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The Fleeting Windhorse: Tibetan Cultural Identity and the Challenge of Modernity

Introduction

Can one speak about Tibet and modernity or globalization with any kind of credibility, may the incredulous reader ask? Is Tibet not this country "[that] seemed not to belong to our earth, a society left on the shelf, set in amber, preserved in deep freeze, a land so close to the sky that the natural occupation of her people was to pray"?[1] With films such as *Seven Years in Tibet* and *Kundun*, Hollywood has presented the world with an image of Tibet that reinforces stereotypes of a land and people so other that they are seen as redeemers of a depraved modern world.[2] Tibet, so the argument is made, has to be sheltered from the attacks of the modern world so that it can save a materialistic world from itself. Tibet and modernity are two antagonistic poles that need to be kept apart unless this fantastic image of the West's unmet desire for purity and spiritual wholeness will collapse. This romanticized image of Tibet has become thoroughly incorporated in the modern popular culture. Beside films, one may refer to the Free Tibet concerts, the "Dalai Lamas" as a pop group, fragments of Buddhist scriptures as lyrics of pop songs, or Tibetan mantras imprinted on t-shirts to be sold in a sports store.

A new Tibet has been created in the media and in parts of modern scholarship: a people solely devoted to the pursuit of spiritual awareness and averse to all materialistic and worldly gains; a country united as a nation under

1 Huston Smith, *Requiem for a Faith*, Hartley Film Foundation, 1968.

2 A critical discussion of Tibet as a creature of the West's deske is given by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

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the leadership of a *bodhisattva*, i.e. the Dalai Lama, who leads the Tibetans along a path of compassion and non-violence only to be brutally attacked and destroyed by the evil of Communist China. A cataclysmic clash between good and evil—a scenario so dear to the Western mind.

This contribution, dedicated to the issue of Tibetan identity constructs, will first sketch traits of Tibetan identity as found in texts dating from the beginning of recorded Tibetan history (7^{th}-9^{th} centuries). Then, I shall demonstrate how this self-understanding underwent significant changes in the light of loss of political independence and increased dependence on the military might of neighboring countries. In the last portion of this contribution I shall reflect on contemporary Tibetan writers and their vision of identity constructs before returning to the issues raised at the beginning, i.e., the question of how modernity and a concomitant globalization affect the notion of cultural identity among Tibetans. My claim is that two streams of events, i.e. the disintegration and fragmentation of the Tibetan polity from the 9^{th} century on and the domination over Tibet established during the Yuan Dynasty, shattered the self-image of the early Tibetan empire, so vivid in its prowess and youthful recklessness, and displaced it with an identity of humility and piety expressed through Buddhist mytho-historic narratives. I will further argue that by continuously embracing this fictive image of Buddhist humility and piety, the engagement with modernity and its concomitant processes, i.e. modern economy and social structure, becomes more difficult. Finally, I will engage writings by contemporary Tibetans in this critical discourse.

Entry into History and Following Its Winding Path

Long before Tibetan tribes entered the realm of recorded history in the early 7^{th} century, proto-Tibetan tribes had been in contact with the Chinese empire that tried to pacify its western frontier, which was prone to raids by "western barbarians" (Jay). In the late sixth century the chief of the *Bod* tribe subdued neighboring tribes forging them into an alliance that occupied the valley of the Tsangpo River and those of its southern tributaries. This was the beginning of the Tibetan empire that stepped on to the world stage with prowess and significant military success. Srong-btsan sgam-po (618-49), Tibet's first historically documented ruler, expanded the territory he inherited from his father through raids, wars, and ambush. His power culminated in the fifth decade when he demanded and, eventually received a Tang princess as wife and when he invaded the kingdom of Tirhut in northern India to avenge an

assault on the Chinese delegation that was there to participate in the celebratory reception provided for Hsuan-tsang, the famous Chinese Buddhist master and monk-scholar. For two centuries the Tibetan rulers dominated vast stretches of Central Asia with their armies.

While testimonies from these two centuries present the rulers as warrior-kings who claimed the tide "the divine mighty one of occult wisdom" *(phrul gyi Iba btsan po),* an increasing exposure to Buddhist narratives linked the ancient indigenous ideology of the ruler with Buddhist concepts of the *dbarmar ja,* "king of righteousness," as bodhisattva (Buddha-to-be). Tibetan sources dating from the 11th century on, portray the rulers as instruments of Buddha's "skill in means" (kaushala up ya) and as bodhisattvas. Up to the present Tibetan cultural identities are grounded in these mytho-historic narratives that displaced narration of and engagement with factual history.

The distinct redefinition and re-writing of these foundational narratives that form the root of Tibetan cultural identities seem to have been effected by two historical situations. The first is the disintegration of the Tibetan empire in the mid 9th century and the subsequent fragmentation of power and governance in Tibet (Gyalbo et al. 4-6); the second situation is the Tibetans' loss of autonomy at the hands of the Mongols and the Yuan Dynasty. Claims made by the exile Tibetan community and some of its Western supporters that Tibet remained an independent and autonomous country during and beyond the Yuan Dynasty (Shakabpa 73-82) are in striking conflict with the testimony of recently published documents housed in the Archives of the Tibet Autonomous Region (Archives 1-22) which clearly demonstrate that the Mongol Khans and Yuan emperors had authority over the Tibetan land and its people and monasteries. During the Yuan Dynasty, the concept of "priest and patron" *(mchod yon)* was conceived to condense the multi-layered hierarchies that structured the relationship between Tibetan monastic regents and the Yuan emperors into one symbolic phrase. From the disintegration of the Tibetan empire in the 9th century onward, endless and often bitter internal feuds absorbed the military and political energy of the various Tibetan noble families as they fought over hegemonic domination. As a consequence, the defense of the Tibetan land was left to foreign powers, the Mongols and increasingly to the Chinese empire. Tibet retreated increasingly into a self-created cocoon where historicizing fiction and myths enwrapped the formation of cultural identity. The West eagerly adopted the image of Tibet as Shangri La, as total otherness to satisfy unmet desires and yearnings of its own (Lopez). This cocoon is now pried open by modernity and the modern

economy and related shifts in social organization. I shall contrast narratives that reflect the much-cherished mytho-historicism with writings by contemporary Tibetans.

Traditional Identity Construct

To trace the changing imagery of Tibetan identity constructs, we need to start with the cultural identity as taking shape during the dynastic period of Tibetan history (7th to 9th centuries). The scarcity of contemporary sources limits our choice of evidence. Therefore, I turn to an inscription ascribed to the second last of the Tibetan dynastic rulers, King Khri-gtsug Ide-brtsan (r. 815-838) rather than to a desirable but not extant inscription or document ascribed to King Srong-btsan sgam-po, the first historically documented ruler of Tibet. Khri-gtsug Ide-brtsan attempted in the early years of the 820s to forge an alliance with Emperor Mu-tsung of the Tang Dynasty (Richardson 37). Befittingly, the inscription, which is preserved on a rock pillar erected near the main entrance of the Jo-khang in Lha-sa, starts with the intent of forming a political alliance before continuing with a description of the divine nature and descent of the Tibetan king:

> The Divine King of Miracles, Ho Lde Spu Rgyal, from the time when this country came into being and the earth emerged, thereafter came to be a ruler of men and became the great king of Tibet. From being a god in heaven he came to be a king of men in a high country and a pure land, the centre of snowy mountains and the source of great rivers. By the great sciences he established an enduring kingdom. By excellent religious rule he instituted good order. With kindly affection he devoted himself to the affairs of the interior. Through knowledge of the arts of war he subdued outer enemies, increased the breadth of his kingdom and established its extent and might firmly and unchangeably. (Richardson 60)

The passage emphasizes the ruler's divine descent, being a god on earth to rule humanity and his command of *'phrul,* a Tibetan word that combines trickery, magic and esoteric wisdom. This esoteric but cunning wisdom enables him to do two things: he establishes with loving kindness good order within and he subdues the enemies from without while increasing the might of his kingdom. Three conceptual clusters arise from the passage that will have lasting impact on the cultural identity of Tibetans: there is first the divine descent of the ruler that sets the stage for later texts that claim the ruler to be a bodhisattva on

earth; secondly the text fuses the ruler with the land that is described in idealistic fashion as a high land, the source of mighty rivers amidst snowy mountains; thirdly the passage constructs a dichotomy of within and without, whereby the ruler's benign disposition is directed toward the within but his wrath against the without.

The entire inscription, covering all four sides of the pillar, exhibits an air of this-worldliness. The names and ranks of the various bureaucrats and dignitaries of Tibet and China are listed beside a condensed account of the previous military encounters between China and Tibet. The text does not make any reference to Buddhism although another ancient text, the dBa*' bzhed*, which in its earliest extant manuscript is attributed to the 10th century (Wangdu/ Diemberger 8) says that under his rule "[t]he religious law was tied again like a silken knot and the holy doctrine was put into a system" (op. cit. 91). We can safely assume that the wording of the inscription is the product of the royal chancery and thus of secular noblemen while the subsequent texts that formed the foundational narrative (Bhabha 292) of Tibetan identity "were written from an exclusively Buddhist viewpoint to celebrate the past glories of clans and principalities...and the Tibetan state itself (Wangdu/ Diemberger 5). Consequently, the this-worldliness that is so tangible in the Mu tsung / Khri IDe-gtsug-brtsan inscription is increasingly displaced by a Buddhist ficto-historicity. The pivotal symbols of Tibetan cultural identity have been transmuted from warrior-king to bodhisattva and from a land amidst snowy mountains to Shangri La.

In the subsequent passage I want to reflect on these Buddhist ficto-historiographies as foundational narratives for a Tibetan cultural identity that choose to resist the flux of history. The formation of these ficto-historiographies seems to have roots in textual sources of the late dynastic period (9th century). For instance, the claim that Tibet's ruler is an embodiment of bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, i.e. ultimate compassion, occurs in several texts of this period. They relate a story of two Khotanese monks who believed that they saw Avalokiteshvara in Srong-btsan sgam-po, the first historically documented Tibetan ruler (Wangdu/ Diemberger 32 and 33 n.51). It seems that when these narratives were first conceived, they stood side by side with more this-worldly and non-Buddhist visions of ruler and nation. However around the time of the Yuan dynasty the Buddhist narratives that had made their first appearance during the last hour of the imperial period, displaced the non-Buddhist and this-worldly narratives forever. For instance, the famous Tibetan monk-scholar Bu-ston (1290-1364) referred in his *History*

of Buddhism to the literary tradition of the two Khotanese monks envisioning the Tibetan ruler as a bodhisattva but he remains silent about the great political and cultural achievements of this ruler while he dwells extensively on Srong-btsan sgam-po as promoter of Buddhism. However, most of these purported missionary accomplishments defy historical verification up to the present.

The myth of establishing Tibet as the domain of Avalokiteshvara who regularly manifests in its rulers is fully developed in the *Clear Mirror of Genealogies (*\ 368). The ninth chapter, which accounts the birth of Srong-btsan sgam-po starts by narrating first the miraculous birth of the Nepalese and Chinese princesses before addressing Srong-btsan sgam-po's.

> "Then again from [Avalokiteshvara's] mouth came a ray of light, and it echoed from far and beyond from rocks and water courses. To discipline the pig-headed [creatures] of this remote land...the six syllables appeared. Then light rays again emanated from his heart and went to the kingdom of Snow and it made the whole land of Bod, the Snowy One, covered with light. Also the Byams-pa mi-'gyur palace was covered with light. The king gNam-ri srong-btsan was also fully covered with light. Then all these rays of light gathered and entered the womb of 'Bri-za thod-dkar-ma, the queen of King gNam-ri srong-btsan, and signs of good fortune appeared in the whole land. After nine months and two weeks had passed, an exceptional son was born in the Byams-pa mi-'gyur Palace in a Fire Ox year. On his head Buddha AmitO bha dwelt."

Then the text continues to glorify the young prince to be like a Buddha.

This passage establishes the Tibetan ruler not as a successful warlord and shrewd politician but as the embodiment of Avalokiteshvara. In this capacity, Srong-btsan sgam-po's grand task is to remove the darkness of ignorance from the inhabitants of the Land of Snow and to establish them in the *buddbadharma.* While the historical Srong-btsan sgam-po was vulnerable to being politically and militarily challenged, the divine *figura* of Srong-btsan sgam-po / Avalokiteshvara was beyond such human foibles. In this narrative, the political arena in which Srong-btsan sgam-po acted and, which he had helped to create, was drowned in a gigantic flood of light which acted as main metaphor to indicate the other-worldliness of the force that was now about to take shape in the Land of Snow. By erasing the historical reality of Srong-btsan sgam-po and along with it the historicity of Tibet's political fate, the author of the *Mirror of Genealogies* elevates Tibet from being a part of the

historical/political reality of Central Asia to something that has more in common with one of the Buddha lands than with any principality on earth.

The year in which the *Mirror of Genealogies* was completed, i.e., 1368, is the year of the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty, a fact that freed Tibet from Mongolian sovereignty before the following Ming Dynasty reestablished its sovereignty over Tibet. This timeframe implies that the work on the *Mirror* was carried out while the Mongols still imposed their demand for tribute on the Tibetans. Facing the formidable military force of the Mongols, the Tibetan erudite monastic elite, to which our author (the Sa-skya-pa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan, abbot of bSam-yas monastery) belonged, chose to displace the concrete reality of a ruler who fought victoriously the super-powers of his world with a fictive religio/mythic vision that eludes the necessity to take a stance in this world. Srong-btsan sgam-po, as Avalokiteshvara, was placed on a plane far above any other ruler, a plane where he could never be seen as an antagonist or rival to the Mongolian emperor. Even the mightiest of the Mongols was no rival for a true bodhisattva. Rather than claiming their place in this world, the Tibetan intellectuals preferred a ficto-religious historiographic stance of superiority that released them from any political responsibility.

The flight into a world of religio-historical fiction where Buddhas of compassion ruled benignly made the harsh realities of politics and diplomacy disappear beyond a horizon bathed in the light of mythos and of selective memory and historical amnesia. This flight becomes particularly evident in some of the actions, or rather non-actions adopted by the late XIIIth Dalai Lama (early 20th century) when he returned diplomatic letters unopened that were sent to him by the British Viceroy of India, an inaction that eventually resulted in the British invasion of Lhasa, which in turn provoked a much harsher response from China. Similarly, the Tibetan government chose to ignore the repeated claims made by the various governments of China that Tibet was and is part of China and avoided negotiations with them.

Confronting Modernity and the Search for Identity

I have claimed that two events were pivotal in ushering in an era where ficto-historiographies displaced factual realities: the disintegration of dynastic Tibet in the mid 9th century along with its ensuing fragmentation of political power and the domination by the Mongols during the Yuan Dynasty that eliminated the possibility of a Tibetan autonomy. By the late 14th century, the ficto-

historiographies were firmly entrenched and hence formed the foundational narratives on which Tibetan cultural identity is resting. The Tibet that has been shielded in the past by the highest mountain ranges on earth, the most forbidding deserts and insurmountable river gorges, is increasingly confronted with modernity. Highways connect the Tibetan plateau with other Chinese provinces and with Nepal and India; a railroad is being constructed connecting the ancient Silk Road with Lhasa, and airstrips dot the Tibetan landscape.

In the following part of my paper, I shall turn to contemporary accounts that reveal issues of cultural identity. My objective is to show that, on the one hand, the religious ficto-historiography of the past is used as a protective shield against modernity, while on the other hand a new quest for identity becomes manifest that blends traditional Tibetan narratives with the experience of modernity.

My first example is the abbreviated life story of mKhan-po 'Jigs-phun, a religious master who plays an important role in reviving certain death rituals and meditations in Golok Serta, northwest Sichuan (Germano 58-62, 166 n!3). Born in 1933, his life story unfolds along the conventional lines of Tibetan hagiographies: a miraculous birth ("placenta sac draped around his shoulders like a monastic robe;" recognition of intense light at the moment of birth), identification with a religious master of the past and religious studies and practices. However, when the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution reached this remote area of the Tibetan mountains, mKhan-po 'Jigs-phun retreated into an inner realm created from shreds of Tibetan narratives of prophetic "treasure finders" and of shamanic experiences of the warrior deity Gesar. In his autobiographical notes, mKhan-po 'Jigs-phun claims that when evoking Gesar before his inner eye, the warrior deity protected him from a "struggle session" and similar dangers of the modern world by, for instance, temporarily disfiguring his face. During the course of his life, mKhan-po 'Jigs-phun's identity continued to merge with one of the warrior deity's generals. This identification functioned like a veil withdrawing him from the hostile gaze of the modern world. The autobiographical account follows the same literary strategy developed by the ficto-historiographies of the 14th century, that is, a strategy that displaces an often hostile and antagonistic present with a religio-fictive narrative that seems to acknowledge a past molded from selective memories and amnesia in which the individual finds a comforting and uncontested place. In mKhan-po 'Jigs-phun's account, an engagement with modernity, which he encountered during his stay in Beijing and on a trip to the

United States, does not occur. He remains sheltered in the cocoon of ancient fictional yet foundational narratives.

Tibetan exiles often chose a similar approach in piecing together a new yet ancient identity. A telling example is the cult of *rDo-rje zhugs-ldan* that pitches cult followers, who identify themselves with this tutelary deity, against exiles who reject the cult as too specious. Each group claims a vision of Tibetan identity that is intolerant of diversity. In their attempt to "rebuild" a Tibetan identity that justifies the loss of the Tibetan homeland and the ensuing exile, a note of cultural "purity" creeps in. Tibetan culture and its concomitant identity are presented as homogenous and untainted by any hybridity; it is pristinely enshrined in its exotic otherness—an ancient artifact on display, created for the consumption of Western fans.

In contrast to these religio/ficto-narratives that pose as historiographies and autobiographies is a piece of fiction by Zhaxi Dawa, an ethnic Tibetan born in 1959 who now lives in Lhasa. His short story "Souls Tied to the Knots on a Leather Cord" bears more resemblance with reality than those texts that claim to be historical and factual but are rendering a web of fictive desires interwoven with selected bits of memory and amnesia (Tai 137-69). Unlike stories that perpetrate cultural homogeneity and purity, Zhaxi Dawa's story begins with an alien setting—the Andes, their landscape, and folkloristic music—before turning to the narrator's native village on the Tibetan plateau. In his story, Tibet is not unique; it is similar to the Andes—no Shangri La. Scenery, people, culture and even time shift between the alien and the familiar, the fictive and the realistic, the ancient/primitive and the industrial/modern, as well as the past and an unknown present. Bucolic scenes of a Tibet the West has so much fallen in love with are punctuated with solar energy power plants, tractor-trailers manufactured in Germany and people with doctorates in agriculture. But from within this Tibetan modernity creep up ancient Tibetan customs betraying themselves through body language. "[H]e will every now and then inhale loudly through his lips and make subservient ululating noises with his tongue ... some of the old folks still take off their hats and hold them against their chests as they step to one side, to show their heartfelt respect" (Tai 138). The story itself literally escapes from the mouth of a dying Buddhist monk, who seems to remember it although it had remained hidden from his eyes, tucked away in the narrator/author's desk. Toward the end of the story, the narrator contemplates how and why he released the protagonists into the fictive landscape they inhabit and where he encounters them dying. Zhaxi Dawa employs here a literary strategy of creating an alienating distance

between the reader and his/her desire to identify with the story's characters. The author, claiming ownership of the story, alludes that it is nothing but a creature of his imagination and that the reader should maintain a critical distance to the story. On the one hand, Zhaxi Dawa demonstrates here his familiarity with similar literary techniques employed by contemporary Western writers,[3] while on the other hand he uses aspects of Buddhist philosophy—i.e., that everything is a projection of the mind—to create an interesting alienating literary effect. In contrast to Lu Tonglin who classifies Zhaxi Dawa's short stories as "experimental fiction" (Lu 104-28) and critiques who perceived misogynist trends in his work, I propose to understand him from his ethnic/ cultural roots and the challenge modernity imposes on his ethnic community. The few academics who have engaged with Zhaxi Dawa's writings usually see him as a representative of magical realism and inspired by Latin American writers (Schiaffini).

The protagonists are a woman who "think[s] about the childhood and adolescence she has spent on this lonely, desolate little hilltop, about those people—always silent and expressionless" (Tai 143f) and a man, a traveler, "born without a home" (Tai 145) and "who has come from afar and will leave for some distant place the next day" (Tai 144). Neither have a home, a place to which they belong and neither do they know where they will go. The only destination they know of is the unknown. The Tibetan plateau stretches into a far distance without any features or boundaries—like the lives of the two protagonists who travel through life not knowing from where they came nor where to go. They are like tumble weed blown across the plains by the relentless wind of the Tibetan plateau. The *angst* of the modern world with its elimination of structure and boundaries animates the Tibetan plateau so lacking in any geographical features save its sheer expanse. Zhaxi Dawa articulates the tension between the pre-modern and archaic world of Tibet and the modern technological world by juxtaposing Chiong, the young woman who follows Tabei, the restless wanderer, with a monk of the *Geluk* order.[4] Chiong counts her days of wandering by tying a knot for each day into a

3 In Timothey Findlay's *Headhunter*, Lilah, the librarian, releases Kurtz from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as a menacing creature into the reality of the *Headhunter* narrative (Findlay, 3).

4 The translator of Zhaxi Dawa's story, originally written in Chinese, obviously misunderstood the equivalent to "yellow hat" as a name while, in a popular mode, the expression denotes members of the *Geluk* order whose members are often referred to as Yellow Hats.

leather sash, thus mimicking the pre-historic Tibetan habit to transmit messages through knots in ropes while the Yellow Hat monk has an electronic calculator. "Whatever problems I run into I solve them with this thing.... We Tibetans never used to keep track of our age. But this thing knows" boasts the monk proudly (Tai 150). A deep chasm separates Zhaxi Dawa's characters from those in the ficto-religious narratives where all events are inscribed in the timeless plans of Buddha's compassion, where nothing is left to serendipity.

Chiong and Tabei, sometimes united in their passion and sometimes wandering off separately, enter deeper into the Tibetan desert of gullies and crevasses, which are nothing but the lines in the palm of Guru Padmasambhava, the semi-mythic figure credited with adapting Buddhism to Tibetan taste. They lose themselves in this labyrinth to face their end. Zhaxi Dawa seems to suggest that when the Tibetans seek the security of structure and boundaries in the old way of life, they face their annihilation. At this moment, when the reader anticipates the narrator's despair of any hope for his people, he enters the story. Literally he slides into the narrative by falling down a snow-covered slope. "I knew I could no longer stop of my own accord, so I drew myself up into a ball and rolled down the mountain as heaven and earth spun around and around me" (Tai 161). He steps out of real time and his "fully automatic, solar-powered electronic time piece" moves backward (Tai 162)! In a grand vision, the narrator portrays the pain of the Tibetans who are searching for a path to their future by referring to Dali's "The Temptation of Saint Anthony" and to the warrior deity of the Tibetans, Gesar. In the end the narrator wonders "And why is it that to this day I have not been able to give shape to 'people of a new type'?" (Tai 166) .The search for the modern Tibetan ends with the fanfare of the L.A. Olympics and the author concludes: "and we set out on the journey back. Time begins again, from the beginning."

In this short story Zhaxi Dawa has explored the conundrum of the Tibetans who, entangled in an enticing modern consumerism, nevertheless find themselves caught in a labyrinth of ancient customs, dreams and fantasies. His story has no answers, only questions; no compassionate Buddha or bodhisattva is rescuing the people from their own errors, greed and desires. The path into the future seems to go back whereby the past turns into what lies ahead. Zhaxi Dawa's protagonists are conflicted personalities caught in a web of hybridity that brings the characters to life unlike the narratives arising from the ficto-historiographies.

Reflections

I claimed that during the imperial period, Tibetans created the ruler's identity as divine warrior who wields the power of occult wisdom as his most powerful weapon. Further, I presented the hypothesis that the collapse of the Tibetan empire in the ninth century as well as the loss of political independence during the rule of the Mongols and the Yuan dynasty enticed Tibetan authors to transform a narrative rooted in military and occult might into a Buddhist narrative of other-worldly compassion and predestination. This ficto-religious pseudo-history became the foundational narrative on which much of present Tibetan identity claims are based. Some contemporary Tibetans, like mKhan-po 'Jigs-phun of Serta, still embrace this strategy of evading engagement with the actual socio-political environment by escaping into a shamanic vision. However, some other Tibetans, and granted they are very few, venture out from the cocoon of ficto-historicism and courageously wander, like Zhaxi Dawa's protagonists, into the unknown of modernity to forge a new identity. Unfortunately, it seems that the Tibetan public is not yet ready to let authors like Zhaxi Dawa speak in their native Tibetan tongue. He has to write his short stories in Chinese![5]

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