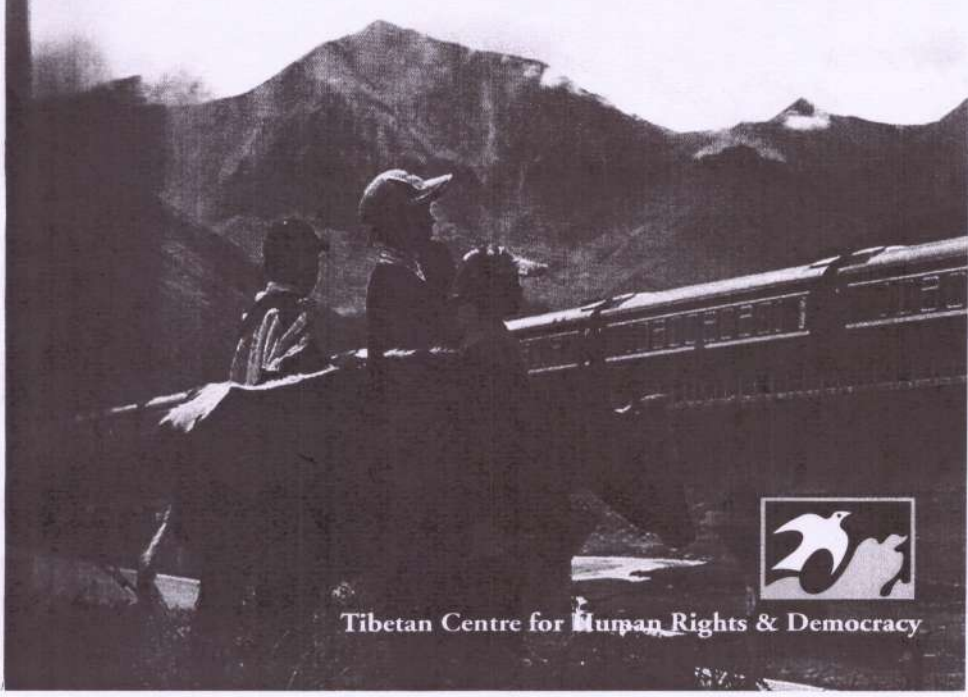


2 0 0 6 S P E C I A L R E P O R T

RAILWAY AND CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN TIBET - A TALE OF TWO ECONOMIES

RAILWAY AND CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN TIBET

A Tale of Two Economies



Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy

Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is the first Tibetan non-governmental organization to be formed with the mission to promote and protect human rights of Tibetans in Tibet and to educate the exile Tibetan community on human rights concepts and democratic principles. TCHRD is independent of the Tibetan Government-in-exile, and is based in Dharamsala, India. It is funded by donations from individual supporters and foundations around the world. It was founded in January 1996 and was registered as an NGO on 4 May 1996.

TCHRD conducts regular, systematic investigations of human rights abuses in Tibet and publishes research documents on various human rights issues confronted by the Tibetan people in Tibet. TCHRD organizes various educational programmes like workshops, talk series, and public discussions in an effort to empower the Tibetan exile community to play an important participatory and vigilant role in a democratic future Tibet. TCHRD attends the UN Commission on Human Rights and takes part in other national and international conferences to highlight the human rights situation in Tibet.

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**Railway and China's Development
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INTRODUCTION

China's occupation of Tibet and its development programmes in Tibet function on similar contours of perception and mindset. Tibet a land to be occupied, a rightful part of the great Motherland China. In order to hold the rule China believe development as a necessary tool to nurture and further strengthen the occupation or "national unity". These two levels of perception and outlook still continue to influence China's policy on Tibet. China's development approach and model in Tibet has been seen through this prism of these two perceptions.

Yin Fatang in his introductory remarks in the Pictorial Book "*GOLDEN BRIDGES*" marking the 30th anniversary of the inauguration of the Sichuan-Tibet and Qinghai-Tibet Highways said that,

One of the chief reasons for Tibet's long held up development could be traced to its primitive mode of transportation characterized by mountain paths and sliding cables, pack animals and human feet. Facts show that road building and development of the motor transportation in Tibet in the last three decades constitutes a basic condition for its social advances. From their own experiences, the Tibetan people have arrived at the conclusion that communications and transportation are the lifeline of Tibetan economy and that national unity provides the basic condition for all successful endeavours in Tibet.

Mao sent an inscription to the road builders who built the Sichuan-Tibet and the Qinghai-Tibet Highways. The inscription called for, "Celebrate the opening of the Sichuan-Tibet and the Qinghai-Tibet highways, consolidate the unity of the people of all nationalism, and build up the motherland".²

In the last ten years, China has been obsessed with the goal of achieving '*development*' in Tibet. The construction of the Qingzang Railway was hyped and glorified in the State Media. The Railway was greeted with applause and paraded to the outside world as triumphant evidence of China's

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developmental endeavours in Tibet. China has been undertaking sporadic '*developmental projects*' inside Tibet in the last decade. Hence an assessment on China's '*developmental*' initiatives in Tibet is warranted. This report is an attempt to uncover some of harsh realities behind China's zealous '*development*' projects in Tibet.

In 1950, Mao Zedong sent PLA soldiers to "liberate" Tibet from the oppression of feudalism; however, "liberation" resulted in the occupation and colonization of Tibet. Ever since the occupation of Tibet, the PRC's most credible claim cited as justification for its presence in Tibet is to promote development and to rescue Tibetans from the clutches of "backwardness and medievalism". The Chinese government claims that it is empowering and helping its 'Xizang brothers' [Tibetan brothers] the way in which Tibet has been transformed reflects a stark contrast between official rhetoric and the situation on the ground.

In the last decade we have seen radical urbanization in Tibet. Urban enclaves and towns have mushroomed everywhere. The changing face of Tibet's old cities like Lhasa has never been dramatic and radical the way it has been transformed since the coming of Chinese. In the wake of China's miraculous economic growth and rapid rise of stature in the international and diplomatic arena, Beijing has sought to earn international credibility by investing millions of dollars in massive state-sponsored infrastructure developments and projects in Tibet.

However, in an economic era of globalization and consumerism, the term '*development*' is a loaded term. It cannot be viewed in 'isolation'. Development includes education, culture and traditions, Aids and investment, employment, agriculture, science and mining, healthcare, environment, Tibetan medicine, tourism and nomadic life style of Tibetans.

In the age of neo-global diplomacy, political opportunism and national-interest-come-first, advocacy for human rights of Tibetans in Tibet, particularly the rights to development of the Tibetan people presents daunting challenges for many of countries who has close trade ties with China. 'Human Rights Commission' and 'Human Rights Council' are a mere change of words.

Introduction

There is far more to China's development campaign in Tibet than a mere effort to project a new modernized and prosperous Tibet. Moreover, because China is a reclusive State, it remains a mountainous task to overcome the lack of access, obstacles and hurdles to carrying out investigative research into the nature of 'development' in Tibet. *Developmental scientists* like Andrew Fischer and others based much of their research papers and assessments on facts and figures released by the State as attempts to carry out field research met with difficulties due to the secretive nature of the Chinese State and political sensitivity attached to the Tibetan issue. It is therefore difficult to reach to a precise and accurate understanding of 'development' is a challenge faced by researchers and monitoring agents.

In backdrop of 'development' inside Tibet, the report attempts to give an overview of the situation of 'development' inside Tibet. This report tackles two main issues related to 'development' in Tibet. First, it addresses China's 'development strategy', analyzing whether China fulfilled its stated objectives. The report highlights the flaws of the Chinese government's *flawed development strategy and model implementing in Tibet*. Secondly, the report uncovers the application of China's 'development strategy' in Tibet and how far it goes out to achieve development in Tibet as stated by the Chinese government.

The report unravels the nature of the dual economies currently functioning in Tibet, the rapid development and creation of urban enclaves and the existence of neglected rural hinterland where more than 80 percent of Tibetan population live. The report also uncovers the fact how China's development strategy in Tibet failed by breaking Tibet's economy into three sectors.

Finally the report looks into the heart of the Qingzang Railway to analyze, ascertain and uncover whether it promotes development in Tibet as stated by the Chinese government. The report also makes observation on negative fall out, implications and challenges of the train. It is also important to consider how the train would soon shape the demographic composition of Tibet and how Tibetans will wrest the ownership and masters of their affairs. Therefore the entire report is categorized in two parts, (1) **Flaws in China's Development Strategy in Tibet**, (2) **Railway, Development And Myth**.

FLAWS IN CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN TIBET

Development as Ownership

It is to be noted that China has been a great success in creating vibrant urban centres and bringing superficial infrastructure changes to Tibet. Not so surprisingly, many visitors to Tibet are shocked because reality differs drastically with the images of Tibet they gained from books. Lhasa City epitomizes an old Tibet that is hardly visible today. Today, Lhasa contains modern buildings, shopping malls, bars, broad boulevards, discotheques, hotels and traffic. However, the picture of modern Lhasa City, as well as that of other Tibetan towns and cities, can be very deceptive. China intends that they prove its claims of 'development' in Tibet after fifty years of Chinese rule. However, Tibet's development cannot be gauged from superficial images.

The true yardstick to measure development is the ownership of development from the first stage of formulating policy, to implementation and finally to the reaping of benefits from development. Throughout these processes, the interest and benefit of Tibetan people must remain at the center and not on the periphery. China's development in Tibet over the past years has failed to benefit Tibetans because it excludes the agrarian Tibetan community, which composes more than 80 percent of the Tibetan population.

Although every year the central Chinese government pours billions of yuan into Tibet, underdevelopment in rural areas persists. In the last decade Tibet has been the largest per capita recipient of subsidy and funding from the central government. On the Tibetan Autonomous Region's (TAR) 20th anniversary, the government spent 500 million yuan on 43 projects; on TAR's 30th anniversary, it spent 4.6 billion yuan on 62 projects; and on TAR's 40th anniversary, it spent 6.42 billion yuan on 24 projects. TAR Chairman Jampa Phuntsok said that in 2004 over 16.6 billion yuan (US\$ 2 billion) was invested in building infrastructure. Most of the funds came

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from the central government under the "Western Development Program." Tsering Dhondup a nomad from Kanlho County testified to TCHRD that mismanagement and embezzlement of public funds are common practice at local government levels.

Local governments' misuse of power³

In the same county of Kanlho, the local authorities mismanaged the nomad's fund. In 2001, a Chinese entrepreneur collected money from Tibetan nomads, however, with the involvement of local authorities, the money collected disappeared without a trace. The nomads forwarded a petition to the local authorities but received no response.

In 2005, a peaceful protest against the local authorities was held, however, a local Tibetan official, Tsering Dhondup; *Huis* Chinese officials; and PAP soldiers suppressed the protest and issued a terse warning that such protest would amount to counter revolutionary activities with dire consequences.

Later, after a change in government officials, new local officials solved the case by stating that this was a case of "corruption and misuse of public funds". Each family had invested 100 Yuan in the enterprise and there were 2,200 families. The authorities at all levels - County, Township and Prefecture - took money rightfully owned by the Tibetans. So far, the authorities have not reimbursed the local Tibetans.

However, the monetary and political energy has been focused on the urban sector. This indicates the absence of a 'human face' to a planned economic policy. One of the most viable and reliable means to uncover what obstructs the development of Tibetan people is to study the nature of three sectors of Tibetan economy i.e. primary, secondary and the tertiary.

In the case of land and housing rights, China's constitution provides, "land is owned by the State...can be requested for public purposes." The Tibetan people in Tibet today face ownership crisis of their ancestral lands and housing rights through forced eviction, displacement, confiscation of private properties, and the practice of population transfer.

Development in three sectors of Tibet

The true form of development promoted by social scientists for Tibetans is 'human capital formation' and implementation of the 'right to development' and right to self-determination. It is only on these grounds that true development of Tibet can be accessed and examined. In order to assess Tibetans' development, we must look at the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the Tibetan economy. The monetary investments and infrastructure projects in Tibet do not represent an accurate picture of growth.

Comparison among three sectors:

The breakdown of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the TAR, Qinghai and China as a whole reflects unfair growth. Furthermore, the entire GDP picture of Tibet also reflects the false growth figure.

The GDP of Tibet in 1998 was 9.118 billion yuan, 10.561 billion yuan in 1999, 11.746 billion yuan in 2000 and 13.873 billion yuan in 2001. Therefore, the GDP growth of entire Tibet reflects is 10 percent annually.

The GDP of primary sector was 3.131 in 1998, 3.419 billion yuan in 1999, 3.632 billion yuan in 2000 and 3.747 billion yuan in 2001. This shows growth in the primary sector was roughly 2 percent yearly. In the secondary sector, the GDP was 20.24 percent in 1998, 24 percent in 1999, 27.21 percent in 2000 and 32.18 percent in 2001.

Here, the growth was 4 percent annually in the secondary sector with growth picking up from 2000 onwards, indicating that the sector enjoyed growth due to the economic boom in coastal China. In comparison, the growth in the secondary sector doubled that of the primary sector, which has only 2 percent annual growth. This demonstrates that 87 percent of the agrarian Tibetan community in the primary sector's derived growth of only one half of the growth enjoyed by the secondary sector, which is overwhelmingly non-Tibetans or migrant workers.

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In the tertiary sector the GDP was 39.63 percent in 1998, 47.42 percent in 1999, 53.93 percent in 2000 and 69.08 percent in 2001.

In this sector the growth was 6 percent annually, highest of the three sectors. Only middle-class Tibetans has a robust share in the tertiary sector in areas of administration and clerical works. The 6 percent annual growth demonstrates the overriding political emphasis and weight.

Based on these statistics, GDP growth in Tibet as well as in China was 10 percent. However, further analysis reveals that the urban enclaves grew disproportionately. While in the primary sector, the majority of Tibetan population, growth increased a meager 2 percent. Only the 13 percent of Tibetan population living in urban enclaves enjoyed the benefit of significant growth while 90 percent of those living in urban centers are Chinese.

In the Qinghai region, where the secondary sector dominates, statistics demonstrate considerable growth; however, closer study reveals a similar trend. The benefits and prosperity go to Chinese migrants to the exclusion of Qinghai nomads and semi nomads.

The GDP of entire Qinghai was 220.16 million yuan in 1998, 238.39 million yuan in 1999, 263.59 million yuan in 2000 and 300.95 million yuan in 2001.

Based on these figures, the GDP was 12.2 percent annually in the Qinghai region. Judging from the overall picture, there was growth, but a closer look reveals further discrepancies. In the primary sector, *the GDP growth was 41.63 percent in 1998, 40.54 percent in 1999, 38.53 percent in 2000 and 42.79 percent in 2001.*

The annual growth was 1.16 percent, which is slightly lower than the TAR. This lower growth could be because of the fact that the TAR is the favourite destination of central funding because of the political sensitivity attached to the region. In Qinghai the Chinese migrants are mostly concentrated in the secondary sector unlike the tertiary sector in the TAR.

The secondary sector shows strong growth of 88.42 percent in 1998, 97.88 percent in 1999, 114 percent in 2000 and 132.18 percent in 2001.

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This is 16.5 percent growth. Such growth may have resulted from the area's proximity to China as well as from its other economic and logistics advantages. Regardless, the projection overstates the development of the Tibetan people involved in the secondary sector, who are a minority in any case. Moreover, the growth in the tertiary sector was lower than in the secondary; however, it was high compared to China's overall growth standard.

The GDP in the tertiary sector was 90.11 percent in 1998, 99.97 percent in 1999, 111.06 in 2000 and 125.98 percent in 2001.

The growth rate in the region is 13.3 percent annually. In order for Tibetans to compete in the tertiary sector in the Qinghai region, they need both competitive and comparative advantages to compete with their Chinese counterparts in the secondary sector.

In the Qinghai region, the Tibetan population has a largely rural nomadic background. Hence, the players in this sector are predominantly Chinese migrants. In the secondary sector, Chinese shop owners, entrepreneurs, skilled workers and semiskilled workers working in the large construction projects, mining and industry in the Qinghai belt occupy this sector. The massive role of the secondary and tertiary sectors almost entirely nullifies any trickle down growth for ordinary Tibetans.

The government expenditure in the TAR, the Qinghai region and entire China in 2001 gives us a clear picture of China's preference and emphasis on infrastructure and fixed asset growth over human capital formation.

In the year 2001, the investment in infrastructure development in China was roughly 12.5 percent while in the TAR it was a massive 33 percent and a relatively high figure of 26 percent in the Qinghai region. This illustrates that investment in infrastructure development in the TAR was three times more than in China while investment in infrastructure development in the Qinghai region was two times more than in China. In this regard, China's investors in state projects, both skilled and semi-skilled migrants workers, businessmen and contractors from the western regions of China benefited most from the massive infrastructure in the TAR and the Qinghai region considering that the majority of the agrarian Tibetan population have no direct and indirect role in this investment sector.

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Out of the overall government investment in China in 2001, the TAR eclipses both China and Qinghai, which were 13 percent and 8 percent, respectively. The statistics show that China has the highest expenditure in education of 15 percent while the TAR has the lowest of 8 percent and the Qinghai region a higher rate of 10 percent. This affirms and illustrates what many international experts and social scientists argue for the social and human development of Tibetan people. In the health sector, all three regions have relatively low rates of 4 percent in China, 3 percent in the TAR and 4 percent in Qinghai. Again the TAR scores the lowest investment in health sector amongst the three regions.

Amongst all the regions of China, Tibet lags in terms of human development. Today Tibet remains one of the poorest regions in China. In terms of education, in 2001 China had an illiteracy rate of 9.1 percent with 22.9 percent below the age of 14. With this high ratio of illiteracy not many Tibetans can reach the secondary sector, a thoroughly skill-based sector of the economy. In the TAR, the illiteracy rate was a staggering 47.3 percent, more than five times the national average, and 31.2 percent of children below the age of 14 are illiterate. In other words, three in every ten children in Tibet below the age of 14 don't know how to read and write.

The Qinghai region had a slightly lower illiteracy rate of 25.4 percent when compared to the TAR, which is almost three times the national average, with 26.9 percent of children below the age of 14 illiterate. The Sichuan region has a 9.9 percent illiteracy rate, which is far lower than the TAR and negligibly higher than the national average. 22.6 percent of children below the age of 14 are illiterate, which remains a concern. It means that out of 100 hundred illiterate people in the region, 22 of them are children below the age of 14. This is the overall bleak picture of the level of education and literacy for Tibetans in Tibet.

Poverty in the TAR and rural Tibet results from apathy and China's leaders self-interest. While agriculture comprises the background of the economy of rural Tibetans in the TAR, it has the lowest investment of 2 percent. China and Qinghai have investment of just over 2.5 percent. The President of the World Bank said on 18 October 2005 that China has 150 million people living in acute poverty. Excluding Tibetans was the chief factor for the lack of development and progress in Tibet. In order for leaders in Beijing to achieve meaningful results, they need to rethink their agriculture policies. This sector desperately needs a human face in its development pursuits.

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The Primary Sector

The primary sector forms the basic subsistence economy of Tibetans involve in first level economic activities such as agriculture and animal husbandry. Since over 80 percent of the Tibetan population lives in rural regions, the primary sector of the economy forms the backbone of the Tibetan economy till today. The TAR is the most agrarian region of Tibet followed by Qinghai. The economic growth in all of China is divided into three growth rates i.e 'fast growth' in the coastal Chinese cities where it has experienced phenomena economic growth for at least a decade and the interior and non-TAR region of Tibet where the secondary sector of the economy is strong and therefore categorized under 'moderate growth'. However in the TAR, where currently two forms of economy are functional, the traditional agrarian and rural economy and the urban model economy are heading in opposite directions.

By and large, the living patterns in rural Tibet, as indicated from the testimonies, is still much the same as that of the living patterns that existed during pre-1959 Tibet. The yields from the farm provide rural Tibetans with a staple diet and grains throughout the year, and animal husbandry provides them with meat and dairy. In this way the Tibetan people subsist on a basic self-sufficient economy. Animal products such as milk, butter, wool, hide and most importantly the ready supply of meat, serve Tibetans'



More than 80 percent of Tibetans are farmer

daily needs. So far all the investment and subsidies in the TAR have primarily concentrated on the urban enclave with massive infrastructure development and investments with little focus and emphasis on the traditional Tibetan economy. Hence, Andrew Fischer described it as 'highly polarized growth'.

Exile returnee Lobsang Choedor testifies to TCHRD about the presence of widespread poverty in rural Tibet.

Poverty Widespread In Rural Tibet⁴

An exile returnee, Lobsang Choedor, 32, from Samdup village, Chukhog township, Ngari county, "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR") gave testimony to TCHRD at Kathmandu Refugee Reception Centre on 6 May 2006 in relation to widespread poverty in his native hometown in Tibet, to which he returned after an absence of 7 years.

Lobsang Choedor sought exile India in 1999. He became monk and joined Drepung Monastery in South India. 7 years later, he returned to his native hometown in Tibet. He said:

I really wanted to know the true situation in my home town. But to my disappointment, nothing had really changed in all those years. Instead, the Chinese are more cautious and wary of exile returnees, particularly monks and nuns. There are many informers and spies in the village and therefore I couldn't move an inch when I was in Tibet.

Lobsang Choedor recounted:

To my disbelief, no positive changes were visible. In the name of development, the local government constructed one stone house, but there was nothing of practical assistance to the local Tibetans. In the past, the Chinese government had distributed two and half kilograms of wheat flour and three and half kilograms of rice to the locals. The event was widely publicized and broadcast in the State media.

In truth, the local Tibetans are mostly farmers and they live in abject poverty. The village still has no electricity. The Chinese government has completely neglected the locals because of their

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remoteness and lack of political significance. Villagers of all ages seek jobs in the nearby township and county city and work on construction sites. There is no school and all the locals in village are illiterate.

For the ethnic Chinese, however, the situation is different. *Huis* Chinese and *Han* Chinese who have settled in the region in last decade today dominate business in the area and the local economy. They are far wealthier than Tibetans, owning restaurants and hotels. They have more political clout and influence. Tibetans are reduced to a minority community, alienated from the new Chinese settlers. As Choedor concluded, "It is sad and pitiable to see the situation in which Tibetans live. The widespread poverty and their plight are very visible".

In the primary sector the 'trickle down of benefits' for Tibetans is minute since economic policy is focused on the creation of urban enclaves and much of the resources are being spent for administration, maintaining security and the large presence of military forces in the TAR. Administrative and security requirements consume most of the central funds, leaving little to trickle down to ordinary Tibetans.

Tashi Tsering, a native from Nyingtri Prefecture reported to TCHRD about the ecological and environment destruction in Tibet.

Curbs and livelihood restrictions for Tibetans in countryside⁵

Tashi Tsering, aged 18 from Dromo Township, Gyamda County, Nyingtri Prefecture, gave testimony to TCHRD at Kathmandu Refugee Reception Centre on 17 October 2006 in relation to ongoing environmental and ecological destruction in his native hometown.

According to Tashi Tsering, China is continuing its' immense destruction of the Kongpo forest in Tibet with no regard to ecological considerations. The famed Kongpo forest was a region of dense forest prior to the Chinese occupation and even before the Cultural Revolution. Today, however, a major part of the forest cover has disappeared, leaving behind barren valleys and hills after years of unchecked deforestation and logging. Many of the species of the region have also vanished according to local people.

Ironically, the Chinese government issued strict orders restricting the collection of firewood by local Tibetans, explaining to villagers the harmful consequences of ecological and environmental destruction caused by cutting down trees. The local and central governments initiated campaigns calling on local people not to cause damage to the environment and ecology. Villagers were mobilized to plant and grow trees. The local authorities, in close collaboration with central government, then resorted to rampant and reckless deforestation and logging to sell and trade timber to companies outside of the region. Tashi Tsering recounted, "It was a regular sight to see huge convoys of trucks transporting timber and wood to Lhasa and to other provinces in China. Strangely, not a single piece of wood or log reaches ordinary Tibetans".

It is now rare to see species which inhabited Kongpo forest and were previously prevalent, including bears, mountain sheep and musk deer. Of late, the Chinese government has banned Tibetans from poaching; however, there is a growing number of Chinese settlers in the Kongpo region, many of whom make their living by poaching and hunting.

The key reason why the traditional Tibetan economy remained on the periphery for so long seems to have been the nature of economy in the first place. The nature of traditional Tibetan economy is subsistence, based on agriculture, which normally does not generate surpluses of income. In other parts of the world, even the rich and developed countries of the European Union, give high subsidies to their farming communities. It naturally would not attract private investors and migrant Chinese entrepreneurs because of the absence of comparative and competitive advantages in this sector.

The core objective of China's economic plans in Tibet seems to be a rapid and fast track creation of urban enclaves and industrial regions so as to achieve a great economic take-off as has been experienced in coastal China. However, the Chinese seem to have over-looked the fundamental factors that triggered the economic take-off in China's coastal regions. There are (a) huge untapped markets, (b) absence of bureaucratic interferences, (c) a supply of cheap labour, (d) ready availability of cheap raw materials, (e) intensive farm production, (f) and rural township enterprises adding value to farm products.

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If the absence of the above favourable conditions have kept private investors away from Tibet, then the only valid argument would be the Chinese leaders have neglected the real needs and interests of Tibetan farmers and nomads, whether deliberately or not. Instead, Beijing has crafted the Tibet political issue in its favour. Tibet's current economic blueprint has tremendous potential to attract and drive in floods of migrant workers and immigrants from China. If the leadership in Beijing wants to disprove such criticism, then it should rethink and reprioritize the economic policies currently in place in Tibet.

The regular influx of Chinese migrant workers to Tibet suggests that China has almost exclusively relied on manpower and expertise imported from China rather than recruiting and training local Tibetans. Tibet has unique ethnic and ethnographic characteristics, and any developmental program must focus on long-term development and genuine growth for Tibetans. In his review of Andrew Fischer's work, Bill Hillman stated,

More controversially, Mr. Fischer denies that poverty in Tibet is entirely a result of ecological factors (altitude, harsh climate, low soil fertility) on the high plateau. He argues that impoverishment emerges from the very process of state-led modernization as Tibetans become less able to participate in the economic opportunities available. The solution he proffers is a sensible one—the state should completely reprioritize its development strategies in the region and invest more in people, especially in basic social services such as education and health care. He also advocates a different strategy for economic growth, one that supports local economy activity, locally owned and controlled businesses and local capital accumulation.

However, it seems that better days lay ahead for the farming communities in rural areas of China and Tibet. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report, the Chinese Government is going to take some bold and positive steps for the Chinese farmers such as abolishing the agriculture tax and relaxing the *Hukou* or residential permit which was long described as 'peasant apartheid'. As Khalid Malik states,

The Government is already taking concrete steps to address these human development inequities. By the end of this year,

it will have completely abolished agriculture taxes across the country. To improve literacy rates in rural communities, the government is promoting compulsory education for the rural poor through renovation of primary and middle schools and providing free textbooks for 24 million students and poor families.

The Secondary Sector

The secondary sector forms the backbone of the Chinese economy in all the different provinces of China. In terms of income and wealth, this sector contributes far more to the national GDP than the primary and tertiary sectors. In the case of Tibet, the secondary sector prospers in the non-TAR regions, such as Qinghai and Sichuan. The Qinghai region has more industrial units and productive core regions than TAR. While in the TAR the tertiary sector dominates in terms of income and central funding, the primary sector is the largest sector with over 80 percent of the Tibetan population. The absence of a dominant role of the primary and tertiary sectors in the non-TAR regions allows the secondary sector to loom large.

Because the 2001 labour share show that 71.8 percent of the labour forces are concentrated in the primary sector, one could argue that the TAR is the



A scene of Chinese mining camp in Tibet

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most agrarian province in all of China. In sharp contrast to the trend in China, where the secondary sector is the highest contributor of income, this sector in the TAR contributes labour shares as low as 6.5 percent which is roughly ten times lower than the primary sector. The labour share reveal a grim tale. Over 90 percent of the Chinese population in the TAR including military personnel, police forces, technicians, businessmen prostitutes and skilled and semi skilled workers, lives in urban enclaves. On the other hand, the labour share in the tertiary sector is 21.7 percent because of the high presence of a service sector, such as administration, in the TAR which constitutes the largest component of the tertiary sector followed by the booming tourism industry, prostitution, retailing, banking and transport.

In Qinghai the labour share is 60 percent in the primary sector, which includes Tibetan farmers and nomads. The labour shares in the secondary sector were 13.0 percent, twice as much as the TAR's 6.5 percent. Qinghai has some of the most productive industries and petrol chemical factories. Due to the region's proximity to China, Chinese migrant workers fill most of the labour forces in these factories. In the case of the tertiary sector in Qinghai, more than 80 percent of the Tibetan population is involved in agriculture and animal husbandry. In addition to Chinese immigrants, ethnic Chinese who have lived in the region for years compose the labour force for the secondary sector in Qinghai.

Dhondup Tsering testified to TCHRD about economic disadvantages faced by Tibetans as a minority in their own land.

Minority and Economic Disadvantages⁶

Dhondup Tsering also gave testimony to TCHRD in relation to the economic disadvantages faced by Tibetans as a minority group.

There are many shops, restaurants and hotels owned by *Huis* Chinese in and around the Kokonor Basin. In the summer, and even in winter, *Huis* Chinese people catch fish from Kokonor Lake. Since they have become the dominant ethnic group in the area, they monopolize the fishing business in the area. Every year, thousands of Chinese tourists flock to the area in and around Kokonor Lake Basin and stay in hotels and guesthouses built by the Chinese government. These hotels and guesthouses are rented to

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the *Huis* Chinese, who run them, keeping a share of the profits and giving the rest to the government. *Huis* Chinese hoteliers charge around 6000 to 7000 Yuan per year. This is 7 times more than the annual per capita income of Tibetans in Tibet.

Huis Chinese businessmen are skilled and shrewd. Dhondup Tsering couldn't survive the competition and his business was no longer profitable. He reports that every month, hundreds of *Huis* Chinese move to the Kokonor Basin to begin new life. Owing to immense pressure, waste and drainage are heavily polluting the Kokonor Lake. In hope of finding a new life and hope for the future, Dhondup Tsering sought exile in India.

It would be interesting to know why Tibetans are excluded from the secondary sector, the largest contributor of income and wealth in China, as Tibetan exclusion has created such a disproportionate economic system in Tibet. The following statistic sheds some light on the ownership of labour share ratios of Tibetans in the TAR and Qinghai region in all the three sectors of economy. It would be interesting to know about the labour concentration of Tibetans, which casts China's development process a dubious shadow.

For now, the focus must concentrate on how much of the meager 6.5 percent of labour shares consist of Tibetan work forces. The statistics demonstrate the prospect for job opportunities and employment prospects, and evidence the need for Tibetans to take direct participation in the development projects and processes. According to Andrew Fischer, out-of-province investors tend to invest in Mainland China while local investors tend to invest locally. Perhaps the biggest concern of this poor show of labour shares in the secondary sector is that if this trend continues, China would never produce skilled and semi skilled Tibetan work forces. The 2005 UNDP report expressed similar concern,

The authors highlight that improving the educational level of farmers plays an important role in raising their skills levels and ultimately their incomes. To make the curriculum and the education system more relevant to the demands of the labour market, the study recommends the establishment of community universities for vocational training to disadvantaged groups and enterprise training.

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It is understandable that China's urbanization in Tibet will continue to gain momentum and support, but it is also critical to the Tibetan issue that skill and expertise stay in Tibet and subsequently benefit the local economy. In order to empower Tibetans, a sincere effort is needed from the Chinese Government in investing funds in social services such as education and training Tibetans in scientific know-how and other vocational training

The Tertiary Sector

In the case of the tertiary sector, Tibetan society is predominantly concentrated in urban enclaves. Lhasa City is a classic example. The booming tourism industry, fast flourishing prostitution, ever expanding administration units, transport, retail, banking and finance constitute the main tertiary sector activities.

Of all the three sectors, the tertiary sector generates the most income and wealth in terms of salaries and other incentives in the administrative urban enclaves such as Lhasa City. In urban enclaves, administrative works absorbed a large chunk of funds meant for the TAR, i.e. constructing and renovating office buildings, staff, cadres, electricity, water and other security purposes. Although central government funds may appear huge, the money simply evaporates when it goes down the administrative apparatus. In terms of



Money exchange outlet: a thriving business

Flaws in China's Development Strategy in Tibet

economic productiveness, the administrative projects greatly drain money and resources because they don't generate profit and income. As a result, the billions of yuan from Beijing fail to trickle down to the needy and actual targets of the government's development efforts. While middle class Tibetans in the urban areas benefit in the administrative service of the tertiary sector, middle class Tibetans are negligible in number even though they represent a high proportion of the Tibetan population in the urban center.

This scenario reflects the troubling economic divide between rural hinterlands and urban enclaves, where mostly Chinese migrants live. According to Fischer, 160,000 Chinese, including military and migrants, lived in Lhasa City between September and April 2000. Almost 90 percent of Chinese migrants live in the urban enclaves, and they benefit most from the three service sectors. For instance, Chinese migrant entrepreneurs own most of the hotels, bars and shops, and most of the sex workers in Lhasa were Sichuanese Chinese. Thus, the Chinese and urban elites dominate the Tibetan economy's most profitable and booming industries.

Choepa Tso testified to TCHRD about how rural poverty and lack of economic opportunities forced young rural girls into prostitution.

Poverty and Prostitution⁷

Choepa Tso, 25, from Nyagong village, Lhucho Township, Sangchu County, Qinghai Province, gave her testimony to TCHRD at Kathmandu Refugee Reception Centre on 23 June 2006 in relation to widespread poverty in her village and how young rural girls opt to work as sex workers in order to evade poverty. Choepa Tso said:

I was born to a poor semi-nomadic family in Amdo. In our family, we have six members. A poor agricultural yield and taxation by the local authority are common in our village. Poverty is widespread. I am illiterate; people in my village hardly go to school. When I was 20 years old, I developed a strong urge to support my family financially. I was forced to leave my home and lived in Lhasa working as dishwasher cum waitress in restaurants. I moved from one ill-paid job to another. Most of my masters were *Huis* Chinese Businessmen, very cruel and mean.

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There are many Tibetans from rural Tibet who are willing to do any kind of work in order to escape poverty. They are not educated. They are illiterate and exploited on the streets of Lhasa and other big cities. There were other girls working in Choepa Tso's restaurant. They were beaten, scolded, maltreated and threatened and had to work long shifts in unhygienic conditions. They were often coerced by the owners to sleep with clients with the promise of increased wages.

Choepa Tso said:

Finally I landed in a well-paid job as a waitress in one of the gambling dens in Lhasa. The owner was a Tibetan; customers were Tibetans, *Huis* Chinese and *Han* Chinese. Waitresses in the gambling den smoke, drink alcohol and even sleep with clients to make easy and fast money. Sex workers charge 100 Yuan for a night. I have seen so many lives of young Tibetan girls ruined. Like me, more and more young Tibetan girls from rural areas are moving into cities in search of a better livelihood at an alarming rate. However, very often they end up working as prostitutes, as it is the only way to make fast and easy money. They belong to the most vulnerable portion of population.

Seeing nothing but a bleak future in Tibet, Choepa Tso fled Tibet and reached Kathmandu, Nepal on 21 July 2006.

In the last decade, the tertiary sector enjoyed honeymoon status in receiving central funds. Throughout the years the percentage has jumped by leaps and bounds. In the TAR, there was a huge increase in funds from 1998 to a moderate increase in 1999 to a 5 percent increase in 2000.

In Qinghai, the increment grew from 12 percent to a massive 17.5 percent between the years 2000 and 2001. Under the Western Development Program the agriculture sector has grown slowly at a rate of 5 percent per year. In the tertiary sector too the trickle down of benefits is staggeringly low.

Out of the multiple billions of yuan that China pumps into Tibet every year, only 6.5 percent of labour shares involve the secondary sector which is completely dominated by Chinese migrant skilled workers, professionals, businessmen, investors, hotels and shops in Lhasa city.

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At the macro level the concentration of wealth exists chiefly in the secondary and tertiary sectors where *Han* and other ethnic Chinese have the upper hand in generating income and wealth. Contrary to China's claims, the funds mostly reach the hands of non-Tibetans directly and indirectly.

The Tibetans do not benefit from the subsidies. 138 *Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2005* The United Nation's top staffer in China, Khalid Malik¹⁰, commented at the release of China's Human Development Report 2005 that,

China's wealth gap between urban and rural communities is among the highest in the world, but according to a UNDP report released today, the government is coming to grips with the widening disparities that threaten the country's stability. China's Human Development Report 2005 is the first comprehensive study to offer a set of bold and practical policy recommendations to improve conditions for the rural poor, and bolster education, health care and the social security system.

China's Development Strategy on Tibet

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For two decades, Mao experimented in Tibet with purely socialist ideological rule. Mao aimed chiefly to achieve political consolidation of Tibet under Mainland China. During his campaign in Tibet, Mao attempted to dismantle feudal Tibet, although the young Dalai Lama initiated reforms such as the 'Three Ways' before the Chinese invaded.

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Mao also initiated the introduction of collectivization (reform in agriculture) as well as the commune system. Although his leadership was punctuated with campaigns such as the 'Great Leap' forward and freeing Tibet from backwardness (to use the communist jargon), little genuine economic progress and development came to Tibet.

In fact, many economist and developmental scholars agree that up until 1985 no development took place in Tibet. On the contrary China's rule brought more harm than benefit to Tibetans.

In his famous 70,000 Character Petition forwarded to Chairman Mao Zedong, the 10th Panchen Lama criticized China's policies in Tibet.

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Following his petition, the Chinese imprisoned him, and it was not until Mao Zedong's death that the authorities freed the Panchen Lama. Deng rose to power following the Cultural Revolution, and introduced liberal policies in Tibet, most characteristically liberalizing the economy and breaking away from the command system of economy. It was only in the mid-1980s that economic progress gradually took-off with a characteristic rise in income throughout Tibet.

Two Myths of modern China:

21st Century China has contradicted two myths. According to Karl Marx socialism was meant to triumph over the capitalist system in Europe; however, socialism took birth in countries Marx never envisaged. In Marx's view, the middle class and workers would form the pillar of the socialist revolution, however, Mao Zedong brought revolution to the Chinese peasants. Thus, China's Communist Party built its power base among the Chinese peasants. Yet, after coming to power, China's Communist Party treated the Chinese peasantry as if it never existed. It remains a great historical irony of 21st Century China that the Communist Party excluded and ignored the very strata of society on which it derived its power and legitimacy.

After Mao's demise, President Deng redefined China and embraced a western form of capitalism. Although the coining of new jargon and rhetoric called 'Socialist Capitalism' meant to reaffirm the government's legitimacy, the term, 'Socialist Capitalism,' carries no significant meaning. According to one source, around 70,000 riots and protests occur on the streets of China today. Almost all of the riots and protests occur in China's interior hinterlands. The promises of socialist revolution have simply disappeared after all these decades. According to sources, the 'Great Leap Forward' campaign actually led to the starvation deaths of seventy million Chinese peasants during the early 1950s while Tibetans in Tibet simultaneously experienced their first famine.

The economic policies neglected the interest of Chinese peasants to the extent that today Communist cadres do not dare go in the rural provinces of China to collect the taxes. The Chinese scholar Li Xiande carried out extensive field study on the confrontation and hostility between the Chinese peasants and the communist cadres. In *nongmin fudan* (Peasant Burden),

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he says: "Cadres no more venture alone into the peasant households for collecting the hetongkuan (total amount due to the state) and the grain quota. They now often act in groups, and behave in a hostile manner towards the farmers. The social situation in the countryside can therefore be characterized as conflictual." (*Journal of Peasant Studies* 2003, 41-74)

Communist China did not represent the peasants and masses who composed 80 percent of Chinese society. Iconic images of the Cultural Revolution, such as the romanticized slogan of the role of rural women as a provider and the famous saying of the late founder Mao Zedong, "China's women hold up half the sky," remain harsh reminders of the disillusionment that existed at the time. Over-taxation and impoverishment of the peasants resulted in the massive intra-country migration of Chinese peasants and farmers into the new pistons of China's coastal cities in search of the fortune and wealth they have been seeking for so long. The 'migrant workers' worked and lived under appalling and unimaginable conditions in shanty towns on the fringes of new glass houses and towering skyscrapers without any welfare schemes, health, housing and other citizenry rights. In fact, the peasant workforce drove the engines of coastal economies with the most readily available and exploitable labor resources in the world. Thus, we can hardly say that the Communist Party in China represented the peasants.

China's second myth came into being during what neo-Chinese capitalists call 'Deng's historic inspection' of southern China in the late 1970s, a few years after the demise of Chairman Mao. The inspection opened China's economy to the western hemisphere and coincided with the new fervour of liberal policies in Tibet.

From a reformed point of view the decision to abandon the socialist economy or centrally planned economy may have been a wise decision because the system failed to deliver the promises made by the Communist Party in 1949. Deng's new China made fresh promises of wealth for everyone two decades ago, and the economy's restructuring ensued during the 1980s producing the government's first scary picture of China, with typical western characteristics of wealth concentrating in the hands of a few rich people. In 1991, Deng himself defended his economic policy and famously stated, "Let some get rich first". His statement symbolized the first and last approval signal to international investors who soon encouraged one of the most unethical polarization of economic growths in the world.

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In the 1990s foreign investors flocked in massive numbers to coastal China and poured more than \$300 billion into China. Paradoxically, the rise of skyscrapers and industries in coastal China coincided with the burial of the northern industrial belt that formerly served as the piston of Chinese industrialization. Today it is notoriously called the northern 'Rust Belt'. Meanwhile, the new economy has brought tremendous wealth and prosperity to the coastal cities in China.

A few hundred kilometers from the coast, in the rural hinterland and on the margins of the rustbelt, we see the bleak side of modern China, nothing short of medievalism and backwardness. Roughly 60 percent of the Chinese population lives in these areas. Deng himself said that wealth would flow from the eastern coastline to the western and interior parts of China. One day the rich Chinese brethren would help develop the interior and western regions of China. Deng Xiaoping died on 19 February 1997, and modern reality has not approached his predictions.

During the last two decades of economic policies, one trend prevailed throughout China: the movement of people and resources from western to eastern China. The modernization and revitalization of modern China was punctuated by great political slogans such as 'go west,' but wealth and prosperity refused to travel beyond the rich contours of coastal China. The campaign to develop Tibet has failed to achieve China's own stated goals. The reasons for its failure will be discussed later on in the report. This proved the second myth of modern China's journey into the holistic progress of its citizens and regions. In the last few months of Jiang's tenure he tried to re-legitimize the Communist Party of China and to create new power base by launching a political campaign called, "Three Represents" which called for the 'incorporation of the advanced productive forces', a communist concept that sought to enlarge and open the Communist Party membership among the neo rich Chinese entrepreneurs and business community.

In reality, the rhetoric was Jiang's attempts to re-legitimize the Communist Party since it failed to represent the Chinese peasants, the traditional power base of yester years. The Communist Party of China was more concerned about holding onto its power than truly representing the masses and working for their welfare. Thus, the great Chinese quest for 'spiritual materialism' remains a myth while a minority of Chinese entrepreneurs achieved their quest of 'spiritual materialism' in coastal China.

Now the question is what are China's strategies to develop Tibet? Or is the repetition of the economic growth in coastal China feasible and suitable in the case of Tibet?

In the mid-1980s the Chinese economy opened more and more to the western capitalist nations. In April 1980 Deng called for the return of private properties back to the people. Since then, China's economic growth began with a big bang. For the first decade of economic transformation, growth has concentrated in coastal China, particularly Guangdong in southern China and in Shanghai. China is one of the exemplary developing countries that embarked on smart economic and fast track development.

Several favourable conditions in 21st century China attracted western investment: (a) a huge untapped market, (b) an absence of bureaucratic interferences, (c) a supply of cheap labour, and (d) a ready availability of cheap raw materials. The tremendous economic growth in coastal China also brought its share of problems. Economic growth exclusively favoured the people in coastal China because of their comparative advantages and competitive advantages. Thus began the China's tale of unethical and immoral economic growth in the last two decades.

The Five different Chinas

In his article, "The Five Chinas," Dune Lawrence analyzes modern China by dividing it into five regions that reveal drastically different pictures of economic growth. The most visible and staggering disparity of modern China exists between coastal China and its other four regions. Today, Chinese society suffers from a large gap between the rich and the poor. According to Chinese government statistics published in the Newsweek Special Issue, 2004, bizarre income gaps exist which are still widening in terms of wealth and human development.

The Margins:

Total Population: 205 Million
Total GDP: \$114 Billion
Share of actual FDI: 3 percent
Illiteracy Rate: 10.2 percent

According to Lawrence's division, the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and TAR constitute the "The Margins". In Lhasa the per capita annual food budget was \$311, there was 1 computer per 1000 households, 3.3 doctors per 1000 people, and there were 134,539 international tourists in 2000.

The Rust Belt:

Total Population: 107 Million
Total GDP: \$118 Billion
Share of Actual FDI: 7 percent
Illiteracy Rate: 4.8 percent

Dune included regions of northern China, former dysfunctional industrial belts and Inner Mongolia under the Rust Belt. Accordingly, the Shenyang city has a per capita annual food budget of \$238, 6 computers per 100 households, and 3 doctors per 1,000 people.

The Hinterland:

Total Population: 577 Million
Total GDP: \$395 Billion
Share of actual FDI: 12 percent
Illiteracy Rate: 6.7 percent

Accordingly, Kaifeng city has a per capita annual food budget of \$148, 6 computers per 100 households, and 1.4 doctors per 1,000 people.

The Coast:

Total Population: 374 Million
Total GDP: \$549 Billion
Share of actual FDI: 78 percent
Illiteracy Rate: 6.3

Shanghai city has a per capita annual food budget of \$473, 26 computers per 100 households, and 3.8 doctors per 1,000 people

The Diaspora:

Total Population: 55 Million (estimated)
Total GDP: \$1 Trillion (estimated)

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The population of Chinese Taipei is included among those of Chinese origins who are settled in other parts of the world.

The statistics correspond with China's attitude towards each of the five regions, especially the TAR and other regions where ethnic Tibetans live. The economic transformation that seized coastal China originated from comparative advantages that have always existed in that area. Coastal China has experienced a great 'economic take off,' and the virtues of the economic take off continue to stimulate the economy in other parts of China where similar comparative advantages and conditions exist. Within a decade, China produced one of the most lopsided economies in the world, and the resulting disparity between rich and poor has shattered the socialist ideologies and principles upon which most of the policies were formed.

Empirically speaking, the western countries' commercial conquests is completed when they penetrated the Chinese economy seem a repetition of their colonial conquests. The players are same: a handful of the elite collaborating with the colonizers who have the power, opportunity, access, network, educational expertise and support.

The desire to maximize profits drives Western investors. Historically, colonizers have virtually no interest and concern about the welfare and woes of the colonized people. During colonial times, there were no human rights, democracy, rule of law and laws of ethics and equity. It was definitely not the interest and concern of colonizers to preach and practice these principles and moralities.

However, the present Chinese government described itself as 'progressive and socialist'. Yet colonial era characteristics persist and continue to plague China where the minority enjoys wealth and prosperity while a large section of the interior, hinterland and margins remain in utter backwardness and poverty. China's development strategy in Tibet seems to hinge on this *Neo Das Kapitalism* without considering the regional characteristics that uniquely define the economy in the agrarian communities of the Tibetan plateau.

The shortcomings in China's development strategy in Tibet stem from a fundamental lack of understanding of the unique characteristics of Tibet as well as China's imposition of an economic system that does not fit Tibet's agrarian nature. China's lack of understanding comes from a classic colonial

syndrome where the Chinese government creates its policy for Tibet from several thousands kilometers away. Yet, the more serious shortcoming arises from the fact that China has forced an urban-based economy upon a traditional-minded land.

For several thousands of years, Tibetans have practiced a barter system economy based upon the concepts of subsistence and self-sufficiency. It was only in the 19th Century that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama Thupten Gyatso introduced paper money for the first time. The Buddhist religion and principles have influenced the Tibetans in whose view generating income and profit was always considered unethical and unrighteous. Hence, the Tibetan economy is inherently opposed to a modern consumerist, profit driven market economy. Tibetans have thrived on their farming and nomadic tradition, and these two economic activities work in an annual cycle which can be divided into the production season and the consumption season. During the cultivation season Tibetans must produce enough food to last the rest of the year. In the summer domestic animals are driven to high pasture and grassland for grazing, and in winter they are driven back home. In this manner, animal husbandry and agriculture form the backdrop of the traditional Tibetan subsistence economy.

Although Tibet has an abundance of natural resources, Tibetans have been very moderate in the exploitation of these resources. For example, the nomadic traditional practice of grazing animals in a cycle wise manner wisely avoided overgrazing and the destruction of natural habitats. This tradition cannot sustain a population increase such as that created by the Chinese invasion. In 1950 the Lhasa area experienced an acute shortage of grains when several thousand PLA soldiers were stationed there. A few months afterwards the Chinese introduced vegetables to relieve the food crisis. According to China's statistics, 4.5 million ethnic Chinese currently live in the Tibetan region. However, actual figures of Chinese in Tibet could exceed China's calculation.

From the perspective of merging the traditional Tibetan livelihood and China's urban model economy, one must consider many fundamental issues in order to carry out the development program in Tibet. The first concern is the 'mandate issue' surrounding the development package for Tibetans. From where does this mandate come from? Does it come from the Chinese government? Or is it a mandate put forward by the will of Tibetan people

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in Tibet? The answer to this question lies in the issue of Tibetan peoples' right to self-determination. Over the last five decades, China has repeatedly failed to consult Tibetans and excluded them from participating in forming a developmental strategy in any way.

China, as an outside agent, imposed the development that is intended to benefit and modernize Tibet. While China brought development to Tibet, the developments have occurred chiefly in hard infrastructure, and therefore have naturally fails to meet and fulfill the most basic and immediate needs and requirements of Tibetan people who are overwhelmingly farmers and nomads.

For the Tibetan people to participate in infrastructure development, it will take time for Tibetans to adapt and orient themselves in development and modernization of Tibet. Yet China imposed western style development in only two decades. How can generations of rural Tibetans immediately fit into scientific and technological oriented fields? The shift created an insurmountable economic barrier while the Chinese have systematically and catastrophically destroyed the Tibetan identity and culture. Furthermore, the Tibetan people and landscape's characteristics call into question the practicality and feasibility of Beijing's development blueprint.

China's development in Tibet contradicts the fabric and spirit of the Chinese constitution because the government does not consult Tibetans on development programs. Chinese development also threatens Tibetan Buddhism, which forms the core of Tibetan society. China has tried to regulate and urbanize a religious institution that has regulated itself for centuries. However, Chinese rule has damaged and continues to damage traditional rural Tibetans more than any others. In order to generate a profit from the traditional Tibetan herding and animal husbandry, the Chinese government adopted the sedentarization method. This method certainly has many advantages and is far more productive than the traditional herding method. During snowstorms and blizzards, nomads commonly loose significant portions of their animal livestock. Such natural disasters occur regularly in the high upland of the Tibetan plateau. For example, a few years ago in Qinghai province, a blizzard wiped out huge quantities of animal stocks, leaving Qinghai nomads in a dire state.

The most ominous threat to the sedentarization of large section of nomadic culture and way of life comes from the privatization trend in Mainland China. It is likely that China might eventually privatize sedentarization. If privatization occurs, history predicts that a few rich nomads and elites, either Tibetans or Chinese migrants, stand to benefit at the expense of the masses. In the event that this happens, the large section of disadvantaged nomads would have few places to go and no alternative livelihood within the market economy. Therefore, Tibetan survival will largely depend on *favourable* socio-economic policies favouring the larger section of ordinary Tibetans rather than on massive infrastructure inputs from the central Chinese Government.

China's development strategy in Tibet stressed the creation of urban centers as depicted clearly in the above figure (a) and (b). Since China's military intervention in 1950, it has created urban centers throughout Tibet, particularly in central and eastern Tibet. Chinese development strategy successfully created numerous of urban centers in Tibet; however, in the view of many social scientists and economists, Tibetans currently need well-grounded human development that could eventually support urbanization. Moreover, *Han* and *Huis* Chinese predominantly populate the urban centers in Tibet. In this respect, the Chinese created the urban centers in Tibet for Chinese migrants rather than Tibetans. We will discuss the internal chemistry of urbanization in the next chapter.

Boomerang (remittance) and Two Economies⁸

All forms of development should be analyzed through two perspectives, rights based development and needs based development. We have already discussed the right to development in the first chapter. Such development can be achieved if Chinese leaders sincerely adopt favourable policies and implement all the domestic provisions drafted for the minority nationalities, particularly in the case of Tibet. Secondly, Tibetans can secure needs based development only if China promotes Tibetan interests while planning and development strategies. In Tibet's case, the political sensitivity of the Tibetan issue has been both a blessing and a curse. In the last several decades Tibet received more central funds and subsidies compared to other ethnic minorities. However, political emphasis and stability has attached to the TAR and other areas of eastern Tibet where most of the top leaders at the province and prefecture levels are of Chinese *Han* origins.

Beijing has focused on administration and maintaining stability inside Tibet. Security and administration inside Tibet consumes the largest chunks of central government funds and leaves little for the welfare of the Tibetan people. Therefore, the funds and grants fail to trickle down to the intended targets, and it has been this trend that has dominated for the last several decades in Tibet. The economic strategy has produced 'boomerang' effects like the hunting weapon used by aborigines in Australia. The term is coined in the following chapter. According to the 'boomerang' economic theory, the funds that come to Tibet go back to the original source, leaving little or no impact on the Tibetan lives who are the supposed beneficiaries of the development programs. Therefore, genuine materialization of development in Tibet cannot proceed. As Andrew Fischer put it rightly,

This is especially the case in the Tibetan areas. Due to the strong security interest of Beijing in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and its heavy reliance on external subsidies, development policies in the TAR is largely determined outside the province by *Han* Chinese in Beijing, the coastal provinces, and key centers in western China, such as Chengdu, Chongqing, Xi'an, and Lanzhou. These latter western Chinese cities play a dominant role in governance of the Tibetan areas outside of the TAR, divided up between Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan. Although policymaking may contain elements of philanthropy, it is easy for development strategies and their implementation to reflect the priorities of the core regions of China rather than the actual development needs of the Tibetan areas.⁹

Economists and social scientists have struggled to deconstruct some of the jargons and rhetoric such as the "Great Western Development Strategy", "Macro regulation" and the "Social and economic development of Tibet" frequently used by the Chinese leaders. The contours of the rhetoric and political alignments in Zhongnanhai display commonalities. In the case of the "Western Development Strategy" campaign, former Chinese President Jiang Zemin launched it in 1999 using a huge media and propaganda overhaul. However, today the Chinese government as well as the mainstream media rarely discusses the "Western Development Strategy" even though its implementation continues inside Tibet.

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Many people question whether the "Western Development Strategy" campaign has been a 'panacea' for the massive overhaul of international criticisms on China's extremely lopsided economic prosperity between the coastal regions and the poverty stricken regions such as Tibet. Or was it a campaign to legitimize and endorse the construction of a railway track in Tibet, which was received with intense international criticism and outcry? Or was it to lure the World Bank to release monetary funds for China? Clear-cut answers to the above questions are difficult to ascertain. However, the program has failed to bring economic prosperity to the Tibetans while it succeeded in bringing infrastructure and investment to Tibet.

While the slogan, "*social and economic development of Tibet*", has recently emerged in discussions about Tibet, it holds no significance so long as the economic policies and trends continue to remain and function as they have over the past decades. For example, any discussion of "Macro regulation" seems farfetched when Tibet's unique regional character and traditional economy require "micro regulation."

Development in Tibet must grow out of the social, economic and cultural attributes of the Tibetan people and not through the skyscrapers and financial juggernauts that stimulated the economy in coastal Chinese enclaves. Yet, our analysis of economic and development strategies currently placed in Tibet reveal China's lack of consideration for Tibetan needs.

According to Chinese statistics obtained by Andrew Fischer for his field research, 87 percent of Tibetans in Tibet are nomads and semi nomads or nomads cum peasants. Because nomads make seasonal migration round, Tibetans' economic activity is extensive and diverse in contrast to China's policy of creating urban enclaves in Tibet. On the contrary, several dozens of towns and cities appeared in Tibet, mostly in the Qinghai and Sichuan Province, after the Chinese entered Tibet. Most of these towns and cities grew along with resource industries and infrastructure projects where hundreds of Chinese migrants continue to arrive.

In light of this, it is imperative to assess the two economies of Tibet and to figure out which of them benefited most from the current economic policies. The following figure illustrates the point.

Flaws in China's Development Strategy in Tibet

The State investments and resources enter Tibet, process, generated profits and wealth and then they return back to Mainland China from where they come from in the first place. To outsiders, it would seem that there is investment and help from Chinese government but looking closer, there is no growth and income generated for the local Tibetans and the investments and resources doesn't trickle down to the supposed beneficiaries.

Investment in the TAR for instance has grown from 1.6 percent of the total investment in 1992 to 8.7 percent in 1996 to 16.3 percent in 2001, shortly following the implementation of the western development strategy in 1999. In the case of Qinghai province the inflow of investment was 5.9 percent in 1996, but it fell until investments picked up in 1998 with 6.6 percent and 9.9 percent in 2001. In the case of Gansu region the inflow of investment was 8.2 percent in 1992, which was relatively high compared to the other two regions. The investment inflow declined until 1995. However, investments picked up in 1996 with 16.0 percent but then continued to decline until 2001.

The fixed assets and core investment infrastructure remains in Tibet by virtue of its income generation although hardware investment does not generate any tangible benefits for the Tibetan people since skilled Chinese entrepreneurs and workers handle the advanced scientific projects. Tibetans, who are mostly uneducated and have little technological knowledge, do not have access to these projects. What remains of the inflow and outflow investment cycle is the 'Zero Sum' income generation. The wealth has not trickled down to the Tibetans at the lowest level of economic sector. This is the very nature of the market economy where rich capitalists aim to amass personal wealth, in a highly competitive system.

In order to achieve economic prosperity and growth for Tibetans, Beijing must rethink its economic policy to ensure that there is only a linear inflow of investment and no avenue left open for outflow of the wealth generated. Profits must not leave Tibet from the 'back door' as has been the trend so far. Such an economic policy and growth strategy would better guarantee that investments would trickle down to Tibetans. However, Beijing is unlikely to formulate such policy since it counters the fundamentals of a market economy and capitalist system.

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In the last five decades China has exerted a colonial economic policy in order to extract resources and wealth from Tibet. China's opportunistic migrants currently refer to Tibet as 'Xizang' which means 'western treasure bowl'. Similarly, the British Raj described India as Britain's 'jewel in the crown', the most profitable of all its colonies. Britain's rule propelled it to the height of world power in the 19th and early 20th centuries as much as China is today in the global geopolitics.

On the other hand, China is an economic powerhouse, and all the countries in the world are eagerly solidifying their economic and political ties by any means. Due to China's enormous wealth, it could develop Tibet without bringing harm to itself. If this had been the case over the last fifty years of rule, the Tibetan people would be living in a far better economic condition and with control over their own affairs. To the contrary, the private investors enter Tibet with an aim to make a profit, not to help Tibetans. This pattern will never help Tibetans; however, the genuine growth and development of the Tibetan people is possible if Chinese leaders hand over the decision-making power to the Tibetan people.

Issues Tibetan People Face In Tibet

The key reasons why China had went wrong in their development of Tibet, particularly the agrarian and nomadic countryside where more than 80 percent of population live is precisely because of missing formalae on part of planners in Beijing.

Several decades of development pursuits and initiatives have shown consistently that the entire model of development implemented in the past and still implementing is a flawed strategy. The rapid industrialization of rural economy or to bring it to the market economy has proven ineffective in alleviating the poverty in the countryside. Beside the introduction of hardware and infrastructure has also proven ineffective to lift rural Tibet from poverty to age of prosperity and modernity.

The inflow of skilled migrant workers and resources from China has in the past only produced a tiny class of neo-Chinese elites in Tibet. It failed in bringing modernization and development in rural Tibet. Even the industrialization in Tibet itself has failed miserably because they do not operate under fundamentals of economy or rate of return.

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So far the Industrialization of the secondary sector is driven by a political goal of achieving 'stability' inside Tibet. As a result, industries in Tibet are unproductive and inefficient. Over more than 90 percent of industries inside Tibet malfunction, however these have to be there in Tibet as a showpiece or a sign of Beijing's development activities inside Tibet.

If the agrarian community has to usher into age of prosperity and modernization, then a straight jacket approach of bringing skilled technicians and forcefully implementing policies that goes against the interests of farmers and nomads must be put to hold. An overhaul of entire policy on farmers and nomads must be introduced and implemented in Tibet. However this has to be done after consulting the farmers and nomads.

A gradual and systemic strategy of introducing farmers and nomads is needed; first empowerment of farmers and nomads in field of modern education, health care, exposure to ideas and innovation, probably a University must be built and set up solely for the studies and research related to animal husbandry and farming in permafrost Tibetan tundra landscape. All these studies and research has to be done only the Tibetans farmers and nomads, if need be, foreign and Chinese agriculture scientists and experts may be invited but they role should only of a mere facilitator.

This empowerment of modern Tibetans farmers and nomads will take at least one generation if not more. The time it takes for transformation and growth, only Tibetans will take the entire charge and ownerships of affairs, ranging from making decisions, consultation and grass root democratic process. State's role should be the provider of resources and facilities not implementer.

Lobsang Choedrak from Toelung Dechen County told TCHRD about the lands being forcefully seized and grabbed from the local Tibetans in the name of development and progress.

Lands Taken from the Tibetans in Toelung Dechen¹⁰

Testimony was also given to TCHRD by another exile returnee, Lobsang Choedrak, 32, from Zsamo township, Toelung Dechen county, "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"), at Kathmandu Refugee Reception Centre on 6 May 2006 in relation to the lands being grabbed from local Tibetans in Toelung County.

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In Toelung Dechen County, the Chinese authorities were grabbing land and property from local Tibetans in order to build lavish hotels and luxury resorts in the name of development. These government "development projects" have evicted and displaced thousands of Tibetans from the area. The evicted and displaced Tibetans have only been given paltry monetary compensation of a few thousand Yuan.

Fencing of Grassland and Sedentarization:

The fencing and sedentarization introduced in nomadic and semi-nomadic regions are unpopular. Considering the fragile and delicate nature of Tibetan grassland and natural ecology, fencing and sedentarization is not feasible. It leads to feuds and conflicts within nomadic and farming families.

An allocated small portion of grassland to feed animals through out the year is not possible. It leads to degradation, starvation and shortage of fodder in winter months for animals.



Rinchen Dhondup testified to TCHRD about nomads in Tibet reeling under the poverty due to recent policies and measures introduced by the Chinese government.

Impoverishment of Tibetan Nomads¹¹

Rinchen Dhondup, 25, from Bido village, Nyitha Township, Henan County, Qinghai Province, gave testimony to TCHRD at Kathmandu Refugee Reception Centre on 12 July 2006 about the impoverishment of nomads in his area of Tibet by virtue of new legislation.

Rinchen reported:

In 2003, the Chinese government introduced a new domestic law for Tibetan nomads. The new law, calling for the "Modernization of Western China", required Tibetan nomads to decrease the size of their animal herds. The law was hard-hitting for Tibetan nomads, who pride themselves on rearing

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and herding livestock on the steppes for their livelihood, a way of life that has been passed down the centuries.

The law placed Tibetan nomads under pressure to sell the meat of their livestock to Chinese meat merchants at reduced rates. The Chinese government has long issued propaganda depicting the nomadic way of life as "primitive and backward". The government has also informed nomads that keeping large amounts of livestock puts pressure on grassland pasture, leading to degradation.

Rinchen testified:

Prior to the new law, my family had 90 Zsos (cross breed between yak and cow) and 250 sheep. But now we are allowed to keep no more than 2 Zso and 5 sheep. Moreover, we would be taxed if we were to keep herds of animals. The government is trying hard to make us abandon our ancestral nomadic tradition. The years ahead will be tough for the Tibetan nomads.

According to Rinchen, the new law has been introduced for 2 reasons. Firstly, it is the aim of Chinese government to destroy the nomadic tradition and to ensure that nomads move to towns and cities. In the past, those nomads who have abandoned their livelihoods have met with tragedy. They are illiterate and have no alternative skills to earn a living. Many of them have ended up living a life of impoverishment and destitution. Secondly, the Chinese government has discovered natural resources in Rinchen's locality where the hill named "Nyida" is believed to contain gold, silver, coal and iron deposits. The introduction of the new law was, therefore, a clever ploy by the government to move nomads to a distant place in order to exploit these natural resources.

Gabriel Lafitte, a scholar on Tibet pointed out to lack of understanding and comprehension on the part of Chinese government in carrying out innovation and developments in Tibet. He argues,

New mechanism and systems of management have been unsuccessful in understanding the dynamics of local human-nature relationships. In fact, according to some social anthropologists, the new systems are the cause of nomads' present hardships. Each family was individually allocated land use

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rights to a specified pasture, on which the family was expected to settle, build permanent housing and fencing usually by going into debt. These policies of sedentarisation have further impacted on the pasture quality by reducing mobility and flexibility of rangeland management in a highly unpredictable climate where flexibility is essential.¹²

Chinese settlers: a burden

Only 2 percent of entire Tibetan territory is arable. The geographic, climate and land arability of lands in Tibet has itself contributed to thin population of Tibet. By natural selection, by their sustenance and living patterns, the Tibetan ancestors have adopted a 'subsistence' economy or way of living, thereby ensures modest and suitable exploitation of natural resources and land use. The 2 percent arable land of Tibet can never feed high population, if it have had, Tibet would have a much larger population than today's population size. Today Tibet has roughly 2.5 million in "TAR" and another 2-3 million in "non-Tar" regions of Tibet, i.e. Sichuan Province, Qinghai Province, Gansu Province and Yunan Province.

A Tibetan from Kongpo region who withheld his name testified to TCHRD about the land and livelihood disputes among the Tibetans caused by insensitive government policies.

Man-made Displacement Crisis¹³

A few years back, there was a forced resettlement of a large group of Tibetans from the Jol region of Kham who, under strict orders from the Chinese authorities, were resettled to Gyamda County, Nyingtri Prefecture, "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"), Kongpo. Such insensitive and often forced resettlement of people has resulted in tension between various communities. Since the resettlement of the Jol Tibetans, there have been problems over pasture and other ownership rights as Khampas and ethnic Chinese, who have no rights over the land from which the Tibetans were forcibly displaced, have collected "caterpillar fungus", 500g of which can be sold for up to 15,000 Yuan, from the Tibetans' land.

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During disputes, the local Chinese authorities have remained silent and haven't punished the wrongdoers, nor helped to settle disputes. They have turned a blind eye to the unlawful behavior of Khampas and ethnic Chinese. This has had the effect of encouraging many Khampas and Chinese to continue collecting and selling the "caterpillar fungus", with resulting tax revenue for township and county level government.

One of the most contentious issues regarding the livelihood in Tibet has been the food subsidy in "TAR". Owing inequity in food subsidy in "TAR", it is attracting a lot of Chinese settlers in the region. However, the inequity of food subsidies put the Tibetans in disadvantaged position. Large numbers of subsidized food items are wheat and rice, eaten and preferred by Chinese.

The irony here is that "subsidies" are part of central government grants and allocation of resources for the growth and benefits of Tibetans in "TAR" region, however, the central government is only subsidizing the foodstuffs of Chinese, therefore the government is allocating their grants and resources only to Chinese not Tibetans. While on the sheet, in the annual growth and statistical yearbook, it appears that millions of yuan being pumped to Tibet in form of subsidies, but on ground, millions of yuan ended up being taken away by the Chinese settlers. Millions of yuan are for the Chinese settlers not for the Tibetan people.

Today Tibet is an ideal destination for Chinese settlers and migrant workers. Although, It may not be intentional or deliberate on the part of government in Beijing, however on the ground, a sort of incentive and ideal situation is there for the Chinese settlers to settle in "TAR". So this encourages and perpetuates the influx of population transfer against the interests and survival of indigenous Tibetan population.

On the other hand, this reduces the Tibetan people with their purchasing power since foodstuff they buy from markets are more expensive while Chinese settlers buy foodstuff at a cheaper rate. How can two different purchasing communities operate in a same market? This can be implied as a way of empowering of Chinese settlers and de-empowering the Tibetan people. How could Tibetan people live and meet prosperity and better life under such abject and biased policies and benchmarks? How could two economies operate under one market forces?

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Looking from more critical and more sensitive perspective, this is a valid argument and criticism on the part of Tibetan activists and rights groups around the world, criticizing Beijing's policy in Tibet as a 'sinicization' and 'cultural genocide' taking place inside Tibet.

Nevertheless, this practice goes against the stated goal of China to develop Tibet. Why such policy of unfair and biased 'food subsidies' be implemented? Perhaps, answer lies in nature of government in "TAR", which is run by Chinese and administrative staff. The new Chinese elites in "TAR" should be happy with subsidy of foodstuff allotted for them and therefore they don't see any reason why subsidy should be abolished.

This succinctly proves the overall argument of this report, calling for the restoration of ownership of development to the Tibetan people. Or to be more precise, Tibetan people should be the masters of their own affairs. The central Chinese government and Chinese settlers in Tibet cannot decide the interest and needs of rural Tibet. The new Chinese elites and few numbers of middle class Tibetan civil servants cannot define and represent the needs of more than 80 percent of poor rural Tibetans inside Tibet.

The plight of Tibetan farmers and nomads in rural countryside cannot be higher than recent propaganda glitz and news footages in Xizang TV or Tibet Television which local Tibetans describe it as "*Tashi Channel*" which means 'News channel that only speaks of positive things and prosperities'.

Chinese government and PLA soldiers put Gansu Nomads In Crisis¹⁴

Pema Rinchen, 46, a nomad from Kanlho, Sangchu county, Gansu Province gave testimony to TCHRD at Kathmandu Refugee Reception Centre on 13 December 2006 in relation to the impoverishment of nomads in Gansu Province.

He said:

The Chinese government has recently introduced a new policy in respect of nomads. The new policy, directed at nomads in Gansu, is aimed at reducing the size of their herds of livestock. Pasture is distributed amongst them. Each family has to pay pasture tax, such as 2.50 Yuan per Mu (roughly 67 square

meters) of land. The pasture tax comes to 2000 Yuan every year. We dislike the new policy but can't do anything about it. We are not able to rear and raise livestock as we did in the past. At the present we are not allowed to keep more than 50 to 100 livestock.

In the past, Tibetan nomads in Sangchu County, Kanlho had the best pastureland. They had large herds of livestock, a good life, meat, cheese, milk and other animal products in abundance. They sold their surplus products in the markets.

Pema Rinchen further stated:

I had around 300 Yaks and 300 sheep. I had an income of 200, 000 Yuan but now the Chinese government has restricted me to keeping 30 Yaks and 80 sheep. Our income and living standard have drastically decreased. Nowadays, we eat meagerly so that our provisions last for a year.

He reported that in June 2006, 5000 military personnel, People's Armed Police ("PAP"), carried out a military drill on Kanlho pastureland. An area of 30, 000 square Mu. During the drill, soldiers did not allow local nomads to use the pastureland as Tibetans were not allowed in the vicinity of the drill exercise. The pastureland was damaged and destroyed during the drill.

He said:

There were many small airplanes, around 200 motor vehicles, artillery shells, explosives, and sniping and marksmanship by the soldiers. They even used livestock as targets, killing animals. Moreover, the soldiers left behind seriously damaged pastureland. They paid nothing in compensation to the nomads. The nomads were deeply hurt and angered yet they could do nothing.

In Xizang TV or Tibet TV, it showed a long cues of Tibetan civil servants or neo-Tibetan elites under Chinese rule, one by one donating currency notes in a donation box meant for the poor kinsmen in rural areas. The footages also show goods and clothes being donated.

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The millions of yuan the central government allocated for the Tibetans are absorbed by the administrative agencies of the local government that it never reaches the poor Tibetans. If the local Tibetans were allowed to own what they produce and what is rightfully theirs, such widespread poverty would not have taken place.

It also exposes the outcome of Beijing's design in Tibet. The income China generated from Tibet's natural resources is rarely spoken of. However, from a part of what China took out of Tibet is given back as aid and help from central government, which Beijing does not fail to showcase or parade to the outside world.

This economic vicious cycle implemented in the last four decades by Beijing have stalled and hampered true the development for the Tibetan people. This flaw strategy is responsible for the impoverishment of Tibetan farmers and nomads. Hence leadership in Beijing must address the flaws in China's development policy.

Compulsory Purchase of Fertilizer:

The enforcement for the Tibetan farmers to increase the wheat production lands them in problem since the cultivation of winter wheat requires concentrated applications of fertilizer. Moreover, it is compulsory for Tibetan farmers to buy fertilizers according to some of testimonies documented by TCHRD.

The heavy concentrated applications of fertilizer degrade the natural fertility of the soil and hence soil loses its natural nutrition, thus resulting in a decline of harvest each following year.

There are also many cases of Tibetan farmers unable to pay back the price of fertilizers due to their growing poverty. Tibetan farmers do not have any say or right to choose what kind of farming method they want to apply and what crop they want to grow. Chinese feed on wheat and therefore it is a denial of rights for Tibetan farmers to grow what they do not normally consume. Tibetans consume barley and owing to heavy applications of fertilizers, many farmers have repeatedly reported a loss of quality of barley and its particular taste.

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In recent times, the most significant danger to their livelihood of Tibetan nomads and semi-nomads is being pose by the increasing degradation of grasslands in Tibet. The primary cause of the decline in the quality of pasture has been the human habitation. The growing number of Chinese settlers and increasing pressure on lands as well as impacts of climate changes are equally responsible for the degradation of pasture.

Already the glaciers in Tibet, which has been the source of many of perennial rivers originating from Tibet, are shrinking at an alarming rate. Not only has it contributing to the rapid changes of the fragile ecology of Tibet but more so, it also adds to the extinction of unique bio-diversity of Tibet. Shrinking glacial peaks and fresh water lakes would add to rise of temperature on Tibetan plateau. This would further resulted in loss of Tibetan grassland on which 80 percent of Tibetan population based their livelihood. Therefore the protection and preservation of Tibet's ecology and environment is the most single challenge facing in Tibet toady.

DEVELOPMENT IN QOMOLANGMA BASIN



A Testimony of Tsering Dorjee

In an interview with Tsering Dorjee, a native of Qomolangma Basin. The interview was taken to ascertain the development in the region, which has remained one of the poorest regions in Tibet. In 1996 China launched the "Western Development Strategy" (WDS), and through the completion of the Qingzang Railway, China has claimed that they have brought huge development to the rural areas of Tibet in recent times. The campaign of the "creation of new Socialist countryside" under the Eleventh Five Year Plan was officially launched last year.

More than 80 percent of the Tibetan population lives in rural hinterlands as farmers and nomads. Therefore, this study conducted on Qomolangma Basin looks at one pocket of the Tibetan rural region in order to assess how much positive development has taken place. Has the development program initiated by the Chinese government actually reached the region? What are the loopholes in China's development strategy implemented in Tibet?

An Introduction to Qomolangma Basin:

Qomolangma Basin is named after Mount Everest, the highest mountain peak in the world. The Tibetans call the peak 'Jomolangma,' but it is 'Qomolangma' in the Chinese transliteration. The basin has an area of 33,819 square kilometers and is inhabited by 68,000 people, mostly Tibetans. Most Qomolangma Basin inhabitants engage in animal husbandry as their form of livelihood. The area is mostly a vast open desert and semi-desert, but it is rich with hydro energy and water resources. Yet, the basin is one of poorest regions of Tibet. The local Tibetans cultivate one crop per year; wheat, barley and mustards are staple crops. The inhabitants rarely use weeding and manuring; they follow more traditional farming methods. Although output has been low compared to modern farming outputs, the yields are sufficient to support the population year round, except when major famines or natural calamities strike.

The people rely mostly on grain and cereals that are harvested in a single season, and they use animal livestock for meat and to produce dairy products such as milk, butter, cheese, and yogurt. The region remained unchanged and backwards even after the China's occupation of Tibet since 1950. Only in the last decade have the initiatives and the introduction of sporadic development projects finally touched the lives of the people in the region.

As late as 1995 and even later in the most remote villages, people still used kerosene lamps for light. In 2000 the Tibetan farmers still used crude technology such as iron ploughshares, hoes, sickles, rakes and wooden tools. They still used primitive and traditional methods for their livestock. Sometimes major natural calamities strike, and nomads and farmers lose large portions of their livestock. The animals suffer heavy tolls particularly in the winter months when they are most exposed to the harsh climate and grass and fodder become scarce.

TSERING DORJEE is a native of Qomolangma Basin but left his native village during his early childhood to receive education. He is now a university graduate. He made two important visits to his native village in 1994 and then spent an entire year in Tibet between 2005-2006. TCHRD interviewed him on the changes and developments taken place during the last ten years in the Qomolangma Basin. Tsering Dorjee now lives in the United States of America. The following is TCHRD's interview with him.

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Infrastructure Development Projects:

TCHRD: In recent times, one of the major development projects has been the ongoing construction of the Lhasa-Zhamo (Tibet's border town to Nepal) Highway. Will you please tell us something about this?

TSERING DORJEE: The construction of the highway has been going on for the last few years. The highway extends about 500 km. In my opinion, the highway's chief objective is to boost commerce and increase trade with Nepal. It also appears to exploit the mineral deposits in the region, as I saw few of them. The most important aspect of the construction of the highway is its political ambition. Since the occupation of Lhasa city, it appears to me that China needs viable roads and infrastructure to strengthen the borders and to consolidate the entire restive region of Tibet under its rule. Borders are crucial and it needs to be protected. The highway is China's solution.

TCHRD: How much of the highway has been completed so far?

TSERING DORJEE: The highways from Lhasa to Xigatse and from Xigatse to Thogme County are already completed. Using the old road, it took nine hours to reach Lhasa from Zhamo. Now it takes just four hours to reach Lhasa.

The planned highway from Thogme County to Ganga village was to be constructed when I was in Tibet. I think the highway will greatly change the complexion of transportation. Only one truck could ply on the old road, but now four trucks can ply.

TCHRD: Are there any incidents of land grabbing by the central government in the name of construction of the highway? Have any Tibetans failed to receive proper and fair compensation?

TSERING DORJEE: I don't know about the case along the entire route. But as far as I know, there are a few cases where houses have been demolished; particularly those that fall on the proposed route. Two families' houses were demolished. They were given 70,000 yuan for reconstruction. One family's house was partially demolished during construction, and they were awarded 30,000 as compensation. One family received 6,000 yuan because its courtyard was demolished. At least in these cases, I felt that Tibetans were given a fairly reasonable compensation.

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TCHRD: What percentage of the highway construction was completed?

TSERING DORJEE: I would say that around 50 percent of the construction was completed then.

TCHRD: Do these kinds of State development projects generate employment opportunities for local Tibetans?

TSERING DORJEE: Yes, indeed. Tibetans in the Qomolangma Basin normally do not have many economic activities compared to Tibetans in Lhasa city and other parts of eastern Tibet. In this region, construction work and other odd jobs constitute the major source of income during the non-farming season. The Tibetan workers earn a robust salary. For instance, they get around 30 yuan a day, and in a month they get around 900 yuan, which is indeed a good income. Unfortunately, such economic opportunities are rare in the region. They appear once in a while. If the central government could create job opportunities for these locals in order to have a sustained supplementary income, it would do wonders for them.

TCHRD: Does the highway pass through any important social economic zones?

TSERING DORJEE: No special economic zones. I saw few cement factories in Xigatse. I think the Chinese government constructed the highway to give it a strategic reach rather than to implement sincere development projects in the region.

TCHRD: Did the Chinese government provide any dams or irrigation projects for the Tibetan farmers?

TSERING DORJEE: The Chinese government did not initiate any projects of that kind. The local Tibetans themselves built a few artificial lakes or small reservoirs to use during their farming season. They looked after their interests and needs as much as they could. Another thing that I want to share with you is that during the summer the rivers flood and create problems for the locals. So lots of bridges are needed to make their transportation and life easier.

TCHRD: The Chinese government has already announced its plan to construct the rail to the border with Nepal. Is it going to bring positive benefits to Tibetans in the area?

TSERING DORJEE: I don't know about the plan, but I think it would be very difficult to construct a railway line to Zhamo and the Nepalese border.

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It was difficult to construct a road there, and considering the nature of the terrain, it would be infeasible to construct a railway line.

TCHRD: Do they pay any attention to the environment when they construct the highway?

TSERING DORJEE: This is the best thing I saw during my stay in Tibet. There is newfound attention and sensitivity attached to the preservation of environment. The workers and constructors were not supposed to dig or break grounds as they wished. If it happens, the person in charge of construction is liable and will get in trouble. I saw that they travel great distances to dig soil and sand while constructing the road.

TCHRD: Does the highway link and connect Tibetan villages and rural areas?

TSERING DORJEE: Strangely, the highway is built on the existing primitive road. The highway runs through the villages and connects Tsakor, Honga, Pelpa, Nyepai, Ganga, Zhamo, etc. It appears that it is far easier to construct the highway over the old roads. I think this was the main consideration rather than an intention of the Chinese government to link the highway to villages and rural areas.

TCHRD: Do the rural Tibetans actually need the fancy highway?

TSERING DORJEE: I can't understand the logic here. It is definitely for transportation, but I am afraid that the rural Tibetans are the intended targets. I observed that most of the vehicles using the highway were Chinese military trucks transporting cargo and other military hardware. The Chinese government has stationed thousands of troops on the border areas. In fact it has established frontier posts in Ganga, Gyatso and Tsanda and Nyalam. The highway is an ideal medium to transport the rations, clothing and military supplies to the Chinese military bases near the Nepalese border.

Conditions Of Farmers And Nomads:

TCHRD: Are the Tibetan farmers using any new methods or modern techniques?

TSERING DORJEE: I think the farming methods have remained the same; no major changes have taken place since the Chinese entered Tibet. Lately, the local Chinese authorities have introduced fertilizers and other chemical agents to increase productivity. Ironically, the local Tibetans complaining that the use of fertilizers damages the topsoil and minerals in the soil. The

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soils are no more fertile and have become dependent on chemicals. The most outrageous part of the matter is that the local Chinese authorities are forcing the local Tibetan farmers to buy and use the fertilizers. Even though the Tibetans prefer not to use the chemicals on the fields, they are forced to use them. It sounded very odd and strange to me.

Moreover, the Tibetan farmers must return the cost of pesticides and fertilizers in the form of grain. Some farmers have no grain to repay the cost, and so they wait for the next farming season to do so. In doing so, they become handicapped as debt piles on debt. Now, where is the sweet sounding "creation of the new socialist countryside"?

I have seen the farmers converting the grain into liquid money. 500 grams of grain cost around 1 yuan. If a farmer owes 300 yuan as payment for the fertilizers, then the farmer has to give 150,000 grams of grain. To add insult to injury, the local Tibetan farmers told me that flour barley no longer taste the way it used to. They no longer have the old flavour and taste. It is indeed very sad to learn all of these things.

TCHRD: Has the Chinese invasion of Tibet brought any changes to food habits or lifestyles?

TSERING DORJEE: Yes, since the Chinese the coming of People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers to Tibet, the food habits and lifestyles have changed. It is very visible. I saw many green house vegetable farms. We know the Chinese are avid eaters of vegetables. Slowly, the local Tibetans are adopting Chinese foods. Locals have more choices now. However, all these vegetables cater to Chinese migrants and settlers. Therefore, it should not be understood as an example of development in the region. Non-native grain is also more available at an affordable price. It is good to see an improvement in the nutritional diet for the local Tibetans.

TCHRD: Does the taxation of farmers add more to their poverty?

TSERING DORJEE: I don't know about the law, but I am certain that 'taxation' is still being demanded from the Tibetan farmers. I saw some kind of old 'commune system' being practiced, where farmers have to give large quantities of grain to the village commune. If they don't have the grain, they have to work, and they must give the equivalent income in place of grain to the commune office.

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TCHRD: Are the Tibetans able to market their animal husbandry products in big cities in order to make extra income?

TSERING DORJEE: No, they are not able to make a commercial profit from the animal husbandry products. This is where they are disadvantaged compared to Chinese settlers. The Chinese settlers and traders come to buy animal products such as cheese, animal skins, leather, wool, meat and so forth. The Chinese traders process the products and use them to make beauty creams and other cosmetic products.

TCHRD: The Chinese government introduced 'Sedentarization' as a solution to problems faced by nomads when they move from one place to another. The Chinese authorities say that 'Sedentarization' improves the production of animal husbandry products. Is 'Sedentarization' a workable venture in the Qomolangma Basin?

TSERING DORJEE: 'Sedentarization' is not a solution. The Qomolangma pastures and grasslands are limited, and therefore traditional grazing and seasonal rotation is far more an ideal method for this part of Tibet.

TCHRD: It seems that the Chinese authorities have placed a ceiling on the number of sheep and goats kept by Tibetan farmers. Is there such a practice?

TSERING DORJEE: Yes, it is true. The Chinese authorities put a ceiling on the number of sheep and goat semi-nomadic householders can keep. In the Qomolangma Basin, a single family is not allowed to keep more than 1500 sheep and goat. If they keep more than the allotted number, the family will be fined for the offence.

TCHRD: In what ways do Tibetans make use of the highway? Be specific. What are the benefits for the Tibetan farmers?

TSERING DORJEE: As I mentioned earlier, the goods from Nepal go straight to Lhasa and so do the military supply lines. The goods for locals come via the highway, but when we look closer, it is Chinese settlers who own most of shops and restaurants. For them the highway is a lifeline, but not for Tibetans. The locals still use traditional modes of transportation, i.e. horse and mule-driven wagons, when they travel from one village to another to transport their cargo. I believe the highway will not make any significant improvement for the locals.

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TCHRD: In recent years, has any assistance come from the central government and gone to the local Tibetans?

TSERING DORJEE: One good thing that I discovered last year was that the central government is lending capital money to Tibetans if they want to set up any venture or business. The government lends the money at a low interest rate. For a 1000 yuan loan, it charges a 40 yuan interest rate.

Influx Of Chinese Settlers:

TCHRD: Have you seen an increase in the number of Chinese settlers between your first visit in 1994 and your visit this year?

TSERING DORJEE: The increment has been multifold. In 1994, there were Chinese settlers, but there were not many of them. The Tibetans were still a majority in the region. But this year, the number of Chinese settlers have mushroomed. In Lhasa city there is one Tibetan for every seven Chinese. The ratio in the Qomolangma Basin is not as drastic, but I would say there are 55 percent Chinese compared to 45 percent Tibetans. In the years ahead, I believe more Chinese settlers will join the influx as the region opens its trade ties with Nepal and India. In Shegar town, the Chinese own all of the shops and restaurants.

TCHRD: How many Chinese have settled in the Qomolangma Basin?

TSERING DORJEE: During my visit in 1994, I saw quite a modest population of Chinese settled in Zhamo and in other towns. Now so many Chinese have settled, three times as many as in 1994. I would say that the population ratio between Chinese and Tibetans is 60:40, respectively.

TCHRD: Which type of Chinese settlers have come to the region?

TSERING DORJEE: They are mostly Chinese soldiers, border soldiers and local administrators. There are also lots of Chinese sex workers, hairdressers, and restaurant owners, bar owners, shopkeepers, labourers and petty traders. These days you can see a lot of *Huis* Muslim truck drivers too.

TCHRD: Do the Chinese sex workers conduct their trade in a proper brothel? Are they legal or illegal?

TSERING DORJEE: No, it is illegal, and they run the entire sex trade under cover. Of course, the police and law enforcing agents and the so-called owners of bars and pink parlours run the illegal trade. The Chinese government pays no attention. I am afraid it is a deliberate tactic and part

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of its policy. The Chinese prostitutes are there to provide services to Chinese troops and soldiers stationed at border military camps.

TCHRD: Tell us who owns most of the shops in the villages?

TSERING DORJEE: Chinese. Besides the lack of opportunities for Tibetans, I think it is because of the lack of commercial knowledge and enterprising skills.

TCHRD: Does the traditional Tibetan mindset and social taboos prevent Tibetans from opening up enterprise?

TSERING DORJEE: I think that is the main reason why Tibetans have failed to open enterprises and generate income for themselves. It is all due to the vacuum which Chinese settlers come to fill. They now work as tailors, shoeshine boys, hawkers, petty traders and cobblers. Back in 1994, there was only one saloon, but these days there are so many of them. And the Chinese own all of them. At the same time, Chinese settlers own all of the buildings, restaurants, hotels, and shops. Therefore, it would naturally confuse outsiders or tourists to see all these marvels and changes. If they examine more closely, they will come to terms with the reality of Tibetans in Tibet.

The Condition of Tibetan Women:

TCHRD: What is the condition of Tibetan women in the region?

TSERING DORJEE: The women still wear their traditional garb. Nothing much has changed. Due to poverty many young village girls enter the sex trade to make quick and easy money in order to support their families. In Zhamo I saw many Tibetan prostitutes ply their trade alongside the Chinese prostitutes. The Tibetan prostitutes try to hide their Tibetan identity by mingling amongst the Chinese prostitutes. However, their conditions are poorer than those of their Chinese counterparts. The Chinese prostitutes charge 100 yuan per client whereas Tibetan prostitutes charge 50 yuan per client. Although catering the same service, Tibetan prostitutes earn 50 percent less than the Chinese prostitutes. Even in this red light world, the Tibetans are treated as second-class citizens, and that is really annoying.

TCHRD: Have you made any other observations on Tibetan women in general?

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TSERING DORJEE: The Tibetan women in the region remain unempowered. It is still a patriarchal society. I have seen a few Tibetan girls given away as brides and maybe even sold as brides to *Huis* Chinese men from Xinjiang. I have heard from the locals that the *Huis* Chinese consider Tibetan girls to be hardworking and sincere, and therefore they approach the girls' parents and make an offer for marriage. The *Huis* Chinese have large plantation fields in their home country, and there the Tibetan brides are made to work. The Tibetan parents find that giving away their daughters as brides is an easy way to relieve their burden. This is another aspect of assimilation taking place; however, the trend is driven purely by poverty and lack of opportunity in the rural Tibetan community. I am afraid that Tibetan women live a second-class life within Tibetan society. The Chinese government talks about fancy things such as development and modernization, these politically insignificant regions remain neglected.

TCHRD: Are there many of these cases?

TSERING DORJEE: Not many, a few of them. But to me, it presents a worrying trend.

TCHRD: Have you seen government investment on health and education in the region?

TSERING DORJEE: No, not to my knowledge. I have never seen anything of that kind. The Chinese government failed to look after these people. It failed to put its wonderful rhetoric and propaganda into action. This is a most distressing sight in rural Tibet.

TCHRD: There have been reports of forced sterilization and birth control inside Tibet. Have you come across any implementation of birth control enforcement in the region?

TSERING DORJEE: In that part of the region, there hasn't been much birth control enforcement. During my stay in Tibet, the locals could have as many children as they wanted. I guess this restriction is more relevant in larger cities and towns, not in this remote part of Tibet.

State Of Education:

TCHRD: Tell us about education in the region.

TSERING DORJEE: In my village, a new school was built. Until the third grade, they teach English apart from Tibetan, Mandarin, and

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mathematics. The government's much campaigned 'nine year compulsory education' is currently implemented in the villages. After nine years of education, the best and brightest students go to study in Xigatse city and then to Tibet University in Lhasa. After graduating from Tibet University, these students can do further studies in China.

In our neighboring Tsamda village, there is a strange practice that I would like to share with you. There is a school in the village that goes up to the sixth grade. By policy, every year the school must send two students who pass a competitive exam to Xigatse. If the school teachers are successful in sending two students to the middle school in Xigatse, the village administrators reward the teachers with 10,000 yuan, to be divided among them. If the teachers fail, they are fined 10,000 yuan, which goes to the village administrators.

If only one student passes the competitive exam to study in Xigatse, the teachers neither receive the reward nor are they fined. I have a friend who teaches in the school. He told me about this strange practice. It seems that it was a program designed by the villager administrators, so that they could send students to the middle school in Xigatse and therefore please the authorities at the prefecture and province levels. Or it could be that the village administrators exhorted the teachers to meet the demand of the higher authorities.

During my stay in Tsamda village, a Tibetan man, a philanthropist living in Minnesota in the United States, donated money to construct a school in the village. Unfortunately, the Chinese were more interested in promoting and developing tourist infrastructure surrounding the Mount Everest valley for foreign trekkers and climbers. In fact, today most of the state money intended to meet basic needs goes directly towards constructing infrastructure from which the state and private investors generate long-term profit. Education and health care are neglected as if NGOs and philanthropists will take care of them. The Tibetan inhabitants in the region suffer from the appalling denial of fundamental rights.

The philanthropist who built the school in Tsamda told me that it was difficult to get permission to purchase a plot of land to build the school. After getting the land, which took a few months, the old school was turned into some kind of old age center or community building. The Chinese

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government did not build the new school; a Tibetan philanthropist from Minnesota built it.

TCHRD: How is the quality of education in the region? Are there options for the students to go and study in city schools?

TSERING DORJEE: I don't think the quality of education compares to the urban schools, but it seemed to me that the aim of education in the region was simply to cure illiteracy. There are 18 townships in the entire region, and two students from every township get the opportunity to study in Xigatse. It means that 36 students enroll in the Xigatse School each year. In the townships, the students' parents must pay for their child's education themselves while those privileged few who get the opportunity to study in cities receive government scholarships or grants.

TCHRD: How many of them return to their respective village after their education?

TSERING DORJEE: I don't know much about this; however, I have not found that the graduates return to serve and work. After schooling in Xigatse, they usually go to Tibet University and later to universities in China. Of course, they find more opportunities and better prospects in the cities.

Concluding assessment:

Considering China's rapid economic growth and development, Tsering Dorjee laments the amount of wealth and riches seen in the coastal regions of China compared with his native region, which has remained poor and backward. When PLA soldiers first came to Tibet China claimed that it would develop the Tibetan region, but in the last four decades, such development has not materialized. Tsering Dorjee desires to return to his hometown to help and provide basic amenities for the people in the region through aids and donor money.

Development is a complicated and complex issue such as education, culture and traditions, Aids and investment, employment, agriculture, science and mining, healthcare, environment, Tibetan medicine, tourism and nomadic life style of Tibetans.

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RAILWAY, DEVELOPMENT AND MYTH



*"Tibet is reached by railway
Indeed, it is ruining Tibet*

*A black construction is snaking into the heart of Tibet
... This time, Buddha really can do nothing about it"*

An excerpt from a poem written
by Chinese writer, posted on a Chinese language chat room

After seven years of official slogans, rhetoric and controversy, on July 1st 2006 the much hyped and controversial Railway line was finally completed. The project was conceived during the last years of the President Jiang Zemin's tenure. It was part of the much-lauded campaign of the great 'Western Development Strategy' (WDS) or 'Xibu da kaifa' [Chinese]. The main goal of the campaign was to develop the poor western regions of China to achieve the level of modernization and development seen in the coastal regions of China, decades after the bold and daring economic reforms introduced by patriarch Deng Xiaoping. The "Western Development Strategy" was seen

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as a continuation of Deng Xiaoping's economic reform calling for the 'few to become rich first', and for this wealth then be transferred to the poor kinsmen in the central and western hinterland.

It was in the name of bringing development to the western regions that the Qingzang Railway line was constructed with massive central funding and scale of political 'will' never seen before in any of development adventures and ventures. Despite the controversies, protest and criticism from human rights groups, the Qingzang Railway came to be seen as a 'shining symbol of development' in the eyes of the world. But is it, and will it be, a 'symbol of development' in the larger context, taking into consideration many domestic factors?

On 1st July 2006, the Chinese President Hu Jintao cut the red ribbon and the Qingzang Railway was opened to the world. It was followed by pomp celebration and hailed as a remarkable engineering achievement in the Chinese history. The efficiency of the railway is yet to be tested but considering the harsh terrain, climate and altitude, the construction was certainly a breakthrough and represents a fulfillment of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's century old dream. However, technical achievement alone does not amount to economic development: on the contrary it will take time for the professed objectives to be fulfilled.

It is, therefore, difficult to ascertain the developmental and economic benefits of the railway to the local Tibetan people, despite the officials' claims and rhetoric. The construction of a railroad of this magnitude betrays one major motivation of the Beijing leadership: to enhance China's economic grip and command over Tibet. At no point during the construction of the railway have the Tibetan people been consulted or their opinions been sought.

Both the private and government media in China overwhelmingly described it as 'engineering marvel', as 'promoting tourism' and as 'uncovering a mysterious land to the Chinese and the outside world'. Ironically, the true objectives of the railway were barely discussed in media. It still remains a matter of speculation as to how it is going to serve the purpose of Tibetan nomads and farmers. From the outset, the railway has been a cause of concern for Tibetan nomads and farmers.

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The Qingzang Railway was one of the four major projects of the Tenth Five Year Plan. The other three important projects were the construction of the West-East Gas Pipeline, the South-North Water Transfer, and the West-East Electric Power Transmission.

Of all the projects, the Qingzang Railway received the most critical attention from all quarters. It is the most expensive project ever undertaken in Tibet both in terms of political will and financial resources.

Qingzang Railway is the world highest railway, reaching 5000m at its highest point. The route starts at Golmud which is roughly 2,800m, then it climbs the Kunlun mountains via the Kunlun Pass at a height of 4,722m. It then climbs further, crossing the 5000m high Dangla Pass. The railway then descends towards the Nagqu region, and enters Lhasa at around 3,590m. In total the Qingzang railway line is 1142 km long. 7 percent of the track consists of bridges and tunnels; the longest tunnel is 1720 meters. The total expenditure on the project reached 4.1 billion dollars, the most ever spent in Tibet on a single project.

Melinda Liu, in her article "Bound to the Tracks", paints a realistic picture of the implications of the railway

More than a century since the opening of the transcontinental railway in Utah, Warburton's analogy holds true. But in this case what many people see is not so much a golden spike as a nail in Tibet's coffin. Ever since Chinese communist forces marched into Lhasa in 1951, Beijing has spared no effort to cement its hold on the population and stamp out every trace of Tibetan separatism. The 2.5 million ethnic Tibetans of the Tibet Autonomous Region (its official name today) are hopelessly outnumbered by China's 1.2 billion *Han* Chinese. Long before the laying of the tracks, *Han* Chinese sightseers, entrepreneurs and migrant laborers were streaming into Lhasa, transforming the ancient Tibetan capital with shops and services that cater to lowlander tastes. Of the roughly 100,000 laborers who built the \$4.2 billion Golmud-Lhasa stretch, only 10 percent were ethnic Tibetans, according to Zhu Zhensheng, the Railway Ministry's project chief.¹

Railway and Myth of Economic Development

The controversy of the railway lies in the fact that the true motivations for its construction differ from those articulated by President Jiang Zemin. The official railway advertisement aired frequently on government television shows it bringing development and economic prosperity to Tibetan farmers and nomads. However, the former President Jiang Zemin, who vociferously and almost single handedly spearheaded the construction of Railway, has admitted the political motivations behind the construction.

According to official statements, the railway has been constructed to promote development in the region. The official Xinhua News Agency, in its article '*Qinghai-Tibet Railway Boost Pride and Economies*'² chalked out the economic plans. It claimed,

As the Qinghai-Tibet railway gets set to launch its maiden run on July 1, not only is national pride on the rise but continuing analysis of the practical benefits show the region is likely to experience an economic boom... Now developers can seriously consider mining and manufacturing as viable industries for Qinghai and Tibet. The railway will mean they can now get heavy machinery into the remote, resource-rich region and in turn they can move raw materials by the millions of tons all the way to port cities. The railway is expected to have its biggest and most immediate impact on Tibet's tourism industry. Even in its relative remoteness more than 2.5 million tourists are expected to come to Tibet this year. Now that travelers can jump a train in Shanghai and get off in Lhasa tourism is expected to double by 2010 with annual direct tourism income of 5.8 billion yuan (725 million U.S. dollars), said Xu Hao, deputy director of the Tibet regional tourism department. The regional government is working hard on improving tourist infrastructure to meet the influx of visitors that are expected by the end of the decade.

According to the report published by Xinhua News Agency, the economic incentives and promotion of development in Tibet are the aims and objectives. However, in an interview with the New York Times on 10th August 2001, Jiang Zemin stated:

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Recently a project has been launched to build a railroad from Golmud (in Qinghai province) to Lhasa. It will be built through permafrost area at 4,000 to 5,000 meters elevation. Some people advised me not to go ahead with this project because it is not commercially viable. I said this is a political decision, we will make this project succeed at all costs, even if there is a commercial loss.

The construction of the Qingzang Railway is a true engineering marvel. It marks the fulfillment of part of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's grand railway plan of 1921. For more than two millennia, Tibet remained a completely landlocked country with limited interaction with the outside world. There were no highways in pre-1950 Tibet; the physical exploitation of Tibet's resources and the taming of the wild, harsh terrain and climate was an alien concept then. All developmental scientists and economists would agree that in terms of material, science and infrastructure, Tibet had remained cloistered in backwardness for centuries. It is true that with Chinese intervention in 1950, Tibet entered an era of transformation and modernisation; over the last four decades, the Chinese government has poured in trillion of yuans in financial resources, assistance, investment, infrastructure and projects. Of all of the investments and projects over the last four decades, the Qingzang Railway is the most expensive venture ever undertaken since China's invasion of Tibet in 1950.

However, no development project can be judged in isolation, irrespective of its supposed brilliance. It has to be seen against many backdrops, and should consider all perspectives, domestic factors, regional sensitivities, nationalities and ethnic issues, particularly the humanitarian implications. There is a rights based aspect to development, considering the 'right to self-determination' of the subjects or community of people which it is intended to benefit and serve. A development project should not be devised to serve the vested political interests of an individual, corporate company, political party or regime, nor should it be at an unreasonable cost to humanity, or lead to the violation of the human rights of a particular community, ethnic or indigenous people.

The testimony of Jampa Choeden illustrates how Tibetans are deprived of their right to self-determination in deciding whether they want the development projects introduced by the Chinese government.

New Administrative Regulations Pushing Tibetans To The Brink¹⁵

Jampa Choeden, 29, from Rangpatsang township, Kardze county “Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture” (“TAP”), gave testimony to TCHRD at Kathmandu Refugee Reception Centre on 6 December 2006 in relation to the Chinese authorities’ new regulations on Tibetans and the poor state of education in Tibet.

He said:

This year the Chinese government has stopped issuing travel permits and passports to people in Kardze. The government impose heavy restrictions on the movement of people and the only way to procure travel permits is either through bribing officials or by having contacts at high levels. There is no other way. The move was triggered by the widespread burning of animal skins in wake of the Dalai Lama’s 2006 Kalachakra Initiation where he advised Tibetans in Tibet against wearing animal skins as part of fashionable trends....I moved to Lhasa and worked as a wall painter and calligrapher. In that way, I was able to make a living.

He secured a job which required him to be included on a “Guest List”, a record of all Tibetans from “non-TAR” regions who come to stay or settle in and around Lhasa. Their presence is recorded in this way because the “TAR” is a politically volatile and sensitive place. He further said:

If anyone is involved in political activities, he or she can be easily traced and arrested. However, on the other side, since July 2006, Chinese settlers have been coming to Lhasa, but the local government is not keeping any record of them. There is a growing surge of Chinese labourers coming to Tibet. As a result, Tibetan labourers are facing stiff competition in the labour market. More and more Tibetans are becoming unemployed. The new Chinese settlers are using advanced technologies and, as a result, the commercial value of Tibetan skilled work is fast diminishing.

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The 'Declaration on the Right to Development', adopted by General Assembly resolution 41/128 on 4th December 1986 promised every human being the right to development and the right to participate in and reap the benefits and fruits of development.

The General Assembly

Bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations relating to the achievement of international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian nature, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recognizing that development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom,

Considering that under the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in that Declaration can be fully realized,

Recalling the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Therefore all development enterprise must address and meet the needs of those it affects. Through this perspective, the railway is a cause for concern for both environmentalist and human rights groups, who have questioned how it undermines the long-term interests of the Tibetan people.

It is crucial for the Tibetan community that their rights as enshrined in international law are recognised. The Communist Party of China asserts its legitimacy and power by claiming that it represents peasants and workers. However, the Chinese state often implements policies and development projects without consulting peasants and workers. The Chinese constitution

prioritizes the interests of the Chinese people and respects their human rights. Article 33 of Chinese Constitution states that: "The State respects and preserves human rights".

Many domestic laws of China also recognize and pay respect to fundamental human rights. It is therefore the duty of the Chinese state to implement and effect the framework of human rights as enshrined in Chinese national law. The preservation of human rights by its logical extension should include the recognition of the right to development as outlined in the UN Declaration, as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to which China is a signatory. This report attempts to ascertain whether the Tibetan people have been guaranteed the 'right to development', or been given due opportunity to participate in the development process.

Article 1 of the 'Declaration on the Right to Development' called for,
The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.

The spirit of the preamble of the 'Declaration on the Right to Development' guided the State to take and consider the benefits and interests of the people as the most important priority. The preamble called the State to,

Recognizing that the human person is the central subject of the development process and that development policy should therefore make the human being the main participant and beneficiary of development. Recognizing that the creation of conditions favorable to the development of peoples and individuals is the primary responsibility of their States.

China's one party rule means that the government often has absolute authority when implementing development policies. The Communist Party of China has a poor record when it comes to consulting local people about development projects. The large evacuation and displacement of millions of river valley Chinese people for the construction of the controversial Three Gorges Dam bears witness to this fact.

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The construction of Three Gorges Dam did not generate serious public outcry and even the private newspapers in China hardly mentioned the negative repercussions of the project on Chinese citizens. The approach of the Chinese State exemplifies 'bottom down' development strategy. Rinchen Dhondup's case depicts how the Chinese government often do not consult Tibetans on developments projects which will have an irreversible consequences.

Richen Dhondup from Bidoh Village told TCHRD about displacement of Tibetans in his village.

Hydroelectric Powers Station Submerges Tibetan Villages¹⁶

Rinchen Dhondup, 25, from Bido village, Nyitha Township, Henan County, Qinghai Province, gave testimony to TCHRD at Kathmandu Refugee Reception Centre on 12 July 2006 about the displacement of Tibetan villages due to the construction of a hydroelectric power station in the area.

According to the Chinese government's plan, a hydroelectric power station will be built in Henan County and Bido village, with 160 families; Nitha village, with 100 families; and Suchen village, with 120 families, are all to be submerged under water once the dam fills up. The local residents are very worried and fearful. They are of view that not only will this lead to massive destruction of the environment and ecology, it also creates uncertainty about their lives and future. However, the construction is to go ahead unhindered and is to be completed in 2 years' time.

A closer look at the Railway project shows that the initial survey studies and the feasibility of the construction was conducted during the Ninth Five Year Plan (1996-2000). The decision to construct the railway was finalized with the Tenth Year Plan (2000-2006). The authorities instructed the Number One Survey and Design Institute of China's Ministry of Railways to prepare blueprints for the Golmud-Nagqu-Lhasa Route and the Lanzhou-Nagqu-Lhasa Route. The Number Two Survey and Design Institute was instructed to prepare blueprints for the Chengdu-Nagqu-Lhasa Route and the Dali-Nyingtri-Lhasa Route.

The planning and execution of plans for the construction of the railway were all conducted without the participation of the Tibetan people, despite the official rhetoric espousing the benefits of economic development. This represents a denial of the rights of the Tibetan people to be informed, to participate in the decision making process, and to express their feelings without fear of repercussions.

A classic example of how China deny right to self-determination and right to development of Tibetan people in Tibet is shown by Tashi Tsering's testimony to TCHRD.

Tibetans Forced to Build New Houses¹⁷

Tashi Tsering also gave testimony to TCHRD in relation to Tibetans being forced to build new houses under China's Housing Programme.

Under the Housing Programme, which is compulsory, the government lends money to all Tibetan families to construct new houses. According to the government, it costs around 20,000 Yuan for a family to build a new house. The government lends families 10,000 Yuan and they must find the other 10,000 Yuan from other sources.

If families refuse to build new houses, the government issues an enforcement warning indicating that they must comply or have their houses demolished. Tibetans are thus being forced into debt and penury. At present, many Tibetans in rural areas are living under the burden of substantial loans. The Chinese government is doing little to address their problems.

Tibetans forced to build new houses under the Housing Programme complain that the houses are not of traditional Tibetan design and are bad for their health. They are made of bricks and cement, rather than wood; are narrow; and are not large enough to house Tibetan families with many family members. The fact that the new houses must be built to Chinese, rather than Tibetan, specification in terms of design, raises questions of the erosion of traditional Tibetan culture and identity. Any arguments based upon environmental considerations which the authorities might use to justify the fact that timber materials cannot be used in building the houses would appear to be undermined by their actions in selling timber and wood for construction in large cities and to large companies in China.

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As a result of construction, a number of Tibetan nomads have been displaced due to the construction of the railway. Since July 2006, the Chinese government has been resettling Tibetan nomads in uniformed and poorly built houses on the outskirts of townships and towns. Many areas of Amdo have been hit hard by the campaign, most vividly in the Golog region. The Chinese government's strategy of modernization is their traditional nomadic way of life whereby they graze livestock on the grassland pastures.

The resettled nomads now receive few sacks of flour in aid even after the initial official promise of adequate compensation and special aid packages. They had to sell the livestock at half the market price. For e.g, a yak that sed to cost 1500 yuan, added the source. The grassland are now fenced with barbed wires and grazing is banned. Those who moved near Pema County town were given two rooms per household but were asked to pay half of the cost of construction (around 50,000 yuan) but people believe it could only cost around 10,000 yuan. The newly resettled nomads are a worried lot with their livestock gone; jobless and government help not in sight. With the rise in newly resettled nomads in towns, the number of unemployed and frustrated Tibetan nomads is increasing. Jobs are hard to come by as they cannot speak Chinese.

While the Chinese government argues that the resettling of nomads increases productivity, older nomadic folks maintain that the Chinese government has resettled nomads in order to curb the flooding in the Yellow River belt, which originates in Golog region. This is an outrageous violation of the fundamental human rights of Tibetan people and a denial of the right to equal and meaningful development.

On the contrary, investments in human capital development such as health and education have been significantly smaller than investments in hard infrastructure development projects. Therefore, in regards to the most basic and fundamental aspects of human development, Beijing has mismanaged its priorities inside Tibet. Hence, Beijing's actions established the fact that it is more concerned with laying an iron track, a tool of control and administration, than in constructing clinics and schools in rural areas, which actually empower and bring positive development to Tibetan people. Beijing's actions further demonstrate that, in formulating its developmental

designs and urbanization in Tibet, Beijing has served its own interests and long-term designs at the expense of the Tibetan people.

How soft investments like health care and schooling are not receiving due attention in Tibet while the government is deeply engrossed in multi million dollars infrastructure developments in Tibet. The soft investments like education and health care are the foremost and immediate needs of the Tibetan people in Tibet.

Dorjee Dhondup from Gansu Province testified to TCHRD about abject state of health care in his region.

Health Care¹⁸

Dorjee Dhondup, 25, from Do-ge Township, Kanlho Prefecture, Gansu Province, gave testimony to TCHRD at Kathmandu Refugee Reception Centre on 20 September 2006.

He was born to a poor semi-nomadic family of five. He is the eldest of the siblings. During his teen years, he had an accident that damaged his ear drum and since then he has experienced problems with his hearing. His other ear later became infected and he needed urgent treatment, probably immediate surgery, in order to save his hearing.

When he visited a Chinese doctor at the hospital, the doctor demanded 2,000 Yuan from him without which he would not provide the required urgent treatment. At the time, Dorjee Dhondup only had 700 Yuan with him. The doctor didn't even look at his ears. Dorjee Dhondup then borrowed 2500 Yuan from a person in his village and went back to the doctor. He was hospitalized for nearly a month. No diagnosis was made in relation to his infected ear problem. He paid 3,000 Yuan but was not given proper treatment or medication. He submitted numerous petitions to the local authorities, requesting that he be provided with health care and support, but received no positive response.

Due to his hearing problem, he was unable to go to school to receive education and worked as sheep and yak herder. A few years back, he had a poor harvest. Finally, having concluded that he cannot forever live in poverty, he decided to flee Tibet in hope of receiving medical treatment for his ear and education.

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Even in early stages, the Qingzang Railway has already brought difficulty to Tibetan nomads and farmers. The construction swallowed significant portions of farmlands and nomadic pastoral grassland that have served as the basis of nomads' livelihood for many generations. At certain points in the construction, the track has encroached farmlands and pastoral areas. According to testimonies of some affected people who recently came to Kathmandu, Nepal, the Chinese government has done little to address their problems, and has not provided adequate monetary compensation or rehabilitation for the affected people.

The demolition and confiscation of houses and farmland has been reported in Chusur County, Lhasa as well as in Damxung County, near Lhasa.

No Tibetans like Railway coming to Tibet because many Chinese from Mainland China would come to Tibet and Tibet would be full of Chinese, people in our Township were ordered to build new houses on their farmland according to number of household members, we don't have enough space to keep our livestock, all these campaigns are to make room for Chinese settlers when they arrive in Tibet" says Tsering from Chushur County.¹⁹

Tenzin Dhargey from Damshung County says, "Nowadays Railway is harming livestock and nomads are very worried. Many livestock fell to death in pits dug up for Railway construction and some died consuming poison sprayed along Railway track to kill rabbits and picas but Chinese claim the deaths were caused by a pig disease to cover up the matter and no compensation were given; several nomad households of Choten Village were moved to give way for Railway track and several more households were ordered to move but they have to build their own house with small government compensation but no compensation was given for nomadic grassland."²⁰

Toelung Dechen County witnessed the eviction and displacement of inhabitants from their ancestral lands in order to facilitate the construction of the railroad. However, there were no reports of compensation and rehabilitation provided for the affected people.

Tashi Dolma of Tölung Dechen County says, "Many good farmlands of Tölung Dechen were destroyed for Railway track construction; the track was constructed in the middle of

farmland. First a hump is made, then fertile soil of farmland were used to level it; then they brought soil from the hills also and livestock grazing areas were also damaged. Farmers are facing problems because both their farmland and livestock grazing land are either destroyed or damaged. Over 55 households of our village lost big parts of their farmland for Railway track.

The government gave compensation but households received only a small amount and suffered big losses due to embezzlement of funds in between. One household did not receive any compensation at all. Our household also did not receive compensation for a part of our farmland but we could not complain and no one dares because government claims that the land belongs to the nation and whenever government needs land, people should be ready to give up their land. Some people became ill by worrying, all the people are living with worries and anxiety nowadays because their income have decreased. The compensation money was spent quickly, now they have to find alternatives.²¹

These testimonies represent the quintessence of 'development error,' by which Tibetan farmers and nomads remain poor and neglected, that now plagues Tibet. However in urban enclaves, many modernization and economic activities have taken place. More alarming still, the statistics from National Statistical Year Book show that 90 percent of all Chinese and *Han* immigrants live in urban enclaves or newly formed urban settlements. Thus, the statistics reinforce the view that Chinese immigrants come to Tibet to prosper and grow at the expense of Tibetan people. The decades of exclusionary and polarized economic strategy and policy have produced neo-Chinese-*Han* settlements and enclaves, and the native Tibetans have been pushed into the far fringe of rural hinterlands in a state of political apathy and economic discrimination.

China's development programs in Tibet present two fundamental issues: whether or not the development trickles down to Tibetans and whether Tibetans own development and prosperity inside Tibet. We must analyze these issues while scrutinizing Beijing's claims. Development inside Tibet remains locked in old patterns of heavy state and central government funding.

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The majority of the Tibetan people will not benefit from the train. On board, the speaker system makes announcements only in Chinese and English, not in Tibetan and additionally Chinese songs about Tibet blare loudly through the public address system and the televisions in the dining cars show promotional tourism related videos about Tibet. Around 300 staff members, none of whom are Tibetan, assist the passengers, who are mostly Chinese tourists. According to media reports, very few passengers are Tibetan.

Lynette Dumble and Susanne Menihane in their eyewitness account of Lhasa and the presence of Chinese developments reached the following conclusion about the impact of train:

The streets of Lhasa, as too those of Shigatse, bear testimony to the 'fading presence' of native Tibetans: by 1996 in Lhasa, native Tibetans were outnumbered 2:1 by the *Han* Chinese who monopolize the running of factories, shops, bars and restaurants, even to the point of carrying out the shoe repairs and selling the locally grown peaches. On this background, despite China's claims to the contrary, the anticipated economic windfall from the railway is unlikely to flow towards native Tibetans.

The swelling of the Chinese population in Tibet indicates that China is actually inclined to serve its own political and economic objectives despite its rhetoric about developing for the Tibetan people's benefit. According to Miss Dumble and Miss Menihane, the term "development" became a loaded word during the last five decades and began to lack any meaning when contrasted with actual results. Miss Dumble and Miss Menihane argue,

Fifty years ago, Tibet's Qinghai Plateau was a scantily populated wilderness. Today, following "development a la China", it is a land conquered and settled by *Han* bureaucrats, engineers, miners, soldiers, police and prisoners. By 2004, there were six million Tibetans and an estimated 7.5 million Chinese in the original area of Tibet, with Tibetans employed chiefly in traditional agriculture, and the Chinese predominantly in government, commerce and the service sector. In other words, Beijing's economic inducements for Chinese immigration to Tibet has turned Tibetans into a minority in their own land.

While Beijing has spoken positively about the railway's engineering feats and called the train the "development centerpiece", Tibetans still lack fundamental services such as health and education. The Chinese government neglects Tibetans' basic needs while it promotes massive urban development with bars, discotheques, shopping malls, five star hotels, pink palours and luxury hotels.

China's phasing out of the Tibetan language from primary education has hastened the erosion of Tibet's cultural identity, while compared with their counterparts in mainland China, and with *Han* Chinese immigrants, native Tibetans are starved of education. Figures from China's 2000 census indicate that 47% of Tibetan adults and 60% of Tibetan women are illiterate, whereas in Beijing, only 4.9% of adults are unable to read.²²

Almost all development projects in Tibet undertaken by the Chinese government reflect the stark contrast between, which are also supposed to be the recipient of benefits. According to ICT,²³

Beijing's economic development policy for the PRC's western regions neglects "soft" infrastructure such as health and education provision. Official Chinese statistics show that the GDP value of the health care sector in the TAR decreased in nominal value between 2001 and 2003, and fell from 6.8 to 4.5% of the tertiary sector despite frequent government proclamations that it is been pouring money into health care. The failure of the health system to reach rural areas, coupled with prohibitive medical costs, is leading to large numbers of Tibetans dying from easily treatable conditions such as diarrhea, dysentery and pneumonia. The proportion of resources allocated to education in the TAR has also dropped, and parents often cannot afford to send their children to school.

Apart from the stated long-term gains and benefits for the Tibetan people, China also claims that the construction of the Qingzang Railway as well as other developmental projects can bring immediate sources of income, generate jobs and, in long run, train and groom the Tibetan labour market. According to a report in the Xinhua News Agency, 6000 skilled labourers and technicians from China participated in the railway construction. All of

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the business contracts were outsourced to provinces in other Mainland areas. In the six years it took to complete the construction, only 600 Tibetans, mostly unskilled and manual workers, participated in the railway construction. People of Tibetan origins compose only a meager 10 percent of the total work force or labour market, which painfully contradicts Beijing's claims that it intends the railway to benefit Tibetans. Thus, during six years of construction, the Qingzang Railway has not benefited the Tibetan people, and it remains a monumental question for China: how will the train bring development to Tibetans in the long run?

Many experts on Tibet have raised their fears and concerns over the construction of the railway line, particularly the physical changes and further alienation of Tibetan identity that will inevitably take place once the population influx begins. Thus, many believe that the railway will continue to erode the Tibetan identity as well as the socio-economic-linguistics and cultural facets of the Tibetan people. Steven Marshall who authored "Tibet Outside the TAR" responded TIN:

There is nothing I can think of that could more dramatically or incontrovertibly hasten the end of the Tibetan character of the region than putting a railroad loop through Qinghai, the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), and perhaps into Yunnan or Sichuan. It's for that very reason that I think the state will do whatever it must to push the project through. Economically it's not a high-profit proposition, as was extending railroads across America's middle and western reaches. But despite the expense, it will create possibilities for mineral exploration and commerce that did not exist before, which will generate large-scale and small-scale opportunities for employment and enterprise. That will stimulate the flow of 'human capital' into the area, bringing about demographic transformation.

In the coming years, the influx of Chinese settlers will find their way to the entire Tibet; it has so far been seen in many parts of Tibet. The Chinese settlers with superior education dominate the industrial, economic and tourist centers. These Chinese immigrants often wield more comparative advantages when it comes to starting enterprises, winning contracts and gaining access to markets and 'gaunxi' (Ch: networks and bribes) compared to native Tibetans who move to urban centers to make a living.

Dhondup Tsering testified to TCHRD about the adverse impacts of China's population transfer in Tibet.

Negative consequences of Chinese influx on Tibetans in Tibet²⁴

Dhondup Tsering also gave testimony to TCHRD in relation to the economic disadvantages faced by Tibetans as a minority group.

There are many shops, restaurants and hotels owned by *Huis* Chinese in and around the Kokonor Basin. In the summer, and even in winter, *Huis* Chinese people catch fish from Kokonor Lake. Since they have become the dominant ethnic group in the area, they monopolize the fishing business in the area. Every year, thousands of Chinese tourists flock to the area in and around Kokonor Lake Basin and stay in hotels and guesthouses built by the Chinese government. These hotels and guesthouses are rented to the *Huis* Chinese, who run them, keeping a share of the profits and giving the rest to the government. *Huis* Chinese hoteliers charge around 6000 to 7000 Yuan per year. This is 7 times more than the annual per capita income of Tibetans in Tibet.

Huis Chinese businessmen are skilled and shrewd. Dhondup Tsering couldn't survive the competition and his business was no longer profitable. He reports that every month, hundreds of *Huis* Chinese move to the Kokonor Basin to begin new life. Owing to immense pressure, waste and drainage are heavily polluting the Kokonor Lake. In hope of finding a new life and hope for the future, Dhondup Tsering sought exile in India.

According to Chinese officials, the Qingzang Railway will bring 'tangible benefits' to local Tibetan farmers and nomads. The article, "*What are the tangible benefits for locals?*" which appeared on the People's Daily website, July 8, 2006, claimed that the Qingzang Railway is expected to carry 75 percent of the region's entire cargo and materials. According to the article, a single one-way-journey will carry 40 times the amount of cargo previously carried by trucks and road transport and will reduce the transportation expenses by half. The article stated that the railway would allow superior and high quality goods to reach Tibet at a cheaper price and thus increasing the local Tibetans' purchasing power.

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However, the officials have not raised the issue of 'dual profit loss'. The issue of 'dual profit loss' occurs because the Chinese traders buy raw materials from Tibetan people at a lower cost. When the processing and packaging of the products are done, the goods are then sold in Tibetan market, where the Tibetans have to pay more to consume them. Thus, at initial Tibetans suffer loss because they sell the raw material at lower price and then pay much more for the products of their raw material.

In short, the Chinese people in Tibet have more 'comparative advantages' than Tibetan entrepreneurs, who have relatively little support. Therefore, the stated tangible benefits that Chinese officials and government have promised to local Tibetans will remain elusive until Tibetans gain empowerment, equal economic footing in competition and protection of their comparative advantages.

Another larger issue pertaining to China's development pursuits in Tibet that has hindered the actual growth and economic prosperity for Tibetans has been the 'unfair economic lever' existing between the Chinese and Tibetan entrepreneurs. In terms of scientific know how, technology, education, skills and expertise, labour market, capital and purchasing power, government incentive, support and level of education, all of these factors have favored the Chinese counterpart. In the end, a completely lopsided and exclusionary economic growth pattern in Tibet has resulted.

The Damxung mineral water bottling, which came to the spotlight after the construction of the railway line highlights one intended purpose of the railway since Damxung is one of the important stations along the track. The lack of Tibetans who have seized economic opportunities clearly illustrates the crucial issue of 'unfair economic leverage and the exclusionary growth in Tibet'. In simple terms, Damxung mineral water belongs to Tibetans because the spring water originates from their ancestral lands. Although the Tibetans are the ancestral and true owners of the water source, they are profoundly handicapped in terms of legal and technological expertise and cannot harness the mineral water. The Constitution of China states that all lands belong to Government, no one owns it, and yet Chinese entrepreneurs and settlers now controls almost all economic and exclusive rights at the expense of the local Tibetan population. The Xinhua News Agency²⁵ covered the Damxung mineral water episode:

Development of Tibet's mineral water resources will not only contribute to cargo transportation on the railway, it will also increase the value of local mineral water resources," said Dorji, a Tibetan academician with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, who made the suggestion to the geological and mineral exploitation bureau of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

The bureau has located over 100 drinking water springs with the largest source found in Damxung County, which can produce 3,000 tons of drinking water a day.

The daily output of the lake in Damxung could fill 50 train cars or two trains, said Lu Yan, a senior engineer with the bureau.

"Bottling the Damxung mineral water could generate an annual output value of one billion yuan (125 million U.S. dollars)" said Lu.

Dubbed Asia's Water Tower, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is the source region for the major rivers in China and is home to the largest lake resources in China.

The Damxung mineral water issue demonstrates how the Chinese have exploited Tibet's natural resources for its own commercial purposes. It reveals a pattern of developmental features that can drastically harm the people who have been living in the resource area for generations. The Damxung mineral water episode represents only one instance in the larger phenomenon of development projects and economic strategies and policies that the Chinese have implemented in Tibet at the expense of the local population, and it highlights three levels of resource and human exploitations and the disempowerment of the native Tibetan people.

In the first level, higher authorities ignore the religious, spiritual and traditional sentiments of local inhabitants when embarking on any development cum business ventures. In many of the inhabited areas of indigenous people, water springs and certain natural sites such as mountain peaks can be objects of worship and spiritual importance. In this regard, the authorities do not consult the Damxung people and do not give them any decision-making role in harnessing the mineral water.

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In the second level, exploitation of local resources produces destruction of local ecology and environment, an immediate fall out. The exploitation of natural resources often results in the destruction and damage of fragile natural surroundings that in turn profoundly affects the ancestral way of life of the Tibetan people. Traditionally, Tibetans depend on natural resources for their survival and subsistence. In view of this, the long-term interest of indigenous people are often ignored and neglected.

The third level shows the disempowerment and exclusion of native and local people in benefiting from development projects and business ventures. The Damxung mineral water bottling episode, where Chinese entrepreneurs and migrants make the investments in water harnessing technology, is a case in point. Once the Chinese entrepreneurs start exploiting and harnessing the mineral water, it will be sold to consumers in China to meet the acute demand for mineral water coming from Tibet. In the first phase, profit lands strictly in the hands of Chinese owners.

Additionally, the Chinese will conduct their business using cheap labour forces consisting chiefly of migrant Chinese workers. Thus, in addition to exploiting the natural resource of Tibet, the project will not generate any employment for Tibetans. Moreover, the Chinese will transport the bottled water by train to be sold in Chinese markets. The business venture functions exclusively between the Chinese entrepreneurs, their Chinese retailers, customers in China, and its Chinese manufacturers in Tibet. The Tibetan people are completely excluded from the business ventures process while, at the same time, they have to face the damages brought to the ecology in their surrounding areas.

A Tibetan from Phenpo Lhundup County told TCHRD about mining and other resource extraction enterprise in Tibet in wake of the construction of the Qingzang Railway. His testimony points to the lack of participatory of the local Tibetans.

Mining And Displacement of Tibetans in Phenpo Lhundup County²⁶

According to testimony given to TCHRD by a new arrival from Tibet to India who withheld his name, there has been a mass displacement of Tibetans

from an area in which they have lived for centuries in the wake of the discovery of a mineral deposit in Phenpo Lhundup County.

70 families from Sertsa village, Nyana Township, Phenpo Lhundup County were required by the Chinese government to move from Sertsa village to Yulchen Township. The inhabitants of Sertsa village were largely farmers and nomads who had been living in the area for generations. The village head petitioned the local authority against the planned displacement; however, the authority turned down the request that the Tibetans be allowed to stay in their homes.

From late 1999, Chinese scientists and survey groups visited the remote valley of Sertsa and carried out meticulous research, leading to the discovery of mineral deposits. The Chinese government planned to resettle the Tibetans in Sertsa village from 2000; however, the villagers were largely kept in the dark about these plans. From early 2003 onwards, the local authority began the displacement of the Tibetans in a phased manner, moving 20 Tibetan families at a time.

In Yulchen Township, the Chinese government constructed houses for the displaced Tibetans from Sertsa village but the houses were too small to accommodate them. Houses have 5 small rooms but this is not sufficient to accommodate Tibetan families with many family members. The houses also lack basic amenities, such as a fresh water supply, electricity and drinking water. The displaced Tibetans have to fetch drinking water from springs and rivers.

So far, the trends have repeatedly demonstrated that Chinese migrants from Mainland China dominate the most lucrative enterprises such as mining, manufacturing, tourism and tertiary sectors. Thus, Chinese entrepreneurs enjoy economic development and prosperity at the expense of native Tibetans. As a result, the Tibetan population suffers from exclusionary growth, and the bottom of society has seen little growth. The annual GDP of Tibet only shows statistics of numbers and production; it does not specify where they came from and who actually calculated the figures. Based on GDP statistics, the overall picture boasts great growth and economic progress inside Tibet; however, a closer look at the reality of Tibet reveals much contradiction from the national growth statistics.

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Following decades of intense government campaigns for development in the western regions of China and in Tibet, 80 percent of the Tibetan population, consisting mostly of farmers and nomads, remain anchored in its traditional economy with virtually no development or prosperity while the urban enclaves and cities of western China and Tibet have grown at a rapid pace.

Rather than advancing development in Tibet, The Qingzang Railway has not benefited the local Tibetan community and changed the economic landscape in favour of Chinese entrepreneurs and settlers. People's Daily Online predicted a flow of 600,000 people per year going to Xinning, the capital city of Qinghai Province. The officials in both the TAR and Qinghai have vowed to construct more towns with a capacity for larger populations and with a bigger economic profile. Their promises vindicate the argument that administrative outposts such as Chengdu, Xinning and Lanzhou prosper and grow while development fails to reach the interior regions of Tibet. The economic planners and juggernauts in Beijing have not sorted out who will occupy the planned towns and cities, but the plan can only harm Tibetan farmers and nomads. The economic activities planned for these coming towns and cities and China's newly reformed *Hukou*, or household registration system, indicates that it is to attract settlers and profit adventurers from Mainland China.

The Qingzang Railway project demonstrates that China continues to neglect western regions of China and Tibet while it remains fixated on economic projects that benefit *Huis* and *Han* Chinese community. During the launch of the railway, President Hu Jintao, said "The project is not only a magnificent feat in China's history of railway construction, but also a great miracle of the world's railroad history". China enjoys great success while it deprives the Tibetan people the better education, health care and growth in knowledge and expertise promoted by the government in Mainland China. Tibetans need to become the masters of their own affairs. They need a genuine growth and per capita human development.

Dhondup Tsering testified about the two faces of Tibet, a rapid infrastructure development in Tibet while the empowerment of Tibetans such as education and health care receives little attention from the government.

Education: A Colonial Design²⁷

Dhondup Tsering, 30, a businessman from Shit-Tsa Township, Talung County, Qinghai Province, gave testimony to TCHRD at Kathmandu Refugee Reception Centre on 8 October 2006.

At the age of 7, he attended the people's school and studied until the fifth grade. There were 49 students in his school. When he was in first grade, Tibetan language was removed from the curriculum. The Tibetan teacher was sent back to his native village as there was no need for him given that Tibetan language was no longer to be taught at the school. Later, Dhondup Tsering attended the county school at Bayen where there were 300 students. The 50 percent of the students were *Han* Chinese, 30 per cent were *Huis* Chinese and 20 percent were Tibetans. Subjects such as Chinese language, history, physics, chemistry and political science were taught. Tibetan language was not taught. The Tibetan students at the school were required to speak Chinese rather than Tibetan.

In the last few decades, there has been a dramatic rise in the Chinese population in the area. The cost of education is very expensive and almost unaffordable for Tibetans. Dhondup Tsering wanted to pursue higher education but was unable to due to the exorbitant fees. Each semester cost around 600 Yuan, which, according to official statistics, is 60 per cent of the annual income of a person in Tibet. He left school and set up a small shop.

In that sense, the so-called "magnificent feat" ignores the interests and needs of Tibetan nomads and farmers who have lost so much in order to make the Qingzang Railway possible. Thus, the "great miracle of the world's railroad history" lacks meaning and realism. President Hu Jintao's words show that the railway is just another assertive call in China's quest for a so-called "peaceful rise," an image it craves so much to carve in the world arena. The Qingzang Railway has little to offer Tibetan nomads and farmers, and the birth of the railway forecasts their bleak future that may culminate in socio-cultural and economic ghettoization amidst booming *Han* cities and economic zones on the other face of Tibet.

An exile returnee Lobsang Choedor from Samdup village reported to TCHRD about no progress in his native village.

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Poverty Widespread In Rural Tibet²⁸

An exile returnee, Lobsang Choedor, 32, from Samdup village, Chukhog township, Ngari county, "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR") gave testimony to TCHRD at Kathmandu Refugee Reception Centre on 6 May 2006 in relation to widespread poverty in his native hometown in Tibet, to which he returned after an absence of 7 years.

Lobsang Choedor sought exile India in 1999. He became monk and joined Drepung Monastery in South India. 7 years later, he returned to his native hometown in Tibet. He said:

I really wanted to know the true situation in my home town. But to my disappointment, nothing had really changed in all those years. Instead, the Chinese are more cautious and wary of exile returnees, particularly monks and nuns. There are many informers and spies in the village and therefore I couldn't move an inch when I was in Tibet.

Lobsang Choedor recounted:

To my disbelief, no positive changes were visible. In the name of development, the local government constructed one stone house, but there was nothing of practical assistance to the local Tibetans. In the past, the Chinese government had distributed two and half kilograms of wheat flour and three and half kilograms of rice to the locals. The event was widely publicized and broadcast in the State media.

In truth, the local Tibetans are mostly farmers and they live in abject poverty. The village still has no electricity. The Chinese government has completely neglected the locals because of their remoteness and lack of political significance. Villagers of all ages seek jobs in the nearby township and county city and work on construction sites. There is no school and all the locals in village are illiterate.

For the ethnic Chinese, however, the situation is different. *Huis* Chinese and *Han* Chinese who have settled in the region in last decade today dominate business in the area and the local economy. They are far wealthier than Tibetans, owning restaurants and hotels. They have more political clout and influence. Tibetans are reduced to a minority community, alienated

from the new Chinese settlers. As Choedor concluded, "It is sad and pitiable to see the situation in which Tibetans live. The widespread poverty and their plight are very visible".

The Tibetan Government in Exile (TGIE) expressed its concern and raised its objections to any development projects that are promoted at the expense of the Tibetan people and may result in long-term marginalisation and exclusion.

We firmly oppose any development projects or activities that promote or result in: violence, environmental destruction, social exclusion and economic marginalisation of Tibetans, direct or indirect population transfer of non-Tibetans to Tibet, violations of basic human rights, including involuntary displacement, confinement and eviction.²⁹

Going by the 'rights' aspect of development, the Tibetan people were not consulted and had very little say in the decision-making process of the Qingzang Railway. From the conceptual stage, the matters concerning the survey, design, contracting, import of foreign technology, laying of the track, work force, generation of employment, utility of the train started with rich Chinese tourists and officials. Only a handful of Tibetans travel the train.

In May 2006 Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported cases of eviction and paltry compensation given by the Chinese government for Tibetan farmers whose house and farms fell along the Qingzang Railway's route. The interviewee testified,

The Tibetan farmers went to different departments, including the Tibetan Autonomous Region government, to appeal but nothing really helps. All this is what they call the great western development plan. We are victims of these developments.

In her critique "*China railroads over Tibet's suffering*" Kate Saunders reported a case of a nun who lost her ancestral land and was not adequately compensated by the authorities. Ms. Saunders wrote,

A Tibetan nun who recently escaped into exile from Tibet reported that her family had lost land and been denied adequate compensation due to the railway construction. She said: "we appealed to county-level cadres about our dissatisfaction over

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the inadequate compensation for the land used by the State for the railway track. But none of the authorities paid attention to our petition. We are helpless.

Apart from these facts, the authorities have yet to make the train a feasible means of transportation for the ordinary Tibetan nomads and farmers, and the poorer sections of the society, in whose name the construction of the Qingzang Railway was sanctified and baptized. Perhaps now, the route of Golmud-Nagqu-Lhasa and other routes still in the blueprints might shed some light on the purpose of the construction of the railway lines in Tibet as well as the impact that the railways may bring in the near future.

In an interview with "Voice of Tibet," a new arrival from Tibet spoke about the denial of 'development as rights' to the Tibetan people during the construction of the Qingzang Railway. He said, "It is not that we are against development or against a railway to Lhasa and given the opportunity, we may have even decided to build one ourselves, the problem is that we never got to make that decision". His response reveals the frustration due to the fact that the Chinese deprived the Tibetan people of their rights to development in their own ancestral lands. In this case, the Chinese government violated the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people in order to build the Qingzang Railway.

Routes and its impacts

During the second Five-Year Plan (1958-1962) the Chinese first connected the Tibetan plateau by railway. China first connected the Tibetan plateau with the Chinese cities of Lanzhou and Siling (now called Xinning, the capital of Qinghai Province). Construction concluded in October 1959, and the railway became operational in 1961. China planned to connect Xinning and Golmud as early as 1958, however, the construction encountered numerous unfavorable circumstances and construction stalled. After nearly two decades, the Chinese revived construction in 1977, and the track became operational in 1984. It has a total length of 845 km. During the same period, China established the Northern Nuclear Weapon Research and Design Academy programs at Xihai City, the capital of "Tsojang Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture". Even in the beginning, it was obvious that the railroads meant to serve China economically and in terms

of military defense. In light of the past, we must question whether the three other planned routes will serve the economic development of Tibet or China's core interests.



Gormo-Nagqu-Lhasa Route:

Golmud-Nagqu-Lhasa Railway line contains seven major stations and seventeen junctions. After prolonged discussion and planning, the Chinese built this route first. It appears that few reasons favoured constructing this track first. First, the Xinning route connects Beijing directly, so it manifests a symbolic reach that Beijing dreamt about for a long time. Secondly, the route runs parallel to the Qinghai-Tibet highway, long described as the lifeline of Tibet. The highway facilitated the transportation of raw materials needed for construction and logistical support. Finally, the terrain made construction far easier. In addition to these factors, the route is shortest and was the least expensive to construct.

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For the purposes of exploring mineral resources, the Golmud-Xinning track enables the Chinese to transport minerals and raw materials from Tibet. The resource rich Tsaidam Basin is rich in minerals such as petroleum and gas, coal, tin, uranium and gold, and the route has been used to transport these materials. The natural oil reserves in Tsaidam were a dream discovery for China considering its industrialization and massive consumption of gas. Khyunglho Tsetan Dolkar, a Ph.D candidate in the Political Science Department at Phillips University, Marburg argued in her article printed in TRING-GYI-PHO-NYA, Sept 2006 edition,

According to Soviet and Chinese geologists, Karamay contained approximately 60 percent of Mainland China's oil reserves and Tsaidam was once believed by the Chinese geologists as the most promising oilfield. The West to East Gas Transfer project focused on the construction of pipelines to transport natural gas from Xinjiang to Shanghai City and Sebei in the Tsaidam Basin to Lanzhou, capital of Gansu Province. The construction of 953 kilometer Sebei-Xining-Lanzhou gas transmission pipeline began on 30 March 2000 at the cost of \$302 million. The pipeline is designed to transfer two billion cubic meters of gas annually. On July 4, 2002 China kicked off another multibillion dollar natural gas transmission project, a 4,200 kilometer pipeline which starts from Lunnan oilfield in southern Xinjiang and snakes through the provinces of Gansu, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Henan, Anhui, Jiangsu and the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, ending in Shanghai and Zhejiang province.

In a report carried by Xinhuanet, in 2001 Chinese scientists had claimed of a 180 million year old oil belt discovery in Changthang Basin, northern Tibet. The team predicted that the reserves in the ancient belt hold up to 5.4 billion tons with enormous large oil and gas basins. The prediction indicates that the government may intensify exploration and extraction in Tibet for years to come.

Similarly, the gas and petroleum and coal deposits in Yushu "TAP" will be easily explored and transported to China. At the same time gold and coal deposits in Nagchu will be impacted greatly.

Cheng Guodong, Director of the National Laboratory for Permafrost Engineering and member of the Chinese Academy of Science, reported on the mineral resources and oil deposits in the basin,

Through decades of effort, we have discovered laws and special characteristics of the frozen earth. During this period, we have participated in the construction of many engineering projects on the plateau, including the Qinghai-Tibet Highway and Qinghai-Tibet Oil Pipeline. Practice has proven that our technologies and measures for permafrost engineering are feasible.

The Qingzang Railway will likely make a heavy impact in the Nagchu region, the northern area of the TAR, a place that is known for its animal husbandry production. Nagchu inhabitants can look forward to selling their products at faster rates due to cheaper transportation costs. Nagchu County currently has 34 million hectares of grassland on which some 7.7 million head of livestock graze. Around 387,000 members of the population depend on animal husbandry. Local official Duan Xiangzheng³⁰ spoke about the train's direct impact on animal husbandry, "It's been our long-cherished dream to have a railway in Nagqu County".

Apart from animal husbandry, the northern region belt contains over six trillion yuan or US \$722 billion worth of natural resources, which is around 60 percent of the value of the entire mineral deposits in Tibet. According to the Xinhua News Agency, around 40,000 Nagchu locals have participated in the project and earned US \$ 28 million in additional income. According to the Railway Ministry, about 10 percent of the 100,000 workers who built the railway was ethnic Tibetan people. Two government-sponsored media networks contradicted each other regarding the number of workers who constructed the railway. The large discrepancy demonstrates that the Chinese government released sometimes unreliable and misleading statistics, perhaps in an effort to improve their international image. Beijing's political tactics often obstruct progress, and the propaganda does little to bring development to Tibetans.

As China's increases its exploitation of the mineral resources along the Qingzang and Gormo-Nagchu-Lhasa railway, the Chinese might increase construction work at the largest copper mine in Yushu, which is estimated

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to contain around 6.5 million tons of reserves. At a meeting in Lhasa, the general manager, Li Jinqian, stated that they would put the mine into operation within the next three years. This venture will draw many Chinese skilled workers, technicians, and migrant workers to the copper belt area. The location of the mine, required expertise, and its proximity to the railway mean the copper mining business in the area will be a strictly ethnic Chinese affair. The possibility that the copper belt will benefit the local Tibetan economy is limited and remote. According to a government source,

The mine will produce 50,000 tons to 100,000 tons of electrolytic copper every year after two phases of construction...The company will emphasize environmental protection in building the copper mine with measures including land rehabilitation and the recycling of used water. Investors signed an agreement last April to set up the Yulong Copper Industry Company for tapping the mine in Yulong Township, Jomda County of Qamdo Prefecture, Tibet. The joint venture has a registered capital of 625 million yuan (US \$78.1 million).³¹

One of the route's virtues would be to provide logistical and hardware support to construct three other proposed routes. At the moment, we cannot assess how many Chinese settlers the route will draw to Tibet; however, such construction often leads to the creation of a hub of migrant workers who build shantytowns near the route's stations and junctions. As of now, floating work forces have kept a presence along the track only so long as the railways provide construction work, and these groups have vanished after the track laying are completed.

The workers may also leave because the terrains have a harsh climate that is inhospitable to settlers. Other factors also explain the lack of shantytowns along the route. These areas generally rest at high altitudes and offer extreme conditions, making it uncomfortable and inconvenient for Chinese settlers. The train has thus far bound Beijing and Lhasa for the benefit of rich Chinese and foreign tourists because it drastically reduces the cost of transportation and makes Tibet's raw materials and goods cheaper and thus more competitive in the Chinese markets and vice versa.

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it comes to military and defense. At most, sites along the route can be used to launch and deploy nuclear missiles. However, the route has the potential to attract large numbers of Chinese tourists who might want to ride along the route that connects some of the richest regions in China.

From this route, the Chinese can effectively exploit and explore mineral deposits, such as gold, copper, coal, tin and uranium, in Thewo, Machen, Golog, Kandze, and the Chamdo region. Trains along this route will transport mineral deposits in Lithang and Dartsedo as these regions contain minerals such as gold, tin, coal, copper, coal and bauxite. In spite of the fact that this proposed route meets at Nagchu, it can transfer mineral deposits such as lithium, gold and coal in the Nagchu areas since these regions are relatively warm, have a lower altitude, and display scenic beauty. Hence, the economic activities will pick up in these regions, and will therefore encourage Chinese settlers and business adventurers to settle there.

Dali-Nyingtri-Lhasa Route:

This 1,594.4 km route stretches from Dali station in Yunnan to Lhasa, via Nyingtri town. The line will pass through the Dechen 26 Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan, Zayul town in Chamdo Prefecture of the TAR, and Nyingtri town before reaching Lhasa City.

It will pass through 65 tunnels and bridges, covering a total distance of 710.65 km, the longest tunnel being 1.53 km. The project, scheduled for 2001-2038, will cost 63.59 billion yuan (US \$7.96 billion), according to the 1997 static evaluation.

This route would arguably be the most key and vital route for China, both in terms of military, border consolidation and security and that of fueling economic growth of the region. On the ground, this route traces the Sino-Indian border where border disputes have raged throughout recent times. Moreover, the Chinese authorities have recently said that they are going to further extend the train route to Shigatse. On other hand, the route exposes Tibet to the industrialized and affluent Guangzhou, Macau and Hong Kong belt, which means cheaper consumer goods and products will flood the southern belt of the Tibetan region. This might greatly enhance economic

activities for Chinese entrepreneurs and business adventurers, though it remains uncertain as to what prospects and benefits will reach the local Tibetans.

The Chinese can use the route to explore and mine minerals such as bauxite in Balung, coal and gold in Gyalthang, and uranium, iron and chromite in the Nyingtri belt. The route will touch and give strategic logistical support to vital airport structures at Lhasa, Gyalthang, Pangda and Shigatse. The route will also give a strategic thrust to the nuclear missile base at Nyingtri Nedong, thus enhancing the strike capability.

Chengdu-Nagchu-Lhasa Route:

This route stretches from the Dujiangyan station near Chengdu to Lhasa City via Nagchu. The total length of this route is 1,927 km, of which 1,243 km will be inside the TAR. The line will pass through Ngapa 27 Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and Kardze "Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures" in Sichuan Province before joining with the Dali-Lhasa Railway Line at Zhongshaba near Nyingtri.

This route will incorporate approximately 70 tunnels and bridges with a total distance of 819.24 km, the longest one being 19.5 km. The project, scheduled for 2001-2038, will cost 76.79 billion yuan (US \$9.27 billion), according to the 1995 static evaluation. It will run parallel to the Chengdu-Lhasa highway, which is characterized by mountainous and rugged terrain. The line will have tremendous strategic importance, as Chengdu is the headquarters of South-West Military Command under whose jurisdiction falls the People's Liberation Army of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

From this route, Beijing can effectively exploit and explore minerals such as coal, copper, uranium, gold and tin from Thewo, Machen, Golog, Kandze and the Chamdo region. This route can transport mineral deposits such as gold, tin, coal, copper, coal and bauxite in Lithang and in the Dartsedo area, and lithium, gold and coal in the Nagchu areas since the regions along this route have relatively warm climates, lower altitudes and scenic beauty. Hence, the economic activities will pick up in these regions, and

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will therefore encourage Chinese settlers and business adventurers to settle there. From a military perspective, this route would boost the installations of two airports at Kandze and Jyekundo. The route will enhance the nuclear missile base at Kandze and give it unprecedented reach across the subcontinent.

In its critique of the construction of the railway, "*China's Railway Project: Where will it take Tibet?*" the Tibetan Government in Exile raised its concerns,

The Tsaidam Basin in Tsonub Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture is "a treasure house of mineral resources" to the Chinese government. The basin holds 42 billion tones of oil reserves, 1,500 billion cubic meters of natural gas, rich deposits of potassium chloride and several other resources. As early as 1956, the authorities built settlements in Da Tsaidam and Mengya with road links to Tsakha (Ch: Chaka). 46 Thousands of forced immigrants from eastern China and prisoners were moved there to work on road construction, mines and production facilities. To support the burgeoning Chinese population, the traditional grasslands of the Tibetan and ethnic Mongolian nomads of Amdo were turned into croplands.³²

On 12 November 2000, a writer for the People's Daily stated his opinion in an article titled, "*Prospecting and Feasibility Study Up for Building Railway to Tibet*". He wrote,

The above-mentioned four formulas each do have their advantages, as phased long-range plans, they are all feasible. They are all very important in terms of road network planning and traffic layout. The Yunnan-Tibet line and the Qinghai-Tibet line, in particular, both have their respective construction significance and role, they can't replace each other. Both the No. 1 and No. 2 institutes of the Ministry of Railways agreed that it is quite difficult to build a railway leading to Tibet and so the matter should be taken with great care.

But judged from the actual conditions, including initial stage preparation, the degree of difficulties involved in the project, the amount of investment, the working period for the project

and the State's present financial and material resources, the No. 1 Institute is of the opinion that it is appropriate to take the Qinghai-Tibet line as the first choice at present. The 1,080-km-long Qinghai-Tibet line is currently the shortest among the four lines leading to Tibet. It will require less investment.

The No. 2 Institute stressed that Construction of the Yunnan-Tibet Railway will fundamentally change the communications and transportation conditions of Tibet and western Yunnan and is of great political, economic and military significance to accelerating the regional economic development of Tibet and western Yunnan Province and to strengthening ethnic unity and national defense.

Finally, both No.1 and No.2 institutes indicated that in the selection from among the four formulas for the construction of a railway leading to Tibet, particularly from between the Qinghai-Tibet line and the Yunnan-Tibet line, which formula should be chosen in the end, they will completely obey the decision of the Party Central Committee and the State Council. They believe that the day is not far off when the final decision will come out. Probably it will come in the first spring of the 21st century.

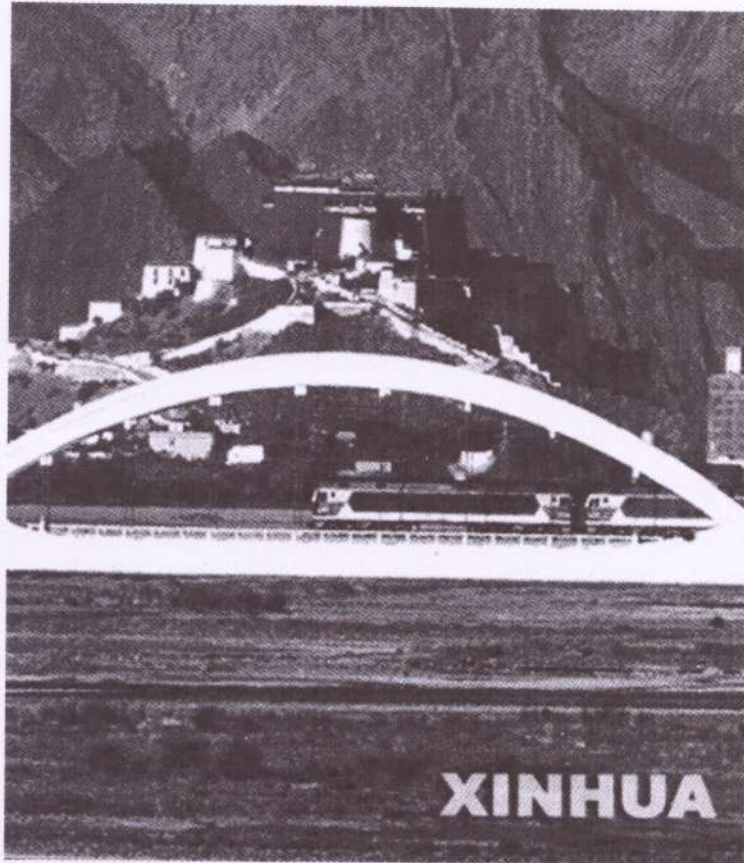
Tsering Dorjee testified to TCHRD about the immediate impacts made on Tibetan society after the coming of train to Lhasa.

Railway: A Tool of Cultural Genocide³³

Following several years of massive government propaganda, the "Qinghai-Tibet Railway" opened on 1 July 2006. Chinese President Hu boasted, "The project is not only a magnificent feat in China's history of railway construction, but also a great miracle of the world's railroad history". Hu stressed that China intended the train to bring development and economic prosperity to Tibetans. According to the government in Beijing, the train is the "center-piece" of a developmental plan that will facilitate economic development in Tibet and other western regions of China. In contrast, a monk who recently sought exile believes the train will bring harm and

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long-term ills to Tibetan society. In testimony given to TCHRD, he contradicted the Chinese government's claims.

Tseten Norbu is a 25 year old monk from Toelung Dechen County, a couple of hours drive from Lhasa city. In August 2006, he left Tibet and reached the Tibetan Refugee Reception Center in Kathmandu, Nepal. He told TCHRD about the impact of the railway on the Lhasa cityscape and Tibetan society.

After the completion of the construction of Qinghai-Tibet Railway in Tibet, the Chinese government issued two or three flags to all of the government offices in Lhasa city and Lhasa residents to mark the opening ceremony. They were issued with strict instructions that the flags had to be hoisted on the

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rooftops of houses to celebrate the inaugural ceremony. Government officials issued terse warnings to residents that if they failed to hoist the Chinese flags on their rooftops, this would be interpreted as a gesture of defiance and revolt against Motherland China. The government also said that they would take firm and stringent action against those who failed to hoist the flag. In response to these threats, Tibetan residents in Lhasa city hoisted Chinese flags.

Tibetan people have been living in intense fear and anxiety over the laying of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway line in Tibet. In addition, just two months after the passenger cars were on the tracks, the train brought an exodus of ethnic Chinese from China into Lhasa city in search of new livelihoods. Every train that came to Lhasa station filled Lhasa's streets with ethnic Chinese searching for a new beginning. The Chinese authorities gathered them together for an orientation meeting. Hundreds of Chinese settlers based themselves on the sides of highways looking for a new lease of life with sleeping bags and goods on their backs. There are lots of Chinese circus entertainers, carrying monkeys, drums and luggage and making their monkeys to do tricks and gimmicks in Lhasa's streets, and in that manner they earn their livelihood. Likewise, so-called Chinese Shaolin monks entertain the crowds in Lhasa's streets by displaying martial arts and Kungfu. Tibet has now become a victim of China's population transfer and assimilation. In recent years, the Chinese government has intensified and stepped up the influx of people to Tibet.

On the streets of Lhasa, Chinese settlers have taken over public transportation services, taxis and human peddled rickshaws. There are very few Tibetans providing transportation services. In the service sector, Chinese businessmen and businesswomen own most of the hotels and restaurants. A very large numbers of Tibetan young men and women work for them as employees. They earn around 400 to 500 Yuan per month. Under the guise of the official tag, "Chinese tourists", large numbers of unemployed Chinese migrants arrive in Tibet by train. Amongst the swarms of migrants, many are Chinese sex workers and

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Lhasa city has witnessed an unprecedented rise in thefts and robbery in a very short period of time since the arrival of the train in Lhasa. As far as the cultural landscape of Lhasa city is concerned, the old traditional image of Lhasa is no longer visible; instead, Lhasa city has been converted into a typical sprawling modern Chinese city.

In recent times in the streets of Lhasa city, Mandarin has become a day-to-day language used and spoken by people. Even elders, young people and children in Tibetan families now mix Mandarin words into the Tibetan language. There is a dominant stigma prevalent in Tibetan society that if anyone doesn't know how to speak Mandarin, they are not part of mainstream society and trends. This is very true. Similarly, the Tibetan butcher and meat sellers in and around Potala Palace, Tsuglagkhang temple, Ramoche Tsuglagkhang and Norbulinga Palace only speak Mandarin.

They have almost lost their own mother tongue. The large open ground in front of Potala palace and Tsuglagkhang is occupied by thousands of Chinese settlers brought in by the train. The Chinese government explained that the train would bring Chinese tourists from Mainland China and even foreign tourists contributing largely to the generation of income. In their rhetoric, the government stated that the economic development in Tibet and for the Tibetan people would move ahead like a young moon growing to its full moon stature. Unfortunately the Chinese government has not kept to that goal in implementing their plans but rather they are fully preoccupied and engrossed in stepping up the influx of Chinese settlers into Tibet.

I have seen myself that since the coming of train to Lhasa city, the city has witnessed a steady rise in population. The Chinese government is now implementing the construction of many guesthouses and residence quarters. Government propaganda and claims to the outside world that the Chinese authorities are transforming Lhasa city into an ultra modern city are nothing but a deception and window dressing. The

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construction of new residence quarters is in fact to accommodate Chinese settlers, an agenda contrary to the authorities' stated claims in government-sponsored media. The new residences are not for the purpose of housing Tibetans from Kham, Amdo and Tibetan people in villages around Lhasa city, but for Chinese settlers moving into Tibet.

Old and traditional Tibetan housing and architecture inside Lhasa city are now being destroyed. In place of old traditional buildings, strange looking buildings are mushrooming up in all places, and as a result, when we enter Lhasa city, we no longer have the feeling that we are entering our Lhasa city of Tibet but, rather, the feeling we are entering a Chinese city.

Chinese settlers, after a month, began resorting to cheating and deceiving Tibetan people from rural areas coming to Lhasa by selling poor quality watches they brought from China at a high rate, telling the Tibetans that the watches are made and brought from foreign countries. At times when Tibetan people realized that they have been cheated and deceived, any effort to fight back against the Chinese is in vain. Tibetans are trapped in a hopeless situation. Lhasa city is now completely dominated by the influx of Chinese settlers, and since they form the majority, Tibetan people can't dare to fight back against the Chinese. They are reduced to feeling that they are in a foreign land, although in their own land. There is nothing else they can do apart from keeping quiet. However, it might be possible that the Qinghai-Tibet Railway will bring economic development to Tibet.

Still then, the development and economic prosperity of Tibet claimed by the Chinese government has serious long-term negative consequences upon our virtuous Tibetan culture. In recent times in the streets, narrow lanes and corners of Lhasa's alleyways, whether they are Chinese or young men and women without any tinge of shyness and shame, people display their emotions and sentiments in public by hugging and kissing in the streets. I saw many of them.

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This intrusion of disgraceful and shameless culture did not penetrate our Tibetan culture and manners in the past, but now, with the influence of China and its negative fall out in general society; a growing number of Tibetan young men and women are embracing and emulating Chinese shameful ways and manners. Therefore the Qinghai-Tibet Railway has become a tool inflicting heavy and serious damage to the unique and precious cultural identity of Tibetan people which has defined Tibet and Tibetans for centuries. This cultural genocide will continue in the future. There is little doubt what negative impact and damage it can do to Tibetan identity and culture judging by the present trends and changes brought to Tibetan society thus far."³⁴

Unlike the Tibet-Qinghai Highway that opened in 1954, the Qinghai-Tibet Railway will encourage population transfer from China to Tibet. Prior to the rail construction, about seven to nine million Chinese settlers lived in Tibet. With population transfer on the rise, the new train grimly foreshadows Tibet's fate, and recalls the example of the Uighur people in Xinjiang, who became a minority in their homeland after the Chinese connected Xinjiang with Mainland China. Similarly, the Qinghai-Tibet train will hasten the process of population transfer to Tibet.

The article "On top of the world", featured in *The Globe and Mail* on October 27th, 2006, expresses similar views about the Qingzang train's capacity to move Chinese migrants into Tibet. The article says,

Beijing is now using the new railway to ensure that Tibet is tightly integrated into the rest of China. Migrant workers and tourists are pouring into the region. The railways ministry forecasts that almost a million people a year will arrive in Tibet via rail, of whom 400,000 will be tourists. Train tickets are subsidized-some seats are as cheap as \$55 for the two-day journey from Beijing, much cheaper than airfare.

Unsurprisingly, the Tibetan people inside Tibet live in a state of fear and urgency because of the prospects of Chinese migrants flooding the streets of Lhasa, the primary destination. As a Tibetan monk in Lhasa stated,

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In Lhasa, the Tibetan monks are fed up with the hordes of rowdy Chinese tourists who swarm into their temples and grab the monks for photos, even in the middle of theological discussions. On the roof of the sacred Jokhang Temple, monks openly admit that they fear the influx of Chinese migrants and tourists the railway is bringing to their homeland.³⁵



Since Canadian companies like Bombardier and Nortel became involved in constructing the Qingzang Railway, many Tibetan activists have protested and encouraged them not to assist Beijing's violations of human rights. Other Canadian investors, such as Continental Minerals, presently involved in the exploration and mining of copper and gold along the train route, ignored similar external pressure and protest. Bombardier China's president and chief country representative, Jianwei Zhang, defended the company's involvement by saying that, "The railway is not our responsibility. We are just manufacturing the cars. Bombardier's responsibility is to make certain of our long-term collaboration with China".

In years to come many more foreign companies will explore commercial possibilities in Tibet. The arrival of Railway had made it very convenient for investors. According to some of reliable reports, Grand Hyatt and InterContinental hotel chains are planning to set up properties in Lhasa eyeing both foreign and domestic tourists but also for the business travellers.

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This would contribute greatly to the growth of tourism in Tibet. Unfortunately, the domination of non-Tibetans in the most lucrative service of Tertiary sector is overwhelming. Many of Chinese companies are entering into newly branded Tibet as "mythical Shangrila and beautiful land" contrary to the decades of "barbaric and uncivilized" label Chinese government had branded on Tibet and Tibetans.

Although political and economic opportunism on part of Beijing is very evident, however the more important issue is how will the booming tourism industry benefit the local Tibetan populace. Considering the nature of capitalism and market economy in Tibet the prospect of tourism benefiting the local populace will be dimmed. The income and profits will concentrate on few companies and individuals who engage in service sector. The 90 percent of Chinese settlers and migrants in Tibet dominates the tertiary sector, while 80 percent of Tibetan population engages in primary sector (farming and animal husbandry).

The Continental Minerals Corp a Canadian mining company from Vancouver has already invested in a copper and gold deposit located 240 kilometers southwest of Lhasa. Likewise, Toronto based company GobiMin Inc. recently invested \$1.625 million to acquire 30 percent of the stake in Chinese company. The company is mining Zinc and Copper in Tibet.

Minerals exports from Tibet are expected to represent 70 percent of the freight traffic on the new railway, according to railway officials. But the railway could become even more important as China and India expand their overland trade routes. The railway, which would give Tibet a much bigger role in the trade between the two emerging superpowers of the developing world.³⁶

The Chinese government has induced many migrant labourers to head west to Tibet and help with the 'modernization drive.' On July 27, 2006, the government made an official announcement in the Xinhua News Agency about the simplified legal aid procedures for migrant workers. According to the previous residence permit system, Chinese migrant workers needed to procure permission from the local authorities to seek work in other provinces. The announced law implements two major simplifications: it makes it easier for the government to lure migrant workers to Tibet, and it

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encourages the free and fluid movement of labour within the central and shore regions of China. While it is not clear whether the Chinese government simplified the laws in order to promote population transfer to Tibet, the new law will accelerate the migration trends.

According to Mr. Zhao Dacheng, the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Justice, the central government spent 310 million yuan (US \$38 million) last year on legal aid for the migrant workers. The central government described the legal aid as a system protecting the rights of disadvantaged people.

During the communist era, the Chinese government used the *Hukou* [Chinese] household registration system to keep a close watch on the movements of Chinese citizens. The system led to discrimination between coastal Chinese provinces open to trade and the 800 million rural peasants deprived of the privileges enjoyed by their urban compatriots for many decades. As China heads into an era of unprecedented economic prosperity, the divide continues to widen between the urban nouveau rich and the impoverished peasants who live in the rural hinterlands.

The top government officials felt the need to bring reform and change to the *Hukuo* system in order to permit rural inhabitants to seek fortune and wealth in China's prosperous, industrious coastal provinces.

The government proposed the abolition of the *Hukuo* system in 11 of China's 23 provinces, mainly in those provinces located along the developed coastal regions. The changes promoted the movement of labour from the poorer western hinterlands to the big cities on the coast. However, without making tangible reforms to the *Hukuo* system and actual implementing those reforms, very little can be achieved on the ground.

Xu Zhiyong, a law lecturer living in Beijing, argues that the *Hukuo* system had long been abandoned in practice as it was deemed too impractical for the rapidly growing Chinese economy and the need for a labour force to push the ever-growing Chinese economy. He believes that the *Hukuo* system only exists in name. Mr Xu said,

Even in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, it has almost lost its function. The export-driven southern province of Guangdong is among the areas planning to end the permit

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system. Migrants already make up about a third of its 110 million population, but it has recently struggled to attract as many migrants as it needs to fill its factories. Neither of China's two biggest cities is included in the list of provinces proposing to drop the system, because both still face problems in dealing with migrants over matters such as education and security.³⁷

On the contrary, the rich, southern coastal province of Guangdong spearheaded the proposed changes to the *Hukuo* permit system, simply because the region needed cheap, readily available labour in order to sustain and feed its export-driven manufacturing industries. According to official sources, migrants make up one third of the region's 110 million population. However, matters pertaining to the rights, health, education and security of the migrant workers pose the most daunting challenges. Therefore, the government intended for the legal aid system to encourage and facilitate free movement of migrant labours, particularly to the underdeveloped regions of the western China. Thus, the Qingzang Railway helps Chinese migrant workers who are willing to move to Tibet in order to make money because the train makes their journey cheaper and easier. As the central government introduces many development projects in Tibet, and individually owned enterprises and businesses continue to grow there, the train will bring exhaustible supply of Chinese migrant workers.

TRAIN AND ITS TENTACLES

A dark precursor in Golmud and Xinning:

Before the railway opened in Lhasa in July 2006, the railway began to operate at Xinning and Golmud beginning in 1984. The train's arrival on the Tibetan plateau has a strange history to it. Initially, global geopolitical factors and Mao's defense strategy fueled the rail program, but later the desire to explore and exploit rich minerals in Tibet drove the project. A report, "*China's Railway Project: Where will it take Tibet?*"³⁸, published by the Environment and Development Desk of the Tibetan Government in Exile details the history,

In the early 1950s, Communist China revived the idea of building a railway network on the Tibetan plateau when the Korean War and the deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations forced the Communist government to move its military industries to Central China. Perceiving threats from "imperialist



A Chinese migrant worker on his way to work in a permafrost track

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America" and the "revisionist Soviets", Mao ordered the speedy construction of railway lines in Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan even if this involved taking out railways tracks in other parts of China.

The urgent need for a railway became more acute when the Communist government decided to explore and exploit natural resources in Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Manchuria. Zhou Enlai articulated China's needs for the natural resources of these regions in 1957 when he stated:

In the *Han*-inhabited regions there is not enough land available for reclamation, and underground natural resources in areas are not so abundant as elsewhere. Development of the natural resources in areas populated by the fraternal minority nationalities provides popular support for the nation's industrialization. However, these natural resources have remained untapped for lack of labour power and technological expertise. Without mutual assistance, especially assistance from the *Han* people, the minority peoples will find it difficult to make significant progress on their own.'

By then, thousands of Tibetan and Chinese prisoners were already incarcerated in a chain of large labour camps spread across Amdo. The prisoners were engaged in road construction, exploitation of mineral resources, building of nuclear research centres and in running state farms for the People's Liberation Army.

From 1956 the population of forced immigrants in this northeastern Tibetan region increased dramatically following Mao's "Rustication" campaign. Millions of Chinese from the urban areas of eastern China were forced to the remote, sparsely-populated minority regions in the north and west of China. In the first two years of the campaign, some 600,000 people were sent to Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia.

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In light of “imperialist America” and “revisionist Soviet”, Mao’s reason to construct the railway in Tibet remains unfounded. Nor can China justify the railroad as necessary to maintain a firm grip on Tibet since Tibet is already well under China’s grip. Militarily speaking, the Qinghai-Tibet highway is sufficient to maintain strategic military presence and control in Tibet. Thus far, China has deployed massive numbers of troops through the highway, and the heavy presence of military and security personnel in Tibet can easily deal with any outbreak of secessionist movement. Therefore, the train would not increase China’s ability to respond to pro-independence and mass public unrest. Furthermore, an external invasion of Tibet in order to liberate it is highly unlikely. Therefore, the massive militarisation of Tibet is unfounded except on grounds of China’s aggressive military doctrine in the Asian subcontinent and in the western hemisphere.

Almost five decades have passed since premier Zhou Enlai issued the above statement. Global power landscapes and global geopolitics have undergone great changes. Hence, the only persuasive explanation is that of China’s military interest. In this context, the railway would serve a strategic deployment of China’s military assets, particularly the long-range Dongfeng missiles (DF-31A) and tactical M11 missiles, in the Indian subcontinent. Deployment of these strategic weapons would surely tilt military and power balance in China’s favour, providing her with strategic depth and the second-strike capability that neighboring countries lack.

In “*Asian Strategic and Military Perspective*,” R.S.N. Singh asserts that China has deployed almost a quarter of its nuclear missile warheads in Tibet. In order to bolster these deployments, China added 14 airbases and an oil pipeline from Golmud to Lhasa. The railway may give China an edge and an unprecedented reach across the subcontinent. It might also strengthen their control of the border.

According to Tsering Shakya, a Tibetan historian and think tank whose book, *Dragon in the Land of Snows*, received critical acclaim, the objective of the Qingzang Railway is one of, “political and strategic integration”. Shakya further adds that, “Tibet’s natural economy faces westwards South Asia; Beijing wants to tie it firmly eastwards with China and to encourage more migration from the [Chinese] interior.”

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However, global geopolitics and equations have changed. The Cold War ended, and the Soviet Satellite countries have gained their independence. China renounced socialism or, if socialism continues to exist, it exists merely within ideological rhetoric. Modern China embraces capitalism and the market economy. Today, China is the fastest developing country with the fastest growing economy in the world. As the fourth largest economy in the world, China requires fuel and energy supplies in order to feed its growth and ever-increasing demand for offshore oil and gas. In order to feed its massive economy, China created the "Western Development Strategy" by which it explores and exploits the reserves of oil, gas and other mineral resources in China's western regions. The railway will serve the long-term exploration and exploitation of Tibet's mineral resources. In a report by the Xinhua News Agency, dated 23 June, 2006, Chidain Doje, a professor of economics at the Qinghai University of Nationalities, said,

While the province of Qinghai and the region of Tibet are both massively rich in natural resources, their combined economies are less than one thirtieth the size of Shanghai's. Although the economic comparison may not be entirely fair, experts agree the railway will be akin to pulling the cork out of the bottleneck that has held the region's development back for decades.

A ton of coal or cement now sells for more than 800 yuan (US \$100) in Lhasa, the regional capital of Tibet, almost four times the price in the country's inland provinces. Transportation costs currently accounts for 75 percent of the price.

With the opening of the railway, developers can seriously consider mining and manufacturing as viable industries for Qinghai and Tibet. The railway allows them to transport heavy machinery into the remote, resource-rich region, and as a result they can move raw materials by the millions of tons to the port cities. The railway is expected to have its biggest and most immediate impacts on Tibet's tourism industry.

China's demand and dependency on natural resource to sustain its mammoth economic growth is well known. China was never been more resource hungry in its history than it is now. Therefore, despite government

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claims of promotion of tourism and development in Tibet, the actual truth on ground is that the train is now a novel technology to exploit Tibet's resource and shift them to manufacturing units in China. Had it not been for Tibet's rich natural deposits, Qingzang Railway wouldn't have been constructed.

According to state published papers, the Chinese government listed many natural resource deposits that are to be tapped in the coming years. Hans Schaefer in his article argues,

According to official Chinese surveys, Tibet has proven deposits of 126 minerals, with a significant share of the world's reserves of uranium, lithium, chromite, copper, borax, and iron. Over the past four decades, the PRC government has steadily escalated its mining activities on the plateau. During Mao's Great Leap Forward, thousands of prisoners and forced immigrants were dispatched to mining camps in Tibet and Qinghai province. Mineral reserves are everywhere on the plateau. More than 50 salt and chemical plants have been built around the Tsaidam Basin. Their products are exported to the Middle East and Europe. Near the start of the line south of Golmud, there have been found mineral resources: Copper, cobalt and gold. There is an oil refinery and a potassium products plant at Golmud. The railway makes transportation cheaper and more accessible, probably leading to new mines being opened.³⁹

The head of Nankai University said, "As transportation improves the development of natural resources, local talent and the spreading of (Western China) culture will all benefit".⁴⁰

During the construction of the railway in Golmud and Xinning, nearly two decades prior to the Qingzang railway, the Chinese government claimed that promotion of economic development in the region and bringing benefit to local Tibetans motivated China's decision to build the railway. However, rather than accomplish its stated intentions, the railroad created big cities like Xinning and Golmud and the industrial city of Terlingkha, which are all massively populated by Chinese settlers, diluting the Tibetan population and making them a minority in their own land.

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In an interview with TCHRD, a Qinghai tour guide named Zhaxi Zholma expressed her pessimism about the Qingzang railway. She grew up in the Chinese dominated region of Xinning and Gansu province. She said,

The local Tibetans have not benefited much from the railroad. Golmud, Terlingkha, Lanzhou and Xinning industrial cities are today thriving modern cities populated by migrant Chinese settlers and are a haven for new settlers from China to make their treasure hunt journey into Tibet.

At present the demographic ratio between the Chinese and Tibetans is 95 percent Chinese and 5 percent Tibetan in Golmud, 90 percent Chinese and 10 percent Tibetan in Xinning, and 97 percent Chinese and 3 percent Tibetan in Lanzhou. Before the Chinese entered Tibet in 1950, Tibetans formed the majority in these cities while some Chinese traders lived in them as a minority. After decades of population transfer, however, the Chinese have successfully sinicized the Tibetans.

Looking at the socio, ethnic, economic, demographic and political scene of the industrial cities in northeast Tibet, we see a pattern whereby the railway enables migrant Chinese settlers to thrive while the Tibetans suffer rather than prosper. Thus, the railway simply enables China to plunder Tibet by seizing and capitalizing on opportunities that should belong to the Tibetan people.

China has benefited greatly from the railway project in Golmud and Xinning, and China will likely to produce many replicas of these cities in other parts of Tibet. The Tibetans, who currently form a majority in their cities and towns, will shortly become the minority. Because Golmud's fate will become the fate of the other parts of Tibet, particularly the TAR. A closer look at Golmud would shed some light.

Golmud was built in 1954, and it is the third largest city in Tibet following Lhasa and Xinning. The original city plan allotted about 52 square kilometers, out of which 30.22 square kilometers have been constructed. Golmud has rich and diverse mineral resources. Situated in the central southern belly of Tsaidam Basin on the Qinghai-Tibet plateau, it covers an area of 124,500 square kilometers. It has a population of 270,000, and more than 90 percent of the population lives in the towns and cities.

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Golmud is a typical new industrial city which is rich in natural resources. It has about 50 different kinds of mineral resources, such as petroleum, natural gas, potassium, sodium, magnesium, lithium, boron, strontium, antimony, gold copper lead jade and crystal. The reserves of potassium, sodium, magnesium and lithium are in the very beginning of China. The area of Chaerhan Salt lake is about 5856 square kilometers which is the biggest sylvite and magnesium mineral deposit in China. The total reserves of sylvite are 32 million tons, magnesium is 316 million tons, sodium is 331 million tons. The proven petroleum deposits is about 30 million tons, natural gas is 300 billion cubic metres, the Sebei natural gas field is one of the fourth in China. Also there are more than 20 rivers in Golmud, the reserves water resources is 238.5 million cubic metres, so Golmud has large superiority in the development of hydropower. Golmud has about 50 kinds of wild animals and 200 kinds of wild plants resources, among 20 of them are ranked as rare animals and plants of China. Besides, Golmud has abundant wind power and solar energy.

Golmud is a city with a quite important strategic position. It situated in the inner part of Qinghai-Tibet plateau. And it is the strategic garrison and the transportation hinge in western part because it connect Tibet autonomous region, Xinjiang and Gansu. Three main stems (Qing-Zang ,Qing-Xin ,Dun-Ge) meet in Golmud . The railway from xining to golmud which is the first stage of Qing-Zang railway project can transport 10 million materials and 2 million passengers every year. The second stage of Qing-Zang railway from Golmud to Lhasa is under the intensive construction now, it will be in effective in 2007. The varying and expanding project of Golmud's airport has already been finished and reused in December of 2003. At present, Golmud has formed a decussate and solid transportation net including high way railway pipeline and so on. Golmud is the geographical center of the western part, the inevitable part of the south silk road, the strategic shore of south west border's protection, the important gateway and big Land Wharf from the inner land to Tibet, more than 90% materials out and entering Tibet is transferred in Golmud.

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Golmud is an industrial city of source exploit, it is a new industrial city in Qinghai even in west of China. The proportion of the secondary industry has increased over 60 percent in the three industry and has become the ruling industry. The investment and construction of the three projects: megaton petroleum refining, megaton potash fertilizer, petroleum and natural gas, have formed the frame and basis of Golmud's industry. Especially along the implement of the strategy of developing west region, a number of key industrial projects, Such as the process of petroleum, natural gas, ferrochrome and jade, the comprehensive exploitation of magnesium, lithium, potassium of the Salt Lake, were established and put into operation, which lay a solid foundation for the process of Golmud's industrialization. The implement of Zhongxin company investing and exploiting magnesium, lithium, natural gas and the exploit of hydropower will push the natural exploitation into a new stage.

Golmud is a high-developed city. Since the reform and opening up, especially the implement of developing west region, Golmud has grasped the opportunity the strategy of developing west region and the implement of the proactive fiscal policy, to develop its economy and social causes. The GDP totaled 11.408 billion Yuan from 1999 to 2003, increased at an average annual rate of 18 percent The per capita GDP of 2003 was 33,149 Yuan, increased at an average annual rate of 23.4 percent. The absolute value and the increasing speed occupy the top place in Qinghai province respectively. The local general budget income added up 66.1 million Yuan for 5 years, increased at an average annual rate of 15 percent. The investment of the fixed assets added up to 11.157 billion Yuan increased at an average annual rate of 45 percent. The budgetable income of the residents in the town reached 7,448 Yuan, increased at an average annual rate of 10.7 percent. The per capita net income of the peasant and herdsman was 2,752 yuan increased at an average annual rate of 10 percent. Every target all increased, The economy and society have achieved a exceeding and leap-forward development.

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Golmud is a city full of vigor. The advantaged resources, location and transportation of Golmud determined its special position in developing Qinghai province. The Central Party and the State Council are concerning about the development of Golmud. In recent years, Hujintao, Jiangzemin, Wubangguo, Zengpeiyan, Lipeng, Zhurongji, Lilanqing and other leaders of our Party and nation go to Golmud for inspection and express their great expectations of the development of Golmud. In 1996, Liruihuan, the former chairman of the political consultative conference, put forward an assumption that we should construct Golmud as a modernized central city in west China when he visited Golmud. In December, 2003, provincial Party committee and government suggest that through great efforts in 10 or 20 years, we are trying to make Golmud be at the key position of modernized transportation in the west and the communication, and become the center where resources are processed and transformed and also the tourist center with plateau characteristic. Golmud will become a modernized central city with its particular style, standing in the Gobi and Desert.⁴¹

The provincial government of Qinghai described Golmud as a city that can become more productive. They labeled the city as a 'brighter and more vigorous pearl on Qinghai-Tibet plateau'. It was transformed from the home of Tibetan herdsmen and nomads to a modern city. While Beijing has lauded itself for achieving progress and prosperity, only Chinese migrants have benefited from increased ownership and development. The *Han* Chinese settlers amass riches that simply go back to Mainland China. China has created a system by which its own manpower exploits Tibet's resources, generates profit, and returns the wealth to Mainland China.

Because China does not categorize its statistics by ethnicity, its publicized numbers about the growth in Golmud distort the real picture. Over 90 percent of the Chinese settlers who come to Tibet live in urban enclaves and cities while only 13 percent of the Tibetan population live in urban enclaves and cities. This disparity explains the disproportionate number of Chinese who have benefited from development in Tibet while very little progress touches the lives of the Tibetan people. Moreover, the few Tibetans who live in cities such as Golmud do not prosper like the Chinese migrants

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because the urban Tibetans are mostly low skilled, low paid, manual workers. Andrew Fischer termed the economic growth and development taking place inside Tibet as "highly polarized growth".

Golmud has darkly foreshadowed Tibet's fate, particularly to emerging cities that will not likely produce growth and prosperity for Tibetans. China's claims of progress in Tibet are misleading, and any development will continue to lack credibility until the government changes its objectives and strategies.

India's premier television reporter reported on the negative transformation in Tibet and how Chinese population transfer increasingly marginalizes Tibetans in their own land. The report further establishes the fact that Lhasa city, like all other emerging cities and towns in Tibet, will eventually meet a similar end if the current transfer of Chinese into Tibet continues.

It now looks like any other medium sized modern Chinese city - full of glass and chrome, catering to a new consumer class, which has grown rich on the largesse of the billions Beijing has poured into Tibet for development. Discos, pubs and flashing neon signs dominate the streets of Lhasa. Banks, petrol stations, big enterprises are all controlled by non-Tibetans. And in the years to come, this domination is all set to increase. Many poor Tibetans from rural areas still throng to monasteries like Jokhang for pilgrimage but soon they will be outnumbered by curious tourists. Chinese businessmen are seeking a fortune in new business opportunities in Tibet. Every day there are new hotels and restaurants opening up in Lhasa, in anticipation of the coming tourist boom. But the local Tibetans have very little stake in the economic upturn. Most new enterprises are owned by Chinese traders streaming into Tibet from other parts of China. Tibetans get to do only low-end jobs. Wa Ming, who manages an upmarket restaurant in Lhasa has come all the way from north-east China, some 4,000 km away.⁴²

Will the Qingzang railway create many other Golmuds in Tibet? Based on the Golmud experience, the answer is an emphatic yes. However, we have to consider several factors first. In former days, Golmud served as a herding base for Mongols and Tibetan rangers on the vast empty steppe. The place has attractive warm weather in winter and cool weather in summer. Today,

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almost 200,000 people live in Golmud, and large numbers of Chinese will likely continue to arrive. Employing the Golmud yardstick, it is unlikely that vibrant cities will appear between the Khunu Bridge and Lenthung River, a distance of about 900 km. This vast, rugged mountainous region has a harsh climate. However, other places like Nagqu, Damxung, Yangpachen, Lhasa and Shigatse should expect a rise in the pouring of Chinese settlers into Tibet.

Once the Chinese build the three other railway lines, cities similar to Golmud will appear in Kham (Sichuan) and the southern parts of Amdo (Qinghai), and the Gyalthang (Yunnan) region might experience a rise of new urban enclaves. The next phase of the population transfer might take place in these regions since they offer favorable conditions: an abundance of natural resources, a warm and pleasant climate and government incentives. Even more widespread, resource extraction enclaves will grow in Tsaidam and the TAR, which will draw many settlers from Mainland China. The Chinese government is certainly aware of the Chinese influx. The report "Tibet Outside TAR" mentioned that,

When and if the tracks are extended beyond the Tanggula into the TAR, it is reasonable to expect it will be the most significant event for the TAR since the arrival of the PLA there in 1950s. The effects of Chinese-style development and population influx will be pervasive and can be expected to mirror those seen today in formerly Tibetan and Mongolian zones such as Tsolho (Ch: Hainan) and Inner Mongolia.

Currently, 70 percent of China's energy is consumed by its eastern and central regions, whereas some 90 percent of hydropower resources and 80 percent of coal reserves lie in western and northern China respectively. In the year 2000, the construction of the Sebei-Siling-Lanzhou gas pipeline was selected as one of the nation's ten most important projects and the work was commenced in April 2000. In the TAR, the construction of water conservancy projects is currently receiving a major focus. The Tenth Five-Year Plan proposes to see the construction of a conveyance system in the Menla, Phenbo and Yarlung irrigation areas. Similarly, it wants to see the early commencement of the construction of nine "backbone projects", including the Pangduo irrigation hub.⁴³

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However, TAR Vice Chairman Wu Yingjie downplayed the fears of Chinese population influx to an Austrian reporter. He was quoted as saying;

The newly opened railway that has linked Tibet with the rest of China will not bring an influx of permanent settlers to the plateau. Tibet's unique natural conditions make it impossible for the *Han* people and other ethnic groups to settle down here...Tibet is a vast land of 1.2 million square kilometers, so tourist won't overburden the local ecology in the short run.

TAR Vice Chairman Jampa Phuntsok downplayed the role of the Chinese government and officials in Tibet. Tourists do not have the final say over the preservation and well-being of Tibet's ecology; the ecological fate rests entirely in the hands of the leaders and their political will. If Tibet's unique natural conditions make it impossible for Chinese to settle there, why do the *Han* people dominate Lhasa's skyline, restaurants, service sector, tourism business and shopping malls? So far, the Chinese government has used economic and legal incentives to lure *Han* and non-*Han* Chinese to settle in Tibet. Without such incentives, even the silliest *Han* and non-*Han* Chinese wouldn't risk their lives to go to Tibet, a country whose language, culture, food habits, inhospitable geographic terrains and people are so different and alien from their own culture.

Just months after the successful completion of the construction of Qingzang Railway, the "TAR" governor Jampa Phuntsok announced in Xinhua that the next track line linking Lhasa city to Xigatse city and then to the Nepal border. The "TAR" governor said, "Tibet is a remote place that is looking forward to being connected to South Asia. The railway extension will promote business". The Nepal and Tibet shared a borderline of more than 1,400 km and five open border crossings. Few years back the Chinese government has been constructing a highway road from Xigatse and Nyalam, a Tibetan border town near Nepal.

According to blue print of Chinese engineers, a branch line linking Lhasa to Xigatse will start by next year onwards. The branch track line linking the two important cities in "TAR" is of about 270 km. The branch line project is expected to take around three years to finish according to Xinhua news agency reporting. The Chinese government explained that the construction was to integrate and connect the far western regions of Tibet

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economically and politically. The move may be strategic for Beijing, however defense think-tank in India was very wary of the developments inside Tibet.

The linking of border regions of Tibet through railway line serves two strategic interests of Beijing. From political point of view, the presence of railway line would add extra combat capability and strategic military reach to China, particularly when it comes to deployment of medium and long reach missiles which carry China's nuclear weapons. The railway line would also Beijing to have more access into markets of Nepal and India. This may open another floodgates for the Chinese products to find its market in Indian subcontinent.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal KP Sharma Oli on 30th August hailed Chinese government plans to extend the Railway line to Nepalese border. He said that the railway line would facilitate bilateral trade, tourism and people to people contacts. In his interview to Xinhua news agency, he said, "The extension of railway line up to Nepal-China border will greatly facilitate bilateral trade, tourism and promote people- to-people contacts thereby further solidifying the foundation of bilateral relations".

Mr. Oli further mentioned that both sides were planning to establish areas around Panchkhal, Kabhre District as a Special Economic Zone, an area which is 60 km away from the Nepal-China border. According to him, "I believe that China's phenomenal economic development will have a positive bearing on the process of our economic development".

On 2 October 2006, the Chinese government decided to add two more rail links to Tibet. The trains are coming from Shanghai and Guangzhou. Traditionally the communist government in China tends to coincide the opening ceremony of landmark projects on 1st October, which is the founding anniversary of the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The first train from Shanghai city to Lhasa departed from on Sunday, 1st October 2006. The train was scheduled to take 51 hours to reach Lhasa with a distance of 4,373 Km journey according to Xinhua News Agency.

Xinhua news agency also reported that the train from Guangzhou city departed on 1st October 2006 to Lhasa. It took 57 hours and covered a distance of 4,980 Km. So far this route is the longest train route in China.

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Viewing from political perspective, the linking of Tibetan region with the two of the farthest cities of China should indicate and reflect the complete consolidation as well as integration of the restive region under China's rule. Judging from commercial point of view, the move should reflect and echo the commercial value of Tibet and its potentials that will be exposed and connected to the two of the richest cities in China.

The Tibetan region is finally connected and integrated into the rest of China through railway track, first ever in the history of Tibetan region and Mainland China. In this respect, Qingzang Railway not only changes the destiny of Tibet but also it sends shock waves across Nepal and in Indian subcontinent.

The Chinese government advocates the preservation of Tibet's ecology and environment while it encourages destructive actions. Just months after the Qingzang Railway opened, the Chinese government established the "Kill to Conserve" campaign and invited bids from foreign tourists who desired a permit to hunt endangered wild animals.⁴⁴ The first auction took place on 13 August 2006 in Chengdu, the capital of the southwestern province of Sichuan. The permit price to hunt a wild yak, listed under the 'endangered category' started at US \$40,000. The bid for an argali (wild sheep hunted for their spiral horns) started at US \$10,000. Wolves started at the rate of US \$200.

The campaign demonstrated the Chinese government's attitude towards Tibet's fragile ecology. The damages to Tibetan environment trigger natural disasters in the lower plains of China, the authorities in Beijing immediately react and declare restrictive measures to protect Tibetan forest and logging. Since the 1990s, the massive timber logging in Kham and Amdo have ceased. In certain cases, the traditional farms were converted to forest areas so as to reduce soil erosion and thus prevent floods in Mainland China. Such changes come at the expense of Tibetan inhabitants. China never considers the interest and well-being of Tibetan people. In its quest to exploit Tibet's natural riches, the Chinese show little actual concern for ecological preservation.

Economic disasters loom in the future. In August 2006, the Chinese government announced a controversial diversion of the Yangtse River (known as Drichu to Tibetans). According to the plan, the Chinese will construct a

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400-500 km canal to connect the Yangtse with the Yellow River (known as Machu to Tibetans). The Chinese intend that the enriched Yellow River, which flows towards northern China and Beijing, will help to feed and revitalize the industries in the Rust Belt. The China planned to launch the project as soon as 2010, and it could have serious consequences for the Tibetan regions of Amdo, Kham and Gyalthang, where 60 percent of the Yangtse runs.

From the day of its inception, the Qingzang Railway faced two challenges, technological concerns and inevitable environmental damages, although engineering technology has successfully dealt with permafrost for years. In many of the Tundra regions of northern Europe as well as in the tundra belts of the former Soviet countries, engineers managed to lay railway tracks on ground that remained frozen throughout the year.

However, the ground in Tibet presents an unusual challenge because the soil above the permafrost is not frozen for the entire year. During winter the subsoil freezes while in summer it thaws, cracks, moves and swells. Generally, the ground is frozen 3 to 5 meters deep. Unlike the ground in northern Europe and the former Soviet countries, the ground in the high altitude of Tibet receives intense sun radiation in summer and therefore thaws more.

Although the Chinese government claims that their scientists have researched and studied the ground conditions for many years, this aspect of Tibet's environmental characteristics had not been previously researched. However, Chinese scientists discovered that if the engineers could use coolant technology to cool the soil beneath the track, the sun would not thaw the surface soil. In order to implement the solution, the engineers selected various types of roadbed, i.e. slab-stone ventilation roadbed, pipe ventilation roadbed (PVC pipes underneath the track), sun-shaded roadbed and the bridge-style road. In the case of the Qingzang Railway line, the engineers decided to mostly apply the slab-stone ventilation roadbed. It was the first time that anyone had applied slab-stone ventilation roadbed in permafrost conditions.

The technology promises to protect the permafrost and surface soil below the track from thawing and cracking. By constructing the track on elevated grounds, the engineers could counter the effects of water draining into the

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slab-stone ventilation roadbed. Because the elevated grounds are higher than the normal terrains, the slab-stone ventilation roadbed will remain frozen in the winter while the water from the melted snow will not trickle inside the slab-stone ventilation during summer. During construction, some portions had to be completed in a single cold season. The builders sometimes used bridges on the wet terrain in the place of elevated grounds to tackle water draining underneath the roadbed.

Although the Chinese government hailed the Qingzang Railway as a great engineering achievement, it seems that at certain points in the track, cracks and setbacks occurred. In July the Agence France Presse reported that cracks and fractures occurred on some sections of the structures on which the track was built. In the Beijing News, China's Railway Ministry spokesman, Wang Yongping, said, "The frozen ground that forms the foundation of the railway is sinking and cracking in some sections, making the railway unstable in some places...the concrete is cracking on some of the railway structures and bridges, forming a hidden danger to the railway line quality...these form dangers to passengers on the train".

According to Mr. Yang shifting sands have created some serious problems, and as of now Chinese scientists and engineers do not know how to solve them. Animal movements, particularly the Yak herds, also add to the problems. Nonetheless, it is very evident that the future fate of the Qingzang Railway hinges on changes to Tibet's climate, particularly the effects of global warming.

The permafrost challenge loomed large during the construction of the railway in Tibet, which took seven years. But finding a solution to the permafrost problem would not suffice. The Chinese constructed about 900 km of track on permafrost regions of Tibet, and environmentalists argue that permafrost in Tibet is highly delicate and sensitive to change caused by either animals or human interference. Once permafrost is damaged or disrupted, it takes at least fifty years to recover its original and natural state. Of course, the permafrost damage will be catastrophic for native Tibetan people who have lived on the semi-tundra region for thousands of years. The nomads' traditional way of life will suffer serious consequences that will seriously undermine their livelihood.

There have been reports of Tibetan antelope facing new threats from making

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their seasonal migration. Although the Chinese government designated certain areas as animal reserves, i.e. Hoh Xil or otherwise known as Ke Ke Xi Li, certain parts of the Qingzang Railway run through the Ke Ke Xi Li reserve and therefore pose a serious threat to some of the endangered animals. Anticipating such problems, the Chinese constructed a bridge-like safety channel at Wudaoliang Basin so that animals can safely cross the land during their migration.

There have been no official statistics as to how many Tibetan antelopes have been killed since construction of the railway began; however, according to Xinhua News Agency, in 2005 over 11 Tibetan antelopes were killed in mishaps. The head management bureau of the Ke Ke Xi Li Nature Reserve, called Cega, said, "Measures have been taken to protect the migrating animals. Staff with the management bureau and conservationists patrol the highway and stop vehicles when flocks of Tibetan antelopes are about to cross". He stressed the need to promote awareness about the environment and the protection of the Tibetan antelopes. According to local sources, there are about 56,000 Tibetan antelopes roaming in Ke Ke Xi Li Nature Reserve who face acute threats to their existences from both poachers and the rapid destruction of their natural habitats.

Lila Buckley, an environmental researcher, thinks that although the government has taken measures to protect Tibet's endangered animals during and after the construction of the Qingzang Railway line, the train remains a serious threat to Tibet's wild animals and its unique environment. In her article, "Qinghai-Tibet Railway highlights Discrepancy in protection at Central and Provincial Levels", Miss Buckley argues,

If the generous budget, thorough research, and extensive nongovernmental and media involvement contributed in large part to the minimal impact of the rail project, then the alternative—misinformation, poor public participation, and a lack of funding—is the recipe for environmental damage in most Chinese development projects, particularly those implemented at the provincial level. For example, the Qinghai-Tibet Highway, an ongoing road project that began over 50 years ago, has led to serious documented decline of the endangered Tibetan antelope population. "These roads crisscrossing the fragile alpine grasslands not only affect the

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land itself, they also fragment the habitat for native animals, disrupting their migration patterns and food sources,' says Yang. Studies conducted by Green River have shown that the antelope's greatest barrier to reproduction over the past 50 years has been the highway, which hinders the movement required for mating and birthing practices.

Keeping these challenges in their minds, the Chinese scientists and engineers have come up with solutions that, according to them, will minimize the damages to the permafrost region. However, safeguarding the fragile environment will not suffice. Several unique species of animal inhabit Tibet's vast northern belt, and many of them are already on the verge of extinction after decades of illegal poaching and government negligence.

Despite how impressive the technological innovations sound, we cannot merely dismiss the detrimental effects the construction of the Qingzang Railway will have on the fragile ecology. Although it may not be visible today, environmental damage and disruption will take its toll in the long run.

Since the Qingzang Railway opened five months ago, there have been no major incidents with the exception of one train that derailed. Thus far, the Chinese government has called the train construction and operation a success; however, some social and environmental scientists like Dr. Lynette Dumble and Ms. Susanne Menihane from the Global Sisterhood Network believe that further challenges lurk ahead for the Qingzang Railway. In their article "China's Sky Train Railroading Genocide And Ecocide In Tibet", they warn,

Like China's development paradigm, the Sky Train project also has major flaws, with the rail's foundations sinking into the permafrost, together with the thousands of yak grazing along the tracks becoming a derailment threat, within the first month of operations. Worryingly too, the line passes through an earthquake prone zone where yearly tremors average around six on the Richter scale.

In November of 2001, a quake measuring 8.1 on the Richter scale tore a 7km crack through the earth in the vicinity of Kunlun Pass on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. More recently, in February of 2006, a quake measuring 5.5 on the Richter Scale

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shook an area some 660 kilometres northwest of Lhasa. Back in 2001, China's experts proclaimed that the Qinghai-Tibet rail line was quake-resistant as Sky Train's path crossed the seismic belt at right angles, thereby minimising any damage future tremors might cause to the tracks. Five years further on, and only three weeks after Sky Train's launch, Beijing has announced the investment of 13 million yuan [US \$1.61 million] in an earthquake warning system along the southern section of the line. Peng Fengshan, head of the Tibet Autonomous Regional Seismological Bureau, admitted that earthquake monitoring on the plateau railway was crucial due to Tibet's entering a seismologically active period which would last until about 2014.

Peng Fengshan, the head of "TAR" Seismological Bureau, admitted that certain sections of the Qingzang Railway pass through a part of the Tibetan region where moderate quakes measuring up to six on the Richter scale occur every year. Apart from technology, investment, human error and the permafrost problem, the Qingzang train must run at the mercy of the region's moderate yet regular earthquakes.



One of the junctions on the train route

Compiled Facts about the Qingzang Railway

The Qingzang Railway uses pressurized passenger cars and special locomotives. Rumours buzz that the air condition equipment of passenger cars will add oxygen to the interior air. Diesel locomotives are planned, but suffer from lack of oxygen at high altitudes, thus parts of the line may be electrified in the future. At least the first trains are to reach Lhasa in October 2005. An ordinary type DF4B diesel locomotive, DF4 3225, pulls the trains.

China Railways Magazine reports that special locomotives have been developed in 2002, on the basis of the DF8B engine. The problem with diesel traction is that high altitude with only 50 to 60 percent of normal oxygen content in the air leads to numerous breakdowns of diesel locomotives and construction equipment.

Substructures have to be of class 1 quality (i.e. national main lines), even if traffic volume will be low. Ruling grade 20 per thousand, curve radius min. 600 m, on long plateau stretches min. 800 m or, if possible, even more. Speed 100 km/h, diesel traction with possibility of electrification. Speed may be increased in the future.

Project leader is Zhao Xingyu. The whole project was planned to be complete in 2007, but trial running of freight trains commenced in autumn 2005, and trial running of passenger trains will commence in August 2006.

Fu Zhihuan, minister of railways, said his ministry is building four trial projects along frozen areas in Tibet which will provide them with first-hand information ahead of large-scale construction next year.

Live tests and thorough geographic research were conducted in the plateau over past decades. The Chinese ministry of Railway successfully finished the railway project with high quality on time. Fu said at a news conference held by the Information Office under the State Council Wednesday.

His ministry has organized a construction team of 11,000 workers to lay the track along the roof of the world with some local people also involved in the project.

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The ministry has dispatched fully-equipped professional medical teams to ensure workers' health and safety at high altitudes where the air is thin.

The ministry had invested a total of 770 million yuan (US\$93 million) in the project by October, starting the construction of 55 bridges and three tunnels. Fu said his ministry attached great importance to the environment protection of the plateau, and protective measures to preserve vegetation and wildlife had been detailed to construction units.

Zhang Guobao, vice-minister of the State Development Planning Commission said that the central government would bear the entire 26.2 billion yuan (US\$3.2 billion) investment.

Initial cost estimates had been as low as 14 billion Yuan, later revised to 26 billion. The price per kilometer (23 million Yuan) seems quite low, especially when considering that construction will be on high altitude and in difficult terrain. Average price per kilometer for railways built in 1996 to 2000 was 39 million per km.

The Baikal-Amur railway (BAM) in Russia cost about two to three times that amount. It is also difficult to see that this investment will pay off. Today's transportation along the highway is less than 300,000 tons per year.

The 100-kilometer section from Golmud to Wangkun of the Qinghai to Tibet railway was built in 2002; a government official of northwest China's Qinghai Province disclosed the information. Track laying started from



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Nanshankou on July 1, 2002. Nanshankou is 32 km down to the south of Golmud. The existing railway was upgraded. China Daily reported on July 2, 2002 that rail laying actually has started on June 29, 2002. Ministry of Railways reports that on July 30, 2002, 40.4 km of track and 62 km of ties had been laid.

The official told Xinhua that a railway section connecting Xining, capital of Qinghai Province, and Golmud, which was built 10 years ago, had suffered "illnesses" compounded by frozen earth on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. "Chinese railway experts have successfully cured the 'illnesses' in three years' efforts," he added.

Excerpts from Peopledaily, June 30, 2001: Construction starts

China began construction on Friday 29 June 2001. Opening ceremonies were held respectively at the railway's starting point, Golmud in Qinghai Province, and the terminal, Lhasa in Tibet, Friday morning.

The two sites for the opening ceremony were decorated with auspicious Tibetan designs, colorful bunting, flags and balloons. The sound of gongs and drums resounded in the air. Tens of thousands of people of *Han*, Tibetan and other ethnic groups cheered and clapped.



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Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji announced the start of construction project at a ceremony held in Golmud, Qinghai Province.

The railway starts at Golmud in Qinghai Province and terminates at Lhasa in Tibet with a total length of 1,118 km. It will be the longest and most elevated railway built on highlands in the world. It will be the first railway in Tibet.

As early as the 1950s, late CPC chairman Mao Zedong and other senior Chinese leaders endorsed the construction of the Qinghai- Tibet Railway. The central government of China officially approved the gigantic project in western China early this year.

The Qinghai-Tibet Railway is a key project in China's Tenth Five-Year Plan (2001-2005) period and one of the four major projects to be built in western China.

Representatives of the 10 construction teams, selected from 32 bidders, also attended the ceremony in Golmud.

Xia Xianfang, a senior engineer of the No.1 Survey and Designing Institute under the Ministry of Railways, said, "We are capable of reducing the effects of construction on the local environment to the minimum. Every inch of grass will be protected. "

Xinhua news agency, Beijing, December 12, 2002

Construction of the most difficult section of the... railway across the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau will begin next year. A distance of 190 km of track will be laid through the Dangla Mountains in the east of Tibet in 2003. The highest spot on the railway will be 5,072 metres above the sea level.

The track to be built will run through a 550-km stretch of permafrost. Zeng Peiyan, minister in charge of the State Development Planning Commission, said the government would invest 5.6bn yuan (677m US dollars) in the construction of the Qinghai-Tibet railway next year.

The government has invested 5.3bn yuan in building the railway in 2002 to complete 121 km of track.

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China Daily 13 Oct 2003

Construction on the 3,345-meter Yangbajain No. 1 tunnel on the Qinghai-Tibet railway was completed Sunday in the Tibet Autonomous Region in southwest China. The tunnel is 4,264 meters above sea level, located 80 kilometers away from the regional capital Lhasa. It is the longest tunnel built in areas with an elevation of over 4,000 meters in China.

Completion of the Yangbajain tunnel marks the completion of all the seven tunnels on the Qinghai-Tibet railway.

According to the Headquarters of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway Construction, by Oct. 11, a total of 12.3 billion yuan (1.49 billion US dollars), (out of 26 billion Yuan estimated project cost) had been used until now in tracklaying on the rail route.

Data from Ministry of Railways, June 30, 2001:

Total length is 1142 kilometers, 1110 kilometers of newly built line among them. However the Peopledaily reported 1118 km as newly built among them.

Total investment was stated to be 26.2 billion Yuan. Later reports speak of 36 billion Yuan.

The 965 kilometers of the track was above 4000 meters altitude. Golmud is at 3080 meters. Peak near the mountain "Tanggula" at the Qinghai-Tibet border 5072 meters above sea level. Totally 7 percent of the line will be on bridges or in tunnels, the longest tunnel being 1720 m long.

The 846-kilometre-long Xining-Golmud part of the line was completed in 1979 and opened for public traffic in 1984. Upgrading of the section, with 740 million Yuan (US\$89.16 million) in funding from the Central government, was started at the beginning of 2000 and to be finished by October 2001. This line has diesel traction (DF4B).

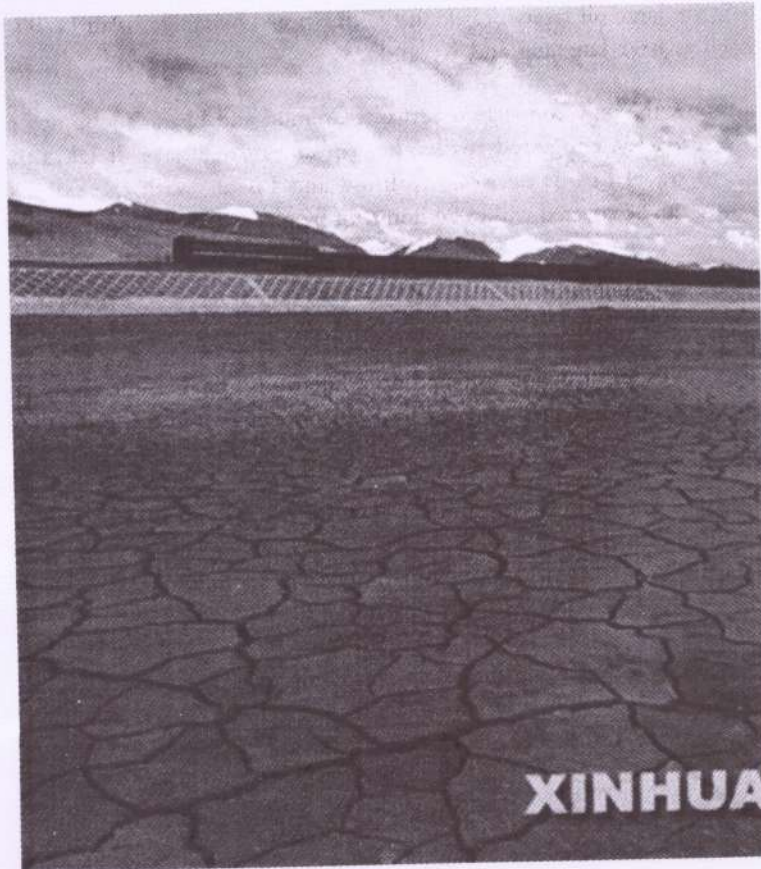
Planned line capacity is 8 pairs of passenger trains and a one-way flow of goods of 5 million tons.

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In Autumn 2001, the work force came up to 67000 people. Workers from all over China come to Golmud to try to get a job. The pay is double of the normal construction workers pay, about 4000 Yuan. However, because of high altitude, the typical work done in a day corresponds only to two hours work in low altitudes. Many workers have to leave after a short period, because they cannot acclimatize to high altitudes.

The altitude profile of the railway:

Golmud (Qinghai Province) 3080 mt
Kunlun pass 4722 mt
Dangla (Tanggula) pass 5000 mt
Tanggula Shan 5072 mt (highest point)
Lhasa 3590 mt



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The highest larger station will be 2km west of the town of Nagqu, 4500 meters above sea level. "Station" here means something larger than just a passing loop.

286 bridges and 10 tunnels planned to be constructed.

There will be constructed wind power plants as well as solar panels to generate the necessary electricity for stations along the line. Cables to be specially protected against thunderstorms.

The passenger trains will have pressurized cars, and doctors and nurses will be on board to cater for passengers getting altitude problems. Oxygen will be available.

There are large oil reservoirs along the line near Lhuenpola basin (4700 m) as well as near Jangtang and Kyegudo.

As of now the only connection between Golmud and Lhasa is a bumpy and under capacity, congested road. The trip takes three days. It takes three days to travel in bus between Golmud and Lhasa. With the train, the distance can be covered within 24 hours for freight and 18 hours for passenger trains.

The new station at Lhasa was to be ready by 2003.

In the 1970s construction initiated on a line from Qinghai, the cheapest of the alternatives, but then stopped in 1984 once it proved too difficult and costly.

There is a tunnel near the summit at 5000 meters above sea level: Feng Huo Shan tunnel, 1338 meters long. China Railways Ministry News reports several times in August 2002 about progress in its building. It is believed to be the highest railway tunnel in the world.

The summit tunnel Feng huo shan was completed on October 19, at an elevation of 4,905 meters elevation. Its length is 1,338 meters in length. In 2002, the first 116 km of the line was finished.

In October 2003, the longest tunnel, 3345 m long Yangbajain tunnel was completed.

Train and its Tentacles

On June 22, 2004, track laying began from Amdo base in Tibet, in addition to the base at Nanshankou.

On August 9, 2004, the railway reached Tongtianhe station. 421 km of track laying have been completed since then (People Daily).

Total length of track until 11 was October 2004 is 618 km.

Locomotives fitted on the Train

Diesel locomotives malfunction in high altitude when oxygen is thin and therefore new engines needed to be designed. On 15 November 2002, Qishuyang locomotive factory unveiled the first prototype of a new class of locomotives for the Tibet railway, DF8CJ 9001. It is called "Holy Boat on the Snow Land". It uses two 16V280ZJA diesel engines. There are various modifications of the old DF8B engine to cope with the extreme weather conditions and altitude. The engine generates 2700 kW at 5100m altitudes and 3400 kW at 2800m. Max speed is 100 km/h.

The first designed engine was transported to Amdo by four trucks and put into service. (Xinhua March 24, 2004). The locomotive weighs 86 tons. Amdo is situated 4704 m above sea level.

At 4,000 metres, the doctor and nurse's services are required for passengers suffering from altitude sickness; passengers were reported to have vomited in their bunks. At high altitudes, ballpoint pens burst, the tiny airbags that cushion disk drives burst, causing laptops to malfunction.

In the 1990s, Bombardier won several contracts that allowed it to export subway cars to China that had no Chinese content in their manufacturing. But in 1999, Beijing introduced a new policy, requiring bidders on public contracts to give a chunk of business to Chinese producers. Bombardier had shrewdly anticipated this. In 1998 it had set up a joint venture with Qingdao -based CSR Sifang Locomotive and Rolling Stock Co. Ltd. in alliance with Power Corp.

Amir Levin, an Israeli-Canadian who serves as the factory's general manager, and Emmanuel Verhoeven, a Belgian engineer who is director of project management. He and his team were credited to have solved the extraordinary technical challenges of building train cars that could withstand Tibet's harsh climate and high altitudes. The 363 wagons are designed to endure cross-

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ings on the mountain passes more than 5,000 metres above sea level. Oxygen levels 40% thinner than normal sea-level air, winter temperatures falling to 45 below zero, lightning storms striking up to 82 days a year, ultra-violet radiation is 60% stronger than sea-level radiation, heavy snow and sandstorms.

The railway had officially begun operation on July 1, and the early runs had revealed a few flaws. The oxygen system needed to be fine-tuned. A welding problem had to be fixed. The hot-water taps were too sensitive and needed adjustment. The water tanks needed a bigger capacity. And filters would be added to the sink drains to catch the noodles and tea leaves that the passengers were dumping.

Another Canadian company, RailPartners, seeks to placate the protesters by promising to promote "responsible tourism" on its luxury train service on the Tibet line. The luxury trains, charging each passenger around \$1,000 (U.S.) per night, are expected to go into service in late 2007 or early 2008. Passengers will be offered round-the-clock butler service, 10-square-metre suites and a gamut of digital entertainment, among other amenities.

RailPartners is planning to pump \$100 million to \$200 million into the project, including the cars themselves-53 of them, to be purchased from Bombardier. The company also foresees building luxury resorts at several stops along the railway.

When Jianwei Zhang was appointed to head up Bombardier's transport division in China in 1998, he had no staff and no certain prospects. Today, the Montreal-based company has about 2,400 employees in the country, and it is dominant nationally in train cars and regional jets.

Qingzang Railway is made of 16 carriages equipped with oxygen facilities to prevent altitude sickness, Train 27 Special Express, also dubbed the Sky Train, was hailed by Hu Jintao in his televised speech as a "magnificent feat by the Chinese people".

The success would not have been possible without the fitting of US General Electric's diesel engines which have the capacity to maintain an average speed of 100 kph, even at altitudes of 4,000 metres where thin air minimize the efficiency of the engine.

Train and its Tentacles

Canada's Bombardier fulfilled a US\$280 million contract to build carriages. The train is fitted with deluxe sleeping compartments equipped with showers, glass-walled sides for sight seeing, entertainment centres, gourmet dining areas, toilets with sewage and waste-treatment systems.

From - To	Distance (km)	Hard Seat Price	Hard Sleeper (Bottom Berth) Price	Soft Sleeper (Bottom Berth) Price
Beijing West-Lhasa	4,064	389 yuan (US\$49)	813 yuan (US\$102)	1,262 yuan (US\$158)
Chengdu-Lhasa	3,360	331 yuan (US\$41)	712 yuan (US\$89)	1,104 yuan (US\$138)
Chongqing-Lhasa	3,654	355 yuan (US\$44)	754 yuan (US\$94)	1,168 yuan (US\$146)
Lanzhou-Lhasa	2,188	242 yuan (US\$30)	552 yuan (US\$69)	854 yuan (US\$107)
Xining-Lhasa	1,972	226 yuan (US\$28)	523 yuan (US\$65)	810 yuan (US\$101)

Beijing-Lhasa

Train T27 will start from Beijing West Railway Station at 21:30 and arrive at Lhasa Railway Station at 20:58 on the third day after 47 hours and 28 minutes' running.

Train T28 will depart from Lhasa Railway Station at 8:00 am and arrive in Beijing west at 8:00 am on the third day with a 48-hour-trip.

Chengdu-Lhasa

T22/3 train will leave Chengdu at 18:18 and arrive in Lhasa at 18:28 on the third day with a trip of 2 hours and 10 minutes.

T24/1 train will set out from Lhasa at 9:05 am and get to Chengdu at 9:55 am on the third day after 48 hours and 50 minutes.

Lanzhou-Lhasa

K917 train will leave Lanzhou at 16:45 and arrive in Lhasa at 22:30 on the second day with a trip of 29 hours and 45 minutes.

K918 train will set out from Lhasa at 9:32 am and arrive in Lanzhou at 15:45 on the second day after running for 30 hours and 13 minutes.

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Chongqing-Lhasa

Train T222/3 will start from Chongqing at 19:20 and arrive in Lhasa at 18:28 on the third day running for 47 hours and 8 minutes.

Train T224/1 will set out from Lhasa at 9:05 am and arrive in Chongqing at 9:55 am with a trip of 48 hours and 50 minutes.

Xining-Lhasa

K917 train will set out from Xining at 20:07 and arrive in Lhasa at 22:30 on the second day after running for 26 hours and 23 minutes.

K917 train will start from Lhasa at 9:32 am and arrive in Xining at 12:19 am. on the second day with a trip of 26 hours and 47 minutes.



Yaks still the beast of burden in rural Tibet

An Interview with Zhaxi Zholma

Zhaxi Zholma works as a tour guide for a private company in Qinghai province. Most of her co-workers are ethnic Chinese. The interview was conducted online. The readers should note here in advance that there is no formal coherence and sequence in the interview.

TCHRD: You people are making lots of money as tour guides?

Zhaxi: Not really.

TCHRD: How come?

Zhaxi: I can't earn much money. But it's ok for me.

TCHRD: May be your boss is Chinese and do Chinese employees paid more?

Zhaxi: No. He is a Tibetan.

TCHRD: Is he?

Zhaxi: Yes.

TCHRD: How many Tibetans people working under him?

Zhaxi: Just three.

TCHRD: Rest of them are Chinese employees, right?

Zhaxi: Yes.

TCHRD: How many of them?

Zhaxi: About 30 people.

TCHRD: Ah! That is pretty bad.

Zhaxi: Why?

TCHRD: Tibetans must employ Tibetan not Chinese.

TCHRD: Then how can our Tibetan people find jobs?

Zhaxi: Both of them very hard to find a good job.

TCHRD: Then you are very lucky woman.

Zhaxi: My job is not a government job. It is a private company.

Zhaxi: To get work in government, you need to be a Party member.

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TCHRD: How did you get the job?

Zhaxi: I entered exams, got tour guide card from the exams and then easy to find tour guide job in China.

TCHRD: May be you are having a good knowledge in Chinese language that help you.

Zhaxi: Not really.

TCHRD: Then how come?

Zhaxi: My Tibetan is ok. Then just know little bit Chinese and English.

TCHRD: I see, so three languages help.

TCHRD: So what is your future plans?

Zhaxi: Always thinking for it...that we can have our own business.

TCHRD: How is a political climate there in your region?

Zhaxi: I really hate stay under others.

TCHRD: Do Tibetans and Chinese live friendly?

Zhaxi: Working together.

TCHRD: Are there more Chinese than Tibetans in your area?

Zhaxi: It's the capital of Qinghai province...of course most of them are Chinese.

TCHRD: You mean the Xinning city?

Zhaxi: Yes.

TCHRD: Railroad had already been constructed there since 1984 in your Xinning region

Zhaxi: But we have four Tibetan prefectures in Qinghai.

TCHRD: Now the Qingzang train linking Lhasa and Beijing for first time.

Zhaxi: Yes started from 1st of this month.

TCHRD: What do you think? Does it help Tibetans or help Chinese?

Zhaxi: I think both of them.

TCHRD: Is there any benefit for the ordinary Tibetans, tell me what are they??

Train and its Tentacles

Zhaxi: Many Tibetans want to visit Tibet (Lhasa and central region) so faster and cheaper than plane.

Zhaxi: Mostly for the Chinese...they are doing tourism business and then very easy to sell the tickets for many tourists.

TCHRD: Yes, it is.

TCHRD: Any dangers and threats pose by the train for the Tibetan people in long run.

Zhaxi: I couldn't discover yet.

TCHRD: Sure, I agree.

Zhaxi: we can't see it directly, but here and in many parts of the world, Tibetans are very afraid of the train, who knows?

TCHRD: I am afraid of the train, since more Chinese will come and there is a threat to our culture.

Zhaxi: It will happen.

TCHRD: So sad.

Zhaxi: Sure, what to do?

TCHRD: What you think Tibetans in Tibet hope for, is it Dalai Lama, living under Chinese or self rule?

Zhaxi: No idea.

Zhaxi: Here many people thought meeting the Dalai Lama is just dream.

TCHRD: so sad

Zhaxi: We can't hear anything about it, not like India.

TCHRD: Chinese are saying they are giving lots of money and development to the Tibetan people inside Tibet. Is that true? Does money and development actually landed in the hands of the Tibetan people?

Zhaxi: Yes, they are helping for some poor places but not much.

TCHRD: According to you, which section of Tibetan people, farmers, nomads, business, government workers, migrant Chinese, soldiers and the Chinese business travel by the train? Or which section of these people get the maximum benefit and advantage from the construction of the railway?

Zhaxi: Nice question.

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TCHRD: Tell me I am curious to know this?

Zhaxi: I am not sure what will happen and what benefit for them.

TCHRD: Will Tibetan farmers and nomads get the benefits?

Zhaxi: Not very big, just easy to travel from place to place.

TCHRD: What about you? Will it benefit and change your life for better?

Zhaxi: Nothing for me.

TCHRD: Then who will get the most of the benefits?

Zhaxi: Can I listen to your opinion?

TCHRD: In my view, train is not built for Tibetans but for Chinese.

Zhaxi: Your view? How?

TCHRD: It is built in the name of development for Tibetan people. But how does it benefit Tibetans.

Zhaxi: Then?

TCHRD: It has military objectives to it, to put Tibet under their control, in a more efficient way. Chinese goods reaching Tibet are much easier now and may be cheaper. Isn't it?

TCHRD: Do you agree to my opinion?

Zhaxi: Most of them. I too have strong feelings for our Tibetans inside Tibet.

TCHRD: Tell me about the lives of other Amdos in your area, what do most of them do to make a living in your region?

Zhaxi: Most of them are going out to make money.

TCHRD: Where do they go?

Zhaxi: Some of them go to Chinese places and some of them go to nomads region to open restaurants and teashops.

TCHRD: Do the Chinese government helping them in economic matters. What about the Chinese migrants? How do they earn bread and butter in Tibet?

Zhaxi: They are making money without the help of government.

Train and its Tentacles

TCHRD: But the China tells the outside world that they are helping Xizang brothers in Tibet?

Zhaxi: They help little bit and doing advertisement very nicely on the TVs (sic).

TCHRD: Previously when they built the railway to Golmud. The government also explained it was to bring development to the Tibetan people in Qinghai belt? Or do you think the Golmud Railway has brought any economic development for the Tibetans?

Zhaxi: You know that there is no benefit for Tibetans.

Conclusion note: Zhaxi Zholma believes that there is no tangible and real benefit the Qingzang Railway will bring to Tibetans in Tibet. The Tibetan nomads and farmers are not receiving help and support from the government contrary to its claims. An ethnic woman like her who is somehow thriving in Tibet has a relatively sound education she received in China, she can read and write in three languages reasonably such as Chinese, English and Tibetan, she says in her interview that a meeting with the Dalai Lama is just a dream although she has such a profound faith in him.

Concluding Assessment on Qingzang Railway

The Qingzang Railway stands out as the most outstanding achievements of the Tenth Five Year Plan. Although the train entered record book but it has very little tangible values to ordinary Tibetan nomads and farmers in rural countryside. Judging from scientific and engineering technicality, the train can be best described as a monumental pride for Chinese scientists and engineers and not for Tibetans. This is the farthest point the train can go to describe it.

Unfortunately the Railway remains a fancy technology for underdeveloped rural Tibet where the vast majority lived. The train is a painful reflection of China's failing and flawed development strategy still implementing inside Tibet. The most ironical aspect of the train is its birth. It was conceived during the Tenth Five Year Plan, the era dedicatedly only to infrastructure and hardware development in Tibet.

However, the train came to use during the era of the Eleventh Five Year Plan, an era dedicated to 'Creation of New Socialist Countryside'. How

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could the purpose and application of technology like the way Qingzang Railway do differs? How could the train whose only clientele being the resource extraction enclaves and Chinese eco-tourists can bring benefit "Tibet's countryside"? How would train resurrected Tibetan farmers and nomads in rural hinterland and countryside? These are some of questions the Chinese economic planners and strategy implementers must face with.

In reality the train comes to represent China's long-term colonial quest over Tibet, to push Chinese investors, migrants into Tibet and to extract Tibet's resources. So far infrastructure and technological advancement made in Tibet have isolated Tibetans on brink and had in fact paved way for Chinese settlers inside Tibet. The most tangible benefits of the train will be the exploitation of Tibet's tourism and commercial potentials, however the revenue generated would go to the coffers of the central government and to the local "TAR" government for running the region and administration.

However, this revenue will be absorbed for administration. There is nothing left to trickle down for poor and needy Tibetans in countryside while on other hand, the money and investments is described as an aid to Tibet's development. In end, there is zero sum benefit for Tibetans.

In short the vast majority of poor Tibetan people live in 'Primary sector' and the train operates in 'Tertiary sector'. There were no linkages that connect the two faces of economies in Tibet. Hence the train will not make any positive impacts to Tibetans in Tibet but for the rich and opportunists Chinese settlers in Tibet.

CONCLUSION

In last two decades, we have seen some aspects of development taking place in Tibet. The *development* has been the catchword for many of Chinese leaders in the past justifying China's rule over Tibet. Measuring *development* in Tibet can be a mammoth task due to various reasons. However, most economists or social scientists would agree on the phenomenon of two economies in Tibet. In today's Tibet there is a bustling and rapidly growing urban enclaves along with the desolate and poverty stricken rural countryside. Ironically the two faces of Tibet operate under one State.

The most visible flaw in Tibet's economy is a lack of *linkages* between China's massive state funded development infrastructure in urban enclaves and utterly neglected countryside. The absence of *linkages* has hampered the wealth and income to trickle down to the poor.

The main reason why Beijing's professed development pursuits in Tibet failed, despite its incessant rhetoric and official propaganda is due to lack of sound commitment and sincerity by the Chinese government. If Beijing truly has a sound commitment to alleviate the Tibetan farmers and nomads from the widespread poverty, they could do it very well.

The '*political issue of Tibet*' is both boom and bane for Tibetans. The Tibet being a restive and renegade region under China, it has its advantage in receiving a special treatment from central government. However, this has a flipside too. China's treatment and approach to Tibet has been one of *colonial design*, where needs for political stability superimposes the implementation of true economic development in the region. The Tibetans are not trustworthy for Chinese authorities and therefore they cannot be the masters of their own affairs. Having denied Tibetans of their decision-making mandate, the needs of Tibetans are often ignored and sidelined thus hampering true empowerment and progress. The long-standing mistrust for Tibetans on part of Chinese should be removed in order to move forward.

The Dalai Lama had long renounced his strive for Tibet's Independence. The Tibetans under him agreed to stay with China if they are accommo-

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dated in a high degree of Autonomy. The Dalai Lama has moved on. China must move on, must free them from getting struck in political opportunism and shortsightedness. There will be no other historical opportunity for the both parties in resolving the long-standing political solution over Tibetan issue upon them.

The last two decades have been zealously devoted to the urbanization of China and capitalism. China has today emerged as an economic and military superpower. For instance, cityscapes and skyscrapers define the 21st century China. Now it is the time for the rural countryside to grow and prosper. They have waited for a long time and now their time has finally dawned.

Rhetoric must be replaced by pragmatism and implementation on the ground. The soft investments such as health care, education, food security, environment, ecology, preservation of pastureland and alleviation of poverty of farmers and nomads must receive priority.

The simplest and yet the most effective way of promoting development in Tibet is not to tailor out strategy and model from Zhongnanhai residence where China's top leaders live. On contrary leaders in Beijing should come to Tibet, study its features, characteristics, climate, culture, custom, livelihood patterns and its comparative advantages. Based on these findings and understanding of Tibet's unique characteristics, then only can they sit down and chalk out plans for Tibet's development.

It is highly imperative that the immediate and the long-term interests of Tibetan people should drive and decide the development model in Tibet. Their interests and priorities must be respected and stressed in determining the courses and textures of development in Tibet.

The time to leave behind the *political baggage* has arrived for Beijing. The *political baggage* over Tibet had hijacked development in Tibet. Tibet's golden period is now. Beijing can help Tibetans to achieve this goal. The brand label placed on Tibet has undergone a paradigm shift from "barbaric and uncivilized" to "mythical Shangrila" and "Paradise". It is certainly Tibet's era under China to achieve its paradise status in the lives of Tibetan farmers and nomads.

endnotes

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- 8 All the figures and statistics used in this chapter are taken from the book by Andrew Martin Fischer titled "Crisis States Programme" and his highly acclaimed essay titled "Economic Dimensions of Autonomy and the Right to Development in Tibet". Andrew Fischer has done extensive field work survey in Tibet. His study focus on the two economies of Tibet, traditional Tibetan and Urban economy.
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This report presents how China's economic and development strategy in Tibet produces polar economies. On the one hand, the economy is driven by fast paced capitalism with massive growth in urban Tibet which is dominated by *Huis* and *Han* Chinese settlers; whilst on the other hand, the rural face of Tibet, representing more than 80 percent of the Tibetan population, remains trapped in widespread poverty and neglect.

Today, China has a growth rate of more than 10 percent annually. On face value, this growth projection might seem to paint a bright picture for Tibet as the fastest developing region in China; yet growth rates and projections only illustrate the overall picture in Tibet and do not reflect the position for most Tibetans.

The present development strategy in Tibet has failed to yield positive results in the past and seems likely to continue to do so in the future. The root cause of the impoverishment of Tibetans is the persistent and deliberate policy of the Chinese leadership not to "empower" Tibetans. The true yardstick of development can only be assessed through the empowerment of Tibetans - through the implementation of people-friendly policies, considering the unique characteristics of Tibetan people.

Until China reforms its development approach and strategy in Tibet, as has been the case in the past, however many five years plans there are in the future, the fate of Tibetans is unlikely to change. The denial of opportunity to Tibetans is a gross denial and violation of human rights. It is to be hoped that this report offers a handy reference for the leaders of China in promoting development in Tibet.



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