

## **White Paper on Tibetan Culture**

**Following is the full text of the white paper on "The Development of Tibetan Culture" released by the Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China June 22:**

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#### **Foreword**

China is a united multi-ethnic country. As a member of the big family of the Chinese nation, the Tibetan people have created and developed their brilliant and distinctive culture during a long history of continuous exchanges and contacts with other ethnic groups, all of whom have assimilated and promoted each other's cultures. Tibetan culture has all along been a dazzling pearl in the treasure-house of Chinese culture as well as that of the world as a whole.

The gradual merger of the Tubo culture of the Yalong Valley in the middle part of the basin of the Yarlung Zangbo River, and the ancient Shang-Shung culture of the western part of the Qinghai- Tibet Plateau formed the native Tibetan culture. In the period of the reign of Songtsen Gampo in the seventh century, Buddhism was introduced to the Tubo people from the Central Plain of China, India and Nepal, and gradually developed into Tibetan Buddhism with its distinctive characteristics. At the same time, the Indian and Nepalese cultures of South Asia, the Persian and Arabic cultures of West Asia and especially the Han Chinese culture of the Central Plain had considerable influence on the development of Tibetan culture. In the long process of Tibetan cultural development, Tibetan architecture art and the plastic arts such as sculpture, painting, decoration and handicrafts, as well as music, dance, drama, spoken and written language, literature in written form, folk literature, Tibetan medicine and pharmacology, astronomy and the calendar all reached very high levels.

Tibet later became a local regime practicing a system of feudal serfdom under a theocracy, and ruled by a few upper-class monks and nobles. This ensured that Tibetan Buddhist culture gained the dominant position in Tibetan culture for a long period of time, until the Democratic Reform was carried out in 1959. Throughout this period, a handful of upper-class lamas and aristocrats monopolized the means of production, culture and education.

Cultural and artistic pursuits were regarded as their exclusive amusements, while the serfs and slaves, who constituted 95 percent of the Tibetan population, lived in extreme poverty and were not guaranteed even the basic right of subsistence, let alone the right to enjoy culture and education. The long reign of feudal serfdom under theocracy not only severely fettered the growth of the productive forces in Tibet, but also resulted in a hermetically sealed and moribund traditional Tibetan culture, including cultural relics, historic sites and sites for Buddhist worship. As for modern science, technology, culture and education, they did not get any chance to develop at all.

After the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, the Central People's Government attached great importance to the protection and development of the fine aspects of traditional Tibetan culture. The "Seventeen-Article Agreement" on measures for the peaceful liberation of Tibet signed by the Central People's Government and the local government of Tibet in 1951 clearly stipulates: "In accordance with the actual conditions of Tibet, the spoken and written Tibetan language and school education will be progressively developed." In 1959, with the support of the Central Government, Tibet carried out the Democratic Reform to abolish the feudal serf system and liberate the million serfs and slaves, and implemented the ethnic regional autonomy system there step by step. This marked the advent of a brand-new era in the social and cultural development of Tibet, and ended the monopoly exercised over Tibetan culture by the few upper-class feudal lamas and aristocrats, making it the common legacy for all the people of Tibet to inherit and carry on.

In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the Law on Ethnic Regional Autonomy, the Central People's Government and the People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region have made great efforts in the past 40-plus years to promote the social and economic development of Tibet, to satisfy the Tibetan people's increasing needs for rich material and cultural lives. At the same time, they have devoted large amounts of human, financial and material resources to protecting and carrying forward the fine aspects of traditional Tibetan culture, as well as initiating and developing modern science, culture and education by employing legal, economic and administrative means. As a result, considerable achievements attracting worldwide attention have been attained. All the people in Tibet, as masters of the new era, jointly carry on, develop and enjoy the traditional Tibetan culture, and jointly create modern civilized life and culture, bringing unprecedented prosperity and development to Tibetan culture.

## **I. The Spoken and Written Tibetan Language Is Widely Studied and Used, and Being Developed**

The Tibet Autonomous Region is an area where Tibetan people live in concentrated communities, constituting more than 95 percent of the population of the region. In Tibet, the spoken and written Tibetan language is universally used. In accordance with the stipulations of the Constitution and the Law on Ethnic Regional Autonomy, the Tibet Autonomous Region has paid great attention to maintaining and safeguarding the Tibetan people's right to study, use and develop their spoken and written language.

It promulgated and implemented Some Provisions of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the Study, Use and Development of the Spoken and Written Tibetan Language (Draft) and the Rules for the Implementation of "Some Provisions of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the Study, Use and Development of the Spoken and Written Tibetan Language (Draft)" in 1987 and 1988, respectively. These two laws put the work related to the study, use and development of the spoken and written Tibetan language on a legal track. The governments at all levels in Tibet have implemented the provisions on protecting and developing the spoken and written Tibetan language according to law, safeguarding the Tibetan people's right to study and use their native language, and making the language develop continuously together with the development of politics, economy and culture.

The spoken and written Tibetan language is widely used in every aspect of social life in Tibet. Since the Democratic Reform in 1959, the Tibetan and Han Chinese languages have been used for all the resolutions, laws and regulations adopted by the People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region, and the official documents and proclamations issued by the governments at all levels or their departments in Tibet. In judicial proceedings, the spoken and written Tibetan language is used in trying cases and in the relevant legal documents if the litigant participants are Tibetans. Both the Tibetan and Han Chinese languages are used for all work units' official seals, certificates, forms, stationery, and signs, and signboards of institutions, factories, mines, schools, railway stations, airports, stores and shops, hotels, cinemas, theaters and gymnasiums, street and road signs, and traffic signs.

At present, the radio and TV stations in the Tibet Autonomous Region broadcast in the Tibetan language for over 20 hours per day.

On October 1, 1999, the Tibet Television started its satellite broadcasting channel, which broadcast telefilms and other programs in the Tibetan language every day. The cinema is oriented toward grassroots and farming and pastoral areas, guaranteeing that at least 25 movies newly dubbed into the Tibetan language are shown in the various places in Tibet every year. Meanwhile, the publication of Tibetan books, magazines and newspapers has made rapid progress. Since 1989 alone, 441 titles

of books have been published in the Tibetan language, of which many have won domestic or international awards. There are altogether 14 magazines and 10 newspapers published in the Tibetan language in Tibet. The Tibetan edition of the Tibet Daily is published every day, with a large number of articles and news dispatches written or edited in the Tibetan language directly. The newspaper has said good-bye to sort typesetting by investing a considerable sum of money to establish Tibetan computer editing and typesetting systems. Both Tibet Science and Technology News and Tibet Scientific and Technological Information have their Tibetan-language editions, which are very popular among the farmers and herdsmen. All the art troupes in Tibet create programs and perform in the Tibetan language.

The study of the Tibetan language is protected by law.

Educational institutions in the Tibet Autonomous Region universally practice a bilingual educational system whereby teaching is done principally in the Tibetan language. Furthermore, the teaching and reference materials for all the courses from primary school to senior high school have been edited in or translated into the Tibetan language.

As the times progress and society advances, the Tibetan language develops in tandem, with its vocabulary and grammar continuously enriched. Much headway has been made in the normalization of technical terms and standardization of information technology in the Tibetan language. The encoded Tibetan language has been formally recognized by the Chinese state and international standards, and the promotion of the Tibetan language as an Internet communication tool is proceeding apace.

## **II. Cultural Relics and Ancient Books and Records Are Well Preserved and Utilized**

In old Tibet, cultural relic protection was virtually nonexistent. But since the Democratic Reform, the Central People's Government has attached great importance to the protection of cultural relics in Tibet. As early as in June 1959, the Tibet Cultural Relics, Historical Sites, Documents and Archives Management Committee was established to collect and protect a large number of cultural relics, archives, and ancient books and records. At the same time, the Central People's Government assigned work teams to Lhasa, Xigaze and Shannan to conduct on-the-spot investigations of major cultural relics. A total of nine historical sites were listed among the first batch of important cultural relic sites under state-level protection by the State Council in 1961, including the Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, Ganden Monastery, Tibetan King's Tomb, Mount Dzong (Dzongri) Anti-British Monument in Gyangze County, and the Guge Kingdom ruins.

Even in such a special period as the "Cultural Revolution" (1966- 1976), Premier Zhou Enlai gave instructions personally that special measures be taken to protect major cultural relics like the Potala Palace from destruction. After the "Cultural Revolution," the Central People's Government took prompt measures to repair and protect a lot of historical relics, investing more than 300 million yuan to repair and open 1,400-odd monasteries and temples.

In particular, between 1989 and 1994, the Central People's Government allocated 55 million yuan and a great quantity of gold, silver and other precious materials to repair the Potala Palace, which was unprecedented in China's history of historical relic preservation. In May 1994, experts entrusted by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee inspected the repaired Potala Palace and said that the design and construction of the repairs had both attained advanced world levels. They considered it "a miracle in the history of ancient building protection" and "a great contribution to the protection of Tibetan, and even world, culture." In December 1994, in view of its importance and condition of protection the World Heritage Committee unanimously agreed to place the Potala Palace on the World Heritage List. Meanwhile, representatives from various countries also expressed their support for the proposal on including the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa in the same list. Now, the Central People's Government allocates four to five million yuan every year for cultural relic protection in Tibet. From 1994 to 1997, the Central Government invested nearly 100 million yuan to construct the Tibet Autonomous Region Museum, one of the leading modern museums in China, with an area of 52,479 square meters and a floor space of 21,000 square meters.

In 1965, the People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region set up the Cultural Relics Administration Committee to take charge of the preservation and administration of cultural relics in Tibet.

It named 11 historical sites, such as Ramoche Monastery, Radreng Monastery and Tsurpu Monastery, as important cultural relic sites under autonomous region-level protection, and repaired those that urgently needed repair. Beginning in the 1980s, the Tibet Autonomous Region has issued successively the Proclamation of the People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region on Improving the Preservation of Cultural Relics, the Interim Provisions of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the Administration of Scattered Cultural Relics, the Regulations of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the Protection and Administration of Cultural Relics, and the Measures for the Protection and Administration of the Potala Palace. These laws and regulations have brought the work of preserving cultural relics in Tibet within the orbit of legalization and standardization. At the same time, a large contingent of cultural relic protection staff has been formed, and the ranks of such personnel are constantly growing. According to statistics, there are now more than 270 archeologists in Tibet, among whom 95 percent are Tibetans.

Remarkable achievements have been gained in archeological work in Tibet. Among them, the excavation of the Karuo ruins, Qamdo, attracted the attention of archeologists both at home and abroad.

Since the 1970s, China has conducted archeological work extensively in Tibet and unearthed many Old and New Stone Age sites, gradually unveiling the mystery of the origins of the society, history and traditional culture of Tibet. A general survey made from the mid-1980s to the beginning of the 1990s discovered 1,700-odd sites of cultural remains, and unearthed and collected several thousand cultural relics. In addition, over six million words of archeological documents were edited, along with 670-odd diagrams, more than 30,000 photos were taken, and some 400 pictures of tablet inscriptions, stone statues and murals were copied. These materials have helped outline the changes and development of Tibet from ancient to modern times, and revealed the long-standing cultural exchanges between the Tibetan, Han and other neighboring ethnic groups. Moreover, they furnish a full and reliable basis for archeological workers of the present and later times to better preserve cultural relics and strengthen archeological work in Tibet. Currently, there are 18 important cultural relic sites under state-level protection, three famous historical and cultural cities under state-level protection, 64 cultural relic sites under autonomous region-level protection, and 20-odd cultural relic sites under county- or city-level protection in Tibet. In recent years, Tibet has successfully held Tibetan cultural relic exhibitions in Japan, France, Italy, Argentina and other countries, promoting cultural exchanges between Tibet and other nations worldwide, and helping the international community better understand Tibet.

Ancient documents and archives are well preserved in Tibet.

There are enormous numbers of Tibetan-language documents and archives in various categories, next in number only to the Han- Chinese language ones. In June 1959, the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, on the instructions of the State Council, issued Some Provisions on Strengthening the Administration of Cultural Relics, Historical Sites, Documents and Archives, and started to edit, preserve, collect and store the documents and archives of the former local government of Tibet and its subordinate departments, as well as those collected by monasteries, temples and aristocrats. As a result, a fairly complete collection of archives was established. In 1984, the Central People's Government allocated a large amount of money to build the new Tibet Autonomous Region Archives, with improved functions and modern facilities. At present, there are over three million volumes in the Archives. Large-format books such as A Selection of Tibetan Historical Archives and An Inventory of the Year of the Iron-Tiger edited by the Tibet Autonomous Region Archives have been published, furnishing precious materials for research. The government institutions at all levels in Tibet have collected over four million volumes of archives on paper, silk, wood, metal, stone and Patra leaf. Among them, more than 90 percent are in Tibetan, and the others in a variety of languages such as Han Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian, Hindi, Sanskrit, Nepalese, English and Russian. These archives, which date from the Yuan Dynasty to contemporary times, constitute a treasure-house of chronologically complete historical records.

### **III. Folk Customs and Freedom of Religious Belief Are Respected and Protected**

The state respects and safeguards the rights of the Tibetans and other ethnic groups in Tibet to live their lives and conduct social activities in accordance with their traditional customs, and their freedoms to engage in normal religious activities and major religious and folk festival celebrations. As society progresses, some decayed, backward old customs despising laboring people that bear a strong tinge

of the feudal serf system have been abandoned, which reflects the Tibetans' pursuit of modern civilization and a healthy life as well as the continuous development of Tibetan culture in the new era. The Tibetan people, while maintaining their traditions, have greatly enriched their lives by absorbing many new cultural customs, as displayed in dress and adornments, diet, residence, weddings and funerals.

There are many traditional festivals and fairs in Tibet, including the Tibetan New Year, Sakadawa Festival, Ongkor (Bumper Harvest) Festival, Shoton (Yogurt) Festival, Bathing Festival, Butter Lamp Festival, Dharma Festival, Burning Offerings Festival, Garchachen Festival, and Horse Race Fair of Lhasa and the many festivals of other places. Religious festivals celebrated by monasteries include the Shimo Chento Festival of Tashilhunpo Monastery, Nganjo Festival of Ganden Monastery, Collecting Sutras and Religious Dance festivals of Samye Monastery, July Vajra Festival of Sakya Monastery, Erecting the Prayer Banner Pole Festival of Tsurpu Monastery, and Paltung Tanbo Festival of Radreng Monastery. In addition, the Tibetans also celebrate some national and international festivals such as International Working Women's Day (March 8th), International Labor Day (May 1st), Chinese Youth Festival (May 4th), International Children's Day (June 1st) and National Day (October 1st). Combining new concepts and the new culture of modern civilization with the fine aspects of traditional Tibetan culture, Tibet has formed new customs and habits with the characteristics of both the ethnic group and the times.

The Central People's Government and the government of the Tibet Autonomous Region have all along paid special attention to respect for and protection of the freedom of religious belief and normal religious activities of the Tibetan people. Since the Democratic Reform, religion-related cultural relics and historical sites, monasteries and temples have been well preserved at the behest of both the clerical and secular masses. The Potala Palace, the Three Grand Monasteries in Lhasa, Jokhang Temple and Tashilhunpo Monastery in Xigaze have been listed as important cultural relic sites under state-level protection by the Central Government. The murals, sculptures, statues, Thangkas (scroll paintings), artistic decorations, scriptures, offerings, ritual musical instruments and shrines of Buddha of those monasteries, as well as the scripture halls, worship halls, monasteries, temples and pagodas, the carriers of religious culture, have been preserved as far as possible or have been repaired or restored to their original condition. Especially beginning in the 1980s, the state has allocated large amounts of money for the reconstruction of some famous monasteries, including the Ganden, Yumbulagang and Sanggagorto monasteries, and the repairing of well-known but dilapidated monasteries, such as the Samye, Shalu, Sakya, Changzhug, Qamba Ling and Toling monasteries. The scriptures and classics of the Potala Palace, the Norbulingka and Sakya Monastery have been well preserved, with some edited and published as the Catalogue of the Classics of the Potala Palace, Ancient Books of the Snowland, and Origin of Religions by Deu. Now, Tibet is home to more than 1,700 monasteries, temples and other sites of religious activity, with over 46,000 Buddhist monks and nuns. Each year, religious activities are held and important religious festivals are celebrated on schedule in the Autonomous Region. The Tibet Branch of the Buddhist Association of China, an umbrella organization of the various sects of Tibetan Buddhism, now has seven prefecture (city)-level sub-branches, the journal Buddhism in Tibet in the Tibetan language, an institute of Buddhist theology and a Tibetan scripture printing house.

#### **IV. Culture and Art Are Being Inherited and Developed in an All-Round Way**

The Central People's Government and the People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region have all along attached importance to the inheritance and development of Tibetan culture and art. As early as in the 1950s, a group of literary and art workers from different ethnic groups went to Tibet to collect music, dance, folk stories, proverbs and folk songs together with their Tibetan counterparts, and edited them for publication. One fruit of their labors was the book Tibetan Folk Songs. Beginning at the end of the 1970s, the state conducted a large-scale systematic survey, collection and edition of the Tibetan folk cultural and art heritage. Since the 1980s, a group of region-, prefecture- and city-level institutions have been set up to save, collect, research, edit and publish the Tibetan folk literary and art heritage, on a scale without parallel in history. The regional government has assigned survey teams to go to the towns, villages and monasteries to make extensive investigation and collection of this heritage. These efforts have resulted in the collection of about 30 million words of written materials in the Han Chinese and Tibetan languages, the making of a large amount of video tapes and the taking of nearly 10,000 pictures. On this basis, the History of Chinese Operas and Story-telling Ballads: Tibet Volume, Collection of Chinese Folk Songs: Tibet Volume, Collection of Folk Dances of Chinese Ethnic Groups: Tibet Volume, and Collection of Chinese Proverbs: Tibet Volume have been published, and a

series of collections of Tibetan ballads, folk songs, opera music and folk stories are now under compilation and will be published very soon. The editing and publishing of these books reflects the regional government's achievements in the protection of the fine aspects of traditional Tibetan culture and folk literature and art.

The world-famous Life of King Gesar, a long and valuable heroic epic created by the Tibetan people over a considerable long period of time, is a rare literary treasure of China and the entire world. However, it has all along been passed down by folk artists orally.

To better protect it, the regional authorities set up special bodies in 1979 for the collection, research, editing and publishing of the Life of King Gesar. The state placed it on the key scientific research project lists of the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Five-Year Plans. After 20 years of effort, nearly 300 handwritten or block-printed Tibetan volumes have been collected.

Among them, except 100 variant volumes, about 70 volumes have been formally published in the Tibetan language, with a total print run of well over three million copies. Thus, this epic, which had for long centuries been known only to a few folk artists, has come out as a systematically complete literary masterpiece that is called "the king of world epics." In addition, over 20 volumes of the Chinese edition have been published, and some have been translated into English, Japanese and French, and distributed all over the world. This was an unprecedented achievement in protecting the Tibetan literary and art heritage, as well as in publishing history.

Modern Tibetan literature and art have developed greatly in the process of combining with the traditional formats, styles and characteristics. After the peaceful liberation of Tibet, a group of literary and art workers from different ethnic groups went into the thick of life in Tibet to explore and inherit the fine aspects of the local literature and art tradition. They created a lot of poems, novels, songs, dances, fine art works, films and photos, introducing new literary and artistic ideas and creation experience to the then closed or semi-closed parts of Tibet. A large number of Tibetan intellectuals loving literature and art joined the new ranks of literary and art workers, and created a batch of modern works with distinctive ethnic features.

Particularly after the Democratic Reform in 1959, a number of excellent literary and art works emerged in Tibet and, to a certain degree, influenced people both at home and abroad. These works include the songs "On the Golden Hill of Beijing" and "Liberated Serfs Sing," the song with actions "Strolling Around the New Town," the song and dance combination "Washing Clothes," the dance epic with music "Emancipated Serfs Turn Toward the Sun," the drama "Princess Wen Cheng" and the movie "The Serfs." Over the past half century, professional literary and art workers in Tibet have created and performed a total of 569 literary and art works and theatrical programs with distinctive ethnic features and a strong feel of the times, of which 51 have won national awards, and 121 regional awards. In the past five years, professional theatrical troupes in Tibet have presented 4,887 performances, attracting audiences totaling 2.79 million. In addition, they have presented over 400 performances for ordinary people every year.

Popular culture and art have developed energetically. Beginning in 1959, the emancipated serfs set up amateur song and dance and Tibetan opera teams one after another in cities and townships.

They composed, wrote and performed a number of programs reflecting the people's new life since the liberation in the forms loved by the masses. In 1963, Tibet, for the first time, held a regional popular theatrical festival, and formed a delegation to participate in the National Amateur Theatrical Festival of Ethnic Minorities in Beijing. The delegation performed a number of excellent programs with new contents and distinctive ethnic characteristics, displaying the new level of popular literary and artistic creation. In the past five years, with the support of the Central People's Government and other autonomous regions, provinces and municipalities, Tibet has intensified its efforts for the construction of cultural facilities, investing a total of 140.46 million yuan in this sphere. So far, Tibet has constructed more than 400 mass art centers, where rich recreational and sports activities of diverse forms can be carried out. The Tibet Library was opened in July 1996, and has been visited by over 100,000 Tibetan readers so far. Now Tibet has 17 mobile performance teams and some 160 amateur theatrical performance teams and Tibetan opera teams at the county level. These teams always perform for the people of the farming and pastoral areas, and are very popular there. Many of their performances have won awards at national or regional theatrical festivals. In addition, the various prefectures, cities and counties hold mass theatrical festivals from time to time to promote popular cultural activities. On the traditional Tibetan Shoton Festival in recent years, Tibetan opera and song and dance

performances have been given in Tibet, together with a wide range of other colorful traditional cultural activities of popular appeal. Lhozhag County, Biru County, Chenggo Township in Gonggar County, Jiongriwuqi Township in Ngamring County and Gyangze County, which are famous for their Tibetan opera, song and dance performances, folk plastic art, folk dances, Tibetan opera and Tibetan carpets, respectively, have received official recognition from the state, which invested over 2.6 million yuan to construct the state-level cultural garden for rural children in Doilungdeqen County and established the Tibet Children's Art Ensemble in 1996. The Tibet Children's Art Ensemble has performed twice in Beijing, and participated in the International Children's Art Festival in the United States in 1998, both times with great success. From 1995 to 1999, a total of 40 professional and amateur art ensembles made up of 360 people were sent by the Tibet Autonomous Region to perform or hold exhibitions in or conduct academic exchanges with more than 20 countries and regions worldwide, and wherever they went, they were enthusiastically welcomed.

## **V. Tibetan Studies Are Flourishing, and Tibetan Medicine and Pharmacology Have Taken On a New Lease of Life**

Old Tibet had no Tibetan studies in the modern sense. But today, great progress has been made in Tibetan studies in Tibet, and Tibetology has been universally acknowledged as a newly developed discipline worldwide, being highly valued in international academic circles. It covers most of the basic subjects in the social and natural sciences, including political science, economics, history, literature and art, religion, philosophy, spoken and written language, geography, education, archeology, folk customs, Tibetan medicine and pharmacology, astronomy, the calendar, ecological protection, sustainable economic development, and agriculture and animal husbandry, breaking the narrow bounds of the "Five Major and Five Minor Treatises of Buddhist Doctrine" of traditional Tibetan culture. Thus Tibetology has become a grand system of comprehensive studies of Tibetan society. According to statistics, there are over 50 institutions of Tibetan studies and more than 1,000 experts and scholars in this field in China at present.

Tibetan studies in Tibet started after the peaceful liberation of the region in 1951. A number of special organizations on Tibetan studies have been established in Tibet since the 1970s, represented by the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences. In the past few years, the Academy has made a breakthrough in Tibetan studies by completing a sequence of important monographs, including A General History of Tibet (Tibetan and Chinese editions), A Political History of Tibet by Xagaba (Annotated), A Communications History of Ancient and Modern Tibet (Chinese edition), The Inference Theory in Tibetan Philosophy (Tibetan edition), A Dictionary of Tibetan Philosophy (Tibetan edition), and Index of the Catalogues of Tibetan Studies Documents. Tibetan Studies has become one of the 100 leading Chinese periodicals on the social sciences. Especially in recent years, unprecedented development has been made in social sciences research in Tibet, a great number of experts and scholars with outstanding accomplishments have emerged, and many scientific research achievements have filled important academic gaps in various fields of Tibetan studies, making important contributions to collating, exploring and saving the precious Tibetan historical and cultural heritage, promoting and carrying forward the fine aspects of traditional Tibetan culture, and enriching the treasure-house of traditional Chinese culture.

Great achievements have also been made in the collection and collation of Chinese documents and historical materials relating to Tibetan studies. A total of over 200 works in more than five million copies have been compiled and published, producing a great impact both at home and abroad, and providing rich evidence and reliable historical materials for research in Tibetology, the history of Han-Tibetan relations, and the history of the relations between the central and Tibetan local authorities. Extensive academic exchanges and cooperation have been carried out between Tibetologists in China and foreign countries, with China receiving more than 200 foreign experts and scholars, and often sending experts and scholars to other countries to give lectures and carry out cooperative research.

Tibetan medicine and pharmacology, with distinctive Tibetan characteristics, occupies an important position in traditional Tibetan culture, and forms a unique part of the treasure-house of Chinese medicine and pharmacology. However, there were only two medical organs in Tibet before 1959—the "Mantsikhang" (Institute of Tibetan Medicine and Astrology) and the "Chakpori Zhopanling" (Medicine King Hill Institute for Saving All Living Beings) in Lhasa, the conditions at which were very simple and crude. They had a combined floor space of only 500 square meters for the outpatient clinics and a total staff of fewer than 50. They handled 30-50 outpatients a day, and mainly served the nobles, feudal lords and upper-strata lamas.

The state has allocated over 800 million yuan to promote the development of Tibetan medicine and pharmacology since Tibet carried out the Democratic Reform over 40 years ago, giving a great boost to this sector. At present, there are a total of 14 Tibetan medical institutions in Tibet, and over 60 county-level hospitals have established Tibetan medicine sections. In 1959, the working personnel involved in Tibetan medicine in Tibet numbered only 434, while in 1999 the number had increased to 1,071, including 61 chief physicians and associate chief physicians, 166 attending physicians and 844 resident physicians and doctors. The "Mantsikhang" and "Chakpori Zhopanling" have been amalgamated to become the Tibet Autonomous Regional Hospital of Tibetan Medicine, with a floor space of over 100,000 square meters and a staff of 438, of whom 290 are health technicians. The hospital has 250 beds and provides free medical care for the broad masses of the Tibetan people, receiving 230,000 outpatients annually. The hospital has set up outpatient and inpatient departments, a pharmaceuticals factory, and research institutes of Tibetan medicine, astronomy and the calendar. It has a department of medicine, surgical department, department of gynecology and obstetrics, tumor department, gastrointestinal department and department of pediatrics to cater to outpatients. In addition, it has set up more than 20 special outpatient departments, such as the department for disease prevention and health protection, oral hygiene department, ophthalmological department and department of external Tibetan therapeutic medicine, and some modern medical and technical departments such as the departments of radiation, ultrasonic wave examination, electrocardioscopy and gastroscopy.

The hospital has adopted the method of combining Western and Tibetan medicine to treat diseases, thereby enriching and developing Tibetan medical therapies and theories.

Due attention has been paid to scientific research and education concerning Tibetan medicine. Tibetan medical institutions at all levels are actively carrying out scientific research on Tibetan medicine, and have collected and collated nearly 100 related documents and monographs. New achievements have been made in studies relating to the history of Tibetan medicine, medical documents, pharmacological theories, medical ethics, the inheritance of the teachings of the masters, and Tibetan materia medica. Thirty-two monographs have been published, including the Four Medical Classics (Tibetan-Chinese bilingual edition), Blue Glaze, A Complete Collection of Wall Charts of the Four Medical Classics, Diagnostics of Tibetan Medicine, Newly Compiled Tibetan Medicaments and Biographies of Famous Tibetan Doctors. The College of Tibetan Medicine has trained 615 qualified personnel of various levels and categories since it was established 10 years ago. The production of Tibetan medicine has been put on a standardized, normalized and scientific administration track. The Tibetan Pharmaceuticals Factory of the Tibet Autonomous Region, one of a dozen similar factories in Tibet, has two production lines, turning out over 110 varieties of products and boasting an annual output value of 46.1 million yuan.

Tibetan medicine is now taking its place in the world, arousing the attention of international medical circles. Many foreign experts and scholars come to Tibet every year to study Tibetan medicine. Tibetan medicine and pharmacology has also been introduced to the United States, Britain and Germany, and some countries have sent students to Tibet to study Tibetan medicine.

With the development and progress of the times, the old science of Tibetan medicine and pharmacology is now full of vigor and vitality, playing an important role in improving the health conditions of the Tibetan people and bringing benefits to mankind as a whole.

## **VI. Popular Education Makes a Historic Leap**

There were no proper schools in old Tibet. Monasteries monopolized education, and there were only a few government schools for training only clerical and secular officials, where most of the students were children of the nobility. The masses of serfs and slaves had no chance to receive education at all and illiterate persons accounted for 95 percent of their total number.

Less than 300 students studied in the state-run Lhasa Primary School, which was established by the Ministry of Education of the National Government in 1937, even during its period of full bloom, and only 12 students graduated from higher primary school during its 10 or so years of operation.

The People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region has always regarded it as an important task to develop popular education to enhance the scientific and cultural qualities of all the Tibetans

since Tibet carried out the Democratic Reform. To guarantee the people's right to receive education in accordance with the law, the autonomous region promulgated for implementation the Measures of Compulsory Education in the Tibet Autonomous Region and A Plan for Compulsory Education in the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1994, and adopted a policy which favored investment in education, providing in explicit terms that the proportion of education to either its annual financial budget or annual investment plan in capital construction should reach 17 percent.

The investment in education within the local budget totaled 1.03 billion yuan from 1990 to 1995. At present, a fairly complete educational system has taken initial shape in Tibet. The teaching and administrative staff have reached 22,279, among whom 19,276 are full-time teachers, and the teachers of ethnic minorities, with most being Tibetans, account for over 80 percent.

Education in Tibet has made great strides. According to statistics, Tibet now boasts 820 primary schools, 101 middle schools and 3,033 teaching centers, with a total enrollment of 354,644 in primary and middle schools, including 34,756 junior middle school students and 9,451 senior middle school students within the region itself. The enrollment ratio of school-age children has reached 83.4 percent. A three-year compulsory education system has been popularized in pastoral areas; in agricultural areas, six years; and in major cities and towns, nine years. Sixteen secondary vocational schools have been set up in the region, and the number of students attending such schools both within and outside Tibet has reached 8,161. With the development of adult education, the illiteracy rate of Tibetan young and middle-aged people declined from 95 percent before 1951 to 42 percent in 1999.

Higher education has also been developed rapidly. Tibet has now established four universities—the Tibet Ethnic Institute, Tibet Institute of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Tibet University, and Tibet College of Tibetan Medicine, with a total enrollment of 5,249.

In the last few decades in Tibet, over 20,000 students have graduated from universities, and more than 23,000 from secondary vocational schools. Some Tibetans have received master's or doctor's degrees. A large number of Tibetan professionals have thus been trained, including scientists, engineers, professors, doctors, writers and artists.

## **VII. The News and Publishing, Broadcasting, Film and Television Industries Are Developing Rapidly**

There was no genuine news and publishing industry in Tibet before its peaceful liberation, and the materials printed by the few wood-block printing houses were almost all scriptures. Tibet's news and publishing industry has grown gradually from nothing since its peaceful liberation. Especially in the past 20 years, the publishing of books, newspapers and audio-visual materials has made rapid progress, and a news and publishing system covering the whole region has already taken initial shape.

Publishing is flourishing. Tibet has established four publishing houses and an audio-visual products duplication and manufacturing plant. The Tibet People's Publishing House has published over 6,600 titles of books, with a total distribution of over 78.9 million copies since it was founded some 30 years ago, among which Tibetan-language books accounted for approximately 80 percent, and nearly 100 titles won national or regional prizes. At present, the region has the Tibet Xinhua Printing House and another 24 printing houses, and new technologies have been gradually introduced to printing enterprises, such as electronic composition, offset lithography, electronic color separation and polychrome printing. There was no system of book distribution in Tibet before its peaceful liberation. But now, the region has 67 Xinhua bookstores at regional, prefectural (city) and county levels. A network of book distribution covering the whole region is now basically in place, offering a total of 90-odd million Tibetan-language books in over 8,000 titles to the masses of Tibetan readers over the past 20 years. The publishing of newspapers and periodicals has also been developed steadily. The Tibet Daily started publication in 1956, and Tibetan Literature and Art in 1977. Now, a total of 52 newspapers and periodicals are published for the general public in Tibet.

Tibet's broadcasting, film and television industries have also been developed gradually since its peaceful liberation. The Lhasa Cable Broadcasting Station was established in 1953; wireless broadcasting was started in 1958; the Tibet People's Broadcasting Station was formally founded in 1959; black-and-white and color television programs were trial-broadcast in 1978 and 1979, respectively; the Tibet Television was established formally in 1985; and the project of the Production Center of the Tibet Dubbed Radio and Television Programs was put in use in 1995. In the last four

decades and more, the state and the autonomous region have invested a total of 530 million yuan in Tibet's radio, film and television industries. The Central Government as well as provinces and municipalities have also given their support to Tibet by supplying it with a large number of equipment and materials, more than 200 technicians and cadres in five groups, and training a galaxy of broadcasting, film and television professionals for it.

At present, Tibet has two radio broadcasting stations, 36 medium- and short-wave radio transmitting and relay stations, 45 county- level FM relay stations, two wireless television stations, 354 television relay stations and 1,475 ground satellite stations, bringing radio and TV programs to 65 and 55 percent of the people in Tibet, respectively, and TV programs to 75 percent of the residents in Lhasa and its vicinity. Seeing films is one of the main cultural activities of the broad masses of people in agricultural and pastoral areas. Tibet now has 436 cinemas, 650 grassroots film projection teams and over 9,300 projection centers, giving more than 130,000 movie shows to 28.5 million people annually, averaging at least one show per farmer or herdsman per month. Films are dubbed in Tibetan in agricultural and pastoral areas so that farmers and herdsmen can understand them. Radio, film and television have become indispensable parts of the cultural lives of the people of various ethnic groups in Tibet.

## Conclusion

Over the past four decades and more, Tibet has made much headway in carrying forward the fine aspects of its traditional culture, while maintaining Tibetan cultural traits, which is revealed prominently in the following aspects: First, the main body of Tibetan culture, which was monopolized by a small handful of feudal serf-owners in the past, has been changed completely, and the entire Tibetan people have become the main body jointly carrying forward and developing Tibetan culture and sharing its fruits; second, Tibetan culture has undergone deep changes-with social progress and development, decadent and backward things inherent in feudal serfdom have been abandoned, the religious beliefs of Tibetan religious followers enjoy full respect and protection, and the fine aspects of traditional Tibetan culture have been carefully preserved and carried forward. Improvement has been steadily made both in its contents and forms, adding some topical contents to reflect the new life of the people and the new needs of social development; and third, a substantive shift has taken place in the development stance of Tibetan culture, from the self-enclosed, stagnating and shrinking situation to a new stance- the stance of opening-up and development oriented to modernization and the outside world. While developing and promoting its traditional culture, Tibet is also developing modern scientific and technological education and news dissemination at an unprecedented rate.

It deserves careful reflection that, although Tibetan culture is developing continuously, the Dalai Lama clique is clamoring all over the world that "Tibetan culture has become extinct," and, on this pretext, is whipping up anti-China opinions with the backing of international antagonist forces. From the 40-odd years of history following the Democratic Reform in Tibet it can be clearly perceived that what the Dalai clique is aiming at is nothing but hampering the real development of Tibetan culture.

First, as a social ideology, culture varies with the changes in the other parts of the social economic foundation and superstructure. The formation and development of modern Western culture are inseparable from the modern European bourgeois revolution, in which the dictatorial system of feudal serfdom and theocracy in the Middle Ages was eliminated, along with the religious reforms and great changes in the ideological and cultural fields caused by it. The development of Tibetan culture in the last four decades and more has been achieved in the course of the same great social change marked by the elimination of feudal serfdom under theocracy that was even darker than the European system in the Middle Ages. With the elimination of feudal serfdom, the cultural characteristics under the old system, in which Tibetan culture was monopolized by a few serf-owners was bound to become "extinct," and so was the old cultural autocracy marked by theocracy and the domination of the entire spectrum of socio-political life by religion, which was an inevitable outcome of both the historical and cultural development in Tibet.

Because without such "extinction," it would be impossible to emancipate and develop Tibetan society and culture, the ordinary Tibetan people would be unable to obtain the right of mastering and sharing the fruits of Tibet's cultural development, and it would be impossible for them to enjoy real freedom, for their religious beliefs would not be regarded as personal affairs.

However, such "extinction" was fatal to the Dalai Lama clique, the chief representatives of feudal

serfdom, for it meant the extinction of their cultural rule. Therefore, it is not surprising at all that they clamor about the "extinction of traditional Tibetan culture."

Second, the development of a culture has never been achieved in isolation, and it is bound to acquire new contents and forms ceaselessly with the progress of the times and development of the society, and nourish and enrich itself while adapting to and absorbing other cultures. The development of Tibetan culture in the last four decades and more has been achieved while Tibetan society is gradually putting an end to ignorance and backwardness, and heading for reform, opening-up and modernization, and while Tibetan culture and modern civilization, including modern Western civilization, are absorbing and blending with each other. The people's mode of thinking and concepts are bound to change with the changes of the modes of production and life in Tibet. During this process, some new aspects of culture which are not contained in the traditional Tibetan culture but are essential in modern civilization have been developed, such as modern scientific and technological education and news dissemination. The fine cultural traditions with Tibetan features are being carried forward and promoted in the new age, and the decayed and backward things in the traditional culture that are not adapted to social development and people's life are being gradually sifted out. It is a natural phenomenon in conformity with the law of cultural development, and a manifestation of the unceasing prosperity and development of Tibetan culture in the new situation. To prattle about the "extinction of Tibetan culture" due to its acquisition of the new contents of the new age and to its progress and development is in essence to demand that modern Tibetan people keep the life styles and cultural values of old Tibet's feudal serfdom wholly intact. This is completely ridiculous, for it goes against the tide of progress of the times and the fundamental interests of the Tibetan people.

At present, as mankind has marched into the new millennium, economic globalization and informationization in social life are developing rapidly, increasingly changing people's material and cultural lives. With the deepening development of China's reform and opening-up and the modernization drive, especially the practice of the strategy of large-scale development of the western region, Tibet is striding toward modernization and going global with a completely new shape, and new and still greater development will certainly be achieved in Tibetan culture in this process.