**Tibet Since 1951:   
Liberation, Development   
and Prosperity**

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Foreword

On May 23, 1951, the Agreement of the Central People’s Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (the 17-Article Agreement) was signed. The people of Tibet broke free from the fetters of invading imperialism for good, embarking on a bright road of unity, progress and development with all the other ethnic groups in China.

Following the peaceful liberation, all the ethnic peoples of Tibet, united under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), have worked together in implementing the 17-Article Agreement, and stood firm in safeguarding national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. Together, they have:

• carried out democratic reform to abolish Tibet’s feudal theocratic serfdom, liberating millions of serfs and ensuring the fundamental interests of all ethnic groups in Tibet;

• established the socialist system and implemented regional ethnic autonomy in Tibet, bringing historic changes to Tibetan society; and

• pressed ahead with reform, opening up, and modernization, significantly unleashing the productive potential and improving the lives and working conditions of the people in Tibet.

In the new era, under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at the core and with the vigorous support of the whole country, Tibet has eradicated extreme poverty. Enjoying a stable social environment, economic and cultural prosperity, and a sound eco-environment, the people now lead better lives and live in contentment. A brand new socialist Tibet has taken shape.

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Tibet’s peaceful liberation, we are publishing this white paper to review Tibet’s history and achievements, and present a true and panoramic picture of the new socialist Tibet. This will help to counter the propaganda spread by a number of Western countries and their allies and provide the international community with a balanced account of the enormous transformation that has taken place in Tibet.

I. Tibet Before the Peaceful Liberation

Tibet has been an integral part of Chinese territory since ancient times, and one of the main Tibetan-inhabited areas in China. In the aftermath of the Opium Wars in the middle of the 19th century, the UK-led imperialist powers began to cultivate the idea of “Tibet independence”, intentionally undermining China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

– Tibet has been an inseparable part of China since ancient times.

China is a unified multiethnic country with a long history. The Chinese nation is a community of shared future. Tibet has developed through the combined efforts of all the ethnic groups in China, and these are the peoples who have created its history. The political, economic and cultural exchanges between Tibetans and other ethnic groups throughout history have had an important bearing on the development of the Tibetan people as an ethnic group. Abundant archeological and academic research shows that in times of remote antiquity, the ancestral people inhabiting the Tibetan Plateau had close ties with the Han and other ethnic groups in terms of blood, language, and culture. The Tubo Kingdom established in Tibet in the 7th century contributed significantly to the exploration of China’s southwestern borders.

In the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), the central government exercised jurisdiction and governance over Tibet. It established the Supreme Control Commission of Buddhism (later renamed the Commission for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs) to directly manage local affairs in the region, conducting censuses, setting up courier stations, collecting taxes, stationing troops and appointing officials. It also issued and enacted the Yuan criminal law and calendar in Tibet.

The central government of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) implemented a policy of multiple enfeoffment, conferring honorific titles such as “Prince”, “Prince of Dharma”, and “National Master in Tantrism” on political and religious leaders in various parts of Tibet. It established the U-Tsang and Do-kham regional military commissions and the Ngari Commanding Tribal Office to manage military and political affairs in U-Tsang, Qamdo and Ngari respectively.

During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the central government exercised sound governance over Tibet. It granted honorific titles to the leaders of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism – the 5th Dalai Lama and the 5th Panchen Lama – officially establishing the titles of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni and their political and religious status in Tibet. From then on, it became an established convention that the central government conferred the titles of Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni. The Qing government began to station Grand Ministers Resident in Tibet to supervise and jointly manage local military and political affairs on behalf of the central authorities; in total it appointed more than 100 such ministers. In 1751, Qing Emperor Qianlong authorized the 7th Dalai Lama to jointly manage local political and religious affairs with the Grand Minister Resident in Tibet. In 1793, after dispelling Gurkha invaders, the Qing government restored order in Tibet and promulgated the Imperially Approved Ordinance for Better Governance of Tibet (the 29-Article Ordinance), improving several of the systems by which the central government administered Tibet. The ordinance stipulated that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and other grand Living Buddhas had to follow the procedure of “drawing lots from the golden urn”, and the selected candidate would be subject to approval by the central government of China. Observing the ordinance, three of the five Dalai Lamas in the Qing Dynasty were selected and approved in accordance with this procedure, and the other two were exempted from the procedure with special approval from the central government.

After the downfall of the Qing Dynasty, the Republic of China (ROC) continued to exercise sovereignty over Tibet. In 1912, the ROC issued its first constitution – the Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China, which reaffirmed the central government’s sovereignty over Tibet. It clearly stipulated that “Tibet is a part of the territory of the ROC”, and stated that “the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui and Tibetan peoples are of one nation, and are to run the Republic together.” In July, the government set up the Bureau of Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs. The Nanjing National Government set up the Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs in 1929 to act in the same capacity. In 1940, the Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs opened an office in Lhasa as the permanent organ representing the central government in Tibet. Under the ROC, Tibet was clearly identified as Chinese territory in world maps and maps of China issued by government and non-government publishers. The central government of the ROC safeguarded the nation’s sovereignty over Tibet in spite of frequent civil wars among warlords and a weak state, and following the tradition by conferring the official titles on the 14th Dalai Lama and the 10th Panchen Lama. No country or government in the world has ever acknowledged the “independence of Tibet”.

– “Tibetan independence” was a product of imperialist aggression against China in modern times.

Western attempts on Tibet began in the 18th century, pioneered by “adventurers” and “explorers” who made trips to the region. At the end of the 19th century, imperialist powers engaged in a fervent spree of carving up China, and the British aggressors took the opportunity to invade Tibet. British troops invaded Tibet twice in 1888 and 1903 and met with stubborn resistance from the Tibetan army and civilians. Its invasion plans thwarted, Britain began to cultivate pro-imperialist separatists in Tibet, devising activities to separate Tibet from China and championing “Tibet independence”. In 1907, Britain and Russia signed the Convention Between Great Britain and Russia on Tibet, without the Chinese government’s knowledge, changing China’s sovereignty over Tibet into “suzerainty” in an international document for the first time. In 1913, the British government engineered the Simla Conference to instigate the Tibetan representative to raise the issue of “Tibetan independence”, which was immediately rejected by the representative of the Chinese government. This was the first time the concept had been made public. In July 1914, the representative of the Chinese government refused to sign the Simla Convention, and made a statement saying that the government of China refused to recognize any such agreement or document. The Chinese government also sent a note to the British government, reiterating its position. Thereupon, the conference collapsed.

In 1942, the local government of Tibet, with the support of the British representative, suddenly announced the establishment of a “foreign affairs bureau” and began to openly engage in “independence” activities. With opposition from the Chinese people and the national government, the local government of Tibet had no choice but to withdraw its decision. In 1947, Britain conspired behind the scenes to invite Tibetan representatives to attend the Asian Relations Conference, and even identified Tibet as an independent country on the map of Asia hung in the conference hall and in the array of national flags. The organizers were forced to rectify this after the Chinese delegation made a stern protest.

Around the time of the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, imperialists accelerated their collusion with pro-imperialist separatists in Tibet. On July 8, 1949, the local government of Tibet issued an order to expel officials of the Tibet Office of the Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs on the pretext of “prohibiting Communists from staying in Tibet”. In November 1949, the local government of Tibet decided to dispatch a “goodwill mission” to the United States, Britain, India, Nepal and a number of other countries, seeking political and military support for “independence” and making it obvious that it was intensifying separatist activities. In 1949, the American Lowell Thomas crossed Tibet in the guise of a “radio commentator” of the Columbia Broadcasting System to explore the “possibility of aid that Washington could give Tibet”. He wrote in a US newspaper: “The United States is ready to recognize Tibet as an independent and free country.” In the first half of 1950, American weaponry was shipped into Tibet through Calcutta in order to help resist the People’s Liberation Army’s entry into Tibet.

Historical facts clearly demonstrate that “Tibetan independence” was no more than a product of imperialist aggression against China. Driving imperialist forces out of Tibet was the precondition for the Chinese people to safeguard national unification.

– Liberating Tibet was the shared aspiration of all ethnic groups in Tibet.

On September 2, 1949, Xinhua News Agency, with authorization from the CPC, published an editorial under the headline, “Foreign Aggressors Are Resolutely Not Allowed to Annex China’s Territory – Tibet”. The editorial pointed out, “Tibet is part of the Chinese territory; no foreign aggression is allowed. The Tibetan people are an inseparable part of the Chinese nation, and any attempt to divide them from China will be doomed. This is a consistent policy of the Chinese people, the CPC and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA).”

All sectors of society of Tibet quickly responded and expressed support for the editorial and the hope that the PLA would enter Tibet as soon as possible. On October 1, 1949, the day the PRC was founded, the 10th Panchen Lama sent a telegram to the central government: “Please send troops to liberate Tibet and expel the imperialists as soon as possible.”

On December 2, Yeshe Tsultrim, an aide of the 5th Regent Reting Rinpoche, arrived in Xining, Qinghai Province, to lodge complaints with the PLA about the imperialists destroying the internal unity of Tibet, and urged the PLA to liberate Tibet as soon as possible.

Sherab Gyatso, a prominent Tibetan scholar, delivered a talk in Xi’an, denouncing an imperialist conspiracy through which Lhasa authorities would seek “independence”. In early 1950, over 100 Tibetan people, including farmers and herdsmen, young people, women and democratic representatives, assembled in Lanzhou in Gansu Province, which had been liberated not long before, and urged the PLA to liberate Tibet.

In their reply to the 10th Panchen Lama, Mao Zedong and Zhu De stated, “The Tibetan people love the motherland and stand against foreign aggression. They are discontent with the policies of the reactionary Kuomintang government, and want to be part of the big family of a unified New China, where all ethnic groups are equal and work together for prosperity. The Central People’s Government and the Chinese PLA will certainly comply with this wish of the Tibetan people.”

With determined support from the Central People’s Government, Tibet saw the hope of a peaceful liberation anticipated by the whole of China.

II. Peaceful Liberation

To address the complex and changing international landscape and the difficult situation in Tibet, and to satisfy the Tibetan people’s wish for liberation as soon as possible, Mao Zedong wrote a letter to the CPC Central Committee while in Manzhouli on his way to the Soviet Union for a visit in December 1949. In the letter, Mao made the strategic decision that “it is better for the PLA to enter Tibet sooner rather than later.”

– The victory in the Qamdo Battle created the conditions for the peaceful liberation of Tibet.

Considering the difficulties of transport and the ethnic and religious characteristics of Tibet, Mao Zedong proposed two basic principles – to prioritize a political settlement, and to avoid undue haste in liberating Tibet. The Central People’s Government organized and carried out a lot of work in political persuasion, sending delegates or delegations to Tibet for mediation on several occasions in order to achieve peaceful liberation, a strategy with proven success for Beiping (Beijing), Suiyuan and Xinjiang. In February 1950, the Northwest Bureau of the CPC Central Committee sent a Tibetan official named Zhang Jingcheng to Tibet with a letter from Liao Hansheng, then vice chairman of the Qinghai Provincial People’s Government, directed to the 14th Dalai Lama and Regent Taktra Ngawang Sungrab. In March, an eminent Han monk, Master Zhiqing, who had good contacts in the political and religious circles of Tibet, set out for Tibet from Chengdu, with the approval of the CPC Central Committee and the support of the Southwest Bureau. In July, a delegation composed of members from Qinghai temples and monasteries, led by Taktser Rinpoche of Kumbum Monastery, set out from Xining. Sherab Gyatso, vice chairman of the Qinghai Provincial People’s Government and a leading Tibetan scholar, delivered a radio talk, calling on the local government of Tibet to “quickly dispatch plenipotentiary representatives to Beijing for peace talks”. Also in this month, a delegation including the 5th Gedar Tulku of Beri Monastery in Garze, Xikang, went to Tibet.

However, these mediation activities suffered obstruction from Western imperialists and pro-imperialist separatists in Tibet. In the meantime, in spite of local economic decline, the separatists from the upper classes of Tibet expanded the Tibetan army and dispatched troops in an attempt to halt the PLA’s advance. They also colluded with their imperialist supporters to set up radio stations, spread rumors to deepen the rifts among the Han and local people, and dispatched a “goodwill mission” to seek support from other countries.

In the circumstances, Mao Zedong and the CPC Central Committee realized that the liberation of Tibet was a matter of extreme urgency. Under the unified deployment of the Central People’s Government, the southwest and northwest bureaux of the CPC Central Committee issued a prompt order for troops to stand by.

The PLA troops followed the principles that military operations should only be carried out when political persuasion failed and the troops had sufficient supplies to fight a battle. Guided by the central authorities’ strategy of outflanking the enemy from various directions, the PLA, with the 18th army as the major force, advanced into Tibet from four directions and won the Battle of Qamdo in October, 1950.

After the victory, the First People’s Congress of Qamdo was held. The Qamdo People’s Liberation Committee was elected and a working committee for the peaceful liberation of Tibet was founded, composed of both ecclesiastical and secular representatives. The battle created the conditions for the peaceful liberation of Tibet. The Central People’s Government and Chairman Mao Zedong had never given up their efforts to this end. Even during the battle, Mao Zedong urged that a local Tibetan delegation should come to Beijing as soon as possible.

– Signing the 17-Article Agreement marked the liberation of Tibet.

The victory at Qamdo gave the upper hand to the patriotic and progressive forces within the local government of Tibet, and the political situation moved in the direction of peaceful liberation. In February 1951, an “officials’ meeting” of the local government of Tibet decided to send a formal delegation to Beijing to conduct peace negotiations with the Central People’s Government. The 14th Dalai Lama expressed his wish for peace talks in a letter to the Central People’s Government. On April 29, the Central People’s Government and the local government of Tibet began official negotiations for the peaceful liberation. After serious consultations and thorough discussions, they signed the 17-Article Agreement in Beijing on May 23.

The 17-Article Agreement stipulates:

• The people of Tibet shall unite and drive out aggressive imperialist forces; they will return to the family of the People’s Republic of China.

• The PLA troops shall enter Tibet to consolidate national defense.

• All foreign-related affairs of Tibet shall be dealt with by the Central People’s Government on a centralized basis.

• The local government of Tibet shall actively assist the PLA to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defense.

• The Tibetan people shall have the right of regional ethnic autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People’s Government.

• The religious beliefs and customs of the Tibetan people shall be respected.

The agreement also clarified that the central authorities would not alter the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni, and that former officials of all ranks in the local government of Tibet could continue to hold office. The signing of the 17-Article Agreement symbolized the final liberation of all the Chinese mainland, embodied the full sovereignty of the People’s Republic in Tibet, united all forces to safeguard overall social stability, ensured the enforcement of the CPC’s ethnic, religious, economic and cultural policies, and laid a solid political foundation for social development and reform in Tibet.

The 17-Article Agreement gained the support of all ethnic groups and people from all walks of life across the country. On May 28, 1951, the *People’s Daily* published in full the agreement in both Chinese and Tibetan accompanied by an editorial entitled “Supporting the Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet”. The article made the point that this was the first step for the Tibetan people out of a dark and miserable past and toward a bright and happy future. Assemblies and processions were held in Beijing, Xi’an, Chongqing, Chengdu, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia to celebrate the signing of the agreement.

On the same day, the 10th Panchen Lama and the Panchen Kampus Assembly made a statement in support of the agreement, declaring, “We will be the staunch supporters of Chairman Mao’s leadership, and of the leadership of the Central People’s Government and the CPC.” On October 24, the 14th Dalai Lama, on behalf of the local government of Tibet and himself, sent a telegram to the Central People’s Government to express his support for the agreement, which read, “Chairman Mao of the Central People’s Government: This year the local government of Tibet sent five delegates with full authority, headed by Kalon Ngapoi, to Beijing in late April 1951 to conduct peace talks with delegates with full authority appointed by the Central People’s Government. On the basis of friendship, the delegates of the two sides signed on May 23, 1951 the Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. The local government of Tibet as well as the ecclesiastical and secular people unanimously support this agreement, and, under the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Central People’s Government, will actively assist the PLA troops entering Tibet to consolidate national defense, ousting imperialist influences from Tibet and safeguarding the unification of the territory and the sovereignty of the motherland.”

– Implementing the 17-Article Agreement to safeguard national sovereignty and promote social development

In line with the 17-Article Agreement and between September 1951 and June 1952, the PLA troops in Tibet reached Lhasa and were dispatched to Gyamda, Gyangze, Xigaze, Lhunze Dzong, Yadong, Zayu and Gerze. For the first time in history Tibet’s 4,000-km border was fully and properly defended.

On September 6, 1952, the foreign affairs office of the Central People’s Government representative stationed in Tibet was set up, taking responsibility for all the foreign-related affairs of Tibet under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Central People’s Government. On April 29, 1954, in Beijing, China and India signed the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse Between the Tibet Region of China and India and exchanged diplomatic notes, abolishing the privileges India had inherited from the British invaders. On September 20, 1956, China and Nepal signed the Agreement on Maintaining Friendly Relations Between the People’s Republic of China and the Kingdom of Nepal and on Trade and Intercourse Between the Tibet Region of China and Nepal, which cancelled Nepal’s privileges in Tibet. Henceforth, all the foreign-related affairs of Tibet would be dealt with by the Central People’s Government on a centralized basis.

The Central People’s Government issued a series of specific instructions and policies. Troops would be stationed in Tibet but would not depend on the local people for their grain supplies. They would operate according to a strict budget and produce what they needed. Food supplies would be guaranteed for the army itself while taking into consideration civilian needs. There would be unified procurement and economy would be practiced.

Soon after the PLA troops entered Lhasa, they set up the Qiyi and Bayi Farms, reclaiming land to provide for themselves. They also used the revenues from export of wool to support the PLA and the local people.

Encouraged by the Central People’s Government, the 10th Panchen Lama returned to Lhasa from Qinghai Province to have an amicable meeting with the 14th Dalai Lama in April 1952. In 1953, the Dalai and Panchen lamas were elected as honorary presidents of the Buddhist Association of China, with Living Buddha Kundeling as vice president. In September 1954, the Dalai and Panchen lamas went together to Beijing to attend the First Session of the First National People’s Congress (NPC) of the People’s Republic of China, with the former elected vice-chairman of the NPC Standing Committee. On December 25, the 10th Panchen Lama was elected vice chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) at its First Plenary Session of the Second National Committee. From 1952 to 1957, a total of over 1,000 people in 13 groups, including ecclesiastical and secular officials, monks, and ordinary people including women and youngsters, made organized trips to other parts of the country, which strengthened connections between Tibet and the rest of the country and promoted national unity.

After the signing of the 17-Article Agreement, rapid progress was made in all social undertakings of Tibet under the leadership of the Central People’s Government.

A modern education system was gradually put in place. In March 1951, Qamdo Primary School was set up – the first modern school in Tibet. In August 1952, Lhasa Primary School was founded. Soon afterwards, 28 public primary schools were set up in locations such as Xigaze and Shannan. In September 1956, Lhasa Middle School was established – the first modern and standard middle school in the history of Tibet. In September 1958, Xizang Minzu University officially opened in Xianyang, Shaanxi Province, enrolling a total of 3,460 students, most of whom were the children of former serfs.

There were significant improvements in transport infrastructure. In 1954, the Qinghai-Tibet Highway and the Sichuan-Tibet Highway, both terminating at Lhasa, were completed and opened to traffic. In 1956, Damxung Airport – Tibet’s first airport – was completed, linking Beijing and Lhasa through official air services.

Modern agriculture, animal husbandry, industry and commerce began to emerge. Great efforts were made to improve crop farming and agricultural irrigation. Small factories of various sizes were built. Hospitals, banks, stores and post offices were set up in major cities and towns.

Visible progress was made in cultural undertakings. On October 1, 1953, a radio station was set up in Lhasa, broadcasting live programs in Tibetan. On April 22, 1956, the *Tibet Daily* started publication in both Tibetan and Chinese. A variety of rich and varied recreational activities were set up, including art troupes and social clubs. In 1954, newly-established performing groups from Tibet went on a performance tour in cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. They were universally and warmly welcomed by local audiences.

III. Historic Changes in Society

The Tibetan people yearned for democratic reform, but the timing had to be determined by the situation. In 1956, the Central People’s Government made a decision that no reform need be carried out in Tibet for the next six years. However, some members of the Tibetan ruling class wanted to preserve serfdom forever, and staged a full-scale armed rebellion in March 1959. The Central People’s Government quelled the rebellion, and carried out democratic reform to abolish feudal serfdom, putting an end to the old system and laying a solid foundation for forming the Tibet Autonomous Region.

– Wretched and backward feudal serfdom was doomed to die out.

Old Tibet was ruled by a theocratic feudal serfdom. This system crushed human dignity, ignored human rights, and impeded development in Tibet, all of which flouted the progressive trend in China and elsewhere in the world.

In old Tibet, there was no separation of religious and political power, and the former enjoyed absolute supremacy. Religious power prevailed over political power, while political power protected religious privileges. The two combined to defend the interests of the three major stakeholders: officials, aristocrats and higher-ranking lamas in the monasteries. Under theocracy, monasteries became fortresses from which the local rulers organized religious activities, exercised administration, exploited the serfs, built up armed forces, and passed legal judgement. Some monasteries even had private dungeons, with instruments of torture used for eye gouging and hamstringing, in addition to handcuffs, chains and clubs.

In old Tibet, there was a rigid hierarchy and the higher ranks of society gave no thought to human rights. The three major stakeholders applied every means to maintain feudal serfdom. The *13-Article Code* and *16-Article Code*, which had been enforced for several hundred years in old Tibet, stipulated that people were divided into three classes by blood and position, and that each class was further divided into three ranks. The value of a life corresponded to the difference in class and rank. The bodies of people of the highest rank of the upper class were “worth their weight in gold”, while the lives of people of the lowest rank of the lower class were “worth a straw rope”.

In old Tibet, polarization of the rich and the poor hindered development. The three major stakeholders and their agents, who made up less than five percent of the population, owned almost all of the land, pastures, forests, mountains, rivers and flood plains, and most of the livestock. Before the democratic reform in 1959, there were 197 hereditary aristocratic families, and the few top families each possessed dozens of manors and thousands of hectares of land. The family of the 14th Dalai Lama owned 27 manors, 30 pastures, and over 6,000 serfs. The Dalai Lama alone owned 160,000 taels (one tael = 30 grams) of gold, 95 million taels of silver, over 20,000 pieces of jewelry and jade ware, and more than 10,000 pieces of silk clothing and rare furs.

Meanwhile the serfs and slaves, who accounted for 95 percent of the population, had no means of production or freedom of their own. They were subjected to the three-fold exploitation of corvée labor, taxes, and high-interest loans, and struggled for mere existence.

– The central government upheld the 17-Article Agreement and honored its promise not to carry out reform for six years.

The 17-Article Agreement stipulated, “In matters related to reform in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the central government. The local government of Tibet shall take initiative to carry out reform, and when the people raise demands for reform, the central government shall consult with the leading personnel in Tibet to settle the issue.” Following liberation, amidst the growing demand of the Tibetan people for democratic reform, many enlightened people of the upper and middle classes also realized that, if the old system were not reformed, the Tibetan people would never attain prosperity.

In consideration of Tibetan history and the region’s special situation, the Central People’s Government adopted a circumspect attitude of patient persuasion, waiting for the ruling elite to carry out reform, and giving them adequate time to do so. In 1956, still awaiting a change in the attitude of the ruling upper class, the Central People’s Government made a decision that no reform should be carried out in Tibet for six years. During his visit to India in January 1957, Premier of the State Council Zhou Enlai handed a letter from Chairman Mao Zedong to the 14th Dalai Lama and 10th Panchen Lama, and the accompanying senior local Tibetan government officials. The letter informed them of the central government’s decision that reform would be deferred for six years; whether reform should be carried out after six years would still be decided by Tibet in accordance with its own situation and the prevailing conditions. The Central People’s Government showed the utmost patience and made every concession.

– The armed rebellion was quelled and democratic reform was implemented.

Reforming the social system was an essential requirement of social development and the fundamental aspiration of the Tibetan people. To preserve serfdom, the reactionaries from Tibet’s upper class planned a series of activities to split Tibet from China, in blatant violation of the 17-Article Agreement. These led to a full-scale insurrection on March 10, 1959. The Central People’s Government, together with the Tibetan people, took decisive measures to suppress the rebellion, and subsequently implemented a democratic reform in Tibet that brought feudal serfdom to an end.

Through this reform, the theocratic system was annulled and religion was separated from government. The feudal serf owners’ right to own the means of production was abolished and private ownership by farmers and herdsmen was established. The personal bondage of serfs and slaves to the officials, nobles and upper-ranking monks was annulled, and they won their freedom as individuals. Former serfs and slaves were granted around 186,700 hectares of land in the democratic reform.

During this period Tibet’s first supply and marketing cooperative, first rural credit cooperative, first community primary school, first night school, first literacy class, first film projection team, and first medical institution were established. The Ngachen Hydroelectric Station was completed and entered service, bringing electric lighting for the first time to the citizens of Lhasa.

Democratic reform represented an epoch-making change in Tibetan society and in the human rights of its people. It granted political, economic and social emancipation to a million serfs and slaves, effectively promoted the development of social productive forces in Tibet, and opened up the road toward modernization.

– The Tibet Autonomous Region was established to launch Tibet on the path to socialism.

The democratic reform in Tibet coincided with the introduction of democratic politics. After the rebellion broke out in March 1959, the State Council issued an order to dissolve the Tibetan local government and decided to have the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region exercise the duties and power of local government. Later, the Qamdo People’s Liberation Committee and the Panchen Kampus Assembly were abolished, and a centralized people’s democratic government was set up. In 1961, a general election was held across Tibet. For the first time, the former serfs and slaves were able to enjoy democratic rights as their own masters, as they elected people’s governments at all levels. Many emancipated serfs and slaves took up posts of leadership at various levels in the region. In August 1965, elections were completed in townships and counties across Tibet. In September, the First Session of the First People’s Congress of Tibet was convened in Lhasa, at which the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the Regional People’s Government were officially proclaimed. With regional ethnic autonomy established and through the socialist transformation of agriculture and animal husbandry, Tibet embarked on the road of socialism.

The founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region and adoption of the socialist system provided a guarantee for the realization of ethnic equality, solidarity, mutual help, and common development and prosperity in the region. It also created the conditions for all ethnic groups in Tibet to enjoy equal rights to participate in the administration of regional and state affairs. In this way, an institutional structure was put in place that would allow Tibet to develop along with other parts of China.

IV. Rapid Development of Various Undertakings

Thanks to the leadership of the Central People’s Government and strong support from the rest of China, and to the great endeavors of people of all ethnic groups in the region, Tibet is catching up with other parts of the country in terms of socioeconomic development. With a more solid base, it enjoys better opportunities and enormous potential.

– Sustained and rapid socioeconomic development

Over the last seven decades, the central government has introduced many favorable policies for the region, covering tax and finance, infrastructure, industrial development, education, health, cultural preservation, environmental protection, and other fields. The central government increases its fiscal transfer to Tibet every year, and has planned and carried out a number of major projects at different stages which have a bearing on the long-term development of the region and the living standard of the people. As a result, the local people enjoy much better working and living conditions, and their sense of gain, happiness, and security is growing. From 1994 to 2020, the provinces and equivalent administrative units, central government departments, along with state-owned enterprises (SOEs) directly under the central government, provided support to Tibet in the form of paired assistance through 6,330 projects, representing a total investment of RMB52.7 billion. They also selected and dispatched 9,682 outstanding officials to assist the region. In 1951, Tibet’s GDP was only RMB129 million. In 2020, its GDP exceeded RMB190 billion. There has been substantial economic growth and significant improvements to the economic structure. In 2020, Tibet’s retail sales of consumer goods reached RMB74.6 billion, more than 2,000 times larger than in 1959.

*Xizang Shimo Jiyao*, a book published in 1930, described the roads in Tibet as extremely rough and dangerous for passengers and their horses. In the old days, it took between six months and a year to make a round trip between Lhasa and Xining in Qinghai or Ya’an in Sichuan. Since 1951, Tibet has gradually built a comprehensive transport network composed of highways, railways, air routes, and pipelines. Highways with a total length of 118,800 km have been built, providing access to all administrative villages in the region. Ninety-four percent of towns and 76 percent of administrative villages have direct access to asphalt and concrete roads. Some 700 km of expressways and grade-one highways are in service. The Qinghai-Tibet Railway and the Lhasa-Xigaze Railway have been completed and opened to traffic. The construction of the Sichuan-Tibet Railway has begun. A number of feeder airports have been built, including Bamda Airport in Qamdo, Mainling Airport in Nyingchi, Peace Airport in Xigaze, and Gunsa Airport in Ngari. Tibet now has 140 domestic and international air routes in operation, reaching 66 cities.

With a modern communications network mainly consisting of optical cables and satellites, Tibet is part of the information expressway. All administrative villages have mobile phone access, and optical cable broadband coverage has reached 99 percent. Before 1951, Tibet had only one hydropower station, which supplied electricity only to a handful of aristocrats. Now, a comprehensive energy network is in place, with hydro power as the mainstay, supplemented by solar, wind, and geothermal power. In 2020, Ngari Prefecture was connected to the central Tibet power grid, completing the full coverage of the main power grid across the whole of Tibet.

A great effort has been made to develop agriculture, animal husbandry, green industries and tertiary industries adapted to local conditions. In 1965, the total value of output from Tibet’s agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and fisheries was no more than RMB264 million. In 2020, it reached RMB23.4 billion. In 2015, grain yield was over 1 million tonnes, and the yield of highland barley exceeded 795,000 tonnes. The region now has a modern industrial system with distinctive local features, covering clean energy, natural drinking water, farming and animal product processing, folk handicrafts, Tibetan medicine, and building materials, among others. The clean energy industry is developing rapidly, with a total installed capacity of 4.23 million kw and generation output of over 9 billion kwh. In 2020, despite the impact of Covid-19, the growth rate of the added value of industrial “enterprises of designated size” (enterprises with a turnover exceeding RMB20 million per annum) reached 9.6 percent, which was the highest in the country. Tourism in the region maintained rapid growth momentum, receiving more than 35 million tourist visits. There has been widespread development of service industries. E-commerce services are fully available at the city, county, township, and village levels, and total online retail sales exceeded RMB20 billion. The high-tech digital industry has seen multiple innovations, and the scale of digital economy surpassed RMB33 billion.

– Marked improvement in living standards

Prior to liberation, more than 90 percent of Tibet’s residents had no private housing and lacked adequate food and clothing. Now, residents in the region enjoy a relatively comfortable life. Thanks to low-income housing projects for farmers and herdsmen and affordable housing projects in urban and rural areas, the per capita living space of farmers and herdsmen reached 41.46 sq m in 2020, and that of urban residents reached 33.4 sq m. From 2011 to 2020, the central government allocated funds totaling RMB17.3 billion, supporting the construction of 351,900 affordable homes in urban areas. Since 2019, the central government has allocated funds of RMB230 million to support the transformation of 8,900 dilapidated urban dwellings. The region has carried out comprehensive improvement projects in farming and pastoral areas, which mainly involve the supply of water, electricity, gas, telecommunications, postal services, radio and television, the construction of highways, and improvements to the environment. This has brought tremendous change to these areas. In 2019, the urbanization rate of Tibet reached 31.5 percent. In 2020, the per capita disposable income doubled in comparison with 2010. The average per capita disposable income of rural residents was RMB14,598, up 12.7 percent over the previous year and representing double-digit growth for the past 18 years. In the past five years, it recorded an annual increase of around 13 percent – the fastest growth in China. The average per capita disposable income of urban residents in 2020 was RMB41,156, a year-on-year increase of 10 percent.

– All-round progress of basic public services

The public cultural service system keeps improving. As of 2020, there is a five-tiered public cultural service system in place, which consists of the autonomous region, city/prefecture, county/district, town/township, and village/community levels. Libraries, people’s art halls, museums, comprehensive culture centers, and reserved halls have become important sites where people can participate in cultural activities. Tibet now has 10 professional performing art troupes, 76 art troupes at county/district level, 153 part-time Tibetan opera troupes, 395 performing teams at township level and 5,492 at administrative village level, with more than 100,000 performers, including amateurs and professionals. A large number of excellent works, including *The Laundry Song* and *Another Folk Song Dedicated to the Party*, have been released, highlighting the spirit of the times, demonstrating the flavor of Tibet, and winning popularity among the people. Designed to meet people’s cultural aspirations, free or subsidized performances have become increasingly colorful, and more than 24,000 such shows have been staged.

Notable progress has been made in developing a digital public culture. The region’s digital service capacity is increasing. The “Beautiful Tibet, Lovely Hometown” project designed to supply excellent cultural products to rural residents has been implemented. 9.33TB of programs with special local flavor or revolutionary themes have been produced and released on public culture and digital culture websites. Commissioned programs numbered 2,950, with a total size of 20TB. 4,169 hours of digital programs have been dubbed into minority languages.

Tibet’s radio, TV, press, and publications are expanding rapidly. In 2020, the region had one radio station, one TV station, and 75 radio-TV stations, 112 radio and TV receiving and transmitting stations at township/village levels, 27 medium and short-wave transmitting and relay stations, and 3,933 FM TV transmitting and relay stations. More than 600,000 households of farmers and herdsmen can receive 26 radio channels and 54 TV channels via direct broadcasting satellites. The coverage rates of radio and TV programs have both reached 99 percent. A total of 18,594 hours of radio programs and 6,881 hours of TV programs have been translated or dubbed in minority languages. Tibet publishes 66 newspapers and periodicals, and has built 5,464 rural libraries and 1,787 monastery libraries, providing libraries to all administrative villages and monasteries.

In old Tibet there was not a single proper school. The illiteracy rate exceeded 95 percent, to say nothing of complete ignorance of modern science and technology. From 1951 to 2020, the central government invested RMB224 billion in Tibet’s education. Now, the region has established a modern educational system which includes preschool, primary and middle schools, vocational and technical schools, institutions of higher learning, and continuing and special education institutions. Students enjoy 15 years of publicly-funded compulsory education. All primary schools are offering math course, all middle schools have completed teaching plans for math, physics, chemistry, and biology courses, and all vocational and technical schools are offering the courses prescribed in the national catalog of courses for these schools. A campaign to popularize senior high school education was completed on schedule. Since 2015, organized educational professionals from across the country have made a tremendous contribution to Tibet’s education system. At present, Tibet has 3,195 schools of various types and at various levels, hosting more than 790,000 students. These include seven institutions of higher learning, 12 secondary vocational schools, 143 middle schools, and 827 primary schools. In addition, more than 92,000 students attend schools outside the region. The gross enrollment rate for the three-year preschool education has reached 87 percent. The net enrollment rate in primary school is more than 99.9 percent, and the gross enrollment rate in junior high, senior high, and higher education are 107, 90.2 and 56.1 percent respectively. Basic balanced development of compulsory education has been realized in all counties. The completion rate for compulsory education has reached 95 percent, and new entrants to the region’s workforce now have an average of 13.1 years of education.

Tibet is addressing issues of employment by relying on the concerted efforts of the government, society, and enterprises. The employment rate among higher-education graduates has remained above 95 percent for the past five years, and reached 99 percent in 2020. The development of scientific and technological platforms and talent teams is accelerating. Tibet has 92,000 professional technical personnel, and the contribution of science and technology to economic growth has reached 45.6 percent.

Before liberation, there were only three small, shabby government-run institutions of Tibetan medicine and a small number of private clinics. Now, Tibet has a full system covering regular medical services, maternity and child care, disease prevention and control, and Tibetan medicine and therapies. In Tibet today there are 1,642 medical institutions of various types, 11 of which are grade A tertiary hospitals. There are 4.9 hospital beds and 5.89 medical workers per thousand people. Medical teams from other parts of China have been sent to assist Tibet, to ensure that people can receive excellent medical services in their own neighborhoods. The medical and healthcare network now covers the whole region. All townships have health centers and all villages have clinics.

These improvements in medical services have brought about a corresponding improvement in public health. The death rate of women in childbirth has dropped to 48 per 100,000, and the infant mortality rate to 7.6 per thousand. Both are record lows. The average life expectancy has increased from 35.5 years in 1951 to 71.1 years in 2019. Victims of more than 400 major diseases can now obtain treatment within the region. Ailments that were once widespread in Tibet, such as hydatidosis, Kashin-Beck disease, congenital heart disease, and cataracts, have been eradicated or brought under effective prevention and control.

Social security provision is improving. The registered urban unemployment rate is below 4 percent. The employment rates of key groups are among the highest in the country. A social security system including mainly five major types of insurance (old age insurance, medical insurance, unemployment insurance, work-related injury insurance, and maternity insurance) is now in place and covers both urban and rural residents. Basic living standards are effectively guaranteed. In 2020, the basic medical insurance systems of urban and rural residents were integrated, and the standard subsidy increased to RMB585 per person per year. One-time settlement after diagnosis and treatment, full coverage of the insured, and balance of insurance funds have been realized. Individual reimbursement of medical expenses can be as high as RMB140,000, nearly seven times the average annual per capita disposable income of urban and rural residents in Tibet. A special treatment policy has been extended to cover 38 serious diseases. Basic medical insurance is more effective. Full coverage of social insurance has been realized, and people of all ethnic groups now enjoy comprehensive social security.

V. A Complete Victory over Poverty

Tibet was a contiguous poor area with the highest incidence and most severe level of poverty, where the cost of poverty eradication was highest and the difficulty greatest. Ending poverty in Tibet is a consistent policy of the Central People’s Government.

As early as 1951, after the liberation of Tibet, the PLA and other organizations in Tibet were already taking action to reduce poverty.

In 1959 after feudal serfdom was abolished and Tibet embarked on the path of socialism, the CPC set about developing the productive forces, eliminating exploitation and poverty, achieving common prosperity, growing the economy, and improving people’s lives.

After the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the Party convened the National Conference on Better Poverty Alleviation Partnership Assistance from Other Parts of the Country to Tibet for five successive years, and launched a campaign under which SOEs directly under the central government would assist Tibet in achieving prosperity. Through targeted poverty alleviation policies and measures, Tibet has won a decisive victory over poverty, and local people of all ethnic groups now have adequate food and clothing and access to compulsory education, basic medical services and safe housing.

By the end of 2019, all the 628,000 registered poor and 74 designated poor counties in Tibet had risen from poverty, marking the end of absolute poverty in Tibet for the first time in history. The average annual per capita disposable income of those who have just emerged from poverty now exceeds RMB10,000, an indication that the positive results of poverty elimination have been consolidated.

It was the democratic reform in Tibet that led to leapfrog progress in its social system, and the fight against poverty secured historic improvements in its ways of life.

– Eliminating absolute poverty

Tibet has made great efforts to develop industries that leverage local strengths, to find the right path for economic growth.It has been vigorously developing and promoting highland barley strains such as Zangqing 2000, Ximala 22, and livestock breeds such as Pagri yak, Riwoqe yak, and Gamba sheep, to raise the per unit yield.

Tibet has been supporting deep processing, improving product supply, and expanding industrial chains. In 2020, there were 162 leading agriculture and animal husbandry enterprises, with a total processing output value of RMB5.7 billion. This was double the figure for 2015.

Tibet has been increasing the level of specialization in production and boosting production efficiency through cooperation between cooperatives and rural households, and among leading enterprises, village-level collective economic organizations and rural households. The comprehensive mechanization rate for growing staple crops has reached 65 percent.

Tibet has been alleviating poverty by developing e-commerce programs targeted at the entire rural community to improve the marketing of local specialties. A total of RMB879 million from the state budget was allocated to promote the online sales of agro-products, boost incomes and employment, and reduce poverty in Tibet.

Tibet has been fully engaged in developing tourism, launching programs such as “Tibetan Cultural Tour”, “G318 Self-drive Tour” for the 2018 Around China Self-driving Tour Championship (ACSC), and “Winter Tour in Tibet”. By 2020, rural tourism had created, directly or indirectly, 86,000 jobs for local farmers and herdsmen, resulting in an increment in annual per capita income of RMB4,300.

Tibet has been developing its cultural industry by expanding the market for traditional Tibetan culture. Thangka, sculpting, textiles, costumes, home decoration and other handicrafts have grown into emerging industries, huge in both supply and demand. Cultural industry demonstration parks/centers at all levels and in all categories have been completed, creating a total output value of more than RMB6 billion at an average annual growth rate of 15 percent.

Since 2016, Tibet has applied agricultural funds totaling RMB75.4 billion to poverty alleviation and implemented 3,037 programs supporting local businesses, which has helped 238,000 registered poor out of poverty. It has issued subsidized loans of RMB64.8 billion and micro-credit loans of RMB6.33 billion, providing strong support for the development of local industries.

Efforts have been made to renovate dilapidated rural homes to ensure safe housing. Since 2008, a total of RMB3.62 billion has been applied to 399,700 households in Tibet for the renovation of dilapidated homes, covering registered poor households, households entitled to subsistence allowances, severely impoverished rural residents cared for at their homes with government support, and impoverished families of individuals with disabilities. The project has enabled them to abandon rammed-earth dwellings and stone shacks, and presented them with bright and spacious housing. The widowed, orphaned and childless in extreme poverty are eligible for rural public rental housing, or vacant public housing that has been renovated, to guarantee their access to safe housing. All these measures have laid a solid foundation for Tibet to beat poverty and achieve moderate prosperity.

Tibet has relocated the impoverished to improve their living and working conditions.Poverty-stricken populations in Tibet are concentrated in the northern pastoral areas, the southern border areas, and the eastern areas along the Hengduan Mountains. All these areas are located at high altitudes. They are remote from vital markets and live in harsh conditions. Therefore, relocating the inhabitants of these areas is a rational solution to lift them out of poverty. Since 2016, Tibet has increased efforts to resettle the impoverished from inhospitable areas to places with better economic prospects. By 2020, Tibet had completed the construction of 964 relocation zones/sites for poverty alleviation in low-altitude, hospitable areas, where 266,000 poor were happy to resettle. Some five percent of Tibet’s growth-driven poverty alleviation funds were applied to the development of industries and businesses at relocation sites, and at least one individual from each resettled household was guaranteed employment. This was a significant primary step ensuring steady progress toward a prosperous life.

Tibet has implemented policies to sustain poverty elimination through the endogenous initiatives of the poor themselves by increasing their confidence and helping them acquire knowledge and skills.Tibet’s education funds are directed more to basic education and vocational education in poor areas to improve conditions there. Tibet has established a student financial assistance system covering all stages of education from preschool to higher education, covering both private and public education, and covering all students experiencing economic difficulties, supported by 40 financial assistance policies. The Three Guarantees policy for education in Tibet – providing food, accommodation and school expenses for preschool to senior high students from farming and herding households and impoverished urban families – has resulted in a rise in subsidy to an average of RMB4,200 per student per year; dropouts from registered poor families are all identified and helped back into school in a timely manner.

Tibet has encouraged institutions of higher learning to recruit students from its farming and pastoral areas and poverty-stricken areas through special programs. Tibet has implemented the Three Cost-frees and One Subsidy policy, under which college students from registered poor households and rural families entitled to subsistence allowances are exempt from tuition, textbook and accommodation fees and are provided with cost-of-living subsidies. Altogether 46,700 impoverished undergraduates received assistance from this policy during the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020). Based on market demand and personal choice, poor populations in Tibet are provided with vocational and technical education covering constructional engineering, service, food processing, vehicle repair and maintenance, nursing, and handicrafts, to help them obtain stable jobs with higher payments.

Tibet has improved social security by providing subsistence allowances for the impoverished.All the 114,000 registered poor in Tibet are provided with subsistence allowances. Currently, the standards are RMB10,164 per person per year for urban residents, RMB4,713 for rural residents, RMB7,070 for severely impoverished rural residents cared for at their homes with government support, and RMB13,213 for severely impoverished urban and rural residents cared for at nursing homes with government support. The standard for temporary social relief has been raised to RMB4,334 on average. In all its 74 national-level poor counties, Tibet has implemented the national nutrition improvement program for children in impoverished areas, targeted at 6 to 24-month-olds.

Tibet has implemented the project of “Laying the Foundations for Better Lives”, through innovative paired-up assistance for the impoverished.From 2012 to 2020, Tibet dispatched 193,300 resident officials in nine groups to help alleviate poverty in villages. Officials at all levels in Tibet were paired up with registered poor households in all designated poor villages, townships and counties, to offer one-to-one employment assistance to the relocated poor and college graduates from impoverished families, and to help boost the economy in poverty-stricken areas.

– Developing border areas and improving people’s lives

Tibet has a 4,000-km long external border line. The inhabitants of the contiguous areas experience harsh living and working conditions and a high incidence of poverty. Governments at all levels have been making constant efforts to develop border areas and improve people’s lives. Under the guidance of the Party Central Committee, financial input has been increasing year by year for border development in Tibet. Particularly since 2012, border villages, townships and counties in Tibet have been granted more preferential state policies on infrastructure construction, covering water, electricity, roads, and housing. In 2017, the Plan of Tibet Autonomous Region on the Construction of Villages of Moderate Prosperity in Border Areas (2017-2020) was released, designed to ensure better access to housing, water, electricity, roads, communications and the internet, to improve education, technology, culture, healthcare and social security in border villages, and to boost industries in border areas. By the end of 2020, first-tier and second-tier border villages had access to highways, all border townships and towns were connected to the main power grid, and all border villages had access to postal services, mobile communications, and safe drinking water. Through all these efforts in the border areas in Tibet, infrastructure has seen remarkable improvements, all industries are flourishing, and the people enjoy better living and working conditions.

– Revitalizing the countryside

In 2017, China proposed the strategy of rural revitalization. Accordingly, the Strategic Plan of Tibet Autonomous Region on Rural Revitalization (2018-2022) was formulated, to build rural areas with thriving businesses, an eco-friendly environment, social etiquette and civility, effective governance, and a prosperous rural population, making sure that the positive results in poverty elimination are consolidated and become an integral part of rural revitalization in Tibet. The plan focuses on:

• developing plateau biotechnology, tourism, green industry, clean energy, modern services, advanced digital technology, and border trade and logistics;

• improving talent training in farming and pastoral areas, scaling up the training of native professionals, establishing a complete training system for farmers and herdsmen, and attracting talent toward rural development;

• promoting civilized village rules, improving public cultural services, encouraging literary and artistic works on agriculture, rural areas and rural people, carrying forward the best of traditional Tibetan culture, strengthening the competence of rural cultural workers, nurturing healthy folk customs, cultivating fine family traditions, and encouraging virtues in individuals;

• protecting and restoring the rural eco-system, improving rural living environments, developing eco-friendly rural industries, and building institutional mechanisms for promoting rural eco-environmental progress, so as to keep Tibet’s eco-environment at the highest national level, and turn its farming and pastoral areas into a beautiful, hospitable countryside where the people live in harmony with nature.

VI. Protection and Development of Traditional Culture

China attaches great importance to the protection and development of traditional Tibetan culture. It has invested huge human, financial and material resources to protect, develop and carry forward the fine traditional culture of Tibet through a variety of legal, economic and administrative means.

– The Tibetan spoken and written language is widely used.

The study and use of the Tibetan language is protected by law. Since the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region, the resolutions and regulations adopted by its people’s congress, and the official documents and announcements by governments at various levels and government departments have all been issued in Chinese and Tibetan. The two languages are used in large meetings and major activities organized by local governments, enterprises and public institutions. In judicial proceedings, the Tibetan language is used to hear cases and make legal documents in accordance with the needs of Tibetan litigants, so as to guarantee the right of Tibetan citizens to use the language for litigation. Tibet now has 16 periodicals and 12 newspapers in the Tibetan language, and has published more than 40 million copies of 7,185 Tibetan-language books. In addition, the language is widely used in health, postal services, communications, transport, finance, and science and technology.

Tibetan classics are protected and utilized. In 1984, the state allocated funds for the establishment of the Archives of the Tibet Autonomous Region, which houses and preserves a large number of precious Tibetan archives. The archives in its collection now number more than 3 million items. The state supports the collection, collation, translation and publication of important Tibetan classics. It has organized the collation and publication of the Tibetan-language *Chinese Tripitaka*, the rescue and collation of the epic *Life of King Gesar*, and the publication of many valuable Tibetan classics, including the *Collected Works of Ancient Tibetan Scholars*, *Library of Chinese Classics: Tibet Volume*, and the “Library of Snowfield Classics” series.

The standardization of Tibetan terminology is high on the state agenda. In 1995, the National Working Committee for the Standardization of Tibetan Terminology was established. In 2018, the working committee issued the *New Tibetan Terms Approved Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, which contains nearly 1,500 new terms. Remarkable results have been achieved in employing the Tibetan language in IT and in the research, development and promotion of Tibetan-language software. In July 1997, the Tibetan coded character set was officially adopted, and became an important part of the Information Technology – Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set. The Tibetan language thus became the first ethnic-minority language in China with an international standard and a pass to the global information superhighway. In 2004, the People’s Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the Ministry of Information Industry signed the Cooperation Agreement on the Development, Promotion and Application of Tibetan-Language Software, on which base a core set of Tibetan-language software was developed, including input method, operating system, office software, and web browser. At the end of 2015, the national standard *Information Technology – Vocabulary in Tibetan* was officially released, which marked the birth of China’s first national standard vocabulary for information technology in an ethnic-minority language.

– Customs and habits are fully respected.

The state respects and protects the rights of all ethnic groups in Tibet to live and conduct social activities in accordance with traditional customs and habits. While maintaining their traditional ways and styles of dress, diet and housing, people of all ethnic groups have also absorbed many new and modern cultural customs. The Tibetan New Year, the Shoton Festival in Lhasa, and the Horse Racing Festival in Nagqu are among a large number of cultural and traditional festivals that have been conserved and upgraded. In recent years, various cultural and tourism festivals, such as the Commemoration Day for the Liberation of One Million Serfs in Tibet, the Mount Qomolangma Culture and Art Festival in Xigaze, the Yarlung Cultural Festival in Shannan, and the Peach Blossom Festival in Nyingchi, have enriched the lives of Tibetan people and showcased their vitality in the new era.

– Cultural heritage is effectively protected and passed on.

Over the past few decades, Tibet has organized large-scale and systematic surveys, and the collection, collation and research of cultural heritage. A total of 4,277 cultural relics sites of all kinds have been examined and registered. Tibet has 1,985 cultural relics sites under the protection of governments at different levels, of which 70 are under state protection. Since restorative work was done on the Jokhang Temple in 1972, the state has continued to invest huge funds in the maintenance and protection of the Potala Palace, Norbulingka, Jokhang Temple and other cultural relics and historic sites. From 1989 to 1995 alone, the state invested more than RMB200 million in the maintenance of the Potala Palace and the expansion of its square. At the end of 2018, the state launched a 10-year project to protect and utilize cultural relics of the Potala Palace – mainly ancient books and documents – at an investment of RMB300 million. From 2006 to 2020, the state allocated more than RMB3.4 billion for the maintenance of 155 cultural relic sites under protection, including the renovation and expansion of the Tibet Museum. Thirty-five villages have been added to the list of Traditional Chinese Villages, and central government funding of RMB69 million has been used to protect elements of agricultural civilization and cultural heritage and to improve the living environment of farmers and herdsmen.

The state makes a point of supporting the inheritance and development of Tibetan medicine. It established the University of Tibetan Medicine, which has trained more than 7,000 professionals in this field. It has standardized the diagnosis and treatment of Tibetan medicine. There are 44 public Tibetan medical institutions in Tibet, and about 94 percent of township health centers and 42 percent of village health clinics provide Tibetan medicine services. Industrial production of Tibetan medicine has been scaled up and standardized, and a basic Tibetan medicine industry chain has taken shape. Seventeen Tibetan medicine manufacturers in Tibet have passed GMP certification, and 311 Tibetan drugs have been approved by the state. The state has launched a project to collate ancient books on ethnic medicine. By 2020, 145 ancient books on Tibetan medicine, astronomy and calendars had been collated, published and distributed. Over the years, the state has compiled and published more than 300 ancient books on Tibetan medicine, and collected more than 600 volumes of rare ancient books.

Since 2006, the state has invested a total of RMB209 million in Tibet in the following areas – protecting intangible cultural heritage (ICH) items on the national representative list, taking steps to record and conserve the knowledge and skills of the bearers of the ICH items on the national list, training ICH practitioners, and assisting them to set up sites for the protection and utilization of intangible cultural heritage and pass on their skills. Tibet now has three items (*Gesar*, Tibetan opera and Lum medicinal bathing of Sowa Rigpa) included on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. There are 89 items on the national ICH list with 96 state-level representative bearers, 460 items on the regional list with 522 regional-level representative bearers.

VII. Remarkable Results in Ethnic and Religious Work

The state formulates guidelines and policies to fully implement the system of regional ethnic autonomy, protect normal religious activities in accordance with the law, and promote the unity and common prosperity of all ethnic groups.

– The system of regional ethnic autonomy has been fully implemented.

The system of regional ethnic autonomy is a basic political system of the state. In 1965, the Tibet Autonomous Region was founded and its People’s Committee was elected. Since then, the system of regional ethnic autonomy has been fully implemented in Tibet. In 1984, the central government promulgated and implemented the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy of the People’s Republic of China. After decades of experimentation and practical work, people of all ethnic groups in Tibet have built ethnic relationships characterized by equality, unity, mutual support and harmony.

People in Tibet enjoy the right to be masters of the country and the region in accordance with the law. Since its founding, the autonomous region has issued 152 local regulations and normative documents, providing an important legal guarantee for the rights and interests of all ethnic groups. People in Tibet actively exercise the right to vote and stand for election as prescribed by the Constitution and laws; they participate in the election of deputies to people’s congresses at the national and local levels, and in the administration of state and local affairs. Since 1979, elections have been held at the regional, prefectural (city), county and township (town) levels, with the voter participation rate above 90 percent, and in some places as high as 100 percent. Of the 439 deputies to the 11th People’s Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region announced on January 18, 2018, 289 – almost exactly two-thirds – are from the Tibetan and other ethnic minorities. Most of the current and previous members of the Tibetan Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference are or were Tibetan and other ethnic minorities. The state supports equal participation and joint management by all ethnic groups, and sets up ethnic townships in areas where ethnic groups with small populations live in compact communities, to protect the rights and interests of these groups. At present, nine ethnic townships have been set up in Shannan, Nyingchi and Qamdo, of which five are Monba townships, three are Lhoba townships and one is a Naxi township.

The state pays great attention to the training of officials and personnel from minority ethnic groups. After the liberation of Tibet, especially during democratic reform, a large number of liberated serfs and slaves grew rapidly into outstanding officials. By setting up a special institution to train and educate ethnic minority officials in 1981, and a leading group for official education in 1989, Tibet has cultivated a large number of administrative and technical ethnic minority officials through training, job rotation, providing work opportunities at the grass-roots, and arranging for leading officials to hold posts in different localities.

– The sense of national identity has been heightened.

Tibet has had a fine tradition of exchanges, communication, and integration among ethnic groups since ancient times. In the early 1950s, a large number of people from various ethnic groups and sectors in Tibet visited other parts of China. Since reform and opening up in 1978, economic and cultural exchanges between ethnic groups have become closer and the sense of national identity has grown stronger. Every year on National Day, and during the Peaceful Liberation Celebration and the Ethnic Unity Month, Tibet conducts themed education on the Chinese Dream and patriotism. Thanks to these efforts, ethnic unity and progress have been promoted. To date the State Council and the Tibet Autonomous Region have presented 1,985 awards to exemplary organizations and 2,846 awards to exemplary individuals for ethnic unity and progress. Lhasa, Xigaze, Qamdo and Ngari have each become demonstration cities (prefectures) for ethnic unity and progress. By the end of 2020, Tibet had promulgated and implemented one regulation – Regulations on the Establishment of Model Areas for Ethnic Unity and Progress – and four normative documents on ethnic unity and progress. Tibetan students and workers are free to find jobs and start businesses anywhere in the rest of China. Every year, more than 10 percent of Tibetan college students take jobs outside the autonomous region.

The autonomous region encourages people from other parts of China to study, invest and start businesses in Tibet, and constantly creates innovative new measures to attract investment. Since 2016, the region has issued 52 special preferential policies related to taxation, finance, and land, which have effectively improved the efficiency of administrative examination and approval and the quality of services. As a result, a total of RMB253.5 billion has been in place. The region has also worked hard to create an integrated social structure and community environment for all ethnic groups, promote equal access to public services, protect the legitimate rights and interests of ethnic minorities living in cities and scattered residential areas, and respect their festive, food and funeral customs and traditions.

– Freedom of religious belief is fully protected.

In Tibet, all religions and sects are equal, as are all believers and non-believers. There are more than 1,700 sites for Tibetan Buddhist activities with 46,000 monks and nuns, 4 mosques serving 12,000 native Muslims, and a Catholic church with more than 700 followers. In order to adapt religions to the Chinese context, ensure the freedom and order of religious belief, and manage religious affairs in accordance with the law, the state has formulated the Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism in accordance with the Regulations on Religious Affairs. It has also formulated a series of policies, measures and regulatory documents, which include Measures of the Tibet Autonomous Region on Implementing the Regulations on Religious Affairs (trial), Measures of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the Management of Major Religious Activities, and Detailed Rules of the Tibet Autonomous Region for the Implementation of the Measures on the Management of Living Buddha Reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhism.

The reincarnation of Living Buddhas has been carried out in an orderly manner in accordance with laws, regulations, religious rituals and historical conventions. In 1995, with the approval of the State Council, the search for and identification of the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama and the enthronement of the 11th Panchen Lama were completed by drawing lots from a golden urn. In 2010, the Sixth Living Buddha Dezhub was identified and enthroned through the drawing of lots from a golden urn and with the approval of the government of the Tibet Autonomous Region. By 2020, 92 reincarnated Living Buddhas had been identified and approved through traditional religious rituals and historical conventions. Traditional religious activities are carried out regularly in accordance with the law – activities such as studying scriptures and debate, initiation as a monk or nun, *abhisheka* (an empowerment ceremony), and self-cultivation. Examination on scriptures and subsequent promotion in academic degrees are also held in monasteries on a regular basis.

The Tibetan Buddhist Institute and its 10 branches now have more than 3,000 monks and nuns who are studying the sutras, and 240 received senior academic titles between 2005 and 2020. Monastery-run scripture printing houses have been conserved and developed; there are three large-scale printing houses at the Potala Palace and other monasteries. Religious believers regularly participate in various religious and traditional activities such as the Saga Dawa Festival, the Monlam Prayer Festival in Lhasa, the Tour of Gangdise Mountains in the Year of the Horse, and the Tour of Lake Namtso in the Year of the Sheep. Currently more than 600 religious figures serve as deputies or members of people’s congresses and political consultative conferences at various levels.

VIII. Solid Environmental Safety Barriers

The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is known as “the roof of the world” and “the water tower of Asia.” Tibet is an important guarantor of China’s environmental security. The Chinese government attaches great importance to eco-environmental protection in Tibet. It has made constant efforts to improve institutions, provide strong scientific and cultural support, and increase investment in this field, with the goal of building a community of life for humanity and nature.

Tibet’s ecosystems are now generally stable. Environmental quality is improving, a green development model is in place, and eco-environmental rights and interests are more secure. “Clear waters and green mountains are invaluable assets, so is snow-covered land” – this concept is alive in people’s hearts. Tibet has become one of the regions with the best eco-environment in the world.

– Making coordinated progress in improving the eco-environment

Shortly after liberation, the Chinese Academy of Sciences sent specialists to Tibet to survey the local ecology, geology and meteorology. The Chinese government organized two comprehensive scientific investigations on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, in 1973 and 2017.

Since 2012, a number of regulations have been released to improve the system for monitoring and assessing the local eco-environment. These include Opinions on Strengthening Eco-environmental Protection and Pollution Prevention and Control, Opinions on Building a Beautiful Tibet, Opinions on Building National Ecological Culture Demonstration Areas to Boost Efforts for Building a Beautiful Tibet, and Regulations on Developing Ecological Highlands in the Tibet Autonomous Region. By 2020, Tibet had invested a total of RMB81.4 billion in this field.

A holistic approach to conserving mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, and grasslands has been adopted. The Plan for Protecting and Improving the Ecological Safety Barriers in Tibet (2008-2030) and the afforestation project in the watersheds of the Yarlung Zangbo River, Nujiang River, Lhasa River, Nianchu River, Yalong River, and Shiquan River have been implemented.

Work has been carried forward to build eco-environmental culture demonstration areas. Lhasa, Shannan, Nyingchi and Qamdo cities and Ngari Prefecture won national titles for their pioneering work, as did Bayi District of Nyingchi City, Yadong County and Damxung County. Lhunze County has become a base for practicing the concept that clear waters and green mountains are invaluable assets.

The efforts to conserve water and soil and control soil erosion have been increased. A river/lake responsibility system, where officials at different levels are assigned responsibility for the governance of specific rivers and lakes, has been rolled out, involving 14,800 officials at the regional, city, county, township and village levels. In addition, the cleanup campaign initiated in 2018 to regulate illegal riverside occupation, construction, mining and waste, has become a systematic and standard practice. Gar County was recognized for outstanding performance in this regard by the State Council General Office in 2020.

– Maintaining a good eco-environment

Tibet has 11 national nature reserves, 4 national scenic spots, 3 national geological parks, 9 national forest parks, and 22 national wetland parks. Protected natural areas make up almost 40 percent of the region’s land area. Tibet has one comprehensive demonstration area for desertification control, and five closed-off protection zones of desertified land covering an area of 48,000 hectares. From 2004 to 2014, Tibet saw a fall of 92,400 hectares in desertification and a decline of 100,700 hectares in sandification. In 2020, the forest coverage reached 12.3 percent, the comprehensive vegetation coverage of natural grassland grew to 47 percent, and the wetland area totaled 6.53 million hectares.

Wild animals and their habitats are better protected. The population of black-necked cranes has increased from no more than 3,000 in the 1990s to more than 8,000, and the population of Tibetan antelopes is around 300,000. In the second survey of terrestrial wild animals, five new species including white-cheeked macaques were discovered, and another five species were found for the first time in China, including the Eastern Orphean Warbler. The second survey of wild plants showed that the number of giant cypress – under Class A national protection – has steadily increased and been effectively protected. The survey also found 21 species including *Alsophila spinulosa* and *Taxus wallichiana Zuccarini* in new sites.

The water quality of major rivers and lakes is generally good. Quality in both the Yarlung Zangbo River and Lake Namtso is up to Class II standard of the Environmental Quality Standards for Surface Water of China, and that of the Rongbuk River under Mount Qomolangma, Class I standard.

The use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides has been held stable in Tibet, bringing the soil to a natural state. In 2020, Tibet saw its average concentrations of PM10 and PM2.5 declining by 28.1 and 37.5 percent respectively compared with 2015, and its days of good air quality fell just short of 100 percent.

– A green development model in place

Tibet is working to develop itself into a national clean energy base. By 2020, clean energy had contributed 89.1 percent of the installed power-generating capacity in Tibet. From 2015 to the end of 2020, 6.5 billion kwh of clean energy-generated electricity was transmitted, which greatly reduced carbon dioxide emissions.

A pilot national circular economy program has been carried out in Tibet, and efforts have been made to increase the utilization of kitchen waste. Solid wastes have been brought under strict regulation. The rate of safe domestic bio-waste disposal at or above the county level has reached 97.3 percent, and all medical waste requiring collection and treatment is collected and treated properly. The rate of urban sewage disposal grew from 50.2 percent in 2016 to 96.3 percent in 2020.

The initiative to build a beautiful countryside has advanced. Projects have been carried out to replace firewood with clean energy, build sufficient clean and safe toilets, improve living environments, and create green rural areas. A sound system to collect, transport and dispose of rural domestic sewage has been put in place.

A mechanism has been established to provide recompense for eco-protection of grasslands, forests and wetlands, and for damage caused by wild animals. From 2019 to 2020, RMB274 million was allocated in subsidies for selecting and recruiting 78,200 forest rangers, and RMB3.18 billion was granted as compensation and subsidies for forest protection, better ensuring people’s eco-environmental rights and interests.

Campaigns have continued to encourage food saving and oppose food waste. Both urban and rural residents are more aware of the need to save water and electricity. New energy electric vehicles have grown in number. Green living is becoming part of everyday life.

IX. Resolutely Safeguarding National Unity and Social Stability

National unity and social stability are important guarantors of all the undertakings of Tibet, and a solid buttress ensuring a happy life for all ethnic groups in Tibet. Over the years, Western anti-China forces have used Tibet as a pretext to disrupt China and interfere with its development, and the 14th Dalai Lama and his supporters have continued to try to promote “Tibetan independence” by provoking incidents to jeopardize peace and stability in Tibet. The Chinese government has taken effective measures to maintain social stability and harmony in the region.

– The Western anti-China forces’ attempts to create disorder in Tibet to contain China

Over the years, Western anti-China forces have continued to interfere in China’s Tibetan affairs in an attempt to sabotage its social stability. Prior to liberation, the US government had already established contacts with pro-imperialist separatists in Tibet. In the mid-1950s, the CIA helped to train Tibetan separatists in Colorado to carry out violent activities. During the armed rebellion in Tibet in 1959, the CIA helped the 14th Dalai Lama flee and airdropped a large quantity of weaponry to support rebel forces. The CIA was also in direct command of a rebel organization named “Four Rivers and Six Ranges”,[[1]](#footnote-0) providing it with weapons and training instructors.[[2]](#footnote-1)

Since the 1980s, Western forces have played an active role in all the outbreaks of unrest that have taken place in Tibet. In recent years, Western anti-China forces have intensified such efforts. Using the “Tibetan issue” as the excuse, the US government has enacted the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018, and the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020, to interfere in China’s domestic affairs.

– The 14th Dalai group and their attempts to divide China

In 1959, after the failure of their armed rebellion, the reactionaries of Tibet’s ruling class fled to India. They subsequently began to campaign for “Tibetan independence” by force. Later, with the support of the US, they reorganized the “Four Rivers and Six Ranges” rebel organization, and set up a military base in Mustang, a county in Nepal, to engage in long-term attacks across the China-Nepal borders. In 1962, with support from external powers, they built a para-commando force composed of mainly Tibetan exiles to harass Chinese border troops and civilians along the China-India border.

From the late 1970s, under pressure from significant shifts in the international landscape, the 14th Dalai Lama and his supporters began to alter their tactics.

On the one hand, they continued to provoke incidents of violence to keep up pressure on the central government. For example, in 1987, 1988 and 1989 they planned and instigated multiple violent incidents. In 2008, they planned and executed violent riots in Lhasa on March 14 and launched a number of international incidents designed to sabotage the preparations for the Beijing Olympic Games. Since 2011, the 14th Dalai Lama and his supporters have incited Tibetan lamas and lay followers inside China to engage in acts of self-immolation, and released a *Self-Immolation Guide* on the internet, giving rise to a surge of self-immolation incidents in some parts of China.

On the other hand, they proclaimed a commitment to “non-violence” and the “middle way”. At the Congressional Human Rights Caucus in 1987 in Washington DC, the 14th Dalai Lama proposed a Five-Point Peace Plan and in 1988, in Strasbourg in France, he put forward the Strasbourg Proposal. In 2008, the Dalai group presented the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People.

The claims of the “middle way” can be summarized as follows:

• It denies the fact that Tibet has been an integral part of China since ancient times; instead it claims that Tibet was “an independent state”.

• It seeks to establish a “Greater Tibet” that has never existed at any time in history, claiming that Tibet, Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, Qinghai and other areas inhabited by compact communities of both Tibetans and people of other ethnic minorities should be incorporated into a unified administrative region.

• It demands “a high degree of autonomy” that is not subject to any constraint whatsoever from the central government, and denies the leadership of the central government and Tibet’s present social and political systems; it proposes to establish an “autonomous government” under which “Tibetans (in truth the Dalai group) take full charge of all affairs other than diplomacy and national defense”.

• It opposes the central government’s right to garrison troops in Tibet. Despite its superficial agreement that the central government holds the authority over national defense, it demands that the central government “withdraw all Chinese troops” to turn Tibet into an “international zone of peace”.

• In total disregard of the fact that the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has been a multiethnic region since ancient times, it demands that other ethnic groups be driven out of regions where they have lived for generations.

The “middle way” does not tally with China’s history, national reality, state Constitution, laws and basic systems. Neither does it conform to Tibet’s history, reality and ethnic relations. Moreover, it runs counter to the fundamental interests of all the people of China, including the Tibetans.

– Resolutely safeguarding national security and Tibet’s stability

All experience since liberation has proved that without national security, the fundamental interests of the ethnic groups of Tibet cannot be protected. Without a stable social environment, there will be no economic, cultural or eco-environmental development, nor can the people’s right to a stable and happy life be guaranteed. Over the years, the 14th Dalai Lama and his followers, supported by Western anti-China forces, have contributed nothing positive to the social solidarity and progress of Tibet.

Since the 14th Dalai Lama fled abroad in 1959, the central government has exercised great restraint and done its best to provide solutions, for example preserving his position as a vice-chairman of the NPC Standing Committee until 1964. After reform and opening up, the central government offered the 14th Dalai Lama an opportunity to accept the policy that “all patriots belong to one big family, whether they embrace patriotism earlier or later,” and invited him to send representatives to return home for a visit. The central government received 13 visits by private representatives of the 14th Dalai Lama between 1979 and 2002, and granted approval to ten visits from 2002 to 2010. But to the disappointment of the central government, the Dalai Lama has refused to relinquish his political demands.

All the people of China, including the Tibetans, will resolutely safeguard national unity, protect national sovereignty, and fight all separatists and anti-China forces, particularly Western anti-China forces. Steadfast under the twin banners of the Constitution and the law, Tibet has firmly resisted infiltration and sabotage by the 14th Dalai Lama and his supporters, continued to build the region into a place of ethnic solidarity and progress, strengthened the keen sense of identity of the Chinese nation, stayed committed to managing religion in the Chinese context, and guided Tibetan Buddhism to adapt to socialist society and become a bastion of stability in the region.

X. Embarking on a New Journey in the New Era

Since 1978 when China started reform and opening up, the CPC Central Committee has held seven national meetings on Tibet, making major decisions and plans for the region. Entering the new era following the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at the core has attached great importance to the development of Tibet, and General Secretary Xi Jinping has set the direction and made overall plans. He proposed an important strategy – “to govern the country well we must first govern the frontiers well, and to govern the frontiers well we must first ensure stability in Tibet” – and issued instructions to strengthen ethnic unity, and build a beautiful Tibet. He presided over the sixth and seventh national meetings on Tibet, defining guiding principles, objectives, and tasks in the new era. It was decided at the meetings that the central government would support a large number of key construction projects in Tibet, and a series of special preferential policies were enacted benefiting all ethnic groups in Tibet. Under the strong leadership of the CPC, the officials and people in Tibet have worked diligently with one heart and one mind to resolve many long-standing and troublesome problems, and achieved many notable successes that were unimaginable in the past. All-round progress has been made in all endeavors.

In the new era, Tibet is enjoying rapid and sustained growth thanks to social harmony and stability. All those counties formerly classified as poor have risen out of poverty, and the people are leading better lives in every respect. Environmental safeguards in the region have been strengthened. Ethnic unity has been enhanced, religion has found its place in a socialist society, and the borders are secure. Everywhere Tibet is thriving and prospering.

– Laying down the guidelines for governing Tibet in the new era

The world today is undergoing change of a scale unseen in a century. China is at a critical juncture for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and there have been profound changes to the work required and the tasks to be accomplished in Tibet. Based on a keen understanding of the situation, the CPC has summarized its successes in leading the people of Tibet to stability and prosperity, and proposed the guidelines for governing Tibet in the new era. The guidelines are:

• We must uphold CPC leadership, socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the system of regional ethnic autonomy.

• We must uphold Xi Jinping’s strategy on governing the frontiers and ensuring stability in Tibet.

• We must focus on safeguarding national unification and strengthening ethnic unity in the work in Tibet.

• We must govern Tibet in accordance with the law, bring prosperity to Tibet and its residents, unite the people in one heart, and lay a solid foundation for its long-term growth.

• We must take into consideration both the domestic and the international situation.

• We must focus on improving people’s lives and strengthening unity in socioeconomic development.

• We must facilitate ethnic exchanges, communication and integration.

• We must develop religions in a Chinese context, and handle religious affairs in accordance with the law.

• We must prioritize eco-environmental protection.

• We must strengthen the Party, especially in its political convictions.

These guidelines, embodying Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, provide answers to a series of questions on the future direction and strategy in governing Tibet and are to be followed in all work related to Tibet.

– Embarking on a new journey toward modernization

The 70th anniversary of Tibet’s peaceful liberation coincides with the first year of the 14th Five-year Plan period. It is also the year in which China embarks on the great journey toward all-round modernization, after having attained the First Centenary Goal and achieved moderate prosperity in all respects. In the foreseeable future, China will remain committed to the principle of pursuing progress while ensuring stability, implement the new development philosophy, and create a new development model. Driven by reform and innovation, it will strive to meet the people’s growing expectation of a better life, and make plans to coordinate development and security. It will also ensure that the four main tasks embodied in the guidelines for governing Tibet – ensuring stability, facilitating development, protecting the eco-environment, and strengthening the frontiers – will be implemented. This will ensure success in building a prosperous, harmonious and beautiful new socialist Tibet underpinned by unity, civility and modernization. By 2035, new industrialization, IT application, urbanization, and agricultural modernization will have been realized in Tibet. The people will enjoy equal access to basic public services, and substantial progress will have been made in seeking common prosperity for all ethnic groups.

Conclusion

Justice prevails when the mighty wind sweeps all evils away. Seventy years have flashed by in the long course of history. During these seven decades, the CPC has united and led the ethnic peoples of Tibet to achieve historic change and unprecedented success. A thousand years of darkness have dissipated in decades, and Tibet has broken free from its backward, autocratic, isolated past to embrace prosperity, democracy, and an open future. In a fast-changing society with a thriving economy, the Tibetan people lead better, happier lives.

These seventy years have fully demonstrated that the Tibetan people’s fundamental interests can only be protected in a unified country with territorial integrity. Only by upholding CPC leadership, socialism with Chinese characteristics, and regional ethnic autonomy can there be long-term peace, stability and development in Tibet. Only by pursuing reform and opening up can Tibet build its economy and society. Only by seeking people-centered development can Tibet better meet its people’s hopes for a better life. Only by following the Party’s guidelines for governing Tibet in a new era can the region transform into a modern and beautiful new socialist Tibet characterized by unity, prosperity, civility, and harmony.

Guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, all the ethnic peoples in Tibet are following General Secretary Xi’s overall strategy and implementing the decisions made at the Seventh National Meeting on Tibet. More united than ever, they are pressing forward and contributing to the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In Tibet’s brighter future, the people of Tibet can be confident of enjoying better and more fulfilled lives.

1. This refers to the four main rivers and six mountain ranges in Tibet and the Tibetan-inhabited areas of Sichuan Province in southwestern China. – *Tr*. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. *The CIA’s Secret War in Tibet* [Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison, University Press of Kansas: 2002] reveals how America’s Central Intelligence Agency encouraged and eventually controlled Tibet’s revolt against China. – *Ed*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)