

and culture. The problem is that, as Chinese citizens, many Tibetans are faced with what they perceive to be competing claims on their loyalties. Some choose to adhere publicly to the official culture while masking their true sentiments, while others may see the only feasible alternative to be resistance.

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The Struggle for Modern Tibet: The Autobiography of Tashi Tsering. By MELVYN GOLDSTEIN, WILLIAM SIEBENSCHUH, and TASHI TSERING. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1997. xi, 207 pp. \$27.95.

In May 1952, a six-point petition was circulated in Lhasa, claiming to represent “the general voice of the Tibetan people, lay and clerical.” Covering several points, the petition in part voiced discontent with the economic disruptions and hardships that the influx of Chinese troops had created in Tibet. The document caused a tumult in Lhasa and when it reached India its text was published in the newspaper *Yul-phyogs so-so'i gсар-'gyur me-long* on October 1. As a result of all this, the Chinese authorities in Lhasa forced the dismissals of two of the young Dalai Lama's ministers. For some time the affair remained the subject of much talk and speculation in Lhasa.

I bring up this incident at the outset for the simple reason that it gets no mention in Tashi Tsering's autobiography, under review here. Tashi Tsering was in Lhasa and seemingly quite aware of the political currents at the time. Moreover, in the introduction to this book Melvyn Goldstein, his amanuensis, tells how he refused to help Tashi Tsering write a “Pollyanna” book (his term) about Tibet, a point on which both were in agreement. The implication thus is that only books which paint monochromatically positive images about life in pre-PRC Tibet, downplaying its negative aspects, are Pollyanna-like in their outlook. But since the issue of comparative objectivity is raised at the start, it must be noted that Tashi Tsering, who does bring up negative aspects of pre-1950s Tibetan society that many people might prefer to ignore, is at times clearly selective in what he chooses to discuss, and here and there seems to be disingenuous in recalling his attitudes during times gone by (of the Chinese troops in Lhasa in 1952 he notices only their efficiency and self-sufficiency and says—not with much originality—that “they would not even take a needle from the people [p. 40]”). And yet he does indeed have an engaging story to tell, one that makes for a most interesting book, and provides the point of view of a Tibetan who is today attempting to improve conditions in Tibet in cooperation with the powers that be.

Tashi Tsering was born in Tibet in 1929 and experienced life in pre-Communist Tibet, in exile, in China during the Cultural Revolution, and then in Tibet in the decades since. In his youth he was a member of the Dalai Lama's personal dance troupe. In that capacity the mistreatment he received makes for a titillating description on the book jacket (“sex-toy, for a well-connected monk”). Nevertheless it cannot be denied that Tashi Tsering's experiences allow a glimpse into a part of the Tibetan world never before presented in writing. The author is a resourceful person and by the late 1950s had managed to secure the funds that allowed him to travel to India to study. Residing outside of Tibet at the time of the Tibetan Uprising in 1959, he was soon working closely with the exiled Tibetan resistance leaders, particularly Gyalo Thondrup (= Rgyal-lo don-grub), who was intimately involved in securing

U.S. support for resistance activities. After being sent to the U.S. for further studies he astounded those who knew him by returning to the PRC in 1964. More Pangloss than Pollyanna, Tashi Tsering was clearly hoping for the best. But upon arriving in China he became an object of intense suspicion, and was allowed only a few months in 1966–67 for a short visit to Lhasa (where incredulous friends asked how he could have given up life in the U.S. to return). Then, in October 1967, he was arrested and held as a prisoner until 1973. The story of his painful and humiliating imprisonment, bluntly recounted, does grab the reader. For Tashi Tsering the real turning point, after his release, came with the beginnings of liberalization in China in the late 1970s. His fluency in English was a big plus in these changed circumstances and he was ultimately appointed to Tibet University. Among other things, Tashi Tsering was instrumental in laying the foundations for the teaching of English in Tibet. More importantly to him, he has provided the financing and the inspiration for the founding of rural schools in his home area. It is this work which now commands most of his attention.

The details of Tashi Tsering's personal life also make for interesting reading, particularly his relations with his wives and the circumstances of his marriages—not to mention the details of his earlier, youthful family life. What is curious is the near total absence of references to the nationalist activity in Tibet (especially in Lhasa) that has been part of the Tibetan landscape since the late 1980s, and which has markedly colored international perceptions of the state of affairs in Tibet. The only mention is in one sentence: "In addition, the political situation heated up as a series of violent riots occurred in Lhasa in 1987 and 1988" (p. 191). This in a book whose very title speaks of a struggle for modern Tibet! One could well argue that Tashi Tsering's continued residence in Lhasa naturally mandates extreme discretion in the discussion of such matters. But in granting such leeway one ought to at least recognize that the term "Pollyanna" can be applied all across the political spectrum.

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The Secret History of the Mongols. The Origin of Chingis Khan. (Expanded Edition). An Adaptation of the Yüan Ch'ao Pi Shih, Based Primarily on the English Translation by Francis Woodman Cleaves. By PAUL KAHN. Boston: Cheng and Tsui Company, 1998. xxiv, 201 pp. \$19.95 (paper).

The Secret History (Mongqolun ni'uča tobča'an), the largest and most significant original Mongol work of the thirteenth century, is a historical narrative, a conglomerate of various epic and lyric genres written in prose and verse with passion and bias. The transmission of its Middle Mongolian text itself is an eventful story; the exact date of the work, its original title, form, and authorship are still debated. The genres embedded in the mainstream narrative of Chinggis Khan's ancestry and his and his heir Emperor Ögödei's deeds are genealogy, anecdotes, myths, epic fragments, dialogues, songs (eulogies, battle song, lament, etc.), malediction, vassals' oaths of loyalty, versified messages, proverbs, army regulations, catalogues of ranks and privileges bestowed, etc. This second, expanded, avatar of the *Secret History* by Paul Kahn benefited from recent information. As in the first edition (1984) here, too, the foundation is F. W. Cleaves's philological translation (ready in the 1950s but published in 1982) which were rendered in the English of the King James Bible. Paul