

VOICES FROM TIBET:

SELECTED ESSAYS AND REPORTAGE

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A COMPILATION OF A SERIES OF “EXPERT ON TIBET” PROGRAMS

For RADIO FREE ASIA

By WARREN SMITH

## VOICES FROM TIBET

*Voices From Tibet* is a recently published collection of articles about Tibet by Tsering Woeser and her husband Wang Lixiong. The articles were translated into English and published by a Chinese-American woman named Violet Law. Woeser is well-known to many Tibetans as a commentator on the political situation in Tibet. Wang Lixiong is a Chinese democracy activist and supporter of Tibetan human rights. They are based in Beijing. The first article, "Freedom for Chinese, Autonomy for Tibetans," was written by Woeser.

Woeser writes about her excitement in October 2010 upon hearing that the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the Chinese democracy activist Liu Xiaobo. Liu was the first Chinese to win the Nobel Peace Prize, assuming, of course, that one does not consider the Dalai Lama, who won the Peace Prize in 1989, to be Chinese. Liu had been the organizer, in 2008, of Charter 08, which Woeser had signed, which called for human rights, democracy and the rule of law in China. It was modeled after Charter 77, which had originated in Czechoslovakia in 1977 and was credited to have begun the collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire.

In response to the uprising in Tibet in 2008, Liu had organized a petition of 30 Chinese intellectuals calling on the Chinese government to respect Tibetans' rights, to cease the repression of their protests and to try to understand their grievances, and to allow them to exercise genuine autonomy as proposed by the Dalai Lama. He had also written articles calling on the Chinese government to allow the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet. It was Liu who said that freedom for Chinese was a prerequisite for autonomy for Tibetans. Liu had also defended Woeser, in 2004, when she was persecuted for publishing her first book of essays on Tibet.

Liu Xiaobo was arrested by the Chinese government in 2009 for his political activities in regard to Chinese democracy and support for Tibetans' rights. In December 2009 he was sentenced to eleven years in prison. He was in prison in 2010 when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and he remains in prison to this day despite worldwide protests and appeals from foreign leaders for his release. China is the only country in the world to imprison a Nobel Peace Prize winner. Not only that, but Liu was the only Chinese winner of a Nobel Prize of any sort at that time. China's repression of Liu Xiaobo simply for writing about democracy and attempting to organize a political party to compete with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is a testimony to the authoritarian, dictatorial and anti-democratic nature of the current Chinese political system.

Liu Xiaobo's pro-democracy activities in 2008 came at the same time that the Chinese government was organizing the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The Olympics were meant to be an international promotion of China and the CCP. China was to be portrayed as a modern and progressive country that not only was not in need of political reform but that offered a model to other countries that were dissatisfied with the model offered by Western democratic countries. Liu Xiaobo's exposure of the lack of freedom and democracy in China was thus an embarrassment to the Party at precisely the time when the Party was trying to pretend that the Chinese political system was the choice of the Chinese people and in fact offered a sort of democracy, or democracy with Chinese characteristics, as the Party said. Liu was thus regarded as a traitor because he sought to diminish China's reputation and the credibility of its political system just when the Party was trying to promote the same.

Liu was also considered as something of a traitor because he supported Tibetans' rights during the Tibetan uprising of March 2008. The Chinese government and many individual Chinese considered the uprising by Tibetans to be a deliberate attempt to embarrass China just before the Olympics. Many Chinese blamed the uprising on foreign interference and distortions of the truth by Western media. Many Chinese, both in China and overseas, were further incensed by Tibetans' protests against the International Olympic Torch Relay held in several countries. Popular Chinese rejection of Tibetan nationalism was aroused by the Tibetan uprising and was promoted by the CCP in an attempt to increase popular support for the government and Party.

The Tibetan uprising was an important factor in the rise of popular Chinese nationalism at the time. Since Tibetans were considered ungrateful to China and as disloyal and even traitorous to China, then any Chinese who supported them were also considered by many China to be traitors. Liu Xiaobo's pro-democracy and pro-Tibetan activities were the reasons for his arrest and imprisonment. His subsequent award of the Nobel Peace Prize while in prison made him even more of an embarrassment to the CCP.

#### *Where are Tibetans in the Chinese Dream?*

The article "Where Are Tibetans in the Chinese Dream?" was written by Woese in May 2013. Woese asks if Tibetans should place any hope in the Chinese Dream, the signature slogan of the new Chinese leader, Xi Jinping. She says that almost all Tibetan hopes that Xi will soften Chinese policy on Tibet are based upon the relationship that his father, Xi Zhongxun, had with the young Dalai Lama. Xi Zhongxun was also friendly with the Panchen Lama and was known as more liberal in his attitude toward Tibet and as rather more enlightened than most of the early Chinese Communists. Xi Zhongxun's wife, Xi Jinping's mother, was also known to have been a Buddhist, as is Xi Jinping's wife. Some even say that Xi Jinping himself has studied Buddhism with a Tibetan teacher. However, there is no other evidence that Xi Jinping has any sympathy

toward Tibet. China's Tibet policy has not changed under his leadership and in fact may be said to have become ever more hard-line. Woenser then asks whether the Tibetan hope that he will be more sympathetic toward Tibet is just typical Tibetan wishful thinking.

Woenser writes that Xi Jinping has said nothing about Tibet. Instead, he has frequently talked about the ambitions of the Chinese nation to achieve what he has called the "Chinese Dream." Xi Jinping defines the Chinese Dream as "to realize the great renaissance of the Chinese nation," which, he says, is "coming closer to realization than ever before in China's history." Every Chinese leader since Deng Xiaoping has had a slogan meant to define his period of leadership. Deng's slogan was "Reform and Opening up." Jiang Zemin had the "Three Represents." For Hu Jintao it was the "Harmonious Society." Mostly these slogans are meaningless words. However, Deng really did reform Chinese communism and open China to the world. Jiang Zemin's slogan was supposed to mean that the CCP represented "advanced social productive forces, advanced culture and the interests of the majority of the Chinese people.

This is an almost meaningless slogan except in that it is supposed to mean that the Party was modern and still relevant to Chinese society and people. The real meaning was that the Party feared that it was no longer modern or relevant to the interests of most Chinese people. Hu Jintao's slogan of a "Harmonious Society" was the most sinister in that it meant that the Party would attempt to enforce conformity by any means necessary. The slogan became a cynical joke among many Chinese, who said that anyone who had been repressed by the CCP had been "harmonized."

Woenser says that Xi Jinping's slogan is essentially an expression of nationalism, or of a nationalistic intent to make China more powerful in the world. What that means to small nations near China, or even to small nationalities within China, is Chinese imperialism. China is demanding concessions from Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia to recognize Chinese sovereignty over all of the South China Sea. Even more powerful countries like India, Japan and the United States are apprehensive about Chinese nationalism. Chinese nationalism has become the CCP's primary justification for its monopoly on political power in China.

Woenser says that China's Dream means Chinese nationalism and that nationalism is incompatible with any hope for meaningful Tibetan autonomy within China. The Tibetan hope for meaningful autonomy such as the Dalai Lama proposes is the Tibetan Dream, writes Woenser, even though many Tibetans would really prefer independence. However, the Chinese know very well that many Tibetans want independence and that is why they will not allow even autonomy. They fear that any autonomy, especially any genuine autonomy, would be a breeding ground for Tibetan nationalism and separatism, which is undoubtedly true. So the Chinese are adamantly against any concessions in regard to Tibetan autonomy.

Woeser says that the Tibetan dream of autonomy and cultural survival is incompatible with the Chinese nationalist dream. The Chinese need total political control over Tibet so they can exploit Tibet's natural resources without any concessions to Tibetans. And they hope to permanently resolve the problem of Tibetan separatism by means of Chinese colonization, partly furthered by economic development, including mining, and partly by the cultural colonization of Chinese tourism. China is in the process of turning Tibet into something like a minority nationality theme park for Chinese tourists. As Woeser writes, "Tibetans have no place in the Chinese Dream." If the Chinese Dream is achieved, she says, then "the Tibetan Dream is doomed."

### *The Fall of Lhasa*

In the article "The Fall of Lhasa," Woeser writes about how Lhasa had resumed its role as the traditional center of Tibetan culture after the reform and opening up initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s. After the relaxation of strict travel limits that had prevailed during the 1960s and 1970s, Tibetans from Kham and Amdo were again allowed to travel to Lhasa. Many Tibetans went on pilgrimages to Lhasa after having been denied that right for twenty years. Lhasa once again became the center of Tibetan economy and culture, as well as religion, as monks from Kham and Amdo were once again allowed to study in Lhasa's large monasteries. Woeser herself went to Lhasa in 1990 to work for the Tibetan Culture Association. Many of her colleagues were also from eastern Tibet. Tibetans were eager to reestablish Lhasa as the center of Tibetan culture, and they regarded Lhasa as the place where they could be most engaged in the enjoyment and preservation of Tibetan culture.

All this changed in 2008 due to the Tibetan uprising in March of that year. Some Tibetans from eastern Tibet were involved in the riots in Lhasa. Woeser wrote in an article at the time that some of those involved in protests around the Ramoche temple were nomads, as was revealed by their typical style of whistling used to herd their yaks. Demonstrations and riots also continued for more than two months mostly in eastern Tibet. Chinese officials were surprised by the prevalence of demonstrations in eastern Tibet since they regarded those areas as more pacified and assimilated, if only because they were closer to China. These circumstances led the Chinese authorities to intensify repression and assimilation of Tibetans in eastern Tibet and to restrict their travel to and residence in Lhasa.

The Chinese felt that allowing eastern Tibetans to come to or live in Lhasa was a problem because some of them were idle and looking for trouble. In addition, the Tibetan solidarity created by having Lhasa as a center of Tibetan culture that was gratifying for Tibetans was a problem for the Chinese. Chinese policy until the 1980s had been to divide Tibetans and not

allow them any cultural center or solidarity. In 2008 the Chinese realized that Tibetans were still not reconciled to Chinese rule; therefore, they could not be allowed to have a cultural center in Lhasa where they could create cultural and political solidarity.

Woeser writes that in April 2008 Chinese security forces raided the large Lhasa monasteries in the middle of night and arrested hundreds of monks. Monks who were identified from surveillance cameras as having taken part in protests were detained in Lhasa while all monks from eastern Tibet were sent by train to Golmud. In Golmud they were detained for three months and subjected to education on patriotism to China. After that they were sent under police escort to their home areas where they were subjected to further indoctrination. They were then released but were not allowed to return to monasteries in central Tibet. Lhasa was also subjected to searches for Tibetans from eastern Tibet, who were arrested if identified as having taken part in the riot or sent back to their homes if not.

The Chinese authorities identified monks from eastern Tibet as well as nomads and others from outside the TAR as having been instigators or participants in the demonstrations and riot of March 2008 in Lhasa. Since that time, eastern Tibetans have not been allowed to live in Lhasa or even to travel there for pilgrimage. Chinese tourists, in contrast, have begun to flood Lhasa in huge numbers. Woeser also writes that Lhasa has become like a city under military occupation, with police on every corner and troops parading through the streets for purposes of intimidation. Tibetans are constantly stopped and asked for identification while Chinese are never stopped.

Tibetan cultural and business leaders in Lhasa and all over Tibet have been subjected to harassment and arrest on false charges. Tibetans who once wanted to live in Lhasa have now begun to go to places like Chengdu in Sichuan where they are at least subjected to less restrictions and harassment than in Lhasa. The cultural revival with Lhasa as its center that Tibetans experienced before 2008 became such a political threat that China has now had to revert to its usual divisive policies. China cannot allow Lhasa to be a center of Tibetan culture because Tibetan culture itself is a threat to Chinese control over Tibet.

### *Tibetans Are Ruined by Hope*

The article “Tibetans Are Ruined by Hope” was written by Woeser in 2006. Woeser writes that the expression “Tibetans are ruined by hope and the Chinese are ruined by suspicion” is one of the most well-known Tibetan sayings. She says that although Tibetans are well aware of their failings in regard to wishful thinking and unrealistic hopefulness, they never stop thinking like the expression indicates. The second part of the expression about Chinese suspiciousness means that the Chinese typically exploit Tibetan hopefulness. Woeser writes that

they have most recently done so by raising Tibetan hopes by having dialogues with Dharamsala's representatives but then making no concessions in regard to Tibetan autonomy. China managed to counteract international criticism of its Tibet policy after the uprising of 2008 by having two meetings with Tibetan representatives, which raised the hopes not only of Tibetans but of many international leaders as well. However, in the end the Chinese only used the pretense of a willingness to talk about the Tibet issue in order to ensure that the Beijing Olympics could be held without protest. After the Olympics they scornfully rejected Tibetan proposals for autonomy and discontinued the dialogue.

Woeser writes that this Tibetan expression was used in a biography of Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal. Phuntsok Wangyal, who is often called by his nickname Phunwang, is an example of the Tibetan trait of hopefulness, even unrealistic hopefulness. Phunwang idealistically believed in the promises of Marxist doctrine about minority nationality autonomy. He even joined the CCP and played a role in leading the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into Tibet in 1950-51. His recent death has raised the question about whether he was a patriot or a traitor. In his later life he called upon the CCP to pursue dialogue with the Dalai Lama and to allow him to return to Tibet. Dharamsala therefore mourned his death as a patriot. In addition, his promotion of Tibetan autonomy in the 1950s is essentially the same policy that Dharamsala now promotes. However, many Tibetans denounced Phunwang as a traitor after his death because he had collaborated with the Chinese in their invasion of Tibet. Whatever hopes Phunwang may have had that China would allow any meaningful autonomy in Tibet have not been rewarded by the ever-suspicious Chinese.

Woeser writes that another example of Tibetan hopefulness is more recent but is again in regard to the possibilities of a negotiated solution to the Tibet issue. Tibetans in exile were told by the Dharamsala administration, particularly by Samdhong Rinpoche, to refrain from protesting against the international travels of Chinese leaders, in the hope that this would produce a conducive atmosphere for dialogue. Chinese negotiators may in fact be presumed to have suggested in previous talks with Tibetan representatives that such a conducive atmosphere should be created.

However, even though Tibetan protests and demonstrations were therefore curtailed, the Chinese were not forthcoming with any concessions. Once again the Chinese seem to have used Tibetan hopefulness to their advantage. The Chinese furthermore made the excuse that they could not trust the sincerity of Tibetans in curtailing protests because some had continued to do so. In other words, the Chinese would demand ever more concessions from the Tibetan side while making none themselves. They also questioned whether the Dalai Lama had really given up independence since he still maintained a Tibetan Government in Exile, which they say would not be necessary if Tibetans really accepted that Tibet is a part of China. The Chinese thus tried

to manipulate Tibetan hopefulness for a negotiated autonomy in order to cause them to dissolve the last vestige of Tibet's independent political existence.

Woeser, who lives in China, is well aware of the differences between Chinese and Tibetans. She knows that Tibetans are continually hopeful that China will allow Tibetan culture and national identity to survive. However, the Chinese are continually suspicious that Tibetans really want their own independent country. They think that Tibetan separatism grows out of the same cultural and national identity that Tibetans want to preserve. It is undeniable that almost all Tibetans wish that Tibet were an independent country, which just furthers Chinese suspicions. Many Chinese think that the only way to eliminate Tibetan separatism is to eliminate the separate Tibetan identity. Chinese suspiciousness of Tibetan motives is thus a contradiction to Tibetan hopes for autonomy or cultural survival. The expression "Tibetans are ruined by hope and the Chinese are ruined by suspicion," is thus entirely appropriate as a definition of the psychological character of Tibetans and Chinese as well as a definition of the political relations between China and Tibet.

#### *Winners and Losers under Tibet's Capitalism*

The article "Winners and Losers under Tibet's Capitalism" was written in 2005 by Woeser's husband Wang Lixiong. Wang writes that the Han Chinese immigrants in Tibet have taken far greater advantage of free market capitalism in Tibet than have Tibetans. Since the beginning of the reform and opening up policy initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s, more and more Han Chinese have come to Tibet to pursue economic opportunities. The reform policy loosened restrictions on travel for Chinese who, for the first time under the Chinese Communists, were allowed to go anywhere they wanted in the pursuit of private business. This policy produced an immediate influx of Han Chinese, mostly from Sichuan, and Hui from Gansu. Their influx quickly produced resentment among Tibetans, who had been promised by former Chinese party secretary Hu Yaobang that the numbers of Han in Tibet would be reduced by as much as 85 percent in order to allow Tibetans to actually enjoy cultural autonomy. The numbers of Han Chinese officials were indeed reduced, at least in the early 1980s, but they were replaced by private Chinese seeking their fortunes in Tibet.

By the late 1980s the policy of allowing Tibetan autonomy had produced a Tibetan cultural revival, but also Tibetan protests against Chinese rule. China then adopted a policy of economic development as a solution to all problems in Tibet and rationalized that development could happen only if Han Chinese were allowed to come to Tibet to help stimulate the private economy. At that time, Deng Xiaoping said that China would no longer try to restrain the numbers of Han Chinese in Tibet in order to allow Tibetan autonomy. At the same time, economic stimulus from Beijing and other Chinese provinces was vastly increased. However, the

stimulus was monopolized by Han Chinese in Tibet. Some provincial development projects used exclusively Chinese workers, and these workers patronized local Chinese businesses. China did not pursue a direct colonization policy in Tibet by sending Han settlers there, but its development policies produced the same result. The completion of the railroad in 2006 allowed even more Chinese to come to Tibet and to be supplied with all the essentials to enjoy their own sort of lifestyle.

Wang writes that the Han Chinese have come to dominate the economy in Lhasa and other cities in Tibet. They have done so partly because they have connections to Chinese officials who dispense development funds, but also because they are more energetic and industrious than Tibetans. Although he does not say so, it may be assumed that it was scarcity and economic insecurity in China in the past that has produced this industriousness among the Chinese. In contrast, Tibetans were relatively economically secure before the Chinese conquest, despite Chinese propaganda to the contrary. Han Chinese businesses in Lhasa are often more efficient than Tibetans and Han laborers are more energetic. Even Tibetans therefore prefer to hire Chinese rather than Tibetans. Wang writes that the Han have come to dominate professions such as tailoring, shoemaking, house building, cab driving and auto repair, and furniture making.

By raising vegetables under plastic coverings, the Han Chinese have even come to dominate farming in the Lhasa area. They rent the land from Tibetans who prefer to live on the rent rather than do the hard work of such intensive farming themselves. Wang says that there is a saying in Lhasa that the Chinese will do any job except becoming a monk or performing a sky burial. Because they are generally more industrious, the Han Chinese have come to regard Tibetans as lazy. Their industriousness gives the Chinese an attitude that they have as much right as Tibetans to be in Tibet because they work so hard and contribute more to economic development.

Wang writes that Tibetans realize they are selling their heritage to the Chinese and allowing the Chinese to own the Tibetan economy. He doesn't propose any solution to this problem, and indeed there may be no solution. The Han Chinese are not only industrious but they have structured the political system and the economy to benefit themselves. Tibet is still sustained by central government subsidies, and most of that goes to the Chinese in Tibet rather than Tibetans. What the Chinese have created in Tibet is a colonialist system that benefits themselves and impoverishes Tibetans.

### *Public Square or Propaganda*

The article "Public Square or Propaganda" was written in 2005 by Wang Lixiong. Wang writes about a public square built by the Chinese government in Chushul near Lhasa. The square

is named Taizhou Square after the city of Taizhou in Jiangsu Province, the home of former Chinese president Hu Jintao. The square was meant as a gift to the Tibetan town of Chushul. However, as Wang says, neither the name of the square nor its function has anything to do with the Tibetan people of Chushul. Wang says that when he visited the square it was empty and lifeless. It was paved with concrete which heated up in the sun and made the square too hot for anyone to enjoy most of the time. It had no grassy spaces or even benches where one could rest.

Wang writes that the square is built entirely in the Chinese style with no concessions to Tibetan style or Tibetans' needs. It has a small pavilion and a small arched bridge, both entirely Chinese in character. In the center there is a huge steel ball supported on a steel frame. He thinks the monument is meant to represent science or progress, although its meaning is unclear. Surrounding the square are stone panels with images of CCP leaders and slogans exhorting Tibetans to love the Motherland and the Communist Party and to uphold the unity of the nationalities. Wang says that the square is obviously meant as propaganda, but it also serves as a form of cultural imperialism. The square was meant to stamp the Chinese cultural style on the landscape of Tibet and as a symbol of China's political and cultural conquest of Tibet.

Wang imagines that the people of the Chinese city of Taizhou may have thought that their public square was a gift to Tibet that the Tibetan people would appreciate and even cherish. Perhaps they thought that the Tibetans would be impressed with the generosity of the people of China or awed by the prosperity and magnificence represented by the huge square. However, Wang says that the square is entirely foreign to the place where it was built and is unused by the local Tibetans. It is therefore nothing but a monument to the Chinese misconception about the relationship between China and Tibet. The Chinese citizens of Taizhou may have meant the gift as an act of benevolence, but it is interpreted by Tibetans as another in a long list of examples of China's unwanted gifts to Tibet. Such gifts began with the so-called liberation of Tibet and continued through all of China's political campaigns, none of which caused anything but suffering for most Tibetans.

Wang could have written much the same about most if not all of the public squares built by the Chinese in Tibet, starting with the huge square below the Potala in Lhasa. This large open area has now been dedicated to the liberation of Tibet and contains a large monument to that theme. The Lhasa square and all public squares in Tibetan cities and towns are meant as sites for large public gatherings usually for the sake of celebrations of Chinese political anniversaries. The latest such celebration is the Liberation of the Serfs day, which the Chinese instituted only in 2009 to counteract the political impact of the Tibetan uprising of the previous year. Tibetans are now forced to participate in this and other Chinese political rituals meant to demonstrate China's authority in and dominance over Tibet. These rituals signify Tibetan subservience. What the Chinese celebrate as the liberation of Tibet means to Tibetans the Chinese conquest of Tibet.

There are many other Chinese cultural monuments that express the Chinese conquest and dominance of Tibet. The new cultural palace built for performances of the story of the Chinese princess Wencheng for Chinese tourists is one example. The railroad is another. China is now in the process of transforming Lhasa and other Tibetan cities with buildings in the Chinese style. Perhaps the best example of China's attempt to dominate the physical landscape of Tibet is its destruction of Tibetan cultural monuments. Tibetan cultural monuments like monasteries, *chortens* and *mani* walls were all destroyed after the revolt of 1959 and before and during the Cultural Revolution. China has allowed some reconstruction of such Tibetan cultural monuments, but at the same time is has attempted to dominant the Tibetan landscape with monuments that symbolize the Chinese domination of Tibet.

### *The "Nineteenth Army"*

The article "The 'Nineteenth Army'" was written in 2005 by Wang Lixiong with additions by Woesser in 2007. The People's Liberation Army troops who invaded Tibet in 1950 were from the Eighteenth Army unit from Sichuan. The Eighteenth Army of the PLA is thus given credit by the Chinese for the so-called liberation of Tibet. Now Tibet is flooded with Chinese prostitutes, whom Tibetans humorously call the Nineteenth Army. Wang and Woesser write that most of the prostitutes are from the Chinese interior, mainly from Sichuan. At one time they were found only in Lhasa near Chinese government offices and military bases, but now they are to be found in every town and village in Tibet. Some impoverished Tibetans have now also resorted to prostitution.

Wang says that some Han Chinese tourists seek out Tibetan prostitutes because of the belief that the Tibetans are more sexually liberated than the Han or even that sex with a Tibetan can cure arthritis. To fill this need, some Han Chinese prostitutes try to pass themselves off as Tibetan. Therefore, some Han Chinese try to get Tibetan tourist guides to find genuine Tibetan prostitutes for them. Thus, Chinese tourism continues the moral corruption of Tibetan society begun by the military occupation and Chinese colonialist administration of Tibet.

Prostitution was not unknown in traditional Tibetan society. However, it was very rare. Now, Chinese prostitutes are to be seen everywhere in Lhasa and other cities. Chinese prostitutes began to come to Tibet during the reform and opening up period that began in the early 1980s to service Chinese officials and soldiers. They rented tiny shops from Chinese government and military organizations that were at that time allowed to construct commercial shops on the streets in front of their offices. The shops may be found almost anywhere in Lhasa but are most concentrated along the Chingdrol Shar Lam near the Tibet Military Area Command Headquarters and the People's Armed Police Headquarters. The prostitutes are permitted to stay

in Lhasa by those same Chinese government officials who rent them their shops. The fact that most prostitution shops are located in commercial buildings constructed by party and government organizations points out the close association between the Chinese administration in Tibet and prostitution. Prostitutes who formerly served Chinese officials and soldiers now also serve Chinese tourists.

The rise of prostitution in Tibet coincided with the Chinese campaign for the promotion of so-called socialist spiritual civilization. However, the proliferation of prostitution in Lhasa and other Tibetan cities is a visible contradiction of the Chinese claim to have brought any sort of spiritual civilization to Tibet. Some Chinese officials have rationalized prostitution as a small corruption that has come along with a more open society. One Chinese official was quoted as saying that when you open a window some flies are certain to get inside. However, prostitution is not contrary to China's so-called spiritual civilization but is completely compatible with it. Prostitution has come along with the endemic corruption of Chinese society, the unrestricted migration of Chinese to Tibet and the nature of Chinese colonialism in Tibet. The association between prostitution and the Chinese presence in Tibet is obvious for anyone to see.

Under China's law on National Regional Autonomy, autonomous regions are supposed to have the authority to control migration into their territories. However, the Chinese authorities have refused to respect this right. China expends much propaganda in Tibet trying to convince Tibetans to give up their own traditional culture in favor of China's so-called socialist spiritual civilization. In Tibet, socialist spiritual civilization continues to be promoted as an alternative to Tibetan Buddhism. However, prostitution is but one of the most visible signs of the spiritual pollution that China has brought to Tibet. Tibetans may be forgiven for seeing very little that is spiritual in China's so-called spiritual civilization and for longing for the return of the true spirituality that was so characteristic of Tibet's traditional civilization.

Tibetans are mostly powerless to control the numbers of Chinese military and security personnel in Tibet, Chinese migration to Tibet or Chinese tourism. They have the ability only to express their opinions on any such subjects in the form of underground humor. China expends much propaganda about the glorious liberation of Tibet by the PLA's Eighteenth Army. By labeling the army of Chinese prostitutes in Tibet the Nineteenth Army, Tibetans express what they think about China's liberation of Tibet as well as its current social and cultural influence.

### *Merchants of Fake Culture*

The article "Merchants of Fake Culture" was written by Woesser in 2007. Woesser writes about how most of the merchants selling Tibetan art in the Barkor area of Lhasa are Chinese and how they routinely cheat their customers, whether Han or Western tourists. One shop she mentions was run by two brothers from Sichuan. One of their favorite and most successful tricks

was to confidentially tell customers that Buddha statues on display were actually fake but that the real thing could be had for a higher price. The customer would be taken into the interior of the shop and shown another statue that was supposedly genuine.

The customer would then be told that the statue was an ancient one from a local monastery that wanted to sell it in order to raise money for renovations. The price would be huge and the tourist would be required to register the purchase as though the monastery wanted to know that their valuable art was going to an appreciative buyer. The registration also served to further convince the tourist of the authenticity of the statue. However, the statue was just as fake as the one on display. The tourist would however be fooled into thinking that they had bought a genuine ancient Tibetan Buddhist statue. Some tourists, both Han and Western, could be convinced to pay huge inflated prices for fake Tibetan statues. Woesser says that the shop owners once sold a statue for 20,000 yuan that they had bought for only 8 yuan.

Another trick that Woesser observed was at shops that sold Tibetan carpets. A Tibetan weaver would be on site making carpets, which gave the impression that all the shop's carpets were handmade by Tibetans on site. However, in fact, almost all the carpets sold there were made by machine in China. Woesser says that there were other scams going on around the Barkor, including fundraising appeals for charities that she suspected were fake. The effect is that both Han and Western tourists come away from Lhasa thinking that they had been cheated by Tibetans when in fact they had been cheated by Han Chinese.

The cheating of tourists in Lhasa is not confined to private businesses but is also indulged in on a large scale by the Chinese government. The government engages in an elaborate deception aimed at Chinese tourists in the way it depicts Tibetan culture. First, Han Chinese tourists are given a false version of Tibetan history in which Tibet has always been a part of China, old Tibet was a feudal serfdom from which Tibetans are grateful to have been liberated by the CCP and Tibetans are now happy and content. Tibetans are depicted as loyal citizens of China without any desire for their own country. Their culture is portrayed as consisting mostly of songs and dances that they are happy to perform for Chinese tourists. Model villages have been built in certain favorite tourist spots, like Nyingtri in Kongpo, where Chinese tourists can live in fake Tibetan villages and be entertained by supposedly happy Tibetans, some of whom are actually Han Chinese dressed up as Tibetans.

Perhaps the most blatant deception of Chinese tourists perpetrated by the Chinese administration in Tibet is the performance of the Wencheng play put on at a special cultural palace built in Lhasa for that purpose. The Wencheng palace is built like a fake Potala across the Kyi Chu from the real Potala. There, Chinese tourists are entertained with elaborate performances of the story of how Princess Wencheng came to Tibet to marry the Tibetan King Srongtsen Gampo. Her marriage is implied to have made Tibet a part of China. She is further

said to have brought Buddhism to Tibet as well as other cultural arts to the Tibetan barbarians who had no culture of their own before her arrival. The Wencheng cultural palace has other cultural performances and displays all aimed at conveying the impression that Tibet has always been a part of China and that Tibetans are little more than colorful ethnic Chinese. China's tourism promotion policy in Tibet is aimed at diluting Tibetan culture with huge numbers of tourists while making the tourists comfortable with safe and sanitized versions of Tibetan culture. Chinese tourists are given no indications that there are any unresolved political issues in regard to Tibet or that Tibetans are anything other than happy and loyal citizens of China. The Chinese government thus engages in the same sort of deception and cheating of tourists as do the Chinese merchants of Lhasa.

### *Only State-Sanctioned Tour Guides Need Apply*

The article "Only State-Sanctioned Tour Guides Need Apply" was written by Wang Lixiong in 2006. Wang writes that in 2002 a Canadian Chinese who had travelled to Tibet complained to Chinese tourism officials about the Tibetan guide he had in Lhasa. The Canadian Chinese said that the Tibetan guide had told his group such things as that the PLA troops in Tibet were sent from China and that some temples had been defaced during the Cultural Revolution. He also accused the Tibetan guide of revealing some less than patriotic attitudes toward China during a flag-raising ceremony. The guide, like many in Tibet, was a returnee from India and therefore, the Canadian Chinese thought, probably sympathetic to the Dalai Lama and critical of Chinese control over Tibet. The complainer said that the Tibetan guide was a threat to Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. According to Wang Lixiong, his letter managed to get the Tibetan guide fired and arrested.

Many guides for foreign tourists at the time were returnees from India because they spoke good English. Foreign tourists tended to prefer Tibetan guides because they were considered more authentic than Chinese tour guides in Tibet. Nevertheless, after this incident Hu Jintao personally decreed that Tibetans who had returned from India could no longer be tour guides. They were replaced with Han Chinese guides recruited in a so-called "Help Tibet" campaign. This led to many complaints from foreign tourists who said that they were given false information about Tibet by the Chinese guides. The Chinese guides generally knew nothing about Tibet except what they were told during their training, which was essentially Chinese propaganda about Tibet. Their information was generally derogatory toward the Dalai Lama and justified China's role in Tibet in exclusively positive terms. Many foreign tourists got into heated arguments with their guides about the information they were given. This led to some Chinese guides trying to pass themselves off as Tibetans.

What the Canadian Chinese complained about revealed his own ignorance about Tibet and intolerance of any criticism of China's role in Tibet. The Tibetan tour guide was certainly correct that the PLA troops who invaded Tibet did so from China at a time when China did not effectively control Tibet. His claim that some temples in Tibet were defaced is mild in contrast to the truth. In fact, thousands of Tibetan temples and monasteries were systematically closed and then looted by the Chinese government after the 1959 revolt. Only later during the Cultural Revolution were the empty monasteries defaced and mostly completely destroyed. The Canadian Chinese may not have wanted to hear this history, and probably would not have accepted it if he had, but that is the truth about China's intentional destruction of Tibetan culture.

The ignorance and intolerance of the Canadian Chinese is in fact not rare but typical of overseas Chinese. Although they have the ability to learn the truth about Chinese history, including that about Tibet, they remain defensive about China's role in Tibet. Part of the reason for this is psychological, since the Chinese prefer to think of themselves as having liberated Tibet, as they have been told by their government, rather than as invaders, colonialists and destroyers of Tibetan culture and repressors of Tibetan freedom, which is the actual truth. Therefore, even though they might doubt Chinese propaganda on other subjects, they tend to accept it in regard to Tibet.

In his article, Wang predicts that the problem of the lack of authentic Tibetan tour guides would increase after the completion of the railroad in that year, which was expected to vastly increase the numbers of tourists to Tibet. However, Wang assumed that tourists would remain predominantly foreigners, as they had been ever since Tibet opened to tourism in the early 1980s. However, since the completion of the railroad the numbers of tourists have indeed vastly increased, but they have been almost exclusively Han Chinese tourists. In 2013, foreign tourists made up only about one percent of the almost 13 million tourists to Tibet.

Facilities have been created to cater to the huge numbers of Chinese tourists, and cultural performances have been organized to entertain them. They are now exposed only to an unthreatening, sanitized and fake version of Tibetan history and culture. They are led by Chinese tour guides who know nothing but Chinese propaganda about Tibet. China has solved the problem of foreign tourists complaining about inauthentic Chinese tour guides by making domestic tourists vastly outnumber foreigners.

### *Railroad to Perdition*

The article "Railroad to Perdition" was written by Woesser in 2007. The title of Woesser's article, "Railroad to Perdition," means that the completion of the railroad to Lhasa in 2006 has not been a benefit for Tibetans but a road to their ruin. She says that the actual purpose of the

railroad was not for the benefit of Tibetans, as the CCP said, but only to consolidate Chinese political and military control over Tibet and to facilitate large-scale mining operations. Another purpose, to open Tibet up to Chinese tourists, has also had unforeseen consequences that are equally as negative from the Tibetan point of view.

The Chinese government has proclaimed endlessly that the railroad was only for the benefit of Tibetans. However, anyone can see that the actual purpose was political and military. After the completion of the railroad, China gained the ability to move military forces into Tibet very quickly. This ability was demonstrated less than two years later in the spring of 2008 when China moved large military and security forces into Tibet in response to the uprising in March. The potential of the railroad in regard to mining is only just beginning and will take many years and the completion of branch lines to mining sites to fully manifest. The impact on tourism in Tibet, on the other hand, was almost immediate.

Woeser writes that the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) Tourism Bureau reported that within twenty days of the opening of the railway nearly ninety thousand Chinese came to Lhasa. This rapid flooding of Lhasa with Chinese tourists caused immediate Tibetan discontent. Tibetans cited their opposition to Chinese tourism as one of the reasons for the demonstrations that led to the uprising of 2008.

Woeser writes that she went on the railroad to Lhasa in January 2007. At that time, in the middle of the winter, there were few Chinese tourists. However, there were several Tibetan students travelling from their schools in the Chinese interior to Tibet for Losar, the Lunar New Year. When they reached Lhasa all the Tibetans, Woeser included, were detained and their documents checked very closely. Some Tibetans who came to Lhasa without permission were sent back. The Chinese tourists, on the other hand, were not checked and had no difficulties entering Lhasa. Woeser said that Tibetans were treated like aliens in their own country while the Chinese were treated like the rightful owners. Woeser said that she tried to talk to some of the Chinese on the train but found they knew very little and had no interest in learning more. They did not want to understand anything about the Tibet political issue or even to acknowledge that there was any such issue.

In the years after Woeser wrote her article, Chinese tourism to Tibet has vastly increased. The statistics for 2013 show almost 13 million tourists came to Tibet and that almost all of them were Chinese. Foreign tourism has now become insignificant. Tourist facilities in Lhasa have been built to cater almost exclusively to Chinese tourists. Cultural performances are put on for the Chinese tourists that denigrate Tibetan culture and distort Tibetan history. A cultural palace in the style of the Potala has been built for performances of the story of the Chinese princess Wencheng's coming to Tibet to marry King Songtsan Gampo in the seventh century. The

performance implies that Wencheng brought religion and culture to Tibet and consolidated Tibet's status as a part of China. Chinese tourists are not informed about the reality that Tibet was an empire at the time that was unequivocally independent of China. The very fact that the Tibetan king was able to demand a Chinese queen is evidence of Tibet's independence. In this and many other ways the Chinese tourists are given a false and fake view of Tibetan history and culture.

When Woesser wrote her article about the opening of the railroad she could hardly have contemplated its ultimate effects. Its political and military purpose was evident, despite Chinese claims that it was only for the benefit of Tibetans. Its economic effects are yet to be realized given that its greatest impact will be upon mining which is only just getting started. It is the cultural impact of the railroad that has been most immediate and dramatic. Lhasa has been overwhelmed with Chinese tourists whose constant presence has altered Lhasa's population statistics. Chinese tourism had facilitated the Chinese state's goal of diluting the Tibetan population in a sea of Chinese and distorting Tibetan culture to suit Chinese preferences.

#### *Cassock vs. Police Uniform*

The article "Cassock vs. Police Uniform" was written by Wang Lixiong in 2008. The title of the article refers to the uniforms worn by monks in Tibet and the police and other security forces, respectively. Wang writes that during the uprising of 2008 the police and security forces particularly targeted monks for repression. This was particularly true of the security forces, who are predominantly Han Chinese. The riot of 14 March in Lhasa was a result of the arrests and torture of monks who had demonstrated on previous days. Outside Lhasa, particularly in eastern Tibet, violence ensued only when Chinese security forces attacked protesting Tibetans, many of whom were monks. Wang writes that the attacks by the security forces on monks had much to do with their pre-existing attitudes toward monks. The Chinese security forces tend to regard Tibetan monks as unproductive parasites and troublemakers who support the Dalai Lama and are unpatriotic toward China. Despite their policy of religious freedom, the Chinese dislike Tibetan monks and seek every opportunity to repress them and restrict their religious freedoms.

The Chinese Communists adhere to the atheist Marxist doctrine they acquired from the Soviet Union. While proclaiming a policy of religious freedom, communist political parties have repressed religion and religious practitioners in every country they have ruled. They have regarded religion as backward and archaic and as a natural opponent of communism. Thus, while proclaiming tolerance toward religion, they have taken strong measures to restrict religion and to inhibit its practice. Ultimately, Communists think that religion will die out naturally, but they pursue policies aimed at making that happen as fast as possible.

The persistence of religion in Tibet, together with other aspects of Tibetan culture and Tibetan national identity, has frustrated the Chinese Communists, who have reacted with further restrictions on Buddhism and monasteries. They blamed much of the unrest in 2008 on the instigation of the Dalai Lama and assumed that monks and monasteries inside Tibet had acted as his agents. Since 2008, the Chinese government has increased restrictions on the management of monasteries and has pursued constant patriotic education campaigns in order to educate monks about patriotism toward the Chinese state.

Wang writes that the Chinese attitude toward monks and religion is the exact opposite of the Tibetan attitude. Most Tibetans still revere monks and have deep respect toward Buddhism and the religious establishment. They are particularly offended by Chinese propaganda campaigns that denigrate the Dalai Lama and that require monks to denounce their spiritual leader. Chinese repression of monks and monasteries after 2008 has only deepened Tibetan resentment toward the Chinese. The recent series of self-immolations is an expression of that discontent. Chinese repression of Tibetan culture and intolerance of Tibetan opinions has left Tibetans with no other way to express their political grievances.

Wang writes that it is true that monks are the most defiant of Chinese rule in Tibet. They are the upholders of Tibetan tradition and are thus the most resistant to cultural assimilation. They are the protectors of Tibetan Buddhism against Chinese attempts to eradicate this most important component of Tibetan culture and national identity. They are supported by most Tibetans as the protectors of Tibetan culture. They are able to be more defiant than most Tibetans because they have no families of their own and no possessions. Many monks left their monasteries due to the repression after 2008, which the Chinese may have thought a good thing, but many of them just became more determined to preserve Tibetan religion and Tibetan national identity.

The Chinese may be correct in identifying Tibetan monks and monasteries as the source of resistance to Chinese rule. Tibetan Buddhism and the monasteries are an essential component of Tibetan culture and national identity, which the Chinese are determined to eradicate. It is this assault on Tibetan culture and identity that make them so resistant. The Chinese targeting of monks and monasteries since 2008 is the strongest evidence that the Chinese have no intention of actually allowing Tibetan autonomy of the type that they themselves have promised. The Chinese thought that Tibetan religion would quickly diminish along with most aspects of Tibetan culture as well as Tibetan resistance to Chinese rule. Instead, Tibetan resistance has continued and has been concentrated in the monasteries. The Chinese have thus resorted to attacks and restrictions on all aspects of Tibetan religion and the monastic establishment. China's intolerance of religion and repression of religious practitioners is contradictory to China's own policy of

religious freedom and indicative of the poor prospects for any genuine Tibetan autonomy under Chinese rule.

### *The World's Youngest Political Prisoner*

The article “The World’s Youngest Political Prisoner” was written by Woesser in 2006. At that time, it had been about 10 years since the disappearance of Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the Panchen Lama. He was six years old when he disappeared, making him known as the world’s youngest political prisoner. Now, in 2014, eight years after Woesser wrote her article, Gendun Choekyi Nyima remains a disappeared person. Gendun Choekyi Nyima was recognized as the Panchen Lama’s reincarnation by the Dalai Lama after the traditional search process conducted by a committee of lamas belonging to Tashilhunpo monastery. The selection was politically sensitive at the time. The Chinese government had previously cooperated with exiled Tibetan lamas of the Karmapa sect in choosing the Karmapa reincarnation. However, the Chinese then reneged on their promise to allow the Karmapa to travel to India for religious instruction. Nevertheless, a pattern had been set that allowed some contact and cooperation between the Chinese government and Tibetans in exile. What the Chinese gained from this cooperation was the legitimacy of Tibetan Buddhist reincarnations inside Tibet because they had the approval of the Dalai Lama.

The Chinese seemed willing at first to continue such cooperation in the selection of the Panchen Lama. They even went so far as to allow contact between some high level Tibetans in Beijing with Dharamsala in regard to the process. However, it seems the Chinese became suspicious about too much contact between the Tashilhunpo selection committee and the Dalai Lama. For the Tibetan search committee the approval of the Dalai Lama was all important. For the Chinese, however, his approval was secondary while their own approval was primary. The Chinese Government wished to recognize the reincarnation first and then have the Dalai Lama agree upon their selection.

For the Chinese, their right to approve Dalai and Panchen Lamas is considered an essential part of their claim to sovereignty over Tibet. The process ran afoul when the Tashilhunpo lamas sought approval of their selection from the Dalai Lama before informing Beijing. Had the Dalai Lama’s approval of Gendun Choekyi Nyima been kept secret, the Chinese might still have gone along. Their only consideration was that their approval should be considered essential and that of the Dalai Lama only a secondary confirmation. Unfortunately, the Dalai Lama made his approval known first, which resulted in the Chinese rejection of Gendun Choekyi Nyima and the selection of another boy by the Chinese as the Panchen Lama.

The Panchen Lama selection process that began with an attempt at cooperation between Beijing and Dharamsala became a turning point in their relations. Never again would there be any such attempts at cooperation. The Chinese soon identified the Dalai Lama's influence over the selection of other reincarnations as an attempt to maintain his political influence within Tibet. They then determined that all reincarnations would be approved by the Chinese government alone. From this time China also began to denounce the Dalai Lama in disrespectful terms and began a campaign to eradicate his influence inside Tibet. From this time, patriotic education campaigns inside Tibet included the requirement that Tibetans should renounce any allegiance to the Dalai Lama.

Woeser writes that international protests to China about the disappearance of Gendun Choekyi Nyima had no effect on the Chinese government. It has still had no effect to the present time. He may no longer be the world's youngest political prisoner but he is certainly one of the longest-serving political prisoners whose sentence began at such a young age. His disappearance marks a shift in Chinese policy in Tibet from the relatively liberal policies of the 1980s to the hard-line policies of today. Before the Panchen Lama affair the Chinese made some attempts to be conciliatory toward Tibetans, partly because of the influence of the previous Panchen Lama.

Since then, however, they have seemed to care little about the sentiments of Tibetans. As Chinese economic and political power has increased, they have also ceased to care about international opinion in regard to Tibet. Since the uprising of 2008 the Chinese have apparently determined that only a hard-line policy can prevent Tibetan separatism. They have identified Tibetan culture, particularly religion, as the basis of Tibetan national identity, which is the source of Tibetan separatism, and have decided that Tibetan culture must be repressed and no real autonomy allowed.

### *Why Tibetans Flee to India?*

The article "Why Tibetans Flee to India?" was written by Woeser in 2007. Woeser writes that when Chinese border patrol soldiers fired on Tibetans crossing the Nangpa La mountain pass into Nepal in 2006, killing a young Tibetan nun, many in the world may have wondered why Tibetans were killed leaving their own country. They may also have wondered why they would have to try to cross a 19,000 foot pass in the middle of the winter to do so. And why were they so desperate to leave Tibet that they were willing to take such risks? All that the group who were fired upon while crossing the Nangpa La wanted to do was to go to India, most of them in order to pursue the study of Buddhism, so why could they not get permission to leave for that purpose like the citizens of almost any other country in the world?

Woeser says that Tibetans also wonder why they are not allowed to leave their own country for study or pilgrimage or any other purpose. She says that the reason lies with the Chinese government and its policies, which have left Tibetans with no other choice than to take desperate measures. For most Chinese citizens, it is not difficult to get a passport to travel to other countries. All they have to do is to apply to the local public security bureau and pay 200 yuan. Travel outside the country is a basic right of the citizens of most countries, including China, except for Tibetans. Tibetans are almost never given passports except for official business.

Before 2008 it was possible for some ordinary Tibetans to get a passport after going through a lengthy process of applications and background checks to determine their loyalty to the Chinese government. It was easier for Tibetans outside the TAR to get passports since there was less political sensitivity in those areas. This changed after thousands of Tibetans, many from eastern Tibet, went to India for a religious ceremony, the Kalachakra, at which the Dalai Lama exhorted them to cease the practice of wearing animal fur. Many did so, even organizing fur burnings inside Tibet. However, since this showed the influence of the Dalai Lama, the Chinese then restricted eastern Tibetans' travel to India.

After the uprising of 2008, the Chinese further restricted travel for all Tibetans and began more strictly patrolling the border. Whereas before that time many Tibetans had traveled to Nepal and India without permission, after 2008 it became far more difficult to do so. Now, few if any Tibetans are given permission to travel, and travel without permission has almost ceased. Woeser says that this shows the basic lack of freedom granted to Tibetans as citizens of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The reason that China restricts foreign travel by Tibetans is that the Chinese think that they want to travel to India to see the Dalai Lama. So, this is a basic issue of Chinese mistrust of Tibetans' loyalty. And it is true that many Tibetans want to travel to India for that purpose. The source of the problem lies in the political situation within Tibet, in which Chinese rule over Tibet is still challenged by the existence of Tibet's former political leader in exile in India. So, the Chinese have no one to blame but themselves for their difficulty in creating loyalty among Tibetans. Their political problem requires that they restrict the basic freedoms of Tibetans, whom they have claimed as their subjects.

The security problem the Chinese have in Tibet is a common characteristic of repressive regimes worldwide. Communist countries were famously unable to keep their citizens from fleeing. The flight of eastern Europeans to the West was one of the causes of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe. China is not likely to collapse because it keeps Tibetans from fleeing to India, but its attempt to keep Tibetans prisoner in their

own country reveals a similar lack of freedom and a similar discontent. The Soviet Union collapsed because it repressed its own people.

The PRC also represses its own people, but it has learned not to repress them so much that they might rise up and overthrow the government. There are no similar restrictions on how much the Chinese can repress Tibetans. Tibetans may once again rise up in protest as they did in 2008, but, once again, they can expect no Chinese sympathy. As Woenser writes, the Chinese have effectively restricted Tibetan travel to other countries, partly as a response to the revelation of Tibetan discontent in 2008.

### *Stampede in Jokhang*

The article “Stampede in Jokhang” was written by Woenser in 2007. Woenser writes that the Lhasa Jokhang was built more than 1,300 years ago and is the holiest temple in Lhasa and in all of Tibet. It is the center of Tibetans’ devotions and the destination of their pilgrimages to Lhasa. Now, however, Tibetan devotees have a hard time getting past the huge numbers of Chinese tourists in order to worship at the Jokhang. In 2007 there were some 6,000 visitors a day, approximately 4,000 of whom were Chinese tourists. Since the uprising of 2008, Tibetans from outside the TAR have been prevented from doing pilgrimage to Lhasa, and Chinese tourists have increased, so by now there are probably even more Chinese tourists every day and fewer Tibetan worshipers.

Woenser writes that there have been attempts to restrict the numbers of tourists during certain hours in order to allow Tibetan worshipers as well as the Jokhang monks to perform their religious devotions. Mornings were reserved mostly for Tibetans while afternoons were for tourists. In the evenings both worshippers and tourists were allowed. However, she says that these rules were often disregarded due to the pressure from tour groups to be allowed access to the Jokhang. Tibetan monks and pilgrims then had to compete with tourists for access. The tourists were usually given greater access because they had bought tickets.

There were rumors that money from ticket sales was divided up by corrupt local officials, who thus had a personal interest in allowing tourist access to the temple. Tibetans complained that they could not get into the Jokhang, and that if they did so they had to compete with Chinese tourists. Monks also complained that their studies and religious rituals were disturbed by noisy and rude Chinese tourists. Chinese tour guides would escort their large groups into the Jokhang, pushing Tibetans aside, claiming that they had priority because they had bought tickets. Tibetans were said to question if the Jokhang was for Buddhists or for tourists.

Woeser writes that Jokhang lamas tried to limit the disruption caused by tourists by handing out a manual of instructions about proper behavior at the temple. Tourists were told to be quiet and polite and to not disturb the monks. However, the suggestions for proper behavior were ignored by most Chinese tour groups. Instead, Chinese tourists listened only to their own guides, who were interested only in keeping their groups together and getting them ahead of all other groups. As to what the Chinese tourists were told about the Jokhang, this was all typical propaganda about how Tibet has always been part of China, the evidence for which was the Jowo statue within the Jokhang that was brought from China by Wencheng.

They would typically imply that Wencheng (*Gyalsa*) was responsible not only for bringing Buddhism to Tibet but for building the Jokhang as well. However, the Jokhang was built due to the Nepalese princess Brikuti (*Belsa*), a fact not mentioned by the Chinese tour guides. They also do not mention that the marriage of Wencheng to the Tibet king Songtsan Gampo did not make Tibet a part of China, just as his prior marriage to the Nepalese princess did not make Tibet a part of Nepal.

Woeser says that Tibetan pilgrims who understand Chinese were offended by the misinformation given to Chinese tourists by their guides but could do nothing about it. Similarly, the Jokhang monks were offended by the numbers and behavior of Chinese tourists but were powerless to do anything about it. Tourism plays a large role in China's plans for the future of Tibet. However, an accurate account of Tibetan history is not part of that plan. Instead, Chinese tourists are presented with a sanitized and essentially false picture of Tibetan history and culture in which there are no political controversies and no evidence of Tibetan discontent with Chinese rule.

Tibetan tour guides have been purged so that no other information is available to Chinese tourists or to foreigners. China's plan for Tibet is to turn it into a sort of theme park where Chinese can go and see colorful and exotic Tibetans, who are portrayed as happy to sing and dance for them in an expression of gratitude for their liberation from their own misrule.

### *Highway Robbery in Holy Places*

The article "Highway Robbery in Holy Places" was written by Wang Lixiong in 2007. Wang tells a story about some of his Chinese friends who had gone to Lhasa and felt that they had been fooled into making large donations to unscrupulous monks. Their tour group had been taken to what was supposed to be an important ancient Tibetan monastery in Lhasa where they met with a Tibetan Living Buddha, or reincarnate lama. They were all impressed with the obviously authentic nature of the monastery as well as the sincerity of the Tibetan lama. However, they were told that the lama did not speak any Chinese and therefore they would meet

with a Chinese-speaking monk who would convey the Lama's advice and predictions for their futures. The monk met with each of the tourists separately, which they initially regarded as a good thing because individual advice could thus be attained.

However, they each found that they were offered nothing but typical platitudes combined with predictions about trouble in the future that could be prevented only by certain rituals performed by the monks. They were each asked to make large donations to the monastery so that the necessary rituals could be performed. Some of them gave large amounts to the monk, but after comparing their experiences they felt that they had been cheated out of their money. They had similar experiences in other monasteries they visited in other parts of Tibet. This experience led Wang Lixiong's Chinese friends to feel that Tibetan Buddhist monasteries were engaged in some sort of huge scam to exploit innocent tourists.

Wang decided to try to find out from some friends in Lhasa about the monastery where his friends felt they had been cheated. He sent a photo of the monastery to Lhasa. He was surprised when the monastery was identified as Gyume Dratsang, which is indeed an ancient and famous Tibetan monastery. Wang later went to Lhasa and decided to investigate the situation. He went to Gyume and asked some of the monks about the incident, telling them that the reputation of Tibetan Buddhism was harmed by such practices.

He was surprised when the monks told him that they were also angered by the practice. They said that the scheme was not the doing of the monastery itself but rather of a Chinese tour company that had got permission from the Lhasa Tourism Bureau to set up tours to the monastery and to provide interpreters for the Chinese tourists. The tour company then sent some of its Chinese staff to the monastery to help with the tour groups. A few of the Chinese even shaved their heads and wore monks' robes and pretended to be Tibetan monks. It was these fake monks who met individually with the tourists and cheated them out of their money. No rituals were performed for the tourists who gave money for that purpose.

The tour company also set up shops where they sold fake art and ritual articles to the tourists at inflated prices. The Tibetan monks were aware of what was happening and were angered by it but were powerless to do anything about it. They even tried to warn some of the Chinese tourists but were unable to communicate well with them because they spoke little Chinese. The fake monks employed by the tour company then complained to the Tourism Bureau about the Tibetan monks. The Tourism Bureau sided with the Chinese tour company because they were taking a part of their profits. The tour company finally had to leave Gyume after a Taiwanese tourist group complained. Nevertheless, Wang says, other such scams continued at many other monasteries much to the detriment of the reputation of Tibetan Buddhism.

The story told to Wang by his Chinese friends at first seemed to imply that Gyume Dratsang himself was exploiting Chinese tourists. However, once the truth was revealed it was found that it was Chinese, not Tibetans, who were responsible for such corruption. Tibetans, like the Chinese tourists, were the victims of the corrupt schemes of Chinese tourist companies in collaboration with local officials. As usual, Tibetans were powerless even to control their own monasteries while the Chinese had all the power and authority. And, as usual, the Chinese used their power for corrupt and exploitative practices. In this instance, it was fellow Chinese whom they exploited while the Tibetans were merely helpless participants.

### *Herders are Strangers on Their Land*

The article “Herders are Strangers on Their Land” was written by Wang Lixiong in 2007. Wang writes about the resettlement of nomads in the Three Rivers National Nature Reserve in Northern Kham and Amdo. The nature reserve was established in the headwaters region of the Yellow, Yangtze and Mekong rivers and near the Ngoring and Kyaring lakes in what is now Qinghai. He says that many nomads were persuaded to resettle based upon promises of many years of financial subsidies. There were other pressures, of course, mainly political, in that nomads were coerced by local officials to leave their lands. The officials in turn were coerced by the Chinese government to remove the nomads from their lands.

The ostensible reason was to allow the grasslands to regenerate after being overgrazed by the nomads’ yaks and other animals. However, non-Chinese grasslands specialists claimed that the nomads and their animals were not the cause of grassland degradation. Rather, it was misguided Chinese policies that had caused most of the damage. In any case, it was uncertain that ecology was the only reason why the Chinese wanted to resettle the nomads. Resettlement facilitated political control over the Tibetans. And Tibetans complained that Chinese mining companies were given access to the same lands from which the nomads had been removed.

Many nomads have thus been resettled, due to various incentives as well as coercion by the government, with uncertain effects on the grasslands but with usually negative effects for the nomads. The nomads were experts in animal husbandry. They knew everything there was to know about survival on the high plateau and the care of their animals. Had they been allowed to continue that lifestyle they could probably have resolved ecological issues for themselves since their livelihood depended on it. Now, however, they have been forced to adopt a new lifestyle with which they have no familiarity. They are moved to often poorly constructed and environmentally ill-suited new houses and told to get jobs where there are no jobs to be had. They are given subsidies, at least temporarily, that they tend to spend immediately and wastefully because they have not previously been involved in a money economy.

Wang Lixiong writes that many resettled nomads do not know how to budget their expenses or use their money. They have to buy household furnishings for the first time in their lives and they tend to spend all their money on furnishings and similar things and leave themselves nothing for everyday expenses. They buy motorcycles that they can't afford and they go into nearby towns and waste their money on frivolous things. They spend money like people with jobs do, but they have no jobs and the money they get from subsidies does not last as long as they expect. When their money runs out they have no skills that they can use to get jobs or make money. Some resort to crime. Wang reports that some former nomads steal motorcycles by lassoing their riders along the roads. He says that only nomads know how to use a lasso, so they have adopted this particular and peculiar sort of crime. Others seek jobs as laborers on roads and construction jobs. Many are unable to adapt and they then sink to the lowest levels of society, becoming beggars and thieves. Wang compares their condition to what their parents experienced in labor camps in an earlier era.

The result of the resettlement of the nomads is thus an impoverishment of the nomads. It also affects the survival of one of the most distinct characteristics of Tibetan culture. Tibetan cultural ecology evolved as an adaptation to life on the high plateau. Nomadic animal husbandry is ideally suited to the environment of the plateau. Combined with small-scale agriculture practiced in lower elevations it is what provided the basis for Tibetan culture and national identity.

Resettlement of Tibetan nomads is not just an ecological preservation project or a voluntary change in lifestyle. It also has a negative effect on Tibetan culture and national identity. The Chinese have always considered nomads as barbarians, so they have no respect for the nomadic lifestyle. They see resettlement as necessary for assimilation and civilization. However, for Tibetans it does damage to their own version of civilization and to their own unique culture and identity.

### *Every Inch of Land is Sacred*

The article "Every Inch of Land is Sacred" was written by Wang Lixiong in 2007. Wang Lixiong writes about a Tibetan environmentalist, Rinchen Samdrup, who set up an environmental organization in Kham Gonjo. He had observed that all the forests in Gonjo had been cut down, so he organized his fellow villagers in order to plant trees. His organization was called Voluntary Environmental Protection Association or Kham Anchung Sengenamzong. He also organized patrols to protect against poaching of wild animals and illegal logging. They also regulated the digging of the medicinal fungus *yartsa gunbu* on nearby hillsides in order to preserve the supply.

Rinchen started a journal in Tibetan called *Self-Awareness* in which he wrote about environmental protection based upon both Chinese regulations and Buddhist principles. He maintained that environmental protection is inherent in the Buddhist belief in the sacredness of the landscape and the harmony of nature. Rinchen Samdup's organization was effective for that very reason, because it combined local traditions with the modern need for environmental protection. Rinchen's organization mobilized some 1,700 local villagers and was praised in an article by China's environmental ministry. He had also been recognized by, and received awards from, international organizations.

When Wang Lixiong wrote this article he could not imagine that Rinchen Samdrup's activities or that of his organization or his journal would be in any way offensive to the Chinese authorities. Logically, they had reason to support his activities because they were compatible with the Chinese government's expressed intentions to preserve the environment. However, in 2008 everything changed. After the uprising of that year, the Chinese began to consider almost all Tibetan nongovernmental organizations as breeding grounds for separatism. His brother, the environmental advocate Karma Samdrup, who collected Tibetan antiquities and artifacts, was arrested on a charge of grave robbing. He was sentenced to 15 years and remains in prison in Xinjiang.

Rinchen Samdrup was arrested in 2010 and accused of inciting separatism. He was said to have written an article in his journal supporting the Dalai Lama. He was specifically accused of compiling audiovisual materials on environmental and religious issues, possessing propaganda materials from the so-called Dalai Clique, and supplying photographs and other material for an illegal publication titled "Forbidden Mountain, Prohibited Hunting." Presumably, his attempt to combine Tibetan Buddhism and environmentalism had led him to favorably cite the Dalai Lama in support of environmental protection. However, some Tibetans claimed that he was arrested because he had accused a police officer in the Chamdo area of poaching. They said that he was simply the victim of the Chinese tactic of accusing Tibetans of separatism for almost any reason, including personal feuds.

Rinchen Samdrup was recently released from prison after serving four years of his five year sentence. His arrest and imprisonment, along with many others for similar seemingly innocuous activities, was a reflection of Chinese paranoia about Tibetan cultural and social organizations and activities. All sorts of Tibetan cultural activities, like language classes and community events, are prohibited because the Chinese fear that any kind of Tibetan social or cultural activity might become a breeding ground for Tibetan cultural identity, nationalism and separatism. The Chinese have realized that almost all Tibetan cultural characteristics have political implications.

Language study efforts that are aimed at Tibetan cultural preservation are interpreted by the Chinese as attempts to resist assimilation to Chinese culture. Any and all religious activities by Tibetans are suspicious to the Chinese because of the association of Tibetan Buddhism with the former political system. The Chinese can therefore allow only the most superficial aspects of Tibetan culture and then only under close supervision. Because of Chinese paranoia about almost all aspects of Tibetan culture, the government has apparently decided that it cannot allow any semblance of Tibetan cultural autonomy, even those aspects that are ostensibly guaranteed in Chinese law.

Rinchen Samdrup's environmental preservation activities would appear to be entirely innocuous to anyone except the paranoid and suspicious Chinese. His attempt to combine environmentalism and Tibetan Buddhism was apparently suspicious to the Chinese because it led him to say favorable things about the Dalai Lama and aroused their paranoia about the nationalist implications of Tibetan Buddhism. They were suspicious of his organizing efforts among local villagers because they feared that any public gatherings or organizations could lead to separatism. His writings and publications were prohibited for similar reasons. Ultimately, the Chinese chose to suppress many Tibetan cultural leaders and activities during this period simply because of their fear that Tibetan culture inevitably leads to separatism.

### *Betting on Tibetan Land*

The article "Betting on Tibetan Land" was written by Wang Lixiong in 2006. Wang writes about the gambling mentality of Chinese who came to Tibet in search of quick wealth by mining gold. As in gold rushes in other countries, many Chinese heard that gold could be found in Tibet relatively easily and that one could quickly become rich. They were led to believe that Tibetans didn't mine for gold for religious reasons and that Tibet's wealth in gold was therefore almost completely unexploited. The easiest way to mine gold is to find it in streams, so even a single person could hope to find gold in the right place in one of the many streams in Tibet. More organized and industrious Chinese could gather together a number of people and buy machines to dig up the beds of streams. The most organized and industrious might dig into the sides of hills and mountains in the hopes of finding a vein of gold that was the source of the minute quantities in streams. This last method required the most investment but was potentially the most rewarding.

Wang says that mining in Tibet was hampered by the lack of any reliable geological information. Anyone who wanted to mine in Tibet or in Tibetan areas of Qinghai or Sichuan was supposed to get a permit from the provincial mining bureau. But since the mining bureaus were usually unhelpful, most Chinese avoided them in favor of getting permission from local officials.

Chinese were able to travel to Tibet after residency restrictions were relaxed and, at the same time, local officials gained more authority to allow gold mining in their areas in exchange for a fee or a percentage of the profits. Just as individual Chinese saw an opportunity to become rich by mining gold, so did poorly paid local officials see the opportunity to strike it rich by allowing the miners to operate without restrictions and without any regard for the wishes of local Tibetans. Local officials also played a role in repressing any Tibetan protests against the mining activities.

The result was a gold rush in the streams and rivers of eastern Tibet. Because the miners did not know where to look for the gold, they dug up stream beds and hillsides everywhere and left when no gold was found. The motives of the miners as well as the Chinese officials were essentially predatory; they were interested only in extracting profits for themselves without any regard for the environmental consequences. Local Tibetans did not receive any economic benefits from the gold mining of their streams and rivers but were left to suffer all the destructive environmental consequences.

Gold mining in streams and rivers is a hugely damaging and destructive process. The river or stream banks are excavated by hand or machine or by water hoses that remove the earth that is then sifted for the minute quantities of gold that may be present. Whole streambeds are destroyed in order to find tiny quantities of gold. Gold miners sometimes operate alone or in small groups and simply try to pan for gold in streams. Other times large mechanical dredging machines are transported in pieces to mining sites where they are assembled and then crawl along streambeds on tracks, chewing up the earth on all sides and then turning it all into mud that is sifted for gold. The result is an entirely devastated stream that in the harsh Tibetan climate may take years to be restored. Cyanide and mercury are often used to separate the gold from other materials. These poisons then flow downstream and poison wild animals, livestock and people.

The Chinese miners are usually protected by local officials, and Tibetans' protests are dismissed or repressed as separatist activities. Tibetans' protests against gold mining were often repressed by the PAP, whose responsibilities included guarding China's natural resource extraction activities in minority areas. But the PAP was also supposed to support itself through economic activities, and so it evolved from a protector of gold mines into a miner itself. What Wang Lixiong saw in Tibet in 2006 was just an early stage in the Chinese exploitation of Tibetan mineral resources. It has since been superseded by more organized and large-scale mining by large state-owned enterprises. What Wang saw was but the beginning of the Chinese exploitation and destruction of the Tibetan environment.

*How Fur Becomes Tibetan Fashion*

The article “How Fur Becomes Tibetan Fashion” was written by Wang Lixiong in 2006. Wang Lixiong writes about the prevalence of fur in Tibetan fashion. The story is well-known about how the Dalai Lama commented at a Kalachakra ceremony in India that the tradition of wearing fur as a clothing ornament was not ecologically sustainable and about how many Tibetans stopped wearing fur in response. The Tibetan response to the Dalai Lama’s comments, which included the burning of many fur-lined clothes, was remarkable evidence of the Dalai Lama’s continuing cultural influence inside Tibet.

This of course was alarming to the Chinese, who tried to get the Tibetans to continue wearing furs. Their efforts included requiring Tibetans who appeared on TV to wear fur lined *chubas*. However, most Tibetans discontinued wearing fur in accordance with the Dalai Lama’s wishes. In this instance, there was little that the Chinese could do to counter the Dalai Lama’s influence or to deny the reality of that influence. This part of the story is relatively well-known. What is less well-known is why Tibetans were wearing so much fur in the first place.

Wang Lixiong writes that Tibetans at that time were wearing far more fur than had been the case in the past. He says that in the past it was fashionable only among Khampas to use a bit of fur on the collars, cuffs and lapels of their *chubas*. However, before the Dalai Lama spoke out, fur was becoming more of a fashion among Tibetans. He says that Sonam Wangmo, a Tibetan pop singer, appeared on TV wearing a *chuba* made mostly of fur. After her appearance the wearing of fur became more of a fashion. He reveals that it was Chinese and Tibetan tourism officials who were encouraging this trend in order to make Tibet appealing to tourists. Since almost all tourists to Tibet are now Chinese, it was to the Chinese sense of Tibet as an exotic, if backward place, that the tourism officials were appealing.

These same officials sponsored and promoted several cultural festivals at which Tibetans were encouraged to show up in their most colorful and elaborate costumes. They went so far as to hire models and dress them up in furs to appear at such cultural festivals in order to appeal to the Chinese tourists. They even loaned out valuable jewels to the models and loaded them up with far more jewelry than anyone would ordinarily wear, even to a festival. Then they had to provide security guards to the models because they were wearing so much expensive jewelry. The result was a show put on for the Chinese tourists by exploiting Tibetans and their exotic costumes and customs. The efforts also resulted in a fashion among Tibetans to wear fur. Most did not realize how they were being exploited by the Chinese to appear more exotic for the benefit of tourists.

Chinese tourists in Tibet love to dress up in native Tibetan costumes and pose in front of the Potala or other places. For many of them this is the closest they will get to Tibetan culture. The Chinese prefer Tibetans to be exotic but unthreatening. They prefer them to be primitive but

tamed by exposure to Chinese civilization. Tibetans were manipulated and exploited by the tourism officials to appear as colorful and exotic as the tourists expected them to be. Wang writes that wearing fur had become far more common than had previously been the custom. Their manipulation by the tourism officials for the sake of Chinese tourists reveals the typically superficial Chinese understanding of Tibetan culture. The Chinese imagine that Tibetan culture consists mostly just of singing and dancing. The Chinese government represses the more fundamental aspects of Tibetan culture, like language and religion, but they allow and emphasize singing and dancing, so it is not too surprising that Chinese tourists think that Tibetan culture consists only of these superficial aspects.

The Dalai Lama's comments put an end to the Tibetan fashion of wearing fur. However, it was generally interpreted that he did so only for ecological reasons, to save Tibet's wildlife for ecological as well as Buddhist reasons. Nevertheless, the result of his comments was also to curtail one aspect of the Chinese exploitation of Tibetan culture. No longer can tourism officials exploit Tibetans and their exotic costumes, lined with the fur of rare wild animals, for the sake of Chinese tourists.

### *Disappearing Lhasa*

The article "Disappearing Lhasa" was written by Woese in 2008. Woese writes about the Tibet Heritage Fund founded in Lhasa in 1996 by several Western architects working in Lhasa to preserve historic buildings, especially in the old Barkor area. For a few years foreign researchers were allowed to work in Lhasa doing surveys of the existing historic buildings and making efforts to work with the Lhasa city government and international organizations to preserve the old buildings of the Lhasa city core. For some years they received the cooperation of Lhasa city authorities in an effort to preserve historic buildings. The Western architects worked with Tibetans and Chinese to produce several studies and maps of Lhasa historic buildings and published several books on that subject. Their efforts, along with the cooperation of the Lhasa city government, led to the designation in 1994 of the Potala as a UNESCO (United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Site and in 2000 of the Jokhang and the surrounding Barkor area as a World Heritage Site.

However, the political situation in China and in Tibet began to change in the early 2000s toward a more hard-line policy. China became less tolerant of Western organizations working in Tibet because such organizations were usually more sympathetic to Tibetans and Tibetan culture than to China or to China's development plans for Tibet. Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations began to be more restricted in their activities in Tibet, and eventually most were banned from any further work in China or Tibet. Western tourists to Tibet were also gradually replaced by domestic tourists, so the authorities felt less need to cater to foreign interests.

The Western, mostly European, architects finally were not allowed to continue their work in Lhasa. The Chinese government had different plans for the future of Lhasa than did the foreign preservationists. The Lhasa city government had plans for the modernization of the historic districts in a way that usually required the tearing down of historic buildings and replacing them with more modern constructions that retained some of the superficial traditional elements, particularly outside ornamentation, but included more modern heating and plumbing.

The Lhasa city government justified their modernization plans by citing the need for more structurally sound buildings that included modern facilities. However, their plans were in conflict with those of the preservationists, both local and foreign, who preferred that the oldest and most historic buildings should be preserved as they were. They also objected that the Tibetan residents were being removed. The authorities planned to remove local residents only while their homes were being rebuilt, but in reality the original residents often could not afford to pay the increased rents in the modernized buildings. Many of the old buildings were rebuilt in traditional style, but the original residents were still removed and replaced with more wealthy residents, whether Tibetan or Chinese.

In addition, other buildings were constructed outside the city center that altered the character of Lhasa in a negative way. The most offensive was the towering Public Security Bureau building that overshadowed the inner city of Lhasa and gave the appearance of intimidation and surveillance. Another offensive construction was the Tibet Liberation Memorial Monument in the Potala Square. By 2007 UNESCO had become so alarmed at the Lhasa city renovation plans and other offensive constructions that it threatened to remove World Heritage Site designation for Lhasa city.

Chinese and Westerners clearly have different ideas about preservation, modernization, renovation and development in Lhasa. Chinese and Lhasa city government officials cooperated with independent Western architects and researchers in the 1990s in surveys of historic buildings and plans for preservation. This cooperation led to the World Heritage Site designation. However, Chinese and Western plans deviated when it came to renovation and development plans for Lhasa city. Westerners preferred that historic buildings be preserved as they were in order to preserve their historic character.

However, the Chinese intended that all of Lhasa should be renovated and modernized. They thought that the preservation of a few of the most historic buildings would be sufficient, while most others should be torn down and rebuilt preserving only some architectural characteristics. In addition, Chinese authorities became increasingly intolerant of Westerners' interest in and support for the preservation of not only Tibetan architecture but also Tibetan

culture and Tibetan human rights. The Chinese thus gradually eliminated most of the Western Non-Governmental Organizations working in Tibet and they pursued their own plans for the renovation of historic buildings and areas of Lhasa.

### *Scrapping Tibetan Lessons for Stability*

The article “Scrapping Tibetan Lessons for Stability” was written by Woesser in 2010. What Woesser means by this title is that Tibetan language lessons were being scrapped, or discontinued, for the sake of political stability. In 2010, in Rebkong, Amdo, Tibetan schoolchildren demonstrated in favor of more lessons in the Tibetan language. The protests spread across Amdo and even reached the Minority Nationalities Institute in Beijing. The protesters complained that lessons were mostly in Chinese with only supplements in Tibetan. Whereas Tibetan had previously been the language of instruction in primary schools, with Chinese being introduced only at higher levels, now the situation was the reverse, with Chinese being used at the lowest levels as the primary language of instruction.

Woesser writes that 300 Tibetan teachers sent a letter to the Qinghai provincial education department demanding that Tibetan students be primarily taught in the Tibetan language. Former and current Tibetan officials in the Qinghai government also sent letters and petitions in support of using the Tibetan language. The Qinghai Party Secretary responded to the Tibetan teachers’ appeal, promising that bilingual education reforms would be gradually adopted. The teachers thought that this meant that instruction would continue to be bilingual: in other words, that Tibetan would be used equally with Chinese. However, what the Party Secretary apparently meant by bilingual education reforms was the replacement of Tibetan with Chinese. His only concession was that such reforms should be gradual.

Woesser writes that the Tibetan teachers were surprised when only a little more than a year later, in March 2012, many of their teaching materials in the Tibetan language had been replaced with textbooks in Chinese. Now the teaching materials were not even bilingual but were primarily in Chinese even for the earliest years of education. Tibetan students once again took to the streets in protest, and one student even resorted to self-immolation in a desperate attempt to draw attention to the importance of the issue. The reasons behind the change were learned when a Qinghai provincial government document was revealed that said that implementing Chinese language education was a major political task and that the elimination of Tibetan language education was a necessity for harmony and political stability. While Amdo Tibetans were interested in their own cultural preservation, the Chinese government was interested only in the assimilation of Tibetans to Chinese culture, including the substitution of Chinese language for Tibetan.

What this episode apparently reveals is that in the Chinese mind, harmony and stability can be achieved only with cultural uniformity. Only when all the citizens of China identify as Chinese rather than as Tibetans or any other minority nationality can China have harmony and stability. This attitude is contrary to all of China's promises to the minority nationalities in regard to cultural autonomy. While autonomy was the promise, assimilation was always the ultimate goal. The Chinese assumed that all minorities would quickly give up their own backward and barbaric cultures in favor of the more advanced Chinese socialist cultures. Their promises of autonomy to the minorities were apparently little more than an expedient in order to gain control of the minority nationalities' territories without the use of force. While the minorities were told that they could retain their own cultures forever, the Chinese never intended for autonomy to be permanent. Their ultimate goal was always assimilation, which they regarded as essential for harmony and stability.

Minority nationality resistance to Chinese assimilation, particularly among Tibetans, has been more persistent and has lasted far longer than the Chinese ever imagined. This has been a major frustration for the Chinese, who have little understanding of why any minorities would want to retain their own cultures. Because of this lack of understanding, the Chinese have tended to attribute minority culture preservation efforts to local nationalism and separatism. Tibetans want to preserve their language in order to preserve Tibetan culture and Tibetan identity. However, a separate Tibetan identity is incompatible with Chinese needs for cultural unity.

The Chinese rightly understand that a separate Tibetan cultural identity fosters a separate national identity and leads to political separatism. Therefore, they are determined to eradicate Tibetan cultural identity. Tibetan language, an essential component of Tibetan culture, is thus a particular target. There is thus an essential conflict between Tibetan culture and Chinese needs for harmony and stability. Having annexed Tibet by force and against the will of the Tibetan people, China now has no alternative other than to eradicate the separate Tibetan cultural and national identity, no matter what promises they may have once made about Tibetan autonomy.

### *Celebrate Chinese Festivals, Ringing in the Tibetan New Year*

The articles "Celebrate Chinese Festivals" and "Ringing in the Tibetan New Year" were written by Woese in 2008. Woese writes about how Tibetans are coerced to celebrate Chinese rather than Tibetan traditional festivals. She says that in 2007 China announced that certain traditional Chinese festivals would be national holidays. This was something of a change for the CCP, which had previously promoted only celebrations of its own history, such as the founding days of the PRC and the PLA. She attributes the change to the Party's need to adopt more traditional nationalist themes because its communist ideology had ceased to inspire most

Chinese. She says that this change was fine for the Chinese, but no similar minority nationality festivals were featured.

Minorities like Tibetans were not forced to celebrate Han Chinese festivals but they had holidays from work for these days whereas they had no such holidays for their own traditional festival days. Thus there was some coercion to participate in Chinese holidays and to not participate in their own festivals. Tibetans who wished to keep out of political trouble or to curry favor with the Chinese would participate in the Chinese festivals, whereas those who did not participate had to worry that they would therefore be identified as resistant to assimilation or unpatriotic to China. At the same time, if they instead celebrated Tibetan festivals, they could be identified as Tibetan nationalists or separatists. Tibetan schoolchildren were also coerced to take part in Han Chinese festivals. Wooser says that she was one of those students who learned about Chinese culture but nothing about Tibetan culture. In order to learn about Tibetan culture she had to study it herself.

Not only are Tibetans not given holidays in order to celebrate their own traditional festivals but some of those festivals are banned. The ban applies to any Tibetan festivals that have any political implications, as many do, such as *Lhabab Duchen*, *Monlam Chenmo*, *Saka Dawa* or *Drukpa Tse Shar*, and especially the Dalai Lama's birthday and even the commemoration of the death of Tsong Kapa, founder of the Gelukpa school of Tibetan Buddhism. Some festivals without any particular political implications, like *Shoton*, are allowed by the Chinese and even promoted for Chinese tourists.

In addition there are the more sensitive political anniversaries, like 10 March and 10 December, which is World Human Rights Day and the day when the Dalai Lama received the Nobel Peace Prize, and now 14 March, which marks the day that the 2008 uprising began. Tibetans caught commemorating these occasions in any way are subject to identification as opponents of the Chinese government and potentially as subjects of future repression. Wooser also says that there is pressure to celebrate Chinese rather than Tibetan New Year.

Since Wooser wrote this article, Tibetans have actually found themselves pressured by the Chinese to celebrate some of their own traditional festivals of a secular nature in order to demonstrate that they are happy and content under Chinese rule. In eastern Tibet some Tibetans decided to not celebrate Tibetan New Year out of respect for those Tibetans who had sacrificed their lives by self-immolation. They were then coerced by the Chinese to celebrate. Thus the noncelebration of a traditional Tibetan festival became a form of prohibited political protest. Most recently, Tibetans in the Driru area were coerced to participate in the annual harvest festival. Local Tibetans had wanted to forego the celebration this year out of respect for those

who have self-immolated as well as because of the repression of political protests in Driru in 2014.

However, they were ordered by local officials to celebrate and to summon their relatives from Lhasa and other places in order to participate as well. They were threatened that if they did not participate they would suffer punishments such as not being allowed to collect *yartsa gunbu*. The local officials were thought to be expecting some higher-level officials to visit at that time and they wanted to show that everything was alright in their district. Or, they may have even wanted to display Tibetans singing and dancing to visiting groups of Chinese tourists.

The pressure on Tibetans to celebrate Chinese festivals is part of China's policy of assimilation in Tibet. Chinese prohibition of any Tibetan festivals or anniversaries that have political implications is part of their political repression of Tibetan national identity. All such coercion is of course entirely contrary to China's promise of cultural autonomy to Tibetans as written in Chinese law. However, the Chinese do not respect their own law since China is a country ruled by a political party and not by an independent system of law.

### *Epilogue*

Most of the articles in this collection were written between 2007 and 2010. The epilogue was written by Woese in 2013, after she had time to reflect on her and her husband Wang Lixiong's experiences since that time. She writes about March 2013, when the Chinese National Peoples' Congress was set to meet in Beijing. The usual strategy of the CCP at such times of political significance was to remove dissidents such as Woese and Wang Lixiong from Beijing or to confine them to their home and prohibit any outside contacts, especially with the foreign press. However, at the same time, she had just been given the International Women of Courage Award by the U.S. State Department. This award obviously caused her some difficulty with the Chinese authorities, who prohibited her from travelling to the U.S. to receive it.

Woese says that she only gradually became a writer and a proponent of Tibetan human rights. She was born in Lhasa but her father was Han Chinese. She was educated in the Chinese language and majored in Chinese literature in the Chinese interior. She only became aware of Tibetan politics after going back to Lhasa for her first job at the journal *Tibetan Literature*. Even though she knew no Tibetan, she was supposed to write about Tibetan literature in Chinese. Presumably, she would have been able to do this because much of Tibetan literature was written in Chinese at the time, in the early 1990s.

However, she began to become more aware of Tibetan culture in Lhasa and more involved in the Tibetan political issue. She says that by 2008 she was deeply involved in the

Tibetan political issue and, as one of the few Tibetans able to write in Chinese, she felt a responsibility to convey to the world the truth about what was happening there. She was also aware of the falsifications of Chinese propaganda about Tibet and felt the need to counteract the Chinese version of Tibet with the reality as she knew it. As a Tibetan living in Beijing she was able to express herself far more easily than any Tibetans in Tibet. She soon became known as the most articulate spokesperson about Tibet still allowed to publish her views within China.

Woeser and her husband have been subjected to varying levels of surveillance, harassment and obstruction in their travels and writing and publications within China. Wang Lixiong had previously been allowed to travel to the U.S., but Woeser was not allowed to leave China. She wrote to the U.S. State Department accepting the award but expressing her regret that she was not allowed to come in person to receive it. She said that she would dedicate the award to all those in Tibet whose voices had been silenced by repression. She said that the award was an expression of international attention to the situation in Tibet and concern about what was happening there, which at the time was the epidemic of self-immolations. Woeser also said that many others had been repressed for speaking out about the human rights violations in China and Tibet and that she wondered when the repression would fall on her.

Many in the outside world have also worried about Woeser's future in China. She and Wang Lixiong have seemed immune from punishment even though both have been outspoken in their criticism of the CCP. They have been harassed but never arrested or prohibited from publishing their views. Perhaps they have been careful to avoid crossing some sensitive political lines. Nevertheless, the recent arrest and imprisonment of the Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti seems ominous for the fate of Woeser and Wang Lixiong.

Ilham Tohti was a professor at the Minority Nationalities Institute in Beijing, where he taught students from Xinjiang. He also was careful to avoid crossing sensitive political lines in regard to the ethnic nationalist separatism issue in Xinjiang. However, he was eventually accused of fomenting separatism in his classes just because he allowed the discussion of ethnic issues. He was tried on the separatism charge even though there was little evidence against him. Some of his students were arrested and coerced to testify against him. Xinjiang and Tibet are of equal political sensitivity. Ilham Tohti's persecution was probably the result of recent violent activities by Uyghurs in Xinjiang and the Chinese interior.

One worries that Woeser and Wang could be the targets of a similar Chinese reaction should Tibet again experience political events embarrassing to the CCP.

