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Introduction: The Development of Modern Tibetan Studies

Tsering Shakya

On September 27th, 1987, a small group of monks staged a demonstration in Lhasa which once again drew the attention of the world to Tibet. In the following 18 months thirty or more such incidents occurred in different parts of the region, leading to the imposition of martial law by the Chinese government in the capital in March 1989, the first time since the creation of the People's Republic of China that the Chinese Government had formally imposed martial law on any part of the territories under its control. These events propelled Tibet into the headlines of the international press for the first time in thirty years.

Martial law was still in place in Lhasa when, in April 1990, a number of scholars gathered in London to examine the context in which those events had occurred. This volume is the result of that gathering. The conference, `40 Years On: Tibet 1950-1990', was held at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. Its specific aim was to look at developments in Tibet over those past four decades. But it aimed also to establish the study of modern Tibet as a subject in its own right. In this, it was breaking with tradition. The Western, Tibetan and Chinese scholars who met in London that April to initiate the academic discussion of contemporary conditions and changes in Tibet were opening a new chapter in the history of Tibetan studies.

The field of Tibetan studies had not previously dealt with Tibet as an evolving and contemporary society. Although there had been great interest in Tibet in the West since at least the early nineteenth century, academic studies of Tibetan in Western universities began in earnest only in 1959. In that year the Dalai Lama and some 80,000 followers fled to India, and soon after the Rockefeller Foundation made funds available for university courses in Tibetan studies. Since then many Western universities have developed courses in Tibetan language and culture.

Even with the establishment of Tibetan studies in the universities, Western studies of Tibet, and debates on the subject, have tended to reflect the perceptions current amongst popular writers as well as scholars. It is to these we must turn to explain the absence of serious study of contemporary Tibetan society and its politics.

John K. Fairbank in his introduction to *The Cambridge History of China* described four aspects of the western approach to the study of China. "These phases of understanding may be characterised as missionary, diplomatic, journalistic and social scientific," he wrote.[1] To some extent we can apply this typology to Tibetan studies. In the case of Tibet these descriptions represent not discrete historical phenomena, but overlapping and ongoing interpretations of Tibet amongst Western writers. In the case of Tibet we can add to Fairbank's list the category of the travelogue, which has become the dominant and most accessible mode of interpretation of Tibet for the Western public.

The Missionary View

The first Westerners to penetrate Tibet were Jesuits who in 1624 arrived from India to establish a mission in Tsaparang, then the cultural centre of Western Tibet. By the beginning of the 18th century, however, Tibet had been granted as an area of missionary activity by the Papal See to the Capuchins, who reached Lhasa in 1707 to establish a mission there. The reluctance of the Jesuits to depart from Tibet led to conflict and, in 1745, to the collapse of the entire missionary effort.

But both China and British India were to benefit greatly from the material gathered by the Jesuit missionaries. When, in 1774, the British decided to expand their interests beyond the foothills of the Himalayas and sent George Bogle to Shigatse, their prime source of information was a map of Tibet which the missionary D'Anvill, then based in Peking, had drawn ten years earlier for the Manchu Emperor Kang Hsi, relying on material provided by his co-religionists.

In 1762 the Augustin Friar Antonio Giorgi, using information supplied by the Capuchin missionaries, had published in Rome the *Alphabetum Thibetanum*, which introduced the Tibetan script to the West. The last of the Jesuit missionaries, Ippolito Desideri, had left an important account of his sojourn in Tibet, which included a valuable account of the Dzungar (Mongol) invasion. This was not published in English until 1904, but was influential in clerical circles from earlier times. Although Desideri mastered Tibetan language and studied the culture, he did so not as the subject of academic exploration but in order to "arm myself to launch a war", as he put it. He was impelled by a desire to refute Tibetan religious ideas and beliefs, and thus to propagate Christianity.

This was the dominant feature of study of Tibet by missionaries, who viewed Tibet as particularly fertile ground for conversion, seeing what they took to be the dominant role of religion in that country as an indicator that Tibetans were well suited to conversion to the Christian faith.

The Moravians, the most successful of all missionary groups working amongst Tibetan-speaking peoples, with a settlement established in Leh in 1885, shared Desideri's motivation. In the introduction to his Tibetan-English dictionary (originally produced in German) the well-known scholar-missionary Jaeschke explained in 1881 that "the chief motive of all our exertions lay always in the desire to facilitate and to hasten the spread of the Christian religion and of Christian civilisation among millions of Buddhists who inhabit Central Asia, and who speak and read in Tibetan idioms". [2] Nevertheless, they developed in their writings a highly scholarly approach, stemming from their efforts to translate the bible. Jaeschke's colleagues, A.H. Francke and K. Marx, produced between 1891 and 1931 a corpus of historical and ethnological studies on Ladakh which remains unsurpassed.

Although historically the missionary approach introduced an important mode of the Western interpretation of Tibet, its significance has since become primarily of historical import. Today Tibet is still seen as prime territory for conversion by Christian missionaries, but their contribution to scholarly studies in the modern era has never equalled that of the pioneer figures; viewing Tibetan society primarily as degenerate, modern missionaries have attached little importance to studying its culture.

The missionaries shared with later scholars a common focus on Tibetan religious systems and institutions as the primary subject of enquiry. They looked to Tibetan religion essentially in terms of the vocabulary it could provide for the translation and description of Christian concepts. Their primary focus on the religious aspect of Tibetan society has dominated Western views and studies of Tibet ever since the first missionary writings.

The Traveller's View

Among the earlier missionaries were figures such as Desideri and Abbé Huc, whose accounts of their travels were widely read in late nineteenth century Europe. These provided inspiration for a generation of Westerners who viewed the region in terms of its potential for exploration and adventure. Those who realised the dream of travel in Tibet, motivated by what Alexandra David-Neel described as a "desire to explore beyond the garden gate", regarded the act of chronicling their wanderings as an essential part of the traveller's experience.[3]

A number of the travel writers sought to describe the social milieu they encountered. Spencer Chapman's story of his life in Lhasa in the late 1930s provided interesting insights into the daily lives of people in the capital, and Harrer too sought to provide a description of the city's inhabitants in the 1930s and 1940s. More recently Catriona Bass has given a detailed impression of people's attitudes towards their daily experience, based on her work there as a teacher in the mid-1980s. To these writers, all of whom worked and lived in Lhasa, the focus was on the people they met rather than on the process of exploration.

But they were the exceptions in the travel-writing genre. From Savage Landor onwards the great majority of Western travel writers have sought to emphasise the difficulties of their journey and the uniqueness of their encounter with the Tibetan environment. What struck these writers was a combination of their personal fortitude and the exclusivity of their experience. When they wrote about the context of these exploits, it was to stress the `otherness' and exoticness of the culture of Tibet, a place which they often characterised as sacred and mystical.

The travellers were struck primarily by the landscape, referring to the harshness of the environment and the splendour of the mountains. These they saw reflected in the essential nature of the Tibetan character and philosophy. "Up here we are in a realm of ice and clarity, of ultimate and primordial purity", wrote Fosco Maraini, the Italian explorer-writer.[4] The combined perception of Tibet as landscape and mystique was aptly summed up by Marco Pallis in the title of his travelogue, *Of Peaks and Lamas*.[5]

The traveller's mode of perception of Tibet contributed little to our understanding of Tibetan culture, but its influence far outweighed its significance, sustaining a popular and continuing perception of Tibet as the `hidden kingdom' and as a land of adventure and mystique. Tibet continues to excite Western travellers in this way, irrespective of the development of other literary presentations of Tibet. The opening of Tibet to Western tourists in the 1980s saw the publication of numerous accounts of travellers' experiences in Tibet, still focussing on the singularity of their experience much as their Edwardian forebears had done, even though at its peak in 1986-7 forty thousand foreign tourists were visiting Lhasa each year.

The Diplomatic View

Britain's desire to expand its political and trade interests into Central Asia led to the need to establish contact with Tibet. Bogle's and Turner's missions to Tibet opened the diplomatic chapter in the Western encounter with Tibet. Turner's account, *The Court of the Tashi Lama*, published in 1835, was, interestingly, the first book in the English language on Tibet. Its publication reflected the increasing dominance of the British in the region, a role that was to be mirrored by their subsequent literary output on the country.

The primary concern of the British was the attempt to define the territorial limits of Tibet, the political

authority of its rulers and its relations with neighbouring states. To accumulate the information needed for this exercise the British state provided patronage for an entire generation of scholars. Csoma de Koros, the great Hungarian researcher and linguist, was commissioned by the Government of Bengal in the 1830s to compile a Tibetan dictionary; Chandra Das, one of the pioneers of Tibetan studies, was employed by the Survey Department of the British Government of India as one of the Pundits, specially trained Indian agents sent by the British to gather information about the region.

Writings motivated by Britain's strategic interests reached their highpoint around the 1903 Younghusband invasion. Eight books were published by senior members of that expedition, including the detailed description of Lhasa provided by Perceval Landon, the correspondent for *The Times* attached to the mission. Younghusband's medical officer, Waddell, later went on to become the first university professor of Tibetan in Britain.

The political nature of their encounter with Tibet radically changed the perception of it as remote and isolated, at least for the diplomats and officers concerned. To them, Tibet was a country of strategic importance with whose leaders European governments now sought to enter into formal correspondence. To support the attempt to define its status and its boundaries, there was an urgent need for information about its economy, geography and political system, all of which was seen in terms of the possibilities it offered to British interests in the region. Moorcroft was looking for the best place to buy horses for the Indian army, Bayley was sent to find the sources of the major rivers, and others looked into the possibility of using Tibet as a market for Indian tea. Hodgeson, later to become a prolific writer on the area, even wrote a paper on the suitability of the southern Himalayas for European settlement.

Younghusband, Bell, O'Connor, MacDonald, Gould and other writers on Tibet, most of whom served the British administration in one capacity or another, tended to see Tibetan history within the context of rivalries between the major regional powers - China, Britain, and to some extent Russia. Consequently, scholarly writings on the history of Tibet in the late nineteenth and in the twentieth centuries by writers such as Mehra, Lamb, Kaur Singh and Addy, concentrate on the territorial limits and definition of Tibet. These writers have invariably depended on primary sources in British archives, thus seeing the history of the period against the backdrop of what Kipling christened the Great Game. This view of Tibet has been heightened by the establishment of Chinese control in Tibet since 1950, based on the much disputed territorial claim that Tibet was part of China. Leading to detailed and contentious study of the status of Tibet, this has been further encouraged since 1962 by the Sino-Indian disputes over the former Tibetan borders.

The Journalistic Approach

The first extensive reports on Tibet to emerge in the Western press were the despatches submitted by journalists who, like Perceval Landon, travelled into Tibet with the Younghusband Expedition. It was with Edmund Chandler, the *Daily Mail* reporter who accompanied the expedition, that the distinctively journalistic view of Tibet emerged. His reports from the battlefront at Khampa Dzong near Gyantse were to have a significant impact on British public opinion, and he was largely responsible for the popular disdain with which Curzon's cavalier approach to Tibet came to be regarded. But his work was unique: until the 1950s what little journalistic coverage there was remained indistinguishable from the travelogue.

The Chinese invasion in 1950 initiated widespread interest in Tibet. It came at the same time as the Korean War, when the Cold War was at its height. Anti-Chinese feeling was thus seen as an automatic

extension of anti-Communist fervour in the West, and there was a tendency to view the Tibetan situation as an example of the Communists' desire for world domination. The flight of the Dalai Lama to India in 1959 initiated a flood of popular writing on the course of the Tibetan rebellion and its consequences (Barber, Patterson, Morris, Peissel). The school of writing which grew out of these events was driven by both a sense of mission and a taste for high drama.

> This tragic sequel... is not an adventure story. It is not a pleasant story. But it is a true story. And we of the free world ought to know more about it,

wrote Lowell Thomas in 1959, introducing his epic account of the Chinese invasion.

The journalistic perception shared by these writers by its nature focussed on those events that were seen as of major significance at the time - the Uprising, the `flight into exile', and so on. The exploits of the protagonists were described as adventures or as acts of individual heroism, but the causes of the events which engendered them were generally not examined beyond their role in provoking people into action. The nature of the society that produced or was changed by these incidents was not within the purview of these writers.

The writers who were close to the Chinese point of view did attempt to describe traditional Tibetan society, but they were dedicated to eulogising the social improvements that China had brought to Tibet and were therefore committed to stressing the backwardness of pre-1950 conditions (Felix Greene, Gelder, Han Suyin, Epstein). Where they talked about the present, it was to stress what they saw as the economic advancement of Tibetan society and its progression towards a Chinese-defined notion of modernity.

Writers who sympathised with the Tibetan exile movement, later to be dominated by Avedon's work, have stressed the role of Tibetans as essentially passive victims, suffering under Chinese rule. Within their work the interpretation of Tibet was an essentially journalistic experience. This view was heightened by the events of 1987, seen chiefly through the eyes of both the Tibetans and Westerners who witnessed them. A literature of reportage emerged that ranged from the chronicling of events to exercises in sensationalism: "the first-ever eyewitness account of Chinese oppression in Tibet", as one author described their account in 1990. This genre chose rarely to explore questions of social change or of the diversity of political interest groups in Tibet. Journalistic literature on Tibet has remained limited to exploring the traditional dramatisation of the issue as a conflict between two protagonists.

The Emergence of a Social Scientific Approach

Today, the study of Tibet has become a distinct academic discipline, as that notion is understood within the Western tradition of studying the Orient. Both its cultural homogeneity and its geographical location have allowed Western scholars to accede to the Tibetans' definition of their culture as a discrete tradition in its own right.

Western studies on Tibet are rooted in the historical encounter between the West and Tibet, some aspects of which we have discussed earlier. They remain defined by their origins in, on the one hand, the intellectual encounter with Tibetan Buddhism and, on the other hand, the expansion of Western political interests across the Himalayas.

More recently the field of Tibetan studies has become largely institutionalised, with a network of

international conferences, university posts, and regular contributions to scholarly journals devoted to Tibetan studies. There is an accepted corpus of scholarly literature, a standard system of transliteration, and broad consensus on the area of studies. The founding fathers of Tibetan studies operated under the aegis of the imperial administrations or of the Church; modern Tibetan studies are now legitimised by their presence within the institutions of Western academia.

Two parallel traditions of scholarship are discernible within the field of academic Tibetan studies, one of them the continuation of the tradition of textual analysis. The knowledge acquired by the missionary scholars had by the end of the nineteenth century allowed scholars of Sanskrit to extend their studies to the Tibetan Buddhist canon, focussing on the historical origins of the Tibetan texts and their relation to the Sanskritic tradition. These scholars tended to perceive the Tibetan religious system as a degenerate form of Buddhism, which they sometimes referred to in a pejorative sense as Lamaism.

The tradition of textual analysis, focussing primarily on Buddhist literature and its exegesis, has continued in the modern era. But it is characterised now by a widespread recognition of the Tibetan contribution to and development of Buddhist philosophy and practice. The wider concerns of modern textual scholars - like Tibetan scholars themselves - have been the history of Buddhism and Buddhist thought in Tibet. In addition their primary interest in earlier Tibet, the period in which much of Buddhist literature was produced, has also led to the study of Bon, the indigenous religion of Tibet. Within this tradition the study of texts was accorded more importance than the study of the social conditions under which they were produced.

The second strand of academic Tibetan studies applied Western social science methodologies to the study of Tibetan culture and society. For these scholars the primary focus is the people and the society. However, in the 1950s, when this tradition emerged, Tibet was still closed to Westerners so that there was virtually no opportunity for first-hand research on these subjects. This situation persisted until the mid-1980s.

The influx of refugees into Northern India enabled social scientists to conduct research on Tibetan society, using them as informants. A number of scholars made an effort to reconstruct a description of the traditional social system in Tibet based on retrospective interviews within the exile community (Aziz, Goldstein, Eva Dargyay, Franz Michael).

While these scholars concentrated on the reconstruction of the traditional society, other social scientists carried out first-hand field work among the Tibetan-speaking peoples of the Himalayan region, providing primary material for comparative analysis of traditional Tibetan social systems. But, except for those done by Chinese scholars, which remained largely unknown outside the People's Republic, there were no studies within Tibet itself in this period by Western scholars.

Behind both these approaches, one dealing with reconstructions and the other with parallels, lay the concept of a traditional Tibetan society, which the scholars sought to describe. There was, however, a small number of social scientists who made studies of social adaptation and change among the refugee communities, reflecting the emergence of new ideologies and identities following the experience of exile (Novak, Saklani, Palakshappa).

But recent developments within Tibet were not examined by Western scholars. While this was partly because those areas remained inaccessible to foreigners, there was also a residual sense that there was nothing worthy of study in post-1950 Tibet, as if the apparent demise of traditional society rendered further studies valueless and uninteresting. This attitude appears to have been widespread amongst scholars in the Tibetan field, so that, for example, contemporary language and literature have received

little attention or analysis.

This absence of scholarly interest in contemporary developments in Tibet has tended to allow the field to be dominated by polemical writings from both sides. On the one hand the Tibetans and their sympathisers have accused the Chinese of cultural genocide, implying that there has been no development in Tibetan culture. The Chinese have argued, on the other hand, that over the past 40 years Tibet has marched forward into a progressive and civilised socialist society.

This antagonistic and often ferocious debate has to some extent obfuscated the real issues concerning the development of Tibetan society today. The past forty years of imposition of Communist ideology presented a direct challenge to the traditional Tibetan worldview and has undoubtedly had an enormous impact on traditional Tibetan culture and its social system. But even the economic changes in Tibet have remained largely unobserved by foreign scholars. For example, the 22,000 kilometres of roads that have been built in the Tibet Autonomous Region since 1950 must have dramatically altered the social and economic relations of Tibetan communities. It is clear that Chinese rule in Tibet has affected Tibetan society in a major way, not merely as the destructive agent that dominates popular Western writings on the subject, but as an instrument of change of other kinds. Some of these changes have been discussed within the polemical debate, but as social phenomena they remain undocumented, indeed undescribed, in Western academic literature.

While the West, hampered by difficulties of access, has been slow to extend its interest into the study of modern Tibet, the Chinese have established a series of institutions to facilitate Tibetan studies. In the 1950s the Chinese sent a large number of leading Chinese social scientists to Tibet to investigate conditions there, but the literature resulting from these studies remains largely unknown outside the People's Republic. They also set up a network of institutes for the `national minorities', as they call the non-Chinese peoples, which since the liberalisations of 1979 are developing into significant centres of studies.

The period of liberalisation has led to a further growth of academic institutions, including the founding of the University of Tibet in 1985 and the Centre for Tibetological Studies in Beijing in 1986. The Tibetan branch of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was formally established in Lhasa in 1985.

Perhaps more important has been the expansion of Tibetan language publishing houses in Lhasa, Beijing, and in Tibetan areas outside the Autonomous Region. They have republished numerous religious texts and have sponsored the translation of Chinese books, and even some English texts, into Tibetan. This minor renaissance of Tibetan publications was epitomised by the publication in 1984 of the three volume *Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary*, the *Bod-rGya Tsig-mDzod Chen-mo*.

These institutions represent the emergence in Tibet itself of Tibetological research using Western academic methods. This process can be seen, for example, in the study by Dung-dkar bLo-bzang 'Phrim-las (Dungkar Lobsang Thrinley), *Bod-kyi Chos Srid Zung 'Brel-sKor bShad-pa* (*The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*), which applies Western social science methods to the social origins of the Tibetan political system. Following traditions established in the West, these scholars have focussed on the study of texts, inscriptions and ancient history, in preference to contemporary studies. The methodologies adopted by contemporary scholars in Tibet are, of course, influenced and constrained by the theoretical and political demands of the Chinese state.

It was to initiate the study of the contemporary situation that the conference `Forty Years On: Tibet 1950-1990' was convened at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies in April 1990. Taking as its subject the development of Tibetan society over the past forty years, it

brought together those scholars who have begun in recent years to study contemporary Tibet. In addition, a number of scholars renowned for their work on earlier periods took the opportunity to apply those skills to the modern era. It was envisaged that academic discussion at the highest level could only help to promote a deeper understanding of the complex and critical issues which surround the current situation in Tibet.

As organisers of the conference we sought to establish a tradition of looking at what had been contentious issues in dispassionate and rigourous ways, and to encourage a shift from the populist debate to the relatively disinterested examination of the phenomena of social change in Tibet. As had been hoped, the contributors examined aspects of social change in Tibet in this way, opening a tradition for serious study in this field. But it was noticeable that almost all the papers continued to place their observations in the context of the larger political debate concerning the `Tibet Question'.

The historical origins of that question are examined by Premen Addy in his study of the role of Tibet within British and Indian strategic concepts. Dr Addy describes the Anglo-Russian manoeuvres along the borders of their empires, which left Tibet's own status indeterminate, a legacy which has been passed on to today's regional powers. In his paper he sees the roots of the current Sino-Indian dispute as being found in the earlier years of this century, thus demonstrating the continuing role of Tibet as a major issue in regional rivalries.

Warren Smith's paper deals with the Chinese attempt to interpret the Tibetan issue as a question of a minority group within the context of a multi-national state. He analyses the varying attempts to apply Marxist nationality theory to the Tibetan problem and the consequences of Mao's decision to abrogate his 1931 commitment to the right of national self-determination.

After the death of Mao and the toppling of the Gang of Four, Chinese policy focussed on economic reform and liberalisation. Melvyn Goldstein analyses the effectiveness of this reform policy in Tibet among a nomadic group with whom he conducted research, together with Cynthia Beall, from 1987-89, finding evidence of a widespread revitalisation process which accompanied the reform policies within the nomadic communities.

A major issue in Tibetan social studies is the question of how Tibetans in the modern era define themselves and express their identity as a distinctive group; Melvyn Goldstein deals with a historical aspect of this question in the introduction to his paper. In an essay reflecting an ethnological approach to this question, Samten Karmay discusses the central role of geography, and of the mountain cult in particular, in the definition of Tibet as a distinctive entity. He goes on to argue that in the past Buddhism, now serving as an expression of national identity amongst Tibetans, had in earlier times actually dissipated the sense of national unity among Tibetans.

Heather Stoddard's paper looks at the role of literature in fostering a contemporary Tibetan identity, documenting the extent of Tibetan language publications in Tibet since 1979; she raises the question of whether a distinctive TIbetan identity is more likely to evolve and survive inside Tibet or in the exile community.

Per Kvaerne and Tsering Shakya both consider in different ways the post-1950 use of, respectively, symbols and language, in earlier times part of an intrinsically Tibetan cultural identity, to convey secular messages of modernity and of Marxist ideology.

The Tibetans' response to the imposition of the Communist system and its ideology in 1950 has been marked by two contrasting characteristics: diplomacy and resistance. Jamyang Norbu discusses the

genesis of the Tibetan armed opposition to the Chinese advance and questions the popular presentation of non-violence as the dominant characteristic of the Tibetan political response. By contrast, Tsering Wangyal dates diplomatic initiatives by the exile Tibetan Government as beginning from as early as 1972, and goes on to describes the subsequent response of the exile community, now primarily taking the form of diplomatic dialogue between Beijing and Dharamsala.

The demonstrations that began in Lhasa in 1987 implied on the surface that China's reform policies had failed as a political strategy. The actual course of the protests is charted in some detail by Ronald Schwartz and Robert Barnett in their studies. Schwartz goes on to examine the role of the United Front in the Chinese response to the protest movement, suggesting that its attempts at political re-education may have served to consolidate Tibetans' political consciousness. Barnett describes the evolution of a shared symbolism by Tibetan protestors as they developed rituals of defiance which served to reinterpret and invalidate successive Chinese responses.

In her essay on the role of nuns in the protest movement, Hanna Havnevik looks at the prominent role played by nuns in the recent protest movement, which can be seen as a process of revitalisation. She argues that the nuns are prompted by the desire to overcome the double discrimination they face as Tibetans under the Chinese rule and as women in a patriarchal society. The decision to become a nun in Tibet today is, she suggests, not only a religious commitment but in itself an expression of dissent and of commitment to the survival of the Tibetan culture.

Elliot Sperling's paper, applying scholarly methods to contemporary materials in Tibet to reveal a source of information on the current protest movement, examines political documents circulated by the pro-independence movement in Tibet. He argues that the growing sense of national identity that these documents reflect is in some ways a consequence of the importation of Marxist-Leninist ideology, which itself has served as a vehicle for European political ideas of nationhood, rights and individuality.

The two contributions made by Chinese scholars to the conference have been brought together as a postscript and offer an insight into the perceptions of Chinese scholars of the Tibetan issue. Wang Yao and Wang Xiaoqiang were both themselves deeply involved in the evolution of China's post-1979 reform policies, Wang Yao as a member of Hu Yaobang's pivotal `inspection team' in Tibet and Wang Xiaoqiang as an adviser to Hu's successor, Zhao Ziyang.

It was during the visit of Hu Yaobang to Lhasa in May 1980 that the key policy statement of China's effort at reform in Tibet was made. Wang Yao was not able to travel to London to deliver his paper in person at the 1990 SOAS conference, but the attention drawn in his paper, at a time when the reform movement in China was in disarray, to the pivotal role of Hu Yaobang in the transformation of Chinese policy towards Tibet excited considerable interest in the press as well as in academic circles.

Wang Xiaoqiang, one of the leading reform economists sent by the Beijing authorities to Tibet in 1983 to assess the progress of Hu's reforms, addresses in his paper opportunities for future prospects for development and co-operation. Arguing that economic and political progress cannot advance without religious reforms by Tibetans, Wang's paper criticises some of Beijing's Tibet policies, in particular its stand on religion, its replacement of Wu Jinghua and its failure to advance beyond policies already proposed in the 1950s.

There was unanimity amongst the scholars at the London conference about the need to develop the field of modern Tibetan studies. It is apparent from the papers collected here that there exists a wide range of contemporary issues that are worthy of academic debate and of detailed documentation. Hopefully the papers reproduced in this collection will serve as a starting point for the development of

a scholarly discourse on modern Tibet.

Notes

1. John K. Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, Volume 14, Part I, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 1
2. H. Jaeschke, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1965, p. iii
3. Alexandra David Neel, *My Journey to Lhasa*, Heinemann, London, 1927, p. ix
4. Fosco Maraini, *Secret Tibet*, Reader's Union, Hutchinson, London, 1954, p. 46
5. Marco Pallis, *Of Peaks and Lamas*, Cassell, London, 1946