

Appendix 1: Extracts from Interviews

Names and identifying details of the interviewees and the interview locations have been withheld at their request. The interviews were all conducted by Human Rights Watch researchers.

1. Interview with Lhasa Resident A (Former Part-Time Teacher)

Part 1: October 2015

Language at the schools includes Tibetan – but no longer as a medium. These days I would say every Tibetan is very sensitive about new language policies, they are paying a lot of attention to this. Language is a big concern – the fact that Tibetan is becoming a minority language. Even for those who are not so strongly interested in that, they will think the policy is getting worse for Tibetans, and that too many Chinese are coming in. Also, relations of Chinese and Tibetan colleagues in work units have got much worse. Before 2008 everyone tended to live in the same place, and hang out together, for a picnic or wedding, or going to a karaoke bar and so forth. But since then, that has changed. Now they don't mingle together, unless it is for work.

There are a lot of young Chinese working in a government office, more than young Tibetans in that office. There are some *gongyuan* positions not open to TAR residents (for example, now there are some positions at Tibet University for Tibetan language and literature that you can only apply for if you are from outside the TAR, such as from Sichuan or Qinghai, and local Tibetans cannot. So Amdo scholars are coming there in greater numbers, there's quite a lot of tension there, they are seen as more rude and ambitious). So, there is some tension about this. And they get 45 days holiday in their first year, and transfer costs and so on each year.

They [the authorities] are not supporting Tibetan language anymore, that is very obvious. They are opening lots of kindergartens where the language medium is required to be Chinese, if it is government owned (there are very few private ones [where this requirement doesn't apply], and those are often very small or part-time). There will be a Tibetan language class, of course. But mathematics and so on will be in Chinese. There are only

three subjects, Tibetan, Chinese, and maths. The last two will be taught in Chinese. This is very new, the past couple of years.

The private kindergartens still have to follow the government rules, though there are some that are not properly registered, they might function for just a couple of hours a day, they would be exceptions. But for example, “X’s” private kindergarten, which is registered and has a full-time program, is promoted as trilingual, with teaching in Tibetan, Chinese, and English. It is not government owned. But [I know] that most teachers there except in the Tibetan class are using Chinese, even in his school.

“X” gave a talk to parents and teachers, [about] how to keep using the mother-tongue in the home instead of mixing it with Chinese – so the talk was done without using Chinese terms, but just showing that complex issues as well as personal ones can be talked about easily just by using Tibetan on its own – because the parents of the children in the school are not doing that, they have lost that habit, they don't realize it's possible, and they even complain sometimes that they want to learn more Chinese, it's not enough.

In the event, the parents were so happy that someone gave a speech just in Tibetan. They probably speak Tibetan at home, but heavily mixed with Chinese, and they don't expect Tibetan to be used at the school. These are mainly local residents, we're not talking about wealthier people, where we might expect this. This kind of thinking has spread everywhere. So, the children would only understand Tibetan until they got to the kindergarten; then they'd start to think Chinese is more important.

In primary school, the Tibetan teachers are very united and have a strong urgency to teach Tibetan, but the biggest problem is that they lack method and materials, and a lot of the kids in a way don't like Tibetan because they think it will be quite useless, it's only a small percentage of the overall score in exams, and the teaching methods are outdated. The Tibetan language teachers are very worried about the grades their pupils will get and that the kids cannot speak Tibetan, and so they put a lot of pressure them, and are often quite mean to them, and use old methods. They feel they are the ones who have to save [the language] but don't think about the methods. They are trained in that way; it is very difficult to change. Even if they are trained in new methods, they will go back and say that these new methods only work in an ideal situation, they wouldn't work for our kids. They

work very hard, they feel the urgency, and have a strong nationality feeling about Tibetan language and culture, they worry a lot.

There are several different informal friends' groups made by teachers from different schools, they are very united, they have their own little gatherings, and they take some of this material very seriously. They give really detailed feedback if you send even a simple story in Tibetan for them to use for teaching. On WeChat they will discuss in Tibetan. In Tibetan class they are very strict about only using Tibetan, they make their own rules like that. So, they are very dedicated and concerned.

In the rest of the school program, it depends on the social level of the children and their families, and their locations – if they are lower income, the children will mainly use Tibetan to talk to each other. In the other classes besides Tibetan they will use Chinese as the medium. So, the primary schools are no longer Tibetan medium, it changed a while ago. Maybe more than ten years ago. It happened gradually – first they did like the two languages together as a model, or pilot, but then it shifted.

When I was in school in the early 1980s, it was a Tibetan medium, when my husband was teaching, there was a bilingual model, a pure Tibetan-medium model, during the Panchen Lama's time, but by the 2000s the medium was Chinese, There are still some projects going on in rural areas for Tibetan medium in minority areas. It also depends on different areas....

Yes, “education villages” – *jiaoyucun* – are being set up. These are boarding schools, sometimes primary and almost always middle schools. There are *xianxiao* or county primary schools now, and they will have the kids with most confidence in Chinese. But some, especially *xiang* schools, will have terrible conditions and be a long way from home, so it's not easy for the children to go home. The new education "village" or compound in Lhasa, near Tselgungthang [about half a mile from Lhasa, to the southwest on the south side of the river], is a kind of showcase. Yes, once it opens and the schools are all moved from the city to the new compound, children will only get to go home every two weeks usually. They'll be boarders from Lhasa boarding within Lhasa, basically.

Part 2: May 18, 2017

From our village, it's just outside Lhasa, in [name withheld] county, they go for middle school and high school to a place near Lhasa, they board there. It would take about an hour to drive there. There is a primary school in [name withheld] township, it's about a 20-minute drive. They don't walk there anymore, not with all the traffic nowadays. It's the township, the pre-school there is combined for several villages. That's where they teach Chinese language, in that kindergarten. The kids from there can speak such fluent Chinese. For their grandparents, it's really worrisome, but for their parents, many of whom I taught, they were drop-outs from school, they are very lost. Their grandparents are a bit older than my parents, their parents are illiterate, and are looked down upon, they didn't receive a good standard education like the city kids get. But their kids are not willing any more to work on the farm.

These students who have stayed in school for a few years imagine that they are going to get a government job in the end, they won't have to work on the land, and they look down on their parents. They're close to the city and they lose their identity. And when they get to exam for middle school, then 90 percent of them fail and that's the end of it. They go to work on construction sites, or do anything, nothing. They might lose contact with the family back in the village....

[Older] people always complain about the lack of Tibetan, the fact that their grandkids cannot speak proper Tibetan at home. And the kids feel more themselves, more comfortable, if we talk to them in Tibetan. They feel lost in Chinese-medium teaching.

All the pre-school kindergartens teach in Chinese, though they teach the Tibetan alphabet and things like that too. A lot of these government-run kindergartens are teaching them the first-grade textbooks from elementary school. Yes, it's illegal, actually. Before you didn't have to attend the pre-school kindergartens. But now you get a study score, *xuefen*, if you finish a textbook or course, and now if you don't have credits in your report card saying you have done pre-school, the elementary school will not accept you. They say it's not compulsory, but in order to enroll your kids in elementary school, you have to have the credits from pre-school for at least, I think, two years. It's called a *xuefen*, study score, or something like that. This report card, this book, is something that you carry with you all the way to high school....

On the other hand, there are some young people who have a higher education. They feel urgency and are doing their own things, what they can. But it's so ironic to see a lot of these young people sent away to rural areas, remote places, sent to take up government positions, quite high ones, such as a village head - yet they have very little idea what to do. They don't know rural life. And they don't want to be there. And most of their work is advocating for the government, explaining policies, reading newspaper articles [aloud]. And they always want to come back to Lhasa. The village people don't respect or trust them.

Are there private kindergartens?

There are a few private kindergartens. This morning I was talking to one kindergarten principal, a private one, he is very strong on Tibetan language. He says that they are really lacking materials for teaching. But the parents are lacking interest. We talked for an hour. I was really scared. I suggested teacher training in Tibetan, I know someone who does it there, I put them in touch. I was so amazed. I remember he had about 100 students, it was a very small place, near "K", and people really liked it, and it was growing. But his original kindergarten was taken over by the local neighborhood committee. He is still the nominal headmaster, and the parents like his emphasis on Tibetan. But it's been taken over by the neighborhood committee, and they have to follow that curriculum.

U was a monk from Norbulingka, you must remember him. When he came out [from prison], he had to disrobe [give up monkhood]. He opened a very good orphanage, with kids who were well dressed and well behaved, very traditional. They were all arrested, it was closed, and the kids were sent everywhere to other homes. Yes, that was the orphanage where Bangri Rinpoche was arrested. He's still in prison, I think. It was in the early 2000s.

It's really difficult to get the official papers to open a school or kindergarten. I enquired about it, I had a place, and they knew that my funding was ok, was safe.... I didn't go formally to ask about it, but then different friends I asked, they said it's not standard [to apply to open a kindergarten teaching in Tibetan], you are just labelling yourself.... A lot of the students who go to college from Tibet get acceptance letters from a college or institution in China, a long way away – and it turns out not to be a standard college that can issue a standard degree.

Wouldn't learning Chinese help people to do better?

That's what they say. That is what we discuss all the time. I would say that 98 percent of people I know say it's important to keep the language. All but a few say we need to learn Tibetan. But a few say that we cannot really use Tibetan in life now, so just to speak a little is enough.

[Talks about Khenpo Tsultrim Lodro's answer to a question about whether it's needed to learn Tibetan, or just keep the culture without the language.]

This is a question we ask ourselves. You can live a life without Tibetan, it even might be a more prosperous life wherever you happen to be, but this is a question we can ask.

Now more and more Tibetans, especially in the TAR, seeing all the changes happening so quickly, and not just in Lhasa, but even in remote areas, especially a lot of young people who have higher education, have awareness of keeping the language and the culture alive. And most of those I know in the city feel the responsibility falls on us. And not only making money but taking responsibility and serving the community. Observing on WeChat, in the circle that I know, with a lot of educators and social entrepreneurs – I showed you one in Ngari, Norbu Dondrub, doing livecasts daily. He uses central Tibetan dialect; he is really advocating Tibetan mother-tongue. I saw this morning that 60,000 people were watching him at one point, 92,000 a little later. While listening, they feel the same way, but after the show – they still speak Tibetan, but the very young are answering back in Chinese.

Part 3: October 13, 2018

I am not so sure 100 percent of the number of the Chinese living in our neighborhood now, but I am hearing that it is half-half. A lot of them rent, and also a lot of them buy, unlike before. Before it was old neighbors, residential, and in the meantime they are building a lot of houses outside the old city, quite far, like very tall apartment buildings, government housing for low-income people, so they are all very far away from the city. So, a lot of people from the old neighborhood were resettled in that housing. The government demolishes a building, and the *uyonlhankhang* [neighborhood committee] then does it ... that's why our people do not complain since we have been promised we can come back. Then whoever can afford it can buy the new ones, and of course you can use your

connections. And the government also reserves some for – not for low-income people, I don't think they keep those for them – renting to a higher income group, something to do with the housing department, turning the lower level into shops.

In Lhasa the rental rate is very high, so there are plenty of people who have the money to rent those, half and half, Tibetan and Chinese, I would say. In the old part of the city, some are Tibetan owned and rented to Chinese or Chinese Muslims. So, a lot of very similar shops, there are a lot of tourist shops in our area run by Chinese Muslims, so it seems there is big money there. It isn't individual people who are renting this, though it looks like this, but all the things they sell are the same, so it seems it is owned by one business person who owns seven shops or a block, every other shop is the same, and all are close to each other. They sell things that they call Tibetan, but for Tibetans it doesn't look Tibetan, but the tourists can't tell, I don't think they know these things are not Tibetan.

I saw some shops with Tibetans who are hired to work there, I know a Chinese woman who has a little shop nearby, and she had a Tibetan nun sitting near the window with her beads, not as a sales person, just to be visible, she was there entirely for that purpose [to make it look Tibetan].

It is separate communities, I don't think people become friends with the Chinese, not really. I hear some people complain that Tibetans are renting their shops to Chinese or Chinese Muslims in the Barkor area, which makes the rents higher. There isn't tension on the surface, Tibetans never enter into these shops, the tourists go. The people who go to do *korwa* [circumambulations] won't go into these shops, and even some shops won't allow them in. In several big shops there was always a guard hired by the shop outside who won't let Tibetans in, I'm not sure if it is still like that, I didn't go....

The kindergartens – there are more government-run ones than before. And every area has a kindergarten. Then the kids have to go to, it is kind of mandatory, by I think the age of 4, so in order to, then, now I didn't have a document but there is a whole new system, they need to have a report card or credit card in order to enroll in the elementary school, and it carries on in all the schooling years, they have a booklet, which teachers need to sign, from which year you have your whole life story starting from kindergarten. It is very difficult to enroll at the primary school, you have to have kindergarten signatures in there to enroll, you must have a record from kindergarten, it should be two years or three years, at last in Lhasa city,

I don't know elsewhere. I don't think there is a grade attached to it. I think there is *xiaoban*, *zhongban*, *daban*, it's all Chinese, its pre-pre-school, pre-school, and kindergarten, *xiaoban* is the youngest, they have to have a record of learning in those three years.

They have standardized textbooks or playbooks now, I heard, but it is not the same in every region. Some are still using it, some are in between, the one common thing is that they are mainly taught in Chinese. I think there are Tibetan textbooks, but the emphasis is on Chinese. If we look at the books, we see Tibetan, but I think most of the classes have to be conducted in Chinese. The reason I know is my cousin's son is just enrolled this year, although they wanted him to keep him at home another year, but in order to get enrolled later they had to do that, to get the record, it is called a *xueji* card. So, she had to send him by the age of 3 to the kindergarten in order to get that *xueji* card.

My relative was very happy, she went to meet the teachers on the first day – they were all hearing that there is only Chinese in the kindergarten, so was very concerned – so she was very happy when she met the teacher that she speaks Tibetan well, she is encouraging parents to speak Tibetan at home, and said she is trying to use Tibetan more than Chinese in the class, she is confirming to them that she will try to do this. So far, the boy didn't complain, there are a lot of toys, and these days the kindergartens look very nice, but he is a bit confused, because at home they only speak Tibetan. But he is picking up Chinese very quickly.

They said in other classes there are a lot of Chinese teachers coming from China too, so they are glad he got a head teacher who is Tibetan, they have several teachers in the kindergarten. A lot of people complained that the kids don't speak Tibetan well when they get home from the kindergarten. The hours are 8:30 to 4:30, very long, and you can't find a half-day one.

I had a few chances to go to an elementary school, with other teachers who came, when we entered the elementary schools, they are all Tibetan elementary schools, but everywhere they have these big signs saying we have to use Mandarin, speaking mandarin is our responsibility, we are Chinese kids, we have to speak Mandarin, or something like this, or I am a Chinese child, I like to speak Mandarin. The wall is saying how Mandarin is our language of teaching. My friends who are Tibetan language teachers, I asked her what you

feel, because she is a very strong Tibetan teacher, they at first feel there is a big burden, it doesn't mean we – everywhere in school they have these signs, that makes them also a little uncomfortable, they are the ones trying to teach the Tibetan kids not to lose your language, you have to speak Tibetan at home, but then they have these big signs – they are very uncomfortable. And also, they are very pressured, they are a little bit scared, since they are the ones telling students every day to learn Tibetan.

I asked if the officials say anything to them, or the head. They do not say anything direct, but when they have the teacher meetings, they do talk about emphasizing the Chinese, but they do not target the Tibetan-language teachers or say you are not allowed to teach this, no. Because all the meetings, even though all the teachers are Tibetan, are conducted in Chinese, and there is also a vice-principal or Party secretary who is Chinese. So, they feel a little bit awkward and pressured by the bigger environment. They have to watch what they are saying.

All the other classes are taught in Chinese. Tibetan textbooks are in Tibetan, but mathematics and other subjects, sciences and social studies, are all in Chinese. So, the level of Chinese of these first graders in Lhasa elementary schools is so good, just like Chinese. Also, there are some Tibetans who are teaching Chinese, a lot of math and social studies teachers are Chinese. In the kindergarten there are a lot of young teachers who are also mixed, there is a very big issue in Tibet right now: they are recruiting a lot of Chinese from mainland area, so these newly graduated Tibetans can't get jobs nearby. One name is *rencaiyinjing*, literally "Importing Human Resources," it can be in every sector.

There are several ways these Chinese are coming, a lot are coming with this program, where they can apply for the job from mainland China to work in TAR. Then there is another group like these volunteer groups from colleges, who get a job automatically in that work unit after a year of volunteering. People are very mad at this program. These Chinese don't mind about the high altitude anymore, it's very hard to find these "iron [rice] bowl" jobs in China, and there are a lot of benefits in Tibet if you get a job in government work. The gap between government and other jobs is so huge. They recruit very few Tibetans who graduate in mainland China. Every year people can take the civil exams, but very hard for Tibetans to get those jobs.

I heard from “X” and some friends ago that it is no longer Amdo or other Tibetans from those areas getting these jobs, there are some restrictions on minority nationality candidates getting these jobs. It is very difficult for a Tibetan from outside of TAR to get these jobs, it says you must be outside the TAR, but it is not publicly said that it does include Tibetans from outside. Then there are people who come with *yuanzang* [“Aid Tibet”] titles, and a lot of people taking advantage of these policies from China.... I know one of my friends’ son applied for this job, but a lady got this job as a math teacher in an elementary school. She is Chinese, in her 50s, she wants to come and retire in Lhasa in three years. I was quite surprised this from my friend, she said her son’s math teacher was Chinese.... She wasn’t happy in Tibet at all, but she has a high-school age daughter, so she had several reasons to come to Tibet, she wants to enroll her high school daughter to have a seat in Tibet, but actually she goes to school in mainland China, and then will come and take the final high school exam in Tibet and get the extra points. And in three years the mother can retire in Tibet and get the retirement payment from Tibet, which is triple her regular salary back in China, and then take the money and move back to China. There are these kinds of cases.

But there are plenty of very qualified Tibetan graduates even from Beijing Normal University who are finding it very difficult to get Tibet jobs, and even to go to work in a remote area they need to pass the civil exams. But not that many Chinese are going to rural areas, right now they are trying to fill the more comfortable jobs in towns, and cities – in rural areas still the conditions are tough.

2. Interview with a Retired Schoolteacher from a County Near Lhasa

October 2015

There are 345 students at our county middle school which has classes 6-12. Classes 6-9 are middle school and classes 9-12 upper middle school. About 10 years ago, we used to have about 50 to 60 Chinese students in our school, but the number has gone up a lot since then. Today we have 112 Chinese students. It is because of the increase in migrant workers all over the county, and the number of Chinese government employees in townships and villages. For example, since the authorities removed seven Tibetan cadres from their posts for political reasons, we no longer have Tibetan party secretaries in the townships, they are all Chinese. There are at least five Chinese cadres in each

administrative village, and there are many Chinese cadres among the work-teams stationed in each village as well. I don't know exactly whether it is correct or not, but people say that Toelung and Taktse [two counties in Lhasa municipality] have the biggest Chinese population.

A friend who works for government told me that “the Chinese population in Toelung has increased more than 400 percent in the last five years.” I think he could be right, because since the railway reached Lhasa in 2005, the government built warehouses for heavy construction materials on the west side of the county town, the materials for constructing the line to Shigatse were kept there, and many government construction companies are also based there. In the last five years, the government built two bridges over the Toelung River, and then built housing blocks for Chinese migrant workers on the other side of the river. The area has now become a suburb of Lhasa city and there are no Tibetans living there, all are Chinese. We don't know how many, but I am sure there are thousands of them. These people are not included in government population figures.

These Chinese have little contact or dealings with local Tibetans in their daily lives, but it looks like they are going to stay there forever, it already looks like a Chinese city, with schools, banks, hospitals, markets, restaurants, hotels, night clubs, sports facilities, cinemas, and many prostitutes and brothels. So I think many Chinese migrants' children are going to boarding middle school in Lhasa, as there are many middle schools in Lhasa.

Significant Changes in Our Middle School

In general, education facilities in county middle schools in the TAR have improved a lot in last five years, the salary of county middle school teachers increased 50 percent since 2008. The average teacher's salary used to be 2,500 Yuan but it's increased to more than 5,000 Yuan per month.

Those Chinese students at our school whose parents have ration cards in Toelung county have to study Tibetan language for four hours a week. This compulsory program was introduced by government in September 2011. There was a regulation about this program, 10 points in a six-page booklet. The title on the cover was “Regulations for the trial implementation of Tibetan language study for outstanding students.” The program does not include the children of ordinary migrant workers (*bao gung do*), only the children of

those working for the county government, county party members, party secretaries from the five townships, and for important government-owned development and mining projects in the county.

There are about 65 Chinese students taking part in Tibetan language program and all of them are Baoding students. The school principal talked about the program at the teachers' meeting, saying that teaching those students Tibetan is the request of the TAR Education Department, and all the teachers and school staff should be supportive of the program and students, to fulfill the TAR leaders' request. He said that our school's responsibility is to raise these selected students to formulate and build their capability to reform the masses' livelihood, and to be able to contribute to making the motherland greater. The leaders of concerned departments are awaiting positive results from the program and a good example for other county middle schools, he said.

The long-term aim of the program is to prepare the students for official positions and create a [group of bilingual officials] to deal with ordinary Tibetans at village level in the future. But our school principal did not mention this! Those students have been taking this program since 2011, some of them already speak fluent Tibetan and are able to follow lectures in Tibetan and read books in Tibetan. It is not only about learning language, the school invites Tibetan experts to introduce Tibetan culture, society, tradition, history and other complicated philosophical ideas to them in Tibetan. Sometimes even monks give talks, to introduce basic Tibetan Buddhism; since 2013, the school invited monks about 10 times. We don't know which monastery those monks are from. The school also organized a bus to take them on a few days' school trip to visit monasteries and museums, and to see Tibetan village life. These activities are very sensitive and always done secretly. Only the school principal and class supervisors know. These subjects have never been taught to other [Tibetan] students, they have the best Tibetan teachers of course, and there are some high-level cadres inspecting the program's progress. They come to the school from time to time in expensive official cars, and meet only the Tibetan program students, the principal and class supervisors, and do not talk to other teachers or students at all.

Restrictions and Moral Education for Tibetans

In March 2011, the authorities introduced new regulations at our school, "Regulations for the trial implementation of rectification and tightening of moral education for middle

school students.” There are four chapters and 38 points. I can’t remember all the details, but the main points in the introduction said that using suitable teaching methods for students of different ages and abilities, give a clear introduction to the “nationality theory” of Marx, Lenin and Mao. It said that this key concept should always be the fundamental method to establish “healthy political thinking” and to reform “habitual thinking” of students. It added that “nationality theory” always has direct relevance to individual students' daily school lives and is also the bottom line to measure the quality of the next generation of citizens of our Great Motherland.

All the teachers and staff had to study the regulations for more than a week before implementing them at school. Two Chinese cadres from the TAR Party school came to teach us about it, and at the end of the day the county Party secretary Li visited the school. Li did not talk to the teachers, only with the principal and class supervisor, so we don’t know what he said about it. The most important things that we were told over a weeklong study of the regulations were:

1. Any conversation, attitude, behavior, and activities that students have been taking part in their daily life has to be monitored and examined, starting with individual students’ daily school life. If there is anything harmful to the “unity of the motherland and nationality unity,” it should be completely and decisively removed from the school environment straight away. Those involved must receive appropriate advice from school supervisors, and political guidance.
2. All school teachers and heads of class must pay full attention to the minority day-school students’ behaviors by spending time with the student as their friend rather than teacher. Any inadequate behavior or attitude toward the “three inseparables” principle (propaganda formulation for the inseparability of the Han and the minorities) has to be investigated in order to understand where and from whom the young mind picked up negative influences in the first place, without being given a chance to hide from scrutiny in school and classroom. All class supervisors must closely monitor minority-background students, enhance strict control of students “ideological conduct” toward the school political environment and sensitive conversation topics with classmates.
3. The class supervisors should have a good relationship with day-students. They should have a timetable to meet the parents at least twice a month. All day-

students must be informed that their class supervisor has immediate responsibility for their political behavior.

3. Interview with Another Retired Schoolteacher from a County Near Lhasa

October 2016

(The interviewee submitted some of their comments as written responses.)

Nine categories for receiving Patriotic Education

At present, under the direction of the Education Bureau, education work is divided into nine basic categories, with a detailed practice of Patriotic Education and political/ideological regulations in use for each. The nine categories are: 1. primary education, 2. lower middle school compulsory education, 3. middle school vocational education, 4. higher education, 5. professional education, 6. youth education, 7. distance education, 8. correspondence education, and 9. special education.

Of these, most of the students in categories 5-9 are future government officials, or current officials doing further training, who tend to be those in leaders at various levels, or Party and government workers in important positions. The education is said to be [for improving] political awareness in relation to one's area of work on the basis of Marxist theory, and improving work capacity. However, a great many young Tibetan officials are also sent to China for study and training directly related to their work, and then there are those who are trained in China and sent to Tibet as "Tibet Aid Cadres", all of whom are selected and allocated by the state Personnel Bureau. These are the 9 categories in TAR education.

The TAR Student Population

According to a reference book on political fundamentals for middle school teachers distributed by the TAR Education Bureau, there are now 882 primary schools, 91 lower middle schools, 15 upper middle schools, 9 full middle schools [middle schools with classes 7-12], 7 intermediate vocational schools, and 6 university/colleges. Then, TAR students are enrolled in "Tibet classes" in 35 middle schools and colleges in mainland China, including 18 lower middle schools, 13 upper middle schools and 2 teacher training colleges (but not including schools for sports, arts, music, etc.), while some 50 or more

upper middle schools in the mainland without “Tibet classes” also admit Tibetan students. However, when admission exams are held for schools from mainland provinces and municipalities with “Tibet class” enrollment, they are announced everywhere, mainly to the parents of middle school students, and there is no secrecy involved.

Patriotic Education Campaign, the Extent of its Coverage

To speak about the TAR: Patriotic Education and its various campaigns fall under political education, for which the State Council has chief responsibility. This education campaign is not like other political campaigns that are launched for a time and then come to an end.

When they do ideological education and patriotic education in mainland areas of China, one is expected to express love for the Party and Nation and love for Socialism, praise and support the political principles of the Party and Nation, and its laws, and promise to follow them, and there are not really onerous and difficult political preconditions. But in ideological education and Patriotic Education in TAR, unification of the Motherland, unity of nationalities, opposition to splittism and maintaining stability are made preconditions, and those preconditions are the beginning, the end, and the whole point of these two educations. This can be seen clearly from the controversial statement by Deng Xiaogang broadcast on Tibet TV’s Channel 2 on November 25, 2015, that “Both the central government and TAR government are putting financial, material and manpower resources into ideological education in Tibet unlike any other province or autonomous region in the country.”

That is why a trusted friend told me a year ago “The political situation in TAR is complicated/vexed. Public attitudes are disparate, and opinions are confrontational. So, nationality language and culture become unjustly targeted as problematic.”

If one looks closely at Patriotic Education ... apart from its various aspects, in general, public cultural life, such as newspapers, TV, films, radio, magazines, libraries, arts, song and dance, celebrations, anniversaries, gatherings, festivals, parties, etc., [and the institutions] that blend with all aspects of public life and activity, schools, monasteries and offices, are the specific focus. Yet these days, people think of Patriotic Education and its campaigns only as flying the national flag on their roof, keeping a picture of the CP [Communist Party] leaders in their house, supporting the national team in sports

competitions [like the Olympic Games], singing the national anthem and so forth. In fact, the Patriotic Education campaign and the extent of its coverage are very broad and deep.

In general, Patriotic Education means that the public should, of their own accord and with pure motivation, undertake study of the achievements of previous generations in religion and culture, language, customs, progress, etc., with chief regard for the character/interests of the nation to which they belong and the interests of the masses, to constructively pass them on to the next generation, and do this with an altruistic devotion to society, the people and the nation. This has to be done according to the political outlook, culture and customs, and territorial sovereignty of each nation, and in a place like Tibet, this is an extremely complicated/problematic business from start to finish.

It is no easy task to get someone to think patriotically, and in the case of a person with antipathy to the state, getting rid of that, eliminating it, is even more difficult. But, in the Patriotic Education that is going on in Tibet these days, the public's support for the PRC under the leadership of the CP, its political stance and political requirements, the upholding of its state power, national dignity, national sovereignty, etc., irreversible faith and commitment to the Party, the nation and its leaders under any circumstances or political conditions, following their political direction unquestioningly, this is the basic condition.

Moreover, the main point is that Tibetans are citizens of the PRC, and the entirety of Tibetan religion, culture, language, customs, history, crafts, heritage is presented as the culture of the Chinese people, one constituent of the Chinese peoples' cultural repertoire. If a schoolchild or anyone else says that Tibetan culture is not Chinese, or that it is different, that demonstrates an incorrect political stand, and to argue that Tibetan culture was created by the Tibetan people and developed by them through the ages confirms this, in terms of political principles. On the ideological basis that "Without the CP there would be no New China, without New China there would be no socialist system and no New Tibet", present-day Tibet, Tibetans and Tibetan culture belong to China, and that is the basic point and bottom line of mass ideological education.

So, in general, China's Patriotic Education is called a "single measuring stick" [allowing no room for slight deviations], but in fact, there are a great many differences between the campaigns conducted in mainland areas and in Tibet. In TAR there are many differences in

the style and content of Patriotic Education as conducted in different contexts, in rural areas, urban areas, schools and monasteries, differs out of consideration of the outlook of the masses, their livelihood, political environment, and level of education. But it is in schools and monasteries that it is carried out most forcefully and with most intensive management.

Content of Patriotic Education from Primary School to Upper Middle School

The basic strategy is “Instill patriotic thinking through moral education, and instill patriotic thinking to correct the moral conduct of the students.” However, the Patriotic Education that is conducted in TAR schools cannot be described as Patriotic Education, because Patriotic Education in schools is a complete system, and various periodic campaigns are conducted within the context of that system, so “both education and campaigns” are combined. For example, from primary school [years 1-6], through lower middle school [up to year 9] until upper middle school, there are 18 courses and over 200 topics [compiled by the regional educational materials’ editorial office]. These 18 courses and over 194 topics are all written in both Chinese and Tibetan.

The main courses in which Patriotic Education is elaborated are primary literacy, children’s stories, general knowledge, composition, Chinese history, international and Chinese revolutionary history, politics, introduction to law, social science, etc., while biology, chemistry, science, mathematics and basic computing do not have that much relation to Patriotic Education and political education. At present, all upper and middle schools in TAR have both Chinese and Tibetan students, and there are no exclusively Chinese or Tibetan schools. The topics of the 18 courses and supposedly 250 reference books are automatically translated into Tibetan, and seem to be of a standardized quality. However, there is no practice of teaching middle school courses in both languages. In the case of Chushul county middle school, Tibetan students are 65 percent of the total, but as the principals, teachers and parents all know and can see, in reality, apart from literacy, general knowledge, composition and Chinese history, 73 percent of courses, like science, chemistry, biology and computing are taught in Chinese, and there is no prospect for Tibetan students to improve their level of Tibetan language.

In terms of the TAR’s education system and policy, there is the right to parity and equal treatment of written Tibetan and written Chinese, or even primacy of written Tibetan, under

the legal provisions of the nationality autonomy system, but the actual reality is quite different. The crucial point in this is that it depends on deciding in which language the 18 courses are taught, which is up to government policy and resources for teacher allocation and training, and so far the TAR has not trained [enough] Tibetan teachers to teach all these 18 courses in Tibetan, while there is a fully trained corps of teachers capable of teaching them in Chinese. The corps of Tibetan teachers is small, poorly resourced, neglected by the school directors, and so on. So although the teaching materials are in both languages, the actual teaching of the classes ... for example, at our county primary school, when one looks at the class periods and teacher allocation in the timetables for each term, Chinese language classes take up half the time, or for some terms, Tibetan language classes take up slightly more time.

Crèches and Kindergartens

Generally, there are primary schools in township centers throughout the rural areas of TAR. For example, in the counties of Lhasa municipality, they say every village of more than 200 inhabitants has a crèche or kindergarten (these used to be known as crèches [*bu bcol khang*], but since 2003 when they were given government funding and supervision, they became known as kindergartens – *byi pa'i rol rtsed khang*).

In our county, for example, after the 2014 decision to construct a model county, and the development of the suburb of the county town with a population of over 30,000, and 17 rural villages into administrative villages [village with local Party office], the government gave money to build six kindergartens and added two new primary schools in two townships, bringing the total of primary schools in the county to seven.

There are two main reasons for the TAR to spread provision of crèches from urban to village areas:

Traditionally, when the parents go out to work, they leave the children with unoccupied elder relatives or grandparents to look after them. But with the strict enforcement of compulsory education in rural areas, parents who stop or restrict their children from attending school are fined, and so on, and the livelihood of the whole society, and the traditional patterns of seasonal work are all undergoing major change. With these social

and livelihood changes, the number of children below 7 staying at home and being schooled at home is reducing.

Since about 2004, when crèches were included in TAR compulsory education, the government gave funding for many more crèches to be built all over, which were called kindergartens, all the childcare staff were sent by the county education department, they received various degrees of professional training, and the government gave them the same rights as officials or workers. So regardless of the state of childcare, it became easier for parents, and the government achieved control of the entirety of junior education.

Children going to kindergartens are generally ages 2-6, and they can be left there for six to eight hours a day while the parents are at work. Earlier, in the 1990s, there were crèches in Lhasa and larger cities, but they did not come under the government's compulsory education program, and there was no clear policy towards them. Under those conditions, there were many privately run crèches, and apart from cities like Lhasa, Shigatse, Tsetang, Nyingtri, etc., there were a lot of people running private primary schools as well.

In [name withheld] county, for instance, "X" started a home crèche in 1998, and then started a primary school alongside, for Classes 1-3. Then in 2008, the primary school was closed down, and the crèche was also closed a year later. The primary school followed all the county education department's registration procedures, and no questions were raised about authorization, but they said that pupils up to Class 3 were taught to do [daily] prayers, how to do prostrations, make dedication prayers to the Three Jewels [the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha] before meals, and that various [religious] items were arranged in the classrooms. Moreover, butter lamps and water bowl offerings were done in the classroom, which they said is against national and regional regulations on the moral and ideological foundations for primary education, and detrimental to their psychological wellbeing. On the order of the county education department head Zhang Chun, the primary school had to be closed.

"X" and a group of parents petitioned the TAR government, saying that the school had taught only nationality customs, language, and songs, nothing politically reactionary or against the Motherland. The Lhasa Municipal Procuracy and Education Bureau then made a case against "X", who was arrested, detained in Lhasa for three months, and fined 20,000 Yuan for running a school that broke national education regulations. At that point,

the crèche was also closed down. At first, they were ready to listen to public opinions, whatever they were, and the regional Education Bureau had told “X” and the parents that making verbal and written appeals to the government before holding public meetings in the streets was proper and within the law.

Among the 23 parents supporting “X”, “Y” from the [name withheld] county government office was accused of using bad language with government officials, detained for one day in the county, and made to stay at home without salary for three months to think it over, as well as a fine of 2,000 Yuan.

These days in Tibet, there is a new surge in the language preservation movement. Is it really the case that hostile policies by the Chinese government are posing new risks to Tibetan language, or is there another kind of political background to this?

That is a big question. We spoke about this before the New Year, and identified the main reasons, now I will tell you whatever I know and think about them.

1. As the Dalai Lama’s call is not for independence, and there is more emphasis on preservation of religion and culture, he has emphasized the written language and culture so much in public addresses and teachings, so people in Tibet have realized that they need to think again about the unavoidable issue of language loss and religion, culture, national [loss].
2. Earlier, people in Tibet used to wishfully think that the standard of Tibetan instruction in exile government schools must be a hundred times higher than in Tibet, and many children were sent to India [in the 1980s and 90s]. But the standard of Tibetan and cultural education of children educated in the Dalai Lama’s schools did not meet their expectations. It is a fact that Tibetan children educated in Chinese government schools under the minority nationality system have a strong, competent level of Tibetan. It would be correct to say that these two points are objective factors.
3. Concerning the factors inside Tibet ... there has been great economic development, Chinese people have moved to Tibet and settled, Chinese children are growing up in Tibet, and the numbers [of such children] in the TAR education system is a really big issue. The implementation of education policy is suited to the Chinese students, and sometimes even

favors them. Any school will run school courses of most benefit to the Chinese students, and teachers try to please the Chinese students and favor them, because it is the easy and safe way, and makes it easier to get their allowances and benefits. Tibetan students naturally get pushed to the sidelines, their access to the rights and benefits of minority education and access to resources endangered, and ... the inclination of school principals to misbehave have given Tibetans in Tibet, parents especially, something to think about.

4. Previously, although the number of Chinese students in the prefectures and cities of TAR was quite a lot, in the primary and middle schools in counties and townships, Tibetan students made up around 70 percent. Now the number of Chinese workers and officials in the counties has increased many times over, and their children are attending those schools ... the teaching staff, school resources, central government, and regional government allowances for education in Tibet are also taken advantage of by the Chinese students, and with the increase in their numbers, many education systems follow the example of mainland schools in prioritizing Chinese students, and this is becoming more evident. Tibetan students are not the focus, they are ignored, courses based on Tibetan language get neglected, and education and school organization geared to the Chinese students.

About 10 years ago, in TAR primary and middle schools, Tibetan and Chinese students were separated, and many language-based courses were taught, but now it is a big issue ... I have not seen the policy documents and regulations from the central education ministry, regional education bureau and county education departments, but in practice, mixed classrooms have been set up, and Tibetan students have not only a daily language class but classes on Chinese history and political study mostly alongside the Chinese students, a new system which both students and parents find very disturbing.

5. Earlier ... maybe 10 years ago, the Chinese who came to do construction in Tibet, or professionals and skilled workers sent by “Aid Tibet” tie-ups or mainland cities, they didn’t used to bring their whole families, and when their term of employment was over, they went straight back. But this has completely changed in recent years. This is something that the Dalai Lama, and exile commentators do not seem to realize. I have not seen this said or written anywhere, and I noticed it is not mentioned at all in the book you lent me about education, maybe because the author is from Amdo.

Listen ... the fact is that things have changed a lot since the 18th Party Congress. These days, mainland Chinese like construction workers and skilled workers bring their whole families with them to Tibet at the outset. If either the husband or the wife is unemployed, the employer or company provides income support for the unemployed spouse, their kids go to school in the town where their parent is employed, and they are equally entitled to the school fees and welfare policies [designed] for Tibetan students. Around 40 percent of the students qualifying for Tibet-adjusted education policies are Chinese migrants.

For instance, a friend told me that most of the 300,000 Chinese who came to build the Qinghai-Tibet railway mostly did not return to China but settled in Tibet. They say that employees who work for the State Railways Corporation for more than five years get assistance from the corporation to settle in Tibet and do any kind of business. Most of the Chinese who settled in and around Chushul county are those who came to do construction work. No one can say exactly how many they are, but each new Chinese settlement has at least 10,000 inhabitants.

Since they don't have separate schools for their kids, they send them to the existing county primary and middle schools.

6. The county middle schools and township primary schools in particular are the foundations of Tibetan education and the breeding ground of the next generation. Earlier, a lot of school principals were Tibetan, at least in the county and township schools. This has changed – now you hardly see Tibetan principals in county schools, and it's the same in township primary schools. The government sends a lot of teacher-training graduates from China to work in Tibet, who are more qualified than Tibetans to become school principals, and automatically meet the political qualification of nationality unity, I have noticed. School principals have to be Party members, and they control all the school activities and teachers, and have full powers to decide what is good.

Whatever is said about the nationality education system in Tibet, the focus of every activity in the classroom is on the Chinese, and if large numbers of Chinese are needed to develop Tibet, if Tibetans have to become richer, and the orders of the regional and central governments have to be followed, then Chinese definitely has to be taught, and those who take the view that this is not compatible with teaching Tibetan language are many, as I saw in my time as a county school teacher.

Especially, many Chinese principals feel worried that teaching Tibetan language will endanger nationality unity and are very resistant to it. And because the principals are mostly Chinese, Tibetan language teachers are under-resourced and not encouraged, so that when a student gets excellent grades in Tibetan, the principal is not interested.

[Tibetan] parents do not have good relations with the principals, and because if they do not speak Chinese well, they cannot directly discuss problems with their children's education, Tibetan students cannot focus on getting the benefit of their studies, and as Chinese language classes are emphasized out of nationality unity and political requirements, students have no choice but to do what will win the approval and praise of the principal. In this way, written Tibetan, and the cultural values it transmits is naturally ignored and rendered irrelevant.

7. Today, the reason why Tibetans in Tibet are so concerned about language and doing whatever they can about it is the Dalai Lama's influence. First, the Dalai Lama and Tibetans in exile have not accomplished the task of sustaining Tibetan language, the exile education system has failed and been derailed, and now that it has been confirmed that they are not able to preserve our language, that task is up to the people in Tibet. I think they must be encouraged to find new strategies and methods of emergency preservation. For example, graduates of exile schools with their poor speaking ability are a matter of shame for the Dalai Lama, and the disastrous failures of that system are now spoken of openly.

Now that this is no longer a secret, we people in Tibet have learned this through social media and so on, become worried about how little we too have done, and basically understood that the survival of our language is in our own hands, and we cannot rely on the Dalai Lama or the Tibetans in exile.

That is why there is wide participation in language preservation and call to speak unmixed language, and this is not a directly political issue. Whatever movements and discussion are going on take place in Tibetan society, by the Tibetan public, for a reason, where the theory and practice of autonomy and nationality policy can be brought together.

Anyway, apart from these issues I have nothing new to add. Mainly, the two points about policy failures of the exile government and Chinese migration, an agonizing prospect for the language issue.

4. Interview with a Staff Member in the Tourism Industry, Lhasa

April 2017²⁶⁶

When did the bilingual kindergartens policy begin? Were any private or monolingual kindergartens closed?

I have thought about these questions, and asked friends familiar with language [in] education, and it is really complicated. Trying to find the origin is frustrating. I will just tell you what I know.

Bilingual education in Tibet is nothing new, but taking a broad view of the outcome, etc., of bilingual education, I get the feeling that there are some things that are important to understand in order to answer your question in full, the present requirements of the policy, the ultimate aim and eventual outcome.

Bilingual education was introduced in government schools in the early 1970s. At that time, schools in the *xiang* [townships], *fen* [a group of three *ruka* or units] and *ruka* were known as *minban*, People's Schools, and schools in county towns were known as Government Schools. Both were administered by the government, it is not that People's Schools were founded privately, but the government did not directly pay teachers' salaries and running expenses for People's Schools. These had to be provided by the *xiang*, *fen*, or *ruka*. So, the People's Schools did not have Chinese teachers, and only Tibetan was taught. But they used the same textbooks as the Government Schools. People's Schools went only up to Class 6, and Classes 6-12 were taught in the county middle and upper middle schools.

With the introduction of the Liberalization policy after 1980, there were big changes to primary education in *xiangs* and villages. The government sent Chinese teachers to middle

²⁶⁶ This interviewee based their comments on their own experience in school and as a worker in the government sector and on talking with friends familiar with language policy in the education sector. The comments indicate that the interviewee is unusually familiar with technical details of government policy regarding education and a number of related issues.

and primary schools at county level but lacked resources to send them to the village level, so Chinese language teaching did not become that widespread, and hardly existed in remote villages, border areas and pastoral areas.

Then, since the start of the 10th Five-year plan (2000), around the time that construction of the Qinghai-Tibet railway started, the central government granted massive funds for road building in rural areas, improving electricity coverage, building schools and amalgamating schools. By the end of the 12th Five-year plan, there was Chinese language instruction in village primary schools all over TAR. Still, the great majority of children in Xiang and village schools come from Tibetan households and are not that exposed to Chinese language from a young age, so most of them learned only how to mix Chinese words with Tibetan, but not speak fluently in Chinese. Their disposition, way of thinking, behavior and educational development remained dependent on Tibetan language. Chinese mores and culture could be explained to them in Tibetan, but they could not understand it for themselves.

From the point of view of Tibetan language education, identity and cultural survival, this state of affairs can be seen in both positive and negative ways.

The positive: this generation spoke unadulterated Tibetan, as favored by those who wish to see the long-term survival of the Tibetan language. They either did not go to school, or left after primary level and did not go to the county school, went back home and joined their families in farming or herding. In the present Tibetan society, this generation is seen as purely Tibetan, guardians of a Tibetan consciousness passed down over generations, those who can pass on the noble outlook of awareness of karmic cause and effect, kindness and compassion, respecting the old and caring for the young, and so on, to the next generation. Despite the disastrous political upheavals of 1959 and the Cultural Revolution, this thing was not extinguished in Tibetan society but survived and revived, so this generation of people who had no doubt about identifying themselves as Tibetan became qualified as bearers of the ancestral tradition. They had no bilingual education in primary school or kindergarten, etc., and lived in a traditional social milieu, and this is seen as the positive outcome.

The negative: in Tibetan society now, urban and rural, there are young people who do not know Tibetan properly, and even worse, their grasp on the uniquely Tibetan identity and way of thinking has been lost. There are many youths who have Tibetan inscribed on their

ID, but whose actual lives are devoid of Tibetanness, who are not even sure which nationality they belong to. Yet in this fast-developing society, it is mostly they who get government jobs and positions, they benefit from the central government's Tibet policy, aid projects and so on, and tend to find fulfillment in meeting their material needs.

Many people on the outside look at how much stake young Tibetans have in rapid economic and social development, at the economic and political prospects for Tibetans in the development of Tibet, looking only at economic and employment status, as though the satisfaction of material needs were the only condition determining political outlook. Moreover, when the government and media proclaim the correctness of nationality policy, it is this young generation that stands out of Tibetan society as a whole, that can be pointed to as having both the education and the ability to develop Tibet through the kindness of the correct policy. So foreign tourists and many mainland tourists mistakenly see the young generation of Tibetans as beneficiaries of 21st century state-led nationality equality and a guiding force for Tibetan society emerging from poverty towards a prosperous society. The tourists are not to blame for this, since they are not aware of the unique properties of Tibetan-ness and the values associated with it. They are not able to see the imminent danger to Tibetan language, religion and culture from all sides on its current course, and without seeing the profound virtue of Tibetan customs and traditions relative to those of the Chinese or other nationalities, the influence of the idea that "we are all members of the same family of Chinese nationalities" goes for granted. On top of that, I worry whether we have a detailed and clear understanding of the dangers for the future of Tibetan language in exile society....

In TAR today, the top leaders do not take public opinion into account when making political or policy decisions, and those taking important decisions affecting the whole society are still Chinese. So, education work, construction or whatever, is done according to the priorities and objectives of the Chinese leaders, not the actual local situation. Normally, the TAR Party Committee automatically follows whatever the central government policy is, and everyone knows that to oppose it is a political offence. In particular, with the building of kindergartens everywhere in urban and rural areas in which the bilingual system has to be followed, no one will listen to popular sentiment or public opinion about the future of Tibetan language, and there is probably no way for members of the public to speak out.

In my view, “bilingual” kindergartens were started in TAR due to the requirements and objectives of firstly, economic development and secondly, the political ideology of nationality unity.

As for economic development, with the start of the 12th five-year plan, the Socialist New Villages construction program was expanded, huge budgets were allocated for infrastructure projects, and especially village urbanization, relocation for poverty alleviation, professional and vocational training, and tourism development programs multiplied from early 2009. In this context, education work in Tibet underwent great changes aimed at turning out the professionals, technicians and scientists of the future to build Tibet. I feel that the education figures and the rate of employment of skilled personnel over the last 15 years does reflect the actual situation.

The economic development I am talking about, based on Lhasa, the larger cities and resource-rich areas with transport access, has now spread to rural areas throughout the 74 counties of TAR. The “Aid Tibet” projects run by central and provincial governments continue to attract lots of Chinese who migrate to wherever the government money is, but Tibetan graduates, professionals, craftsmen etc., also find employment in these various projects. Which rural Tibetans get employment and benefits out of these projects? Apart from local craftsmen, more than 70 percent are Tibetan students who graduated from high schools in the mainland. The remainder are those who attended primary school in the *xiang* or county and learned to read and write Chinese or to communicate with fluency.

However, it is not true to say that Tibetans with no knowledge of Chinese have not benefitted at all from development projects in Tibet. Illiterate laborers get income from casual work as well, as everyone knows, but only pick and shovel work, they have none of the education and language skills for the easy, well-paid jobs that go to graduates and mainland Chinese ... The CCP built roads, brought electricity, mechanized agriculture and liberated this paradise for dumb oxen, draught horses and donkeys, except that they used to do the work, but now we have to do it for them [the Chinese]. What does that mean? It means that if you don’t know Chinese, you are like a draught animal in old Tibet, working day and night on Chinese construction projects. This shows that for the 80 percent of Tibetans living in rural areas, a way of life using spoken and written Tibetan involves more and more hardship and sorrow.

I already mentioned the groups of young people given skills and technical training to raise a cadre force for developing Tibet. Here again is a big difficulty for ordinary people's language usage: those Tibetans with the essential knowledge of [Chinese] language for everyday life, business and work, who have proven skills, are those who studied in Chinese medium. All the skills training is in Chinese, and all the training books and manuals. The government pays no attention to translating them, to allow skills training in Tibetan language, and no training is given in Tibetan for rural areas. The instructors are arrogant, and have the attitude that only Chinese is suitable for modern life, and Tibetan is irrelevant, backward and useless.

I have been working since 1992 ... I have been a witness to the transformation in Tibet – it has all happened before my eyes. About bilingual education and my background: I went to the village primary school. Back then, in [name withheld] county, there was the middle school, but in the People's Schools below that, I never saw a Chinese language teacher....

Under these conditions, pure Tibetan employees like me, with a fairly good level of written Tibetan, never use it in their working lives, rather the Chinese leaders see this knowledge as a ground for suspicion, and it causes various negative reactions from Chinese colleagues, so for a Tibetan to know their own language well becomes an obstacle in their career. The same problem is there for Tibetans working in all kinds of government offices and enterprises.

So, we already know that bilingual education is about breaking the continuity between my generation, with a fair knowledge of Tibetan, and the next. For Tibetans, the sickening and vexing plight of their language is something they experience in daily life, a troubling burden that we have long carried. The details, and the entire process of how this is happening, is something that the Dalai Lama, the exile government, international human rights organizations and the UN, etc., do not get to know about.

When we talked earlier, and you asked me about bilingual education, I felt delighted to find someone outside Tibet taking an interest in the language situation. Any people need to use its own language, and if someone tries to prevent that, it is not just a Tibetan issue, but a major human rights issue for the whole world. So, if people like you want to use your freedom to look into the issue and research it, I am happier than words can say.

In Tibet, the only way to live your life using Tibetan is to do farming or herding in remote rural areas. There is no future for Tibetan in urban areas. Whether or not this is the deliberate policy of the central government, it is what the Chinese TAR leaders have decided. Tibetans, especially parents who want a secure future for their children, must conclude that they have to study Chinese, because using Tibetan will only bring a life of hardship.

The government's policy that removing obstacles for Tibetans with employment and economy involves not the creation of a Tibetan-speaking environment but rather having Tibetans learn Chinese to be employed or make a living, is completely inconsistent with nationality policy and constitutional guarantees of nationality autonomy. It is about stopping the use of Tibetan in society, and having the next generation grow up with no use for Tibetan. The current implementation of bilingual education in TAR starts from kindergarten, and the central government has paid a lot of attention to it and provided a lot of funds, sent teachers for training (in teaching Chinese). Building kindergartens in the villages and teaching Chinese to the newborn is about changing the language environment for the next generation, or to be blunt, it is an aggressive policy to disrupt the continuity of language transmission between generations of Tibetan society. If it succeeds, it is not difficult to foresee that Tibetan religion, culture, consciousness and identity will become sinicized.

One thing we can be sure about: the government policy of teaching Tibetan kindergartners Chinese in kindergarten has not been clearly and widely announced, and it has nothing in common with the special provisions for national autonomous regions, and the constitutional guarantees of respect for nationality religion and culture. On the other hand, they say many nice-sounding things about "early education," increased financial and material support for education, delivering equal education in urban and rural schools, making the [provision or quality of] education even, and expanding the coverage of education resources, but what they say and what they do are in complete contradiction. Apart from all the talk, and all the different names and terms, what is the government actually doing with Tibetan language? It is deceptively but determinedly pursuing its agenda, making all Tibetans use Chinese, eliminating its role in practical life, and its future, and turning it into useless garbage for the purposes of the entire society.

5. Interview with Tibetan Mid-Level Cadre from Lhasa

May 2017

Since there are Tibetan-language textbooks, why are schools choosing to teach in Chinese?

There are Tibetan textbooks in schools, but they can't really be used as a textbook, it's not like the Chinese, there are many problems, it can't be used really. In mathematics there are many terms, it's really difficult, I am saying there are different areas which each have a different version, so it's just like a mess, the situation is not good. Maybe there is a textbook but actually they are teaching Chinese. It is not that they really took care. It is not that the government really supports it, puts effort in it. This is the problem. Earlier, they used to have Tibetan textbooks, but things are not up to that standard now. There are many ways the prefecture could come together, there are already some basic materials, and make it possible, but it didn't happen. So, there are sometimes books in Tibetan, but they are not getting to the proper level.

These *sixiangpingde* [moral education] textbooks are not about how to be a good person, they are white and black sort of things – “this person is mad,” “this person is bad” – that sort of idea.

My kid is in the primary school, and I never saw a reasonably translated Tibetan textbook, even in the Tibetan language class. I have a feeling that there were some textbooks that had quite many mistakes, and different translation versions [of the same word] – it was very preliminary kind of work, there were many problems. As a student they naturally go for the far finer book, the Chinese one.

Starting from kindergarten there is almost no option but to do Chinese teaching with Chinese textbooks - in the Tibetan language class you could do it, but with other subjects, it is almost impossible, most of the teachers come from China mainland, they don't know Tibetan anyway.

Do students in middle and high schools still get to study Tibetan language?

Yes, in the middle school and high schools, they are teaching Tibetan language, a little bit less than the Chinese. Chinese is the priority, since with this language you should understand all your tasks. Many Tibetan students feeling very bad about the Tibetan, because they see that it is not important at all with that environment, it's just an extra task.

Are kindergartens compulsory? What language do they use?

As for kindergartens, sometimes it is difficult to [find] kindergartens with any good condition. Actually, all of those kindergartens with good conditions are teaching in Chinese, so some parents are sending kids there for safety. Yes, they have a choice not to send them to the kindergarten, but there are very few kindergartens and not enough for all the kids. So, the family is not taking much care about the language, they are deciding where to send them based on safety. There are some kindergartens that are private and maybe teach in Tibetan but there are so many risks, and their conditions can't compare to the fancy, modern ones. I didn't hear of anything particular that happened that was dangerous, but it is not really ideal. There is a potential, except for teaching in Tibetan, there is no guarantee.

Do they have a deliberate policy to create mixed classes?

I also have a very strong feeling that they are doing this mixed class, educating like this. That makes them to be actually sort of forcing Tibetans into the situation of studying in Chinese language - a situation where there is no option, since Chinese students never learn Tibetan. In the kindergartens, there are no separate Tibetan or Chinese classes: they are mixed together, all with one language, and the teachers have to speak in Chinese.

6. Interview with Tibetan University Professor

November 2017

Ma Rong [the leading sociologist] wrote an article in which he said Uighurs need to learn Chinese to be competitive in the job market. This is totally right. But the question is why did they have this problem in the first place? In the nationality autonomy law, the reason that they cannot get jobs is because only the translation and broadcasting and translation bureaus require Tibetan or Uighur language. The others all use Chinese language as a requirement. So, I want to ask Ma Rong about this. Of course, I cannot ask this openly. So, I created a story.

Once upon a time there was a large group of cats catching fish, and in the same place there was a small number of rabbits eating grass. Then one day the cats came to the rabbits and told the rabbits, “Why don’t we get together, so that we can protect ourselves from the wolves? And at the same time, your grazing will be easier and better.” Then the rabbits reluctantly agreed. Then the pool got bigger with more and more fish, while the grassland on which the rabbits grazed got smaller and smaller.

So, then the cats come to the rabbits again and say, “You have to listen: from now on you had better think about learning how to catch fish, otherwise you won’t be able to survive.” So, then the rabbit has to think about that.

This is the story. This is Ma Rong’s thinking.

Ma Rong perfectly pointed out the issue: without learning to catch fish, the rabbits can’t survive. That is the reality. But he didn’t ask two important questions. At the beginning, the cats promised better grazing, but the pool in fact got larger. And the second thing is that the cats make a counterargument, saying that the fact that we are asking you to learn to catch fish doesn’t mean you have to stop grazing – no, you can do both. But where is the grass on which to graze?

So, this is bilingual education. In theory it means you can do both. It sounds beautiful. But in practice the working language even at the township level is in practice becoming Chinese.

But Ma Rong could reply that the pool gets bigger because of the rain, not the cats, couldn't he?

Ah yes, you're right. In other words, globalization. In this story the cat asks the rabbit to become a cat, that's what's so sad. If the rabbit had asked the cat to become a rabbit, what would you feel?

Has the use of Chinese increased at the township level?

Yes. Even the Tibetan university graduate students, their Chinese is much, much better than their Tibetan unless they are Tibetan majors. If he is in the township, even if he wants to use Tibetan, his writing is not good enough, so he would be embarrassed and would use Chinese. I am not against learning languages at all. The more foreign languages the better. But learning Chinese at the cost of your mother-tongue, that is the problem. As the cats said, learning to catch fish without abandoning grazing is fine, that's good. Maybe even Ma Rong is serious about that. But in practice we do not have the condition to continue grazing. You – the government – would have to make the conditions to continue grazing. He is right that Uighurs are not competitive with their Chinese counterparts, it's true, but he and people like him never ask the reason why they are not competitive. In the constitution and the law, the language of jobs in the hospital, school and so on should be in the local language, and if the Chinese put all the articles in the regional autonomy law and the constitution into practice, then many Tibetans would be perfectly happy, we would not need extra law and would not need to make a change. The problem is you promised many things, but now you didn't keep them. Then there's a problem – and it's not our problem, it's your problem.

Thirty years ago, the township working language was Tibetan, I can be almost sure, especially in my area, where township documents had to be Tibetan. Now 30 years later, the language has to be Chinese, or at least, more and more documents are Chinese. Even in villages, in some cases. Now among the *daxueshengcunguan* [university students sent to work as village officials], many are from Tibet University, but their Tibetan language is not good enough, so they are happy to write a report in Chinese, and then in a meeting they can speak directly to the nomads. Now the township will still accept a report in Tibetan, but they would prefer Chinese.

What other evidence is there of the pool expanding?

Now the position of Tibetan [in schools] is equal to English, it's like a foreign language. Now all subjects except that are taught in Chinese. In Qinghai, the situation is much better, that's why there were demonstrations in Rebkong and other places about five years ago when they tried to change the teaching language, you know better than me.

Yes, but what is your direct evidence and experience?

In Lhasa there are lots of kindergartens run by private people, they are quite modern in terms of facilities and environment, so my colleagues like it. But no Tibetan in the kindergartens, only mathematics and so on, in Chinese. The government closed many kindergartens – Tibetan-run ones – and schools run by monks, they also closed them. Many kindergartens are run by Chinese privately, and only mathematics, Chinese and maybe English are taught – but no Tibetan.

This is why Tibetans are not just the victims, but active participants in their marginalization. It's really complicated, it's not one way or the other. If the thing is put in a very simple way, the counter argument of the Chinese is, why are you Tibetan parents sending your children to this Chinese kindergarten, you could just teach Tibetan at home? So, they could say this. I could use the same argument too. So, at the same time, Tibetan people actively work – not just passively – in the system to promote this [situation]. Last night I had a conversation with one of my best friends who works in the [name withheld] office, and several months ago he went to [name withheld] (Western country), his first time abroad. He felt that that place is very clean, with blue sky, and so on, but other than that, there was not really much difference between Lhasa and there, so now he feels Tibet is really developed.... So, I can feel that people enjoy the material benefits in the TAR. He said this foreign place is very modernized and part of the western world and is very developed, he expected something very different from Tibet, but he found much the same blue sky, and iPhones, and the Wi-Fi connection is much better in Lhasa than there in his hotel.

Do you have an example of this change in language use?

About language, township documents are my first observation. The worst case is maybe in Linzhi [Nyingtri], in Kongpo. People my age speak to their children in Chinese more than in

Tibetan and they feel comfortable about doing it, they feel nothing unusual about it. I have a colleague in Lhasa, a PhD from China, a very close friend, and one day she took me to dinner, she has a very nice car – I’m really not part of the system, I don’t have a car – and she got a phone call and I can tell it’s her father, she said Pala or something like that, but the content was Chinese. So, I said politely – because I know her Tibetan is not good, she can speak but not write – “interesting, you speak in Chinese to your father.” She said, “Yes, we know it’s a problem and that we should speak in Tibetan, but in Linzhi it’s like that, we do like that.”

So, I went to Bayi three years ago. It’s really hard to find a noodle restaurant there with Tibetan sweet tea and Tibetan noodles, it’s really hard to find one. In the end we had to ask the cleaner. So Linzhi is a typical example of a kind of colonized city. Many of the shops and restaurants are Chinese and only those doing lower level jobs are Tibetans. Many of them are Khampas, cleaning the streets, those kinds of jobs. Because of so many Chinese in Linzhi, when Tibetans meet there, they feel very emotional. I can tell you one story. When we went to a famous scenic spot that is now very famous in the new economy called Lunang - the Chinese say Lulang – it has a five-star hotel, we went there. We came across a stand selling some local products. So, we stopped, because my Chinese colleague wanted to buy some mushrooms, and I helped. The salesgirl said to me, because she saw I was Tibetan, “Don’t buy this we are just tricking the Chinese, you are Tibetan.” So, when they meet Tibetans from other places, they automatically feel much better. There are several kinds of mushroom and she said to me, you only buy either of these two kinds, the others are just for the Chinese.

Tell me about the kindergartens.

Before there were no kindergartens. In my time at school, the instruction language was Tibetan, and then they changed the language at school – from the late 1980s to the early 1990s it become more obvious. I think it was Chen Kuiyuan’s [party secretary of the TAR, policy [1992-2000] to really discourage Tibetan language education, even at Tibet University, it was directly connected to the earlier demonstrations, they thought that Tibetan identity would increase because of language and would give them problems. So, kindergartens are something new, only over the past 10 years. Right from the beginning they are private Chinese ones where of course they hired Tibetan workers, but the owner was Chinese. It seems that the government indirectly encouraged it, they think that if these

children are fluent in Chinese at three years old, it's better for them, like Ma Rong says, they can get a better chance of jobs, and it's better for the stability issue, that's their thinking. So, when the rabbits agree to share with the cats, there is actually no issue of the cats protecting the rabbits, because the rabbits de facto become cats. Maybe inside his herd, the rabbit thinks he is a rabbit, but his way of life is effectively cat. So, the promise of protection is irrelevant, they are already cats.

Did you see inside any kindergartens in those days?

I went several times with my friend to the kindergarten, it was near our compound, in the city, it was, in terms of facilities, quite modern, they have lunch there so that the children just like you have it don't have to go back home, they have lots of pictures, like the English alphabet, on the walls. There is nothing in Tibetan. It's very modern and the environment is very good and clean and shiny and looks very nice, and so any parent going there will feel safe. And for a parent safety is the first priority, more than language. If they think their children can learn Tibetan but doing it feels unsafe, then they will give up. They will give up the language question in that case.

How did you know that they were giving preference to Chinese in that kindergarten?

When we went to pick up his son, the son came out and said "bye bye" to the teacher, who is Chinese, *laoshi zaijian*, he said something like this. So now small children, their Chinese – I have still a strong accent, not only a Tibetan accent but a local accent from my area of Tibet, they always joke about our accents in Chinese, about people of my generation – but now the small children do not have an accent when they speak Chinese. They speak just like Beijing. In a TV show in Beijing there was a singing competition recently, and there was a small boy from Amdo county in Nagchu, which is quite remote and very high, and they showed he is truly from a nomadic family and his father is still from a nomad. And when he performed, he spoke perfect Chinese, which really impressed people. On the one hand, this is good, but it's like ... the ideal scenario is you can fish, and you can still graze. On the other hand, I am really impressed by the rabbits' fishing skills, like the boy. But if the rabbit cannot graze well, then I will feel sad, because the cost is too high.

I have another theory, which I think that the government researchers do not realize. Whenever there is a demonstration by some group of people in Lhasa, what the

government does is to show some individual on Lhasa TV saying. “I was born before 1959 and at that time we were very poor, so now I am retired, my son’s children went to school in China, every Sunday we go to the park and I go and do some *korwa* [circumambulations]....” On the one hand, they sacrificed years of their time in Tibet, these Chinese who worked to achieve this in the early days, so it is true, and in the 1950s, the economy was really backward comparatively, no cars, no modern school, no bicycles. So, he is right, his two sons and daughters went to Beida [Beijing University] and now have jobs in the Tibetan government – I have no problem with that. You are right. My problem is [writes on napkin:] “individual well-being–collective well-being.”

Now the government and many researches equalize these two. Individual well-being goes up, then group well-being also goes up. That’s how they think. In the Han case, of course this is true: if every single Chinese person’s well-being improves then the total situation of the group improves. No question of loss of identity. But in the Tibet case, it is the opposite: the more progress individually then the less progress for the group, or it means even going backwards for the group. This I really think the Chinese government doesn’t realize. They think when every single individual Tibetan’s well-being improves, they should be happy. Yes, your [interviewer’s] car and house are better, it’s true, but ... So, with Tibetan children going to China, individually they lose Tibetan and master Chinese, they get a better job and living, but for the Tibetan nation it is regression. It’s the opposite way. So, I don’t think many Chinese realize this. So, whenever there is a protest, they show an individual case on television - but actually it doesn’t matter, it doesn’t make sense. When I point this out to my Chinese colleagues, they say, yes, it’s true, and they say that they had never thought of that. But they say, so then what? They think....

Recently there is a Chinese guy, quite famous, Song Luzhang, he is quite active on YouTube, he is a political scientist from Fudan and is affiliated with an institution in France. He is often shown in debate programs, such as one I watched on VOA. What he expressed is the concern of many Chinese: he talked about democracy very clearly, and about the Catalonia situation, and he said that China can never get democracy because once China gets this he is almost sure Tibet and Xinjiang would be separated through a referendum. So, he said we cannot choose democracy. I can feel Ma Rong really has this concern. Once you are democratic you have to give people self-determination rights. Then you can’t really control them. They say it doesn’t fit the Chinese context in the past, but now they directly say it is for the unity of the country. They directly say it now.

Any other evidence of Tibetan language in that kindergarten?

My friend told me there is no Tibetan language in that kindergarten. On the wall there was a colorful picture for each letter in the English alphabet, but no Tibetan. I could easily find one like that in Chengdu. And this was an ordinary one. In my [rural/remote] area, one of my cousins worked for the kindergarten run by the government, so I know that was using Tibetan. I think it is still like that, in that place. [Writes on napkin] “in economically backward places, Tibetan identity is better maintained.”

In Gyalrong a singer, a Tibetan woman, made an embarrassing mistake on television, a few months ago. It was a singing competition. It is on a video. She wanted to impress the jury. They asked why she wanted to sing in Tibetan. She said, as a Gyalrong Tibetan, “I feel bad, I want to promote our Tibetan language, because we speak it, but we do not have a written form of our language.” She used the word *Zangyue*, she means Tibetan, not a local Gyalrong language. She wanted to protect it, but she said this. So, many Tibetans were angry and said, how could you say that in front of the Chinese? They said that it is because she does not know Tibetan.

In terms of development, these places did much better than distant places, but in terms of identity they do much worse. Wang Lixiong said it in his *Sky Burial* book – I really like this idea – “nature saves Tibet.” Do you think so? Still 99 percent of people in Nagchu are Tibetans, because it is the highest area in the region, even if I give Chinese \$1 million to settle down there, they won’t do it, they won’t settle permanently. It is not the case in Linzhi, which is lower altitude, beautiful forest, so many Chinese feel like buying a house, escaping from the smog, and so on. It’s not because they had more identity in Nagchu – it’s because of nature....

Do you think some kindergartens were closed down?

I don’t have direct knowledge of this, I just heard about it. I know of some schools which were....

What about the [name withheld] school statement that was posted online, saying it had been taken over by the authorities?

Yes, I read that. I think what happened to them there is because of several factors. Maybe one is because the counterpart [government office] maybe wanted to get benefit from the local property and wanted to get the advantages of selling or renting out that property. And possibly they also had a quota of the number of children they had to say that they had reached and worked with. So, these might be part of the reasons that they did this.... But the Chinese would never say that was the reason. They'll always give another reason. Otherwise people could say that they are going against the regional autonomy law and the constitution. So, they'll say it's a tax or something else. It will always be like that.