APPENDIX I

Tibet’s March towards Modernization

Modernization has been an important issue confronting countries and regions worldwide in modern times. Since the invasion of the Western powers in the mid-19th century, it has been the most important task of the people of all ethnic groups in China, the Tibetan people included, to get rid of poverty and backwardness, shake off the lot of being trampled upon, and build up an independent, united, strong, democratic and civilized modern country. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and especially since the introduction of reform and opening to the outside world, the modernization drive in China has been burgeoning with each passing day, and achieved successes attracting worldwide attention. China is taking vigorous steps to open even wider and become more prosperous. China's Tibet, with its peaceful liberation in 1951 as the starting point, has carried out regional ethnic autonomy and made a historical leap in its social system following the Democratic Reform in 1959 and the elimination of the feudal serf system. Through carrying out socialist construction and the reform and opening-up, Tibet has made rapid progress in its modernization drive and got onto the track of development in step with the other parts of the country, revealing a bright future for its development.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the peaceful liberation of Tibet. Looking back on the course of modernization since its peaceful liberation, publicizing the achievements in modernization made by the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet through their hard work and with the support of the Central Government and the whole nation, and revealing the law of development of Tibet's modernization-these will contribute not only to accelerating the healthy development of Tibet's modernization but also to clearing up various misunderstandings on the "Tibet issue" in the international community and promoting overall understanding of the past and present situations in Tibet.

The rapid social development in Tibet

Modernization has been the fundamental question in the social development of Tibet in modern times. The feudal serfdom under theocracy, which had lasted for several hundred years in Tibet, became an extremely decadent social system that contradicted the progressive trend in the modern world, for it stifled the development of the social productive forces of Tibet, seriously hindered social progress, relegated Tibet to the state
of extreme poverty, backwardness, isolation and decline, to the point verging on total collapse.

**Backward social system and harsh economic exploitation**

The society of old Tibet under feudal serfdom was even more dark and backward than in Europe in the middle ages. The three major estate-holders -- officials, nobles and upper-ranking monks in monasteries -- accounted for less than five percent of Tibet's total population but owned all the farmland, pastures, forests, mountains and rivers, and the majority of the livestock. The serfs and slaves, accounting for more than 95 percent of the population, owned no land or other means of production. They had no personal freedom, had to depend totally on the manors of estate-holders for livelihood or act as their family slaves from generation to generation. They were subjected to the three-fold exploitation of corvee labor, taxes and high-interest loans and their lives were no more than struggles for existence. According to incomplete statistics, there were over 200 kinds of taxes levied by the Kasha (the former local government of Tibet) alone. Slaves had to contribute more than 50 percent or even 70 to 80 percent of their labor free to the Kasha and estate-holders, and over 60 percent of the farmers and herdsmen were burdened with similar high-interest loans.

**Rigid hierarchy and savage political oppression**

The "13-Article Code" and "16-Article Code" of old Tibet divided the people into three classes and nine ranks, enshrining social and political inequality between the different ranks in law. These codes explicitly stated that the life of a person of the highest rank of the upper class was literally worth his weight in gold, while that of a person of the lowest rank of the lower class was worth only the price of a straw rope. Serfs could be sold, transferred, given away, mortgaged or exchanged by their owners, who had the power over their births, deaths and marriages. Male or female serfs belonging to different owners had to pay a "redemption fee" if they wished to marry, and their children were doomed to be serfs for life. Serf-owners could punish their serfs at will. The punishments included flogging, cutting off their hands or feet, gouging out their eyes, chopping off their ears or tongues, pulling out their tendons, drowning them and throwing them down from cliffs.

**Theocracy and the fetters of religion**

Religion and monasteries "commanded the highest respect" in old Tibet with its theocratic socio-political structure. As the sole ideology and an independent politico-
economic entity, they enjoyed immense influence and numerous political and economic privileges and had control over people's spiritual life. The upper-class monks and priests were Tibet's principal political rulers and also the biggest serf-owners. The Dalai Lama, as one of the heads of the Gelug Sect of Tibetan Buddhism and concurrently the leader of the local government of Tibet, had all the political and religious powers in his hands. The former local government of Tibet practiced a dual clerical and secular officials system, in which the monk officials were senior to the lay officials. According to the 1959 statistics, of the 3.3 million kai (unit of measurement for area used by the Tibetan people, 1 kai = 1/15 hectare) of cultivated land in Tibet, 1.2144 million kai were owned by monasteries and upper-class monks, accounting for 36.8 percent of the total cultivated land, while aristocrats and clerical and secular officials owned 24 percent and 38.9 percent, respectively.

The Drepung Monastery owned 185 manors, 20,000 serfs, 300 pastures and 16,000 herdsmen. According to a survey conducted in the 1950s, Tibet had more than 2,700 temples and monasteries and 120,000 monks, or 12 percent of the total population in Tibet, and about one-fourth of the male population were monks. In 1952, Lhasa had an urban population of 37,000, of whom 16,000 were monks. The widespread temples, numerous monks and frequent religious activities consumed a huge amount of manpower and the greater part of material wealth in Tibet, greatly hindering the development of the productive forces there. According to the American Tibetologist Melvyn C. Goldstein, religion and the monasteries were "extremely conservative" and "played a major role in thwarting progress" in Tibet; "This commitment...to the universality of religion as the core metaphor of Tibetan national identity will be seen...to be a major factor underlying Tibet's inability to adapt to changing circumstances."

**Low level of development and a precarious life**

Cruel oppression and exploitation by the feudal serf-owners, and especially the endless consumption of human and material resources by religion and monasteries under the theocratic system and their spiritual enslavement of the people, had gravely damped the laborers' enthusiasm for production, stifled the vitality of the Tibetan society and reduced Tibet to a protracted state of stagnancy. Even in the middle of the 20th century, Tibet was still extremely isolated and backward, almost without a trace of modern industry, commerce, science and technology, education, culture and health care; primitive farming methods were still being used; and herdsmen had to travel from place to place grazing their livestock. There were few strains and breeds of grains and animals, and some of
them had even degenerated. Farm tools were primitive, grain yield was only 4 to 10 times the seeds sown, and the level of both the productive forces and social development was very low. Deaths from hunger and cold, poverty and diseases were commonplace among the serfs, and the streets in Lhasa, Xigaze, Qamdo and Nagqu were crowded with beggars of both sexes, young and old.

Imperialist invasion brought more disasters for the Tibetan people, and deepened the social contradictions in Tibet, making it go from bad to worse. From the middle of the 19th century, China became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, and Tibet, just like most other parts of the country, was invaded by the Western powers. In their invasions of Tibet British imperialists made no scruple about burning, killing and looting, secured many privileges through a number of unequal treaties, and carried out colonialist control and exploitation by wantonly plundering Tibet's resources and dumping their goods on the Tibetan people. At the same time, they fostered their trusted followers from among the ruling class and groomed their agents, in an attempt to divide Tibet from China. Weighed down by the internal and external double oppression and exploitation, the masses of the serfs fared worse and worse, driving them constantly to present petitions to the government, flee from the land, refuse to pay rent or offer corvee service and even raise armed revolts. Danger lurked on every side in Tibet and "the theocratic system is declining like a lamp consuming its last drop of oil." Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme, once a Kaloon (council minister) of the former local government of Tibet, pointed out in the 1940s several times that if Tibet "goes on like this, the serfs will all die in the near future, and the nobles will not be able to live either. The whole Tibet will be destroyed." So there was a historically imperative need for the progress of Tibetan society and the happiness of the Tibetan people to expel the imperialists and shake off the yoke of feudal serfdom.

The founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 brought hope for the deeply distressed Tibetan people. In conforming to the law of historical development and the interests of the Tibetan people, the Central People's Government worked actively to bring about Tibet's peaceful liberation. After that, important policies and measures were adopted for Tibet's Democratic Reform, regional autonomy, large-scale modernization and reform and opening-up. All this has contributed to changing the lot of Tibet and propelling Tibetan society forward in seven-league boots.
The peaceful liberation opened the way for Tibet to march toward modernization

On May 23, 1951 the "Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" (hereinafter referred to as the "17-Article Agreement") was signed by the Central People's Government and the local government of Tibet, marking the realization of the peaceful liberation of Tibet and opening a new page for the development of the region. The peaceful liberation of Tibet, which was a part of China's national democratic revolution, enabled Tibet to shake off the penetration of imperialist forces and the political and economic shackles imposed by them, ended the discrimination and oppression against the Tibetan ethnic group in old China, safeguarded the national sovereignty, unification and territorial integrity of China, realized the unity of all ethnic groups in China and the internal unity of Tibet, and created the essential prerequisites for Tibet to join the other parts of the country in the drive for common progress and development. After the peaceful liberation, the People's Liberation Army and people from other parts of China working in Tibet persisted in carrying out the 17-Article Agreement and the policies of the Central Government, actively helped the Tibetan people build the Xikang-Tibet and Qinghai-Tibet highways, the Damxung Airport, water conservancy projects, modern factories, banks, trading companies, post offices, farms and schools. They adopted a series of measures to help the farmers and herdsmen expand production, started social relief and disaster relief programs, and provided free medical service for the prevention and treatment of epidemic and other diseases. All this has promoted the economic, social and cultural development of Tibet, created a new social atmosphere of modern civilization and progress, produced a far-reaching influence among people of all walks of life in Tibet, ended the long-term isolation and stagnation of the Tibetan society, paved the way for Tibet's march toward a modern society, and opened up wide prospects for Tibet's further development.

The Democratic Reform cleared the way for the modernization of Tibet

In 1951, when Tibet was liberated peacefully, in consideration of the special history and reality of Tibet the "17-Article Agreement" affirmed the necessity of reforming the social system of Tibet and, at the same time, adopted a prudent attitude toward the reform. It stipulated that "the local government of Tibet shall carry out reform voluntarily, and, when the people demand a reform, shall settle it through consultation with the Tibetan leaders." However, some people in the Tibetan ruling group were totally opposed to reform and raised a hue and cry about their determination never to carry it out, in order to
perpetuate the feudal serf system. Faced with the Tibetan people's ever-stronger demand for a democratic reform, instead of following the popular will they ganged up with overseas anti-China forces and raised an armed rebellion on March 10, 1959, in an attempt to split Tibet from the motherland and seek "independence" for Tibet. In order to safeguard the unity of the nation and the basic interests of the Tibetan people, the Central People's Government took decisive measures to suppress the rebellion together with the Tibetan people, and carried out the Democratic Reform of the Tibetan social system.

The Democratic Reform abolished the feudal serf-owners' right to own land and the serfs and slaves' personal bondage to the feudal serf-owners, repealed the old Tibetan laws and barbarous punishments, and annulled the theocratic system and the feudal privileges of the clergy. The reform liberated Tibet's million serfs and slaves politically, economically and spiritually, making them masters of the land and other means of production, giving them personal and religious freedom, and realizing their human rights. The reform greatly liberated the social productive forces in Tibet, and opened up the road toward modernization. According to statistics, the former serfs and slaves got over 2.8 million kai of land in the Democratic Reform and, in 1960, when the Democratic Reform was basically completed, the total grain yield for the whole of Tibet was 12.6 percent higher than in 1959 and 17.7 percent higher than in 1958, before the Democratic Reform. Moreover, the total amount of livestock was 9.9 percent more than in 1959.

The implementation of regional ethnic autonomy provided a firm institutional guarantee for the modernization of Tibet

After the Democratic Reform, the Tibetan people, like people of all other ethnic groups throughout China, enjoyed all the political rights provided by the Constitution and law. In 1961, a general election was held all over Tibet. For the first time, the former serfs and slaves were able to enjoy democratic rights as their own masters, and actively participated in the election of power organs and governments at all levels in the region. Many emancipated serfs and slaves took up leading posts at various levels in the region. In September 1965, the First People's Congress of Tibet was successfully convened, at which the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the Regional People's Government was officially proclaimed. The founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the implementation of regional ethnic autonomy institutionally ensured the realization of the policy of equality, unity, mutual help and common prosperity among all ethnic groups in the region, and guaranteed the Tibetan people's right to equal participation in the administration of state affairs as well as the right to independent administration of
local and ethnic affairs. In this way, an institutional guarantee was provided for Tibet to develop along with the other parts of China, with special support and assistance by the state and according to its local characteristics.

The policy of reform and opening-up gave a powerful impetus to the modernization of Tibet.

The 1980s witnessed a great upsurge of the reform, opening-up and modernization drive in Tibet, as in the other parts of China. To promote the development of Tibet, the Central Government formulated a series of special favorable policies, such as "long-term right to use and independently operate land by individual households" and "long-term policy of individual households' ownership, raising and management of livestock." These policies promoted the reform of the economic system and opening-up in Tibet. Since 1984, 43 projects have been launched in Tibet with state investment and aid from nine provinces and municipalities. The implementation of the policy of reform and opening-up and the state aid have strengthened and invigorated Tibetan industry, agriculture, animal husbandry and the tertiary industry with trade, catering and tourism as its mainstays, raised the overall level of industries and the level of commercialization of economic activities in Tibet, and helped Tibet take another step forward in its economic and social development.

The modernization drive in Tibet has entered the new stage of rapid development with the strategic decision of the Central Government to accord special attention to Tibet and get all the other parts of China to aid Tibet

In 1994, the Central Government held the Third Forum on Work in Tibet, and set the guiding principles for work in the region in the new era as follows: Focusing efforts on economic construction, firmly grasping the two major tasks of developing the economy and stabilizing the situation, securing the high-speed development of the economy, overall social progress and lasting political stability in Tibet, and ensuring continuous improvement of the Tibetan people's living standards. At the forum, the Central Government also adopted the important decision to devote special attention to Tibet and get all the other parts of China to aid Tibet, and formulated a sequence of special favorable policies and measures for speeding up the development of Tibet. The forum formed a mechanism for all-round aid to the modernization of Tibet, by which the state would directly invest in construction projects in the region, the Central Government provide financial subsidies, and the other parts of the country provide counterpart aid. Since 1994, the Central Government has directly invested a total of 4.86 billion yuan in
62 projects; 15 provinces and municipalities and the various ministries and commissions under the State Council have also given aid gratis for the construction of 716 projects, contributing a total of 3.16 billion yuan; and over 1,900 cadres have been sent from all over the country to assist in Tibet's construction. As a result, the production and living conditions in Tibet have been greatly improved and its social and economic developments revved up. In the meantime, Tibet has promoted all-round reform in its economic and technological systems, adjusted its economic structure and mechanism of enterprise operation and management, set up a complete social security system, enlarged its scope of opening-up, and actively encouraged and attracted funds from both home and abroad for its economic construction. In this way, the economy with diverse forms of ownership has developed rapidly, and Tibet's inner vitality for growth has been strengthened. In June 2001, the Central Government held the Fourth Forum on Work in Tibet, at which it drew up an ambitious blueprint for Tibet's overall modernization in the new century, and decided to adopt more effective policies and measures to further strengthen the support for the modernization of Tibet.

With attention from the Central Government, aid from the other parts of the country and the efforts of people of all ethnic groups in Tibet, the development of the region's economy has been speeded up, the people's living standards have been greatly improved, and the modernization drive is vibrant with life as never before. According to statistics, from 1994 to 2000, the gross domestic product (GDP) in Tibet increased by 130 percent, or a yearly increase of 12.4 percent, changing the situation in which Tibet had lagged behind the other parts of China in the GDP growth rate for a long time in the past. Urban residents' disposable income per capita and the farmers and herdsmen's income per capita increased by 62.9 percent and 93.6 percent, respectively; and the impoverished population decreased from 480,000 in the early 1990s to just over 70,000.

To sum up, the development history of Tibet in the past five decades since its peaceful liberation has been one of proceeding from darkness to brightness, from backwardness to progress, from poverty to prosperity and from isolation to openness, and of the region marching toward modernization as a part of the big family of China.

**Tibet's modernization achievement**

In the past 50 years, thanks to the leadership of the Central Government, the aid of the whole nation and the unremitting efforts of the people of all ethnic groups in the region, Tibet has kept marching forward along the road to modernization and made significant achievements that have attracted worldwide attention.
The economy has progressed significantly

During the past 50 years, Tibet has witnessed tremendous changes in its economic system and economic structure and significant progress in its aggregate economic volume. Having thoroughly eliminated the former closed, natural economy based on the manorial system, Tibet is fast on its way toward a modern market economy. In 2000, the region's GDP reached 11.746 billion yuan, twice as much as in 1995, four times as much as in 1990, and over 30 times as much as in the pre-peaceful liberation period. The economic structure is becoming more and more rational. The primary industry accounted for 30.9 percent in the GDP, as against 99 percent 50 years ago, and the proportions of the secondary and tertiary industries rose to 23.2 percent and 45.9 percent, respectively.

Modern industry, having grown from nothing, has gradually become an important pillar of the rapid economic development in Tibet. So far, over 20 branches of the industry have been set up, including energy, light industry, textiles, machine building, lumbering, mining, building materials, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, printing and foodstuff processing. This modern industrial system with Tibetan characteristics has produced some nationally famous brand names, such as Lhasa Beer, Qizheng Tibetan Medicine and Zhufeng Motorcycles. By 2000, Tibet had 482 enterprises at and above the township level and the added value of its secondary industry reached 2.721 billion yuan.

Basic industries, such as energy and transportation, have thrived. Power industry has developed rapidly, and a new energy system has been formed, with hydropower as the mainstay backed up by supplementary energy sources such as geothermal power, wind energy and solar energy. By 2000, there were 401 power plants in Tibet, with a total installed capacity of 356,200 kw and an annual energy output of 661 million kwh -- a world of difference from before the peaceful liberation, when there was only one 125-kw power plant, which worked irregularly and supplied electricity only to a handful of aristocrats. Putting an end to the history of Tibet having not a single highway, a three-dimensional transportation system is now in place, with highway transportation as the major part, and air and pipeline transportation developing in coordination. A highway network now extends in all directions with Lhasa as the center, including such trunk roads as the Qinghai-Tibet, Sichuan-Tibet, Xinjiang-Tibet, Yunnan-Tibet and China-Nepal highways and 15 main highways and 375 branch highways. These roads total 22,500 km, and reach every county and over 80 percent of the townships in the region. The two civil airports in Tibet, Gonggar Airport in Lhasa and Bamda Airport in Qamdo, operate domestic and international routes from Lhasa to Beijing, Chengdu, Chongqing, Xi'an,
Xining, Shanghai, Deqen and Kunming in Yunnan Province, Hong Kong, and Kathmandu of Nepal. Meanwhile, a 1,080-km petroleum pipeline has been built from Golmud in Qinghai Province to Lhasa, the highest-altitude pipeline in the world. It carries over 80 percent of petroleum transported in the region. In June 2001, work started on the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, and the days when the region was inaccessible by rail will be gone for good in the foreseeable future.

The tertiary industry has become the largest industrial sector in Tibet. Such newly emerging industries as modern commerce, tourism, postal services, catering, entertainment and information technology, unknown in old Tibet, have grown by leaps and bounds. Telecommunications have developed particularly speedily, and an advanced modern telecommunications network covering the whole of Tibet has taken shape, with Lhasa as the center, and including cable and satellite transmission together with program-controlled switching systems, digital and mobile communications. In 2000, Tibet Telecom business totaled 384 million yuan-worth and its income was 123 million yuan, 179 times and 1,086 times the 1978 figures, respectively, and on average increasing by 26.6 percent and 24.3 percent respectively each year over the past 22 years. By the end of 2000, the total installed capacity of fixed telephones reached 170,200, and 111,100 telephones were installed. The total installed capacity of mobile telephones has reached 123,000, with 72,300 mobile telephone users. There are also nine Internet websites and 4,513 users. By 2000, the added value of the tertiary industry had reached 5.393 billion yuan, the highest among all the constituents of the region's GDP.

The mode of production in agriculture and animal husbandry has changed radically, and the productive forces and production returns have risen by big margins. Since the peaceful liberation, the state has invested heavily in water conservancy works, and put great efforts into a number of capital construction projects for agriculture and animal husbandry, especially in the comprehensive development of the middle reaches of the Yarlungzangbo, Lhasa and Nyangqu rivers. These endeavors have greatly improved the agricultural and animal husbandry production conditions in Tibet, and are changing the Tibetan peasants and herders' traditional lifestyles of living at the mercy of the elements. A series of agricultural and stockbreeding technologies have been spread widely, including scientific fertilization, improvement of breeds, pest control and stockraising. The mechanization of agriculture and production efficiency have both improved by a large margin, and farming and animal husbandry are advancing along the line of modernization. By 2000, the added value of the primary industry in Tibet had reached 3.632 billion yuan, the total grain yield had reached 962,200 tons, the total
amount of livestock had come to 22.66 million head, self-sufficiency in grains and edible oils had been basically realized, and the distribution of meat and milk per capita had risen above the national average.

**The level of urbanization has constantly improved**

With its natural economy old Tibet lacked the dynamics of urban development and had only a few small cities and towns. Lhasa, the most populous urban center, had a population of just over 30,000. Other places with comparatively large populations were big villages rather than cities, each having only a few thousand residents. Even Lhasa lacked a sound urban operating mechanism of any sort and had scarcely any of the amenities of a proper city. At present, the urban scale of Tibet is expanding constantly together with industrial growth. By 2000, there were two organic cities in Tibet, 72 counties and districts and 112 organic towns. Moreover, the urban population totaled 491,100, and the total urban area was 147 sq m. The comprehensive functions of the cities and towns have improved steadily, and complete systems have taken shape in various fields, such as roads, water supply, public security and community services, basically satisfying the needs of the lives of the urban residents and the economic development of the cities. Tibet is now marching toward modernization in urban appearance and environmental protection. Its urban environmental index now ranks first in the country with the per capita area of its urban public lawns reaching 10.27 sq m and a greenbelt coverage of 24.4 percent. Urban development groups radiating from Lhasa have come into existence in Tibet, while efforts are being made to form an economic pattern centered on cities and towns to promote economic development in neighboring areas and stimulate mutual development through the integration of urban and rural areas.

**Remarkable achievements have been made in opening up**

The policy of reform and opening-up has promoted the unprecedented development of Tibet's commerce, foreign trade and tourism, and strengthened its interrelations and cooperation with the inland areas and the rest of the world. The regional market system has taken initial shape, and is gradually being integrated into the market system of the whole country and even that of the world. A great number of farmers and herdsmen have become businessmen, throwing themselves into the mainstream of the market economy. Commodities from other parts of the country and the world are flowing into Tibet in a continuous stream to enrich both the urban and rural markets and the lives of the local people. A great quantity of Tibetan famous-brand products, and special local products and handicrafts have entered the domestic and international markets. The flourishing of
commerce and trade has given a powerful impetus to the development of the farm and stockbreeding products processing industry and, as a result, agriculture and animal husbandry are going market-oriented. The state has formulated a series of preferential policies to encourage domestic and foreign enterprises to invest in enterprises in Tibet, and expand both domestic and international economic exchanges and cooperation. Tibet has attained the contractual value of US$ 125 million in overseas investment over the past five years. By 2000, its total imports and exports had reached US$ 130 million-worth, of which the total export value came to US$ 113 million.

The "roof of the world" has become one of China's most popular tourist destinations, attracting numerous tourists from both home and abroad with its unique natural views and places of cultural interest. In 2000, Tibet received a total of 598,300 tourists from both home and abroad, of whom 148,900 were overseas tourists, earning a direct income of 780 million yuan, and an indirect income of 2.98 billion yuan, accounting for 6.6 percent and 25.38 percent of the region's GDP, respectively.

**Environmental and economic development has progressed in coordination**

Large-scale development and construction will be certain to bring enormous pressure to bear on the fragile ecological environment of Tibet. Since the initiation of the policy of reform and opening-up, the Central Government and the local government of Tibet have consistently adhered to the strategy of sustainable development, simultaneously planning and implementing environmental protection and economic construction as an integral whole, to guarantee that the demonstration, design, construction and operation of engineering projects would give full consideration to eco-environmental protection to promote coordinated environmental and economic development. The "Regulations on Environmental Protection" and the "Regulations on the Administration of Geological and Mineral Resources" have been formulated and implemented in Tibet, to form a complete system together with such state laws as the "Agrarian Management Law," "Water Law," "Law on Water and Soil Conservation," "Grassland Law" and "Law on the Protection of Wildlife." Now, with the introduction of an effective supervision and management system for environmental protection and pollution control, most of the forests, rivers, lakes, pastures, wetlands, glaciers, snow mountains and wild animals and plants in the region are well protected, and the water, air and environmental quality is excellent. Eighteen nature reserves at the national and provincial levels have been established, including those in Changtang, Mount Qomolangma and the Yarlungzangbo Grand Canyon, whose
combined area accounts for half of the total area of China's nature reserves, playing an important role in the protection and improvement of the fragile plateau eco-environment. Over the past few years, Tibet has invested over 50 million yuan in the control of waste water and gas at enterprises and institutions such as the Lhasa Brewery, Yangbajain Power Plant, Lhasa Leather Plant, People's Hospital of the Autonomous Region and Lhasa Cement Plant, effectively improving the urban environment and the quality of the region's water. Since 1991, Tibet has invested a total of 900 million yuan in carrying out the development projects in the areas of the Yarlungzangbo, Lhasa and Nyangqu rivers, playing an active role in the prevention and control of soil erosion and the halting of desertification through the construction of water conservancy works, the improvement of pastures, the amelioration of medium- and low-yield fields, and large-scale afforestation, achieving remarkable comprehensive benefits for coordinated social, economic and environmental development. According to the environmental evaluation indices, Tibet's ecology, which basically remains in its primordial condition, is the best in China in terms of environmental conditions. With the implementation of the state's strategy of large-scale development of the western region and the carrying out of the essential points of the Fourth Forum of the Central Government on Work in Tibet, the region is strengthening its eco-environmental protection and planning to invest 22.7 billion yuan and launch 160 key projects for ecological protection by the mid-21st century to further protect and improve its ecological environment.

Rapid progress has been made in education, science and technology, and medical and health care.

In old Tibet there was not a single school in the modern sense, and education was monopolized by monasteries. The enrollment ratio of school-age children was less than two percent, and the illiteracy rate of the young and middle-aged people reached 95 percent. But now, education has been widely popularized, and the broad masses of the people enjoy the right to receive education. The state has invested enormously in developing education, and a complete education system is now in place, covering regular education, preschool education, adult education, vocational education and special education. By 2000, Tibet had set up 956 schools of all kinds, with a total enrollment of 381,100 students; the enrollment ratio of school-age children had increased to 85.8 percent; the illiteracy rate had declined to 32.5 percent; and 33,000 persons had received education above the junior college level, accounting for 12.6 per thousand of the region's total population and higher than the average national level. Now Tibet not only boasts its
own master's and doctorate degree holders, but also a number of nationally renowned experts and scholars.

Growing out of nothing, modern science and technology have been developing rapidly. There was no modern scientific research institute in Tibet before its peaceful liberation, and even such applied technology as astronomy and calendrical calculation were monopolized by the monasteries behind a mysterious religious facade. Attaching great importance to scientific research and the popularization and application of science and technology, the Central Government and the local government of Tibet have set up 25 scientific research institutes over the past half century, employing 35,000 professional scientific and technical personnel in disciplines such as history, economics, population, linguistics and religion, and dozens of sectors such as agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, ecology, biology, Tibetan medicine and pharmacology, salt lakes, geo-thermal and solar energy, among which studies in Tibetology, plateau ecology, Tibetan medicine and pharmacology take the lead in the country. Besides, a number of academic achievements made in Tibet are of worldwide influence.

Medical and health care has grown vigorously. In the old days, when traditional Tibetan medicine was monopolized by feudal nobles and monasteries, the region was extremely short of doctors and medicine, and most sick people lacked both money for medical care and access to doctors. Now a medical and health network has been established in Tibet, integrated with traditional Chinese, Western and Tibetan medicines, covering all the cities and villages in the region, with Lhasa as the center. Tibetan medicine and pharmacology, with unique ethnic features, are promoted all over China and abroad. By 2000, the medical and health organizations in the region had increased to 1,237, with 6,348 beds and 8,948 professionals. The numbers of hospital beds and health workers available per thousand people in Tibet exceeded the national average level. At present, the cooperative medical service program covers 80 percent of the Tibetan rural areas, and 97 percent of children have been immunized against epidemic diseases. There is no longer any lack of medicine, and the level of the Tibetan people's health has improved substantially. The incidence of various infectious and endemic diseases prevalent in old Tibet, such as smallpox, cholera, venereal diseases, macula, typhoid fever, scarlet fever and tetanus, has declined to eight per thousand, and some of the diseases have been wiped out. The childbirth mortality rate has dropped from 50 per thousand in 1959 to approximately seven per thousand; and the infant mortality rate, from 430 to 6.61 per thousand. The average life expectancy of the people has increased from 35.5 years in the 1950s to the present 67 years. The population of old Tibet had increased rather slowly; over the 200-
odd years before the 1950s, it had fluctuated at around one million. (According to the census of the Qing Dynasty government from 1734 to 1736, Tibet had a population of 941,200, and the population reported by the Tibetan local government headed by the Dalai Lama in 1953 was one million, an increase of only 58,000 in 200 years.) However, over the 40-odd years since the Democratic Reform, Tibet's population had increased to 2.5983 million by 2000, or an increase of more than 160 percent.

Considerable achievements have been made in sports. A number of sports facilities up to the international standards have been built in Tibet, and traditional Tibetan sports have been revived, standardized and popularized, some of them even having been included in national competitions. Some excellent athletes from Tibet have scored outstanding achievements in various national sports games and competitions, and in mountain climbing in particular Tibetans have always taken the lead in the country. In 1999, the Sixth National Ethnic Games were held jointly by Tibet and Beijing, further improving the level of Tibetan sports.

The fine aspects of traditional Tibetan culture have been explored, protected and developed

The state has invested a huge amount of capital, gold and silver in the maintenance and protection of the key historical monuments in Tibet. The Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple have been included in UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List. The collation of the Tibetan-language Tripitaka (Gangyur and Tengyur) has been completed. Known as an "encyclopedia" of ancient Tibet, the Bonist Tripitaka has been sorted out in a systematic way and published in its entirety. The Life of King Gesar, which had been handed down orally for centuries, has reached the grand total of more than 200 volumes. Thanks to the great support of the state and unremitting efforts in the past few decades, more than 300 handwritten and block-printed copies of this "Homeric epic of the East" have been collected, of which more than 70 volumes have been published in the Tibetan language, over 20 volumes in the Chinese language, and several volumes in English, Japanese and French. Folk songs, dances, dramas, tales and other forms of artistic expression have been refined and imbued with new ideas and higher forms of expression for enjoyment by the general public. The state has invested in the construction of a large number of cultural and recreational facilities with complete functions and advanced facilities in Tibet, such as museums, libraries, exhibition halls and cinemas, in sharp contrast to the old days when Tibet almost had no cultural and recreational facilities to speak of. By 2000, the Tibet Autonomous Region had more than 400 public cultural centers, more than 25 professional
theatrical troupes of various kinds, such as the Song and Dance Ensemble, Tibetan Opera Troupe and Modern Drama Troupe of the Tibet Autonomous Region, more than 160 amateur performance troupes, and 17 itinerant performance troupes at the county level. They can meet the demands of the broad masses of the people for cultural entertainment.

**Tibetan's characteristics and traditions have been respected and carried on in a scientific way.**

The Tibet Autonomous Region has the right to decide its local affairs and work out relevant laws and regulations in accordance with the law and local political, economic and cultural characteristics, as well as the right to flexibly implement or cease to implement relevant decisions of the state organs at the higher levels, upon approval by the higher authorities. Since 1965, the Regional People's Congress and its Standing Committee have formulated and promulgated more than 160 local laws and regulations, involving the building of political power, economic development, culture and education, spoken and written language, protection of cultural relics, protection of wildlife and natural resources and other aspects, thus effectively safeguarding the special rights and interests of the Tibetan people. For instance, the power and administrative organs of the Tibet Autonomous Region have designated the Tibetan New Year, Shoton (Yogurt) Festival and other traditional Tibetan festivals as the region's official holidays, apart from the official national holidays. Out of consideration for the special natural and geographical factors of Tibet, the region has fixed the work week at 35 hours, five hours fewer than the national work hours per week.

The Tibetan people's freedom of religious belief and their traditional customs and habits have been respected and protected. According to statistics, since the 1980s the state has allocated more than 300 million yuan and a large amount of gold, silver and other materials for the maintenance and protection of the monasteries in Tibet. For instance, the state allocated more than 55 million yuan for the repair of the Potala Palace, and the renovation lasted more than five years, being the largest project and involving the largest amount of capital in the maintenance history of the palace in the past few centuries. At present, Tibet has 1,787 monasteries and sites for religious activities, and over 46,000 resident monks and nuns; the region's various important religious festivals and activities are held normally; and every year more than one million Tibetan people go to Lhasa to pay homage. While maintaining the traditional Tibetan ways and styles of costume, diet and housing, the Tibetan people have absorbed many new modern civilized customs in
the aspects of clothing, food, housing and transportation, as well as marriage and funerals, thus greatly enriching their lives.

The Tibetan people's freedom to study, use and develop their own spoken and written language is fully protected. The government has established the special Tibetan Language Work Guidance Committee and editing and translation organs so as to promote the study, use and development of the Tibetan language. The Tibetan language is a major course of study for schools at all levels in Tibet. Tibetan textbooks and reference materials have been compiled, translated and published for all courses at all levels of schools from primary to senior high. Tibet University has compiled 19 varieties of teaching materials in the Tibetan language, which have already been used on a trial basis. The laws and regulations, resolutions, announcements and other official documents issued by the Regional People's Congress and the Regional People's Government, and the name plates and signs of public institutions and sites are written in both the Tibetan and Chinese languages. The courts and procuratorates at all levels handle cases and issue legal documents in the Tibetan language with regard to the Tibetan litigants and other participants.

Newspapers, and radio and TV stations use both the Tibetan and Chinese languages. The Tibet People's Radio Station broadcasts Tibetan-language items 20.5 hours a day, making up 50 percent of the station's total broadcasting hours and amount. The Tibet TV Station releases 12 hours of programs in the Tibetan language every day, and the channels in the Tibetan language were formally relayed via satellite in 1999. Now Tibet has 23 Tibetan-language newspapers and magazines, and the Tibet Daily has installed computer editing and typesetting in the Tibetan language. Great progress has been made in the standardization of information technology in the Tibetan language. The Tibetan code has been brought up to the national and international standards, becoming the first minority written language in China to reach the international standards.

**The people's quality of life has greatly improved**

Social and economic development has improved the people's material and cultural life remarkably. In 2000, people of all ethnic groups in Tibet had basically shaken off poverty, and had enough to eat and wear; and some people were living a fairly comfortable life. Along with the improvement of the people's livelihood, diversified consumption patterns have appeared, and such consumer goods as refrigerators, color TV sets, washing machines, motorcycles and wristwatches have entered ordinary families. Many farmers and herdsmen have become well-off and have built new houses; some have
even bought automobiles. Currently, Tibet ranks first in per capita housing in the country. Radio, television, telecommunications, the Internet and other modern information transmission means, which are at the same levels of the country and the rest of the world, are now parts of the Tibetans' daily life. By 2000, the coverage of radio stations had reached 77.7 percent of the population in Tibet, and that of TV stations, 76.1 percent. News about the rest of the country and other parts of the world reach most people in Tibet by means of radio and TV, and they can obtain information from and make contact with other parts of the country and the rest of the world through telephone, telegram, fax or the Internet at any time.

The people's political status has been constantly raised, and their participation in political affairs is becoming more extensive with each passing day. Like the people of other ethnic groups in China, the Tibetan people have the right to vote and stand for election, and extensively participate in the administration of state and local affairs according to law. Of the deputies to the National People's Congress, 19 are from Tibet, of whom over 80 percent are of the Tibetan ethnic group or other ethnic minorities. Of the deputies to the people's congresses at the regional, county and township levels, those from the Tibetan ethnic group and other ethnic minorities make up 82.4 percent, 92.62 percent and 99 percent, respectively. The main leading posts of the people's congresses, governments, political consultative conferences, and courts and procuratorates at all levels in the region are filled by Tibetan citizens, and Tibetan cadres also hold leading posts in all the state organs at the central level. Of the chairman and vice-chairmen of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Tibetans and people of other ethnic minorities make up 71.4 percent; of the members of the Standing Committee of the Regional People's Congress, 80 percent; and of the chairman and vice-chairmen of the Regional People's Government, 77.8 percent; of the total cadres in Tibet, 79.4 percent; and of all the technical personnel in Tibet, 69.36 percent.

Tibet is still an underdeveloped area in China, because it is located on the "roof of the world," which is frigid, lacks oxygen and has bad natural conditions. Another reason is that Tibet had very little to start with and its social and historical conditions were burdened with the legacy of centuries of backward feudal serfdom. Tibet's economy is small; its development level is low; agriculture, animal husbandry and the ecological environment are fragile; the infrastructure facilities are weak; and science and technology and education are backward. In addition, Tibet lacks the ability for self-accumulation and development, and its modernization level lags far behind that of the southeastern coastal areas of China. But it is beyond doubt that the development of Tibet in the past half
century has greatly changed its former poor and backward features, and laid a solid foundation for realizing a leapfrog development in its modernization drive.

**The historical inevitability of Tibet’s Modernisation**

Fifty years is a short period in the long process of human history. However, in the past 50 years Tibet, an ancient and mysterious land, has undergone tremendous changes far beyond comparison with those in any other era. Tibet has bidden farewell to the poor, backward, isolated and stagnant feudal serf society, and is forging ahead toward a modern people's democratic society featuring constant progress, civilization and opening-up, and its modernization drive has won world-renowned achievements. First, the situation in which a small number of feudal serf-owners monopolized Tibet's political power and material and cultural resources has been thoroughly changed, and all the people in Tibet have become masters administering Tibetan society, and the creators and beneficiaries of the society's material and cultural wealth. As a result, the people's status and quality have greatly improved. Second, the isolated, stagnant and declining old Tibetan society has been thoroughly smashed; economic development has advanced by leaps and bounds; people's material and cultural life has greatly improved; the modernization drive has developed in an unprecedented way; and an overall-progress situation has appeared in the constant reform and opening-up. Third, Tibet has thoroughly abolished ethnic oppression and discrimination and cleaned up the filth and mire left over from the old Tibetan society; Tibet's ethnic characteristics and the fine aspects of its traditional culture have won full respect and protection under the regional ethnic autonomy system; with the progress of the modernization drive, they have been imbued with the current contents that reflect the people's new life and the new requirements of social progress, and have thus been carried forward in a process of scientific inheritance.

The development in the past 50 years has demonstrated the historical inevitability of Tibet's march toward modernization, and revealed the objective law of Tibet's modernization.

**Tibet's march toward modernization conforms to the world historical trend and the law of development of human society, and embodies the internal demands of Tibet's social development and the fundamental interests and wishes of the Tibetan people.**

Realizing modernization has been a common issue facing all countries and regions in the world in modern times, as well as a natural historical course when human society is changing from an underdeveloped state to a developed one, from ignorance and backwardness to civilization and progress, from relatively independent development in a
closed society to high-speed development in an all-round way in opening-up, cooperation and competition. At the very beginning, modernization appeared following the rise and expansion of the capitalist countries in the West. For a considerable length of time, the big powers in the West monopolized the fruits of modernization and used them in the invasion and colonial rule in the Third World countries. With the rise of the decolonization movement in the 20th century, getting rid of poverty and backwardness and realizing modernization became the road that the Third World countries had to take to realize their complete independence and the invigoration of their nations. Historical development has proved that the modernization tide is enormous and powerful, that those who go with it will prosper while those who go against it will perish. Tibet's productive forces, mode of production and social and political systems in the modern era were in the extremely backward state of the Middle Ages, and came near the verge of collapse after Tibet was subject to imperialist invasion and control. Ending imperialist invasion and control, reforming the backward social and political systems and mode of production and realizing modernization have historically become the only way out and the most urgent question for social progress in Tibet. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Tibet, through the peaceful liberation, Democratic Reform, socialist construction, and reform and opening-up, has broken away from the clutches of imperialism, entered the modern society of people's democracy from the feudal serf society that lagged far behind the times, realized high-speed economic development and all-round social development, and headed toward modernization step by step. All these comply with the world tide of modernization and the law of development of human society, and embody the demand for social progress in Tibet and the fundamental aspiration of the Tibetan people.

**Tibet's modernization is an inseparable part of China's modernization drive, and the inevitable demand from the people of all ethnic groups in China to realize common prosperity and the Chinese nation to realize great rejuvenation**

In the centuries-long course of historical development, our 56 ethnic groups, including the Tibetan ethnic group, have jointly developed China's territory, and formed the big family of the Chinese nation, in which all the ethnic groups share weal and woe, and are inseparable from each other. As an integral part of Chinese territory, Tibet has always gone through thick and thin together with the motherland for common development. Tibet's progress and development are closely related to those of the motherland, and the motherland's destiny directly affects Tibet's future. In modern times, China was reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society; Chinese territory, including Tibet, was subject
to invasion and devastation by the big powers of the West; and China was confronted with the fate of being carved up and dismembered because of its weak national strength and the corruption and incompetence of feudal autocracy. Along with the victory of the national democratic revolution in China and the founding of the People's Republic of China, Tibet realized peaceful liberation, drove away the imperialist forces, took the course of modernization, threw off the heavy shackles of feudal serfdom through the Democratic Reform, and smoothed the road to modernization. As Tibet is a relatively backward area, its development has always been the concern of the Central Government and the people of all ethnic groups in China. In the past 50 years, the state has paid special attention to the social and economic development of Tibet. It has given a powerful impetus to Tibet's modernization by granting it special preferential policies in terms of finance, tax revenue, banking and other aspects, offering energetic support in capital, technology and human resources, investing an accumulative total of close to 50 billion yuan, sending a large amount of materials and dispatching a large number of cadres and technical personnel to help Tibet. We may well say that Tibet's progress and development in the past 50 years has been achieved under the correct leadership of the three generations of leading collectives of the central authorities, with Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin at the core in different periods. This has been inseparable from the unification and development of the motherland and the selfless support of the whole nation; it is also a vivid embodiment of the new ethnic relations of equality, unity, mutual help and common development among all ethnic groups in China.

History has proved that Tibet's modernization cannot be separated from that of the motherland, and the motherland's modernization cannot be realized without that of Tibet. Without Tibet's modernization, the motherland's modernization would be incomplete and incomprehensive. Without the independence and prosperity of the motherland, Tibetan society would not have new life and development. Only when Tibet's modernization drive is merged with the motherland's modernization and wins the support and help of the people throughout the country, can Tibet tightly grasp the historical opportunities, realize speedy development, and achieve constant progress and prosperity. The vigorous development of the motherland's modernization is powerful backing for Tibet's modernization. The correct leadership and sturdy support of the Central Government and the selfless support of the people of all ethnic groups in China are the powerful guarantee and necessary conditions for the speedy and healthy development of Tibet's modernization drive.
The modernization drive of Tibet is the common cause of the people of all the ethnic groups there

The focus must be put on man, so as to promote the all-round social progress and sustainable development.

The course of Tibet's development over the past 50 years has been a process of continuous human emancipation and advance, as well as the all-round progress of society and the harmonious development of modernization and the environment. The people of all ethnic groups in Tibet have always been the mainstay and basic motive power behind the region's modernization drive, and also the beneficiaries of the results of its development. Tibet's peaceful liberation and the Democratic Reform emancipated the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet from imperialist invasion and the inhuman bonds of the feudal serfdom, making them masters of the nation and the Tibetan society. They showed enormous enthusiasm and exerted all their strength, and became the principal force propelling Tibet's modernization. With the sense of responsibility as the masters of their society, they took an active part in the great cause of building a new Tibet and a new life. They struggled in concert, advanced with a pioneering spirit, laid the first stone for the construction with arduous efforts, and upheld the principle that economic construction and social progress should be undertaken simultaneously, and the economy and environment developed harmoniously. In this way, they gave a mighty thrust to the modernization process of Tibet. The achievements attained in the 50 years of Tibet's modernization drive have fully demonstrated the success of the struggle of the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet and embodied the enormous strength of the Tibetan people. Experience has shown that the concerted struggle of the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet is the dynamo propelling the region's modernization drive. Only by maximizing the zeal, initiative and creativity of the people in Tibet and channeling the concern of the Central Government and the support of other parts of the country into Tibet's own advantages for development can miracles be created in Tibet's modernization drive. Moreover, only by proceeding from the fundamental interests and needs of the Tibetan people and adhering to the sustainable development strategy can Tibet's modernization drive develop quickly and soundly.

As Tibet's modernization drive is unfolding in the unique area of Tibet, it must proceed from Tibet's actual conditions and take the road with Tibet's local characteristics.
Located on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Tibet is completely different from other regions in geographic environment, natural conditions, historical development, ethnic composition, religious beliefs, cultural traditions, lifestyle and customs. The region's modernization drive must proceed from the actual conditions of Tibet and take into account Tibet's history and reality. Its primary aim should be to spur the development of Tibet's productive forces and social progress, as well as the development and welfare of the people of Tibet. The adverse natural conditions, backward social and economic basis and the complicated background of Tibet's historical development in modern times dictate that Tibet must take modernization as the key link and realize rapid development with special support and help from the Central Government and the rest of the country. In addition, to realize the sustainable, all-round and harmonious development of society and the economy, Tibet must correctly handle the relations between reform, development and stability, utilize natural resources rationally and protect the ecological environment.

For historical reasons, most of the Tibetans in the region are religious believers and religious influences have permeated Tibetan culture, art, social customs and daily life. How to correctly handle the ethnic and religious problems is a long-standing issue of great importance in Tibet's modernization drive. The 50-year development of Tibet shows that accelerating modernization is where the basic interests of the people in Tibet lie, and also the key to the realization of ethnic equality and common development. It is an important guarantee for the sound development of Tibet's modernization drive to uphold the system of regional ethnic autonomy, ensure in practice that the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet, especially the Tibetan people, exercise the right of self-government in administering local affairs according to law, and completely respect their culture and traditions, customs and habits, spoken and written language, and religious beliefs. Only by observing the following principles can a modernization road with Tibetan local and ethnic characteristics be opened up: Focusing on economic construction; upholding the policies of reform and opening-up; combining the protection of the freedom of religious belief with separation of religion from politics; actively guiding religion to gear to the needs of modernization and social progress; and maintaining and promoting Tibet's ethnic characteristics while energetically developing modern industries, science, education and culture, and propelling the modernization of Tibet's traditional industries and culture.

The modernization drive of Tibet has been forging ahead consistently during the protracted struggle against the Dalai Lama clique and international hostile forces.
As the question of Tibet's modernization emerged against a complicated historical background, it was inevitable that the modernization in Tibet was connected with international struggles. Over a long period of time, between the Dalai Lama clique and international hostile forces on the one hand and the Chinese Government and people on the other, there have been struggles on the "Tibet issue," with the former trying to split Tibet from the rest of China and halt its modernization, and the latter trying to maintain the unity of the country and promote Tibet's modernization. In modern times, a handful of the political and religious rulers in Tibet, in order to safeguard the vested interests of the serf-owner class and the crumbling feudal serfdom, tried by hook or by crook to hinder the modernization of Tibetan society, and even went so far as to collaborate with the imperialist aggressor forces to unleash the "Tibet independence" campaign, in an attempt to split the country and prevent the peaceful liberation of Tibet. After Tibet's peaceful liberation, the Dalai Lama clique, regardless of the patient forbearance of the Central Government and the strong demand of the Tibetan people, spared no efforts to try to check the Democratic Reform and modernization drive, and, with the support of international hostile forces, stirred up an armed rebellion for the purpose of splitting the motherland. When the rebellion had failed and the Dalai Lama clique fled abroad, it even did not scruple to collude with the international anti-China forces to constantly whip up world opinion, wantonly conduct activities aimed at splitting China, slander Tibet's achievements in economic construction and social progress, and by every means hinder and sabotage the modernization of Tibetan society.

The Dalai Lama clique and international hostile forces slandered the peaceful liberation of Tibet and the expulsion of the imperialist forces from Tibet as "China's occupation of Tibet"; denigrated the Central Government's efforts to propel Tibet's modernization as the "elimination of Tibet's ethnic characteristics"; misrepresented the rapid growth of Tibet's economy as "destruction of Tibet's environment"; vilified the concern and support of the Central Government and the whole nation for the modernization of Tibet as "plundering Tibet's resources," "intensifying control over Tibet" and "Han-Chinese assimilation of Tibet"; calumniated the abolition of theocracy and the secular privileges of the clergy and monasteries as "extinguishing religion"; distorted the promotion of traditional Tibetan culture in the new era and the unprecedented development of modern science, education and culture in Tibet as "extirpation of Tibetan culture," and so on and so forth. In a word, whatever was beneficial to Tibet's modernization and social progress and the happiness of the Tibetan people, they willfully misrepresented and left no stone unturned to oppose. This fully reveals the reactionary nature of the Dalai Lama clique, which represents the
backward relations of production of feudal serfdom, the retrogressive religious culture of the theocratic system, and the interests of the dying privileged few of the feudal serf-owner class. Besides, it fully exposes the sinister mentality of some hostile foreign forces in their vain attempt to utilize the "Tibet issue" to sabotage the stability of China, split China's territory, and prevent China from developing and prospering.

Facts speak louder than words, and people have a sense of natural justice. It is universally acknowledged that Tibet is a part of China's territory, and the progress made by the Tibetan community is there for all to see. China has conformed to the trend of the times and followed the wishes of the people in its efforts to promote the modernization of Tibet and combat the Dalai Lama clique's separatist activities. It is only right and proper to do so. The history of 50 years since the peaceful liberation of Tibet shows that the trend of the times cannot be checked, and the tide of history is irreversible. Tibet's modernization and social progress are part of the general trend and popular feeling. Any lie will certainly be revealed by the objective facts of Tibet's development; any perverse acts to turn the clock back, prevent Tibet's modernization drive and separate Tibet from China are doomed to ignominious failure.

Human society has ushered in a new century, and peace and development are the two major themes in the world today. China has embarked upon the new development stage of building, in a comprehensive way, a society in which people enjoy a fairly comfortable life, and of accelerating the reform and opening-up and modernization -- a stage in which the strategy of large-scale development of the western region, as a part of the third-step development strategy of China's modernization drive, is being carried out in an all-round way. With a view to national development and the actual conditions in Tibet, the Fourth Forum on Work in Tibet convened by the Central Government set the strategic objectives for promoting Tibet's modernization in the new century, from simply speeding it up to ensuring a leap forward. The forum also determined to further intensify support for Tibet's development. In this regard, during the Tenth Five-Year Plan period (2001-2005) the Central Government and various parts of the country are to invest 32.2 billion yuan to assist Tibet in constructing 187 projects, and the Central Government is to subsidize Tibet to the tune of 37.9 billion yuan. In addition, other special preferential policies and measures are to be formulated. All this has created new and favorable conditions and rare opportunities for Tibet's modernization drive. It can be confidently asserted that, on the solid foundation laid over the last 50 years and with energetic support and help from the Central Government and people all over the country, Tibet will ultimately realize vigorous development in the process of its modernization drive through arduous efforts, and witness a still more brilliant and splendid future.
Fifty years of democratic reforms in Tibet

Tibet has been an inseparable part of China since ancient times. The peaceful liberation of Tibet, the driving out of the imperialist aggressor forces from Tibet, the democratic reform and abolition of theocratic feudal serfdom in Tibet were significant parts of the Chinese people's national democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism in modern history, as well as major historical tasks facing the Chinese government after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Prior to 1959, Tibet had long been a society of feudal serfdom under theocratic rule, a society which was even darker than medieval society in Europe. The 14th Dalai Lama, as a leader of the Gelug Sect of Tibetan Buddhism and also head of the Tibetan local government, monopolized both political and religious power, and was the chief representative of the feudal serf owners, who, accounting for less than five percent of the total population of Tibet, possessed the overwhelming part of the means of production, and monopolized the material and cultural resources of Tibet. The serfs and slaves, making up over 95 percent of the total population, suffered destitution, cruel oppression and exploitation, and possessed no means of production or personal freedom whatsoever, not to mention other basic human rights. The long centuries of theocratic rule and feudal serfdom stifled the vitality of Tibetan society, and brought about its decline and decay.

In 1951, the Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (hereinafter the "17-Article Agreement") was signed. The Agreement enabled Tibet to repel the imperialist forces and realize peaceful liberation, and created the essential prerequisites for Tibet to join the other parts of the country in the drive for common progress and development.

The "17-Article Agreement" prescribed the necessity of reforming the social system of Tibet, and stressed that "the local government of Tibet shall carry out reform voluntarily." However, in consideration of the special circumstances of Tibet, the Central People's Government adopted a circumspect attitude toward the reform. With great patience, tolerance and sincerity, it reasoned and waited for the local upper ruling strata of Tibet to "carry out reform voluntarily." Instigated and supported by imperialist forces, however,
some people in the upper ruling strata, despite the ever-growing demand of the people for
democratic reform, were totally opposed to reform and proclaimed their determination
never to carry it out. In an attempt to perpetuate feudal serfdom, these people publicly
abandoned the "17-Article Agreement" and staged an all-out armed rebellion on March
10, 1959. In order to safeguard the unity of the nation and the basic interests of the
Tibetan people, the Central People's Government took decisive measures to quell the
rebellion together with the Tibetan people. Meanwhile, a vigorous democratic reform
started on a mass scale in Tibet. The reform overthrew Tibet's feudal serfdom system
under theocracy and liberated about one million serfs and slaves, ushering in a new era
with the people becoming their own masters. The democratic reform was the most
extensive, deepest and greatest social reform in the history of Tibet, and signified an
epoch-making event in Tibet's history of social development and the progress of its
human rights, as well as a significant advance in the history of human civilization and
universal human rights.

Over the past half century, thanks to the care of the Central People's Government and aid
from the whole nation, the liberated people of all ethnic groups in Tibet have, in the
capacity of masters of the nation, enthusiastically participated in the grand course of
constructing a new society and creating a new lifestyle, and worked unprecedented
miracles in Tibetan history. The social system of Tibet has developed by leaps and
bounds; its modernization has advanced rapidly; Tibetan society has undergone earth­
shaking historic changes; and remarkable progress has been witnessed in the cause of
human rights that has attracted worldwide attention.

The year 2009 marks the 50th anniversary of the democratic reform in Tibet. The
magnificent process of the democratic reform and the profound changes that have taken
place in Tibet over the past 50 years shed light on the laws governing the social
development of Tibet and expose the lies and rumors of various kinds spread by the Dalai
Lama clique about the so-called "Tibet issue," and the evil nature of the 14th Dalai Lama
through facts, making clear historical rights and wrongs, and the truth about Tibet and its
development and changes

Old Tibet- A society of Feudal Serfdom under Theocracy

Before the democratic reform in 1959, Tibet had been a society of feudal serfdom under
theocracy, a society characterized by a combination of political and religious power, and
ruthless political oppression and economic exploitation by the serf-owner class, comprising the three major estate-holders — local administrative officials, nobles and upper-ranking lamas in the monasteries — of the broad masses of serfs and slaves. For centuries, the Tibetan people had been living in dire misery and suffering from the harshness of life, and their society had sunk into a grave state of poverty, backwardness, isolation and decline, verging on total collapse.

Medieval theocratic society

British military journalist Edmund Candler, who visited Lhasa in 1904, recorded the details of the old Tibetan society in his book *The Unveiling of Lhasa*: "... at present, the people are medieval, not only in their system of government and their religion, their inquisition, their witchcraft, their incarnations, their ordeals by fire and boiling oil, but in every aspect of their daily life." The most distinctive feature of the social system of old Tibet was theocracy, a system which ensured that the upper religious strata and the monasteries were together the political power holders as well as the biggest serf owners, possessing all kinds of political and economic privileges, and manipulating the material and cultural lives of the Tibetan people for their own advantage. *The Unveiling of Lhasa* goes on, "The country is governed on the feudal system. The monks are the overlords, the peasantry their serfs." "Powerful lamas controlled everything in Tibet, where even the Buddha himself couldn't do anything without the support of the lamas," he added. Statistics show that before the democratic reform in 1959 Tibet had 2,676 monasteries and 114,925 monks, including 500 senior and junior Living Buddhas and other upper-ranking lamas, and over 4,000 lamas holding substantial economic resources. About one quarter of Tibetan men were monks. The three major monasteries — Drepung, Sera and Ganden — housed a total of more than 16,000 monks, and possessed 321 manors, 147,000mu (15mu equal one hectare, it is locally called kep in Tibet — ed.) of land, 450 pastures, 110,000 head of livestock, and over 60,000 serfs. The vicious expansion of religious power under theocracy depleted massive human resources and most material resources, shackled people's thinking and impeded the development of productivity. Charles Bell, who lived in Lhasa as a British trade representative in the 1920s, described in his book *Portrait of A Dalai Lama: The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth* that the theocratic position of the Dalai Lama enabled him to administer rewards and punishments as he wished, because he held absolute power over both this life and the next of the serfs, and coerced them with such power. American Tibetologist Melvyn C. Goldstein incisively pointed out that Tibetan society and government were built upon a value
system dominated by religious goals and behavior; religious power and privileges, and the leading monasteries "played a major role in thwarting progress" in Tibet; religion and the monasteries "were heavy fetters upon Tibet's social progress"; and "This commitment... to the universality of religion as the core metaphor of Tibetan national identity will be seen... to be a major factor underlying Tibet's inability to adapt to changing circumstances."

**Means of production mostly monopolized by the three major estate-holders**

The three major estate-holders, that is, local administrative officials, nobles and upper-ranking lamas in the monasteries, and their agents, accounted for less than five percent of Tibet's population, but owned all of Tibet's farmland, pastures, forests, mountains, rivers and beaches, as well as most livestock. About 90 percent of old Tibet's population was made up of serfs, called "tralpa" in Tibetan (namely, people who tilled plots of land assigned to them and had to provide corvee labor for the serf owners) and "duiqoin" (small households with chimneys emitting smoke). They had no means of production or personal freedom, and the survival of each of them depended on tilling plots for the estate-holders. In addition, "nangzan," who comprised five percent of the population, were hereditary slaves, known as "speaking tools." Statistics released in the early years of the Qing Dynasty in the 17th century indicate that Tibet then had more than three millionmu of farmland, of which 30.9 percent was owned by the local feudal government, 29.6 percent by nobles, and 39.5 percent by monasteries and upper-ranking lamas. The three major estate-holders' monopoly of the means of production remained unchanged until the democratic reform in 1959. Before 1959, the family of the 14th Dalai Lama possessed 27 manors, 30 pastures and over 6,000 serfs, and annually squeezed about 33,000ke (one ke equals 14 kilograms — ed.) of qingke (highland barley), 2,500ke of butter, two millionliang (15 liang of silver equal one silver dollar of the time) of Tibetan silver, 300 head of cattle, and 175 rolls of pulu (woolen fabric made in Tibet) out of its serfs. In 1959, the Dalai Lama alone owned 160,000liang of gold, 95 millionliang of silver, over 20,000 pieces of jewelry and jadeware, and more than 10,000 pieces of silk and satin fabric and rare fur clothing, including over 100 robes inlaid with pearls and gems, each worth tens of thousands of yuan.
Serfs owned by the three major estate-holders

The local government of old Tibet prescribed those serfs must stay on the land within the manors of their owners, and were not allowed to leave without permission. Fleeing from the manor was forbidden. They were serfs from generation to generation, confined to the land of their owners. All serfs and their livestock with labor ability had to till the plots of land assigned to them and provide corvée labor. Once the serfs lost their ability to labor, they were deprived of livestock, farm tools and land, and degraded to the status of slaves. The serf-owners literally possessed the living bodies of their serfs. Since serfs were their private property, they could trade and transfer them, present them as gifts, make them gambling stakes or mortgages for debt or exchange them. According to historical records, in 1943 the noble Trimon Norbu Wangyal sold 100 serfs to a monk official at Kadron Gangsa, in the Drigung area, each serf for 60liangof silver. He also sent 400 serfs to the Kunde Ling Monastery as a payment for a debt of 3,000 pin of silver (one pin equals 50liangof silver). The serf-owners had a firm grip on the birth, death and marriage of serfs. A Tibetan ballad of the time goes, "Our lives were given to us by our parents, while our bodies are owned by the government. We are not masters of our own lives or bodies, or of our own destiny." All serfs had to ask their owners for permission to marry, and male and female serfs not belonging to the same owner had to pay "redemption fees" before they could marry. After marriage, serfs were also taxed for their newborn children. Children of serfs were registered the moment they were born, sealing their life-long fate as serfs.

Rigid hierarchy

The "13-Article Code" and "16-Article Code," which were enforced for several hundred years in old Tibet, divided people into three classes and nine ranks, enshrining inequality between the different ranks in law. The Code stipulated that people were divided into three classes by blood and position, each class was further divided into three ranks. The upper class consisted of the small minority of nobles, Living Buddhas and senior officials; the middle class was composed of lower-ranking ecclesiastical and secular officials, military officers, and the agents of the three major estate-holders; and serfs and slaves constituted the lower class, accounting for 95 percent of Tibet's total population. The provision concerning the penalty for murder in the Code provided, "As people are divided into different classes and ranks, the value of a life correspondingly differs." The bodies of people of the highest rank of the upper class, such as a prince or Living Buddha, were literally worth their weight in gold. The lives of people of the lowest rank of the
lower class, such as women, butchers, hunters and craftsmen, were only worth a straw rope. The "Report on the Prohibition against Taking in Descendents of Blacksmiths" kept in the Archives of the Tibet Autonomous Region records that in 1953, when the 14th Dalai Lama found out that one of his servants was a blacksmith's descendent, he immediately expelled the servant, and announced that descendents of gold, silver and iron smiths, and butchers belonged to the lowest rank of the lower class, and were forbidden to serve in the government or marry people from other ranks or classes. Tibetologist Tom Grunfeld of the State University of New York, USA, noted in his book *The Making of Modern Tibet* that equality among mankind, though incorporated in the doctrines of Buddhism, unfortunately failed to prevent the Tibetan rulers from setting up their own rigid hierarchical system.

**Cruel political oppression and corporal punishments**

As stipulated in the Code of old Tibet, when serfs "infringe upon" the interests of the three estate-holders, the estate-holders "have their eyes gouged out, legs hamstrung, tongue cut out, or hands severed, or have them hurled from a cliff, drowned or otherwise killed; such punishments are a warning to others not to follow their example." Any serf "who voices grievances at the palace, behaving disgracefully, should be arrested and whipped; anyone who disobeys a master shall be arrested; anyone who spy on a master shall be arrested; a commoner who offends an official shall be arrested." When people of different classes and ranks violated the same criminal law, the criteria for imposing penalties and the means of punishment were quite different in old Tibet. As stipulated in the Code, a servant who was insubordinate to his master could have his hands or feet chopped off; but a master who injured a servant only needed to give the servant medical treatment; and a servant who injured a Living Buddha was deemed to have committed a felony and would have his eyes gouged out, a limb amputated, or even put to death.

A Russian traveler in Lhasa in the early 20th century, wrote in his book *A Buddhist Pilgrim to the Holy Place of Tibet*: "The offenders are mostly poverty-stricken Tibetans punished either by having their fingers or noses cut off, or, in most cases, by being blinded in both eyes. Such disfigured and blind people are seen begging in the streets of Lhasa every day. Exile is another type of punishment. Offenders are shackled and chained, and have to wear a large round wooden collar around their necks all their life. They are sent to remote regions for hard labor or work as serfs for feudal aristocrats and patriarchal chiefs. The severest punishment of all is, of course, the death penalty, with the victims drowned in rivers (as in Lhasa) or thrown over rocky cliffs (as in Xigaze)."
David MacDonald, a Briton, wrote in his book *The Land of the Lama*: "Capital punishment is deemed the heaviest category of punishment in Tibet, to which the most inhuman practice of dismemberment is added based on the hypothesis proposed by Tibetan lamas that after dismemberment the human soul cannot be reincarnated. The most common practice is to throw the condemned prisoner into a river in a leather wrapper, which will sink in about five minutes. If he remains alive after this time, he will be tossed into the water again until he dies. Afterwards, the body will be dismembered, and hurled into the river to drift downward with the current…. Even more appalling is the practice of gouging out a prisoner's eyes. A piece of heated, U-shaped iron is inserted into the eye sockets, or boiling water or oil is poured in, and the eyeballs are prized out with an iron hook."

There were penitentiaries or private jails in monasteries and aristocrats' houses, where instruments of torture were kept and clandestine tribunals held to punish serfs and slaves. In the Ganden Monastery there were many handcuffs, fetters, cudgels, and instruments of torture used for eye gouging and hamstringing. The private monastery administrative office set up by Trijang Rinpoche, junior tutor of the present 14th Dalai Lama, killed and injured more than 500 serfs and poor monks, in Dechen Dzong (present-day Dagze County) jailed 121 people, sent 89 into exile, forced 538 into slavery, forced 1,025 commoners into exile, forced 72 divorces, and 484 women were raped there.

In the Archives of the Tibet Autonomous Region there is a letter from a department of the Tibet local government to Rabden in the early 1950s, saying that, to celebrate the Dalai Lama's birthday, all the staff of Gyumey would chant the sutra. To successfully complete this ceremony, some special food would be thrown to the animals. Thus, a corpus of wet intestine, two skulls, many kinds of blood and a full human skin were urgently needed, all of which must be promptly delivered. A religious ceremony for the Dalai Lama used human blood, skulls and skin, showing how cruel and bloody the feudal serfdom system under theocracy was in old Tibet.

**Heavy taxes and larvée**

Serf owners exploited serfs by imposing corvée labor, taxes and levies, and rents for land and livestock. There were over 200 kinds of taxes levied by the former local government of Tibet alone. Serfs had to contribute more than 50 percent or even 70 to 80 percent of their labor, unpaid, to the government and manor owners. At feudal manors, serf owners divided the land into two parts: Most fertile land was kept as manor demesne while infertile and remote lots were rented to serfs on stringent conditions. To use the lots, serfs
had to work on the demesne with their own farm implements and provide their own food. Only after they had finished work on the demesne could they work on the lots assigned to them. In the busy farming season or when serf owners needed laborers, serfs had to contribute man or animal power gratis. In addition, serfs had to do unpaid work for the local government of Tibet and its subordinates, among which the heaviest was transport corvée, because Tibet is large but sparsely populated and all kinds of things had to be transported by man or animal power.

According to a survey conducted prior to the democratic reform of Tibet, the Darongqang Manor owned by Gyaltsap Tajtra had a total of 1,445 mu of land, and 81 able-bodied and semi-able-bodied serfs. They were assigned a total of 21,266 corvée days per year, the equivalent of an entire year's labor by 67.3 people, 83 percent of the total. The Khesum Manor, located by the Yarlung River in present-day Nedong County, was one of the manors owned by aristocrat Surkhang Wangchen Gelek. Before the democratic reform, the manor had 59 serf households totaling 302 persons and 1,200 mu of land. Every year, Surkhang and his agents levied 18 taxes and assigned 14 kinds of corvée, making up 26,800 working days; the local government of Tibet levied nine kinds of taxes and assigned 10 kinds of corvée, making up more than 2,700 working days; and Riwo Choling Monastery levied seven kinds of taxes and assigned three kinds of corvée, making up more than 900 working days; on average, every laborer had to do over 210 days of unpaid work for the three estate-holders, and contribute over 800 kilograms of grain and 100 liang of silver.

Exploitation through usury

Each Dalai Lama had two money-lending agencies. Some money coming from "tribute" to the Dalai Lama was lent at an exorbitant rate of interest. According to records in the account books of the two agencies, in 1950 they lent 3,038,581 liang of silver as principal, and collected 303,858 liang in interest. Governments at different levels in Tibet also had many such agencies, and lending money and collecting interest became one of the officials' duties. A survey done in 1959 showed that the three major monasteries, namely Drepung, Sera and Ganden, in Lhasa lent 22,725,822 kilograms of grain and collected 399,364 kilograms in interest, and lent 57,105,895 liang of silver and collected 1,402,380 liang in interest. Revenue from usury made up 25 to 30 percent of the total revenue of the three monasteries. Most aristocrats also engaged in usury, with the interest accounting for 15 to 20 percent of their family revenues. Serfs had to borrow money to survive, and more than 90 percent of serf households were in debt. French traveler
Alexandre David-Neel wrote in his book *Le Vieux Tibet Face à la Chine Nouvelle* (*Old Tibet Faces New China*), "All the farmers in Tibet are serfs saddled with lifelong debts, and it is almost impossible to find any of them who have paid off their debts." Serfs were burdened with new debts, debts passed down from previous generations, debts resulting from joint liability, and debts apportioned among all the serfs. The debts that were passed down from previous generations and could never be repaid even by succeeding generations accounted for one third of the total debts. The grandfather of a serf named Tsering Gonpo in Maizhokunggar County once borrowed 50*keof* grain from the Sera Monastery. In 77 years the three generations of the family had paid more than 3,000*keof* grain in interest, but the serf owner still claimed that Tsering Gonpo owed him 100,000*keof* grain. There was another serf named Tenzin in Dongkar County who borrowed one *keofqingke* from his master in 1941. In 1951 he was ordered to pay back 600*ke*. Tenzin could not pay off the debt, and had to flee. His wife committed suicide, and his seven-year-old son was taken away to repay the debt by labor.

**A stagnant society on the edge of collapse.**

Ruthless oppression and exploitation under the feudal serfdom of theocracy stifled the vitality of Tibetan society and reduced Tibet to a state of chronic stagnation for centuries. Even by the middle of the 20th century, Tibet was still in a state of extreme isolation and backwardness, almost without a trace of modern industry, commerce, science and technology, education, culture or health care. Primitive farming methods were still being used, and herdsmen had to travel from place to place to find pasture for their livestock. There were few strains and breeds of grains and animals, some of which had even degenerated. Farm tools were primitive. The level of both the productive forces and social development was very low. Deaths from hunger and cold, poverty and disease were commonplace among the serfs, and the streets of Lhasa, Xigaze, Qamdo and Nagqu were crowded with beggars of all ages and both sexes. American Tibetologist A. Tom Grunfeld pointed out that, although some people claimed before 1959, ordinary Tibetan people could enjoy milk tea as they wished and a great deal of meat and vegetables, a survey conducted in eastern Tibet in 1940 showed that 38 percent of Tibetan families never had tea to drink, 51 percent could not afford butter, and 75 percent sometimes had to eat weeds boiled with beef bones and oat or bean flour. "There is no evidence to support these images of a Utopian Shangri-la."

 Plenty of evidence has demonstrated that by the middle of the 20th century the feudal serfdom of theocracy was beset with numerous contradictions and plagued by crises.

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Serfs petitioned their masters for relief from their burdens, fled their lands, resisted paying rent and corvée labor, and even waged armed struggle. Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme, once a Galoin (cabinet minister) of the former local government of Tibet, pointed out that "all believe that if Tibet goes on like this the serfs will all die in the near future, and the nobles will not be able to live either. The whole of Tibet will be destroyed."

**Momentous democratic reforms in Tibet**

Carrying out democratic reform and abolishing the feudal serfdom of theocracy was an inevitable requirement for social progress. It was a major task of the people's democratic revolution led by the Communist Party of China, and was the only solution for social development in Tibet. Moreover, it reflected the yearning of the overwhelming majority of the Tibetan people. In 1959, the Central People's Government carried out a great historical reform in Tibetan history, and profoundly changed the fate of the Tibetan people by launching the democratic reform and abolishing serfdom, a grim and backward feudal system.

The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, when the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) won decisive victories over the Kuomintang troops. Beiping (now Beijing) and provinces like Hunan, Yunnan, Xinjiang and the former Xikang were all liberated peacefully from the rule of the former Kuomintang government. In light of the actual situation in Tibet, the Central People's Government also decided to use peaceful means to liberate Tibet. In January 1950, the Central People's Government formally notified the local authorities of Tibet to "send delegates to Beijing to negotiate the peaceful liberation of Tibet." In February 1951, the 14th Dalai Lama sent Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme as his chief plenipotentiary, and Kemai Soinam Wangdui, Tubdain Daindar, Tubdain Legmoin and Sampo Dainzin Toinzhub as delegates to Beijing to handle with full power the negotiations with the Central People's Government. On May 23, 1951, the "17-Article Agreement" was signed in Beijing and Tibet was thus liberated peacefully. The peaceful liberation enabled Tibet to shake off the trammels imposed by imperialist aggressor forces, brought to an end to the long-term isolation of Tibet and stagnancy of its social development, thus creating favorable conditions for democratic reform and social progress in Tibet.

The "17-Article Agreement" gained the approval and support of people of all ethnic groups in Tibet. In September 26-29th, 1951, the local Tibetan government held a meeting to discuss the Agreement, joined by all ecclesiastical and secular officials and representatives from the three prominent monasteries. The participants concurred that the
Agreement "is of great and incomparable benefit to the grand cause of the Dalai Lama, and to Buddhism, and the politics, economy and other aspects of life in Tibet. Naturally, it should be carried out." The 14th Dalai Lama sent a telegram to Chairman Mao Zedong on October 24, 1951, stating that "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 Tibetan government as well as 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 in consolidating national defense, ousting imperialist influences from Tibet and safeguarding the unification of the territory and the sovereignty of the motherland." In 1954, the 14th Dalai Lama and the 10th Panchen Lama participated in the First National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing, with the former elected vice-chairman of the NPC Standing Committee and the latter a member of the same committee. The 14th Dalai Lama addressed the meeting, fully endorsing the achievements made since the implementation of the "17-Article Agreement" three years previously, and expressing his warm support for the principles and rules regarding the regional autonomy of ethnic minorities. On April 22, 1956, he became chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region Preparatory Committee. In a speech at the founding of the committee, he reaffirmed that the Agreement had enabled the Tibetan people to fully enjoy all rights of ethnic equality and to "embark on a bright road of freedom and happiness."

The reform of the social system in Tibet is clearly defined in the "17-Article Agreement." Article 11 provides: "In matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the Central Authorities. The local government of Tibet shall carry out reforms voluntarily, and when the people raise demands for reform, they shall be settled by means of consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet." Following the peaceful liberation, amidst the ever-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 light of Tibetan history and the region's special situation, the Central People's Government adopted a circumspect attitude toward the reform of the social system in Tibet, patiently persuading and waiting for the ruling strata to carry out the reform, and giving them adequate time for the reform. In 1956, the Central People's Government made a decision that no reform should be carried out in Tibet within six years, still awaiting a change in the attitude of the upper ruling class about the reform. During his visit to India in January 1957, Premier of the State Council Zhou Enlai handed a letter from Chairman Mao
Zedong to the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, and the accompanying senior local Tibetan government officials. The letter informed them of the central government's decision that reform would not be conducted within six years; whether reform should be carried out after six years would still be decided by Tibet according to its own situation and conditions then. On February 27, 1957, Mao Zedong further pointed out clearly in *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*, "According to the seventeen-article agreement reached between the Central People's Government and the local government of Tibet, the reform of the social system must be carried out, but the timing can only be decided by the great majority of the people of Tibet and their public leading figures when they consider it practicable, and one should not be impatient. It has now been decided not to proceed with democratic reforms in Tibet during the period of the Second Five-Year Plan (1958-1962 —ed.). Whether they will be proceeded within the period of the Third Five-Year Plan (1963-1967 —ed.) can only be decided in the light of the situation at that time." We can thus see that the Central People's Government showed utmost patience and made the greatest concessions.

However, some members of the Tibetan ruling class were hostile to reform, and wanted to preserve serfdom forever so as to maintain their own vested interests and privilege. They deliberately violated and undermined the "17-Article Agreement," and intensified their efforts to split the motherland, until finally they staged armed rebellions. In March and April 1952, acting Silon (chief minister — ed.) Sicab Lukangwa and Losang Zhaxi of the local Tibetan government gave secret support to an illicit organization known as the "People's Conference" to oppose the "17-Article Agreement" and create disturbances in Lhasa, demanding that the PLA "pull out of Tibet." In May 1955, as the 14th Dalai Lama returned to Tibet via Sichuan Province, two accompanying local Tibetan government officials — Galoin Surkang and the Junior Tutor Trigyang — took two different routes on the pretext of participating in Buddhist activities. The former took the northern route through Garze and Derge, while the latter followed the southern route via Chatreng and Lithang. On their way, they met with local headmen and abbots of various monasteries, plotting an armed rebellion against democratic reform. The leader of the "People's Conference," Gyale Choze, and four others, on the pretext of welcoming the return of the Dalai Lama, made a special trip to Ya-nga and Kangding. They helped Trigyang organize an armed rebellion in collaboration with reactionary headmen, the abbot of Litang Monastery and some Kuomintang secret agents long-hidden at the monastery. They pledged by mixing their blood to stage the armed rebellion. In 1957, Losang Samten (third elder brother of the Dalai Lama) incited Chimed Gonpo, the headman of Jomda
Dzong in Qamdo to act upon "the Dalai Lama's orders" and gather rebels to launch a local armed uprising. In May 1957, with the support of galoins Neuxar Tubdain Tarba and Xainga Gyurme Doje, a rebel organization named "Four Rivers and Six Ranges" (namely, the four main rivers and six mountain ranges in Tibet and the Tibetan-inhabited areas of Sichuan Province in southwestern China — ed.), and later rebel armed forces named "religious guardians" were founded. They raised the slogan of "Independence of Tibet" and "Oppose Reform," and further intensified their rebellious activities. The armed rebels harassed Qamdo, Dengqen, Heihe and Shannan. They disrupted communication lines, attacked institutions and troops stationed there by the Central Authorities. They looted, cruelly killed officials, persecuted people, and raped women.

In view of the situation, the Central People's Government repeatedly urged the local government of Tibet to punish the rebels and maintain public order. However, the reactionary clique of the upper social strata in Tibet took the extreme forbearance of the central government as a sign of weakness. They declared, "For nine years, the Hans have not dared to touch our most glorious and sacrosanct system. When we attacked them, they could only parry our blows without being able to strike back. So long as we transfer a large number of troops to Lhasa from outside, the Hans will surely flee at the first blow. If they don't run away, we will carry His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Shannan, and gather our strength there to launch a counter-attack and seize back Lhasa. If all these efforts fail, we can go to India."

With the support of foreign anti-China forces, the reactionary clique of Tibet's upper class elaborately plotted and instigated a full-scale armed rebellion in Lhasa on March 10, 1959. On February 7, the Dalai Lama took the initiative, and said to Deng Shaodong, deputy commander of the Tibet Military Area Command, and other officers: "I was told that after its return from studies in the hinterland, the Song and Dance Ensemble under the Tibet Military Area Command has a very good repertoire. I would like to see its show. Please arrange it for me." Deng and the other officers expressed immediate readiness, and asked the Dalai Lama to fix the time and place for the performance. They also conveyed the Dalai Lama's wish to Surkang and other galoins of the local-Tibetan government and Paglha Tubdain Weidain, adjutant general of the Dalai Lama. On March 8, the Dalai Lama said he would go to the performance in the Tibet Military Area Command Auditorium at 3 pm on March 10. The Tibet Military Area Command made careful preparations for the occasion. But on the evening of March 9, the Miboin (official in charge of public security of old downtown, equivalent of the present chief of the Public Security Bureau of Chengguan District of Lhasa) of Lhasa alarmed the citizens of Lhasa.
by saying, "Tomorrow, the Dalai Lama will go to the Military Area Command for a banquet and a performance. The Hans have prepared a plane to kidnap the Dalai Lama, and take him to Beijing. Every household should send people to Norbulingka (the residence of the Dalai Lama —ed.) to urge him not to attend the performance in the Military Area Command." The next morning, the rebels coerced more than 2,000 people to mass at Norbulingka, spreading the rumor that "the Military Area Command is planning to poison the Dalai Lama," and shouting slogans such as "Independence of Tibet" and "Away with the Hans." The rebels injured Sampo Cewang Rinzin, a former galoin of the local Tibetan government and at that time a deputy commander of the Tibet Military Area Command. They stoned to death Kainqoin Pagbalha Soinam Gyamco, a progressive patriot and member of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region. His body was tied to the tail of a horse and dragged through the downtown area as a warning. Subsequently, the rebel leaders convened a so-called "people's congress" and a "people's conference of the independent state of Tibet," intensifying their efforts to organize and expand armed rebellion. They brazenly tore up the "17-Article Agreement," and declared "the independence of Tibet," launching a full-scale armed rebellion against the motherland.

Although Norbulingka was controlled by the rebels, and it was hard to make contact with the Dalai Lama, Tan Guansan, the acting representative of the central government, managed to send three letters to the Dalai Lama on March 10, 11 and 15, respectively, through patriots. In the letters, Tan expressed his understanding of the Dalai Lama's situation as well as his concern for the latter's safety. He pointed out that the rebels were making reckless military provocations, and demanded that the local Tibet government immediately take measures to stop them. The Dalai Lama wrote three letters in reply to Tan on March 11, 12 and 16, respectively. In his letters, the Dalai Lama wrote, "Reactionary, evil elements are carrying out activities endangering me on the pretext of ensuring my safety. I am taking steps to calm things down." "The unlawful activities of the reactionary clique cause me endless worry and sorrow.... As to the incidents of yesterday and the day before, which were brought about on the pretext of ensuring my safety and have seriously estranged relations between the Central People's Government and the local government, I am making every possible effort to deal with them." In his letter of March 16, he said that he had "educated" and "severely criticized" officials of the local Tibet government. He also expressed the desire to go to the Military Area Command a few days later. However, on the evening of March 17, the Dalai Lama, together with
galoins Surkang, Neuxar, Xaisur and other rebel leaders, fled from Lhasa to Shannan, the "base" of the armed rebel forces. When the armed rebellion failed, they fled to India.

After the Dalai Lama left Lhasa, about 7,000 rebels gathered to wage a full-scale attack on the Party, government and army institutions before dawn on March 20, 1959. The PLA, driven beyond forbearance, launched, under orders, a counterattack at 10 am the same day. With the support of patriotic Tibetan people, the 1,000-odd PLA troops completely put down the armed rebellion in Lhasa within two days. Before long, the PLA rapidly suppressed the armed rebellion in other places in Tibet.

Just as Chairman Mao Zedong pointed out, "The Dalai Lama's plotting to launch a rebellion started just after his return from Beijing in 1955. He prepared this rebellion for two years — from early 1957, when he returned from India, to 1958." After he fled from China in 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama and his clique went further and further down the road to splitting the motherland. They established the so-called "Tibetan government-in-exile," publicly declared "Tibetan independence," reorganized rebel forces to carry out military harassment along the Chinese border for many years, engaged in long-term international anti-China activities, and instigated many riots in Tibet and other Tibetan-inhabited areas.

The armed rebellion in Tibet was supported from the very beginning by foreign anti-China forces. According to a Western report on January 26, 1971, a certain country's intelligence agency trained members of the "Four Rivers and Six Ranges" in February 1957 on a certain Pacific island. From 1956 to 1957, the above-mentioned intelligence agency handpicked some 170 rebels, and sent them to the "Kamba guerrilla training base" in that country. Several hundred trained "Kamba guerrillas" were air-dropped into Tibet, carrying submachine guns, and small gold boxes containing the portrait of Dalai Lama. This intelligence agency trained 2,000 Tibetan guerrillas in total. From July 1958 to February 1959, it launched two weapon air-drops to rebellious armed forces, including 403 rifles, 20 sub-machine guns, 60 boxes of hand-grenades, and several bags of Indian rupees. In November 1958, it transported 226 loads of weapons to the Shannan rebel army via the Indian-occupied area to the south of the "McMahon Line." In January the following year, it transported 40 loads of goods to Shannan rebel army via Nepal and Shekar. It launched more than 30 air-drops to the Kham rebel army, and dropped over 250 tons of goods, including approximately 10,000 M1 Garand Rifles, assault rifles, 57 mm recoilless guns, and anti-aircraft machine guns. According to another Western report on August 16, 1999, a certain Western country air-dropped more than 400 tons of goods
to Tibetan guerrillas from 1957 to 1960. This country "spent US$1.7 million on such operations in Tibet annually."

While the Dalai Lama was fleeing, the above-mentioned intelligence agency re-equipped a plane and air-dropped goods for him and his companions on the way, keeping contact with the rebel army and nearby intelligence stations via radio, and recording the whole course of the flight. Based on a Hong Kong report on February 11, 1974, according to participants in the operation, the Dalai Lama's flight from Lhasa was planned by the Western intelligence agency. The country's spy planes sneaked hundreds of miles into Tibet, providing protection for the Dalai Lama clique from air, air-dropping food, maps, radios and money, as well as strafing Chinese installations and taking photos of the operation.

Since the reactionary Tibetan ruling class had taken the road of betraying their country, on March 28, 1959, Premier Zhou Enlai promulgated a State Council Decree dissolving the local Tibetan government. The Preparatory Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region took over local government power, and the 10th Panchen Lama acted as its chairman. At the same time, the Central People's Government implemented a policy of "suppressing the rebellion while conducting the reform," and led the Tibetan people to start the surging tide of democratic reform, wrecked the feudal serfdom of theocracy, and realize the lifelong wish of a million serfs and slaves of being their own masters.

Abolishing the oppression and exploitation of feudal serfdom system,
liberating a million serfs and slaves.

After the quelling of the armed rebellion in 1959, the Central People's Government immediately dissolved the Kasha regime and its armed forces, courts and prisons, which had oppressed the Tibetan people for hundreds of years. At the same time, it repealed the old Tibetan Code and barbarous punishments. This was followed by a planned and step-by-step campaign in the rural areas against rebellion, corvée labor and slavery, and for reduction of rent for land and of interest on loans; a campaign launched in the pastoral areas against rebellion, corvée labor and slavery, and helping hired herdsmen and herd owners; a campaign launched in the monasteries against rebellion, feudal privileges and exploitation, and to square accounts with political persecution, hierarchical oppression and economic exploitation; a campaign launched in the urban areas against rebellion, the feudal system, exploitation and privileges, and on reduction of rent for land and of interest on loans. In addition, the democratic reform was conducted in the border areas by
stages, abolishing the bondage of the serfs and slaves to their feudal masters, as well as the feudal system, exploitation and privileges, and corvée labor and high-interest loans.

The million serfs and slaves in Tibet were emancipated. They became the masters of their state and society. Their lives and personal freedom are now protected and safeguarded by the Chinese Constitution and law. They no longer suffer from the serf-owners' political oppression, forced labor and inhuman treatment, as well as heavy corvée taxes and usurious exploitation. Nyima Tsering, who was elected the first chairman of the Farmers' Association during the democratic reform, used to be a serf of Surkhang Wangchen Gelek, a galoin of the Tibet local government. Wangchen Gelek once said, "Nyima Tsering is my property. I will do whatever I like to him. If I like, I can roll him into a ball and put him in my pocket, or stretch him into a belt and tie it around my waist." After the democratic reform, Nyima Tsering said, "Now my personal freedom is protected by the law. I am no longer another's private property. How wonderful this is!" Tsering Lhamo had been a serf for more than 30 years. After the democratic reform, she organized the first Nangsan Mutual Aid Team at Kyerpa Township, in Nedong County, Shannan Prefecture. Later, she held the post of vice chairman of the Standing Committee of People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

**Implementing land reform, abolishing the feudal land ownership, making serfs and slaves masters of the land.**

On September 21, 1959, the Preparatory Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region passed the "Decision on Abolishing Feudal Land Ownership System and Implementing Farmers' Land Ownership," stipulating that farmland and other means of production originally occupied by those serf-owners involved in the armed rebellion were to be confiscated and distributed to landless serfs and slaves, and the land and other means of production of serf-owners who had not participated in the rebellion were to be redeemed by the state and then distributed to the serfs and slaves. According to statistics, in the democratic reform the central government spent 45 million yuan on the redemption of 900,000 mu of land and over 820,000 head of livestock from more than 1,300 households of serf-owners and agents who had not participated in the rebellion. Over 2.8 million mu of land was confiscated or redeemed from serf-owners, and distributed to 800,000 former serfs or slaves of 200,000 households. Each of the former serfs and slaves got about 3.5 mu of land. The laboring Tibetan people who had been enslaved generation after generation stood on their own land, celebrating all night. They cried, "The sun of the
Dalai Lama shone on the nobility, while the sun of Chairman Mao is shining on our poor people. Now the Dalai Lama's sun is set, and our sun is rising."

Tibet's one million serfs and slaves became masters of the land and other means of production for the first time, making them full of enthusiasm for production and life, and giving rise to a rapid change in Tibet's social situation and living conditions. When the land reform was basically completed in 1960, the total grain yield for the whole of Tibet was 12.6 percent higher than in 1959 and 17.5 percent higher than in 1958, the year before the land reform. Moreover, the total number of livestock was 10 percent more than in 1959. During the democratic reform, 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 organization were established.

By the end of 1959, 28 neighborhood committees had been set up in Lhasa, offering jobs to over 8,700 vagrants and beggars, providing relief to more than 8,500 poor people, and taking in over 120 childless, aged, sick and disabled people. In 1960, Ngachen Hydroelectric Station was completed and put into use, bringing electric lighting for the first time to the citizens of Lhasa. In 1959 and 1960, dozens of small-scale modern factories were set up in Tibet, employing over 20,000 Tibetan workers. Tibet's roads built in those two years totaled 12,500 km, and reached over 90 percent of the counties in the region.

Abolishing theocracy, and implementing the separation of state and religion, and the freedom of religious belief.

During the democratic reform, means of production, including land and livestock, originally owned by monasteries involved in the armed rebellion were all confiscated, while a policy of redemption was introduced with regard to the means of production of monasteries which had not participated in the rebellion. During the democratic reform, on the one hand, citizens' freedom of religious belief, and patriotic and law-abiding monasteries were protected by decree. Citizens' freedom to become a monk or nun and to resume secular life, regular religious activities as well as historical monasteries and cultural relics were all protected. On the other hand, a policy of "political unity, freedom of religious belief and separation of politics and religion" was adopted, abolishing monasteries' feudal privileges in economy and politics, repealing monasteries' feudal occupation and exploitation, and personal slavery, as well as feudal management and hierarchy inside the monasteries, and ensuring that all religious beliefs were politically equal. Public funds and properties inside the monasteries were managed democratically,
serving as production funds and for supporting monks and nuns as well as regular religious activities; the monasteries' management committees uniformly administered the land distributed to monks and nuns in accordance with their labor ability, and managed production. When the income of a monastery was unable to cover its regular expenses, the government would grant a subsidy. Through the democratic reform, all the monasteries in Tibet elected their own management committees, conducting democratic management. The democratic reform enabled the true features of religion to emerge, effectively safeguarding the Tibetan people's freedom of religious belief, and laying a foundation for the introduction of the political system of people's democracy in Tibet.

Establishing the people's democratic state power, ensuring that the people enjoy rights as their own masters

Overthrowing the system of feudal serfdom, the emancipated Tibetan people of various ethnic groups established people's democratic organs of state power. By the end of 1960, Tibet had established 1,009 organs of state power at township level, and 283 at district level, 78 at county level (including county-level districts) and eight at prefecture (city) level. The number of cadres of Tibetan and other minority ethnic groups totaled over 10,000 in Tibet. Among them, township-level ones were all from the Tibetan ethnic group, more than 90 percent of the district-level ones were from the Tibetan ethnic group, and over 300 Tibetan cadres held leading posts at and above the county level. More than 4,400 liberated serfs and slaves were trained as cadres at the grass-roots level. In 1961, a general election was held all over Tibet. For the first time, the former serfs and slaves were able to enjoy rights as their own masters. Thousands of liberated serfs and slaves, dressed in splendid attire, holding hada (white symbolic scarves) in both hands, actively participated in the election of power organs and governments at all levels in the region, exercising their democratic rights with great political enthusiasm and a deep sense of responsibility. In August 1965, the election at the level of township and county was completed in Tibet. One thousand three hundred and fifty-nine townships and towns conducted elections at the basic level, and 567 townships and towns held their people's congresses. The people's democratic organs of state power at county level were established in 92 percent of the region, with the majority of participants being liberated serfs and slaves. In addition, 54 counties held their first people's congresses to elect the county magistrates and deputy magistrates, and established people's committees. In September 1965, the First People's Congress of Tibet was convened, at which the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region was officially proclaimed. Over 80 percent of
the 301 deputies to the congress came from the Tibetan and other ethnic minorities. More than 11 percent were patriots from the upper strata and religious figures. Most deputies of the Tibetan ethnic group to the congress were liberated serfs and slaves. The founding of the people's democratic organs of state power politically guaranteed the Tibetan people's rights as their own masters.

The surging tide of democratic reform took only a few years to overthrow the feudal serfdom system which had been practiced in Tibet for centuries. The reform liberated Tibet's million serfs and slaves politically, economically and socially, brought an entirely new look to Tibet's society, and ushered in a new era for Tibet's development. It was an epoch-making reform in Tibet's history of social advancement and development of human rights, marking the beginning of rapid social development in Tibet.

**Tremendous historic changes over the past half centuries**

Over the past five decades since the democratic reform, and with the care of the Central People's Government and the support of the people of the entire country, the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet, as their own masters, have displayed great enthusiasm in building a new happy life, promoting development of local economy and society in a frog-leaping manner and scoring world-shaking historic achievements in various undertakings.

**Tibet has experienced historic changes in its social system, which provides an institutional guarantee of the people's right to be their own masters**

In 1965, the Tibet Autonomous Region was founded, marking the establishment of regional ethnic autonomy in Tibet and a historic leap from theocratic feudal serfdom to socialism featured with people's democracy. From then on, Tibet entered a new era, with the people becoming their own masters. The former serfs and slaves have since enjoyed political rights to equal participation in the administration of state affairs and to independent administration of local and ethnic affairs. The people of Tibet, as other ethnic groups in China, enjoy all the rights guaranteed by the Chinese Constitution and other laws. They can directly elect, in accordance with the law, deputies to the people's congresses at county, district, township and town levels, and the latter elect deputies to the people's congresses at the national, autonomous regional and municipal levels. Through the people's congresses at various levels, the people of Tibet exercise their rights, in accordance with the law, to participation in the administration of state and local affairs.
In the elections for the people's congresses at the autonomous regional, prefectural (municipal), county and township (town) levels in 2007, the proportion of participating residents was 96.4 percent, and as high as 100 percent in some places. Of the more than 34,000 deputies, directly or indirectly elected, to the people's congresses at the above four levels, more than 94 percent were members of the Tibetans or other ethnic minorities. Of the deputies to the current NPC, 20 are from Tibet, including 12 Tibetans, one Monba and one Lhoba.

Tibetans' rights to independent administration of local and ethnic affairs are guaranteed. Since 1965, the posts of chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress and chairman of the People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region have all been held by Tibetans, and the chief leaders of the standing committees of people's congresses and the people's governments at various levels in the autonomous region are also Tibetans. So are the chief leaders of local courts and procuratorates at all levels. Tibetans and other ethnic-minority people compose 77.97 percent of the staff of current state organs at the autonomous regional, prefectural (municipal) and county levels.

The Tibet Autonomous Region not only has the right to formulate local regulations as a provincial-level state organ, it can also decide on local affairs, and formulate self-government regulations and separate regulations in line with local political, economic and cultural characteristics. Where the resolutions, decisions, orders and instructions by superior state organs do not apply to the conditions in Tibet, the Tibetan autonomous organs can request adjustment or suspension of the relevant documents.

Statistics show that since 1965 the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region has enacted 250 local regulations, resolutions and decisions with regulatory nature, which cover political power buildup, economic development, culture and education, spoken and written languages, justice, relics protection, protection of wild animals and plants, and protection of natural resources. They protect the special rights and interests of the Tibetan people in the spheres of politics, economy and social life, and promote the development of various local undertakings.

**Immense social changes have been made as the economy leaps forward with each passing day.**

To boost local economic and social growth, the central government has adopted a series of preferential policies toward Tibet over the past half century, and given it strong support in terms of finance, materials and manpower.
From 1951 to 2008, state investment in infrastructure in Tibet exceeded 100 billion yuan. In the period from 1959 to 2008, a total of 201.9 billion yuan from the central budget went to Tibet, an annual growth of nearly 12 percent, and 154.1 billion yuan in the period 2001-2008 alone. Since 1994, the Central Authorities have paired more than 60 central state organs, 18 provinces and municipalities, and 17 state-owned enterprises with the entities in Tibet, to help the latter's economic development. By the end of 2008, a total of 11.128 billion yuan of assistance funds had been put in place, 6,056 assistance projects launched, and 3,747 cadres from across the country dispatched to work in Tibet.

Thanks to the care of the Central Authorities and the support of the whole nation, Tibet has witnessed remarkable progress in economic and social development. From 1959 to 2008, the local GDP soared from 174 million yuan to 39.591 billion yuan, an increase of 65-fold or an average annual growth of 8.9 percent at comparable prices. Since 1994 the local GDP has grown at an annual rate of 12.8 percent on average, higher than the national average for the same period. Also, from 1959 to 2008 the per-capita GDP soared from 142 yuan to 13,861 yuan, an increase of 13,719 yuan.

In the old times, there was not a single highway in Tibet. Today, a convenient transportation network has taken shape, radiating from Lhasa in all directions, with highway transportation as the major part and air, rail and pipeline transportation developing in coordination. In 2008, all counties in Tibet became accessible by highways, the total length of which reached 51,300 km, 44,000 km more than the 7,300 km in 1959; the volume of passenger transport increased by nearly 107-fold compared with that in 1959, and that of cargo transport by more than 11-fold.

An extensive energy system has been formed, with hydropower as the mainstay backed up by geothermal, wind and solar energy sources. From 1959 to 2008, electricity production in Tibet increased by 16.8 percent annually on average. Nearly 21 million residents, or 73 percent of the local population, now have access to electrical power. The use of clean energy is encouraged in rural areas, and methane is available to 43,000 households. Due to the rapid expansion of telecommunications, optical cables have reached all counties, and telephone all townships. Subscribers to fixed-line telephones and cell phones number 1.562 million, making 55 phones available for every 100 people.

In the old days, Tibet's agriculture and animal husbandry were completely at the mercy of the elements. Nowadays, modern facilities have been widely introduced, and the capacity to prevent and alleviate damage from natural disasters has been notably improved, with 36 percent of the contribution coming from science and technology. Grain output rose
from 182,900 tons in 1959 to 950,000 tons in 2008; the output per mu rose from 91 kg to nearly 370 kg; and livestock on hand from 9.56 million head at the end of 1958 to 24 million head at the end of 2008.

There was no industry in the modern sense in old Tibet. Now, a modern industrial system with Tibetan characteristics has been put in place, with mining, building materials, folk handicrafts and Tibetan medicine as the pillars, and power, farming and animal product processing and foodstuffs as supplements. The industrial added value skyrocketed from 15 million yuan in 1959 to 2.968 billion yuan in 2008. Modern commerce, tourism, catering, entertainment and other industries that had never been heard of in old Tibet are now booming as primary industries in the region.

**People's living standards have been greatly enhanced, and their subsistence and development conditions much improved.**

Before the democratic reform in 1959, Tibetan peasants and herdsmen had barely any means of production. Debt-ridden almost their whole lives, they hardly expected any net income. But since 1978 the per-capita net income of Tibetan peasants and herdsmen kept increasing by 10.1 percent a year until 2003, when it rose to 13.1 percent, reaching 3,176 yuan in 2008. The per-capita disposable income of urban dwellers in Tibet stood at 12,482 yuan in 2008, which was 21 times that of the 565 yuan in 1978.

Before the democratic reform, more than 90 percent of Tibet's residents had no private housing, the peasants and herdsmen had very poor living conditions, and the per-capita housing of urban dwellers was less than three sq m. At that time, Lhasa had a population of 20,000 only, and nearly 1,000 were poverty-stricken or beggar households huddling in tattered shelters on the outskirts. Today, with the construction of a new countryside and the comfortable housing project under way, 200,000 households, comprising nearly one million peasants and herdsmen, have moved into modern houses. By 2008, the per-capita housing area was 22.83 sq m in rural areas and 33.00 sq m in urban areas.

A social security system has been basically put in place to cover both cities and countryside in Tibet. In 2008, the allowances for each family of the infirm elderly without children, which is guaranteed food, clothing, medical care, housing and burial expenses, was raised to 1,600 yuan. In 2006, Tibet led other farming and pastoral areas in China with a system of basic subsistence allowances which covered all peasants and herdsmen with an income below 800 yuan.
Before the peaceful liberation, there was no medical institution in the modern sense in Tibet, except for three small, shabby government-run organizations of Tibetan medicine and a small number of private clinics, with fewer than 100 medical workers altogether. If the nearly 300 Tibetan medical practitioners in the farming and pastoral areas were included, the total number of medical workers would still have fallen below 400 — less than four medical workers for every 10,000 residents. Smallpox, cholera, venereal diseases, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, tetanus and other epidemics were prevalent.

After the peaceful liberation, and especially after the democratic reform in Tibet, the Chinese government adopted various measures to prevent diseases, and soon got some diseases that seriously harmed people's health under control. Since the 1960s, smallpox has been eliminated in Tibet, and the incidence of infectious and endemic diseases has declined by a big margin. Today, Tibet leads other places in introducing the medical insurance system for urban residents, and is building a medical system in the farming and pastoral areas based on free medical service, which now grants each farmer and herdsman an annual 140 yuan of medical allowance. By 2008, there were 1,339 medical organizations in Tibet, 1,277 more than in 1959; 7,127 hospital beds, 6,647 more than in 1959; and 9,098 medical workers, 8,307 more than in 1959. The number of hospital beds and medical workers for every 1,000 residents were 2.50 and 3.05, respectively, or 2.11 and 2.41 more than in 1959.

Thanks to the improvement of medical services the average life expectancy in Tibet has increased from 35.5 years in 1959 to 67 years at present. According to the fifth national census, carried out in 2000, Tibet had 13,581 senior residents aged 80-99, and a remarkable 62 above 100 years old. In terms of number of the elderly over 100 years of age, Tibet led all provinces and autonomous regions in China. The total population increased from 1.228 million in 1959 to 2.8708 million in 2008, of which more than 95 percent were Tibetans and members of other ethnic minorities. The past 50 years have seen the fastest population expansion in Tibet for centuries.

Traditional ethnic culture is protected and developed; freedom of religious belief is respected.

The Chinese government has made huge efforts to promote the learning, use and development of the Tibetan language. In Tibet, importance is given to both the Tibetan and Han Chinese languages, with priority given to Tibetan. At present, both languages are used in teaching in all schools of the farming and pastoral areas, as well as some urban areas, with the major courses being taught in Tibetan. Teaching is also conducted in the
two languages in high schools. Moreover, courses in the Tibetan language have been opened at Tibetan high schools in the hinterland areas of China. In the matriculation examinations for institutions of higher learning and secondary vocational schools, Tibetan is a subject of examination, and the score is included in the total score. Since the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region, both Tibetan and Han Chinese have been used for resolutions and regulations adopted by the people's congresses at all levels, and official documents and public announcements of people's governments at all levels as well as their subordinate departments. During judicial proceedings, Tibetan is used in hearing any case involving Tibetan people, and the written Tibetan language is used for legal papers. Both Tibetan and Han Chinese are used for official seals, credentials and signs of all entities; logos of government departments, factories and mines, schools, bus and train stations, airports, shops, hotels, restaurants, theaters, scenic spots, sports venues and libraries; and street and traffic signs. Since its establishment in 1959, Tibetan People's Radio (TPR), with focus on Tibetan-language broadcasting, has developed 42 programs in Tibetan and the Khampa dialect, including 21 hours and 15 minutes of news broadcasting in Tibetan and 17 hours and 50 minutes of broadcasting in the Khampa dialect every day. The Tibet Television Station formally opened a Tibetan satellite TV channel, which has been broadcasting 24 hours a day since October 1, 2007. At present, there are 14 Tibetan-language periodicals and 10 Tibetan-language newspapers in Tibet. Computer information processing of the Tibetan script was realized in 1984, and a Tibetan-script operating system compatible with Chinese and English versions was developed. In 1997, an international-standard Tibetan character code was approved, making the Tibetan script the first ethnic-minority script in China with an international standard.

The Tibetan cultural heritage is being effectively protected, inherited and developed. The completion of the Tibetan volumes in a 10-tome folk culture series, including Annals of Chinese Operas, A Collection of Chinese Folk Ballads, A Collection of Folk Dances of China's Ethnic Groups, A Collection of Proverbs, A Collection of Folk Performing Art Genres, A Collection of Folk Songs of China's Ethnic Groups, A Collection of Traditional Operas and Music, and A Collection of Folk Tales, has enabled a large number of major items of the Tibetan cultural heritage to be saved and protected in an effective way. The state has also earmarked special funds for the collection, collation and publishing of the text of the lengthy oral epic Life of King Gesar. This is listed as one of the major scientific research projects. So far, over 300 volumes of the masterpiece have been collected, with the publication of 62 volumes in the Tibetan language and over 20 volumes in Han
Chinese translation; and many volumes have been translated into English, Japanese and French. The Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, and the Drepung, Sera, Ganden, Tashilhunpo, Sakya and many other monasteries have been placed under the protection of the state since the democratic reform in Tibet. Moreover, since the early 1980s more than 700 million yuan has been channeled from central and local coffers for repairing a number of venues of cultural relics under state protection and major monasteries of various sects of Tibetan Buddhism, and helping them open to the public. From 1989 to 1994 the central government allocated 55 million yuan and a great amount of gold, silver and other precious materials for the renovation of the Potala Palace. In 2001, a special fund of 330 million yuan was apportioned to maintain and repair the Potala Palace, the Norbulingka and Sakya monasteries. In 2007, the central government allocated another 570 million yuan for the overall repair and protection of 22 key cultural relics sites in Tibet during the 11th Five-Year Plan period. Such an investment was unprecedented in China's history of cultural relics protection.

The freedom of religious belief and normal religious activities of the Tibetan people are protected. Today, there are more than 1,700 religious venues in Tibet, with more than 46,000 resident monks and nuns, which can fully meet the needs of religious believers in Tibet. Various traditional Buddhist activities are carried out in the normal way — from sutra studies and debates to abhisheka (consecration) and other Buddhist practices, as well as the system of academic degrees and ordination through examinations. According to incomplete statistics, there are now more than 60 classes for sutra studies in Tibet, with 6,000 novice monks. As a unique way of passing on Tibetan Buddhism, the Living Buddha reincarnation system receives respect from the state. In Tibet, religious activities are rich in content and diverse in form; religious festivals are celebrated frequently. Since the early 1980s, more than 40 religious festivals have been successively resumed. Monks and laymen organize and take part in the Sakadawa Festival, Shoton (Yogurt) Festival and other religious and traditional activities every year.

**Modern education and the media are developed in an all-round way; the educational level of the people is constantly improving.**

In old Tibet there was not a single school in the modern sense. The enrollment rate for school-age children was less than two percent, while the illiteracy rate was as high as 95 percent. During the past 50 years, the central government has invested a huge amount of funds in education in Tibet, making Tibet the first place in China to enjoy free compulsory education in both urban and rural areas. Since 1985, the state has set up
boarding primary and high schools in farming and pastoral areas, and covered all tuition as well as food and lodging expenses for students at the stage of compulsory education from Tibet's farming and pastoral families. In 2008, all 73 counties (cities and districts) in Tibet realized six-year compulsory education and basically wiped out illiteracy; in 70 counties of which, nine-year compulsory education is being practiced, and the illiteracy rate has fallen to 2.4 percent overall. The enrollment rate for primary school-age children has reached 98.5 percent, that for junior high school 92.2 percent, and that for senior high school 51.2 percent. There are 884 primary schools, 117 high schools and 1,237 teaching venues now in Tibet. The average educational level of people in Tibet reached 6.3 years in 2008. There are six institutions of higher learning, with about 30,000 students and an enrollment rate of 19.7 percent, and 10 secondary vocational schools, with the number of students totaling 21,000. In 20 hinterland provinces or municipalities of China, 28 junior and senior high schools have classes specially for Tibetan students, 53 key senior high schools and over 90 institutions of higher learning have accumulatively enrolled 36,727 junior high school students, 30,370 senior high school students (including secondary vocational school students), trained and provided more than 18,000 professionals for the construction of Tibet. At present, the number of Tibetan Students in these schools has reached 18,640. Modern science and technology in Tibet has developed rapidly, and the number of related personnel keeps increasing. There were 46,508 professionals of various kinds in 2007; among them 31,487 are of ethnic minorities, with Tibetans in the majority. Large numbers of highly educated Tibetans, including some with Ph.D and MA, as well as scientists and engineers, have become a major force in promoting Tibet's development. The modern press and publishing industry in Tibet started from scratch, and has developed rapidly. Now, Tibet has two publishing houses for books, and two for audio-visual products; 35 printing houses of various types; 23 openly distributed newspapers and 34 periodicals; each of Tibet's seven prefectures and (prefecture-level) cities has newspapers in Tibetan and Han Chinese. Tibet has nine radio and TV stations, 39 medium-wave transmitting and relay stations, 76 FM radio transmitting and relay stations above the county level, 80 TV transmitting stations above the county (including port city) level, 76 cable TV transmitting stations and 9,111 radio and TV stations at the township and village levels. From 1978 to 2008, the radio and TV coverage rates in Tibet have risen from 18 percent and two percent to 88.8 percent and 89.9 percent, respectively, achieving the target of extending radio and TV coverage to each town and administrative village of the region. In addition, there are 564 movie-projection agencies, 82 movie-projection management agencies, 478 projection teams and 7,697 projection locations in
Tibet's farming and pastoral areas, covering 98 percent of the region's administrative villages, with each farmer or herder watching 1.6 movies per month. Besides, there are 257 public art and cultural centers at all levels, 10 professional art performance troupes, 18 folk art performance troupes, and 660 amateur performance teams. The development of the media and cultural services provide convenience for the people in Tibet to acquire the latest news, get access to knowledge and information, and entertain themselves in their spare time, enriching their cultural life.

**Conclusion**

Over the past 50 years, tremendous changes have taken place in Tibet, as it has experienced a process from darkness to brightness, from poverty to prosperity, from autocratic rule to democracy, and from self-seclusion to opening up. At present, Tibet is in its best period of historical development with rapid economic and social progress, cultural prosperity, improved lives, ethnic unity, and a good government and a united people.

History has convincingly proved that instituting the democratic reform in this region of over 1.2 million sq km and abolishing the centuries-old feudal serfdom of theocracy to emancipate the million serfs and slaves was of great significance not only in the history of China's human rights development, but also in the world's anti-slavery history. This is a great page in the progress of human civilization that will shine throughout the ages. Without the democratic reform, there would have been no emancipation of the laborers constituting 95 percent of the Tibetan population, no frog-leaping social progress and human rights development in Tibet, and no happy life for all the ethnic groups in Tibet today.

History has convincingly proved that the 14th Dalai Lama and his political clique are the chief representatives of old Tibet's theocratic feudal serfdom and a small number of serf-owners who monopolized with vested interests old Tibet's political, economic and cultural resources. There are fundamental conflicts of interests between them and the Tibetan laboring people who constitute the overwhelming majority of the Tibetan population, and there are irreconcilable and profound contradictions between them and the need for social progress in Tibet as well as the rules for the development of human society. This means that the Dalai clique is destined to remain anti-democratic reform, that they will not quit the stage of history and give up their privileges by themselves, and that they will not concede defeat. Fifty years ago, the Dalai clique staged an armed rebellion, aiming to separate Tibet from the motherland so as to maintain the theocratic feudal serfdom and to
preserve their privileges forever. Since they fled abroad 50 years ago, they have never stopped trying to restore the system of theocratic feudal serfdom. With the support of anti-China forces, they have set up and maintained a so-called "Tibetan government-in-exile" with the 14th Dalai Lama as the theocratic leader, never ceasing their separatist activities to sabotage the steady development of Tibet. They have turned black into white in an attempt to mislead the international community, pretending to be speaking on behalf of the "Tibetan people." They whitewash the old Tibetan society of feudal serfdom under theocracy as some sort of Shangri-la, denigrating the implementation of the democratic reform to promote social progress as "destruction of culture and religion" and "infringement of human rights." This shows how they hated to see the abolition of the theocratic feudal serfdom, to see the loss of the serf-owners' privileges, how they hate to see the Tibetans and people of other ethnic groups becoming their own masters under the socialist democratic system, and leading a happy and peaceful life; and how they long to restore the feudal serfdom of theocracy that has been swept into the dustbin of history so as to regain the "paradise" under the rule of the feudal serf-owners. This also shows that our essential difference from and fight with the Dalai clique are not merely over the question of autonomy; this is a struggle between progress and reaction, unity and separation.

History has convincingly proved that abolition of serfdom, the liberation of serfs and slaves, and keeping national unity safe against separation are a progressive and just cause for the protection of human rights and maintenance of national sovereignty. Looking back upon history, the American government once started a four-year-long civil war against the secessionist South to abolish slavery, at a cost of over 15 billion US dollars, more than 1.1 million casualties and other incalculable losses. President Abraham Lincoln was crowned with eternal glory for leading the war, and is still extolled by the American people today, as well as by other people all around the globe. When the Dalai clique staged the large-scale armed rebellion to retain the theocratic feudal serfdom and to split the country, the Chinese government took actions to quell the rebellion for the sake of defending national unity and emancipating the serfs and slaves of Tibet. The historical significance of this righteous action is entirely comparable to the emancipation of the slaves in the American civil war. Yet the Western anti-China forces simply ignore the historical facts and confuse right and wrong by exalting the 14th Dalai Lama — chief representative of the theocratic feudal serfdom and the Tibetan serf-owners — as a "guardian of human rights," "peace envoy," and "spiritual leader," and accusing the Chinese government that abolished feudal serfdom and emancipated the serfs and slaves
of "trespassing on human rights." This is totally absurd, and provokes deep thought. In fact, the so-called "Tibet issue" was the outcome of the imperialist attempts to partition China in modern times, as a part of the big powers' conspiracy to turn China into a colony or semi-colony. The armed rebellion staged by the Dalai clique to split the country in 1959 was supported and instigated by imperialist forces. Ever since the Dalai clique went into exile, Western anti-China forces have never ceased their instigation and training of the Dalai clique to support their split and sabotage activities. It is thus clear that the so-called "Tibet issue" is by no means an ethnic, religious and human rights issue; rather, it is the Western anti-China forces' attempt to restrain, split, and demonize China.

History has also convincingly proved that there is no way to restore the old order, and there is no prospect for the success of any separatist attempt. Time goes by, and social progress is inevitable; this is a historical trend no one can resist. The will of the people of all ethnic groups in China, including the Tibetans, shall never be shaken from following the socialist road with Chinese characteristics under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, from holding on to the system of regional ethnic autonomy, from promoting the realization of modernization in Tibet, and from building a new, united and democratic Tibet with a prosperous, civilized and harmonious society. There is no way for the Dalai clique to uphold "Tibetan independence"; neither will it succeed in its attempt to seek semi-independence or covert Tibetan independence under the banner of "a high degree of autonomy." Whatever pretexts the Dalai clique uses to try to turn back the wheel of history and to restore the rule of feudal serfdom, the Tibetan people and people of other ethnic groups who personally experienced the misery under the serfdom system in contrast to the happy life in Tibet today will never allow it, and the Dalai clique's attempts are doomed to failure. The only way out for the 14th Dalai Lama is to give up advocating "Tibetan independence" and any attempt to restore the old system, admit that Tibet is an inalienable part of Chinese territory, disband the so-called "Tibetan government-in-exile" and stop all his activities aimed at splitting the country. The 14th Dalai Lama must thoroughly reflect upon and change his political position and behavior. The central government has opened and will always keep open its door for the 14th Dalai Lama to return to a patriotic stand.

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