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Restrictions and Their Anomalies: The Third Forum and the Regulation of Religion in Tibet

Robert BARNETT

Abstract: In 1994, at a meeting known as the Third Forum on Tibet Work, the Chinese authorities announced a series of restrictions on religious practice in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. Described by many outsiders in terms of abuses of rights, in fact those measures differed in important ways. By analysing the target, rationale and procedure of these restrictions, it becomes clear that some were relatively routine, while others were anomalous – their purpose was not explained by officials, the source of their authority was not clear, or the restrictions were simply not admitted to at all. These anomalous orders can be linked to major changes in underlying discourses of modernization and development among officials in Tibet at the time. They reflected undeclared shifts in attitudes to religion and cultural difference, and seeded the dramatic worsening in state–society relations that has taken place in Tibetan areas since that time.

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Keywords: Tibet, Chen Kuiyuan, Third Forum, development, modernization, religion, restrictions, anomalies

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Introduction

> The adverse natural conditions, backward social and economic basis and the complicated background of Tibet's historical development in modern times dictate that Tibet must take modernization as the key link and realize rapid development with special support and help from the Central Government and the rest of the country. […] For historical reasons, most of the Tibetans in the region are religious believers and religious influences have permeated Tibetan culture, art, social customs and daily life. How to correctly handle the ethnic and religious problems is a long-standing issue of great importance in Tibet's modernization drive. The 50-year development of Tibet shows that accelerating modernization is where the basic interests of the people in Tibet lie, and also the key to the realization of ethnic equality and common development. It is an important guarantee for the sound development of Tibet's modernization drive to […] completely respect their culture and traditions, customs and habits, spoken and written language, and religious beliefs (State Council Information Office 2001).

There is always a cultural component to development, an ideological erasure that, of necessity, involves conflict. At the simplest level, as Scott puts it, "designed or planned social order is necessarily schematic; it always ignores essential features of any real, functioning social order" and does most damage when it occurs in states that are "driven by utopian plans and an authoritarian disregard for the values, desires and objectives of their subjects" (Scott 1998: 6, 7). This paper[1] is about a current development drive that has been underway in Tibet since the mid-1990s that seems increasingly at risk of severely damaging cultural integrity and state–society relations in the region. This drive included a radical reordering by the Chinese state of local religious practice in Tibet and seems to me to have reflected a model of modernization that, because it was essentially incoherent, seeded much of the conflict seen in the area today.

I begin the paper by using a party manual on religion in Tibet to demonstrate the shifts that have taken place in the explanations given for

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1 This article is based on a paper presented for the panel "Opening Up Tibet: Political Economy and Cultural Politics of Development under the Xibu Da Kaifa Campaign", chaired by Ethan Goldings, at the annual conference of the Association of Asian Studies, San Francisco, April 2006, and has benefitted greatly from the advice of the other panelists and the chair, as well as from anonymous reviewers, and from the support of the Helen Clay Frick Foundation.

restrictions on religious practice – shifts that reflect changes in underlying discourses about development and modernization. Then, I analyse those restrictions not in terms of generic notions of abuse or rights, but by identifying anomalies and failures in the explanations offered by officials to justify them. Later in the article I go on to use these anomalies to tentatively reconstruct the underlying ideas driving the modernization model at that time, and suggest that these played a major role in the marked deterioration of relations between Tibetan communities in China and the state that has taken place since the mid-1990s.

The Third Forum, Contradictions and the Story of Little Ceren

To understand the role of religious policy in contemporary Tibet, we first need to know about economic policy there, for, as this paper aims to show, the two are inextricably intertwined. In the last decade or so, economic and social development in the western areas of China has been dominated by the China Western Development project (西部大开发, *Xibu da kaifa*), a policy drive which was introduced by China's leader at the time, Jiang Zemin, in 1999 to initiate a major push for investment in China's western areas, including Tibet (the term is used in this paper to describe the western half of the Tibetan plateau, the area that is also referred to in China as the Tibet Autonomous Region or TAR). The intellectual basis for the particular development model used by officials in Tibet had been laid down five years earlier at a meeting in Beijing held under the chairmanship of Jiang Zemin, called the Third Forum on Tibet Work (第三次西藏工作座谈会, *di sanci Xizang gongzuo zuotanhui*). That forum had announced a strategy of stimulating the Tibetan economy through large-scale investment and subsidies, as a follow-up to the more-or-less forced introduction of rapid marketization imposed throughout China following Deng Xiaoping's "Spring Tide" campaign of 1992 (Barnett 2003a).

In Chinese accounts, it is these dramatic accelerations of economic growth that constitute the story of its policies in Tibet. But among many Tibetans, the Third Forum of 1994 was significant for a reason that on the surface had nothing to do with economics: For no compelling reason, the forum had also called for the public denunciation of the exiled Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama, in his religious capacity and in personal terms (Barnett and Spiegel 1996: 3–5, 20ff). Such a move was unprece-

dented for the Chinese authorities in the post-Cultural Revolution era. It was probably the single most important factor in the increase in protest, nationalism and unrest among Tibetans that took place over the following decade and a half (Barnett 2009).

The twin policies of ultra-rapid development and public denunciation of the Dalai Lama have remained the guiding principles for China's management of Tibetan issues in almost all respects since the Third Forum was held, making it the most significant meeting in Tibetan political history since Hu Yaobang initiated a short-lived policy of reform and cultural relaxation in Tibet in May 1980 (see Sharlo 1992; Goldstein 1995). Official accounts do not refer to development and religion as a twinned set of policies. The pair cited in all official speeches at the time were "development" and "stability", the latter signifying the management of security and the repression of dissent. This pairing was not new – it had been brought into being by Jiang during a visit he made to Lhasa in July 1990, during which he had referred to it as "grasping with two hands", a phrase that has remained one of the main *tifa* (提法, formulations) for Tibetan governance ever since.

At the Third Forum, the development part of this double policy was implemented through such measures as requiring inland Chinese provinces to contribute directly to the Tibetan economy and infrastructural development, along with a much more controversial requirement for people to welcome non-Tibetans as entrepreneurs and workers in the region. The "stability" or security elements were addressed in the Third Forum documents by a series of extensive declarations on ways of increasing control over society, among which the most important concerned a new approach to religion. The *tifa* used to describe this approach was the instruction to "adapt religion to socialism" (Barnett and Spiegel 1996: 28ff). The meaning of this formulation, which had only recently become prominent in public policy documents in Tibet, was elaborated by Chen Kuiyuan, party secretary of the TAR from 1992 to 2000, in a speech to party cadres about its theoretical underpinnings:

> When we say that religion should be compatible with our socialist society, we are saying that this is the basic requirement for religion […]. In the spiritual realm, in particular, the masses would not be heading towards socialism if they fully accepted the guidance of religion. Because of their religious belief, many people are following the Dalai Lama in splitting the motherland and doing what is endangering socialism. […] Marxism maintains that religion is a spiritual opiate that can numb people's minds. When religion is used by certain people as

> a political tool, its toxicity will become even more conspicuous (Chen 1996).

As his reference to "heading towards socialism" indicates, Chen is speaking here within a gradualist rather than a revolutionary model. He thus presents socialism and religion as in essence contradictory but as able to coexist during the preliminary or preparatory stage of socialism, by the end of which religion will have faded away. This was the standard view of religion among officials in post-Mao China at the time. But his main point is specific to the Tibetan context: He appears to assert that, by virtue of its link to the Dalai Lama, religious belief in Tibet is inherently antagonistic not just to socialism but also to the Chinese state. The policy endorsed by the Third Forum did not just say that the Dalai Lama was using religion to conceal a devious political intention – it also specified that the Dalai Lama was henceforth deemed to be "heretical" (Tibet TV 1998), a denunciation of his personal, religious standing. This conflation of the Dalai Lama in his religious role with threats to China's security was new. Chinese officials in the post-Mao era had frequently criticized him for his political claims, his role as the leader of an exile government and his criticisms of China's policies in Tibet, despite their having had intermittent talks and negotiations with his relatives and officials. But until the Third Forum they had avoided openly criticizing his religious or personal standing – let alone arguing that his religious followers represented, by virtue of their faith, an inherent political threat to socialism and China.

The extension of Dalai Lama criticism from the political to the religious field was important not just because it widened the scope of the attack on the most prominent figure in the Tibetan religious system. More significantly, it changed the justification for the party's management of religion from defending society's developmental and social needs to protecting the security of the state. In Chen's explanation, religion had thus shifted from one part of the development–stability dyad to the other.

This shift was not reflected in documents aimed at the general public, where the usual, development-based rationale for religious management continued to appear. They generally avoided explicitly attacking followers of the Dalai Lama and highlighted practical rather than ideological issues, principally the argument that religion causes inefficiency in production and education. Examples of this approach were widespread in local newspapers at this time, featuring accounts of farmers who had

lost their harvests because lamas (the term is used in Chinese to refer to any Tibetan monk, although in Tibetan it refers only to senior religious teachers) had told them not to use pesticide, or because local ritualists had told them to delay bringing in their crops until too late:

> In one village […] in 1997, a peasant asked a lama to perform a divination before the wheat harvest. The lama said that the harvest could not start, which had an adverse effect on the farming season by leaving the wheat subject to a disastrous hailstorm […]. Emancipating the masses from such superstition, to firmly stop and root out such sorcery, is a principle that we Party members and officials need to pursue (Tibet Information Network 1999; see also Youngblood 1995; *Xinhua* 1998; *People's Daily* 2001, 2004).

Long articles detailed the amount of cash that Tibetans had donated to monasteries, stating that instead of contributing to their local economies, Tibetans were thus damaging both production and social improvement. By 2000, this argument was being used by leaders not just in the TAR but in Sichuan too, where about a quarter of China's six million Tibetans live. As Zhou Yongkang, then Sichuan party secretary but later to be made responsible for security throughout China, put it:

> Although the Tibetan people live a harsh life, they donate 30 per cent and sometimes two-thirds of their income to the monasteries. But what's the point of talking about the future when you ignore the present? (Ma 2000).

At about this time, the Third Forum's policies toward religion and the Dalai Lama, originally applicable only to the TAR, began to be implemented in parts of the Tibetan areas of Sichuan too. I have argued elsewhere that this was the primary factor that led to these areas becoming the epicentre of Tibetan protests in 2008 and the site of numerous self-immolations since 2011 (Barnett 2009).

Within the TAR, the local television station conveyed the same message about religion in short dramas or sketches broadcast in Tibetan, part of the small portion of its output that at that time was performed in Tibetan rather than dubbed from the Chinese. One such *xiaopin* (小品, sketch), "*Bsam 'dun*" (The Wish), was written by Pei Fulin (Pei 1997), a traditional Chinese dramatist who had been sent from Beijing to work with the Regional Drama Troupe in Tibet two years earlier (Evans 2003: 273, n. 3). The climax of the sketch showed a young Tibetan girl in tears after gashing her leg in a fall that had occurred while walking to her school some distance from her village. The cause of the girl's injury is,

we are told, her grandmother's fixation on religion: The elderly lady has insisted on using the savings she has collected from other villagers to construct a *ma Ni khang*, a type of Buddhist shrine, instead of handing them over to her son, the village leader or party secretary, so that a local school can be built and thus save the children from having to walk to another village. The drama ends with the old lady, distraught at the sight of the young girl's tears, joyfully handing over the money to the village leader.

In taking such an approach to religion, policymakers in the TAR were moving in a direction opposite to that of most ordinary Tibetans, among whom religiosity had re-emerged as a major form of popular expression as soon as the restrictions of the 1970s era had been lifted (Goldstein and Kapstein 1998). Among Tibetan writers and intellectuals, dismissive representations of religion similar to those found in official texts had been commonplace in the 1980s, a decade or more before the Third Forum, when many short stories had still been written in the style of socialist realism and had retained the anti-clerical opinions of the Cultural Revolution (Shakya 2000: 39; Robin 2008: 149–152). But those writings had later come to be seen by their authors as having been "executed under the guidance of cultural institutions" (Robin 2008: 152) and by at least the mid-1990s a more nuanced appreciation of religion had become dominant among Tibetan writers, artists and intellectuals, particularly those living in Qinghai, where about a quarter of Tibetans live, and where the policy environment was more relaxed. There had been fierce criticism among Tibetans of one group of Tibetan intellectuals based in Xining, the capital of Qinghai, who, led by the writer known as Zhogs-dung ("Morning Conch"), produced a number of articles in the late 1990s that directly criticized Tibetan adherence to religion and declared it contrary to the urgently needed modernization of the Tibetan nationality (Hartley 2002). But in 2008, after protests spread across the Tibetan areas of Sichuan and Qinghai, even Zhogs-dung radically revised his position, publishing (unofficially) a strongly critique of China's presence in Tibetan areas and calling for Tibetans to be given self-determination, with little focus on his earlier critique of religion (Zhogs-dung 2009).

Chinese policy on religion in 1994 was thus at odds with the thinking rapidly emerging among Tibetan intellectuals and almost certainly among the general public, too. At the same time, official thinking became increasingly bifurcated, dominated in terms of the economy by modernization theory, while in terms of religion it had returned to a

selective borrowing from the class-warfare approach within traditional Marxist analysis. In part this policy turn was a result of the shock felt by Chinese leaders at the re-emergence of nationalism and pro-independence agitation among Tibetans in 1987: Approximately 200 pro-independence protests, led by monks and nuns, had taken place in or around Lhasa between that year and 1994, and three of those had escalated into riots (Barnett and Spiegel 1996: 26, 75). This sudden increase in opposition to the state was widely attributed within certain key sectors of the party to the "excessive" relaxation in cultural and religious policy initiated in 1980 by the general secretary of the party at the time, Hu Yaobang, at the First Forum on Tibet Work, with the vigorous support of the 10th Panchen Lama, the most important Tibetan lama to have remained in Tibet after the Dalai Lama fled in 1959. Hu Yaobang was deposed in 1987 and died two years later; the Panchen Lama died three months before him, removing the strongest advocates in China for culturally sensitive policies in Tibet. Outside China, the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October 1989, and was successfully promoting the Tibet issue through increasingly prominent meetings with Western leaders. By 1991, the Soviet Union had collapsed and Chinese policymakers had determined that a major factor contributing to its downfall had been the leniency shown by the central government toward minority nationalities, as Marsh has noted (2003: 9). It was in this climate, one of the reactive reinvigoration of ideology, that the new policies toward religion in Tibet emerged.

The Story of Little Ceren

The typical features of the rationale advanced for development in Tibet by the Third Forum can be seen in a story that was published some four or five years afterward. The story was published in one of the official manuals produced by the party to train the workers it was sending out into society to help in the "adaptation of religion to socialism". Carefully constructed, it shows many of the key elements of thinking at that time within the party about how to educate ordinary Tibetans concerning their beliefs. As we would expect, it argued that a reduction in religious belief was essential for social development. The first phase of this story shows, in familiar terms, the deleterious influence of traditional or outmoded thinking:

> Little Ceren's grandmother Yangzong [Yangzom] is a devoted Buddhist. When little Ceren [Tsering] was about to graduate from his primary school, in order that her grandson be able to attend Tibetan class in the inland area [内地, *neidi*, referring to the China plains], the old lady often took him to the monastery to burn incense and made prostrations and prayed to the deities and spirits to bless him, without consideration of little Ceren's resistance. In the long run, little Ceren was imperceptibly influenced and gradually slackened his studying, believing that everything would be successful according to his wishes with the blessing of the gods and Buddhas. As a result he could not pass his examinations (Propaganda Department of the TAR Branch of the Chinese Communist Party, n.d.; translation based on Saunders 2004: 106).

Three notions of modernity are implied here. One is that it is a general aspiration of Tibetans to seek advanced education, ideally in inland or plains China. Since 1992, many wealthier Tibetans have indeed been eager to send their children to join the *neidiban* (内地班, inland class) in the Han areas of China (Wang and Zhou 2003), which in Tibet are officially referred to as the *neidi* (内地, inland area). A second implication is that modernization is natural to the young and to infants, but alien to the older generation, at least among Tibetans. A third is that religious – or at least Tibetan Buddhist – practice will necessarily damage the learning process and the ability to study. These two assumptions indicate that the writer's thinking about modernity was already organized along lines of ethnicity, age and belief, a form of thought that, as we shall see, seems to have been pervasive at this time.

In the second section of the story, a schoolteacher is introduced. She is presented as a professional embodiment of the modern, and the little boy, too, is shown to have modern virtues of self-regulation and resistance to emotion, because he already knows that he should not make any noise when he cries:

> When little Ceren was weeping silently, teacher Zhouma told him, "Failure is not horrible, the crucial point is to take a lesson from your failure." The teacher also gave him two books, *The Mystery of Nature* and *Stories of Zhang Haidi*. Over vacation, little Ceren read through the books and understood that there are no gods and spirits in the world, and that success comes only from hard work. Last year little Ceren was in grade three in secondary school. This year he was ready to enter high school.

It is clear from her name that the teacher, Zhouma (Drolma), is a Tibetan and a woman, and in the story she embodies service to the state and its privileging of modernization. She provides motherly care for the weeping child by teaching him to overcome emotion, and shows him how to use rational understanding to overcome religious belief as well. She does this by introducing two forms of literature, the scientific and the inspirational, a reflection of the common view found in propaganda work in modern China that persuasion or re-education requires a combination of fact-based explanation and exemplary narratives or models. The latter is provided in this case by the life story of Zhang Haidi, a Chinese woman who, despite being paralysed as a child, in the mid-1950s overcame the wish to commit suicide and taught herself politics, literature, medicine and several foreign languages (Landsberger 2012), becoming a model citizen for her educational achievement despite her childhood difficulties. The insertion of Zhang into the story of Little Ceren suggests that Tibetan religious belief, like physical handicap, is an obstacle that can be overcome through a combination of scientific knowledge and individual determination.

The final part of the story takes us to a third stage in the story, in which the little boy becomes a rationalist himself and is able to re-educate his grandmother:

> Old mother Yangzong wanted to go to the monastery with her grandson to pray to the Buddhas again and said that the reason that they had not had good results in the exam the previous year was because he had not gone to the monastery enough. Little Ceren knew that his grandmother was on his side but he already knew that doing so was ridiculous and useless. So then little Ceren politely said, "Grandmother, our country implements the policy of religious freedom. I respect that you believe in religion, but it is my freedom not to believe in it and you should respect my choice." After convincing his grandmother, little Ceren studied hard wholeheartedly and eventually he entered his long-wished-for Lhasa middle school with excellent marks.

The arc of the story thus follows the basic multi-stage paradigm of socialist narratology: The hero first gains a basic moral grasp of his material conditions and oppression, as in bourgeois or liberal consciousness, and then goes on to acquire a more advanced level of understanding which enables him to analyse social conditions, so that finally he can explain them persuasively to others. In other words, Ceren has become similar to a Young Pioneer, the childhood equivalent of a party cadre, a van-

guardist who can lead others to reject false consciousness and acquire a basic understanding of reality. Appropriately, in speaking to his grandmother, Ceren uses pragmatic, legalistic arguments to draw a line between himself and religion, not those based on full-blown revolutionary or Marxist understanding; this, too, demonstrates the way in which a cadre or pioneer is expected to adjust his methods to the conditions of his audience.

The anecdote has its own contradictions – if Ceren had achieved excellent marks in his examination results, he would have gone to a middle school in inland China, and certainly not to one in Lhasa – but the basic structure of this story is relatively clear: Religious belief is dramatized as an outmoded, pre-rational belief system that is identified with the older generation, the feminine and the uneducated, and which is in conflict with scientific knowledge and social progress. These in turn are associated with youth, aspiration, modern education, modern literature, Chinese people, and the professions. The adaptation of religion to socialism here appears within a familiar process of subjecting religion to the scientific, while the scientific and the secular are both presented as coterminous with the modern.

Grandmothers vs. Monks

But the story also suggests a shift in the party's view of lay religious believers as opposed to monks. The invocation of unreconstructed grandmothers as the typical bearers of Tibetan Buddhism is not a neutral manoeuvre: It identifies the educational campaign of which this story is a part as being aimed at ordinary Tibetans rather than at monks and nuns. Referred to in Chinese legal literature as "religious professionals", monks and nuns had been the main target of religious critiques and re-education in Tibet since the pro-independence protests of the years after 1987. Most of those protests had been small, brief incidents staged by them, and this had led to them being singled out as the major target of the Third Forum's campaign to "adapt religion". They are absent from the story of Little Ceren not because religious professionals were no longer in need of re-education – quite the opposite – but because they belong to a different discourse: They were dealt with by reference to a separate set of concepts and methodologies which identifies them, because of their supposed proclivity for carrying out subversive activities "under the guise of religion", as threats to state security. Meanwhile, in stories and materials intended for use with the masses, the grandmothers and the

other lay Tibetans whom they stand for are critiqued as obstacles to social progress rather than as threats to state security.

Behind this distinction between religious professionals and traditionally-minded lay Tibetans we can see an assumption that lay Tibetans can or will be cured of security-related misapprehensions by an increase in their economic and material wealth, along with education clarifying the sources of that wealth. This is a central tenet of the Chinese commitment to rapid modernization in Tibet. The *White Paper on Tibet* issued by the Chinese government in November 2001, quoted at the head of this paper, argued for the "historical inevitability" of Tibet being modernized. But its argument that such modernization will resolve "the ethnic and religious problems" in Tibet rested less on destiny than on an underlying view that resolution of these problems will follow once lay Tibetans become wealthier, because, unlike the clerics, they will then automatically abandon the belief in religion and the Dalai Lama and the desire for Tibetan independence. Wu Shunxiang, the official in charge of Tibet's Economic Planning Commission in 1996, pointed to the difference in this respect between monks and the lay Tibetans:

> We need to think about the monks and the general public in a different context. […] Normal religious activities are guaranteed, but if religion is used for political purposes, it cannot be called religion. Although the Dalai Lama is trying to control the general public, he cannot do it because the people's living conditions have improved (*Asahi Shimbun* 1996).

The foundation of this approach lies, as in much of modern Chinese penology and political thought, in Mao's 1959 distinction between different forms of *maodun* (矛盾, Tib.: *'gal zla*) or "contradiction", which he divided primarily into those against the people ("antagonistic contradictions"), and those among the people ("non-antagonistic contradictions"). The first group has irreducible enmity against the state, the revolution or the party and must be eliminated or subjected to absolute control, while the second group is confused as a result of misunderstanding, false consciousness or manipulation and can be won back through education and other means. The history of the CCP's policies toward difficult, category-crossing issues like religion, nationality and intellectual life – in short, culture – is that of an unresolved and constantly shifting argument over whether to define each successive iteration of these forces as antagonistic or non-antagonistic contradictions. By the 1990s the Tibetan monks had come increasingly to be seen as belonging to the former category, in

distinction to the view held during the Hu Yaobang–Panchen Lama period in the early 1980s. Meanwhile, well-intentioned but ill-informed members of the laity like Ceren's grandmother, who inadvertently obstruct progress but do not oppose the state, remained in the latter category. Maoist terms from the 1970s or earlier by this time were no longer much used in public debate, and the space once occupied by notions of the non-antagonistic thus came by this time to be filled by the discourse of development and its concomitant assumptions about modernity.

The Absence of Superstition

The story about Little Ceren is a continuation of a debate about religious policy that had begun in the early 1980s, when the central authorities produced "Document 19" (1982), a national-level pronouncement which had formally ended the ultra-leftist approach of the Cultural Revolution by declaring that religious belief was no longer an antagonistic challenge to socialism (MacInnis 1989: 8ff). The new approach asserted that, because it was now recognized that China was still in the primary stage of socialism, there was no need for coercion to be used in order to destroy religion, since it would eventually "wither away" of its own accord as socialism and the economic basis of society matured.

As a result, the critiques of religion that followed the publication of Document 19 were relatively concessional and avoided direct or explicit attacks on religion as a whole. Instead, officials tried to distinguish acceptable aspects of religion from negative ones. They did this by defining the latter as *mixin* (迷信, superstition), and therefore as distinct from *zongjiao* (宗教, religion). Officials were instructed to attack only superstitious practices rather than religious ones, and in some cases superstition was categorized as a serious criminal offence – from 1980 until 1997, "organizing and utilizing superstitious sects, secret societies, and evil religious organizations" was a crime which, if it caused "serious harm to the state", was liable to the death penalty, according to Article 300 of the revised PRC Criminal Code of 1997. In practice, the ways in which superstition could be distinguished from religion varied throughout the 1980s and afterwards, making regulations difficult for local cadres to interpret and enforce (see Diemberger 2005). Generally, however, religion was defined as long-standing and written down, and as having laws and organizational structures, while superstition was seen as lacking any canonical, written or regulatory form (MacInnis 1989: 32–34; Human Rights Watch/ Asia 1997). In practice, this allowed local officials considerable

laxity as to which aspects of religious practice they could tolerate in their areas.

Religious policy in Beijing also exhibited constant variation. In 1991, following the protests in Tibet and serious unrest in Xinjiang, the central authorities had produced a new statement of their policy on religion, known as "Document 6", that emphasized "implementing administration of religious affairs" in order to bring them "within the bounds of law, regulation, and policy" (CCP Central Committee and State Council 1991: 27–32). The declared intention was to not "interfere with normal religious activities or the internal affairs of religious organizations", but activities defined as abnormal, such as those that threatened security, were to be subject to more rigorous sanctions (Potter 2003: 320–322). That December, the TAR authorities produced a set of interim measures on the management of religious affairs in the region that detailed restrictions on the opening of any new monasteries, the admission and registration of monks or nuns, the number of monks allowed in each institution, the holding of any prayer ceremonies or teachings, travel by monks beyond their own province, and the publication of religious books (The TAR People's Government 1991). In 1993 the concept of "actively adapting religion to socialism" became more prominent and was reiterated by Jiang Zemin as one of three important principles for handling religious affairs, alongside "strengthening management of religion by law" (Potter 2003: 323). The repeated references to law and legality reflected the efforts of the leadership to exercise stronger controls over religion without generating the perception of intolerance or coercion.

It was in this climate that the Third Forum took place in 1994. It signalled the privileging of a more coercive approach to religion in the TAR. A similar development would also take place in Xinjiang, where strict regulations about religion were introduced in 2001, with 8,000 imams being re-educated in obligatory 21-day sessions (HRW and HRIC 2005: 15), with widespread "re-education" drives being launched in both regions. At around the same time that the *Xibu da kaifa* drive was announced, the Chinese leadership showed the full potential of its new, legalistic approach to religion by invoking those laws (or inventing new ones) to justify what would earlier have been seen as a determination of an antagonistic contradiction: It declared that the *qigong* (气功) cult known as the Falungong was illegal and ordered that it be completely banned. This led to tens of thousands of detentions, innumerable reports

of torture, and hundreds or even 1,000 or more deaths in custody. This remains the most explicit instance in post-Maoist Chinese history of a fully coercive approach to religion. Even in this case, the determination as to the nature of the Falungong took some time, almost certainly because it required political debate among the party leadership for a consensus to be reached. Thus the suppression of the organization was initially justified in terms of scientific rationalism and social benefit – it was declared to be "advocating superstition and spreading fallacies" and "jeopardizing social stability" (*People's Daily* 1999a). But two weeks later, the movement was defined as "a political force opposed to the Communist Party of China and the central government" (*People's Daily* 1999b). It was thus classified as both anti-society – meaning anti-modernity – and anti-state. This critical array was made possible by the distinctions that emerged in the 1990s as officials re-evaluated and reclassified religiosity according to new criteria.

The regulatory approach to religion did not replace the conciliatory one: Increasingly, several variants ran in parallel. In many cases, state officials working in Tibetan areas outside the TAR remained relatively muted in their comments on religion, probably because ethnic issues are always seen as potentially explosive in China, especially when they involve groups living near international borders, and because Buddhism is one of the five religions officially recognized by the Chinese state. As we have seen, this began to change in the eastern Tibetan areas (those which are outside the TAR) around the year 2000, and the regulatory approach became much more prominent and aggressive, at least in Sichuan; in the TAR, the conciliatory approach had basically become a dead letter after the Third Forum. But in some areas of social life, it remained relevant. For example, the periodic calls of the party for public education to be carried out about the benefits of atheism seem to have remained *pro forma* exercises. Even within Tibetan areas, the concessional approach to religion was periodically advocated in articles by some local-level officials and scholars (Zhang and Guo 1991; Pama Namgyal 1994: 71). At the central level in Beijing, it was of course referred to quite frequently, such as in a speech by Jiang Zemin in 2001 in which he instructed officials to adhere to policies on religious freedom (Potter 2003: 323), and more notably in 2003 when, as part of Hu Jintao's signature notion of "harmoniousness in society", certain religions were described as potentially helpful to modernization and to the construction of a harmonious society. Leading officials at the central level at that time are said to have singled

out Buddhism (not necessarily the Tibetan form) as particularly suited to this role, possibly because the religion is viewed in China as in effect indigenous, or at least as not regulated by a foreign institution. The revised attitude in Beijing to Buddhism was demonstrated by the holding of a series of officially sanctioned meetings called "The World Buddhist Forum" in 2004, 2006 and 2012, although the Dalai Lama and his followers were studiously excluded from these events.

China's views of religion in the twenty-first century thus combined the various approaches represented by Document 19 in 1982, Document 6 in 1991, the Third Forum in 1994 and the crushing of Falungong after 1999. But a general feature can be identified in this discourse: It became increasingly sectoral, at least in Tibet. As we have seen, the conciliatory view, with its rationale phrased in terms of society's developmental needs, tended to be used for lay practitioners, seen as a non-antagonistic force that required education rather than coercion. The "religious professionals", especially in Tibet and Xinjiang, were spoken of increasingly in terms of security concerns rather than development. This dual approach became the dominant mode of state dealings with religion in Tibetan areas after the Tibetan protests of 2008, leading to a sharp increase in legal and administrative controls in monasteries by 2011 (CECC 2011; HRW 2012) and the deployment of paramilitary forces in the streets around the main temple in Lhasa as well as near many of the major monasteries in eastern Tibetan areas.

However, an underlying shift in the basic categorization of religion had taken place at the time of the Third Forum, one that has been rarely noted. It is evident even within the story of Little Ceren. First, that story abandoned the distinction between superstition and religion that had been the main approach to religion since the early 1980s – organized religion, or core elements of it, are treated in the story as an impediment to personal and social progress and modernity. That was how earlier texts had treated superstition, not religion: The efforts of the 1980s to distinguish unwritten *mixin* from canonical *zongjiao* have disappeared.

Second, the discourse of social benefit, educational improvement and progress is mentioned only in the middle section, which describes the schoolteacher's intervention. The final section cites state laws and rights, not practical benefit or conciliation, as the way to explain to laypeople why religion should be rejected: Ceren tells his grandmother that it is his "freedom not to believe in it". This reflects a shift from pragmatic arguments about utility and production to assertions about the primary

need to regulate religion through the legal mechanisms of the state. This fits with what we have seen was an overall shift from a largely gradualist, educational model to a regulatory approach to the handling of religion in China.

But the story expresses an even stronger view when it describes Ceren's own understanding of religion once he has accepted his teacher's advice. Quite unlike the reason he gives his grandmother for his atheism, his personal realization is that her religious practices are "ridiculous and useless". Here Ceren has taken an absolutist position rather than a pragmatic one, putting him closer to the stance taken in earlier times towards an "antagonistic" contradiction, one that is "against the people" rather than "among the people". Thus, although this story is about lay practitioners of the older generation, located within a developmental discourse and framed within the equity-based language of law and civic rights, it does not end with the conciliatory, non-antagonistic approach that would be expected. Its conclusion, that certain lay religious practices are inherently worthless, reflects the discursive change that resulted from the Third Forum with respect to areas of social and cultural practice usually thought of neither as antagonistic nor as threats to state security. The logic of coercion, or at least of absolute dismissal, here appears to have become normative even in considerations of lay religious practice and in areas covered by the discourse of development, rather than just in matters dealing with monks and nuns, political confrontation, or the Dalai Lama. The coercion here is purely discursive: There is no suggestion that in practice the grandmother in the story was to be prevented from carrying out her rituals. The party had not changed the gradualist approach to religion it had enunciated in Document 19. But we now find in a public document intended for the masses that cadres were being instructed to propagate among lay Tibetans a story celebrating the absolute dismissal of religious belief. In practice, the conciliatory approach to religion in Tibet remained in place, but the shifting and contradictory ideas circulating within official discourse there indicated the increasingly serious challenges it faced.

The Sources and Subjects of Restrictions

How was the use of such punitive measures with regard to Tibetan monks and monasteries explained and understood by those involved in producing and implementing them? As we have seen, the Third Forum

had led to a marked increase in administrative restrictions on the life and behaviour of monks and monasteries, as well as nuns and nunneries, to a degree which was unusually severe for the post-Cultural Revolution era. These included most prominently the imposition of the 1996 patriotic education drive in each monastery and nunnery in the TAR. This required every monk and nun to undergo an intensive three-month training programme and at its conclusion obliged them, on pain of expulsion, to sign a written denunciation of the Dalai Lama. This turned out to be the practical import of "adapting religion to socialism" in the TAR, along with the new regulations requiring the registration of all inmates; the removal of those not from the local area; the enforcement of a quota or limit on the number of monks and nuns in each institution; the enforcement of a minimum-age limit on them; the closing of monastery schools; limitations on travel by monks or nuns; limits on religious ceremonies and teachings; and the setting up of management committees in each monastery, sometimes including the participation of lay officials.

These requirements were generally described in Western and exile reports as examples of oppression by the state of the individual freedoms of Tibetans. Such ethical flattening – the treatment of all ethical transgressions as equivalent – overlooks important differences between these measures and tends to treat all of these administrative orders as equally abusive demonstrations of despotism, a perception that makes it harder to assess local understandings of these regulations. Since these measures followed major protests against the state, some of which had included violence, many were probably seen as steps that had to be taken in order to protect social order and security. Like any state, the Chinese authorities had always reserved their right to resort to force in such situations, including in Document 19, so the escalation of state coercion after 1994 and again in 2008 would not have been surprising. For many people and in many cultures, the practice of a state imposing restrictions on religious institutions is not unusual or in itself an abuse, as Žižek argued in the Tibetan case (2007); the question of injustice arises primarily when such restrictions are excessive or inappropriate. From the perspective of many Chinese or Tibetan citizens and officials, a good number of these requirements would probably have fallen within some form of indigenous explanatory scheme that seemed coherent and reasonable at the time, even if it was seen as excessive in some cases. But they could be explained – they made sense as a rational, even legitimate form of state

response to open challenge and unrest. Whatever one's view of them, they represented a change of degree rather than of kind.

But some of these restrictions may have been seen as being of a different nature and as beyond the legitimate remit of the state. My intention here is to identify such outliers among the general set of restrictions by putting aside the conventional human rights approach to such matters and instead considering these measures sociologically. I do this by asking who the subjects of these restrictions are, what form of legal or paralegal authority they claimed to operate under, and how the state explained them. This allows us to reconstruct at least partially what might have been an emic view of these restrictions for officials at the time and to suggest the explanatory logic behind them. The participants in the policy process may not have been aware of the logic implied by these restrictions, so we cannot rely just on their own statements. Instead, I suggest ideal models in the Weberian sense that allow us to identify schematically the likely frameworks within which these normative restrictions were conceptualized, and to detect those restrictions which were wholly different in kind from the ideal types and which cannot be explained even by local standards, let alone by notions of normative regulation. As I shall show, this leads to the identification of anomalous restrictions, the significance of which has been largely overlooked or misread by outsiders. Their existence enables us to reach some tentative conclusions about the changes in thought and official discourse that took place during this period.

In terms of the subjects of the restrictions on religion imposed by the Third Forum, at least five categories can be identified: party members, laypeople, religious professionals, students and government officials. Several of these categories overlap. Each category of person has a different kind of restriction that is appropriate to him or her, and each was treated differently in the regulatory environment that emerged in Tibet in the mid-1990s, with different procedural norms, forms of authorization, and types of explanation provided in each case. These are listed schematically in Table 1 and described in more detail in the text below.

Table 1: Restrictions on Religion as a Result of the Third Forum on Tibet Work, 1994

Social category of subject	Restriction	Procedural type	Explanation
Party members	No religious beliefs or practices	Internal rules of a voluntary membership organization	Organizational: maintaining the purity of the party
Laypeople ("the masses") – Tibetans	a) No pictures of the Dalai Lama	Chinese Buddhist Association advisory opinion, plus unpublished party orders from Nationalities Affairs Committee	Security: defending the state against threats
	b) No worship of the Dalai Lama	Undocumented, unwritten and not publicly acknowledged	No explanation given
Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns ("religious professionals")	a) Registration requirements, travel limits, etc.	Legal regulations passed by congress appropriate to a professional body	Development: maintaining social order
	b) Patriotic education	Ad hoc orders, written down, implemented by party teams	Security: defending the state against threats
	c) No pictures of the Dalai Lama	Chinese Buddhist Association advisory opinion, plus unpublished party orders from Nationalities Affairs Committee	Security: defending the state against threats
	d) No worship of the Dalai Lama	Undocumented, unwritten and not publicly acknowledged	No explanation given
	e) No unauthorized admission to government compounds	Undocumented, unwritten and not publicly acknowledged	No explanation given

Government officials and employees ("cadres")	a) No pictures of the Dalai Lama	Chinese Buddhist Association advisory opinion, plus unpublished party orders from Nationalities Affairs Committee	Security: defending the state against threats
	b) No worship of the Dalai Lama	Undocumented, unwritten and not publicly acknowledged	No explanation given
	c) No religious practices	Undocumented, unwritten and rarely acknowledged	No explanation given
Students – Tibetans	a) No pictures of the Dalai Lama	Chinese Buddhist Association advisory opinion, plus unpublished party orders from Nationalities Affairs Committee	Security: defending the state against threats
	b) No worship of the Dalai Lama	Undocumented, unwritten and not publicly acknowledged	No explanation given
	c) No religious practices	Undocumented, unwritten and rarely acknowledged	No explanation given

Source: Author's own compilation.

Party Members

Members of the CCP constitute a separate category in terms of restrictions on behaviour and thought. With regard to religion, they face the most draconian limitations, on paper, since religious belief is forbidden to them in any form, a rule restated by the party after some debate in September 1993. These regulations are widely published and discussed in certain media outlets, such as *Renmin ribao* (人民日报, *People's Daily*) and *Xizang ribao* (西藏日报, *Tibet Daily*), because these are party organs of which the principal task is to broadcast the party's views, along with instructions and regulations for its members. This public dissemination

obscures the fact that these restrictions are wholly different in kind from state legislation: They are internal regulations of the party, which is, strictly speaking, a voluntary membership organization. The denial of religious belief imposed on its members is presumably envisaged, setting aside ideological explanations, as a sacrifice made by them as compensation for their privileges, which they enjoy because of their voluntary decision to join the party. Accordingly, no question of the excessive or unfair use of power arises in this instance.

In any case, the most severe sanction that the party can impose is expulsion from the party – or, in exceptional cases, referral to the criminal authorities – so breaching the regulations has relatively little impact. In practice, such regulations are of limited significance, and no party members in Tibet are known to have been penalized for religious practice or belief, although they are often accused of this in generalized speeches and internal documents, and although, in my experience, many certainly maintain such beliefs and practices. These particular regulations therefore can be said to have a chiefly symbolic function, one of representing the moral purity of the organization and justifying its assumption of its vanguard role. In either case, they illustrate the unquestioned right of the party-state to impose restrictions on religion at least on this particular set of citizens, and demonstrate that in this context at least restrictions on religious freedom are probably seen as coherent and acceptable.

The Laypeople

The largest category of subject consists of laypeople. They do not have a choice about being members of the category which they constitute, and so are entitled in post-revolutionary China to the widest leeway in their religious activities and, theoretically, should suffer the fewest limitations. This is in fact the case in the current religious policy regime in Tibet, relative to the other subject categories. When the state does impose its powers on laypeople, other than in emergencies, it uses the form of coercion that is most carefully subjected to collective consideration – laws. These apply to far more people than any other form of restriction, and are treated, in theory, with the greatest care, being assessed by the People's Congresses at various levels, the State Council, and other bodies. The party alone cannot authorize the promulgation of such laws and regulations: Technically speaking, this can be done only by the People's Congress and the government, although the reality is that they do this only as

and when instructed to do so by the party. The laboriousness of the state's official regulatory process regarding the general public reflects the fact that laws are the most draconian form of imposition in the state armoury, since they include the death sentence.

Thus it is not surprising to find that the restrictions introduced in Tibet in the mid-1990s did not involve any new laws or formal regulations at the provincial level relating to religion, whether *tiaoli* (条例, regulations, Tib.: *srol yig*), *banfa* (办法, measures, Tib.: *bya thabs*), or even governmental pronouncements or *yijian* (意见, suggestions; see Legislative Committee 1990 and subsequent volumes); in general, new versions of these began to appear only from 2004 onwards. If any of these had been passed in this period, they would have applied to all citizens. In fact, the new regulations formally imposed as a result of the Third Forum did not apply to laypeople as a discrete category – the patriotic education drive, the centrepiece of those restrictions, was aimed at monks and nuns, not the general citizenry. Officials and perhaps the Chinese public at large could rightly maintain that in these instances the state did not use its legal powers to restrict religious belief among the laity in Tibet.

This is true only of legal regulations formally imposed on the general public by the government and legislature. There were also quite different forms of imposition on the public that were invoked in this period, and it is the fact that these were not promulgated as formal regulations that constitutes their political and historical significance. But before considering them, we should look at the category of subjects who were the explicit target of the formal restrictions on religious in that period, and still are – the monks and nuns of Tibet.

Religious Professionals

In terms of state regulation, Tibetan monks and nuns, like priests and imams elsewhere in China, are similar in some ways to party members: From the point of view of the state, they voluntarily decide to join a social institution and to enjoy the privileges it allows. They thus become subject to the corresponding restrictions applied to that institution by its management body or by the state. This is presumably the underlying justification for China's controls over these institutions, and the imposition by the state of greater limits on their activities and membership than on ordinary citizens is not in itself exceptionable.

But the analogy with party members breaks down, even without consideration of the obvious discrepancies in power and privilege, when

we look at the nature of the restrictions to which monks and nuns are subjected. Both groups have to obey the internal regulations of their organizations, but the monks and nuns have to obey special laws imposed by the state which apply to them alone. In addition, monks and nuns are regulated by a state body that exists only to manage their behaviour, the Religious Affairs Bureau, which passes numerous administrative regulations concerning them; by contrast, party members are not regulated by any state body or by state laws, only by internal party agencies. But this situation becomes explicable if monks and nuns are considered along with other professionals who have a fiduciary responsibility toward the public, such as doctors, judges and teachers, all of whom are subject to special, national-level laws and regulations, and are supervised by official bodies that govern their professional behaviour. As in a Western society, professionals earn money from the rest of the citizenry as a result of their claim to expertise, and this is as true of monks as it is of doctors, so the existence of special obligations and restrictions for professionals protects the socially vulnerable and seems reasonable. The explanatory force behind the official Chinese term "religious professional" becomes clearer in this context, invoking as it does the rationale according to which the state is obliged to impose special responsibilities on monks and nuns for the safety of society and the maintenance of high standards.

Again, this formulation helps to separate the normal from the exceptional among the religious restrictions in Tibet in the mid-1990s. From this point of view, enforcing quotas, establishing management committees, imposing minimum-age limits, setting residence requirements, etc., represented the normal actions of the state managing an important profession in society. In fact, laws and regulations covering the requirement to have monastery management committees, quotas for the membership of each monastery and nunnery, and minimum-age requirements for monks and nuns had been passed by Beijing or local bodies several years earlier with respect to temples and mosques in Tibet, Xinjiang and elsewhere (see The TAR Party Committee 1981; The TAR Party Committee and The TAR Government 1987, 1989; The TAR Government 1991). The existing regulations or national laws covering these issues had been laxly enforced until that time, so the new restrictions were technically just a reassertion of existing forms of management.

In legal terms, these restrictions were not aberrations from the norms relating to the exercise of power by the state in China. What was new about them was the degree of enforcement and the unusual level of political assertiveness and aggression involved in that enforcement – as we shall see, this change in style flowed from the fact that these measures were explained in terms of supposed threats to the security of the state rather than by reference to development and to maintaining social order. But by the same token, this analysis clarifies which restrictions introduced in the TAR in the mid-1990s were not of this type: Some did not come through the normal regulatory process, had not been confirmed by local or national legislatures, and were not part of normal management. These anomalous restrictions included the patriotic education drive and the ban on images and worship of the Dalai Lama. These applied initially only to monks and nuns, so I will leave till later the discussion of the remaining two types of legal subject – government employees and students.

The Patriotic Education Drive

The patriotic education drive was initiated in Tibetan religious establishments in May 1996, becoming the most prominent of all the new mechanisms imposed on the clergy there. It has continued until the present day. In terms of legal analysis, it was exceptional and of questionable legality. Such initiatives had, of course, taken place frequently in different areas of public life in China, and to some extent they continue to do so and are not mandated by laws or, as far as is known, by local *tiaoli* or regulations; at most, they are authorized by executive orders issued by some branch of the administration. Accordingly, there is considerable lack of clarity about when or to whom they can be applied. They are largely political initiatives without a clear legal basis, the result of decisions by China's political leaders at one or other level to improve society and diminish challenges to the state. It is this semi-formal nature of the patriotic education drive that marks it as being among the more important of the religious restrictions introduced in Tibet following the Third Forum.

The underlying rationale for such drives lies in the fact that, originally, they applied to party members and were designed to improve their ethical and political quality. They were internal, explicable and voluntary processes imposed by an organization on its own members. It is when such a drive is applied to a sector of society outside the party that ques-

tions arise as to the source of its authority. The normal situation seems to be that, at least in the post-Mao era, the party decides on the need for a public education drive, and the government implements it, in the same way that it advocates road safety or literacy. Drives to educate the general public on specifically political topics usually emanate from the party's Propaganda Bureau and are implemented through its governmental arm, the Culture Ministry, as with the "hundred patriotic books" and the "hundred patriotic films" that were put out as part of the *aiguo zhuyi* (爱国主义; Tib.: *rygal gces ring lugs*) or "patriotism" drive in 1997. But the general population was not required to watch these films or read these books – unless they were members of government institutions such as schools – so these drives were, in effect, advisory rather than regulatory.

The form of patriotic education imposed in Tibet since 1996, by contrast, has been carried out by a specially created ad hoc administrative apparatus, which has its own staff, funding, methods, mandate and powers of enforcement, and was aimed only at the monks and nuns. Initially, the formal title of the initiative was "Carry out patriotic education in monasteries and establish normal work order", but in June 1997 this was changed into "Carry out patriotic education in monasteries, strengthen the management according to law". The change reflected the strong opposition encountered at the outset of the drive – at least 100 monks at Ganden Monastery were detained and given long prison sentences after they protested against the first attempt of a work team to impose these new rules on the monastery. The new title implied that the drive was an operation based on legislation, but I have found no record of a legislative decision authorizing it. Its source of authority was an unpublished party order: On 25 May 1996 Chen Kuiyuan, then the party secretary of the TAR, announced to a meeting of upper-level cadres that "the Regional party Committee has decided to launch patriotic education among monasteries in the whole region" in line with a central government "instruction to expose the Dalai" (Chen 1999; Raidi 1998). A press article in 1996 referred in passing to a central directive called "Circular on Conducting Patriotic Educational Activities in Religious Activities Centres in Tibet" issued by the Religious Affairs Bureau in Beijing, but its contents and status are unknown (Feng 1996).

This was thus an education drive authorized by a party order from Lhasa in the light of a general instruction from Beijing and directed towards a single profession or social group rather than a propaganda exercise applicable to the general public. In an earlier phase of patriotic edu-

cation, carried out in response to the pro-independence protests led by monks in Lhasa in 1987 and 1988, the local party and the government had issued a joint order entitled "The instructions with regard to carrying out the political rectification of monks and nuns who participated in the Lhasa riot" (Kezhu Qunpei 2011). At that time, cadres had been organized into *gongzuodui* (工作队, work teams, Tib.: *las don ru khag*; see Schwartz 1994: 52–58) which had been sent to a total of 16 monasteries and Buddhist institutions in August 1988 to carry out the re-education of their monks and nuns. The 1996 effort was quite different in scale and type from its predecessor eight years earlier. It sent work teams to every one of the 1,700 or so monasteries and temples in the TAR over the following three years, and it required all of their monks and nuns, as far as is known, to undergo three months of near-daily education, during which they had to study and partly memorize the four manuals of instruction issued by the office in charge of the drive (The TAR Office for Spreading Patriotic Education 1996a, b, c, d), with more or less automatic expulsion or worse if they failed to comply.

At the start of the 1996 campaign, individual orders were delivered to each monastery announcing that the education sessions would take place. These described the purpose of the education drive in terms similar to the title of the office, stressing the social value of the drive and its connections to law and legislation. Its aim was

> to implement the Party's policy on religion totally and correctly, to stress the management of religious affairs according to law, and to initiate efforts for the harmonious co-existence between religion and socialist societies (*chos lugs dang spyi tshogs ring lugs kyi spyi tshogs 'tshams mthun yongs ba*) (Sera Monastery Work Affairs Committee 1996).

At the end of this explanation, an additional purpose was mentioned: to educate monks "to oppose completely any activities aimed at splitting the motherland". The developmental, non-antagonistic rationale was thus placed first, with the antagonistic explanation given last. In party documents and discussions, the discourse of security and defending the state is the primary if not the only explanation, with increasingly little mention over time of developmental or social benefit. In Chen's lengthy speech to upper-level party cadres in May 1996 that instructed them how to carry out the drive, the first of the four objectives of the drive was to "eliminate the Dalai clique's infiltration of monasteries", while the last was "to improve the educational level of monks and nuns" and to teach them to abide by state laws (Chen 1999). In that speech Chen used the

word "stability" 17 times and referred 34 times to "the Dalai" or "the Dalai clique" as the enemy of the state; the word "development" occurs three times. In Chinese press articles after 1997, and even more so after the re-emergence of widespread Tibetan protest in 2008, the purpose of patriotic education is increasingly described as being to defend the state and attack the Dalai Lama (Kezhu Qunpei 2011).

The individual orders sent to each monastery in the TAR instructing them to accept patriotic education teams after 1996 varied from one monastery to another. Those that I have seen were not on official letterhead or in a standard form, and made no reference to any authorizing source such as a law or official body. Their provenance was indicated only by the two stamps at the end of the document, one from the management committee of that monastery, and the other from the *gongzuodui* or work team formed especially to carry out the drive in that monastery (Sera Monastery 1996). The former has a remit to issue orders to its own monks, but the latter is an ad hoc body formed by the party with the help of the government specifically to carry out that single education drive in that monastery, so for it to issue an order announcing its own existence is a form of executive self-authorization.

But there is a more fundamental issue here. Technically speaking, the party does not have any direct involvement in the running of religious institutions in China: Since the early 1980s, it has allowed these and other areas of society to operate outside its purview. This construction of a distinct space for religious institutions in China has been described by foreign scholars as a "zone of indifference" (Tang 1986: 18) and as a "concession of socio-economic autonomy" that provides "an important source of popular support" for the authorities (Potter 2003: 318). Under this arrangement, religious controls are supposedly imposed and managed by the Religious Affairs Bureau, which is an arm of the State Council and thus of the government, rather than of the party. In reality, the United Front Work Department, an internal agency of the party, manages all policy on religion and nationality in China and issues the orders for such restrictions, drives and so on. But its role is generally not given any public prominence, and its orders, where these relate to non-party subjects, are supposed to be carried out by a government body. Technically speaking, an order to a monastery in post-Maoist China should either originate from the legislature in the form of laws or regulations, or be an administrative instruction issued by one or other branch of the Religious Affairs Bureau.

This distancing of the party and the state from non-party institutions has always proved difficult to maintain with respect to religion, as Potter has shown (2003: 337). The on-going patriotic education drive remains an example of this. Although termed a joint party–government operation, the office that was created to run the drive – the Office for Spreading Patriotic Education in Monasteries in the TAR (*Bod rang skyongs ljongs kyi dgon sde'i nang rgyal gces ring lugs kyi slob gso spel ba'i gzhung las khung*) – was led by Tenzin, a deputy secretary of the TAR party committee, and four other senior party members: Lechog, Lhakpa Phuntsog, Chongya, and Lobsang Tenzin (Chen 1999). The leading unit within this office was the United Front, and the work teams were staffed by party members. Such teams are often used by the party to carry out campaigns at "the grassroots" – in 2010, for example, 10,000 cadres in the TAR were sent to spend at least a year in villages in the TAR, and a further 11,000 were sent in the following year. But the target of such operations is usually the general public, and the cadres in such drives are considered to be dealing with non-antagonistic problems; they are not running coercive operations and do not (as far as we know) issue explicit, written orders to the villagers.

Ideologically, too, the situation is distinct: The rationale for such drives in the post-Mao era is generally to educate the work team members rather than the villagers. It is a mechanism supposedly designed to enable the cadres to "go to the grassroots" and learn the thinking of the masses so that the party can comprehend and carry out "the mass line". The fact that the party chose in 1996 to intervene directly in monasteries, rather than through the Religious Affairs Bureau, and with coercive power, without any rationale about it being needed in order to educate the cadres, indicates how significant these religious restrictions were, and how urgent and compelling (in all senses) the party considered the issue of religious control of monasteries to be.

A similar phenomenon had taken place in May 1995 when the Dalai Lama had announced from exile in India the child he had chosen to be the successor to the 10th Panchen Lama. On that occasion, rather than waiting for the relevant government or quasi–non-governmental body (typically the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA) in such a case) to reply on behalf of the "masses of believers", the party had intervened openly in the issue by having a deputy party secretary in the TAR be the first to issue a public condemnation of the Dalai Lama's move. This suggested that the incident had caused some kind of crisis for the Chi-

nese authorities (and it is likely that members of the Tibetan branch of the CBA had deliberately framed excuses to delay having to make any public statement themselves; see Barnett and Spiegel 1996: 55ff). The deployment of key party resources as direct managers of the patriotic education drive one year later, however, reflected not a sudden crisis but rather a change in the discursive basis of religious policy and the emergence of wider thinking within the Chinese and the TAR leadership – probably in large part fuelled by its shock at the Dalai Lama's successful identification of the 11th Panchen Lama without their participation – whereby monks were increasingly being regarded as potentially antagonistic elements in society, with security rather than development becoming the basic framework for dealing with them. By the time Ragti (Chin.: Raidi), a deputy party secretary of the TAR, came to announce the accomplishments of the patriotic education drive in its first two years, the general approach of the party leaders was clear:

> Based on a certain amount of experience gained in experiments at temples such as the Sanda Temple in Lhasa, we sent out a large number of task forces, conducting a patriotic indoctrination campaign in over 60 per cent of temples and monasteries to establish normal order. We rooted out certain lawless monks and nuns, persuading monks under the age of 15 to leave the order, and arranged for their schooling. We also cracked a number of cases of threats to national security, uncovering and punishing certain separatists who were mixed in among the monks and nuns. We effectively cracked down on separatist forces, indoctrinating the masses of monks and nuns, to shake the Dalai Lama's base. And in rooting out the social base and reactionary influence of the Dalai Lama's group, we achieved a crucial victory. Tibet's anti-separatist practice of recent years proves that we are acting in the spirit of the Third Central Forum on Tibet Work, our policies and measures in the fight against the separatist and disruptive actions of the Dalai Lama's group are correct, and there is no future for the Dalai Lama's group in serving as a loyal tool of the Western anti-Chinese forces, so that its separatist, restorationist, and reactionary actions cannot win public confidence and are bound to fail (Raidi 1998).

Apart from "certain lawless monks and nuns" who had to be given extra "schooling", there was no attempt to suggest that the operation was anything other than a security drive directed against enemies of the state. The place of monks and nuns in administrative and political thinking had thus shifted from governmental to direct party management, from the

non-antagonistic to the antagonistic, and from developmental to security discourse. For many local observers, this underlying shift would have been far more significant and perhaps more disturbing than the numerous restrictions imposed regarding the numbers, age, registration and administration of monks.

The Ban on Pictures of the Dalai Lama

As we have seen, the policies of the Third Forum were not implemented by drawing up laws, which, once authorized by a legislature or by the government, could apply a restriction to the entire citizenry. Instead, we have seen so far three other types of restrictions used to implement the religious policies of the Forum – regulations that were internal to a social organization, the party, and so applied only to its members; regulations that were applied specifically to monks and nuns as to any leading profession in society; and unpublished orders emanating from the party implemented with an unclear legal basis by ad hoc work teams acting under party instructions and in a coercive manner.

The ban on both pictures and worship of the Dalai Lama belonged to a fourth kind of restriction: one which stemmed from an unpublished party order, without clear involvement of the government. It was similar in that way to the patriotic education drive, except that its source and extent were never clearly stated or consistently implemented, so the nature of the ban has remained obscure in almost all its details. It is still uncertain what exactly is banned, whom it applies to, what the penalties are for breaching it, whether it is applicable to areas of China outside the TAR, and, if so, when it came into force in those areas. It was exceptional in its content – the exile leader had often been criticized in the post-Mao years for his politics, but not in his religious capacity or *ad hominem*. The distribution and sale of photographs of the Dalai Lama had long been forbidden, since he had been regarded since the mid-1960s as a political enemy, though not as a religious one. But people who had photographs of him in their homes or on private shrines had not been attacked, since this was seen as a religious rather than a political matter. Neither had there been any previous suggestion that worship of him was forbidden, other than for party members, who are not supposed to be religious anyway. The new order, when it emerged in April 1996, changed all of this and Tibetan–Chinese relations in general.

The ban on photographs of the Dalai Lama was referred to publicly and prominently at the time of implementation – but only once, and only

partially. It was placed in a box on the front page of the main newspaper in Tibet, extremely rare for any such order or statement. It read, in full, as follows:

> The hanging of the Dalai's portrait in temples should gradually be banned. We should convince and educate the large numbers of monks and ordinary religious believers that the Dalai is no longer a religious leader who can bring happiness to the masses, but a guilty person of the motherland and people (Feng 1996).

The statement was described as the outcome of a meeting of the Tibet branch of the CBA, giving the impression that it was a decision by the CBA rather than one imposed directly by the government or the party. That organization, originally founded in 1929 without any connection to the government (Lancashire 1977: 221), is "a mass organization of personages from religious circles and religious believers", making it technically a voluntary non-governmental organization with an officially mandated consultative role. In essence, it issues instructions or opinions to monks that they would be unwise to disobey, but which probably are not obligatory in any legal sense until the Religious Affairs Bureau publishes them as an order under its authority and enforces them.

The status of the April 1996 statement in the *Tibet Daily* was thus probably an opinion rather than an order. But a fuller article below the boxed quotation indicated that the ruling had been conveyed to the CBA representatives at a meeting the previous day by "persons in charge of the Tibet Regional Nationalities and Religious Affairs Committee". These officials had relayed the content of certain "circulars", including one entitled *Seizing and Confiscating Reactionary Propaganda Materials and Stepping Up Anti-Infiltrative Work in Religious Activities Centres* that seems to have been issued by the Religious Affairs Bureau in Beijing (Feng 1996). Two years later, the source of the order emerged when a senior Tibetan leader noted that the decision to ban "the hanging of pictures of the Dalai Lama" had been taken at the 6th Enlarged Plenary Session of the 4th Regional Party Committee, the key meeting in September 1994 that had authorized implementation of the Third Forum's decisions (Raidi 1998). But in fact, according to the records of that meeting, it had only banned the display of such photographs in the houses of party members and reaffirmed the long-standing ban on the public sale of the photographs; no explicit reference appears in the published materials to a ban on such photographs in monasteries or private homes (Barnett and Spiegel 1996:

37, 73–74, 160). The source of the order as it applied to monasteries and to laypeople thus remains obscure.

This restriction was therefore somewhat different from the other restrictions arising from the Third Forum. It belonged to a different ideal type, one that has no clear source of authority or scope. The public statement indicated that the ban was to be imposed gradually, by means of education rather than through immediate use of force. It was to apply only to the display of the portrait, not to possession of it, and only to temples, by which was meant all monasteries and religious institutions. The approach was to be non-antagonistic or educational, and the masses, along with the majority of monks, were only to be educated concerning this issue; the ban did not apply to them.

But this is not what is reported to have happened. The rationale for the policy was twofold: First, the Dalai Lama was attempting to "split" the nation and so support for him was a security threat; second, his claim to be a religious figure was in fact a deception, so he was not covered by religious policies or freedoms. As one senior Tibetan official, Xu Mingyang, put it, quoting the new *tifa* imposed by the Third Forum on all subsequent official discussion of the Dalai Lama:

> Dalai […] has been engaged in various political activities with an attempt to split the motherland, and he uses Tibetan Buddhism as his political tool for splitting the motherland. He has caused harm to Tibet and has confounded right and wrong in religion. He has done many bad things which are heretical and deviate from the true teachings and has thus created great obstacles to maintaining the normal order of Tibetan Buddhism. […] Dalai is not promoting religion, but is using Tibetan Buddhism as his handy political tool for splittist [pro-independence] activities (Tibet TV 1998).

The restriction was therefore based on a security rationale rather than on the need to protect development or society, meaning that the Third Forum had reclassified the religious role of the Dalai Lama as an antagonistic force, after 15 years of treating him as belonging to a milder category. This in turn meant that anything relating to him, including religious items, could be considered illegal under vague laws forbidding the distribution of "reactionary propaganda materials", such as Article 26 of the TAR Temporary Measures on the Management of Religious Affairs 1991 (The TAR People's Government 1991). Once the practice of religious devotion to the Dalai Lama was ruled a security matter, implementation quickly became coercive: Work teams sent to monasteries were given

absolute authority to remove photographs of the Dalai Lama and were backed up by paramilitary troops where significant resistance was encountered. Some monasteries were raided by troops or police, leading to photographs of the Dalai Lama being taken down or destroyed (most prominently at Ganden near Lhasa on 6 May 1996 and at Tongkor in Sichuan, 3 April 2008; see Poole 1996 and TCHRD 2009). In addition, the restriction was applied not just to temples but to monks as well, where it applied to possession as well as display of the photographs. It was quickly extended to the wider community, although in these instances force was not used: Schools, hotels, restaurants and shops were visited and told that the pictures were banned (Tibet Information Network 1996a). Reportedly, private homes were searched by police or officials from neighbourhood committees (Tibet Information Network 1996b). A US-based monitoring organization even claimed in 2005 that there had been 170 cases of Tibetans being detained after 1987 in connection with possessing photographs, documents or recordings featuring the Dalai Lama (CECC 2005), though probably a range of other reasons was given for holding these people, such as the non-specific offences of "counter-revolutionary incitement" or, after the 1997 revision of the Criminal Code, of "incitement to jeopardise state security". It is still uncertain whether display, let alone possession, of these photographs is a crime, and whether laypeople are subject to such an order, if one in fact exists.

Inside the TAR, almost all Tibetans appear to believe that such an order does exist and that it bans possession as well as display; quite probably, that was how the front-page newspaper announcement of April 1996 was meant to have been understood, even though it referred to only the display of the photographs, and only if the display was in a monastery or temple. Since 1996 it has been the case that almost no Tibetans display such pictures openly, and, in the 18 months in all that I lived and worked at Tibet University in Lhasa at different times between 2000 and 2006, it was clear that people there assumed it to be an order enforceable by punishment of some sort. There is no reference to the ban in the national-level regulations on the management of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries issued in 2010 (State Administration of Religious Affairs 2010), in which the Dalai Lama is not even mentioned. Neither is there any mention of him or of a ban on the display of his photographs in provincial-level regulations dealing with the management of monasteries. In 2004, an order was published that banned the selling in markets of "traitorous foreign pictures of the Living Buddha" and "domestic or

foreign pictures of the Living Buddha that have not been approved by the central or TAR authorities" (The TAR People's Government 2004). The phrase "Living Buddha", a Chinese mistranslation of the Tibetan term for a reincarnated lama, probably refers here to the Dalai Lama (the order also banned the sale of photographs of the child recognized as the 11th Panchen Lama by the Dalai Lama in 1995). A similar order was photographed in a Tibetan area of Qinghai in September 2012 that forbade shops to sell or print photos of the Dalai Lama and other "objects inciting [people] to split the country, publicizing Tibetan independence or spreading obscene, pornographic and vulgar messages" (The Office of the Leadership Team in Rebkong County 2012). But these orders reaffirmed long-standing restrictions on printing, distribution and selling such portraits and did not address the display or possession of them by monks or citizens.

In 1998, the existence of the ban on displaying these photographs in monasteries was publicly confirmed by a vice-chairman of the TAR, Xu Mingyang, who declared that

> Dalai's activities have brought serious damages to Tibetan Buddhism. Therefore, it is completely correct to ban the hanging of Dalai's portraits at lamaseries and temples (Tibet TV 1998).

But by 2004 officials in Lhasa began to deny that such an order existed. When a delegation of foreign journalists asked the vice-mayor of Lhasa which law prohibited the public display of Dalai Lama images, they were answered by a long silence (FCC 2004). They were later told by another vice-chairman of the government, Wu Jilie, that

> not to have the Dalai Lama's photo I think is the voluntary choice of the vast majority of peasants and herdsmen. There is no government stipulation. […] They chose to do it themselves because the Dalai Lama has aroused the distrust and resolute opposition of the vast majority of people here (*Reuters* 2004).

The claim that the absence of photographs was due to popular dislike of the Dalai Lama continued to be made by TAR officials to other foreign journalists until about 2008, 12 years after the ban was set in motion, when the tone of official statements became more assertive. But direct admission of a ban on Dalai Lama photographs remains extremely rare. An internal, local handbook of questions and answers issued for patriotic education at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba (Chin.: Aba) in Sichuan in 2008 included the question "Why is it not allowed to display photos of the

14th Dalai Lama?" The answer given is that "no state would allow the photograph of a person who seeks to harm the interests of the state and the people" (Ngaba 2008). Clearly by that time the ban had spread beyond the TAR, but once again there is no indication of the source or type of the order, and, just as in the *Tibet Daily* announcement of 1996 and Xu's statement of 1998, it admits only to a ban on the display of these photographs in monasteries. In 2011, an English-language reference volume published by the State Council, China's cabinet, finally noted that it is prohibited to display the portrait of the Dalai Lama in public in China, saying that "no country would allow the portrait of a person harming the interests of the state and the nation to be displayed in public" (Wang and Dong 2011: 212). This is the only official acknowledgement I have found that a ban exists other than in monasteries.

Why did the government never publish a formal order or clarify whether the ban applies to laypeople too? Human Rights Watch and Human Rights in China have noted that the central Chinese authorities issued a little-known order in 1995 requiring almost any policies or regulations concerning national minority or religious affairs to be kept secret (SARA 1995; State Ethnic Affairs Commission 1995; see HRW and HRIC 2005: 13, 24, nos. 8 and 9). But several regulations of this kind, such as those on Buddhism and Buddhist monasteries, were made public. Whatever the reason, the result has been that few Tibetans in Tibet (and, at least since 2008, in some eastern Tibetan areas, too) dare to possess the photographs, and many have had their homes or persons searched for them. This may be a result of intimidation rather than law, a reflection of the shadowy, extra-legal, and exceptional nature of this restriction, where not even the social category of those to whom it applies is clear. Just how anomalous and prejudicial this prohibition must appear to Tibetans can be illustrated by one phenomenon: Newspapers and websites in inland China carry photographs of the Dalai Lama quite frequently (see for example, CCTV.com 2012; *Junshinews* 2011; *Huanqiu shibao* 2012). The ban seemingly applies only in Tibetan areas of China, or only to Tibetans.

The ban on the photographs rapidly evolved into a ban of even greater significance: the forbidding of any worship of the Dalai Lama, even by laypeople, let alone by monks. Prayers and rituals dedicated to him were no longer allowed in monasteries or in public after 1996, at least in the TAR. The subject of this ban was the entire populace, and, again, an order was never published and may not exist. Written orders

were posted by the Lhasa municipal government each year in early July from at least 2000 onwards that banned collective acts of worship of the Dalai Lama in or near the Tibetan capital during the week around his birthday, which falls on 6 July. This followed major celebrations of the birthday each year by thousands of Tibetans at a particular site near the Lhasa River in the early 1990s. The rationale for the ban was to "severely crack down on all illegal criminal activities that disrupt social stability, disturb public order or disrupt traffic order" (Tibet Information Network 2001) – in other words, it was conceived primarily as an order to prevent large crowds gathering on a particular occasion, and was thus probably seen by many citizens as an understandable, rational administrative decision, since its applicability was strictly limited in place and time, and its purpose and rationale were clear. But this was different from the undeclared ban on all forms of worship of the Dalai Lama at any time or place, most of which did not pose a threat to traffic. That broader restriction seems to have been imposed by innuendo, without any official declaration, even of a shadowy kind. These restrictions on the normal religious practice of those Tibetan Buddhists who follow the Dalai Lama, probably a majority of practitioners, were the most serious and most widely-felt of all the effects of the Third Forum on the Tibetan population as a whole, and they were implemented in ways that bypassed the usual procedures established by the state for the handling of religion.

Government Officials, Students and the Ban on Religious Activities

The fourth social category to become the subject of religious restrictions at this time consisted of government officials. In the Chinese context, the term corresponds to the word *ganbu* (干部), or *las byed pa* in Tibetan. It is officially translated as "cadre" but refers to any person employed directly by the government, irrespective of their level or type of work. Many of them would not be deemed officials in the Western context and should more properly be termed "government employees". It includes those who work as teachers, technicians, office cleaners and so on, most of whom still live in government accommodation. What degree of coercion can the state normally use with regard to this section of the population, and what procedures is it supposed to go through before doing so? In the PRC, government officials constitute a different social category from the lay public, living until recently separately from the masses, hav-

ing access to official documents and benefits, being paid according to different principles and sometimes entrusted with significant power over others. Within Tibet, only some 45 per cent of these cadres are party members, so party rules do not cover the majority, who are thus not required to be atheists. On the other hand, officials volunteer for their jobs and enjoy certain privileges as a result. So, not unlike members of other professions, they are liable to certain restrictions and regulations additional to those imposed on people in the non-state sector.

But the standing of government officials is disproportionately significant in Tibetan society because they constitute a large proportion of the urban elite, especially in towns or small cities like Lhasa. In 1997 the total number of these officials in the TAR was 52,311 (Barnett 1997: 30-32); at that time, the official population of Lhasa and Shigatse combined was only approximately 200,000. By 2008 the number of officials in the TAR had risen to 67,000, of whom about 70 per cent were Tibetans or another minority. About half of these were "administrative cadres", those involved in running offices of the government or the party; others worked in government enterprises, as technicians, teachers, caretakers, and so on. In the TAR, the officials almost certainly comprise a majority of the population that has received higher education.

The fifth and final category of social subject that was affected by the Third Forum restrictions on religion is the student body – youth and children engaged in education, either in schools or colleges. Strange though it might seem, they were subjected to the same restrictions by the Third Forum as government employees, and so are discussed together with them here. Many outsiders would not expect the student body to be considered as a separate legal category of citizen, since most societies treat minors as a different form of legal subject because of their age rather than their occupation. But the Third Forum passed measures to regulate the practice of religion by students irrespective of their age. Judging by the evidence, whether consciously or not, they were considered a distinct category of subject because of their occupation.

This could have been in part because they reside or work in premises owned and run by the state, much as officials reside and work in *danwei* (单位) or work units, and with both officials and students we find restrictions being implemented more aggressively when the subjects reside in official buildings or residences. But they also apply, if more weakly, when those subjects live outside government premises, as is increasingly the case. In the case of students, the restrictions could have

been imposed on the basis of Chinese laws, such as Article 36 of the Chinese Constitution, that forbid the interference of religion in the educational process. But the Third Forum restrictions appear to apply to the students not just in their schools or colleges, but also when they are at home or off their campus. They thus seem to be applicable to these groups because of their status, not because of their place of study or accommodation, or because of laws about education.

The restriction that was applied to these two groups following the Third Forum was a ban forbidding them from practicing religion. By induction it is clear it applied only to Tibetan Buddhists. The order, like the ban on photographs of the Dalai Lama, evolved from a simpler, more limited prescription: a prohibition of the display of any religious objects, such as a shrine, in their place of residence or dormitories. But it quickly was expanded to include a prohibition against going to monasteries or other religious sites, other than on official business. The ban also came to include religious actions such as circumambulation which take place neither in the residence nor in a monastery. These are the three most visible and frequent forms of Buddhist practice for laypeople in Tibetan societies.

For several years after 1994 (until 2000, when Chen Kuiyuan, the TAR party secretary, was replaced by a more moderate official), the ban applied to second- and third-degree relatives of a government official, at least in some work units, and also to those who had retired. It is rumoured that it was the inclusion of these relatives in the banning order that led the senior-most retired Tibetan leaders in Beijing to complain to the central authorities in Beijing about the ban; some sources claim that Dorje Tseten, a former chairman of the TAR, persuaded the central Chinese leadership to limit the ban to immediate family members, a request that, after Chen was replaced as the TAR party secretary in 2000, seems to have been fulfilled for a time. Reports about which kind of people were included in the ban, and how aggressively it was implemented, vary from work unit to unit, and from one time to another, but generally they all concur that such a restriction has been in place since 1994 or shortly after.

The ban on religious practice among government staff and students differs from the other restrictions arising from the Third Forum in that no public or written reference to it in any form is known, even in speeches by politicians or articles in local papers. It took some nine years to get verbal confirmation that the ban existed: In 2003, a senior official

at Tibet University told a group of foreign journalists in Lhasa that students there "will be kicked out if we catch you taking part in any organized religious activities" (McDonald 2003), a remark that apparently included off-campus activities such as pilgrimages (Yardley 2003). In 2010, the president of Tibet University told a *Reuters* journalist, when asked if his students were free to practice their religion, "This is a socialist college, so what need do the students have of temples?" (Blanchard 2010), indicating that the ban remained in force. Finally, in 2012, a written document was published confirming in part the existence of the restriction.

As with the ban on worship of the Dalai Lama, the public order related to a single expected public instance of religious practice, but hinted at wider implications. In this case, the banned practice was the circumambulation of the centre of the old city and the Potala Palace during the Sagadawa festival in Lhasa, which lasts throughout the fourth lunar month of the Tibetan calendar. Public orders were issued each year from the mid-1990s banning government officials from participation in this festival. But the annual order of 2012 was more expansive. Although the text was entirely devoted to eliminating lapses in "political keenness" and "anti-splittist" zeal among officials, its key substantive statement was much broader: "Party members, state employees and students, all of them, are not allowed to participate in religious activities such as Sagadawa and so forth" (*gung khran tang yon dang/ rgyal khab kyi gzhung zhabs mi sna/ slob ma bcas tshang ma sa ga zla ba sogs kyi chos phyogs byed sgo'i nang zhugs mi chog/* – The TAR Discipline Committee and the TAR Supervision Department 2012).

It thus included students as well as officials, and indicated that the prohibition covered religious activities in general, not just those during the Sagadawa festival. This appears to be the only written admission of the existence of the ban on religious practice among Tibetan officials and students.

When I was teaching or studying at Tibet University for various periods between 2000 and 2006, the impact of the ban was clear, even though – because of the risks to informants – it would have been unethical to have asked Tibetans openly about this issue. But it was nevertheless clear that none of my Tibetan colleagues or students was allowed to visit a monastery, have a shrine in their room, or practice religion in any visible way. The staff and employees there, irrespective of their level, whether or not they were party members, faced the same restrictions. The same situation has been described by other foreigners who were in

contact with government employees and students there, notably the leading researcher Emily Yeh (2008: 70), who studied at Tibet University in the late 1990s, as well as by a foreign journalist who visited some five years later (Johnson 2004).

It is not known for certain if the ban applies to students in all schools in Tibet as well as to colleges, or if it really applies to all forms of outward religious practice, as is widely rumoured to be the case. It is certainly possible: Such a ban applies openly in Xinjiang schools and colleges (HRW and HRIC 2005: 19–21), where Article 14 of the "Xinjiang Implementation Measures of the Law on the Protection of Minors" states that "parents and legal guardians may not allow minors to participate in religious activities" (XUAR People's Congress 1993), and some mosques display signs prohibiting the entry of anyone under 18 years of age (HRW and HRIC 2005: 19). Extensive restrictions are also placed on religious practice there among government staff, including teachers, and these are stated in official directives and manuals (HRW and HRIC 2005: 19–21). The publication of such orders in Xinjiang may be because the security situation there, in terms of physical threat, is much more acute than in Tibet, so officials feel confident that they can justify such moves by invoking the threat of terrorism and armed attacks (Millward 2004).

In the Tibet case, the banning order may not exist in written form even in internal party documents. As far as I can tell, it was conveyed by word of mouth to party leaders in each government unit or institution, who then conveyed them to their party members and then to their non-party staff. This unusual degree of secrecy may be because a ban on normal religious activities among laypeople is technically illegal, since the Chinese constitution guarantees all citizens the freedom of "normal religious belief" and any officials who "illegally deprive citizens' right[s] to religious beliefs" or who "encroach on minority nationalities' customs or habits" are liable to prosecution, according to Article 251 of the Revised PRC Criminal Code of 1997. Buddhism is a permitted religion in China, and having shrines, carrying out circumambulations, going on pilgrimages and visiting temples are ruled to be normal for laypeople, and so, according to current Chinese law, they must be legal for all citizens. Exceptions can be argued in specific instances that threaten public order or state security, as appears to have been the case in Xinjiang generally and in Lhasa for the week around the birthday of the Dalai Lama and the month of Sagadawa. The argument that the Dalai Lama, and photographs of him, are a threat to the security of the state, because of his

disguised objectives, is also presented as a specific exception to the general policy on religion. But this argument cannot apply to the ban on all religious practice by Tibetan officials and students, since Tibetan Buddhist practice cannot in itself be deemed a threat to the security of the state or to social progress without a major change to the basic principles of religious policy in China.

A more likely reason for the reticence about admitting to the ban may be because it is discriminatory: It seems not to have been imposed on non-Tibetans. The few ethnic Chinese students whom I happened to know at Tibet University said there was no ban on their religious practice, but, as far as I could tell, the ban did apply to all Tibetan students. The concept of ethnic equality is strictly followed in the Chinese Constitution and official rhetoric, and not even an internal document would be likely to single out Tibetans for restrictions because of their ethnicity or religion. The only Chinese student whom I knew well told me there were no restrictions on her religious activity, even though she was a college student, so the ban seems only to have been applied to Tibetans who were Buddhist devotees. That included most of those whom I came to know, including many Tibetan officials, among them several who had relatively senior rank, were in the police force, or were in charge of enforcing the ban on others.

Because the Tibetan version of the ban is undocumented and, unlike the equivalent ban in Xinjiang, not sourced to any authority, there is no established form of punishment for breaches of it. It would be difficult for them to be dealt with by the police or the criminal justice system, since there is no law or order for them to act on. Tibetans assume that non-criminal penalties await officials who are found to have visited monasteries or kept shrines, such as an end to their promotion prospects or cancellation of their pensions. As we have seen, students are threatened with expulsion if they are found to be religiously active. No reports have appeared about such sanctions or punishments resulting from breaches of the ban; outside major institutions, it is enforced erratically and may even be ignored by local party secretaries in rural or remote areas. Nevertheless, the unwritten prohibition on religious practice among officials, their families and students appears to be still in place in Lhasa at the time of writing. Unlike the other restrictions resulting from the Third Forum, this restriction remains unexplained: No official statement has appeared providing a rationale for its imposition.

The Absence of Explanation and Reconstructed Metaphor

This analysis throws into the foreground three elements of the mid-1990s religious restrictions in Tibet that did not accord with the standard models in the PRC for social management and control. These were the restrictions on pictures of the Dalai Lama, the unstated ban on worship of him by the entire community, and the ban on religious practice by government officials, their families and students. The coercive methods used by the party in the patriotic education drive may also be considered anomalous in these terms.

The first and last of these restrictions, however unorthodox their manner of implementation, were not imposed without explanation. The party and the government went to great lengths to argue either that society is damaged by some forms of religion or, after 1994, that the Dalai Lama should be seen as an enemy of the state, and that therefore Buddhism had to be changed. This was the underlying meaning of "adapting religion to socialism" – as Chen put it, "because of their religious belief, many people are following the Dalai Lama in splitting the motherland and doing what is endangering socialism" (Chen 1996). All these explanations and the restrictions they justify followed from the single statement in the Third Forum decisions that re-defined the Dalai Lama as an anti-China force, and all policy on religion regarding Tibet since 1994 has flowed from that premise.

There is, however, one exception: the ban on religious practice among government employees and students has no necessary connection to the Dalai Lama. It applies to Tibetan Buddhists who may be followers of another school of Buddhism besides that of the Dalai Lama, and who may not be supporters of his exile government either. So the standard rationale cannot explain it. From a social science point of view, the most unusual feature of the ban is the absence of any attempt to explain it. Officials and official scholars in China have been silent about it, and the closest that we have seen to an explanation of the policy remains Little Ceren's bullying of his grandmother, with its appeal to rational modernity and the legal right to disbelieve. But this cannot explain an outright prohibition on religion for schoolchildren or officials. The ban is therefore an anomaly amongst anomalies.

The imposition of a highly invasive restriction by the state on the private lives of officials and students without any explanatory device is

an important discursive moment in modern Tibetan affairs, perhaps even in modern Chinese affairs as well. It suggests a vortex of confusion, unsettled notions, conflicting strategies, and acute concerns among the Chinese policymakers who deal with such areas as Tibet. These revolve around the logic of the two sentences in the government *White Paper* quoted at the head of this article:

> How to correctly handle the ethnic and religious problems is a long-standing issue of great importance in Tibet's modernization drive. The 50-year development of Tibet shows that accelerating modernization is where the basic interests of the people in Tibet lie.

These "religious problems" are not described; it is assumed that they exist and that modernization is the solution to them. That twin logic, which probably seemed natural to the writers of the *White Paper* and their leaders, is shaped by an assumption that both secularity and anti-separatism – adhesion to the nation-state – are an inevitable outcome of modernization. The same logic appears to underlie the ban on religious practice among students and officials. They constitute a significant proportion of the political and social elite in Tibet, and have or will have roles in implementing governmental policy there. Otherwise, those not subject to a general ban on religious practice are the opposite of the elite: the rural farmers, peasants, and nomads; traders, shop workers and private sector employees; and the unemployed and the marginal. These groups are the least educated and the least likely to have influence in the political or social process; it is the members of these groups that can still carry out Buddhist practices apart from worship of the Dalai Lama. We cannot explain the additional restriction imposed on the educated Tibetan elite by the appeal to state security, for that would lead only to a ban on worship of the Dalai Lama. We can infer that the ban on all visible forms of religious practice by officials and students is based on an assumption that the modern Tibetan elite should be atheists.

The Social-Religious Zoning of Modern Urban Space

A second piece of evidence also suggests that behind such measures is a conception of an elite that fuses secular modernity with the survival of the nation-state. This concerns another undeclared restriction that exists in Lhasa, one that has only gradually become apparent, that has never been documented, and that is much more unexpected: Tibetan monks and nuns are banned from setting foot within the campus of Tibet Uni-

versity, except in special cases. Reportedly, they are similarly banned from entering all or most official compounds. This regulation came to light only in 2004 when I was summoned one day by a senior official at Tibet University, who upbraided me because one of my American students had invited a Tibetan nun for tea in the foreign students' dormitory.

As far as I knew, no foreigner had ever reported the existence of such a rule before; foreigners, including journalists, apparently do not think to ask why there are no monks or nuns on the university campus or in official compounds in Lhasa, because the absence of clergy is normal in their own societies, for reasons that are not to do with any regulations. When I pressed the official for an explanation of the ban, she told me that it was necessary because "monks and nuns have old brains", which meant that some of them "are splittists" and therefore might influence others, such as the students. This was the rationale provided for the ban: "Old thinking" was equated with "threat to state security". Later, other Tibetans in Lhasa confirmed the existence of this rule. Tibetans had come to think of the restricting of religious professionals from the university and official premises as so natural as not to be worth mentioning: They had internalized the discourse of exclusion.

Within the larger Chinese system, certain social groups are sometimes described as threats to the society or the state – in 2011, for example, migrants, unemployed graduates, and NGO activists were among nine categories of people listed as potential threats to social stability. But it is unusual to prevent an entire profession from having the same rights as other citizens to enter certain areas of public or semi-public space, and probably a scholar or jurist in Beijing would be surprised to find such a regulation in place in contemporary China.

In the Chinese media, Tibetan monks have increasingly been presented as physically dangerous and prone to violence, especially since the murderous Lhasa riot of 14 March 2008, although in fact monks played little part in that. The ban could have been a response to the role of monks and nuns in street protests in Lhasa after 1987 (though all except three of those had occurred without violence), but those had finished in Lhasa by 1996 and did not resume until 2008. And if they had been the reason for the ban, it would have applied to many other public spaces as well.

It seems more likely that the rationale for the ban lies with the location from which they are excluded – the government compounds where

the new elite of Tibetan officials and students work, live and are trained. These are the same people who are banned from religious practice; the ban protects them from meeting the full-time practitioners of that religion, those literal embodiments of an alien ideology regarded, at least in the minds of some officials, it would seem, as antithetical to modernity and to state security. Yet what exactly is dangerous about the physical presence of a religious professional in a government compound?

An answer may lie in the importance of location in Chinese legal thinking about religion – a presumption in post-liberalization China, and perhaps earlier, that religion belongs in certain places. This is clear from its laws regarding religion: The word "venue" appears 29 times in the 1991 TAR Measures on Religious Affairs, and 75 times in the revised version issued in 2006. Religion is generally only legal within "religious venues", which have to be registered with the government (no new ones have been allowed in Tibet since the Third Forum). The 1991 measures never refer to or explicitly permit any religious activity to take place outside a monastery or temple; the revised version allows only "simple religious ceremonies at open-air burials or in religious citizens' homes" (Article 31), and threatens to disqualify any monk or nun who conducts any other religious activity "outside of a venue for religious activities" without permission (Article 52). Any religious structure such as a statue or reliquary built without permission outside an authorized venue has to be demolished (Article 48).

Similar attention is paid to movement by a religious person away from his or her assigned place. The 1991 measures forbade Tibetan monks and nuns from travelling beyond their province without permission, while the 2006 version limited them to their county unless permission to travel had been received from the government. Society benefits, this suggests, if monks and nuns remain in designated locations, as if their retrogressive thinking is tolerated provided that they remain largely within the bounds of such spaces.

Official conceptions of tolerance in Tibet and similar areas thus might not follow the standard liberal imagining of freedom, famously imagined as an all-pervasive force, like oxygen; in such a view, physical exclusion of a person from a public space because of their beliefs would be seen as a violation of a core principle. By contrast, in Tibet or China an embedded notion may have arisen which conceives of tolerance in very different spatial terms – as a sort of layered community, in which some minority or backward forms are allowed and even nourished, but

at the same time encouraged to remain in specific locations, or assumed to belong to those locations. The concept is reflected in "A Fiction", a short story by Ma Yuan, the leading Chinese experimental writer of the 1980s, which depicted Tibetan society as a leper colony, existing in a parallel and more or less incomprehensible world (Ma 2001).

Within Tibetan towns like Lhasa, we can imagine that some residents and officials may thus see themselves as a redoubt of modernity against the open spaces of the untamed and pre-modern, largely rural Tibetan past and its cultural legacy. A conception of spatial differentiation seems to have emerged which tolerates retrograde practices such as religious belief, especially those that are visibly marked as such, from the vantage point of the conciliatory, gradualist strategy inherent to the primary stage of socialism, but which at the same time prefers them to be outside those sites of ideological intensity dedicated to the hothouse production of "rapid development" and modernity. It suggests that an internalized model of Lhasa has been germinated in which urban space is zoned according to its suitability for non-modern elements: The central square of the city, which includes the pilgrimage sites of the Jokhang and the Potala, as well as most of the Tibetan shops and suppliers, is an area where rural people and monks are free to wander, and where the push for modern standards is relaxed in the interests of diversity and the enjoyment of cultural difference; the Western area of the city, with its upmarket stores and shopping malls, is self-regulating because its facilities are expensive enough that it attracts mainly modern, advanced people and not the rural or the visibly religious; the official compounds and educational institutions, where the new society is designed and run, are deemed unsuitable for full-blown traditional people and require a certain amount of policing in order to exclude them.

In essence, this is roughly how all cities operate, except that they use largely unstated levers, such as the gated community, to regulate unwanted social presence, thus allowing the oxygen model of tolerance and freedom to remain unchallenged. But it is unusual for notions of ideologically-based spatial exclusion to be forcibly imposed by regulation, let alone when the determinant is religious vocation.

The Body Politic and Disease

From the perspective of many Tibetans, monks and nuns are or were among the most educated and respected members of the community – at least in the recent past – so social and economic levers alone are not

effective there as devices for excluding them from elite society and educational institutions. This may be why there is an explicit if undeclared ban restricting their circulation within social space. But it still remains unclear why the Chinese model in Tibet requires physical exclusion of un-modern, religious elements from elite locations. It seems unlikely that officials are acting on the fear that a single monk or nun could have serious influence on officials or students just by occasionally conversing with them, even though that is the explanation I was given at the university.

Like most rationales for exclusion, a more likely model is not one based on a fear of dangerous conversations, but one reflecting a general theory of intellectual contagion – the assumption that retrograde thought functions like a virus or disease, spreading through casual contact, whether sustained or brief, much as in Ma Yuan's short story. The language of reform and revolution in China's modern history is suffused with references to the binary of disease and health, as Rogaski showed in her study of *weisheng* (卫生, hygiene) in pre-revolutionary China (Rogaski 2004; Lei 2009). A similar preoccupation dominated the thinking of many of the outsiders who forced their way into Tibet in order to free it from its backward past, long before the CCP arrived. The journalists who accompanied the British invasion forces to Lhasa in 1903 and 1904, like earlier Western travellers, sent numerous reports back to London about the foulness of the place, the pigs that wallowed in the streets among "rubbish heaps more than usually repulsive in their compositions" (Landon 1905: 202), and the foetid puddles that made it impossible for British fusiliers to march in step through the city streets (Barnett 2003b). Younghusband, the commander of the British expedition, wrote of the monasteries in Tibet that "the general impression I took away was one of dirt and degradation" (Younghusband 1971: 310).

Communists of various nationalities came to Tibet with the same view: Anna Louise Strong, an American leftist invited by the Beijing government to visit Lhasa in 1959, described Tibetan temples and monks in terms of smell: "Tibet's Holy of Holies seemed just a bit filthier than anything I had yet seen [and] the Chief Lama […] smelled badly from two feet away" (Strong 1960: 124). The British journalist Stuart Gelder complained after his official visit to Lhasa in 1962 that "the stink of butter and the unwashed holiness of temples and lamas […] had soaked into my flesh" (Gelder and Gelder 1964: 145). Chinese political activists in Tibet used similar terms, with the official news agency de-

scribing the first team of Red Guards from inland China to arrive in Lhasa to initiate the violent purges of Cultural Revolution in 1966 as a hygiene project:

> The storm of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is sweeping out the sludge and filthy water of the old world, from which a new Lhasa is emerging resplendent with the thought of Mao Tse-tung (*Xinhua* 1968).

Similar language about health can be seen in Chen Kuiyuan's discussion of Tibetan tradition in the 1990s:

> In dealing with traditional national cultures and their characteristics, we should act according to Comrade Mao Zedong's consistent teaching: We should adopt the attitude of "developing what is useful or healthy and discarding what is not". In other words, we should […] continue to create something new (Chen 1997).

The trope of poison and disease is also found in Chen Kuiyuan's May 1996 speech to party cadres that launched the patriotic education drive, applied in this case directly to religion: "When religion is used by certain people as a political tool, its toxicity will become even more conspicuous." The same motif is found in Pei Fulin's television sketch of 1997: Because of her grandmother's religiosity and traditionalism, the young girl has been physically wounded and can no longer walk. The image is similar to that in the story of Little Ceren, where the grandmother's religious beliefs are equated by the schoolteacher with the physical disabilities of the modernist heroine, Zhang Haidi.

In these stories, where the lay religious beliefs of the elderly are depicted as a physical wound inflicted on the young, religious professionals themselves are not seen as the wound. Rather, they seem to be pictured as the cause of bodily impairment, a cause that is typically found in bodies or places that are old and decayed, in forms that look benign on the exterior but whose true nature is invisible, that can travel constantly around, and that is transferrable through contact. In other words, the pernicious influence of monks and nuns is seen much as if it were a disease or virus.

If this is the underlying model, it implies a corresponding conception of the host society as a body prone to infection. Normally speaking, a society does not need regulation to enforce its isolation; it is robust enough to handle threats of disease with its own resources. If regulation is required to protect elite society in Tibet from such contagion, this

must in turn mean that within the body of Tibetan society, its most progressive and important areas are considered unusually vulnerable to infection, as if lacking antibodies or resistance. The specific locations of these vulnerabilities thus require intensive care, with hygienic isolation and management. In other words, it is as if those zones of the city which are seen as the generators of the new elite – the official compounds and the educational institutions – are envisaged as germ-free laboratories where the risk of infection should be kept at a minimum, so that the work of turning young vulnerable Tibetan bodies into modern selves can continue, in the project of "propelling the modernization of Tibet's traditional industries and culture" (State Council Information Office 2001).

The undeclared and naturalized restrictions of the Third Forum era thus point to an unconscious metaphor that made such polices and ideas seem coherent – in this case, perhaps the conception of Tibetan society as an alien and weakened body. The process of returning this body to a state of health entails, it seems, considering it to have two types of components, each requiring different forms of treatment. One type consists of its key organs, equivalent to its heart and brain, and is constituted by the government officials and the students, which we might call the "advanced core-group". They are given modern rational and scientific knowledge, put to work in government institutions, made relatively prosperous, and pushed or required to be secular. They live, train and work alongside already robust elements introduced from the healthy body of inland China and the party, and are increasingly exposed to strengthening forces like globalization, consumerism and science. If such a metaphor is driving these ideas, then this core-group might well be assumed to be at a vulnerable stage of growth and as needing to be protected from contact with outside sources of infection, such as the forces of tradition and reaction, if it is to survive.

The bulk of the social body does not need the same degree of care as the key organs. This "base-group", a coalition of peasants, nomads and less educated people at a lower level in the non-state economy, is unlikely to deviate from long-established habits or to follow suggestions from an outside body. It will remain for some time essentially impervious to medical treatment or retraining. But it is susceptible, at least temporarily, to the soothing nature of wealth and material comfort provided from outside. It cannot be completely isolated or separated from the principal sources of infection, but those can be tightly regulated, encour-

aged to remain in specific spaces and made to function within certain limits to prevent them reaching the sensitive organs at the core.

In this hypothetical reconstruction of social hygiene for the Other, we can envisage an underlying model resembling that of transplant surgery, with the newly inserted organs seen as particularly vulnerable to infection in the race to guide them to robust health, the condition of modernity. Whatever its exact features, the transplant surgery hypothesis aligns closely with the highly differentiated logic according to which distinct restrictions on religion resulting from the Third Forum were designed, subject-groups identified, modes of implementation deployed, and explanations given or concealed.

Conclusion: The Lessons of Anomalies

At least four of the most important restrictions on religious activity introduced into Tibet in the mid-1990s did not conform to the norms used to naturalize the state's exercise of its authority in contemporary China, did not apply to ethnic Chinese citizens, and were not explained. Even the existence of three of these restrictions – the ban on worship of the Dalai Lama among the general public, that on religion among students and officials, and the spatial zoning of monks and nuns – has not been acknowledged by the state, as far as is known, perhaps because these orders could be seen as illegal in inland China or because they are seen as natural consequences of other public measures. In these cases, the two standard arguments used to explain restrictive policies – defending the state from threats to its integrity and protecting society from harmful influence – were for some reason deemed insufficient, so these restrictions have not been explained or justified in public.

Modernization in Tibet, these anomalies seem to suggest, may be historically inevitable, but it is a process so urgent and so essential to survival that radical shortcuts are needed to protect it. More precisely, it seems that the United Front and its superiors felt there was no time or need to explain to the bulk of party members or the Chinese public why exceptional and contradictory measures were required with regard to Buddhism in Tibet, even though they did so with regard to restrictions imposed on Islamic practice in Xinjiang, where the discourse of terrorism could be readily invoked. Almost certainly the measures chosen in Tibet seemed self-explanatory to officials because Tibetan society was seen, with its "adverse natural conditions, backward social and economic

basis and complicated background", as being at a more primitive stage than other areas of China. If policymakers in Tibet imagined society there as a body, and their offices, institutions and officials as its vital organs, these body parts were seen as weaker than their counterparts elsewhere in China and more prone to hostile attack from the bacilli of local tradition and religiosity.

The history of religious policy in Tibet at the turn of the millennium thus suggests a significant shift in the internal logic under which officials operated. Using a formula reminiscent of the 1950s concept of antagonistic contradiction, the religious role of the Dalai Lama was reclassified as a security threat, as part of an effort to separate him from Tibetan Buddhism, a breathtakingly ambitious project. At the same time, the monks and nuns within Tibet started to be viewed as subjects of the discourse of security rather than development. The Tibetan public, although viewed as non-antagonistic, was subjected to an undeclared ban on what was for many their principal form of worship, presumably because it, too, was seen as a security threat, though this was never stated. In addition, the new Tibetan educated elite was ordered to abandon Buddhist practice entirely, again for unstated reasons, even while the same religious practice was tolerated and even encouraged in Beijing and elsewhere in China. At the most critical junctures of policymaking, those that consist of the imposition of coercive measures on particular sectors of society, officials in Beijing and Lhasa thus found themselves engaged in unorthodox procedures that involved undeclared or unexplained practices of exclusion and denial.

Among foreign visitors, policy analysts and human rights experts, these anomalous restrictions have generally been overlooked or subsumed within a sometimes strident mode of generalized accusations about rights, abuses, and state oppression. But these exceptional policies require forms of attention and discussion that are different from debates over the details of normative state regulation. Those regulations, with their explanatory apparatus, their careful processing through state agencies and processes, their specific targeting of one or other social group, and their conscientious enunciation of a rationale, however crude and implausible, are probably of relatively little concern to most Tibetans: Everyone expects powerful states to regulate institutions, professional bodies and privileged social groups, to manage crowds on special occasions, and to deter or restrict political opponents. Whether such interventions are controversial is usually a question of degree rather than of

kind. It is the restrictions that cannot be explained by such needs or priorities that are likely to have been key drivers in the exacerbation of state–society relations among Tibetans throughout China in the decades following the Third Forum.

The introduction of accelerated modernization as the principal driver of China's policy for Tibet, so emphatically articulated in the *White Paper* of 2001, thus included major contradictions in the state's dealings with Tibetan cultural practices and beliefs. Coupled with the escalation of unrest in Tibetan areas since 2008, it can be seen in terms of Scott's argument that authoritarian, high-modernist projects are inherently liable to fail if they cannot encompass local knowledge: "Any formula that excludes or suppresses the experience, knowledge, and adaptability of *mētis* risks incoherence and failure," as he put it, using a Greek term for knowledge that comes from practical experience (Scott 1998: 319). The model of modernization in Tibet that emerged at the time of the Third Forum involved a rigid conceptualization of political issues and their cultural bases, and, perhaps literally, a pathological aversion to certain local forms of understanding and belief. The development project in Tibet thus fuelled intense antagonism and reaction within the body politic, generating tensions and contradictions within itself that have contributed to further conflict.

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