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Wang Yi, ed., *Xizang Wenwu Jianwenji (Record of Seeing and Hearing about Tibetan Cultural Things)*, *Wenwu*, 1959, 7, p.5; 1960, 6, 42-48, 51 (Lhasa region & three great monasteries); 1960, 8, 52-65 (Shigatse, Tashilhunpo, Narthang, Shalu, Sakya); 1960, 10, 39-46, 54 (Gyantse region, relics of resistance against the British); 1961, 1, 43-53 (Gyantse Kumbum & monastery); 1961, 2, 43-; 1961, 3, 38-48 (Thangtong Gyalpo, Yarlung); 1961, 4, 38-; 1961, 4/5, 81-87 (Tombs of the Tibetan emperors); 1961, 6, 55-63 (Mindroling etc.).

Xizang Wenwu Jianwenji, see Wang Yi.

Yet, in spite of everything, as it stands today, to judge by the recent photos on the www, this mock fortress is much more welcome than a flashy glass and steel hotel in faceless international style. Along with the exploitation of mines and natural resources in Tibet, it is obvious that the luring of tourists to the truly mythic Land of Snows has become one of the major targets of PRC policy in the TAR today.⁹⁹

ILLUSTRATIONS :

The Potala Palace

Shigatse Dzong (the old fort, 1940s)

Shigatse Dzong (ruins, ca 1990s)

Shigatse Dzong (under construction, 2006)

Shigatse Dzong (the new fort, 2008)

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⁹⁹ See www.markhorrell.com, 'The 'old fort' (sic!) pictured behind a thatched house in the Old Town' (of Shigatse).

emerged in the official Chinese discourse, continuing right up to the present day. For the younger generations who were born and brought up from the 1980s and onwards, the Maoist era and the Cultural Revolution are already ancient history, far distant from their everyday concerns. Thus the official propaganda organs in the PRC are tempted once again to transform reality by effacing collective and individual memory, replacing it with newly fabricated 'positive imagery' that hides the reality of China and Tibet's violent 20th century history.

Many questions arise from this brief overview. The new revised regulations, for example, do they emanate from Beijing, or are they orchestrated from Lhasa? Who is behind the new measures? Do the Chinese bosses of the TAR and the Tibetan specialists have a real say in what is to be done about Tibetan culture? Is it tourism that will save Tibet to a certain degree? The need for income generated by the tourist industry, does this rhyme with the new instructions giving permission to Tibetans to put up signs in their own writing on their ancient sites? It is politically correct and it does look good, flattering the Chinese tourist and the indiscriminating foreigner, giving the impression there there is true aspiration on the part of the regime to keep Tibetan culture alive. But in fact it does help to keep the language, the writing and the culture alive, to a certain extent.

By way of a conclusion, in the context of *Exploding Cities*, we may take as an example, the majestic Shigatse Dzong that dominated, until 1966, the small township of the same name⁹⁵. This fortress, originally known as Samdruptse, was founded in the mid-14th century by Tai Situ Changchub Gyaltsen (1302-1364) following his takeover of power from the Sakyapas, in 1358, as one of thirteen new forts (dzong or prefectures), built under his new administration.⁹⁶ Later on, the same fort served as a model for the Potala Palace, in Lhasa in the 17th c., as well as for the royal palace of Leh, in Ladakh (see A.Alexander, **p.000**). Rising in the heart of Shigatse, the second most important town of Central Tibet, the dzong had been the seat of power of the province of Tsang since its construction. It was a superb example of Tibetan fortress architecture, no doubt the finest for which we have visual documentation, and it was in excellent condition, as can be seen from numerous photos taken in the 1940s.⁹⁷ After its destruction during the Cultural Revolution, there remained a whole facade of majestic ramparts and walls, as well as the inner galleries cut into the rockface.⁹⁸

Today, the fort has been completely remade, though not following the original model. The ramparts have been obscured and the whole building, built on a massive armature of steel and concrete, has been enrobed in a thick white layer of paint, with a red building in the centre, making it look much more like the Potala than the old Shigatse Fort. In the 1940s, the latter had kept, essentially, the sobre aspect of natural stone. It is rumoured that this modern 'fort' is a five-star hotel reserved for top brass in the PRC. In its new shining robes it may be promoted in the future as an even more insistant rival to the former palace of the Dalai Lamas. It must also be said that without special permission from the 'higher authorities', its construction would be in complete contravention of clause 22 of the new 2006 regulations (see above **p.000**). No doubt the Chinese and international tourist agencies will soon be calling it the 'old fort', as if it had never been destroyed.

⁹⁵ Shigatse was the main town of the province of Tsang, whereas Lhasa was the capital city of Tibet, and main town of the province of Ü. Ü and Tsang made up the two provinces of Central Tibet, their origins going back to the 7th century.

⁹⁶ See Blo bzang rgya mtsho & Nor brang 'O rgyan, *Bod kyi deb ther dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs*, Lhasa 1993, 360; Shakabpa, 1984, *A Political History of Tibet*, Yale, 81-82.

⁹⁷ See Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, www.prm.ox.ac.uk/tibet_prm-collections.html.

⁹⁸ Ibid; and www.habitatsrealty.com, the ruins of Shigatse dzong.

two small paragraphs that stipulate,

1. All explanatory signs at cultural sites such as tombs, grottos and cave paintings must be in Tibetan as well as Chinese.
2. Documents concerning the protection of cultural heritage must be written in Chinese and in the 'national minority language'.

It is interesting to note that these two points, which are entirely in accord with the legal position of Tibetan language in the TAR, and in the Constitution of the PRC,⁹³ appear to demonstrate some margin of action, as well as the limits of eventual negotiation, on the part of the Tibetan intelligensia. What is the nature of their 'agency' in a social and political environment that is designed, from now on, to use Tibetan civilisation in the context of tourism, and the expanding profit that China is reaping from the Tibetan people, and from the natural and cultural resources on the Tibetan plateau.

IV. LOCAL AGENCY & EXCLUSION

Based upon the above mentioned sources, what can be said about Tibetan agency at work in the sphere of cultural heritage in Tibet today ? Are Tibetans victim of exclusion with regard to their own cultural heritage ?⁹⁴ Is there any choice with regard to their own cultural heritage ? Does interaction & negotiation take place? Are such things possible in the present context , or are they excluded from decision-making processes?

Tibetans often appear from the time of the Chinese occupation in the mid-20th century and onwards, to be hapless victims in their own ancestral land. Reduced to the status of second-class citizens, as a 'national minority', or a 'nationality', it is undeniable that they are way behind in educational and economic terms as compared to the Han majority in the PRC. However, in spite of the overwhelming odds and the imbalance in numbers, Tibetan intellectuals have played and continue to play roles in society today. As already observed, it was the Tibetans who were the first to launch a new literary journal in 1975, and to immediately organise a series of conferences with a view to discussing the future development of their own language and literature. When given the opportunity, there is no doubt, in the mind of the author, from many years of experience in Tibet, that when given the opportunity and the education, Tibetans are as capable and efficient in taking care of their ancient culture as anyone else.

V. CONCLUSION

Each new set of regulations provides information on the historical changes in society in the PRC, and gives clear indications on the changing discourse with regard to Tibetan cultural heritage. The regulations evolve through a clear discussion, in the 1980s, of the major destruction and looting that took place during the Cultural Revolution and in the aftermath. Obvious concern is expressed concerning the smuggling and selling of art on the international market. Legislation during that period stressed different types of punishment for offenders, and referred on numerous occasions to attempts by the government to gain full control of the profitable trade.

Later on in the 1990s, as the market in Tibetan art began to decline, a negationist position

⁹³ Idem, 108-109, 50.

⁹⁴ See above, **note 17**.

This list contains only two items referring to ‘nationalities’, although, special attention is paid to the ‘nationalities’ with regard to maintaining the ‘unity of the Ancestral State’. There is nothing at all about the history, great personalities and achievements of the ‘nationalities’. It is as if they are (still) considered to be devoid of history, valued only for their ‘customs (dancing and singing), arts, artifacts and religion’. The point of view on ‘nationalities’ is that they belong to the domain of folklore in China. The basic intention of this document is to re-animate the revolutionary fervor of the middle decades of the 20th century. The anachronism of the situation in Tibet is plainly clear, as compared to the rest of China, with its expanding booming capitalist and increasingly hi-tech economy.⁹⁰

New or improved regulations with regard to Tibetan religious practices, especially the burning of butter lamps in monasteries and temples, and the consequent danger of fire, are included. These indicate an ongoing need for interaction between cultural heritage administration and the department of religious administration. The inner wooden structures of temples and monasteries are certainly a constant danger. The ‘faithful masses’ (*dad ldan mang tshogs*) are mentioned here, together with tourists and ‘others’, exhorting them all to pay great heed to this new regulation. Thus the ancient Tibetan custom of lighting butterlamps has become a sensitive issue, implying the transformation of certain important places of worship.

On Tuesday May 29th, 2007, the Xinhua News Agency announced that ‘Relics collected or taken care of in places of religious activity in the (Tibet) Autonomous Region, or provided for the use of religious personnel by national artifact collection departments, belong to the state’, adding that the rule on artifacts is part of revised rules on protecting Tibet's cultural heritage and is needed due to the ‘special situation of preserving the existence of Tibet's relics.’⁹¹

This last announcement is clearly an order emanating from the high authorities in Beijing, and in effect condemns any last remnants of social practice and interaction between the religious community and the local population. Traditionally, temples and monasteries were considered to be the custodians and treasurehouses of the wealth of the entire society. Just to take one simple example, when someone died, the family would often have a *thangka* painted by a local artist, and then offer it to their monastery. This re-inforced old links, or created new exchanges of services, that would continue over generations. Such cultural and religious acts helped to hold society together, while contributing to the development of art as a living, evolving aspect of society. The monastery was embellished, traditional culture was reinforced, and the family felt some consolation in creating merit for their dead loved ones, as well as pride in displaying their contribution to the general wealth of the community.

In this new handbook, various clauses confirm and re-inforce state ownership of ‘all objects found below the ground, in rivers and in the ocean under China’s jurisdiction’, as well as all unmovable and movable cultural objects. Another statement refers to ‘all objects below the ground, on the ground and in the air’⁹². To sum up the situation today, anything of any cultural value in Tibet belongs to and is protected by the state.

However, another much more welcome aspect of the revised reglementation is contained in

⁹⁰ Idem, 19-20.

⁹¹ May 29, 2007, Beijing (Reuters), ‘China says state owns Tibetan religious relics...All religious artifacts in places of worship in Tibet belong to the Chinese state’, the official Xinhua news agency said on Tuesday, wtn-editors@tibet.ca.

⁹² HCRW, 4, 106.

Agency announced, on 26.1.2008,

'New records in overseas tourists arrivals'. 'The number of overseas tourists arriving in the TAR grew by 136 percent in 2007, said Wang Songping, deputy head of the TAR tourism bureau. The region received 365 000 foreign visitors, or 210,500 more than 2006, and they reportedly brought in revenue of US\$ 135.3 million, up 122 percent year-on-year. Japan replaced the United States as the largest source of overseas tourists to Tibet, and accounted for 78 000 visitors, 5.2 times the figure of 2006, Wang said. As a whole, the TAR hosted a record high of more than 4 million tourists both inland and overseas tourists, which represents an annual growth of 60.4 percent. The region's revenue from tourism surged 75.1 percent year-on-year to 4.85 billion Yuan (US\$ 668 million). Tourism revenue accounted for 14.2 percent of the gross domestic product in Tibet last year, 4.6 percentage points higher than the previous year. However, official statistics do not reflect which part of this revenue actually benefits Tibetan enterprises and individuals. For 2008, the number of visitors to the TAR is expected to hit 5 million, or 25 percent more than 2007, and tourism revenue is officially predicted to reach 6 billion Yuan (US\$ 826 million) up 24 percent.'⁸⁸

New categories of 'Cultural Objects'

In the *Method for Establishing the Categories of Cultural Relics to be Selected and Kept*, document # 19, dated 5.1.2001,⁸⁹ an assorted list of fourteen types of 'cultural relics' to be included and protected on state category # 1 listings is given. A number of new highly political items not listed in earlier documents may be noted here. The meaning of their inclusion appears to be closely linked to the bid to reinforce the 'unity of the Ancestral State'. The return to revolutionary expression and the fervor of the Cultural Revolution is striking. The categories of 'cultural relics' to be protected are as follows :

- 1) 'Cultural relics' that are of special, crucial nature during China's history, with regard to production, the economic system, the political system, and the historical development of society,
- 2) Specially valuable 'cultural relics' that are historical examples of the development of the power of production, and of advanced production techniques,
- 3) 'Cultural relics' that show the social and historical development of the 'nationalities', or that encourage 'friendship between the nationalities', or that have 'special or important value as examples of the protection of the unity of the Ancestral State',
- 4) 'Cultural relics' that have special, important value as examples of revolts by the laboring masses against oppression and tyranny,
- 5) 'Cultural relics' that have special significant value as examples of international historical exchanges, in the arenas of politics, economics, war, science, education, culture, art, religion, health and hygiene, and sport,
- 6) Valuable 'cultural relics' that show examples of significant historical events and important personalities, who have revolted against foreign imperialist invaders, and oppression,
- 7) Valuable 'cultural relics' that are examples of famous thinkers throughout history, great politicians, great military personalities, learned scientists, creators, educationalists, those learned in culture and the arts,
- 8) Valuable objects that show the everyday customs of the 'nationalities', their arts, beautiful skilled artifacts, and faith in religion,
- 9) Valuable old books that are examples of China's ancient books (sic.),
- 10) Valuable cultural relics that show important events, and fine leading figures of the real revolutionary movement within the international communist movement, and those that show important results in organisation by the Chinese Revolution of the international struggle,
- 11) Valuable cultural relics that show links with important events and people during the recent history of China (1840-1949), the dead heroes, and famous model heroes of that time,
- 12) Valuable cultural relics that show links with significant historical contexts, important organisation results, leading personalities, famous dead heroes and famous model heroes, during the period of the founding of the PRC,
- 13) Valuable cultural relics that show links between the Chinese Communist Party, other branches of the Communist Party, and other parties in recent times, with the important events and leading personalities, with patriotic brothers who live abroad, and famous personalities in society,
- 14) Valuable, precious historical, artistic and scientific cultural relics.

⁸⁸ www.china.org.cn/english/travel/240898.htm

⁸⁹ Idem, 117-124; 119-120.

permission must be obtained from (...the higher authorities)'.⁸¹

Furthermore, the problem of the raiding of tombs continues,⁸² while clauses reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution - appearing extremely dated in the context of the rest of the PRC (with perhaps the exception of Xinjiang) - are included, showing the special attention that is being paid by the Beijing government to the political and cultural scene in Tibet.⁸³

The areas covered by cultural heritage have been extended considerably. They now include what might be termed 'esthetic values', considered to be bourgeois anathema under the Maoist regime. Thus, 'important art products', 'esthetic handicraft products', as well as a wider range of both the tangible historic and the intangible social heritage of the 'nationalities' (*mi rigs khag*) are listed. This last category is immediately followed by 'dinosaur bones' (suggesting perhaps yet another Freudian slip with regard to 'old relics?'), as well as 'quality textiles'.⁸⁴ In 'unmovable cultural objects', the new instructions go as far as preconising the protection of the 'centres of historic cultural towns, villages and the countryside', without going into further elaboration.⁸⁵

The financial aspect of investment in Tibetan cultural heritage and the increasingly rewarding returns, is clearly one that ought to be addressed, since the PRC has made numerous declarations with regard to generous grants provided for the restoration of a few key sites. The total figure announced, \$US 72.3 million, when spread over nearly six decades (1949-2007), through the whole of the TAR, makes \$US 1.2 million a year. This seems little indeed when compared to the vast destruction that has taken place, and in view of the fact that the major part of that sum has been invested in only a few buildings.⁸⁶ A new Tibet Museum, with some excellent displays and modern installations such as audio-tapes, was inaugurated in Lhasa, in October 1999. The funds for this enterprise, US\$ 14 million (100 million yuan, at Feb. 2008 rate) are apparently included in the above figure (though this is not clear), thus reducing considerably the total amount invested on important ancient sites. There is an excellent team of Tibetan researchers working in the museum, including Sonam Wangden, Shargyan Wangdu & Pasang Norbu.⁸⁷ Two of the major sites, the Potala and the Jokhang, have been 'restored' at least twice during the period from the 1980s to the present time. This investment urgently needs to be put in perspective, at the present time, with regard to the vastly increased income that the government is now reaping from the tourist industry. The Xinhua News

⁸¹ Idem, 14-15, 33, 98.

⁸² Idem, 33.

⁸³ Idem, 119-120.

⁸⁴ Considerable quantities of highly important, rare or unique textiles have been smuggled out of Tibet over the last quarter century, and are now in international collections. See *Chinese and Central Asian Textiles, Selected Articles from Orientations, 1983-1997; Heavens' Embroidered Cloths. One Thousand Years of Chinese Textiles*, Hong Kong Museum of Art, 1995. In fact many of these textiles came straight out of Tibet, from tomb sites like Dulam.

⁸⁵ HCRW 48.

⁸⁶ I.e. the Potala, the Jokhang, Norbulingka, Sakya, Shalu, Tashilhunpo, Tholing, Guge Old Citadel, Dungkar-Piyang, are quoted as having received subsidies. The monasteries surrounding Lhasa, Ganden, Drepung and Sera have also recently been equipped with fire-fighting devices. See www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/zgxz/t56212.htm; and tibetinfo.com.cn, *White Paper on Tibetan Culture, White Papers of Government Press Conferences, 2001 Tibet Statistical Yearbook China Facts & Figures 2002*, II. Cultural Relics and Ancient Books and Records Are Well Preserved and Utilized.

⁸⁷ See *Orientations*, Feb. 2000, 62-65, for a report on the museum, including several of its major treasures, and **above note 30**, on its researchers.

forgotten.

Status Quo on Preservation of Tibetan Cultural Relics and Development of Tibetan Museum China Tibet Information Center

‘Since the Peaceful Liberation (1951), the TAR has constantly insisted on the principle of putting emphasis on preservation and rescue as the first priority, rational utilization and reinforced administration. It has made great efforts and obtained remarkable achievements on cultural relics' preservation and development. During the tenth five year plan, the government financed 360 millions RMB (Chinese currency) to projects related to cultural preservation and development, such as renovation, setting up storehouses, publication of articles, and building up the fire fighting infrastructure. The government also earmarked a big amount of gold and silver to those projects in Tibet. The course of Tibetan cultural relics, lasting almost half century, has mainly gained the achievements and experience as follows....’

The text avoids mentioning the Cultural Revolution, and moves simply on to the post-1978 period, justifying the government policy and explaining in detail various successful activities of the PRC, in the usual manner, before suggesting much tighter control on visits to the most famous sites, such as the Potala, as well as ways of encouraging tourists to visit lesser known sites. This seems to point to a better distribution of the hordes of tourists, as well as to the banalisation of many smaller temples and monasteries.

The memorandum was published only a few months after the above-mentioned new volume of regulations *A Handbook of Cultural Relics Work* (HCRW).⁷⁴ The handbook incorporates the most recent modifications to the legal code concerning wide-ranging and comprehensive regulation of cultural heritage in China, but in this case the contents point specifically to the present situation in Tibet. The order of priority in the lists of ‘cultural relics’ has been modified in most cases⁷⁵, and the general tone of language is less militant. Private ownership and export of cultural objects is now permitted.⁷⁶

As in several of the previously published lists of regulations (1991), all aspects of the immediate environment of a cultural heritage site are to be protected⁷⁷. The quality and care of on site restoration is to be respected⁷⁸, and the buffer zone around a site⁷⁹, as well as questions of security, are to be well thought out. The protection system must in harmony with the surroundings⁸⁰. The people should be educated with regard to cultural heritage, new museums are to be created, awards and punishments are to be given, and the question of finances to be addressed.

However ; the basic regulations in this new publication give once again clear provisos allowing for the destruction of sites if it is deemed necessary. Clause 22, declares that ‘All ancient remains on destroyed sites that ought not to be removed must be properly protected. New structures are not allowed to be built on top of them, or if under special circumstances, it is necessary to rebuild, then permission must be obtained from (.the higher authorities)’. Clause 23 continues in the same vein, ‘On memorial sites, or on ancient structures, apart from museums, premises for administration (of the site) and tourist installations (no other installations are allowed, but), in case of the need to use (the site) for other purposes,

⁷⁴ The author has only had access to the Tibetan version, though a Chinese version is also said to exist.

⁷⁵ Historical cultural heritage comes before modern items (ie. objects and sites dating to the Revolution), in most cases, though there is at least one mention of the old order, see p.107.

⁷⁶ HCRW, 27-33.

⁷⁷ Op cit, 106-107.

⁷⁸ Idem, 102.

⁷⁹ Idem, 49.

⁸⁰ Idem, 86.

Fifth Dalai Lama (1671-1682), in the Potala Palace.⁷⁰ Religious art, both Buddhist and Bonpo, was commissioned and offered to the intended beneficiary, and the artists were paid in kind. Art was considered to be sacred. It did not belong to the vulgar category of 'saleable commodities' in any way. Indeed, the buying and selling of religious art was considered to be a serious moral offense, even right into the 1960s, when the author first began to study Tibetan thangka painting. However, this has changed with the tourist market, the internationalisation of Tibetan Buddhism, and the increasing adaptation of Tibetans to the modern world.

In Tibet, the climate was perfect for the preservation of textiles, paper, wood and other organic materials. Whereas in the neighboring lands of India, Nepal, China and South-East Asia, the hot and humid climate for several months each year destroyed much of the art that was based upon organic matter. In Tibet, internal strife and foreign invasions were relatively rare, and the protection of the contents of temples, monasteries, libraries and private homes was in the hands of specially delegated guardians. In some cases the guardians may not have been entirely aware of what they were taking care of, especially from the historical point of view, in view of the layers and layers of ancient treasures gathered over the centuries, but this did not mean that they were lax in the surveillance of what they had in their charge. Temples and monasteries were considered by the people to be the depositaries of the wealth of the whole society. When someone died, generous offerings were made to monastic establishments, often in the form of paintings and sculptures. This created 'merit' and gave work to the local artists (thus continually renewing the art scene, from generation to generation). Everyone knew that the religious establishments were the safest places to keep treasures. For this reason, Tibet was reknowned as a 'Treasure House', with immense wealth in gold and other precious substances, used in the creation of Buddhist imagery⁷¹. Indeed one of the traditional Chinese names for Tibet, Zang, or more recently Xizang, means 'Treasury' or 'Western Treasury'. The use of this character, *zang*, is certainly not a hazardous choice.

In traditional Tibet, even with permits from the Tibetan government, it was hard for visiting scholars to gain access to the libraries and treasures of a monastery with which they were not affiliated. For example, when such a great scholar as Amdo Gedun Chompel tried to obtain permission to visit several monasteries in the province of Tsang, in 1934, in the company of the Indian Buddhist scholar, Rahul Sankrityayan, they had extreme difficulties, and Rahul had completely failed in his previous search. It was only during the 1938 mission, with the help of Gedun Chompel, that they managed to see the precious Indian palm-leaf manuscripts that Rahul was looking for, since all trace of them had disappeared in India. They were able, at that time as well, to enter a few important libraries and see the art collections in some of Tibet's oldest and most prestigious monasteries. The deep knowledge and scholarly integrity of Gedun Chompel must have gone a long way in overcoming the suspicions of the leading lamas in the monasteries, and yet their task was still extremely difficult, as is witnessed in Rahul's diary..⁷²

A new memorandum dated 11.10.2006⁷³, similar to the 2002 statement, reiterates the previous official point of view on the protection of Tibetan cultural heritage, but the whole context is now more clearly linked to the explosion of tourism in Tibet, and the Cultural Revolution is

⁷⁰ The book, *Dzam gling rgyan gcig*, was compiled by the 5th Dalai Lama's regent, Sangye Gyatso (1653-1705), who designed and surveyed the construction of the tomb.

⁷¹ See H.Stoddard, 2002, 'The Religion of Golden Idols', in *Iconoclasm*, ZKM, Karlsruhe, 436-456.

⁷² See H.Stoddard, 1985, *Le Mendiant de l'Amdo*, Société d'ethnographie, Nanterre, Paris, 170-171.

⁷³ en.tibet.cn/bibliotheca/tsp/120061011.

the ‘brilliantly successful cultural reconstruction that had been achieved during the previous fifteen years by Tibetan educationalists and moderate Chinese to repair the damage of the Cultural Revolution’.⁶⁶

V. THE PRESENT SITUATION - 2000-2007

Revised Rules on the Protection of Tibetan Cultural Heritage and ‘A Great One-Thousand-Year Project’ (Chin. *qian nian da ji*)⁶⁷

This period was ushered in when Chen Kuiyuan was replaced by the new party boss, Guo Jinlong, in October 2000. It has seen an intensification of the assimilation of Tibet due to exponential economic development, massive population influx, intensive mining all over the high plateau, road building and lastly the arrival of the first train across the *red grasslands*⁶⁸ of Tibet, on 1.7.2006. As the Maoist era and the Cultural Revolution fade into history, a new bold negationist type of discourse is being promoted to efface lingering memories of the destruction of Tibetan cultural heritage over the last half century, in favor of a newly constructed Chinese presence. In 2002, the official RPC website made the following declaration,

‘In old Tibet, cultural relic protection was virtually nonexistent But since the Democratic Reform, the Central People’s Government has attached great importance to the protection of cultural relics in Tibet. As early as in June 1959, the Tibet Cultural Relics, Historical Sites, Documents and Archives Management Committee was established to collect and protect a large number of cultural relics, archives, and ancient books and records. At the same time, the Central People’s Government assigned work teams to Lhasa, Xigaze and Shannan to conduct on-the-spot investigations of major cultural relics. A total of nine historical sites were listed among the first batch of important cultural relic sites under state-level protection by the State Council in 1961, including the Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, Ganden Monastery, Tibetan King’s Tomb, Mount Dzong (Dzongri) Anti- British Monument in Gyangze County, and the Guge Kingdom ruins. Even during such a special period as the Cultural Revolution (1966- 1976), Premier Zhou Enlai gave instructions personally that special measures be taken to protect major cultural relics like the Potala Palace from destruction. After the Cultural Revolution, the Central People’s Government took prompt measures to repair and protect a lot of historical relics, investing more than 300 million yuan to repair and open 1,400-odd monasteries and temples.’⁶⁹

The first statement in this document is not born out by any eye-witness reports before 1951, nor by the considerable knowledge that is available in writing concerning Tibetan material culture, its protection and conservation in the traditional context, over the last millenium. Tibet was an immense treasury of ancient culture, notably of Asian Buddhist culture, and its guardians kept a notoriously tight hold on the keys. There were catalogues (*dkar chag*) of the holdings of each temple and monastery of any importance, and even catalogues of single projects of construction. For example, one entire volume containing highly detailed descriptions of every step in the project, was dedicated to creation of a single tomb, that of the

⁶⁶ See above **note 62**.

⁶⁷ This meaningful-to-behold slogan has been visible for several years, all over the Tibetan plateau, painted in large Chinese characters, on village walls, entrances to Communist Party HQ, and military barracks etc.

⁶⁸ The author was in Xining at the time and watched in stupefaction, all evening, on TV, the green grasslands of Tibet transformed (by the filter of CTV cameras) into red. It appeared as though, on the 1st of July 2006, at last, after almost fifty years of intensive education, that Tibet had finally turned red, while China was going full steam ahead up the capitalist railroad.

⁶⁹ See reference, above **note 57**.

Rinpoche was working with of a group of intellectuals who were taking concrete steps to defend and develop Tibetan language and literature. He had taken part in the early meetings of the 'Five, TAR + Four Provinces', and was behind the creation of much appreciated annual competitions in Tibetan writing at the university. He had great knowledge of Tibetan material culture, and was a well-loved, almost legendary figure with a phenomenal, photographic memory.

In a famous speech published in the *Tibet Daily*, 11th July 1997, as Dungkar Rinpoche lay dying in hospital in San Francisco, Chen Kuiyuan launched a high-level attack on unnamed Tibetan history researchers at the University of Tibet, declaring that 'Tibetan cultural identity is the enemy preventing full integration with the Ancestral State'. He further announced, 'Some say that college teaching material will be void of substance if religion is not included... Comrades who are engaged in research on Tibetan culture should be indignant at such statements... Some people 'claiming to be authorities' and who support the inclusion of religion in Tibetan studies are similar to 'separatists who attempt to use the spoken language and culture to cause disputes and antagonism between the nationalities'.⁶³

Making use of some knowledge of Tibetan culture, Chen developed his main political thrust through a whole range of long & repetitious speeches, in the almost mantric style of the Chinese communist party. These were published *in extenso* in both Tibetan and Chinese in the daily newspapers. He insisted on the necessary interaction and exchange between the ethnic peoples of China, saying that the 'Great Han chauvanism' and 'local nationalism', and 'narrow local (ie. TAR) ethnic nationalism' were things of the past. Detailing five examples that show the evils of the present situation, he pointed out how necessary it was to rebel against 'narrow local ethnic nationalism'.⁶⁴ This was at a time when the policy of population transfer and economic development were being greatly accelerated, contributing as never before to the swamping of Tibetan cultural identity.

The term 'local', *sa gnas* in Tibetan, as used in PRC officials documents. often refers, for example, to the former Tibetan government of the Dalai Lamas. This translation appears as inept as 'cultural relics'. To speak of one tenth of China's territory and half of the high Tibetan plateau (total 2.5 million km²) as a 'locality', is a massive understatement.

The TIN obituary on the life of Dungkar Rinpoche (died aged 71, 21.7.1997) says that,

'He first appears to have come under suspicion in 1992 (ie. just around the time when Chen Kuiyuan arrived in Tibet), when China's leader Deng Xiaoping signalled an end to the 'special characteristic' privileges that had allowed Tibetans to argue for a significant degree of cultural and economic autonomy.⁶⁵ Dungkar Rinpoche saw the new policy as aiming at full assimilation of Tibet's economy and culture within China, and as jeopardising

Trinley 'Tibetan Thorn in China's Side' ; *Daily Telegraph*, 6th Aug 1997, 'Lama who antagonised China by campaigning for Tibetan language and culture' ; *TIN*, London, 4 August 1997. The TIN obituary adds 'there are unofficial reports that last year the award was withdrawn from him and another Tibetan scholar, the medical expert (head of the University of Tibetan Traditional Medicine) Jampa Trinley'.

⁶³ See www.kingsleyhall.freeuk.com/tibet.htm, *Tibet in the Twentieth Century* by John Rowley, *Gandhi Way Issue* Nos.65-66, *Newsletter of the Gandhi Foundation*, extract : 'Tibetan cultural identity is the enemy', admits Chen Kuiyuan, Tibet's Chinese Party Secretary 'preventing full integration with the Motherland', *Tibet Daily*, 11th July 1997, published in English by BBC, 5th Aug 1997.

⁶⁴ *Tibet Daily*, *Bod ljongs nyin re'i tshags par*, *Xizang ribao*, 15.8.1996, 4.

⁶⁵ In full accordance with the constitution of the PRC.

French Singer-Polignac Foundation⁵⁹. Impressed with the conservation policy in the historic city of Paris, Sonam Wangdu, on his return proposed a plan to the TAR government for the protection of the city of Lhasa within the periphery of the Lingkor, the outer circumambulation ring of the holy city. This project included the twin peaks of the Potala Palace and the Chakpori Medical College, the Lukhang Temple and its park behind the Potala, and the old city with its markets, alleyways and different quarters, its noble residences and popular sectors. As Tibet's first modern-trained archeologist, and head of excavations in the neolithic village of Kharro, near Chamdo⁶⁰, Sonam Wangdu understood the value of conserving the fabric of the historic city, not just its temples and monuments. But he was up against the CCP, the leaders of the TAR, as well as the Chinese and Tibetan property developers.

Then from 1987 and onwards, for five years, there was a critical time of political unrest when numerous revolts and demonstrations took place in Lhasa and all over the Tibetan plateau. This ultimately led to the following period, characterised by a growing repression of Tibetan identity, and increasin development of the TAR, under the hard-liner Chen Kuiyuan.

4) 1992-2000

From the early 1990s onwards, a programme for the building of new socialist-style housing for the masses began in & around the city of Lhasa, no doubt in accord with the 1980-2000 urbanisation plan of the valley. In spite of protests, the people of the old Potala service-village of Shöl were moved to new concrete blocks behind the palace. The final demolition of Shöl and the old city had begun. It is true that many of the houses were sorely delapidated after forty years of neglect and intensive use as peoples' communes, but they were in the majority wonderful old buildings, and most of them were extremely sound from the structural point of view. They could have been renovated, with modern amenities, and would have become excellent dwellings, hotels etc. Luckily there are a few that have been saved.

This was a crucial period following the years of revolt. It was marked by a clear and ongoing confrontation between those who were doing their best to uphold and develop a new Tibetan identity, and those who were launching an all-out drive for assimilation into the 'Ancestral State' of the Han⁶¹. It was the beginning of the much-discussed 'Two-door' policy, ie. the opening up of the big door, or rather the flood-gates between China proper and Tibet, and the small economic door between Tibet and the outside world. This was largely intended to be in the sphere of economics, but it had its effect on cultural heritage as well.

The main protagonist on the Chinese side was Chen Kuiyuan, Party Secretary of the TAR, who had held high positions in Inner Mongolia for many years before moving to Tibet. Although no names were mentioned on the other side, pointed declarations indicated that amongst Chen's principal opponents, Prof. Dungkar Lobsang Trinley, Tibet's most learned historian, doyen of the Tibet University, figured prominently. He had been officially nominated 'National-Level Scholar' of the PRC in 1987, and was one of only four from the TAR to be given this title⁶². In full accord with the Constitution of the PRC, Dungkar

⁵⁹ April 27-29, see publication of acts of the colloquy, *Tibet. Civilisation and Society*, 1990, ed. Fondation Singer-Polignac, Paris.

⁶⁰ *Changdou karuo*, 1985, Xizang Zishi qu wenwu guanli weiyuanhui & Sichuan daxue lishi xi, ed. Wenwu chubanshe, Beijing, 179 pp, 64 plates.

⁶¹ This is a literal translation of the term used in the PRC, in both Chinese, *zuguo*, and Tibetan, *mes rgyal* (translated from the Chinese), and which is usually rendered 'Motherland' in English.

⁶² See Dungkar Lobsang Trinley, obituaries, *The Guardian*, 7th Aug 1997, p.13, Dungkar Lobsang

3) 1966 – 1978 The period of the so-called ‘Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’. In September 1966, right at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, the ‘Down with the Four Olds’ campaign was launched. This led to the destruction and looting of perhaps 90-95% of Tibetan material culture, all over the Tibetan plateau (as well as all over the PRC).

4) 1978-1992 This period is referred to by Tibetans as ‘fifteen years of good work of reconstruction and co-ordination’⁵³, in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. Surprisingly, even before it ended, early initiative and activity on the part of the Tibetans is manifest. They were faster on their feet than the Chinese. Already on the 14th October 1975, the first literary meeting of the ‘TAR & 4 Provinces’⁵⁴ took place in Lhasa. This was the beginning of a common Tibetan programme of reconstruction, with the launching of literary journals, new translations, educational materials and inter-provincial meetings.⁵⁵ In December 1976, the initial test number of the very first literary journal published in any language in the PRC after the Cultural Revolution, came out, *Tibetan Literature and Arts (Chin. Xizang wenyi)*.⁵⁶

Then in 1980, Hu Yaobang visited Tibet. In directive n° 31 of the CCP, he announced special consideration for the Tibetan people, declaring that he realised the failure of government policy, and the ‘negative effects it had had on Tibetan culture’. In 1984, he organised the Second Work Forum on Tibet, in Beijing, during which funds were allocated for the creation of the Tibet Archives, where over three million documents are kept. This major reserve of Tibetan historical documents is now partially available for research, and this is a most welcome development.⁵⁷ Then in 1986, on the 18th January, Hu Yaobang organised the Third Work Forum on Tibet. He denounced the leftist orientations of the TAR, and spoke of the necessity of opening up the region. Zhang Zhiwei (then vice-head of the Office of Propaganda, TAR) said that the leftist tendency was evident since, first of all, the policy of the ‘Hundred Flowers’ had not been implemented in the TAR, and secondly, the ‘work of preservation of traditional cultural heritage had been neglected’.⁵⁸

In April 1987, Sonam Wangdu, then director of the Cultural Relics Office of the TAR, Norbulingka, along with several colleagues from Lhasa, attended for the first time an international conference on Tibetan Studies, *Tibet Civilisation and Society*, hosted by the

Statistical Yearbook China Facts & Figures 2002 - II. ‘Cultural Relics and Ancient Books and Records Are Well Preserved and Utilized’. *tibetinfo.com.cn*.

⁵³ See TIN, London, 4 August 1997, Leading Scholar Dies, Cultural Criticism Stepped Up’.

⁵⁴ H. Stoddard, 1994, "Tibetan Publications and National Identity", in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, Hurst & Co., London, 132-133; L.Maconi, 2008, vol.1, 122. The TAR & 4 Provinces, refers to the TAR + most of the province of Qinghai, part of Gansu, most of western Sichuan, part of Yunnan, making up the five zones of Tibetan culture in the PRC., all being part of traditional Tibet since the 7th century. Information on the early meetings of the ‘Five’, oral communication from Dungkar Lobsang Trinley.

⁵⁵ L. Maconi, 2008, vol.1, 122, 307-324, concerning the Tibetan literary forums, she discusses the hardening of official attitudes which began in 1987, becoming categorical in 1992, and officialised in 1994, when Deng Xiaoping delivered his famous speech in Shanghai, declaring that the economy must dominate, from then on, over culture.

⁵⁶ L. Maconi, 2008, vol.1, 121-123, vol.2, 107.

⁵⁷ *White Papers of Government*, www.tibetinfo.com.cn/tibetz-en/whitebook, White Paper on Tibetan Culture, II. *Cultural Relics and Ancient Books and Records Are Well Preserved and Utilized*.

⁵⁸ See bibliography, L. Maconi, 2008 vol.2, 37, Xizang wenlian éd., 1986 (b), *Wenyi gongzuo yao wei jinji jianshi fuwu*, 32-39.

and avoids the question of environment. Thus although the importance of the protection of the immediate environment of sites, as well as the preservation of richly endowed historic cities are mentioned in the PRC regulations⁴⁹, in practice, no official protection has been applied to any of the traditional urban centres on the Tibetan plateau, and indeed, as we have seen over the last 15 years, the historic towns of Tibet have been swamped by the massive influx of Chinese migrants, surrounding the small traditional cities or towns with endless monotonous suburban zones, and more recently with increasingly sophisticated modern constructions, devoid of any specific identity.

III. DEVELOPMENTS - A TENTATIVE PERIODISATION 1951-2000

1) 1951-1959

In 1951, the 17-point Agreement, signed in Beijing, affirmed the protection of Tibetan monasteries, and non-intervention in their income. This is practically the sole mention of relevance to Tibetan physical cultural heritage. The agreement was essentially concerned with the prerogatives of power and the maintenance (for the time being) of the *status quo* in Tibet⁵⁰. The rich accumulation of wealth over the last fourteen centuries in Tibet, due to the special climate, was no doubt taken for granted by the Tibetans, who had no experience of the outside world, and no source of comparison. Indeed it was the living Buddhist society in Tibet that was considered to be most in danger. The spectre of the Cultural Revolution would not have been on anyone's mind, with perhaps the exception of Mao Zedong himself.

In March 1959, following the flight of Dalai Lama, oboes were launched against the Potala Palace, the major architectural statement of Tibet, and the symbolic centre of Tibetan political and cultural identity.

2) 1959-1965

From 1959 to 1961, several missions of exploration were sent from China through Central Tibet to investigate the 'cultural relics' situation. A resumé of the findings of the Chinese researchers was published in a series of ten articles in the 'Cultural Relics' journal, *Wenwu*, under the collective title *Xizang Wenwu Jianwenji (Record of Seeing and Hearing about Tibetan Cultural Things)*⁵¹. It is widely held, on good authority, that the notes they took were used during the Cultural Revolution to remove, in stages, the contents of historic sites in Tibet. First the most valuable treasures were taken, followed by those of lesser value, and then the libraries and stucco images or other large unmovable objects were destroyed or taken out to be burnt. Finally, the useful timbers were removed and the building blown up. Thus it appears that the whole process was well orchestrated.

In 1965, just before the Cultural Revolution,

'The People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region set up a Cultural Relics Administration Committee to take charge of the preservation and administration of material culture in Tibet. It named eleven historical sites, eg. the monasteries of Ramoche, Radreng and Tshurpu, as important cultural relic sites under TAR-level protection, and carried out repairs on those that needed urgent attention'.⁵²

⁴⁹ SCHR 13, 62.

⁵⁰ See Warren Smith 1996, *Tibetan Nation. A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations*, Westview Press, Oxford, 294-304.*

⁵¹ See bibliography.

⁵² *White Paper on Tibetan Culture, White Papers of Government Press Conferences 2001 Tibet*

market in ‘cultural objects’ following the Cultural Revolution.⁴⁵ The text in which ‘cultural objects’ are defined as ‘commodities’ (dated 1.8.1981), begins with a long tirade against the evils and chaos of the antiquities market, both inside China and in relation to the outside world⁴⁶. This text is entitled, ‘*Report on the Intensification of Surveillance of the Antiquities Market by the State Cultural Relics Affairs Administration*’ and is addressed

‘To the State Council,

There are at the present time, mad, brazen activities going on (*byed sgo smyo ham chen po*) : the chaotic situation of the antiquities market all over the country ; selling on the black market ; wheeler-dealer speculation ; the smuggling of merchandise. Everywhere in the cities and countryside, certain groups of people are specialising in trading in antiquities, in speculation, and making huge profits from these activities. Even worse, there are a few cadres who are working within the ranks of cultural relics administration, who have bad links with merchants in Hong Kong, and with foreigners, and who are beginning to smuggle goods out (of the country)’.⁴⁷

This reflects without any doubt the real situation, but also perhaps attempts made by the government to gain control of the market. The official position may be seen as part of an ongoing attempt to divert attention from the massive destruction that took place during of the Cultural Revolution, throughout China and Tibet. The term ‘Great Cultural Revolution’ is not used in these documents. The condemnation of individuals who have ‘bad links with foreigners’ may be put in perspective with regard to certain of the foreigners involved. They had special permits, no political conscience and, from the early 1980s, were allowed to enter the PRC and buy antiquities from large hangars said to belong to the government, that were filled with treasures gathered during the Cultural Revolution⁴⁸. This was carried out in considerable confidentiality, and it appears possible that the above text is referring partly to this trade.

At the same time – as in many cases of countries that have recently been through periods of extreme violence - the border police at the exit points from Tibet were lax in letting ordinary travellers take out almost anything they wanted. Indeed it appeared that there was a policy, in line with ‘Get Rid of the Four Olds’, of emptying the whole of the Land of Snows of its remaining historic treasures.

6) The object- or monument-orientated view of Cultural Heritage in China

Until relatively recently, most countries have followed a policy of saving ‘monuments’, disregarding the integrity of sites and their surroundings. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre, with its prestigious list of both cultural and natural sites all around the planet, with emphasis placed upon the global context of each site, has gone a long way to raising awareness on this question. The ‘monuments’ vision of cultural heritage, on the other hand, has had particularly negative effects, for it condones the removal of objects from context, and/or the reappropriation or destruction of what is considered by the ‘authorities’, or by the property developers, to be superfluous, minor, in the way, extraneous, reactionary, or historically undesirable. In making decisions concerning what is to be kept and what is to be destroyed, the ‘authorities’ obey a contemporary or even ephemeral set of political, economic, esthetic, historic criteria. The ‘monuments’ policy allows for the break-up of traditional architectural complexes and networks; it ignores the fabric of traditional urban life,

⁴⁵ SCHR 36-38, 39-54 (1981); 55-59 (1987).

⁴⁶ SCHR 39-46.

⁴⁷ SCHR 39.

⁴⁸ Oral sources & SCHR 99-101.

variations on the following theme,

‘in case of the necessity of (a new) construction’, or ‘in case of a special need’..., ‘if they (the cultural relics) have to be displaced or destroyed...then permission must be sought’ from the powers-that-be, ie from the ‘city, prefecture, provincial or state authorities’.

Since this text appears right at the beginning of SCHR, immediately following the first three brief statements that cover only four small pages of text, we can judge the importance of this document.

It is well known that it is precisely these loopholes and the practice of hob-nobbing with the leaders at local city, prefecture, provincial and central government levels, that are the way to success in the PRC, as well as the principal cause of corruption and disregard for public interest. It is exactly these instances that are mentioned in almost every clause and paragraph of the regulations, when appeal is considered desirable.

4)An evolving society

The fourth point is that these laws and regulations speak clearly about the social upheavels and transformations that have taken place in society in China over the last four decades and more.

The 15-Point Method of ca 1965⁴⁰, is concerned largely with the administration of architectural restoration. These regulations cover the whole of the PRC and go into detail concerning the careful protection and authentic restoration of architectural sites, as well as art objects. As mentioned above, the order of things to be protected reveals the revolutionary spirit of the day. First mentioned are memorial structures (of the Revolution), followed by ancient structures, recent ‘exemplary’ structures, cave temples, wall paintings, stucco images, stone stele, stone sculptures etc. The ‘Great Cultural Revolution’ is not mentioned, nor the destruction of cultural heritage. Thus it is likely that they date to ca 1965.⁴¹

In the later documents dating from 1978 through to the latter end of the 1980s, there is great concern with looting, robbery, clandestine export and selling abroad – as well as criticism of the ‘ten years of turmoil’ of the Cultural Revolution⁴².

During the mid-1980s through to the early 1990s a concern for modern kinds of protection and administration of sites surfaces, as seen in the setting up of fire prevention⁴³; in provisions for photography and documentary filming of cultural heritage; and in the establishment of museums.⁴⁴

5) The intense activity of the black market in antiquities in China and the export to the international market, through ‘bad links with foreign merchants’..

Three texts in SCHR speak in frank terms of ‘mad, brazen activities’, of the huge black

⁴⁰ Presented as being based upon, and replacing the regulations brought out in 1963, op cit. SCHR, 173-190. Since it does not mention the Cultural Revolution, nor the post-Cultural Revolution chaos, it may well date to 1965, when another set of regulations was published.

⁴¹ SCHR, 173, see also 172.

⁴² SCHR, 36-40; 112.

⁴³ Often implemented, in Tibet, even in the most important & prestigious sites, by the putting of electric wires for bare light bulbs or strip lighting, into a white maze of plastic tubes laid upon or even cut into superb ancient wooden structures.

⁴⁴ SCHR, on fire prevention, 117-120; 120-132.

sculptures etc., come in second position³⁴.

b) From the early 1980s, with the period of reforms under Deng Xiaoping and onwards, it is economic development that becomes more important, followed by cultural heritage, although as noted above, 'revolutionary memorabilia' are still mentioned right through to 1986³⁵. Indeed, the overriding of cultural heritage regulations when new economic demands arose is explicitly described in the extensive loophole clauses that are included in the laws and regulations.

3)'Loophole clauses'

These are integrated as part of the official regulations on cultural heritage in such a way as to permit, through appeals made to higher administrative authorities, the circumvention of the legal structures of protection, notably concerning the respect of the immediate environment of recognised historic sites. A second, and one might say, more insidious loophole clause is, and I quote, 'in case of the necessity of moving or destroying an historic site, the following administrative procedures are to be undertaken....'³⁶

'*A Selection of Cultural Heritage Regulations*' (SCHR, 1991), opens with three short paragraphs,³⁷

- Text # 1 quotes simply clause 22, extracted from the 1982 Constitution of the PRC, according to which 'all aspects of culture and cultural activity are to be developed'.
- Text # 2 quotes clauses 173 & 174, again from the 1982 Constitution, concerning punishment for 'those who go against the laws concerning cultural heritage or who deliberately destroy important sites or objects of cultural heritage'.
- Text # 3 (29.6.1991), is a reaffirmation, a decade later, of the 'punishments and fines' to be imposed upon those who 'destroy cultural heritage & its sites, who dig up and raid tombs, and sell the booty'. This shows that the legacy of the Cultural Revolution persisted right through to the end of the 1980s (and into the 1990s), and indeed vast quantities of treasures were removed in illegal ways from hundreds if not thousands of sites and caches all over the Tibetan plateau. Much that had not been already destroyed in the 1960s and 1970s, was dug up, looted and put on the market in China, or sold abroad.

It is significant that Text #4,³⁸ the keynote text of collection includes repetitive loophole clauses, accompanying the general laws agreed upon on the 19th November 1982, during the 25th Meeting of the Permanent Consultative Committee, during the Fifth Assembly of the State People's Representatives³⁹ as part of the constitution of the PRC, concerning the protection of cultural heritage. In spite of the promising title, '*Reglementation of the PRC on the Protection of Cultural Objects*', the text includes extensive provisos permitting for the destruction of protected cultural heritage, should the local, provincial or state authorities deem it necessary or desirable. Each clause from 11 through to 15 (Tib. pp.14-18, Chin. p.7-8) discusses the protection of such and such an aspect of cultural heritage, only to continue with

³⁴ SCHR 172.

³⁵ idem 17, 171, 173-4.

³⁶ idem 16-17, Chinese version, p.7.

³⁷ idem, 1-6.

³⁸ SCHR, pp.7-35, *Rig gnas dngos rdzas srung skyob bya rgyu'i skor gyi krung hva mi dmangs spyi mthun rgyal khab kyi bca' khirms*, Chin. *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo wenwu baohu fa*, dated 19.11.1982.

³⁹ *rGyal yongs mi dmangs 'thus mi tshogs chen skabs lnga' ba rgyun las 'u yon lhan khang gi gros tshogs thengs nyer lnga.*

Sichuan University, Profs Huo Wei and Li Yongxian, have also worked for many years on Tibetan archeology, notably in West Tibet. At the 2006 conference in Beijing, Li Yongxian presented a very interesting analysis of the red patterns painted by Tibetans on their faces as seen on one of the astonishing painted coffins from Dulam. Huo Wei, on the other hand, is a great specialist of sites in the TAR, and one of the most active Chinese archeologists in the field in the TAR. He worked for many years with Sonam Wangdu, and has trained a number of young Chinese (& Tibetan ?) archeologists to work on the high plateau.³²

Today, the Tibetan architectural heritage is being replaced by modern concrete and steel structures, and row upon row of monotonous identical housing units organised like military barracks, adorned with concrete painted facades 'with Tibetan characteristics'. This does not mean that the author considers innovation and development to be undesirable. On the contrary. But these regimented urban, village and nomadic programs are alien to Tibet, and to humanity in general, as the world is now realising. Furthermore, in the extreme climate of Tibet, they become delapidated in a very short time. This is why modern cultural heritage architects in Africa and in many other places around the world are developing new attitudes, including the exploration of possible solutions in which traditional and modern techniques can be combined, using local materials and knowledge, respecting the environment, and giving more place for creativity and enjoyment of the living space.³³

Tibetan traditional architecture is organic and accumulative in character. It forms an integral part of the landscape, following the natural lie of the land, choosing asymmetry, multiple levels and broad plain surfaces broken up by colourful detail, even within a small cluster of village houses. Using simple, available materials and adapting to the contingencies of the harsh climate, the huge and sudden variations in temperature, and the likelihood of earthquakes, collective experience and ancient knowledge gathered over the millenia are vitally present in Tibetan architecture. At the same time there is room for and delight taken in individual expression.

Thus, the present government-style urban developments that disrupt Tibet's superb natural environment, appear as yet one more manifestation of a government that cares for its own politically correct image, but is divorced from the reality of the people. The contracts that fatten the housing constructors and fencing engineers are more important today, on the Tibetan plateau, than the interests of the poor and voiceless 'masses'. While the expanding economy of China is intended to benefit the 'Great West', the needs and aspirations of the increasingly marginalised non-Han peoples are put aside in the race for profit, at the expense of environment, and at the expense of the non-Han ethnic populations and their distinctive cultures.

2) An evolving set of values and priorities with regard to Cultural Heritage :

a) In the 1960s and still through to the mid-1980s, first on the lists of things to be protected are memorabilia from the Revolution and historic sites connected with its heroes. Objects and sites belonging to 'ancient culture', ie. ancient tombs, ancient structures, caves temples, stone

³² See for example, *Gu ge gna' grong rjes shul*, Chin. *Guge gucheng*, 1991, Bod rang skyong ljong rig gnas dngos rdzas do dam 'u yon lhan khnag & Wenwu chubanshe, vol.1, text, vol.2, plates; Huo Wei & Li Yongxian, 2001, *The Buddhist Art in Western Tibet*, Chin. *Xizang xibu fojiao yishu*, Sichuan People's Publishing House.

³³ The presentation made at the conference by the Burkino Faso architect, Dr Diebedo Francis Kéré, a post-doctorate researcher working with Prof. Peter Herrle, at the Faculty of Architecture, Berlin University of Technology, and winner of the Aga Khan prize, is a fine example.

in much greater confidentiality at the present time.

Fortunately, certain important tomb sites, or what is left of them, Dulam in north-eastern Tibet, being a major example, have been properly excavated, with in-depth research being carried out and published²⁶ in accord with the above-mentioned regulations.²⁷ On the other side of the coin, it is unfortunate that the few Tibetan & Chinese archeologists who are in activity are barely allowed any space on the international scene²⁸. A recent declaration from the *People's Daily, Renmin ribao*, published on the www states,

'According to statistics, there are now more than 270 archeologists in Tibet, among whom 95 percent are Tibetans'²⁹.

As usual with this kind of statistic, published with no sources to back it up, the same question arises. What is meant by Tibet here ? Is it the TAR ? Or the whole of the Tibetan plateau, including all the numerous *Zangzuzhizhou* (Tibetan Autonomous Districts, Prefectures etc) in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan ? When it is said that 95% of them are Tibetans, where and who are they all ? What are they excavating and where are the results of their research ? Two hundred and fifty-five or so Tibetans is a significant number, and if this is true, then why is it that so very few of them are to be seen, both outside of the PRC, in international conferences, and even in conferences inside China. At the third ICTAA (International Conference on Tibetan Art and Architecture) held in Beijing in October 2006, only two young Tibetan art historians and two young Tibetan archeologist attended, whereas some forty Chinese, mostly from the PRC, with a few from Taiwan, took part. This is a small number indeed as compared to the 270 announced in the *People's Daily*.³⁰ Furthermore, no Tibetan archeologists are known to be active in the traditional north-eastern province of Amdo (Qinghai, Gansu), where several important sites are to be found, including the major tomb site of Dulam. Some of the main Tibetan intellectual centres in the PRC are situated in this region, in the Nationalities Universities of Lanzhou, Xining and Chabcha. How is it that there are no Tibetan archeologists amongst them ? Where are the Tibetan art historians working in Dulam, Dunhuang & Yulin ? Not to mention Dulam, there are between forty and fifty Buddhist cave temples in Dunhuang and Yulin, dating to the period of Tibetan occupation between the mid-8th and the mid-9th centuries, found in these two major Silk Route sites.

However, there is an excellent senior Chinese archeologist, Prof. Xu Xingguo, director of the Institute of Archeology, Xining, who has spent almost three decades studying and excavating Dulam and other sites in Amdo (the north-eastern province of traditional Tibet), as well as other sites in north-west China. He recently published a collection of thirty-seven research essays on his work, mostly in Amdo.³¹ Two other well-known senior archeologists from

²⁶ See below, **note 31**.

²⁷ SCHR 18-23, on the proper excavation of cultural objects, and the procedures to be carried out with regard to archeological finds.

²⁸ See below, **note 30**.

²⁹ <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/features/tibetpaper/tibetc.html>, II, *Cultural Relics and Ancient Books and Records Are Well Preserved and Utilized*.

³⁰ See *The Third ICTAA, Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Art Studies, Book of Abstracts*, Beijing 2006. The Tibetan participants at the conference were Pasang Norbu & and Shargyen Wangdu of the Tibet Museum, Lhasa, Palrae Lobsang Tashi from Tibet University, and Dopgyae from Nyingtri Cultural Bureau. Shargyen and Dopgyae spoke in a group presentation with a Chinese colleague from Sichuan.

³¹ Xu Xingguo, 2006, *Western China and the Eastern and Western Civilisations* (Chin. *Xichui zhi di. Dong Xi fang wenming*, Beijing Yanshan Publishers, 388 pp, 19 pages of plates.

deplore the chaos surrounding the traffic of cultural objects in China. These are the above-mentioned text dated 1.8.1981, and a short depeche from the PRC State Council in Beijing (#161) dated 30.10.1981. The latter text deplores the ‘present chaotic market in cultural objects, the serious situation in the black market in cultural objects, the endless provoking of law suits on the stealing of cultural objects in the various regions, and the widely-spreading evil wind of savage looting of ancient tombs. These are causing great loss for the state from every point of view, cultural, economic and political. So the different regions and departments must pay attention to this as a top priority. It is to be hoped that the provincial, city and autonomous region governments shall apply, with great determination, powerful means to regulate properly the market in cultural objects, for the present situation must be rapidly transformed.....We must struggle against all these phenomena that contravene the state policy and laws concerning cultural objects’.²³

Less than one month later, on the 19.11.82²⁴, a new set of stringent *PRC Regulations on the Protection of Cultural Objects* were published. Section 5, clause #26, states,

‘It is the responsibility of the *banks, smelting factories and paper factories* (author’s italics)²⁵, as well as the work teams who gather and buy up old and damaged objects, to co-operate with the Cultural Objects Administration Work Teams, in sorting out and selecting cultural objects in which *gold and silver* are mixed up in old and damaged things. Apart from historic monies that are much needed by the research departments of the banks and who thus allowed to keep them, all the rest must be handed over to the Cultural Objects Administration Work Teams, and a price must be paid for the objects that are handed over.’

Furthermore, in section 5, clause #24 of the same regulations, it is stated,

‘Cultural objects kept by private individuals must only be gathered and bought by offices specially set up by the Cultural Administration Work Teams. Other work teams or individual persons are not permitted to gather and buy cultural objects’.

Clause #25 goes on,

‘Private individuals are not permitted to sell and make profit from cultural objects that they have in their keeping. They are not allowed to sell them abroad’.

The above statements in the regulations concerning the black market were not exaggerated at all. They should be seen in the perspective of the attempted government monopoly on the market. Both contributed to the huge quantity of fine art coming out of China and Tibet and onto the international market in the 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, successive waves of fine art of different categories became available in the antique galleries in Hong Kong, New York, Paris and London. Notably, early Tibetan art that had rarely if ever been seen before, 11th-14th century sculptures of all kinds, superb early thangkas and ritual instruments, fine and rare textiles etc etc. Tomb raiding became something of a sport, with huge dividends, and many great treasures have been and still are being scattered in collections around the globe, though

²³ SCHR 36-38.

²⁴ SCHR 25, *Rig gnas dngos rdzas srung skyobs bya rgyu'i skor gyi Krung hua mi dmangs spyi mthun rgyal khab kyi bca' khrims*, 7-35.

²⁵ Though these regulations apply to the whole of the PRC, one cannot help but see the huge stocks of smashed Buddhas and ritual implements, the piles of half-burnt manuscripts, the vast resources of the Tibetan monasteries and their libraries, as well as the rich private holdings, in this statement. These were visible especially in the 1980s in various storage facilities all over Tibet. Indeed numerous stands on the Barkor market around the Jokhang in Lhasa and in Shigatse continued for years to sell the lower categories of such objects.

of Shöl are shown as distinctive zones marked by a criss-crossed grid pattern.

Maps 2-10 show the projected urbanisation plan as completed by 2000. Other specified zones include designated areas for residential and office buildings, suburbs and communes, historic sites and scenic spots, universities and colleges, medical and health centres, science, technology, and propaganda, 'special use' (ie. military and prisons), public construction, storage, industry and capital constructions, telecommunications and transport, roads and squares, railway stations and bus stations, water works, electric works, transformation stations, high-tension lines, rivers and canals, parks & shelterbelt, plantations and orchards, planned pastureland.²⁰

On all the latter nine maps, the old city of Lhasa as well as the village of Shöl have disappeared, leaving only the Jokhang Temple in what was the heart of the old city, the Potala Palace on the Red Hill, and the monasteries of Drepung and Sera, all marked as 'famous old remains'. Thus the demolition process of the old city of Lhasa, as shown by André Alexander in his presentation (see pp.000), was according to these maps, programmed already in the late 1970s, at the end of the Cultural Revolution. An increased population in the valley of up to 200 000 is announced in the preface to the Atlas, with an extension of the 1980 urban area to 42 sq kilometers by 2000.²¹ Until 1951, the holy city of Lhasa covered a bare 2-3 sq kilometers, with a population of 30 000.

II. PRACTICE

What do these sources reveal in terms of ideology and application in real life in Tibet?

1) A basically sound and comprehensive coverage of Cultural Heritage legislation and protection.

If the various sets of regulations had been properly implemented over the last four decades (ie. even after the destruction of the Cultural Revolution), the scene would be very different today. Lhasa, for example, in the early 1980s, still stood as a superb example of an ancient Central Asian historic city, with in its heart, the Jokhang Temple. The inner sanctum and surrounding galleries formed a unique stone, juniper wood and pisé structure going back to the 7th century, with several historic restorations and extensions, notably in the 11th and early 15th century. Recently, at least two major 'restoration' projects have seriously modified the inner core, as well as the entire complex²².

If the regulations had been respected the historic city of Lhasa would be still standing today, and would certainly have become one of the major tourist attractions in Asia, as would the whole of the Tibetan cultural zone (before 1966), with its fine and varied styles of vernacular and religious architecture, its majestic forts, spacious palaces, solid manor houses, vast maze-like monasteries and great libraries, its thousands of ancient temples and hermitages and countless stupas, all filled with treasures going back hundreds if not over a thousand years. Today, with the exception of a minute percentage of 'monuments', all of these – the legacy of an entire civilisation - have been destroyed.

Not long after the end of the Cultural Revolution, two official documents published in 1981,

²⁰ Thanks to Lara Maconi for the list in English.

²¹ Preface to *1980-2000, Lhasa Municipality Planning Collected Maps*, 1.

²² Stoddard, 1994, "Restoration in the Tsuklakhang of Lhasa, and the Fate of the Early Paintings", *Orientations*, June, 69-73.

Point 11 In matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the central government. The local government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and when the people request reforms, they shall be settled by means of consultation with the leaders of Tibet.

Point 13 The PLA entering Tibet shall abide by all the above-mentioned policies and shall be fair in buying and selling and shall not arbitrarily take a single needle or thread from the people.

As alluded to above, texts on cultural heritage, published both in Tibetan and in Chinese, are classed according to different categories of priority and confidentiality, depending on the intended audience. Those published for internal distribution (Chin. *neibu*, Tib. *nang khul*) within the PRC, are intended for cadres working in the field of cultural heritage protection, for top officials and political leaders. Some of the secret documents inevitably leak onto the www or to other sources, while a considerable number are found on official PRC web sites. Many are highly instructive.

The texts published in Tibetan (and to a lesser extent in Chinese) seen by the author, are mostly general regulations emitted from the government offices in Beijing, and applicable to the whole of the PRC. However certain relate specifically to the Tibetan regions, notably with regard to the TAR, and the Tibetan historic sites that are listed as protected by the state from 1961 onwards. All documents, in so far as they are translated into Tibetan, are intended for a Tibetan educated audience and for specialists in the subject, and thus may be considered to be of concern for Tibet as a whole.

One notable example – particularly relevant in the context of the Berlin conference, *Exploding Cities*, is a collection of ten detailed maps showing, step by step and theme by theme, the plan for the urbanisation of the Lhasa Valley, 1980-2000, *Lhasa Municipality Planning Collected Maps*, Tib. *Grong khyer Lha sa'i 'char 'god dpe ris phyogs sgrig*, Chin. *Lasa chengshi gui hua tuji*, ed. Xizang Zizhiqu Lasa chengshi gui hua bangongzhai.¹⁹ A series of booklets explain in detail each aspect of the project. The opening lines of the preface to the maps expresses clearly the ‘monuments’ mentality of the Chinese administration with regard to Cultural Heritage :

‘Lhasa stands on the north bank of the Lhasa River, a tributary of the Yarlung Tsangpo River. Since the 7th century, it has been the political and economic centre of the Tibet Region. It is a famous, very ancient historic city. Within the municipality, important ancient architectural structures are still preserved, the majestic Potala Palace, the Jokhang Temple, the Norbulingka, Drepung and Sera Monasteries, etc.’

Indeed, it is only the above-mentioned structures, labled in the atlas as ‘famous old remains’ (Chin. *ming sheng gu ji*), that are seen to be worth keeping. The urban fabric of the ancient city, as it still stood in the mid-1980s, delapidated from 40 years of neglect but fundamentally whole and ‘unspoilt’, with its solid anti-seismic stone architecture, its numerous small temples, markets and alleyways, nomad camping grounds, noble summer houses and gardens, is not mentioned.

Map 1 shows the situation in 1980, ‘The Present Architectural Organisation of Lhasa City’ (Chin. *Lasa chengshi jianshi xianzhuang tu*). Already there are numerous large new structures built by the Chinese communist regime across the valley floor. ‘Special’ or military and prison areas make up the largest percentage and show that Lhasa was (and still is) a ‘besieged city’. The old city around the Jokhang Temple and the Potala with its historic service village

¹⁹ Published June 1982, Beijing Municipality Planning Design Centre (Beijing shi Cehuichu), Tianjin People’s Printing Factory.

and scientific value, as well as a wide range of more classical areas of cultural heritage, including objects and documents relating to the Revolution in China, as well as intangible heritage, specifically that of the ‘nationalities’ or non-Han peoples of the PRC.

Rules and regulations are rather dry objects of study, but given no doubt that they are made to be broken (in Chinese Communist Party fashion), or circumambulated (in Tibetan fashion), the whole operation becomes more complex and interesting. Furthermore, they serve as signposts on a hazardous path and for those involved in real life situations in the field they can be useful indicators in the maze of PRC bureaucracy and the immense and increasing demands of the Chinese economy. As will be seen below, these regulations are also the ‘skillful means’ by which the movers of that economy circumvent the very laws that are supposed to protect cultural heritage inside Tibet. They are also part of the ‘agency’ of Tibetans who continue, in spite of all kinds of obstacles and tactics of exclusion¹⁷, to play roles within this field in the PRC.

By ‘Tibet’, the author means the whole of the Tibetan plateau, ie. historic, ethnic, linguistic, religious Tibet, a unified zone of culture with a strong sense of identity, expressed in manifold ways since the 7th century. When referring to the Tibet Autonomous Region (that China is trying to impress upon the world as ‘Tibet’), TAR is used. This covers less than half of the zone of historic Tibet, and contains less than half the Tibetan population. Two important expressions of identity and of the organisation of society, are architecture and art, ie. the social dwelling space, either lay or religious, in both its material and metaphysical expressions, and its adornment.

PROTECTION OF TIBETAN CULTURE BY THE STATE

From the establishment of the PRC in 1949 up to 2007, the Chinese government has produced numerous documents, declarations, regulations and laws concerning the protection of Cultural Heritage in the PRC, and with regard to Tibet. The first was the 17-point Agreement.

The 17-point Agreement, signed in Beijing, May 23rd, 1951

Culture is not specifically mentioned in the agreement, but several points refer inherently to its different aspects, especially with regard to religion, language and customs. Questions of identity are mentioned in the Preamble and in Points 7 & 9, whereas point 11 contains the affirmation that reforms in the TAR shall not be imposed by the central government (in Beijing), but should come from the Tibetans themselves. Point 13 declares that the PLA shall not take even so much as a needle and thread from the Tibetan people (let alone all their wealth and ancient heritage, which is in fact what happened between 1966 and 1978).

Préambule : ‘all national minorities shall have the freedom to develop their spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their customs, habits, and religious beliefs’

Point 7 The policy of freedom of religious belief laid down in the Common Programme of the Chinese People’s Republic Consultative Conference shall be carried out. The religious beliefs, customs, and habits of the Tibetan People shall be respected, and lama monasteries shall be protected. The central authorities will not effect a change in the income of the monasteries and temples.¹⁸

Point 9 The spoken and written language and school education of the Tibetan nationality shall be developed step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.

¹⁷ Cf. Andrew Martin Fischer, *Anatomy of Modernity in the Conquered Snow Lion: Polarisation, Exclusion and Conflict within the Disempowered Development of Contemporary Tibet in China*, in press, Lexington Books and Columbia University, New York..

¹⁸ Goldstein, 2007, 102.

WHAT IS CULTURAL HERITAGE ? WHAT ARE ‘CULTURAL RELICS’ ?

The terms ‘cultural heritage’, ‘antiquities’ and ‘cultural objects’ shall be used below to render the Chinese term *wenwu* (Tib. *rig dngos*) literally meaning, in both languages, ‘cultural things’ or ‘objects of culture’. The habitual translation used by the Chinese, ‘cultural relics’ shall be used for official documents or declarations. This latter term, ‘relic’ has an essentially pejorative meaning in English, as well as in other European languages, and is somewhat grating on the ears when one first hears it used in this context. The original terms in both Chinese and Tibetan are neutral in tone, but as with all propaganda, after hearing a word or a phrase one hundred or a thousand times, it ends up by being assimilated and accepted, even if uneasily. Thus distinguished Western specialists of Chinese art & archeology sometimes use the English term, even today, as if it were acceptable. It appears probable that the team of Chinese translators established the English term based upon a dictionary reading without consulting any native speakers. Another possible explanation is that they were influenced by the attitude towards culture that was fostered during the Cultural Revolution, with its policy of ‘Getting Rid of the Four Olds, Old Ideas, Old Culture, Old Customs and Old Habits’ ? Indeed, is it possible that the revolutionaries in those days were conscious of the satirical secondary usage of ‘old relic’ in English ?

In the context of terminology and differing points of view it is instructive to look at a couple of definitions of *rig dngos* or *wenwu* as given in one of the above-mentioned texts, SCHR # 6, ‘*A Report on the Reinforcement of Management of the Cultural Relics Market by the State Antiquities Administration Bureau*’ dated 1st August 1981,¹⁴ thus not long after the end of the Cultural Revolution. The first definition is a general statement, while the second is a more circumstantial description reflecting no doubt a Marxist viewpoint as well as the chaos that reigned at the time, at the very beginning of the emerging market economy in China. The definitions are given during discussion on the means of controlling the market and of organising the gathering up and buying of ‘antiquities’ (by government agents).

Section.1 of the text (Tib. 46, Chin. 17), gives the following general definition, ‘Cultural objects are important products, cultural remains (*rig dngos ni mes rgyal rig gnas shul bzhag*). of the Ancestral State’ (Tib. *mes rgyal*, Chin. *zuguo*, usual translation in English, Motherland).

Section 2 of the same text (Tib. 49, Chin. 18), announces, ‘Cultural objects are a special type of commodity (Tib. *dngos zog*, Chin. *wupin*) that come down to us from the past and cannot be reproduced. The carrying out of commerce in this field requires a high level of political awareness and high level of specialisation, and these two must converge. A multi-headed management of this commerce is inadvisable. If this is done, it will certainly be a cause of confusion. Therefore, the State Political Bureau, with great determination, is implementing the norms of document #132 (1974), in which it is stipulated that the market in cultural objects must be properly controlled.¹⁵

A much more comprehensive coverage of the nature of cultural heritage to be protected by the state, both tangible and intangible, is given in another text published a little over a year later, 19.11.1982.¹⁶ Section #2, includes five categories of objects of important historical, artistic

¹⁴ SCHR 39-55.

¹⁵ SCHR 49; Chinese version, 18-19.

¹⁶ SCHR 7-35, 8-9..

gathered *in situ*. This is the period of the reign of the extremist hard-liner, Chen Kuiyuan, as Party Secretary (the most powerful government position in the TAR). Chen spoke much of a new ‘socialist spiritual civilisation’, *spyi tshogs ring lugs kyi bsam pa'i dpal yon dar*, as against ‘narrow nationalism’ (*gu dog pa'i mi rigs ring lugs*) and ‘ethnic or national identity’ (*mi rigs dbar gyi thun mong gi rang bzhin*)⁷. In spite of the plethora of speeches pronounced by Chen and published in the daily newspapers, as well as by other members of the apparatchik in the TAR, apparently only one new set of eighteen regulations on cultural heritage was published in 1996. These concern the protection of monasteries estimated to be of ‘**quite high** historical, artistic and scientific value’ and to possess ‘**quite a lot** of cultural objects’ (author’s italics)⁸. **These regulations were promulgated at the beginning of the period of intensive ‘patriotic re-education’ program in the monasteries all over the TAR, between 1996 and 1999, and although in the author’s English translation the meaning in both statements comes over without too much offense, they both use the Tibetan term, *cung*, ‘small’, ‘somewhat’, ‘just a little’, ‘trifling’, suggesting in fact an attitude of disdain and depreciation of Tibetan cultural heritage, no doubt in relation to that of the Middle Kingdom. Great Han chauvanism is still undeniably present, even in the 21st century, in the minds of the vast majority of Chinese. But, unfortunately, it has also rubbed off and penetrated the hearts of many Tibetans.**⁹

D.THE 21ST CENTURY, 2001-2007 :

The second book of regulations on Cultural Heritage available to the author, ‘*A Handbook on Cultural Relics Work*’ (HCRW), (Tib. *Rig dngos las don gyi lag deb*, Chin. *Wenwu gongzuo shouce*), was published by the Cultural Relics Bureau of the TAR in 2006. It includes two texts published during the preceding periods, one dated 25.3.1991, and the above-mentioned one on Tibetan monasteries, published in 1996 (see C.). Eight others are dated between 6.6.2001 and 6.6.2003.¹⁰ Amongst the ten texts, four are specific to the TAR, two being simple lists of protected sites, at state level and TAR level. These number altogether eighty-three, and their dates of registration range from 1961 to 2005¹¹. Various other documents published by the Chinese & Tibetan authorities concerning this question at the present time can be found on the web.¹²

E. ON SITE EXPERIENCE

In addition to these, on site experience by the author during almost yearly journeys to Tibet from 1982 to the present day, adds a certain amount of direct observation to the enquiry. Research on the state of cultural heritage in Central and Eastern Tibet, especially from 1988 onwards, includes seven years of practical involvement in the TAR between 1994 and 2000, as the Shalu Association co-ordinator of eight projects of architectural consolidation in early historic sites, carried out under contract, in co-operation with the Lhasa, Tsethang and Shigatse branches of the Bureau of Cultural Heritage of the TAR.¹³

⁷ *Bod ljongs mi rigs tshags par*, 15.8.1996, 3-4, on ‘narrow nationalism’ and ‘useless distinctions between nationalities’.

⁸ HCRW 128, 130.

⁹ See Google ‘re-education of monks in Tibet, 1996’; TIN 26, 1998.

¹⁰ Though it is said to exist in both Tibetan and Chinese, the author has only been able to consult the Tibetan version, 149 pp.

¹¹ State level, 1961, 9 sites ; 1982-1988, 4 sites ; 1996, 5 sites ; 2001, 8 sites ; 2005, 8 sites : total 35 sites ; 2.TAR level sites, 1962, 30 sites ; 1996, 16 sites, total 48 sites.

¹² See notably the White Papers on Tibet.

¹³ See Shalu Association Reports, 1994-1995, 1996-1997, 1996 Shelray Lhakhang, Jokhang (by J-M.Terrier), 1996 The Lukhang Temple Restoration Project (by H.Stoddard & J-M. Terrier), 2000 Tibet Trip Report.

Architectural Restoration of Memorial Structures, Ancient Structures, Cave Temples etc.’³. The handbook is undated, but bears a reference in the last paragraph, to a preceding set of regulations published in 1963. Thus it may date to 1965 (see below). The opening paragraph upholds a revolutionary spirit, both in the manner of expression, and in the choice of what are ‘cultural relics’, ‘cultural heritage’ or ‘antiquities’. The first priority is ‘memorial structures’, ie sites linked with the communist revolution in China. This same ‘revolutionary’ order of priority is maintained through the 1980s, as for example in a text dated as late as 1986,⁴ and even in the revised regulations published in 2006 (see below).

Aa. THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The period of collective hysteria⁵ of the Cultural Revolution (in Tibet 1966-1978) was by definition concerned with culture, the main aim being to ‘Get rid of the Four Olds’, ie. ‘Old Ideas, Old Culture, Old Customs and Old Habits’ That campaign, from the point of view of material culture at least, was particularly successful. It was no doubt one of the most concentrated and sustained periods of destruction of ancient heritage in human history. In Tibet an estimated 90%-95% of material cultural heritage was destroyed or looted, with much of the finest quality art recuperated and then sold on the international art market. The author has not had access to any documents dating to this period for the writing of this paper, but one of the texts in SCHR, dated 1.8.1987, refers to a document #132, published in 1974, in which it is already stipulated that the market in cultural objects must be properly regulated⁶.

B. POST-CULTURAL REVOLUTION 1978-1992

Twenty-eight other miscellaneous texts, grouped in the above-mentioned volume SCHR 1991, date to between 1978 and 1991, thus to the important period of cultural renovation from the end of the Cultural Revolution to the nomination of Chen Kuiyuan as Party Secretary of the TAR in 1992. These texts range from single-page memoranda to 38 page sets of regulations.

The last four or five years of this period were marked by intense political upheavels in Tibet, leading to the period of harsh rule under Chen Kuiyuan. The 21st century ushered in the most recent period, when the second important official source book used in this article, HCRW 2006, was published (see below, C & D).

C. THE REIGN OF CHEN KUIYUAN & THE SPREAD OF A SOCIALIST ‘SPIRITUAL CIVILISATION’, March 1992-October 2000.

The next group of sources includes newspaper articles, analyses by TIN and oral information

³ Tib. *Dran rten bzo skrun dang/ gna’ bo’i bzo skrun/ brag phug dgon pa sogs nyams gso ‘ar skrun la do dam bya thabs/* 173-190.

⁴ SCHR, #22, Tibetan version, 173-190, Chinese version, 64-70, see 172 for a definition of ‘memorial structures’, *gsar brje’i dran rten bzo skrun*, ie. ‘memorial structures of the Revolution’, in a text dated 12.7.1986; see also SCHR 17. The same order is also found in one instance in HCRW, in the new regulations dating to 2001.

⁵ The author listened to radio emissions from Lhasa, day after day, during the autumn 1966 through to summer 1967. The note of hysteria and violence in the voices of the newsbroadcasters was so striking it has left an indellible imprint in her mind, right to the present day. This was one of the reasons for studying Tibetan and Chinese, and for this modest research project that touches a vast and almost unexplored field of study, at a time when the authorities in RPC, and the young people who were born after the events, are forgetting what happened. ‘Hysteria’ according to the Oxford dictionary means: ‘a wild and uncontrollable emotion or excitement’.

⁶ SCHR, 40, 49.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORICAL CITIES IN ASIA: SAFEGUARDING TRADITIONS AND ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT

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**THE REGLEMENTATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE
IN THE TIBETAN REGIONS OF THE PRC, 1965-2007**

H.Stoddard, INALCO, France

'We are but ants biting the elephant's toe', quote by a well-placed Han Chinese administrator, Ministry of Culture, Beijing, 1994, with regard to the possibilities of manoeuvring to save cultural heritage in the PRC., let alone Tibet.

I. SOURCE MATERIALS

This is a preliminary overview of the different phases in what the Chinese call 'Cultural Relics' protection in Tibet from the early 1960s up to the present day, based on available source materials, and on site experience. The two main sources for this paper are collected sets of official regulations concerning the protection of cultural heritage in Tibet. The first is dated 1991, and contains materials ranging from ca 1963 to 1991; while the second, published in 2006, contains materials dating from 1991 to 2003. Thus the two sources range over forty years, almost spanning the period of Chinese communist rule in Tibet.

The first book is a selection of twenty-nine texts published under the title '*A Selection of Cultural Heritage Regulations*' (abbrev. SCHR) (Tib. *Rig dngos khrims srol 'dems sgrig*, Chin. *Wenwu fagui xianbian*¹, published in two separate volumes, in Tibetan and in Chinese, in September 1991. The place of publication of both language volumes, Lhasa, the contents, and the fact that the texts are marked as being for 'internal distribution' (Tib. *nang khul*, Chin. *neibu*)², suggests a link with the situation inside Tibet at the time. The contents are no doubt arranged according to relevance, based upon the situation in the early 1990s in the PRC and in the Tibetan regions, but the texts may also be analysed by putting them into chronological order, and dividing them into two periods, pre-Cultural Revolution and post-Cultural Revolution.

A. PRE-CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Text #22 in SCHR, is a handbook of fifteen regulations, entitled 'Management Methods in

¹ Edited by the Bureau of Culture, Tib. Bod rang skyong ljong rig gnas ting, Chin. Xizang zizhqu wenhua ting) of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

² *Texts for internal distribution, Tibet Autonomous Region News Publishing Bureau, Chin. Xizang Zizhiqu Xinwen Chubanju neibu tushu.*