me. My friends and relatives would sit in the evenings drinking tea, and saying comforting things to me. They were worried that after the deaths of my family I couldn't think of anything else, so they urged me again and again to widen my gaze, think about the future - as the saying goes, 'As long as the green mountains stand, don't fear for lack of firewood.' But in truth I never considered suicide. I could only think back as to whether or not I'd committed any crime, whether or not I had injured the Party or the people in some way. The result of all this thinking was that I confirmed for myself that in word or in deed, I had absolutely not rebelled against the Party, or opposed the realization of socialism. Since liberation I had always followed the socialist road of the Communist Party, and this determination had never wavered. The problem facing me now was that, as the Tibetan saying says, 'dark fog has settled over the earth.' Whenever black clouds cover the sun, always a day will come when those clouds open up and the sun comes out. The golden sun would certainly shine over the great land of China. Everything, true and false, straight and crooked, would be made clear, and the merits and crimes of a thousand autumns would be fairly judged.

But to tell the truth, when I returned home in 1962 to find that six members of my family had passed away, my shock, pain, and suffering were so deep I cannot express them in words. My mood was extremely heavy, and the future seemed dark. I was disillusioned, without recourse, and had barely the heart to live on.

Whenever I thought about the past, when the whole family was together from morning to night, talking and laughing, it was incredibly sweet. Especially my mother was kind and hard-working, always cooking food, and taking special care of me. In the winter, my mother would rise in the middle of the night and drive a mule up to Shabrang mountain, five or seven kilometers away, to cut firewood. She would only lead the mule back when the sky had grown dark.

My wife Trashi Tso had been born into a wealthy family. From childhood she was treated like royalty: When clothes came all she had to do was stretch out her arms, when food came all she had to do was open her mouth. But after she married into my family she took on the role of a wife, cleaning

the house, washing clothes, laboring in the fields, doing any sort of work without shirking or laziness. She particularly respected my mother, treating her as if she were her own. Every week she gave me a new change of clothes, the same as city people, allowing me to have good hygiene. Other than doing work around the house, she also milked the cows, and fed the yaks and horses. During that time, although our family had two servants, my mother and wife would never just live in leisure and completely give the work over to them.

When I was imprisoned, my three sons were still very small. The eldest was six years old, the middle one three, and the youngest only one year old. They were lively and adorable, our family's beloved babies, but now all of them were gone. I frequently saw them in dreams, father and sons playing and enjoying themselves together. One night I dreamed that my eldest and middle sons were sitting in the road, calling for their father and mother. I ran to them and swept them up in my arms, all of us crying there together, but after some time I found that my children's eyes were unable to see, that they had suddenly gone blind, and we stood there together sobbing without end. The sound of my own crying woke me up, and I found that my tears had soaked through my pillow. I was wounded, hurt, heartbroken, and I couldn't hold on to myself from crying that night, thinking of them in their tender youth, without their parents in a terrifying and unfamiliar world of darkness, their eyes unable to see, how piteous it was! The more I cried the more I hurt, and clutching my blankets I sobbed over and over, until after a long time that way I was finally able to quiet down. The next day my mood was terrible. I had no desire to see anyone, and whoever came to speak with me would quickly leave my presence. I sat there alone in silence, unwilling to leave the house.

I dreamed of my mother many times. Once I dreamed that I was in jail, and she was outside. I could only hear her calling me, but whatever I did I had no way to catch a glimpse of her. Another time I dreamed that she was telling me, 'I don't want to live any more, I want to go, if I can't see you then this life has no meaning.' I urged my mother, 'This disobedient son has exhausted you so many times, in the future I will repay your love. Don't go! I will work for you, I will give you a good life!' Another time I dreamed that my mother was boiling milk. On the table was a plate of white steamed buns. She was laughing, very happy, very kindly. She told me to eat well and drink.

In the past my mother and I had depended on each other for our lives. We were very close. I remember one time after I'd married, I woke up in the night to see that a lamp was still on. I went out and asked my mother why she hadn't yet gone to bed. She told me that she was unable to sleep, and so she'd got up to cook. I urged my mother not to cook, and that if she didn't sleep I wouldn't. After I'd led my mother back to her room, I crawled into the bed with her like a little child. She told me, 'You have a wife now, and you're too old. If you sleep in the same bed with me everyone will laugh at you.'

All of these things in the past still hung in my eyes, bringing back my endless love for my mother. I spent most of that month in misery, just thinking of my family.

Once Again in Prison

After spending about a month at home, I never thought that I would be once again thrown into a detention center. I could never figure out why a month before, I had been let out with no explanation, and a month later I was put back in, again with no explanation. One afternoon a cadre from the Nyentok collective summoned me to a meeting. From a ways off on the road to the collective, I saw that a great meeting of all the village masses was underway. When I arrived, policemen brought me into the back courtyard of the collective and tied me up with rope. I was then led out in front of the village masses and accused. Tsepel Gyel, a cadre who'd been sent down to our village, announced

that after I'd been sent home I had been engaged in counter-revolutionary activities and trying to seize back confiscated property. Soon, with no explanation, I was led to the Tongren police station and put in a cell.

After about a week, Wang Shuxuan, a cadre from the Tongren Public Security Bureau arrived with some others to give me a trial. They asked me, 'Why were you put in here?'

I replied, 'You don't know why I've been put in here? Why are you asking me?'

After this, they asked me what relationship I'd had with Du Hua'an. They said, 'We've heard that a few days ago you met with Du Hua'an. What did you talk about? What relationship do you have with Du Hua'an?'

Hearing this, I became even more angry. 'What did we talk about? Go ask him! He's an old Red Army member, a cadre from the Long March, he's been my leader for a long time. I met with him to talk about my imprisonment, should I not mention it?'

They asked me again, 'Why were you engaged in counter-revolutionary activities and trying to seize back confiscated property? Are you still trying to oppress and trample all over the people on your high horse?'

I said, 'You say I've been doing all this, can you give an example? What have I seized back?' I was shouting at them with a righteous air in the very courtyard of the Public Security Bureau - I really hadn't seized back anything, I wasn't afraid.

Furiously, they replied, 'With an attitude like this, it will be death for you!'

I said, 'I've been engaged in revolution with the Communist Party since I was a child, what fault is there in following the Communist Party with all my heart? You say I'm a criminal, but I'm not, I'm a member of the Revolutionary Youth, and nobody's revoked my membership. I'm a state cadre, do you know?'

The trial went on this way with us arguing. Because I never admitted a crime, and moreover was stubborn, I was put several times into shackles. This second time I was thrown in jail, some people in there curiously asked me, how did you end up in here again? I just replied, 'My wife died. I raped someone else's wife, and stole things, so I was thrown back in here.'

When these angry words had got back to the jailers, they told me, 'However angry you are, you shouldn't say such things - people might believe you.'

In autumn of 1965, Yang Zhengkun, the head judge of the Tongren County court, asked to interview me. With a caring attitude, he asked me, 'Did you really seize back confiscated property?' I told him that I truly had not. Whatever he asked me I answered, giving truthful answers. This time the interview was short, and both of us were calm, so no angry arguments like the last time took place. After that interview, no one came asking for me again.

I remained there until December, when the court police called me up. They told me to put on my clothes, I would be going to meet the masses of Nyentok village at the village brigade headquarters. When I arrived at the gate of the prison, I once again saw three civilian militiamen carrying guns and judge Yang Zhengkun waiting for me. Together, we went to Chözang's house in Nyentok monastery. Judge Yang told Chözang, 'Nobody's going to bring food for him, give him something to eat. The court will cover the money for food.' We sat there for about an hour; none of my family or friends dared come to see me. Seeing my expression, Judge Yang was very sympathetic to me. Before the meeting began, he went out to explain policy to the masses, stressing that it was not permitted to hit people. After he'd finished speaking, he told me to go out onto the stage.

As had been arranged beforehand, a few activists criticized me one after another. After this, Judge Yang made the announcement: 'Because of his seizing of confiscated property, Shawo Tsering is sentenced to three years in prison. Deducing the time which he has already spent behind bars, he will be imprisoned for a further six months.' Afterwards, Judge Yang asked me if I would appeal the

case. I told him that I would certainly appeal it. He told me that I had to do this within ten days. Although I'd been born and grown up in that village, for the whole day nobody said a single word to me. I felt a coldness that I'd never felt before, truly it was a thousand emotions at once.

That day when I was returned to the detention center, everyone surrounded me to ask me what had happened when I was taken off to the village. I told them that the court had formally issued a judgement, finding me guilty of seizing back confiscated property, and sentencing me to three years. I said that I intended to appeal. At the time, my cell-mates in prison included the former chief of Huangnan Prefecture and Tongren County committee secretary Liu Gu as well as Xin Jiazhang and others, and they all came up with ideas for my appeal. After some analysis, they decided that I shouldn't appeal after all. I only had another six months in my sentence. If I were to appeal, it might delay the process of my release, even for another few years. They had a point, so I abandoned the idea of appealing.

After I'd made this decision, I stayed patiently in my cell, waiting for my six-month term to be up. They even allowed me to be the head of the prisoner brigade. At the time there were about thirty of us; some were cadres who'd made mistakes, others were criminals. At that time life in the prison was better than it had been previously. On holidays we even got to eat some meat. We raised a few pigs in prison, and at new year we would slaughter one or two of them in order to have a good time. During those six months nobody raised any questions that had to do with me, and I passed the days peacefully.

At the time, the Party committee secretary of the Nyentok collective farm, Wen Cunlong, had also been thrown in jail. When I first met him, I said some mocking things that brought up old pains: 'Oh, you've been thrown in here too? Well, now it's your turn.' Immediately after the words had left my mouth, I regretted it. Every day his face was covered in tears, I felt quite sorry for him. He was an old soldier of the Eighth Route Army, the vice secretary of the Tongren County committee, who had a part-time position as the Nyentok collective secretary. According to what the collective members told me, he'd thought of a thousand plans to improve the lives of the masses in Nyentok, to make sure that nobody would again starve to death in the village. Everyone had a high opinion of him. Later on I tried to say kind words to comfort him, using my own experience to encourage him. I told him that we should believe in the Communist Party, that one day true and false would all be made clear, and those of us who'd been unjustly imprisoned would be exonerated. With my encouragement, he gradually became more cheerful, and began to smile again. When the families of prisoners brought food for them to eat, I would beg a bit to feed him, and when his stomach was full he'd become happy again.

There was another prisoner named Gou Yongge, from the North-East, very tall. Every day he would hang his head like he was at a funeral, very depressed. People said that he'd been put in prison due to his greed. I told him that if he'd truly been greedy, he should make a confession and his crime would be dealt with, and I made efforts to get the government to deal with his case. He said that he couldn't sleep due to hunger, and was in a very bad state. I managed to get some bread from the canteen to feed him, and when he'd eaten his fill, his face finally relaxed. Soon after he was released. After he was released he returned to bring me shirts, trousers, and some fried noodles, but unfortunately the detention center wouldn't let him see me. Afterwards he went to the Xining Procurement Station to work; later when I'd been rehabilitated, he would come visit me in Xining when I went there for meetings.

Around June 1965, having fulfilled my sentence, I was released.

Reform by Labor at Home

After the court announced that I was to be let out of prison, they gave me a certificate of release. I thought, 'Well, I'm finally out of jail.' But when I walked out of the gate of the detention center, my heart suddenly sank. By then in truth I had no home left - where was I to go? As I walked home to Nyentok, I wondered which relative's house I should go to. In this way, with heavy steps I arrived at the village that was my home.

When I arrived, I saw several women pulling up weeds in the barley fields, and two of them came out to speak with me. They said that a friend in Changkya village had taken in my young sister and was raising her there. My younger brother had graduated from the prefectural teacher training school, but because his family class origin wasn't good, he hadn't been assigned a job. Instead, he was living at my uncle Sanggyé Bum's house, doing labor at home. Sanggyé Bum's wife Tamdrin Kyi was working below, and she came up to lead me to my uncle's house. I barely recognized her, and she barely recognized me. She carried my baggage and led me back to her home. I was given a small outhouse to stay in, with a tiny *keang* bed. I wondered where I would be able to sleep in such a small room. Just as I was worrying about this, my cousin Tsekha Gyel to invite me to his house. Before we had even finished discussing this, Sanggyé Bum's wife said that her stomach hurt, and that she was going into labor, and Sanggyé Bum went to see his wife off to her parents' house in Wutun to give birth.

I sat there ruminating: According to our customs, a person just released from prison has a sort of darkness about him. He is considered unlucky, and his presence can be injurious to a pregnancy. If the birthing process were to go smoothly, then I could consider myself lucky upon leaving prison - but if the child died, then the rest of my life would be over.

That night I spent in Tsekha Gyel's home. The next morning at dawn Sanggyé Bum arrived to report the good news - his wife had given birth without trouble the previous night, and it was even a boy. After I heard this, my mood relaxed greatly. I thought: 'Maybe I have some hope after this.'

In the mid-morning I went to the Nyentok commune to report. Trashi Dondrüp was on duty, dressed in military clothes. He said: 'You've come. Good! First go to the brigade headquarters and report to Chöpa Dargyé and Jikmé Zangwo. From today onwards, you're to do whatever they say. You must listen to them carefully, and perform labor according to the rules. You are not to be disorderly in speech or action - I'll be visiting frequently to check in on your situation.'

That evening I went to the homes of the civilian militiamen Chöpa Dargyé and Jikmé Zangwo, who were specially in charge of people from the 'Four Categories of People' (landlords, rich farmers, counterrevolutionaries, evil-influencers). I was lucky that these two were my relatives, and we had relatively good relationships. For this reason, they were very courteous to me. They told me, 'You won't have any problems from us two, but you need to be careful outside.' In fact they pitied me, and they wept and said comforting and sympathetic words.

When I returned to the village, my days became even more difficult. My life was aimless. I had little to eat, and other than a bit of moldy pulse flour I would go all day without food. My friends would tell me, 'What are you doing back from prison! You've come back and have neither food nor anywhere to stay - isn't it better to be in prison?' They also told me: 'You've really been let out at the wrong time. For people in the five black categories of landlords, rich farmers, counterrevolutionaries, evil-influencers, and rightists, whether you move or don't move, you'll get criticized and struggled. You were originally a feudal chieftain, and thus you'll be watched even more carefully. According to rumor, the next year they're going to open up the second round of something called the "Four Clean-Ups Campaign," and it might be even more intense than last time.'

During that time I felt hurt and helpless. I knew that I'd have to grit my teeth and go on, but I never thought of going to extremes. One day one of the commune members said to me: 'Nowadays

it's truly difficult here - we should escape. I have a friend in Gannan - perhaps if we went there, things would be better.' He even suggested that we should murder the cadre in the production brigade before fleeing.

When I heard this I simply laughed. I told him, 'Why should we escape? We haven't committed any crimes. The minute we try to flee, our problems will only get worse.'

He said, 'Then should we just wait to die here?'

I told him, 'You're better off staying here. If you run to the 'ends of heaven and the corners of the seas,' they'll still catch you and bring you back here. You're even talking about killing the cadre at the production brigade - we have no quarrel with him, why should we kill him? To kill someone is a terrible thing - we should never kill people. Don't do such evil things!'

Through my earnest remonstrances, he finally gave up these evil thoughts of murder and escape. Afterwards, he would always sigh, and say, 'I'm so grateful for your advice back then - otherwise, I would have become a criminal.'

From 1965 to 1979, a full fourteen years, I was the 'bad guy' of our village, to be reformed by the poor, lower, and middle peasant classes. When they asked me what 'hat' I wore, I would tell them I was a feudal lord, and they would say, no, you're a counter-revolutionary. The next time they'd struggle me, I would say I was a counter-revolutionary, and they would say no, you're a feudal lord. After a while I would straightforwardly say that I was a feudal lord *plus* a landlord, and they had nothing else to say. In those thirteen years they never decided what category I in fact belonged to. Sometimes when they were criticizing other people I would be a supplementary character. Sometimes I would stand together with criminals, sometimes I would be placed separately. Always I was a category of person to be struck down, villainized, and reformed.

After the start of the Four Cleanups Campaign in 1966 [sic], beyond struggling the 'Four Categories of People,' they also began struggling cadres who belonged to the 'Four Uncleans.' At the time, it was said that the 'Four Uncleans' cadres belonged to the internal contradictions among the people, and thus they couldn't be struggled together with the 'Four Categories of People.' In fact, these 'Four Uncleans' cadres were struggled very intensely, and often badly beaten. Sangchen, the vice secretary of the Nyentok production brigade, had many of the teeth knocked out of his mouth.

The hurricane of the 'Four Cleanups' campaign also blew over my own head. In the latter part of the 'Four Cleanups' campaign, they also began re-examining the cases of the 'Four Categories of People.' One evening, I was summoned by a member of the 'Four Cleanups' work group, surnamed Zhu. When I arrived, I found him sitting in the center, with representatives of the poor and lower-middle peasants seated to either side. Zhu wanted me to answer questions. I asked him how far back he intended to ask, and he replied that he intended to start from my childhood. I should tell him everything from when I was six years old to when I started work. Finally, I stated that I would certainly answer all of his questions, but I couldn't accept any such accusation that I was anti-Party or anti-socialist.

From his expression then and the evidence of his later behavior, Zhu in fact was very sympathetic to me. In those days we would usually labor during the day and have meetings at night. One evening while they were struggling me, they'd only struggled for a little while when Zhu announced that they should stop, and told me to go off and write a self-examination.

As he saw me out the door, Zhu told me: 'Go home and write a good self-examination.' The next night, he asked me if I'd written it yet, and I told him that I didn't have paper or pens. He gave me some paper. The third night, he again asked me if I'd written it yet, and I told him that I didn't have an electric light to write it under. On the fourth night I told him that I still didn't have electricity. Thus for a whole series of nights he allowed me to get away with this. On the fifth night, he sent a

group of civilian militiamen to bring me to a place where they would solo-struggle me. In fact, he had me sent to my relative's house. My relatives tightly barred the door, then sat me on the *kang*-bed and boiled some tea for me to drink. Whenever someone knocked on the door, they would leap up and put on an act of struggling me. In this way we talked and laughed through the whole night. The next evening, Zhu came around to inspect. He asked the civilian militiamen whether they'd struggled me or not, and they all said that they had.

Zhu turned around grinning, and instructed the militiamen to 'struggle him well,' 'struggle all night,' and 'struggle until the sun comes up.'

The militiamen said, 'Don't worry about it. We promise that we'll struggle him very well.' After he'd left, we all chatted and laughed, drinking tea and joking, as if nothing whatsoever was going on.

On the sixth night, Zhu summoned me to talk in person. This conversation left a deep impression on me, and several decades later, I still have not forgotten it. He said, 'Your father was killed in your childhood, and your mother has also passed away. Now most of your family are gone. You must keep your spirits up - you absolutely mustn't give up hope, let alone think of suicide. Right now your life is indeed difficult, but in the future it will get better again.' He also told me, 'You've been involved in revolutionary work since you were a child. Your thinking is good, and your behavior not bad. You've also never really labored since you were a child. You can do some light work, but you must be careful to watch your mouth - especially in situations when many people are about. A lot of people have gotten in trouble because of their tongues. But policies change, and better policies will certainly come. The people will live well in the future, thus you should take care of yourself - "As long as the green mountains stand, don't fear for lack of firewood."'

On another evening, I bumped into Zhu in an alley. He came over and said to me, 'We're planning to repair the alleyway - do the masses oppose this?'

I said, 'This would be a service to the masses. How could they oppose it?'

Just as we were speaking, another person came by, and Zhu quickly stepped away.

Another day, the production brigade slaughtered a pig. Zhu asked the brigade head Chöden Gyel if Shawo Tsering had been allotted a portion. The brigade head said he had not. Zhu said that it was alright if he hadn't been given any - he had eaten enough pork in the past. Later on, when they slaughtered a sheep, Zhu once again asked if Shawo Tsering had been given any. The brigade head said that this time he had, and Zhu replied: 'Good. It's good that you've given him some - he should have his portion.'

During the inspections of the 'Four Categories of People' during the 'Four Cleanups' campaign, a knife was confiscated from our house. The night before the work team was to leave, Zhu brought the knife back to me, and told me 'It's a kitchen knife for cutting meat - I return it to you.' He also told me that the work team was to leave the next day. 'Do you have anything else to say? Any other difficulties?'

I told him that I didn't have any other difficulties, but I did ask him for three months of sick-leave. My legs were in pain, and I needed to see a doctor. Zhu had me write a sick-leave application and take it to the brigade headquarters. On the second day, he awarded me with two months of rest time.

At the start of November 1966, the 'Four Cleanups' work group quietly dispersed from Tongren. It's quite clear to see that this comrade was very sympathetic to me, but under the political atmosphere of the time, he couldn't openly care for me, instead he behaved as he did. Afterwards I went to Xining to ask after this good-hearted person, but I never found him. I still think of him to this day.

I Experience the ‘Great Cultural Revolution’

During the period of the Great Cultural Revolution, for the most part I lived with my younger brother Püntsook. After graduating from the prefectural teacher's training school, because his family class background was not good, he wasn't given any work. He and I had nowhere to live, and so we stayed in my cousin Tsekha Gyel's house, eating and sleeping together. Tsekha Gyel and his wife Rinchen Tso at that time had no children, but Tsekha Gyel had a younger brother and sister. In this way we formed a sort of temporary family, which would live together for six years. In our years together, since my age was a bit older, I naturally became the head of the household, and in daily affairs they all deferred to me. We got along very well.

Tsekha Gyel's family's class rating was a poor or lower middle peasant, but once we had joined his family, in the eyes of others it became the household of a feudal lord, which was extremely detrimental to them. In order not to influence them in this way, in 1971 I asked the production brigade for a small plot of land, and built a simple house there. In this way, myself and my brother finally had a place of our own to stay. Us two single men lived together; the other villagers thought we were very piteous there, for life without any women was very difficult. I am fifteen years older than my brother, such that from appearances I am his father. Returning home in the evenings, I would sit on the *kang*, while he would sit beneath building the fire and cooking. During those days we had enough grain to eat, and our friends would supplement this by secretly bringing us loaves of bread. Sometimes when some old herder friends would arrive in Tongren, they would bring us butter and meat, so that we didn't have too bad a time of it.

I was appointed to the sixth production brigade, so every day I went to labor in the sixth brigade at *Xila*. At the time, the production brigade regulated one struggle session every six days. On that day, after eating dinner, I would go myself to the set place to receive criticism. Usually the production brigade cadres would begin with a lecture, and after that the poor and lower-middle peasants would use the same old methods to criticize me. The criticisms were the same leftist slogans that were popular in those days, all of them ridiculous and unwarranted. ‘We will never forget the class struggle! You are the class enemies of the people! We will only allow you to follow the rules, we will never allow you to speak or act out!’ Each time this went on for over two hours. Standing for an entire such meeting during the winter, not only would my legs ache and my stomach go sour, but I would be so cold my whole body was shivering. Beyond that, there was also ‘voluntary labor.’ This was in the main sweeping the streets, carrying soil and manure for the yak pens, gathering firewood for families which had sons in the army, and fixing the roads whenever it needed doing. This ‘voluntary labor’ did not count for labor points.

In those days, the masses struggled on the surface, but in their hearts the majority of them were very sympathetic to me. Especially in my own production brigade, the masses and most of the lower-level cadres in fact took care of me. When I went to work together with my younger brother, they would always let one of us finish first and return home to begin cooking. When I was stricken with my leg pains, everyone would call me ‘gimpy,’ and they wouldn't let me do hard work, only sending me off to do lighter tasks. In the harvest season, carrying the bundles of barley was considered relatively heavy work. They would have me stay in the threshing field to tie the bundles first, or watch over the fields, or other types of easier work. Whenever I was assigned to keeping livestock off the fields, the herders would of their own volition drive their sheep and yaks off to other areas, so that I wouldn't have to hurt my legs running after the animals. In this way my life was very free of toil, and in fact there was not much work for me to do during the day.

In those days, some places had a policy that the so-called ‘evil elements’ would receive slightly less grain during distribution. The Nyentok brigade headquarters would detract at most three hundred

jin (half-kilos). One day, the secretary of Nyentok commune Ma Xingbao came into the village to inspect the work. He saw the grain which had been detracted and asked what was going on. When the production brigade cadres said that it was grain detracted from the 'Four Categories of People,' Secretary Ma said that this was grain obtained by labor, and could not be detracted. After this, nobody took grain from us 'Four Categories' members.

In those days my brother and I were young and strong, and were considered top-level laborers, and we put a lot of effort into it. For this reason we had lots of work points, and when the harvest was allotted, we didn't do too badly. My younger brother and I usually got about seven hundred *jin* (half-kilos) of grain a year, and the most we ever got was two thousand. When cash was handed out we got at least twenty *yuan*, and at most three hundred. We were also allotted ten *jin* of oil and some potatoes, vegetables, apples, etc. If the production brigade was raising pigs, then we could get a bit of pork. Thus our lives were not much worse than those of the normal villagers.

Later on, the production brigade sent me to carry nightsoil for fertilizer. Thus we were frequently in the toilets of the prefectural government courtyard and a few other work-units, digging nightsoil to cart back to the production brigade. This was smelly work, but not actually difficult. Often we'd work through the morning and then rest in the afternoon. Sometimes *en-route* we would read the newspapers pasted at the gate of the prefectural post office, and in this way we became familiar with many of the great affairs of the nation. In fact, overall this was one of the ways that the masses and cadres looked out for me. I valued this chance and worked diligently, and gathered a great deal of high-quality fertilizer for the production brigade, and received the praise of the masses and the brigade head.

From this I came to understand that the masses are sensitive and rational. When they require you to work, they do not care whether it is heavy or light work, they care only whether your attitude towards labor is good. As time went on, the more the masses and the lower-level cadres understood me, the more they could take a relatively enlightened attitude towards the political campaigns, and towards those of us who were objects to be rectified in these campaigns. This was not like at the start, when everyone's heads had been fanned into a fever, and they were criticizing and struggling us like madmen.

During this time, there was one experience that truly showed me the wisdom of the saying that, 'Although they seem heartless, yet they have hearts - among people there is naturally true feeling.' One day when I was pushing my nightsoil cart through Rongwo, I was also leading along a poor and lower-middle peasant named Chöpa Dargyé, who had been sent by the production brigade to inspect my work. (In fact, he was very respectful to me, and was assisting me in my labor.) *En route*, I took him to meet the Prefectural Agriculture and Husbandry Section head Ge Jianpeng. Originally, Ge Jianpeng and I had worked together in the prefectural government, when he was the head of the Bureau of Construction. Ge Jianpeng and his wife poured us tea and made us food, even stewing some mutton for us. At that point I hadn't had 'finger-food' mutton on the bone for a long time, and so I was wolfing it down. As I did so, Ge Jianpeng lit me up a 'Flying-Horse Cigarette,' which at the time cost six *yuan* a pack.

I was very moved, and my inspector Chöpa Dargyé was also very pleased. In those days, people dealt with us 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' with an attitude of 'respect them but keep your distance,' sometimes even verging on fear. How then could Ge Jianpeng treat someone like me this way, when I was publicly known to be a nightsoil pusher and a village drudge? I felt his true kindness, and I felt that between one person and another, if you cut away the selfishness, the conflict, and the heartless attacks, there still exists a kind of friendship, a pure feeling between comrades.

I remember that when I had left prison and returned to the village, I had become a 'three not-haves person' - without house, without salary, and without food. At that time, I asked the cadres in

the brigade headquarters: 'My house has been confiscated, where should I live?' The cadres told me that they would find me a place, and the next day they sent me to stay in an attic room of the house of one of the commune members. The minute I saw it I knew it was too small to live in, and I left there to go stay with my brother in Tsekha Gyel's house. Afterwards when I was given some moldy grain which was impossible to eat, my friends secretly sent me flour and bread. During the struggle sessions, many of my friends would give me some token criticisms, but afterwards they would take care of me. Under the conditions of those times they had no other choice - even some of the cadres would publicly say that I should be severely struggled, but in private they would ask after my health, and sympathize with me. Only the care and love given by my friends gave me faith to go on living, and I will never forget those friends and cadres who did so.

Of course, there were some people who said that Shawo Tsering was too free and happy digging nightsoil, and that he'd got off easy, unlike other 'Four Categories of People.' They even said that I'd gone off to certain work units or friends' houses to work for wages, or that I was off reading newspapers, and altogether didn't seem like someone under control and restriction. Others said that Shawo Tsering had become too comfortable in the sixth brigade, and that I should be moved into a brigade with fewer of my friends, so that I could be properly supervised and thoroughly reformed. But because most of the cadres and masses were secretly protecting me, the years I spent at home being 'reformed through labor' were not nearly as bad as the inhuman treatment given to some other members of the 'Four Categories of People' elsewhere.¹⁰⁰

I See Daylight Once Again

One day in 1976, the comrades at the Nyentok commune had me go to meet with cadres from the county government, and I spoke with the county police chief Ma Wei. He said, 'We've asked you here to understand your situation.'

Ma Wei asked me where my uncle was. I replied: 'After he was released from the labor camp, he spent a few months at home, and then went to a village in Xiahe County. He's a painter, and he works in different places painting. I haven't heard anything from him recently. I heard that the commune had sent militiamen to search for him, but they hadn't found him.'

Ma Wei told me: 'If you hear any news from your uncle, then pass on the word that he should come back. Or if you tell us where he is, we'll go find him ourselves.'

He asked me what I was doing these days, and I told him: 'Now I'm one of the "Four Categories of People," and I'm to be surveilled and reformed by the poor and lower-middle peasants.'

Ma Wei told me, 'I know a bit about you. In the past, you worked diligently for the Communist Party, and you spent not a little of your strength on setting up the Huangnan prefectural government and the school system. You mustn't go on like this - now you should appeal to be exonerated and rehabilitated.'

I told him, 'In 1962 I went to speak with secretary Du Hua'an about my case, and afterwards I got struggled many times for it, and got accused of trying to illegally seize back confiscated property. Do you think I dare write an appeal? I don't have the heart anymore to write an appeal.'

Ma Wei said, 'You must write it. Don't be afraid, I'll help you, and argue your case.' He also told me: 'You must marry, you can't live with no women in your house. And you should have descendants. You're "wearing a hat" of an undesirable class, certainly, but that doesn't prevent you from marrying and having children. And if you don't have children now, then how will you survive

¹⁰⁰ P.105-26

when you're old? You're forty-one this year, you should marry soon and not miss your chance. If anyone gives you trouble for it, you tell them that police chief Ma told you to, and I'll take responsibility for it.'

Previously, I had also thought about marrying and starting a household. Afterwards I considered it more deeply, and my misgivings grew. By finding a wife I would myself be able to enjoy the heavenly delights of marital love, but by my own situation I would be causing my wife to become a sort of criminal or object of discrimination, which was not my wish. Thus I had dismissed any thoughts of marriage, and not considered it again for years.

Chief Ma Wei and I spoke for a long time, and he said many touching things. His words truly moved me, and for the second time in many years, I felt that there was some warmth in the world of men. After he left, a hundred emotions filled my heart, and I turned it around and around in my head, thinking over my situation once again. I gave not a little thought to it, but I couldn't make a decision about writing an appeal, because society at that time still stressed class struggle as its guidelines, and I feared that an appeal would only lead to bad results.¹⁰¹

In 1978, Huangnan celebrated the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the prefecture, and rumor had it that delegations from the central and provincial levels would come to attend the ceremonies. One day when we were doing volunteer labor in the commune, someone came and called me, and I went out and saw that it was Khabum Gyel Tölwo of Sakyil Village. He told me that Kel Tsering from prefectural standing committee had sent him. Kel Tsering said that it Trashi Wangchuk from the central government delegation had repeatedly asked after me, saying: 'Shawo Tsering from Nyentok was just a baby at the time of liberation, have you really understood clearly what's wrong with him now?' Kel Tsering wanted me to go meet Trashi Wangchuk to discuss my affairs. The requirements on us 'Four Categories of People' were very strict during the period of the prefectural anniversary, and we had to do volunteer labor every day, and were not allowed to leave the village. Thus I had no way of going to see Trashi Wangchuk. I could only write out a slip and give it to my brother Püntsook to take to him.

In the letter, I wrote: 'I'm very pleased to hear that you've come. Now I am a person under state supervision, and I cannot easily come to meet you, but I have sent my brother Püntsook with this letter to do so instead.'

My brother had heard that he was about to meet a high-level personage, and was very anxious, but I told him not to be afraid. 'There might be several levels of people guarding him. If they ask what relation you have to Trashi Wangchuk, just say that you're his relative. Try to meet him during his lunchtime rest period.' I got a bowl of yoghurt from my sister's household as a gift, and my brother went off carrying the bowl, very nervous.

After not long, my brother returned, his face full of smiles. When I saw that he was happy, I hurried to ask him about the meeting. He said that he'd been challenged by the guard at the gate, who asked him who he was here to see, to which he replied that he was here to see Trashi Wangchuk. Just at the time he saw Kel Tsering, who led him inside, and introduced him to Trashi Wangchuk, saying that this was Shawo Tsering's younger brother, sent by him to visit you. Trashi Wangchuk welcomed him and gave him meat to eat, telling him: 'Tell your brother that the policies have changed now. It's going back to the way it was before 1958. He should write an appeal. If that doesn't work, he should come to Beijing to find me. He'll have to find some way to pay for the trip himself, but once he gets to Beijing I can put him up and feed him, and give him enough money to get back.'

¹⁰¹ P.128-29

As Trashi Wangchuk was saying this, beside him sat the head of the provincial delegation, the provincial governor Ga Bulong. Trashi Wangchuk gave my letter to governor Ga to read, telling him: "This person has been doing Party work since he was a child, his behavior is very good. Now he's doing labor under supervision, wearing the hat of one of the "Four Categories of People." Governor Ga had a look, and then wrote on the slip a few sentences asking that the province would immediately review the case, and that when a decision was announced, Trashi Wangchuk should be informed. Trashi Wangchuk said: 'Good. Then let it be like that.'

Not long after the prefectural anniversary, the Nyentok commune organized a 'great battle' of farmland capital construction to flatten fields near Kasar village. At the same time, the commune also arranged that the militiamen attending the construction should train alongside their labor. One evening, everyone had gathered to watch a film, while the guns and ammunition for the militia had been placed in a nearby tent. The officer in charge of armaments for the commune, Tsering Gyel, quietly asked me: '*Gaga* (in the Tu language, "Younger Brother"), can you watch the ammunition for me?'

I said, 'I'm a member of the "Four Categories of People," how can I be put in charge of the militia's weapons?'

Tsering Gyel replied: 'Relax! I have faith in you.'

I said: 'If I do it, will you let me read that newspaper of yours?'

He said, 'Only if you take it off and read all of it!' I took the newspaper and read it very carefully. In *People's Daily*, I saw an article by a special commentator. The article said that the Party's Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee had resolved to 'bring order out of chaos' Those who had been wronged in mistaken cases would be redressed and rehabilitated. Deng Xiaoping also emphasized that practice is the sole criterion of truth, etc. Suddenly I realized that good policies had returned to the Party, and that my bitter days had reached their end. People like myself had hope, and my heart filled up, and my thoughts raced ahead to the future, and with enormous excitement I read that entire newspaper, article by article.¹⁰²

At the end of the year in 1978, the Public Security Bureau of Tongren County contacted me twice via the commune, ordering me to come to the political and legal department of the county government. At the time I was at Kasar working in the great earth-leveling meeting. Because of the business of our work, I had no time to go. After they'd called me up for the third time, I had to go.

When I walked into the combined offices of the public security bureau, procuratorial bureau, and courts of Tongren County, I found a large number of people sitting inside, and they stood up to greet me and had me sit, and gave me cigarettes and tea, and were kind and courteous to me. Suddenly I felt that warmth had come back to the atmosphere, and that everything was different, as if the harsh winter had truly passed.

Yang Quanlong, the head of the Tongren county procuratorial office, said: 'The letter of appeal you gave to Trashi Wangchuk was sent to us here.'

I replied that I'd never written any letter of appeal. In 1962 I'd spoken with Du Hua'an about my situation, and afterwards had been accused of attempting to seize back confiscated property, and therefore didn't dare write any such letter. They told me, 'Oh. It was simply a letter that you gave to the central government and provincial delegations, and they wrote instructions on the letter asking us to review your situation. Now the public security bureau, procuratorial bureau, and courts have formed an office for carrying out the new policies. We're reviewing all previous cases for mistaken prosecutions. Tell us about your situation, and then you can go back and write an appeal.'

¹⁰² P.126-28

I said, 'All of you in office here should be familiar with my situation. In 1958 I was suspected of being involved in the revolt, and in '62 I was accused of attempting to seize back confiscated property. I can't bear to look back on the sufferings of these last twenty years, but everyone here should know of them: My family was broken apart and perished, and I "wore the hat" of one the "Four Categories of People." I have been so brutalized that I can't even lift up my head, such that people don't seem to be people, and demons don't seem to be demons. This is all the result of you all "grasping the wind and clutching at shadows" about me, listening to and believing every prejudiced statement. If there is any truth to it, you should produce proof, and I will concede in speech and heart. If there isn't any hard evidence, you should restore my name, and fully exonerate me.'

In that moment, I spoke the anger that had been building in my heart for many years, and my whole body felt eerily light. With quick steps I marched back home. My younger brother was cooking, and two friends were waiting for me there. As I stepped over the threshold, they immediately asked me: 'You look happy! Has something good happened? When your problems are over with, will they let you become a cadre again?'

I replied that so far as I could see, it still wasn't clear, and whether I'd be a cadre or not wasn't important. The central thing was to one-by-one resolve these open cases, to clear my name and allow me to live out my life. This was my greatest hope. The next day I began writing out the materials for the appeal, and four or five days later I delivered the appeal documents to the office. They told me that they were in large part familiar with my situation, but they needed to draw up documents, and fill out the necessary paperwork, at which point my case would be reviewed immediately.

The first day after the lunar new year in 1978, the Nyentok commune called a great meeting of the masses in the village. The commune secretary Liu Yufu came and found me to talk. He said: 'The primary purpose of this meeting is to "take your hat off." After this has been announced, you should make a statement.' I asked him by what method my "hat" was to be taken off. He said, 'We're going to say that you've done your labor well, and so we're removing your "hat."' I requested that since my situation was currently being reviewed by the county, the commune should wait until the situation had been resolved to make an announcement. He said, 'We've called this meeting principally to "take your hat off." Once it's off, you'll be removed from the "Four Categories of People," and you'll be a regular person again. It's good that you should say something afterwards - you need to give a statement.' There was no way I could refuse.

In the meeting of the masses, Liu Yufu announced that the upper levels of government felt that Shawo Tsering had labored well for many years, and that it was time to remove his hat as one of the 'Four Categories of People.' After it was announced, the masses warmly applauded. I braced myself, and went to make the statement:

'Now I have finally become a citizen of the People's Republic of China. I thank the Party and the government for their good policies. I thank the cadres of the production brigade and the masses for their help and teaching. I thought that I would wear that hat until I died, I never thought that a day like today would come. But with everyone's help, I have "returned to the womb and changed my bones," and become a new person. From today onward I will continue to work to reform myself. I will truly become a citizen who eats according to his work, in order to benefit society and the people.' In fact human affairs are always like this. You can't say what you want to say, and you must say what you don't want to say - this is what's called 'words that violate the heart.'

Not long after, the verdict of the appeal review from the Tongren county public security bureau, procuratorial bureau, and courts came down. The conclusion of the verdict document said: 'In 1958, Shawo Tsering was suspected of being involved with the revolt. In 1962, on the basis of several people's reports, he was convicted of attempting to seize back confiscated property, and sentenced to three years in prison. According to our review, these two accusations are entirely false,

and we now pronounce him innocent.' When they issued me the verdict documents, they also told me that the results of this review had been passed on to the Prefectural Standing Committee Office for Implementing Policies, and that I should see them in order that their policy towards cadres be implemented in practice.

The same day, I went to the Office for Implementing Cadre Policy which had been set up in the Prefectural Committee buildings. They agreed to expedite the implementation policies in my case. That was in about March of 1979, and due to the need for all of the various leaders to agree, this continued until July, and I became very impatient. One day the United Front comrades from the Prefectural Committee called me. The United Front bureau chief He Yao handed me a document, and told me that I'd been restored to my original rank and position. I was to temporarily be made a member of the Prefectural Political Consultative Conference. I was to go to the Financial Bureau to receive three hundred *juan* of pay, and I would receive a regular salary from today onwards. I was to return home to rest for three months, and then I would have a job at the Prefectural Political Consultative Conference. At that moment I felt very serene, and was not at all agitated.

Following that, Zhao Zhensui, the secretary of the Prefectural Committee, arranged to meet with me for a talk. He told me: 'The family disaster which you suffered is worse than that of other people. Now the organization has issued a policy in your case, and you've been exonerated of these mistaken accusations. If you have any difficulties from here onward, be sure to let me know.'

I told him, 'I've been carrying this heavy burden for twenty years. I don't have any requests. It's too much that you're restoring me to my original rank and position. All I need is a bit of money to live on.'

He asked me, 'What kind of work do you want to do?'

I told him, 'Just let me guard the gates, that'll be fine. I've been one of the "Four Categories of People" in a village for twenty years, I've grown stupid. I don't know anything anymore. If I was made a cadre, I wouldn't be fit for work.'

He said, 'You're still young. You can continue to work. Because your case was from before the start of the Cultural Revolution, they're not going to retribute your back-salary. But your household is too poor - you need to have some money to live with. Write a report telling me how much you need. If the prefecture can't do it, then we'll make it a special case, and apply to the provincial government for money.'

I laughed and said, 'I don't want any money, and I won't write a report. Give me the amount according to the policy, there's no need to make a special application to the province. Forget about it. Just to have this millstone removed from around my neck is enough to make satisfy me, and I'm incredibly grateful. I don't need so much money. What would I do with it? No amount of money can bring my dead family back to life.' My attitude toward this was noticed by the prefectural leaders, and eventually they began to praise me as unusually upright.

I went back to the village and did labor in the production brigade as usual. Many of the masses had heard about my news, and they said: 'You should stop doing productive labor. You've been doing it for twenty years, haven't you done enough?'

I said: 'I have a salary now, and I don't need to keep track of work-points. But I want to harvest this year's wheat with everyone else, and see it threshed.' Whatever I said, they wouldn't let me work, and resolutely drove me out of the threshing floor. I had no choice but to go home and rest, and occupy myself with household affairs.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ P.129-33

Chapter Four: A Second Youth

This chapter covers Shawo Tsering's career between his restitution to official position in 1979 and his retirement in 1995. His work was, quite simply, rebuilding Amdo: The economy was devastated, the school system was non-functional, the once-great monasteries lay in ruins, and the people were traumatized and often physically imprisoned. Once again, the trilingual cadre-headman Shawo Tsering would become an indispensable figure in restoring some modicum of legitimacy to the CPC's attempts at post-Mao good governance.

For Tibetan Buddhists, this period is often remembered as the yangdar, the 'propagation once-again,' when the Buddha's teachings were re-established in Tibet after twenty years of brutal suppression.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps the most emotive moment in this reconstruction was the visit to Tongren of the 10th Pañchen Lama (Lopzang Trinlé Lhündrup Chökyi Gyeltsen, 1938-1989). The Pañchen lineage of Zhikatsé had long been considered more 'pro-Chinese' than the Dalai Lamas of Lhasa, and the young Pañchen Lama had been supported first by the Nationalists and then by the Communists as a counterweight to the Dalai Lama's Ganden Podrang government. The Pañchen Lama survived the violence of 1958-9, but visited Amdo in the aftermath of the revolt and was horrified by the devastation he encountered. In 1962, he famously denounced the CPC's actions in the '70,000 Character Petition' (Ch. Qi wan yan shu, Th. Yikdru tridun gyi nyenzhu), for which he was brutally persecuted until after Mao's death. Although by 1980 the Pañchen Lama had formally disrobed, married a Chinese woman, and once again taken up high position in the Communist government, his tour of Tongren in that year was the occasion of extraordinary catharsis among the Tu and Tibetan Buddhists of the valley after over two decades of oppression. Even the generally staid cadre Shawo Tsering seems to have experienced this as a time of intense emotion, although he (or his editors) are careful to emphasize the 'patriotic' content of the Pañchen Lama's teachings. The Pañchen Lama would go on lecturing, giving tantric initiations, and working within the Party for Tibetan causes until his sudden death in 1989.¹⁰⁵

The remainder of this chapter mostly speaks for itself, but it's worth pointing out a few interesting aspects of Shawo Tsering's account. Scholars have viewed the work of high lamas in settling grazing-land disputes as state attempts to co-opt the authority of religious figures, and as indexing the continued power of indigenous concepts of law and justice in the face of the officially atheist Communist state's moral illegitimacy in Tibetan society.¹⁰⁶ While Shawo Tsering acknowledges the highly fraught nature of these mediations, he instead paints the resolution of pasture-land disputes as a state-initiated collaboration between religious leaders and minority cadres like himself.

Similarly, it's interesting to compare Shawo Tsering's account of the 1980 re-opening of Rongwo monastery with those collected by scholar Jane Caple from lay and monastic community members in the mid-2000s.¹⁰⁷ These Tibetan-language accounts center on the actions of the Khaso-tsang and other lamas in re-consecrating the temple buildings and re-establishing the monastic community according to formal prātimokṣa vows of discipline. Meanwhile, in Shawo Tsering's account, this process is a sort of state-society partnership: It is he who invites the Khaso-tsang lama to take up the abbacy of Rongwo, and convinces the Maoist-era work units that had occupied the monastery buildings to vacate the premises. The two points of view are not mutually contradictory: All accounts agree that the participation of high lamas and traditional leaders like Shawo Tsering himself were indispensable in establishing the legitimacy of such projects in local Tu and Tibetan eyes.

Another section deals with the revival of the Huangnan prefectural school system. We have seen in previous sections how schooling in Amdo has long been a crucial site of nation-building and resistance, from the contesting

¹⁰⁴ Diemberger, "Life Histories," 115; Caple, *Morality and Monastic Revival*, 20-21, etc. For the monastic revival in 1990s-2000s Amdo generally, see Kolås and Thowsen, *On the Margins of Tibet*, 44-92.

¹⁰⁵ Two short biographical sketches, the full text of the 70,000 character petition, and supporting documents are found in 10th Panchen Lama, *A Poisoned Arrow*.

¹⁰⁶ Yeh, "Tibetan Range Wars," 518-21; Pirie, "Legal Complexity," and "Feuding, Mediation, and the Negotiation of Authority," 21-25.

¹⁰⁷ Caple, "Remembering Monastic Revival," 32-6. For a book length study, see Caple, *Morality and Monastic Revival*.

educational modernisms of Ma Bufang, Sherap Gyatso, and the early Maoist state, to the Tu and Tibetan villagers' refusal to send their sons to government schools lest they 'become Han Chinese.' While scholars have rightly noted that these school systems play 'a privileged role in executing China's national integration,' others have emphasized the ways that PRC school curricula have, paradoxically, propagated a broad awareness of Tibetan national identity.¹⁰⁸ With a relatively liberal political environment compared to other Tibetan administrative regions in the PRC, and shaped by local cadres and intellectuals, Amdo school systems would become increasingly 'Tibeticized' in content and language of instruction over the course of the 1990s and 2000s.¹⁰⁹ The result of this blossoming of primary schools, universities, and monasteries would be a generation of highly-educated young Tibetan-speakers, and a renaissance of both traditional and modernist Tibetan cultural, literary, and intellectual life in Amdo.

Using All our Strength to Resolve Pasture Disputes

After I was exonerated, the organization first made me a member of the Political Consultative Conference. In fact I spent very little time in that position, and didn't do much work there. In June 1980, Tongren County created a People's Standing Committee, and I was made the vice-director. In the four years I spent as the vice-director of the County People's Standing Committee, I was mostly delegated to work on dealing with pasture disputes.

I remember that the first such dispute I dealt with in my new capacity was in August of that year. The dispute was between Gartsé in Tongren County and Gengya in Xiahe County. These two places shared a border several tens of *li* (half-kilometers) in length, and the dispute had been going on for a long time. Over the course of history, many incidents of violence had erupted because of these disagreements, and many people had been killed in these family feuds on both sides, such that there was a deep hatred and resentment. This dispute had been mediated several times before, before the liberation by the great Aröl-Tsang lama, and afterwards by the secretary of the Tongren county prefectural standing committee Du Hua'an and the county head Trashi Namgyel, as well as others. But these mediations were immediately violated, and those violations were again mediated, and so on back and forth, now dying down and now erupting again.

At that time, the Tongren County Committee asked the county head Sanggyé and myself to take on the responsibility of dealing with this. Sanggyé and I went to Xiahe County six times in the course of this mediation. Finally, we agreed that the lamas of Labrang and Rongwo monasteries would mediate, hosted by the governments of the two counties. After the principles of the conflict mediation had been set down, Sanggyé and I went with some work team to inspect the disputed areas along the borders of the two counties. We stayed near the border on the Xiahe County side, and the work team from Xiahe stayed on the Tongren side. The main members of the Xiahe County conflict resolution team were: Xiahe County head Drölkar, the Dewa-tsang lama of Labrang monastery, Gungru Khandroma, and Dukkar Sapel. The lamas from Rongwo monastery in Tongren county included the Sertri-tsang, the Khaso-tsang, Rongwo-tsang, and the Böngya lamas.

The mediation work was very difficult, and there was much factionalism at the negotiating table. For an entire month, either they were arguing, or they had scattered off in anger. The relations between the cadres on both sides were very tense, and even the relationships between the lamas were rather unharmonious. For over a week at one point the two sides had no communication and were not speaking, and some of the lamas had returned to their monasteries. We worked on both sides,

¹⁰⁸ Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 261; quoted in Zenz, "Beyond Assimilation," 293. For the paradoxical role of PRC education in fostering Tibetan national identity, see Upton, "Development of Modern Tibetan Language Education," 306-12. Kolås and Thowsen, *On the Margins of Tibet*, 93-4.

¹⁰⁹ See Zenz, "Beyond Assimilation."

emphasizing that we must maintain unity, and resolve the dispute according to the principles of fairness. We asked the lamas who had departed to return, and tried to make peace between those cadres whose sentiments had become severe, until everyone was once more at the table negotiating.

At the same time, we were working hard to find a good policy for resolving such pasture disputes. We came to the conclusion that such disputes would repeatedly break out due to a lack of fairness. Both sides were trying to get the better of the other, and in fact they would frequently swap place names for this reason. For example, both sides had a place called Nyakka Marro ('Red Gulch'), but in fact the location was not the same, with one above and the other below, separated by about three kilometers. If we were to only listen to one side in drawing the border, then the resulting pasture-lines would be biased. In this way, one side would attempt to get the better of the other, and the side that had got the worst would certainly not respect the agreement. In this way the seeds for further eruptions were sewn, and thus year in and year out there was feuding, conflict, and unrest. In order to prevent this kind of malady, we would repeatedly hold discussions with both sides, and eventually drew the line in between the two disputed places called Nyakka Marro, and the new border was agreed on. Only in this way did we reach a reasonable conclusion to this years-long pasture dispute.

Once the negotiations had succeeded, we drew up bilingual written agreements in both Chinese and Tibetan. The cadres, lamas, and representatives of the masses all shook hands and made up, and presented each other with *kbatak* and toasts at a banquet of reconciliation. Representatives of the masses from both sides also presented *kbatak* to the cadres and lamas in order to express their thanks. The entire scene was extremely harmonious, with representatives of the cadres, lamas, and masses all expressing their happiness and satisfaction, overflowing with a sense of warm unity and friendship.

From the start of this mediation, we had encountered impasses in our negotiations. We experienced how, in order to break these impasses and move towards a resolution, one must have patience and fairness, and one must zealously carry out the Party's policies and the nation's laws, and one must work towards the benefit of the masses on both sides of the dispute. Moreover, one must 'keep on chiseling and not give up,' labor tirelessly at the task, be able to suffer injustice, and be patient in difficulties. Our negotiations took place during the rainy season on the grasslands, and many of our workers suffered from illness during their labors, which was very moving to the masses. The herders told us: 'You've been trying to help us solve this problem with all your hearts, so we will treat you with honesty - all of us want to live peacefully.' Some of the herders came up with ideas for us. When we were surveying plots of land and fixing the borders, many of the masses were not willing to attend, but instead left the cadres and lamas to do the work. When we surveyed their ideas on the matter, it allowed the surveying and border-demarkation work to go much more smoothly.

Because this mediation work was done very soundly, thirty years have gone by from 1980 to today, and no incidents have broken the peace. The masses on both sides have indeed been able to spend their days in peace. Resolving pasture disputes is an extremely prickly work, and it's not the case that once any agreement is made, the results last forever. If both sides are compliant when the agreement is made, this means that the mediation has gone relatively well, and a lasting peace might have been achieved. But if one side is jumping with joy and the other is silent, this means that the agreement is defective, and won't last for long. This has been my historical experience.

In October 1980, the county government sent the Böngya lama and me to mediate the pasture dispute between the Zho'ongchi commune and brigade and the brigade of Awar Te'u of the Gartsé commune. This dispute had extended for over a hundred years, and many battles had been fought, resulting in the deaths of at least ten people. In the fifties there had been one incident in which four people were beaten to death, and as such the conflict and mutual hatred were very deep. The county

government had undertaken many mediation attempts, and four prior written agreements had been drawn up. Some of these agreements conflicted with each other, and were severely lacking in any kind of real basis among the masses.

Resolving such a dispute was no simple task. We first gathered together cadres and masses from both sides for a conference, and had them discuss the history of this dispute, which lasted for half a month. While we were listening to their narratives, we also undertook our own detailed investigations. This investigative work was quite difficult. The cadres had arranged with the masses beforehand, asking all of them to claim that the disputed pasture was theirs. Many of the masses didn't dare tell us the truth, and some flatly claimed they didn't know. After this, we required that both sides choose fifteen representatives for a new conference. These discussions lasted for twenty days without any result. At that point we posed two questions to them: First, why had so many people died in the past? Second, how could such deaths be prevented in the future? Both sides replied that it was very simple: The pastures belonged to them, it was simply that the opposite side would not allow them to access their own lands, and so conflict was inevitable. If the pastures were returned, then the dispute would end. If both sides claimed that the disputed land was theirs, then whose was it in fact? Only by putting backbone into our investigations could we get to the truth.

After a while, we realized that an elderly herder from Awar Te'u in Gartsé was highly respected and listened to by the masses, while an old vice-secretary from Zho'ongchi named Shawo had the best understanding of the situation. These two people were key to resolving the dispute. Thus we separately sought out these two for talks. We explained the policies towards mediation and our difficulties, and earnestly asked for their help. After three or four interviews, finally they began to talk to us and tell the truth. The old man from Te'u's nephew had in fact been killed in the feuding - we asked him whether it was better that this feud go on, or whether it was better that it end. In this way we moved him, and finally he explained to us the location of the traditional border, and told us that if we were to draw the border here, neither side would seriously dispute it. Shawo from Sho'ongchi also came clean, and his account of the border was basically in agreement with that of the old man from Te'u. This confirmed that they knew the original situation, and that they were telling the truth.

Afterwards, with the information supplied by these two elders, we interviewed more people, and heard their thoughts on the matter. After integrating all of these perspectives, we felt that our eyes had been opened, and we had something to hold on to in drawing the boundary. Finally, after getting the agreement of the county standing committee and government, we convened a three-way conference between the lamas, representatives of the masses, and the village and township level cadres, and promulgated the text of the mediation agreement. We asked the Böngya lama and the Gartsé lama to confirm the border, and convened a great conciliation meeting. In this way the pasture dispute reached a satisfactory conclusion. In the more than twenty years since, the two sides have harmoniously coexisted, abiding by the agreement. That no incidents have occurred which might influence the peaceful unity demonstrates the success of this mediation.

After this, along with several relevant leaders from the prefectural and county levels, I was delegated by the Tongren county standing committee and government to succeed as a mediator in the dispute between Changlung pastoral brigade in Chukhok township and Luchu brigade in Gartsé township, as well as that between Changkya in Chukhok township and Sonak.

Because pastures are the basic resource that herders depend on for life, relied on by generation after generation for their basic existence, the success or failure of these mediation has results for the unity both between and within nationalities, as well as the social stability and economic development of the grassland regions. After the Reforms and Opening, the conflicts and problems which had been pushed underground or suppressed during the Cultural Revolution once again burst out. In particular,

when one boundary dispute had died down another would break out, causing difficulties for the Party committees and government work. In order to muster our strength and perform this work, in 1984, the prefecture established a working group for boundaries, and I was made the director. From 1984 to 1986 I worked in this Prefectural Boundaries Office.

In the two years I spent in this position, I was principally involved in mediating the disputes between Chakor township in Zeku County and Drakmar township in Henan County, between Drakmar township and Sonak brigade of Chadar township in Zeku, between Khösun township of Henan County and Nyima township of Machu County in Gansu Province, between Nyinta township of Henan County and the sheep stud farms in Machu County, between Dokarmo Township in Zeku County and Drakmar township, between Kasok brigade of Tsenmo Township in Tongren County and Meshül Brigade of Topten Township in Zeku county, between Böngya Family Township of Tongde County in Hainan Prefecture [sic] and the Nyinchuk Commune of Zeku County, and between Lönchö Township in Tongren County and the Yönru brigade of Chentsa-tang township in Chentsa County.

Of all of these pasture disputes, one that was brought to a relatively successful conclusion was that between Chentsa-tang township in Chentsa County and Lönchö Township in Tongren. In 1985, we invited cadres and representatives of the masses from both sides for a reconciliation conference at the prefectural military district guesthouse. We also invited the Yershong lama, who was at the time the acting chairman of the prefectural standing committee.

The Yershong lama spoke very harshly, and some of the masses couldn't take it. They said, 'You're a lama, we listen to you about scriptures, but if you tell us to give up our pastures, what will we eat?'

The lama asked them, 'How will the masses develop production if you're always fighting and having feuds? How can anyone have peace this way?'

Through the persuasion and the tough love of this lama, we finally convinced both sides to lay down their prior hatred, shake hands and make up, and go on to live in peaceful unity and common development.

Of all these pasture disputes, one which was relatively complex, but which was also an exemplary model of the mediation process, was the dispute between Chakor Township of Zeku County and Drakmar Township of Henan County. The border between these two townships was quite long, from east to west about twenty kilometers. The feud had also been going on for a long time, beginning in the 1880s and continuing over the entire twentieth century, with countless people killed and wounded over this hundred-year period. Almost every year in the late summer and autumn, mobs would gather, and a scheduled battle would occur, sometimes even involving guns and grenades. Raiding and stealing livestock across the border was an even more common occurrence. It was one of the oldest and greatest of all the pasture disputes in Huangnan Prefecture.

In order to mediate this dispute that severely threatened the peace and unity of the Prefecture, on the one hand we propagated Party discipline and national law, as well as the guiding principles, and on the other hand we undertook an investigation of the history and present situation of the disputed area. We also invited the Shingza Kelzang-tsang lama and the Khaso-tsang lama to do on-site work with the masses. On the basis of this vigorously-undertaken work, we made multiple trips to the disputed area to assess the situation and verify the toponyms and landforms.

Some old nomads provided us with accurate information about the customary boundaries for herding and other information. For instance, both sides disputed the place called Metok-gang Lam ('Flower-Ridge Path'). People from the Zeku side of the border said that there was a small meadow on the north side of Metok-gang Lam that was their historical pasture-land. Because this region extended as a sort of peninsula into the pastures of Henan County, and it was extremely easy for yaks

and sheep pastured there to wander across the border and graze. Because of this problem, the herders from Zeku didn't dare bring their flocks there, and the herders from the Henan side resolutely claimed that this pasture was in fact theirs. Finally, we decided that this chunk of pasture should be made a common grazing area.

After the agreement was promulgated, neither side raised any objection. After this, both sides were at peace and no other incidents occurred, and they lived together harmoniously. This demonstrates that this boundary-agreement was basically equitable, and it has stood the test of time.

In the success or failure of these mediations, the attitude of the cadres from both sides, and especially the head cadres, is of great importance, even playing a decisive role.¹¹⁰ In fact, the proximate cause of many of these disputes has to do with the local cadres. If they resolutely follow the guiding policies of the Party and nation, and work according to the laws and regulations, then few such disputes will break out, and those that do break out will be easy to resolve. If, whether consciously or unconsciously, they turn themselves into the feudal chieftains of old, and intentionally or unintentionally seize the pastures of their neighbors, then these pasture disputes will become impossible to end, and cause the masses on both sides to experience great losses and disasters.

A clear example of this is the failure of the mediation work which we undertook in 1980 to solve the dispute between the Kasok brigade of Tsenmo township of Tongren County and Meshül brigade of Topden township of Zeku County. At the time, we invited as mediator Bagyel, the previous headman of Hor and the vice-chairman of the Prefectural Consultative Committee. Bagyel was over seventy years old, and despite the fact that he was elderly and frail, he accompanied everyone else in doing local investigations, convening meetings of the masses. He patiently worked at educating the masses, and did many other aspects of the work, until both sides reached an agreement. Before the agreement was promulgated, we communicated the contents to the secretaries of the communes on both sides, and prepared for the promulgation ceremony, which was to be a great meeting and reconciliation-banquet.

To our surprise, before the promulgation ceremony, the representatives of Meshül slipped away and disappeared. When we heard the news, we went to their quarters, but found them deserted. The secretary of the Topden commune told us that the masses had all left, and when we demanded to know why, he said he didn't know. We found it very strange, and only afterwards did we find out that this commune secretary had been working against us. He had told the masses that the terms of the agreement were unacceptable, and that they should leave now, and see what happened afterwards. From this, one can clearly see that in mediation work, the quality of the cadres involved is of great importance.

Receiving the Tenth Pañchen Lama on his Inspection Tour of Huangnan

In October 1980, Erdeni Chökyi Gyeltsen, the Tenth Pañchen Lama and a National Standing Committee Member, arrived for an inspection tour in Tongren. In order to properly receive him, Huangnan prefecture arranged a united reception unit. The unit head was the prefectural committee secretary, Trashi Nyima, and the vice-heads were the vice-secretary Tsering and the vice prefectural

¹¹⁰ I removed several sentences here, because they duplicate verbatim an earlier passage, and add nothing new in context. 'After I was restituted to my original status, whether I was in the People's Standing Committee of Tongren County or whether I was in the Prefectural Boundaries Office, the important work of which I was in charge was these pasture disputes. Because the pasture is the basic resource that herders depend on for life, relied on by generation after generation for their basic existence, the success or failure of these mediation has results for the unity both between and within nationalities, as well as the social stability and economic development of the grassland regions.'

head Pang Yisheng. Unit members included myself, the Tongren committee vice-secretary Güntar Gyel, and others.

The reception was considered extremely important, without historical precedent. Over ten thousand people attended the reception activities. Organized welcome delegations from the Rongwo gorge, from Mepa, from Bao'an, from Wutun, from Te'u were all lined up for thirty kilometers along the road to Rongwo town. There were common people, both farmers and nomads, cadres from all the relevant departments, soldiers and officers from the military, and students and teachers from the schools. Monks from every sect put on the clothing that they wore only for the most important rituals, playing melodious Buddhist music, joyfully rushing towards the very earth that the Great Master had walked upon. Tibetan women offered silk scarves in the five auspicious colors, singing beautiful songs of prayer. Many people were so emotional that their faces were streaming with tears, some sobbing in great wails.

Racing horses and firing off guns is the Tibetan way of welcoming their most important guests. An escort of several thousand riders carrying guns came out to welcome the Pañchen Lama, all arranged in formation along the road, making a spectacular sight. The crowds were throwing silk scarves towards the Pañchen Lama and kowtowing on the ground. There were so many people that nobody could get near him, and so people in the back would hurl their scarves towards the little car he was in. Many people charged forward to strike their heads on the side of his car to show their devotion. The master was continually waving towards the masses in their excitement to see him, and continually calling out – *'Chö demo yin lak!* 'Peace upon you!'

The masses from the villages along the route had set up *zhuktri* ('thrones') and erected tent-canopies over these, and set up offerings. In order to satisfy the religious feelings of the masses, whenever the master arrived at a place he would enter the *zhuktri* and sit for a while to receive the adoration of the masses. On that day, the people lining the road were as a never-ending brocade, and the villages were emptied of their people by the tens of thousands. People felt that to see the master was the most lucky, auspicious, and glorious event of their lives.

At dusk on that day, the Pañchen Lama arrived at Rongwo Monastery. The monastery had arranged the grandest possible religious ceremony to welcome him. The master chanted scriptures for a time in the great sūtra-hall of Rongwo Monastery, and then proceeded to the Prefectural Standing Committee to attend the welcome-banquet held by the committee and prefectural government. During the banquet, the Pañchen Lama gave a short speech. He said that in eighteen years he hadn't received such a great welcome, and he was deeply moved by everyone's warm and sumptuous reception. He went around each table making toasts to express his thanks.

The next day, the Pañchen Lama gave out tantric empowerments and blessed religious believers by rubbing their heads. The empowerments were held in a field of about ten *mu* [6.6 hectares] in area outside Sakyil Village. A *zhuktri* was fixed in the center of the field, and the masses all crowded around it. The empowerment began at about eight in the morning. The master ate lunch at noon, and after a short break it began again, and continued until dark. He rubbed the heads of the masses until his hands swelled up, and still he continued rubbing, such that the religious believers of the masses were extremely moved.

On the third day, the master convened a great meeting of the masses and cadres, and gave a long speech. He expressed sympathies to the masses and cadres of all nationalities, and fully explained the Party's nationalities and religious policies. He said that since the third plenary session of eleventh central committee, Qinghai Province had experienced great changes. Xunhua County and Huangnan Prefecture had a 'new sun and an unfamiliar moon,' and were making rapid progress. This was all due to the care and support given by the Party to the minority nationality regions, and due to the hard work and struggles of the masses and cadres of all nationalities. The master was extremely good at

speaking, and his spirit was also impressive. He spoke for an entire morning, or about four hours. He spoke of his own experiences, as well as the Central Government's political rehabilitation and restitution work.

He said that the mistakes of the leftists had affected everyone, that everyone had suffered wrongs. This was history, and we should let the past be past. We must unite together and look to the future, not be tied to the problems of history. We must strengthen the unity within both religion and nationalities, and we must strengthen the unity of the peoples of all nationalities. Religion must also accommodate social development - we must emphasize freedom of belief, the equality of religious sects. We cannot return to the feudal privileges of the past, nor the old systems of exploitation.

That afternoon, the master went to the Prefectural Nationalities Teachers-Training School, the Prefectural Hospital, the Prefectural Defense School, the Prefectural Tibetan Medical Academy, and the Tongren County Nationalities Middle School for an inspection tour, in order to visit both old cadres and the teachers and students in the schools. After the inspection tour was finished, he convened a lecture session attended by all nationalities in the Prefectural Consultative Committee, and heard in detail everyone's thoughts on the implementation of the new policies. Afterwards, he sat for a group photo with everyone in the lecture session.

During the time the Pañchen Lama was in Huangnan, I accompanied him for the entire duration of his tours, and was together with him every day. One day he asked me where I lived, and said that he wanted to visit my home to see. I thus invited the master into my house to sit. When the master saw that the furnishings of my house were very simple, and that my life was quite austere, he asked his attendants to bring him some rice, and scattered three big handfuls, chanting prayers as he did so. The meaning of this was to wish me auspiciousness and a good life.

At that time, when my wife Namtso poured him milk tea, he noticed that my wife's clothing was different from that of others. He asked: 'What are these clothes? I've never seen them before.' He even asked Namtso to turn around so that he could look at them in detail.

I explained, 'These are our traditional clothes of our nationality, the Tongren Tu.'

'How many people wear such clothes? How many villages?'

I said, 'Many people wear them. There are four villages, called the Four Forts of Tongren.'

He asked, 'What kind of clothes do men wear?'

I said, 'Men wear Tibetan-style clothes.'

His attitude was very relaxed, and he was very friendly and easy to approach, and interacted with people in a direct and friendly manner.

The Pañchen Lama's inspection work in Huangnan was extremely busy. On the one hand he gave religious believers empowerments and blessings by rubbing heads, while on the other he attended visiting tours, lectures, and discussions, and did inspection and fact-finding work. He rested only after midnight every night. Usually when I went to see him at six o'clock every morning, he'd already long-since put on his clothes and was preparing for work.

One morning he sent me out to the gate to see if there were people waiting to have their heads rubbed for a blessing. When I went out to have a look, people were already lining up in an immense line, there must have been five or six hundred of them. The Pañchen Lama seized the opportunity to rub all of their heads - when it was time for him to leave for a meeting, in order to get all of them he walked out still rubbing heads as he went. Another time, when he was rubbing heads at his lodgings, the money donated by the masses had grown into a great pile. He had me take this money to the gate and scatter it outside for those of the masses who were in difficulties. He was very sympathetic to those elderly and sick individuals who were brought for his blessing - beyond comforting them himself, he would have his attendants bring money for them. He urged them to say *mani* prayers, and blessed them so that their lives would get better. Sometimes he would use both hands to rub the heads of the

masses, in order to express his respect and care for them. With lamas and elderly monks he would touch heads as equals, showing his humility.

In those days, some lamas would simply hit people's heads with a ball made of scripture texts suspended from a stick, and this was considered rubbing heads. The Pañchen Lama, however, used his own two hands to rub heads from beginning to end. By the time half a day had gone by, his hands were covered in grease, but he didn't shy away from the dirt. Sometimes this went on for so long that the Master's right arm would become swollen and stiff, and he would have his attendants support his arm so that he could continue to give blessings. His attendants would often urge him to rest, but he would continue until he had rubbed every head. His words and behavior left a deep impression on all of us.

During the period when the Pañchen Lama was in Huangnan, he was continually emphasizing the need to love the country, love the Buddhist teachings, and love the people, and to treasure the unity of nationalities and the unity of the fatherland. Whether giving speeches at great assemblies or holding discussions in small meetings, he constantly stressed that we should unite the love of the country, of the Buddhist teachings, and the people. He especially warned the minority nationality cadres that they must cleave to the leadership of the Communist Party of China, and that they must protect the unity of the fatherland, and warmly embrace socialism. He said that historically, these places of ours belonged to China, and we Tibetans are important members of the Chinese nation. Over the long years and moons of history, all of our nationalities had shared joys and sufferings, and had together built the great family that is China. But we must fear separatism, fear being like a bowl of sand, easily scattered. It was because of we had not been strong and united that all of China's nationalities had in the past suffered severe oppression by foreign powers. If all of nationalities are able to unite, then we will have incomparably great strength, and we will be able to do glorious things to benefit the nation and the people. Thus we must love and protect the nation and its political and nationalities' unity as we would our own eyeballs, and we must resolutely oppose any activities that divide nationalities or the nation.

He also said that the main way to unify the country is to fully implement the Party's policy towards nationalities and religion, and to make the warm feelings of the Party and the nation felt in actuality. We must make minority nationality cadres feel the necessity of uniting with the Han. Only when each nationality was so close that there was no space between them could the unity of the nation have a reliable guarantee. Moreover, equality between the nationalities is the basis of their unity, and each nationality must respect and assist the others. They must certainly not have prejudice or attack the others.

Summarizing our experience of fully implementing the Party's nationalities policy since liberation, he said: 'Since the liberation, under the Party's policy of equality between the nationalities, each nationality has grown and become strong by mutual interaction based on these principles of equality, and their mutual affection has grown strong and stronger. This is in accordance with the nation's guiding policies, in accordance with the hopes of the masses of the people, and in accordance with the tide of historical development.'

In various fora, he clearly expressed: 'We must love the Communist Party, love the fatherland, and love our own nationality.' He repeatedly asked Tibetan cadres to speak on the behalf of the Tibetan masses, and to do good deeds, and not to rub dirt in the face of our own nationality. He also said that they should respect the people of our brother nationalities, and not speak any words or perform any actions which might harm the unity of the nationalities. At one meeting of people from religious backgrounds, he said: 'It doesn't matter how many monasteries there are. What matters is that they inherit and propagate the principles of Buddhism, and that they become places where Buddhists do away with evil and spread goodness, so that they benefit oneself and others. It doesn't

matter how many monks there are. What matters is that they are disciplined and energetic, that they practice good deeds and cultivate merit, that they transform all sentient beings through teaching, and that they strive to reach true *bodhi*?

Although this short period of interacting with the Pañchen Lama is already twenty-six years in the past, yet his kind and goodly countenance, his every word and action, his great personal character, and his high moral stature are all vivid before my eyes as the bright sky. His spirit of patriotism and selfless work touched me to my core, and opened my eyes and heart. Without doubt he was an exceptional patriot, a religious leader of integrity, and an upright campaigner for the nation. He is a model from which people of all nationalities can learn.

While the Pañchen Lama was touring Huangnan, the thoughts and feelings of the cadres and people were very complex, and many unstable elements were present, some of which had already had a negative influence on the Reform and Opening and on the unity of nationalities. After he had visited Huangnan, through his propaganda work and teaching, he greatly ameliorated and calmed the political atmosphere, and soon a healthy feeling of peace and unity returned. This is the greatest gift which the Tenth Pañchen Lama gave to the people of all nationalities in Huangnan, and his enduring positive legacy.

I Become the Deputy Director of the Prefectural Standing Committee

On September 30th of 1986, at the ninth People's Congress of Huangnan Prefecture, I was selected to be the deputy director of the Prefectural Standing Committee, as well as the director of the Standing Committee on Nationalities and Religion. I continued in these posts until my retirement in May 1995.

In my period at the Committee, I was mainly delegated to work on education, and on nationalities and religion. These two types of work were very important, and from my perspective relatively familiar - these were a few of the main things at which I have worked in this life. After the third plenary session of eleventh central committee, government and Party organizations from the central to the local levels all put emphasis on implementing the Party's nationalities and religion policies. Because of my special identity and experiences, already in the 1980s I was involved in the re-opening of monasteries across the entire prefecture, as well as involved in managing the reincarnation of lamas. Because nationalities and religion work had suffered relatively serious disruptions from leftist thinking, for minority nationality areas in the wake of the Reforms and Opening this work became the long-neglected main task awaiting revival. Most of the monasteries had been ruined during the Cultural Revolution, and the Buddhist statues and religious implements had all been destroyed. Only by rapidly repairing these and restoring religious facilities could the needs of the religious life of the masses of believers be satisfied. Only by fully implementing the Party's nationalities and religion policies, could we achieve peaceful unity and develop production.

At the time, the central government had sent professor Wang Yao to survey the implementation of the minorities' religions policy in Huangnan. He was also to direct the rehabilitation of the Shar-tsang lama of Rongwo monastery, who had been the first provincial governor of Huangnan. Wang Yao convened a meeting of the cadres at the Prefectural Standing Committee, and discussed many of the problems pertaining to implementing the nationalities and religion policy. This talk was extremely useful in spurring on the implementation of these policies in Huangnan. According to the spirit of these policies, the Prefectural Committee decided to re-open the great monastery of Rongwo, and appointed me to be responsible for bringing monks into the monastery, as well as the question of the lamas reincarnation.

I did a thorough investigation of the situation at Rongwo Monastery. I decided that the first problem in re-opening the monastery was to find an abbot. Unfortunately, the seventh Shar-tsang lama had already passed away, and the eighth incarnation had not yet been found. I decided that it was appropriate that the relatively prestigious Sertri Lama would take up the abbacy, while the Khaso-tsang lama would be the vice-abbot.¹¹¹ After canvassing the *akhu* (monks) and the other lamas, everyone agreed to this plan. At that time, all of the large monastery halls had been taken over by various work units. According to the decisions of the Prefectural Standing Committee, I mobilized members of the masses from the nearby communes to help move furniture, clean out the rooms, and in this way the requisitioned monastery halls were quickly usable. Many of the cadres and masses still had doubts about these new religious policies, and so I undertook propaganda teaching work among them, and was able to dispel the doubts in their thinking.

On the eve of the re-opening of the monastery, I sought out the Khaso-tsang lama Nyingchak Cham, as well as Jamo Akhu, and others for a discussion. These were the most prestigious old monks of Rongwo monastery, and their mode of thought was relatively traditional.

They asked me: 'You're not really opening the monastery again? If it's to be like previous times, when they opened it and then closed it, then we'll stay at home and chant scriptures there. If you're really opening it, then we'll truly support the government's work in this.'

They put forth three conditions: First, that the *Vinaya* code of monastic discipline be imposed; second, that they be able to keep the *Yarné*, which is the meditation retreat from the fifteenth day of the sixth month to the thirtieth day of the seventh month; and third, that they would be allowed to perform their ceremonies in peace. We felt that these three conditions were reasonable, and we gave them our agreement.

Through this kind of close and careful work, the policy of re-opening Rongwo monastery went according to plan. On the thirteenth day of the first month of 1980 it was formally opened, and a traditional *mönlam* prayer-festival was held. Tens of thousands of religious professionals and believers from the masses were in attendance.

After the monastery was re-opened, two main problems faced us. The first was that the number of *akhu* in the monastery was over the limits, and the second was that many of them were youths under the age of eighteen. In the latter case, the requirements of the policies and the requirements of the monastery were not in accordance. The monastery felt that it was best if monks entered the monastery when young, for older people were more influenced by lay life, and were less able to take to the discipline. Through negotiations, we were able to deal with the problem of child monks in a flexible way. For those young *akhu* who were caring for elderly monks, and those of good quality who were studying Tibetan medicine, the policy could be somewhat lenient. For everyone else, however, through persuasion and teaching we had all of the monks under the age of eighteen return home and take up their studies again. They received compulsory education and were to vigorously study cultural knowledge.

As for the question of there being too many monks, we undertook propaganda work explaining the Party's policies and common sense to the masses, emphasizing that if too many monks entered the monastery they would increase the burden on the masses, and have negative influence on the development of production. The results demonstrated that if only this work is undertaken in earnest, all such problems can be resolved.

There were also some youths who were staying at home and not studying. These had no liking for labor, and so they entered the monastery as *akhu*, but did not study the scriptures or obey the

¹¹¹ There seems to be some misunderstanding here, possibly on the part of Shawo Tsering's Chinese editors. The *sertri* was not a reincarnated lama-lineage, as the text implies, but a position at Rongwo equivalent to treasurer and head fundraiser. The text probably refers to the Sixth Dzongchung lama (see: Caple, *Morality and Monastic Revival*, 36).

monastic discipline, with very negative consequences. I boldly undertook criticism and teaching towards them, and very quickly they turned around, and received a high evaluation by both the monastery and the masses.

Nationalities and religion work is very broad-ranging, and it is always involved with other types of work. To do this sort of work, us minority nationality cadres have a certain advantage, but we must work diligently along with the power of the Party and the government, and we cannot simply allow evil behaviors to pass by unremarked on. Some cadres feel quite intimidated by this type of problem, and are unable to do such work with confidence and righteousness, for they lack their own sense of principle. The Party and the nation established the autonomy of the minority nationality areas in order allow cadres of a particular nationality to govern the affairs of that nationality. If you do not govern, or you are unwilling to govern, then you have abandoned your responsibilities. In this you have not fulfilled the mission entrusted to you by the Party and the nation.

Beyond working diligently to implement the nationalities and religion policies of the entire prefecture, I was also working actively to assist the base-level cadres in my hometown to guarantee the normal religious activities there. I was born in Nyentok village of Tongren County. Most of the masses here believe in Tibetan Buddhism. According to the traditional customs of our village, on the twelfth day of the first month we hold a *mönlam* prayer-festival. Beyond just chanting scriptures, we also display a great Buddha-image on the mountain slope behind the monastery, which is popularly called 'sunning the Buddha.' The original brocade Buddha-image was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. In order to solve this problem, I assisted the village cadres in putting together some money, and also mobilized my friends in gathering over ten thousand *juan* to buy silk. We invited craftsmen to create a brocade Buddha, sixteen meters wide and twenty-four meters tall. This satisfied the worship needs of the masses. I once again assisted the village cadres in collecting money to craft a statue of Maitreya Buddha for the monastery, and I personally spent over eight thousand *juan* to purchase a full set of the Kagyür (Buddhist canon) from the Potala Palace in Central Tibet, and offered it to the Nyentok Monastery.

The people of Nyentok often pray to the god Erlang, and there is a temple to this god on the ridge behind the village. Originally there was a bell in this temple, which was said to be many generations old, but in 1958 the bell was destroyed along with the temple. After the third plenary session of eleventh central committee, I assisted the villagers in having a new bell cast in Yongjing County of Gansu. We repaired the Erlang Temple, and had a statue of the deity made. We also put effort into resuming the 'Yutu' ritual dances, which have since been certified as a national-level intangible cultural heritage.

During the time I spent at the Standing Committee, the other main work I was involved in was nationalities education. Because of the sudden catastrophe of the Cultural Revolution, nationalities education work in Huangnan had been severely crippled, and the situation was quite deplorable. Investigating the current state of education, reviving nationalities education, and improving the cultural quality of the nationality became the urgent tasks before us. In order to 'loose the arrow' of nationalities' education in the Huangnan Autonomous Prefecture, I became director a work group, together with Lhagyel, who was the acting director of the Prefectural Bureau of Education. We did a comprehensive survey of the education situation in every village and grazing area in the prefecture. The main objects of our survey were: (1) damaged buildings, (2) educational quality, (3) school management, and (4) the financial situation.

During the course of this survey we discovered many practical problems. The first was that most of the classrooms and dormitories for the teachers were old buildings from the 1950s. The windows were often broken, the walls were cracking, in some cases the entire buildings were

collapsing, with rain coming in through the roofs, such that it would be dangerous to have class inside. Some places didn't have enough classrooms, and would hold class in the courtyards. In other areas, two grades of students had to share a single classroom - while one grade was doing their homework in the classroom, the other would be having class in the courtyard. Some schools didn't have benches for the students to sit on, and the students would sit on earthen blocks, and the desks were very old and rotten. For instance, in the elementary school of Chisa village in Chukhok, the blackboard was hung on the wall in the courtyard, and the students would all sit on the ground and listen to the teacher lecturing.

The second problem was that there were quite serious problems with the quality of education. The villages and grazing areas held classes every year, and every year they brought in new students, but no matter how many years went by, they produced few people who were competent to do even the accounting in the village commune. In point of fact the schools had become daycare centers, and when the students grew a bit older they would leave and return home to work. Most of the students didn't attend past the third or fourth grades, and very few reached the fifth or sixth. Most of the parents had only a very hazy conception of what was taught in these schools, and did not have a good understanding of the purpose of studying cultural knowledge. Many of them said that their students wouldn't become cadres by studying, and thus it was better for them to return home early and take up labor.

As for the teachers, many of them were lacking in any sense of responsibility towards their teaching, and they would 'be a monk for a day, toll the bell for a day.' Some of these teachers were quite careless and lax, and they would leave the school at random. Some would return home for long vacations, while others would return home on Friday and only get back to the school on Monday, so that in fact they would only hold four or five days of class in a week (back then, school was supposed to meet six days a week). Thus it was not guaranteed that classes were even being held according to schedule, and let alone the quality of the teaching.

The third problem was that the management of these schools was in chaos. Some portion of the students would not come to school for several days, and the school didn't go searching for them. When students showed up, they would then hold class with however many had appeared. The teachers only cared about holding class, they didn't care if the students learned anything, and they were even less diligent in correcting homework. Within the schools there was total freedom from any discipline. The system of management was faulty, such that there were no concrete regulations as to the quality of the teaching. No one was checking on the system of financial awards and fines, and of course these were not fulfilled.

The fourth problem was that these schools were severely lacking in daily operating funds. The school buildings had not been repaired in many years, and some of the more remote ones did not even have electricity, and relied on paraffin lamps to do paperwork, and some could not even buy oil for their lamps due to lack of funds. At the same time, because of these poor conditions, the body of teachers was quite unstable. Many teachers from other areas, due to not speaking the language, the bad transportation, the difficulties of living, and poor reception locally, were not satisfied with their work, and would use all sorts of methods to be transferred elsewhere. Because there was a shortage of qualified teachers in those days, these schools were completely unable to fulfill the basic needs of education.

On the basis of this investigation, we wrote a special report for the Standing Committee and the prefectural government, laying out in detail the education situation and the problems in need of resolution. Our first concern was from the ideological perspective, to practically increase the recognition of the importance of nationalities education. Our report given a high degree of importance by the prefectural Committee and government, and a written report was prepared and specially sent

to the provincial government. The prefectural bureau of education was given the task of planning concrete rectifications and reforms to address the problems in education across the entire prefecture, and proceed by set stages to solve these problems. The education budget was increased, and special funds were given to repair the damaged school buildings. At the same time, all bureaus and organizations across all the counties were urged to prioritize nationalities' education work, to strengthen the management of the schools, and to increase investment in education.

Due to the importance given to this by the Standing Committees and governments at the prefectural and county levels, after a few years of hard work, the issue of damaged buildings was solved across the entire prefecture. The classrooms and teachers' dormitories were completely renovated, and each school had constructed buildings of brick, concrete, and shingles. Some schools built new teaching buildings, which completely changed the prospects of the teaching conditions in these schools. The improvement in teaching conditions greatly increased the recognition and faith of the masses in teaching work, and a better atmosphere arose, in which both farmers and herders would voluntarily send their children to study. By the 1990s, over ninety-eight percent of children of school age in the prefecture were attending class, and it was common practice for both male and female children of both farming and herding families to diligently study cultural knowledge, representing a very great development in the education work.

During the same period, we also advised Lopzang and Trashi Nyima, the secretaries of the Prefectural Standing Committee, to open a new School of Sanitation and a Prefectural Nationalities' Highschool. Prefectural School of Sanitation trained a generation of base-level doctors and nurses, and most of the medical workers in the Township and Town level health centers were trained in this institution. Since the establishment of the Prefectural Nationalities Highschool, it has produced many outstanding students, and many of these have tested into professional training programs and universities, at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

In 1993, in order to learn from the experience of our fellow provinces, the Prefectural Standing Committee organized a visiting team to tour the country. I was made the team leader, while Lhagyel (at the time the vice-director of the Standing Committee) was the vice-leader. We made study-visits Beijing, Tianjin, and the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in the North-East.

The Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture left a deep impression on us. Not only were agriculture, light industry, and heavy industry all very developed in this region, but the undertaking of nationalities teaching was also very developed. During the time that we were visiting, one of the Han cadres told us the following anecdote. He said that when Han families had faced famine and disaster, they would bring their entire families along and leave home to beg. In the Korean families, however, the adults would go out to beg, but the children would remain to go to school, and the adults would never allow the children to beg with them. This demonstrates that the common people there all attach importance to the next generation's cultural education. All levels of the Party, Committees, and government in Yanbian also prioritize the work of nationalities' education. The single prefecture has three universities, and is known for this reason throughout the country. With the nationalities education developing at this quick rate, a great number of skilled people have been trained. Most of the staff at the several hospitals in the prefecture, as well as the scientists in the main technical organizations, are ethnic Koreans, and in fact the Hans there have become the nationality that is taken care of.

The sense of cooperation between the cadres and masses is very strong, and they put great emphasis on unity with their brother nationalities from outside, and they have especially united with the Hans to build a home together. Just because their own nationality's cultural education and economy are developed, they do not reject the brother nationalities which had once helped them;

instead they are so close to each other that there is no space between them, and are completely integrated. The degree of enlightenment, the quality of the citizens, the public morality and social atmosphere, and the spirited appearance are all very impressive. The economy is also flourishing and highly developed, with the yearly financial income of the Autonomous Prefecture roughly the same as the entirety of our Qinghai Province. The people there all say that cultural education is the key to developing the economy. My experiences in studying their teaching work left me inspired and encouraged.

Leading a Tibetan Opera Troupe on a Performance Tour of Ü-tsang

In August 1988, in order to propagate Tibetan cultural arts, Huangnan prefecture organized a 75-person performance troupe to go to Ü-tsang (Central Tibet), of which I was the leader. The vice-leaders were Norbu, the vice-director of the Prefectural Cultural Bureau, and Dorjé Tar, the director of the Prefectural Song-and-Dance Troupe. We visited Central Tibet in order to perform at the traditional Zhotön festival. Our Tibetan opera troupe received the warm welcome of the local government leaders in Ü-tsang, and a great banquet was held to welcome us. Tendzin, the vice-secretary of the Party-committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Tsenden Drölma, the vice-chairman of the Political Consultative Conference, accompanied us to attend the performance.

This year's Zhotön festival was very grand, with Lhasa city, all the nearby monasteries, as well as districts, counties, and townships from across Ü-tsang sending delegations and brigades to attend the performances. Beyond this, delegations from the provinces of Qinghai, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Gansu, and Inner Mongolia were all attending the events. Most of the time our troupe performed on the main stage, and the tickets could not keep up with the demand every day. The main act in our performance was the famous Tibetan Opera *Prince Norzang*, and all of our performances received a warm welcome from all levels of society in Ü-tsang. Dorjé Tsering, the secretary of the Autonomous Region, held a meeting with us and in his speech greatly praised our performance.

After we'd held nine performances in Lhasa, we were warmly invited by Zhikatsé City and Trashi Lhünpo Monastery, and we performed in the palace of the tenth Pañchen Lama. This was a very special opportunity, which showed the pleasure of all levels of society in Ü-tsang at our performance, and their respect for our performers.

One day, the secretary-general of the government of Qinghai Province remarked to me that this performance tour by the Huangnan Prefecture opera troupe had been extremely successful, and was being heard like a canon-shot all over the Tibet Autonomous Region, giving a bit of glow to Qinghai Province. Some businessmen from Qinghai who were in Ü-tsang had come to talk to him, and they'd proposed having a reception in the Norbu Lingka garden for people of different nationalities from Qinghai to have a bit of fun. Thus we hosted a reception for Qinghai people in the Norbu Lingka, and over two hundred people attended.

In total, we made over fifteen performances in Ü-tsang, and spent twenty days there. It was a great success, and we received the commendation of the Qinghai provincial government.

In September 1990, the eleventh Asian Games were held in Beijing. I represented Huangnan Prefecture in the delegations from Qinghai Province, and watched the opening ceremonies in the Beijing Sports Stadium, and heard in person Chairman Jiang Zemin's speech at the occasion. Together with the group, I also visited the Forbidden City, the Great Wall at Badaling, and a few other factories, mines, and industrial sites.

Chapter Five: Snippets of Life in Old Age

This chapter describes Shawa Tsering's family life after the Reform and Opening, and narrates his activities since retirement in 1995. Once again, the text mostly speaks for itself, but a brief note about the historical and political context of the book's publication is in order.

Shawa Tsering passed away in 2015, in his early eighties. By the time of his death, his village of Nyentok had been subsumed into the rapidly-expanding suburbs of Tongren, now an internet-age city of ritzy balal restaurants, high-rise apartment blocks, and Tibetan art galleries catering to rich Chinese buyers. A four-lane highway tunneling through the mountains and leaping gorges on pylons to the capital of Xining was nearing completion. Rongwo monastery had grown huge and wealthy, with hundreds of monks and a busy ceremonial schedule.

Yet Shawa Tsering ends the book with a plea: 'I hope that our nation [...] will not again experience the disaster of the "Leftist Storm." I hope that the people of all nationalities can grow harmonious and civilized together, and that those tragedies that destroyed our nation and brought disaster to our people will not again occur.' The book was published in May 2010. Two years prior, in March 2008, riots had broken out in Lhasa to mark the anniversary of the 1958-9 uprising and the Dalai Lama's flight to India. Protests spread across the entire Tibetan plateau, including Tongren. Hundreds were killed in the rioting and ensuing military crackdown, and thousands more arrested.¹¹² In February 2009, a young monk in nearby Ngawa set himself on fire in protest against the Chinese state, calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Between then 2019, 155 more would do the same.¹¹³ In the school system that Shawa Tsering built and re-built, and in others like it, Tibetan-language education has been steadily replaced by Chinese, leading among other things to protests in Tongren in 2010.¹¹⁴

Since the accession of Xi Jinping to Party leadership in 2013, the political climate in China's minority regions has steadily worsened, including most notably the genocidal mass-incarceration of Üyghürs in the PRC's far west.¹¹⁵ The Tibetan regions generally have seen growing surveillance, militarization, media censorship, and arrest and intimidation of activists.¹¹⁶ It is unlikely that Shawa Tsering's frank discussion of his experiences between 1958 and 1978 would be published in the PRC today.

Searching for the Girl I'd Loved, Forty Years Later

Whenever I hear the romantic song 'In That Far-off Place' by Wang Luobin, my old teacher at Kunlun Middle-school and now a famous musician, my thoughts cannot but fly back to that broad grassland without end on the shores of Qinghai Lake, fifty years ago. This is because on the Kangtsa grassland, which the song compares to a 'meadow of silver and gold,' I chanced to meet the daughter of a Tibetan chieftain, and played a part in a story of lingering and longing love.

I have already described how in 1949 when I fled up to the shores of Qinghai Lake, I stayed in the family of a hundred-household head, and how I fell in love with Tsedar Kyi, the daughter of the chieftain Sangdak. At the time both of us were betrothed to others, but we truly loved each other,

¹¹² See Department of Information and International Relations, *2008 Uprising in Tibet*; and Smith, *Tibet's Last Stand?* For the militarization of Tongren in the wake of the 2008 protests, see Makley, *The Battle for Fortune*, esp. 1-26.

¹¹³ Central Tibetan Administration, "Fact Sheet." See also John Whalen-Bridge, *Tibet on Fire*, and Tsering Wooser, *Tibet on Fire*.

¹¹⁴ Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy, "China Enforces Compulsory Mandarin Chinese Learning"; Human Rights Watch, "China's 'Bilingual Education' Policy." For an academic analysis of the debates around Tibetan-language schooling, see Clémence, "The Chinese Education System."

¹¹⁵ See Byler, et. al. ed., *Xinjiang Year Zero*, and Clarke ed., *The Xinjiang Emergency*.

¹¹⁶ Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy, *Surveillance and Censorship in Tibet*; Human Rights Watch, "'Illegal Organizations'."

and love can pull at the entrails and hook the stomach, so that it's hard to meet and hard to separate. When fate decreed that we should be separated, we could only face reality, accept the pain of parting, and give ourselves up to the torment of longing. After we left each other, sometimes the image appeared before my eyes of her sweet smile, of her lively and adorable face, or scenes of her bringing me tea and water to wash, her rolling out the beds and laying down blankets. I frequently thought of the oath she'd extracted from me before we were parted. I would think, when my fortunes turn around, and my life improves, I must go again to the bank of Qinghai Lake to see her. I would fulfill that longing, which had been denied for half a century.

Although it was a very long time until I could see her, that day did finally come. In 2002, I decided to go to Kangtsa to find her, together with my wife Namtso. Before I left, I tried to get news of her from a number of sources. I heard that after the Liberation, she had re-married on the eastern side of the lake, and was an employee at the Eastern-Shore Sheep Farm. We took a car to the pastures on the lakeside.

Just before we arrived at the farm, we saw an old woman working near the roadside. I got out of the car and asked her, 'Excuse me, do you know where Tsedar Kyi lives, who works at the Eastern-Shore Sheep Farm?'

She didn't immediately reply, but instead studied me carefully. After inspecting me closely for some time, she asked in reply, 'Are you Shawo Tsering?'

I told her that I was.

As soon as she heard it she grasped my hands, and with great emotion said, 'I thought I'd never see you again in this life. I truly never thought that in the years that I still have life I would see you.' By the time she'd got done saying this, her eyes were already full of tears. According to the customs of the place, when two very close people meet they could embrace, but we two were already old, and we were embarrassed to hug each other. When I introduced my wife Namtso, Tsedar Kyi quickly walked over and embraced her instead, with tears of emotion already flowing down her face.

Meeting again after such a long separation, both of us were filled with emotion. We went with her to her house, and she received us there with the best foods that a nomad can prepare. There was delicious mutton on the bone, milk tea and butter tea with a thick layer of golden butter poured on top. It all made me feel as if I could smell again the delicious scent of those long-ago cups of butter tea, and could see again the scene of her boiling tea and pouring the water. We ate mutton and drank milk tea, filling each other in on what had happened since we separated, deep in the happiness of reunion.

In 2003, my whole family went again for a trip to the lakeshore, and along the way we stopped to see Tsedar Kyi again. Her family was very kind to us. When I told my children about the things I had experienced fifty years before, although that era was far from us now, still these unforgettable stories were fresh before my eyes. In those fifty years, the social system of our country, the economic situation, the level of life for each nationality, have all experienced fundamental changes. Thinking of the past, and gazing at what is now before my eyes, the tide of my heart overflows, and my excitement will not cease.

'Letting Off My Remaining Steam'

After my retirement, according to my physical ability, I continued to work for the country and for the masses as much as I could. In 1998, a Tibetan Research Association was established in Xining City. There were over two hundred Association members, whose main task was to research Tibetan history, cultural arts, historical personages, and other topics in order to provide the Party and

government with materials for the cultural and economic development of the Tibetan nationality. I attended the Association meetings, and was made vice-secretary-general. I was also entrusted by the Association with the responsibility of creating 'nationalities auspiciousness' [decoration] and Tibetan-style stupas on the North Mountain in Xining. Others entrusted with this task included Rikbha, the previous head of Huangnan prefecture, as well as Drakpa, the previous principal of the Party school at Huangnan. The money for this mainly came from some lamas, as well as the assistance of members of the public. About 600,000 RMB was spent on the stupa, and it was completed in 2003 after three years of work. The project was very much welcomed by the people of Xining.

Under the 'Sunshine Project,' I also eagerly partook in a certain amount of work. In society at that time there were a number of people who suffered from cataracts, but were not able to find a doctor. One reason was that the cost of the operation was high, and many people could not afford it. Another reason was that some people, especially those who lived in the pastures or in the villages, found it difficult to get treatment due to problems of transportation and bad information. In Nepal there was a special international cataract eye surgery organization - the Tilganga Institute for Ophthalmology. Through contacts at the Tibetan Research Association, this organization would come to China every year to perform surgeries. I was given the responsibility of receiving them, and putting them in touch with cataract sufferers.

In 2002, under the leadership of the Institute director, the internationally famous specialist in ophthalmology Dr. Sanduk Ruit, thirteen members of the Tilganga Institute for Ophthalmology came for the second time to Qinghai to perform operations on cataract sufferers of all nationalities. Arranged by the Tibetan Research Association, in Huangnan Prefecture (including Xunhua) and then in Xining they were able to perform operations on more than six hundred people who had suffered from cataracts. In order to make this more convenient for the nomads, I asked the Medical Brigade to allow them to make the Huangnan Prefectural Hospital their working station. Just in 2002, over three hundred people from Huangnan were treated. Each surgery cost them a little over three hundred *yuan*, much cheaper than the usual domestic price of three thousand, and the rates of success were over ninety-nine percent. These activities of the Sunshine Project were very much welcomed by those suffering from disease.

In order to increase the English language levels among Tibetan youth, our Tibetan Research Association also created special Tibetan-English training groups. We invited a few foreign English teachers to give young Tibetan people classes, and to do various types of English practice. This project began in 2002, and has already gone through six semesters. The results of the training are very good, and the project has been very much welcomed by young Tibetans. Over three hundred people from these programs have already tested into all different types of universities, and two hundred more are enrolled in them now. I also participated in the survey and editing project of historical gazetteers from the Tibetan areas; this is a project with an immense amount of work to be done, and it will take many years to complete.

I feel that doing such work after my retirement, according to my abilities, has been helpful to my physical health, and has also been a good way to cultivate myself and to progress with the times. It has been comforting also that many leaders from different levels of government have expressed care about me in my old age, and have taken these projects, 'letting off my remaining steam,' very seriously. During the New Years when visits are made, they have taken extra care for me. In 2005, on the night before the Lunar New Year holiday began, I was visited at my home in Nyentok by Zhao Leji, the secretary of the provincial Party committee, Mr. Li, the secretary of the Huangnan Party committee, the prefectural governor Dorjé Tsering, and other leaders from the Party and government of Tongren County. They asked if my life was comfortable, if I had any thoughts on their work in the government, and in many different respects warmly looked after me. I am truly thankful for the care

of these organizations. I will decisively continue to ‘let off my remaining steam,’ and to happily pass my sunset years.

My Family Situation

From when I was released from prison in 1965 to early 1979, nearly fifteen years, I was unmarried. Most of this time I was living together with my younger brother Püntso, and we relied on each other for our livelihood. During this period many of my friends and family urged me to quickly remarry, to find a new wife and live a good life. However, in the face of the situation at that time, in which I had been labeled as one of the ‘Four Categories of People,’ and in which even my own actions were unfree, I knew that were I to marry a wife she would also be implicated in my supposed crimes, and it would be even more difficult for us to have a child. Thus I lived day by day, without any interest in marrying or starting a family. Whenever well-wishers tried to introduce a match for me, I would always graciously refuse, telling them: ‘As long as my political burden is not lifted, I will not marry.’

I was exonerated in March 1979, and in August I was restored to my original rank and position. After a period of resting at home, I went to work at my unit. Once I was working, at the urging of my friends, I drew up a ‘schedule of ceremonies’ for getting married, and after not long I had entered an agreement with my present wife, Namtso. Namtso was a woman from our village, at that time thirty-three years old. Her father Kelzang had also been one of the ‘Four Categories of People,’ and had done labor with me, and had often assisted me when we were in the mountains cutting firewood, and sometimes invited me to his house to eat. Our relationship was quite good, and everyone in their family had cared for me. In this way, Namtso and I had a relatively large amount of contact, and we both felt that we would be able to get along with the other.

The one problem was that our two houses had a blood-feud. Namtso's maternal grandfather was a hundred-household head from Nyentok, who with his brothers had murdered my father in 1938. There was intense opposition to the idea that Namtso and I would marry, but after much thought, I decided that in order to dispel the hatreds handed down to us by the previous generations, and not to let such feuds be passed on to the next, Namtso and I should become husband and wife. The two of us discussed it, and we did some ‘ideological work’ with our friends and relatives, and thus used our actions to create harmony between the two sides, and increase the unity of our entire village.

On the thirteenth day of the first month of 1980, Namtso and I held a proper wedding. Before the wedding I had built a small four-room house on an empty plot of land within the old walled town of Nyentok, and installed an earthen *kang*-bed there, which was to be our new home. The thirteenth was also the day that Rongwo Monastery was reopened. I was working in the monastery all day, and only returned home to eat after dark. Namtso heated up some pork-buns and *baijiu* liquor, and we ate until our hearts were warm and happy. In this way, my life finally took a better turn, and from then on we were a household. The months and years went past, and without noticing it, Namtso and I have now lived together for thirty years, and our children are already grown.

After I married, in order to take care of me, the Prefectural Committee arranged a proper job for my wife, and she worked until she retired in 2004. Now she lives with me in the city of Xining. We have three children.

Our eldest son Bandé Khar in 1997 became a correspondent at the prefectural People’s Consultative Committee. In 2002 he tested into the Prefectural Party School, and after he graduated he took the civil service exams. Now he works in the Food and Drug Inspection and Management Bureau. He is very respectful and caring towards me, frequently asking if I’m cold or hot, and comes

to see me two days out of three. His wife Trashi Tso works in the prefectural Bureau of Civil Affairs, and has graduated from university. She is caring and kind, full of filial respect, and is a daughter-in-law to be praised by all the neighbors. She has given us a little granddaughter, named Pelzang Drölma. She is eleven years old this year, in the fifth grade of elementary school. She is very lively and adorable, clever and witty, and we are extremely fond of her.

My daughter Pelmo graduated from the Provincial School of Sanitation, and was assigned to work in a hydroelectric company in Golmud. Unfortunately, she passed away in 2008.

Our younger son, Khabum Gyel, was born in April 1986, and in 2006 tested into the Lanzhou Institute of Chinese Medicine.

My younger brother Püntsok graduated from the Huangnan Prefectural Teachers' Training School in 1965. According to his specialty, he should have been sent to become a teacher after graduation, but because of his association with me, he was not assigned anything. He is an extremely honest person, and works very hard - he was an excellent student in the Teachers' Training School, and was an excellent farmer in the production brigade. After my problems were resolved, a policy for him was also implemented, and he was assigned to be a worker in the Tongren County cement factory. After another year, the organization sent him to be a cadre in the Tongren County Urban Construction Bureau. He worked in that position until he retired in 2004. His wife's name is Cham Kyi. She also graduated from the Prefectural Teachers' Training School, who was likewise not assigned any work due to my influence. Afterwards, she went to work at the Training School, and retired in 2003. They have two sons and three daughters, several of whom are working, and their family life is very happy.

My younger sister Pema Kyi was adopted by my friends in Changkya after I was sent to 'reform by labor' [sic] for the second time. Later on she married there, and is fifty-seven years old this year. She has three sons and one daughter. Her eldest son is a highly skilled painter of Tongren religious art. Her second son stays at home and does farm work while looking after his parents. The third son graduated from the Huangnan Prefectural Teachers' Training College, and is now an elementary school teacher at Tsenmo Hor in Tongren County. Her daughter graduated from the Qinghai Medical Academy in 2003, and became a doctor in the Qinghai Province Tibetan Medical Hospital. Although my sister suffered by her association with me, and was a homeless beggar in her childhood, yet on the bumpy road of life she faced difficulties and achieved success, and now her days are very happy.

Another person who was implicated by association with me was my uncle Tenpa Lhagyel. It was said that he had supported and protected me, and thus he was subjected to criticism many times. In 1962 he escaped to Gannan, where he met a friend, the *Kachu ritripa* (in Tibetan Buddhism, a monk who undertakes austerities) of Machu County. Later on, my uncle secretly brought my cousin Zöpa over to hide together with this high monk. Roughly ten years later (in about 1972), my uncle passed away, and Zöpa was taken in by this high monk. Later on Zöpa married a local woman and had three sons and four daughters, all of whom are now married with careers. The youngest son Tenpa became a monk, and he has achieved high status in the monastery. After the demise of the 'Gang of Four,' I and Zöpa's elder brother Tsekhön Gyel went to seek out and thank the high monk who had taken in our relatives in time of disaster. Today he is 94 years old, and is locally considered an extremely prestigious high monk, and has become the tutor to many traditional reincarnated lamas. After I was assigned a policy, my uncle was also rehabilitated.

My uncle's other nephew Sanggyé Bum is now sixty-eight years old, and is a very skilled brocade artist of Tongren *tangka* religious icons. He has five children. The eldest son Tsering Döndrup is a teacher at the Henan County middle school. The younger two sons and both daughters are also makers of brocade *tangka* icons, whose skill is truly out of the ordinary. Their whole family is very prosperous, and they have a good house of three courtyards, and a very lively family life.

Again because of his relationship to me, my elder cousin Jikmé Nyima suffered in many campaigns, and was cursed and struck, and for a long time didn't dare to raise his head up. After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, his life slowly got better. He was extremely skilled at traditional Tongren art, and in 2006 was acclaimed as a master artist by the State Council. His eldest son Kyaplo is a national-level cadre. His younger son Trashi has continued his father's trade, and his works one after the other have received provincial- and national-level awards, and today he is a member of the Qinghai Province Arts Consultative Council and the Folk Crafts Consultative Council.

My younger female cousin Jakmo has seven sons. Her third son Chöpel is also a painter, and his works have been awarded prizes by the Cultural Bureau. Today he is the director of the Nyentok Village Committee.

I have another younger male cousin named Jikmé. He was a cadre in the Tongren County education, science, and culture bureau, and is now retired. His family were originally poor and lower-middle peasants, but he also suffered from association with me. When I was made to wear the hat of one of the 'Four Categories of People,' he would also be pulled out and criticized along with me. Now his life is quite good, and his five children all have marriages and careers, and his days are full and happy.

All in all, all those relatives who suffered by their association with me are now 'holding their heads high and puffing vapors,' and living happy and prosperous lives.

Remembering those eventful months and years, and seeing today the effective policies and peace among peoples, how the 'sea is rich and the rivers clear,' I feel that it's truly a 'warbler's song and a swallow's dance,' that our glory eagerly awaits, and our future is of rich brocade. The Party's Reform and Opening period is better, the Party's 'strong nation, prosperous people' road is better, the Party's 'scientific development and harmonious society' policies are better. Especially those who are young should 'know they are lucky amidst such luck,' and treasure even more this irreversibly better age.

What I have said above is what I have personally experienced, the work that I have done over the entire course of my life, and what I have seen and heard. If anyone were to say that I have benefited the nation, society, or the people, then the merit should be to the leadership of the Party, to the support of the organization, to the collective planning and strength of my comrades, with whom I struggled together. That I had the luck to be released from prison, and once again experienced a second youth, and have peacefully spent my waning years, I must also sincerely thank the Communist Party of China, thank the People's Government, thank my family and friends, and thank the innumerable good people that I have met. I hope that our nation will have 'temperate winds and timely rain,' and that it will not again experience the disaster of the 'Leftist Storm.' I hope that the people of all nationalities can grow harmonious and civilized together, and that those tragedies that destroyed our nation and brought disaster to our people will not again occur.

For all good people, I wish you 'auspiciousness and success' -

Jixiang Ruyi!
Trashi Delek!

(These personal experiences were narrated by Shawo Tsering himself and recorded and set in order by Zhao Qingyang. The final text was composed by Zhao Shunlu.)

Appendix: Tibetan and Chinese Terms:

As noted in the Translator’s Introduction, the original Chinese text does not include Tibetan equivalents. Some of the names are well known (the Shar-tsang Lama lineage of Rongwo Monastery), while others are obscure and hard to reconstruct (*Hesang*, a poor villager in early 20th century Nyentok). The Tibetan names below were reconstructed with the help of a scholar from Tongren who wishes to be identified as Rikpé Yeshé, as well as by consulting dictionaries and a toponymical reference-book.¹¹⁷ Especially in the case of personal names, some of these reconstructions are conjectural and may be incorrect. In some cases different sources give different, equally credible spellings for Tibetan toponyms; I have noted variants as I have encountered them. The few words for which no obvious Tibetan original could be found (including several terms in Shawa Tsering’s native *Manegacha* language) are given in pinyin in *italics*.

Personal Names, Including Lama-Lineages

Name as it appears in the English text	Tibetan script	Pinyin (for non-Chinese names)	Chinese
Alak Böngyel	ཨ་ལགས་བོན་རྒྱལ	Wangjia Huofo	王家活佛
Arjia (Agya) Rinpoché	ཨ་རྒྱ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ	Ajia Huofo	阿嘉活佛
Aröl-tsang Lama	ཨ་རོ་ཨ་ཚང་ལ་མ	Aroucang Huofo	阿柔倉活佛
Bagyel	བ་རྒྱལ	Wajia	哇加
Bandé Cham	བན་ཏེ་བྱམས།	Wande Xian	完德先
Bandé Gyel	བན་ཏེ་རྒྱལ	Wande Jia	萬德加
Bandé Khar	བན་ཏེ་མཁར	Wande Ka	完德卡
Cham Kyi	བྱམས་རྒྱིད	Xian Ji	先吉
Champa Gyatso	བྱམས་པ་རྒྱ་མཚོ	Xianba Jiancuo	先巴尖措
Changsem	བྱང་ལེམས	Xiangsanmu	香三木
Chen	陳		
Chen Chengyin	陳承銀		
Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi)	蔣介石		
Chöbum Gyel	མཚོ་བོ་འབྲུག་རྒྱལ		
Chöden Gyel	མཚོ་བོ་ཏན་རྒྱལ	Qiaodan Jia	喬旦加

¹¹⁷ “Qinghai sheng diming lu” bianjizu, *Qinghai sheng diming lu*.

Chöpa Dargyé	མཚོད་པ་དར་རྒྱལ	Jiaoba Daji	角巴達吉
Chöpel	ཚོས་འཕེལ	Qingpei	青培
Chözang	ཚོས་བབང	Qiebuzang	切卜藏
Claire Lee Chennault		Chennade	陳納德
Dalai (Tälé) Lama	དྲ་ལའི་ལྷ་མ	Dalai Lama	達賴喇嘛
Dewa-tsang	ཕྱེ་བ་ཚང	Dewacang	德哇倉
Dorjé	དོ་རྗེ	Duoriji	多日吉
Dorjé Gyeltsen	དོ་རྗེ་རྒྱལ་མཚན	Duojie Jiancan	多杰堅參
Dorjé Tar	དོ་རྗེ་ཐར	Duoji Tai	多吉太
Dorjé Tsering	དོ་རྗེ་ཚེ་རིང	Duojie Cairang	多杰才讓
Drakpa	གྲགས་པ	Zihua	知化
Drölkar	རྩོལ་དཀར	Zhuoga	卓尕
Drölma Tso	རྩོལ་མ་མཚོ	Zhuoma Cuo	卓瑪措
Drukgyel	འབྲུག་རྒྱལ	Zhoujia	周加
Druktsé Gyel	འབྲུག་ཙེ་རྒྱལ	Zhouze Jia	周則加
Du Hua'an	杜華安		
Du Xuzhong	杜旭忠		
Dukkar Sapel (?)	གདུགས་དཀར་ས་དཔལ་ (?)	Duogarisabawa	多尕日薩巴 哇
Dündül	བདུད་འདུལ	Dande'er	丹德爾
Dzongchung	རྫོང་རྩུང		
Erteni Chökyi Gyeltsen	ཨེར་ཏེ་ནི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་མཚན	E'erdeni Queji Jianzan	額爾德尼卻 吉尖贊
Feng	馮		
Ganden Gyatso	དགའ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ	Gedan Jiacao	噶丹嘉措
Ge Jianpeng	葛建朋		
Gelek Gyatso	དགེ་ལེགས་རྒྱ་མཚོ	Gele Jiacao	格勒嘉措

Gendün	དགེ་འདུན་པ་	Gengdeng	更登
Gou Yongge	苟永閣		
Gungru Khandroma (?)	གུང་རུ་མཁའ་འགྲོ་མ་ (?)	Gongri Kanzhuoma	貢日坎卓馬
Gyelwo Pönpo	རྒྱལ་བོ་དཔོན་པོ་	Jiawu Hongbao	加吾洪寶
Hán (surname)	韓		
He Yao	賀耀		
Hesang	?		和桑
Jakmo	ཇལ་མོ་	Jihemao	吉合毛
Jamo Akhu	འཇའ་མོ་ཨ་ཁུ་	Jiamao Aka	加毛阿卡
Jamyang	འཇམ་དབྱངས་	Jiayang	加央
Jiang Zemin	江澤民		
Jikmé	འཇིགས་མེད་	Jiumei	久美
Jikmé Nyima	འཇིགས་མེད་ཉི་མ་	Jiumei Nima	久美尼瑪
Jikmé Rongwo?	འཇིགས་མེད་རོང་བོ་	Jiumei Rongwu	久美茸吾
Jikmé Sherap	འཇིགས་མེད་ཤེས་རབ་	Jiumei Xirao	久美喜饒
Jikmé Zangwo	འཇིགས་མེད་བཟང་བོ་	Jiumei Zangwu	久美藏吾
Kel Tsering?	ཀལ་ཚེ་རིང་?	Ga Cailang	尕才讓
Kelzang	བཀལ་བཟང་	Gazang	尕藏
Khabum Gyel	མཁའ་འབྲུམ་རྒྱལ་	Kaben Jia	卡本加
Khabum Gyel Tölwo (?)	མཁའ་འབྲུམ་རྒྱལ་རྟོལ་བོ་ (?)	Kaben Jia Duwu	卡本加都吾
Khari	མཁའ་རི་	Kuare	夸熱
Khaso-tsang	ཁ་སོ་ཚང་	Kacuocang (Also written Kasuhu Cang; this may be a mistake.)	卡措倉 (卡蘇乎倉)
Khemchok (?)	མཁའ་ས་ཚལ་ (?)	Kemuquehu (also given as Kemukequehu)	克木卻乎 (克木克卻乎)
Khöntar Gyel	ཁོན་ཐང་རྒྱལ་	Kuanta Jia	寬他加
Kyaplo	རྒྱལ་པོ་	Jialuo	加洛

Lhagyel	ལྷ་གྲུ་ལ	Lajia	拉加
Lhatse Gyel	ལྷ་ཙེ་གྲུ་ལ	Lashe Zejia	拉什則加
Li	李		
Li Deyuan	李德元		
Li Gönpö	ལི་ས་མགོན་པོ	Li Gongbao	李公寶
Li Quanguì	李全貴		
Liao Eting	廖額廷		
Liu Chengde	劉承德		
Liu Fuquan	劉福全		
Liu Gu	劉穀		
Liu Wenhui	劉文輝		
Liu Xinshou	劉新壽		
Liu Yufu	劉玉福		
Lönchö Tselo	ལྷོན་ཚོས་ཚེ་ལོ		
Lopzang	ལྷོ་བཟང	Luosang	洛桑
Lopzang Drakpa	ལྷོ་བཟང་གྲགས་པ	Luozang Zhihua	羅藏智化
Lopzang Gyatso	Lungrik ལྷོ་བཟང་ལུང་རྟེན་གྱི་མཚོ	Luosang Longrou Jiacao	洛桑隆柔嘉措
Lopzang Tenpé Gyeltsen	Lungtok ལྷོ་བཟང་ལུང་རྟེན་གསལ་བཟླན་པའི་གྲུ་ལ་མཚན	Luosang Longduo Jianzan	Dabei 洛桑隆朵丹貝堅贊
Lü Shu	呂樹		
Ma Bufang	馬步芳		
Ma Lin	馬麟		
Ma Qi	馬麒		
Ma Wei	馬偉		
Ma Xingbao	馬興寶		
Ma Yizhong	馬一中		

Ma Yulong	馬玉龍		
Mao Zedong	毛澤東		
Naktsang Nülo	ནགས་ཚང་ལུས་ལྗོ		
Namkha Tsewang	གནམ་མཁའ་ཚོ་དབང	Nange Cai'ang	南噶才昂
Namtso	གནམ་མཚོ	Nancuo	南措
Norbu	ནོར་བུ	Nuori	諾日
Nyingchak Cham	ལྷིང་ལྷགས་བྱམས	Niangjihe Xian	娘吉合先
Nyingkar Gyel	ལྷིང་དཀར་རྒྱལ	Ningga Jia	寧尕加
Nyingmo	ལྷིང་མོ	Niangmao	娘毛
Pang Yisheng	龐宜生		
Pelgyé	འཕེལ་རྒྱས	Peiji	培吉
Pelmo	དཔལ་མོ	Huamao	華毛
Pelzang	དཔལ་བཟང	Huabaozang	華寶藏
Pelzang Drölma (?)	དཔལ་བཟང་རྫོལ་མ (?)	Wenzang Zhuoma	文藏卓瑪
Pema Bhum (Bum)	པད་མ་འབུམ		
Pema Kyi	པད་མ་རྒྱེད	Wanma Ji	完瑪吉
Peng Dehuai	彭德懷		
Pönpo Tseden	དཔོན་པོ་ཚོ་བཏན	Hongbao Caidan	洪寶才旦
Püntsok	ཕུན་ཚོགས	Pengcuo	彭措
Rikbha (?)	རིག་ལྷ (?)	Rouba	柔巴
Rinchen Cham	རིན་ཆེན་བྱམས		
Rinchen Tso	རིན་ཆེན་མཚོ	Renqing Cuo	仁青措
Rongwo Nangso Jikmé	རོང་བོ་ནང་སོ་འཇིགས་མེད	Rongwo Nangso Jiumei	隆務囊索久 美
Rongwo-tsang	རོང་བོ་ཚང	Longwucang	隆務倉
Sanduk Ruit		Ruite	瑞特
Sangchen	སངས་ཚེན	Sangqian	桑欠
Sangdak	གསང་བདག	Sangdehai	桑德海

Sanggyé	སངས་རྒྱལ	Sangjie	桑杰
Sanggyé Bum	སངས་རྒྱལ་འབྲམ	Sangjie Ben	桑杰本
Sertri-tsang	གསེར་གྲི་ཚང	Saichicang	賽池倉
Shartsang	ཤར་ཚང	Xiaricang	夏日倉
Shawo	ཤ་འོ	Xiawu	夏吾
Shawo Tar	ཤ་འོ་ཐར	Xiawu Ta	夏吾他
Shawo Tsering	ཤ་འོ་ཚེ་རིང	Xiawu Cailang	夏吾才郎
Sherap Gyatso	ཤེས་རབ་རྒྱ་མཚོ	Xirao Jiacao	喜饒嘉措
Shi Yiyuan	石義元		
Shingza Kelzang-tsang	ཤིང་བཟའ་བསྐལ་བཟང་ཚང	Xiangzha Gabuzang Huofo	香扎尕布藏 活佛
Sölo	བསོད་ལོ	Suoluo	索洛
Sönam	བསོད་ནམས	Suonanmu	索南木
Sönam Rinchen	བསོད་ནམས་རིན་ཚེན	Suonan Renqing	索南仁青
Songtsen Gampo	སྟོང་བཙན་གླམ་པོ	Songzan Ganbu	松贊干布
Takla Gyel	ཏཱ་ལྷ་རྒྱལ	Doula Jia	斗拉加
Tamdrin	ཏ་མཐིན	Danzheng	旦正
Tamdrin Kyi	ཏ་མཐིན་རྒྱུད	Danzheng Ji	旦正吉
Tao Peiliang	陶培良		
Tekchok	ཐེག་མཚོག	Tengquehu	騰卻乎
Tendzin	བཟླན་འཛིན	Danzeng	旦增
Tendzin	བཟླན་འཛིན	Danzeng	丹增
Tengyel	བཟླན་རྒྱལ	Danji	旦吉
Tenpa	བཟླན་པ	Danba	旦巴
Tenpa	བཟླན་པ	Danba	丹巴
Tenpa Lhagyel	བཟླན་པ་ལྷ་རྒྱལ	Danba Laji	丹巴拉吉
Trashì	བཟ་ཤེས	Zhaxi	扎西

Trashi Döndrup	བཀྲ་ཤེས་དོན་གྲུབ	Zhaxi Dangzhou	扎西當周
Trashi Namgyel	བཀྲ་ཤེས་ནམ་གྲུལ	Zhaxi Anjia	扎喜安嘉
Trashi Nyima	བཀྲ་ཤེས་ཉི་མ	Zhaxi Nima	扎喜尼瑪
Trashi Tso	བཀྲ་ཤེས་མཚོ	Zhaxi Cuo	扎西措
Trashi Tso	བཀྲ་ཤེས་མཚོ	Zhaxi Cuo	扎西措
Trashi Wangchuk	བཀྲ་ཤེས་དབང་ལྷུག	Zhaxi Wangxu	扎喜旺徐
Trawo	བཀྲ་པོ་ (?)	Zhawu (?)	扎務
Tsedar Kyi	ཚོ་དར་རྒྱུད	Caida Ji	才達吉
Tseden Drölma	ཚོ་བརྟན་རྒྱལ་མ	Caidan Zhuoma	才旦卓瑪
Tsegé	ཚོ་དགེ	Caigai	才蓋
Tsekha Gyel	ཚོ་མཁའ་གྲུལ	Caika Jia	才卡加
Tsekhön Gyel	ཚོ་ཁོན་གྲུལ	Caikuan Jia	才寬加
Tsepel Gyel	ཚོ་དབལ་གྲུལ	Caihua Jia	才華加
Tsering	ཚོ་རིང	Cairang	才讓
Tsering Döndrup	ཚོ་རིང་དོན་གྲུབ	Cairang Dangzhi	才讓黨智
Tsering Döndrup (Tsering Dorjé)	ཚོ་རིང་དོན་གྲུབ (ཚོ་རིང་དོ་རྗེ)	Cailang Dangzhuo (Qielang Duojie)	才郎當周 (且 郎多杰)
Tsering Gyel	ཚོ་རིང་གྲུལ	Cairang Jia	才讓加
Tsering Gyel	ཚོ་རིང་གྲུལ	Cairen Jia	才仁加
Tsongkhawa	ཚོང་ཁ་བ	Zongkaba	宗喀巴
Wang Rapten (Tsewang)	བང་ (ཚོ་དབང་) རབ་བརྟན	Wang Lafudan	王刺夫旦
Wang Jun	王俊		
Wang Luobin	王洛賓		
Wang Shuxuan	王樹軒		
Wang Yao	王耀		
Wanggyel	དབང་གྲུལ	Hangjie	杭杰
Wen Cunlong	溫存龍		

Xin Jiazhang	辛家章		
Yang	楊		
Yang Quanlong	楊全龍		
Yang Yaozu	陽耀祖		
Yang Zhengkun	楊正坤		
Yershong Lama	གཡང་གཤོང་ལ་མ	Yexiong Huofo	葉雄活佛
Zhang	張		
Zhang Xingxu	張興旭		
Zhang Zhen	張珍		
Zhao Leji	趙樂際		
Zhao Qingyang	趙清陽		
Zhao Shunlu	趙順祿		
Zhao Zhensui	趙鎮綏		
Zhao Zihua	趙子華		
Zhou Enlai	周恩來		
Zhu	朱		
Zöpa	བོད་པ	Zuoba	作巴

Toponyms, including Nomadic Groups

Name as it appears in the English text	Tibetan script	Pinyin (for non-Chinese names) / Tibetan equivalent (if different from Chinese)	Chinese / Tibetan
Amdo	ཨ་མདོ	Anduo	安多
Amyé Bayan	ཨ་མྱེས་བ་ཡན	Ami Wanyan	阿米萬顏
Arik	ཨ་རིག	Alike	阿力克
Atsok	ཨ་ཚོགས	Asuhu	阿蘇乎

Awar Te'u (Awu Tewu)	ཨ་འར་ཐེ་འུ (ཨ་འུ་ཐེ་འུ)	Awaritiewu (Awatiewu)	阿哇日鐵吾 (阿哇鐵吾)
Badaling	八達嶺		
Bao'an	保安	Togya Dewa	托古雅
Beijing	北京		
Böngya	བོན་པ་རྒྱ	Wangjia	王家
Buha	བུ་ཧ	Buha	布哈
Chadar	ཅཱ་དར	Xiaderi	夏德日
Chakor	ཅཱ་ཀོར	Qiakeri	恰科日
Changkya	ཅཱང་རྒྱ	Jiangshejia	江什加
Changlung	ཅཱང་ལུང	Jianglong	江龍
Chentsa	ཅཱཅན་ཚ	Jianzha	尖扎
Chentsa-tang	ཅཱཅན་ཚ་ཐང	Jianzhatan	尖扎灘
Chisa	ཅཱ་ཤི་ས	Xibusha	西卜沙
Chukhok	ཅཱ་ཁོག	Qukuhu	曲庫乎
Chuma	ཅཱ་མ	Quma	曲麻
Dazhi	ཅཱ་དམ་པའི	Dayu	達玉
Dobi	ཅཱ་དོ་བྱིས	Daowei	道帷
Dokarmo	ཅཱ་དཀར་མོ	Duohemao	多禾茂
Domé	ཅཱ་དོ་མེད		
Dönnyin	དོན་ཉིན	Duoning	多寧
Dowa	ཅཱ་དོ་བ	Duowa	多哇
Drakkar Trel dzong	བླ་མ་དཀར་རྒྱལ་རྫོང	Saizong Si	賽宗寺
Drakmar	བླ་མ་དམར	Zhihoumao	智後茂
Fufeng	扶風		
Gannan	甘南	Kenlho	ཀེན་ལོ
Gansu	甘肅		

Gartsé	མགར་ཚེ	Guasheze	瓜什則
Gengya	གན་རྒྱ	Ganjia	甘加
Golok	མགོ་ལོག	Guoluo	果洛
Gomar	གོ་མར	Guomari	郭麻日
Gonghe	共和	Serchen / Chapcha	གཤེར་ཚེན / ཆབ་ཆ
Gönshül	མགོན་ཤུལ	Guanxiu	關秀
Guchu	དགུ་ཚུ	Longwu He (< Tb. Rongwo, although Tibetans do not use this name for the river.)	隆務河
Guinan	貴南	Mangra	མང་ར
Guizhou	貴州		
Gyeltsangma (Gyatsangma)	རྒྱལ་ཚང་མ (རྒྱ་ཚང་མ)	Jiachama	加查麻
Gyelwo (Gyawo)	རྒྱལ་བོ (རྒྱ་བོ)	Jiawu	加吾
Hainan	海南	Tsolho	མཚོ་ལྗོ
Henan	河南	Sokdzong	སོག་རྫོང
Hor	ཧོར	Heri	和日
Horgya	ཧོར་རྒྱ	Huo'erjia	霍爾加
Hornak	ཧོར་ནག	Huangnaihái	黃乃亥
Huangguang	滄光		
Huangnan	黃南	Malho	མ་ལོ
Inner Mongolia		Nei Menggu (Nang Sok)	內蒙古 (ནང་སོག)
Kangtsa	ཀང་ཚ	Gangcha	剛察
Karmo Yangchil	དཀར་མོ་གཡང་འབྲིལ	Gama Yangqu	尕瑪央曲
Kasar	ཀ་གསར	Gashari	尕沙日
Kham	ཁམས	Kangba	康巴
Khasok	ཁ་གསོག	Kasuhu	卡蘇乎
Khösun	ཁོས་སུན	Kesheng	柯生

Labrang	ལ་བླང་	Labuleng Si	拉卜楞寺
Lanzhou	蘭州		
Ledu Xian	樂都縣	Drotsang Dzong	ལྷོ་ཚང་རྫོང་
Lhasa	ལྷ་ས་	Lasa	拉薩
Linxia	臨夏	Kachu	ཀའུ་
Lönchö	ལྷོ་རྩ་ཚོས་	Lancai	蘭菜
Long	隴		
Luchu	ལུ་ཅུ་	Liji	歷吉
Machu	མའ་ཅུ་	Maqu Xian	瑪曲縣
Mei	眉		
Mepa	མེད་པ་	Maba	麻巴
Meshül	མེ་ཤུལ་	Maixiu	麥修
Metok-gang Lam	མེ་ཏོག་གླང་ལམ་	Meiduogang Lanmu	美朵崗蘭木
Nanjing	南京		
Ningxia	寧夏		
Norbu Lingka	ནོར་བུ་ལྷིང་ཀ་	Luobu Linka	羅布林卡
Nyakka Marro	ཉག་ཀ་དམར་རོ་	Niha Marao	尼哈瑪饒
Nyalung	ཉ་ལུང་	Yalang	牙浪
Nyentok	གཉན་ཐོག་	Nianduhu	年都乎
Nyentok Lakha	གཉན་ཐོག་ལ་ཁ་		
Nyima	ཉི་མ་	Nima	尼瑪
Nyinchuk	ཉིན་ལྷུགས་	Ningxiu	寧秀
Nyinta	ཉིན་མཐའ་	Ningmute	寧木特
<i>Qiemu Gou</i>	?		切莫溝
Qingdao	青島		
Qinghai	青海	Tsongön	མཚོ་ལྗོངས་
Ragya Gönpa	ར་རྒྱ་དགོན་པ་	Lajia Si	拉加寺

Repkong (Repgong)	རེབ་གོང་ (རེབ་གོང་)	Regong (see also 'Tongren')	熱貢 (同仁)
Rongke Si	?		茸科寺
Rongwo	རོང་བོ	Longwu	隆務
Sakyil	ས་དཀྱིལ	Siheji	四合吉
Sangchu	སངས་ཚུ	Xiahe	夏河
Sanjiaocheng	三角城		
Shaanxi (Shǎnxi)	陝西		
Shabrang	ཤ་བར	Xiabulang	夏卜浪
Sichuan	四川		
Sizhai	四寨	Tretsi Zhi	ཁྲེ་ཙི་བཞི
Sonak	སོ་ནག	Sunaihai	素乃亥
Songpan	松潘	Zungchu	ཟུང་ཚུ
Ta'er Si	塔爾寺	Kumbum	ལྷུ་འབུམ
Taiwan	台灣		
Tewu (Te'u)	ཐེ་བུ (ཐེ་བུ)	Tiewu	鐵吾
Tianjin	天津		
Tongde	同德	Ba Dzong	འབའ་རྫོང
Tongren	同仁	Tunrin, more commonly called Repkong / Repgong	ཐུན་རིན, རེབ་གོང་ / རེབ་གོང་)
Topden	ལྷོ་བས་ལྗན	Duofudun	多福頓
Trashī Lhünpo	བཀྲ་ཤིས་ལྷུན་པོ	Zhashe Lunbu	扎什倫布
Tsadam	ཚ་འདམ	Chaidamu	柴達木
Tsanggar Gönpa	བཙུང་གསར་དགོན་པ	Shizang Si	石藏寺
Tsenmo	བཙན་མོ	Zhamao	扎毛
Tsenmo Gönpa	Dzongkar བཙན་མོ་རྫོང་དཀར་དགོན་པ	Zhamao Zongka Si	扎毛宗卡寺
Tsenmo Hor	བཙན་མོ་རྟོར	Zhamaoheri	扎毛和日
Ü-tsang	དབུས་གཙང	Xizang	西藏

Wangfujing	王府井		
Wutun	吾屯	Senggé Zhong	མེང་གེ་གཞོང
Xi'an	西安		
Xikang	西康		
Xila	?		西拉
Xinghai	興海	Drakkar	བླ་མ་དཀར
Xining	西寧	Ziling	ཟྱ་མིང
Xinjiang	新疆		
Xunhua	循化	Yadzi	ཡ་ཇི
Yanbian	延邊		
Yongjing	永靖		
Yönru	གཡོན་རུ	Yangzhi	羊智
Yunnan	雲南		
Zeku	澤庫	Tsekhok	ཅེ་ཁོག
Zhikatse	གཞི་ཀ་ཅེ	Rikaze	日喀則
Zho'ong Lakha	ཞོ་འོང་ལ་ཁ	Shuangpeng Laka	雙朋拉卡
Zho'ongchi	ཞོ་འོང་དེ་ཅི	Shuangpengxi	雙朋西

Terms and Expressions

Word as it appears in the English text	Chinese script	/	Tibetan Pinyin (for Chinese words)	non-Chinese
akhu	ཨ་ཁུ		aka	阿卡
Baihu	百戶			
baijiu	白酒			
Bao'an	保安			
bazong	把總			

benbenzi	本本子		
boluan fanzheng	撥亂反正		
chö demo yin lak	ལྷོད་བདེ་མོ་ཡིན་ལགས།	qiao demao yinla	喬德毛因 拉
Chögyel Norzang	ཚོས་རྒྱལ་ཚོར་བཟང	Nuosa Wangzi	諾薩王子
chösi zungdrel	ཚོས་སྲིད་བྱུང་འབྲེལ།		
Da yue jin	大躍進		
daosuan	倒算		
Dexinghai	德興海		
Dordo	དོར་དོ (and other spellings)		
douzheng	鬥爭		
dragyün	ལྷ་རྒྱུན།		
droma	གྲོ་མ།	juema	蕨麻
duo minzuo guojia	多民族國家		
Erlang	二郎		
<i>Ewa Hanglang</i>	?		鄂哇杭浪
gaga	尕尕		
gaige kaifang	改革開放		
Galden Podrang	དགའ་ལྡན་ཡོ་བླང		
Geluk	དགེ་ལུགས།		
geshe lharampa	དགེ་བཤེས་ལྷ་རམ་པ།		
Gyahor	རྒྱ་ཉེར།		
gyapön	བརྒྱ་དཔོན།		
Han (ethnicity)	漢		
Hongweibing	紅衛兵		
huangtu	黃土		
Hui	回		
Ikhwan		Yihewani	伊赫瓦尼
jam	འཇམ།		

jin	斤		尕曲日桌
kachu ritröpa	བཀའ་བཞུ་རི་ཁོང་པ	gaqurizhuoba	巴
Kagyür	བཀའ་འགྱུར	Ganzhu'er	甘珠爾
kang	炕		
khatak	ཁ་བཏགས	hada	哈達
Kunlun Zhongxue	崑崙中學		
kuodahua	擴大化		
lama	ལ་མ	huofo	活佛
laogai	勞改		
Lhawa	ལྷ་བ		
Luröl	ལུ་རོལ	Liuyuehui	六月會
mañi	མ་ཉི	mani	嘛呢
mañi-khang	མ་ཉི་ཁང	mani Fang	嘛呢房
maozi	帽子		
minzhu renshi	民主人士		
minzu	民族		
mirik	མི་རིགས		
mönlam	མོན་ལམ	maolanmu	毛蘭木
mu	畝		
neibu	內部		
Nyingma	རྟེན་མ		
pöntruk	དཔོན་ཕུག	hongzhou	紅周
qinli, qinjian, qinwen	親歷，親見，親聞		
Qi wan yan shu	七萬言書		
qianhu	千戶		
rikné	རིག་གནས		

Rongwo Nangso	རོང་བོ་ནང་སོ	Longwu Nangسو	隆務囊索
Sakya	ས་སྐྱ		
Salar		Salazu	撒拉族
sang	བསང	weisang	煨桑
Shehui zhuyi gaochao	社會主義高潮		
Shehuizhuyi jiaoyu yundong	社會主義教育運動		
sheng	升		
shishi qiushi	實事求是		
si bu qing	四不清		
si lei fenzi	四類分子		
Siqing yundong	四清運動		
sixiang gongzuo	思想工作		
tangka (thangka)	ཐང་ཀ	tangka	唐卡
terma	གཏེན་མ		
tonggou tongxiao	统购统销		
tongpön	སྟོང་དཔོན		
tongyi zhanxian	統一戰線		
trelné (?)	ཐལ་ནལ་ (?)	caimai	才麥
tsangra	འཚང་ར	cangran	倉然
Tu	土		
Tuda	土 達 (and other spellings)		
tuntian	屯田		
tusi	土司		
wei xin zhi yan	違心之言		
Wenhua da geming	文化大革命		
wenhua zhishi	文化知識		
wenshi ziliao	文史資料		

Wo de rensheng zhi lu	我的人生之路		
xin shidai	新世代		
yangdar	ཡང་དར		
yarné	གཡར་གནས	yali	雅里
Yikdru tridun gyi nyenzhu	ཡིག་འབྲུ་ཁི་བདུན་གྱི་སྟན་ཞུ		
yuan	元		
Yutu	?		於菟
zhan	站		
Zhotön	ཞོ་ཏོན	Xuedun Jie	雪頓節
zhuktri	བཟུགས་ཁི	youchi	優池
zishu	自述		

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(Note that I have not reversed the order of Tibetan or Chinese names, because most Tibetan names do not have a clear surname / personal name distinction, and Chinese names put the surname first in any case.)

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