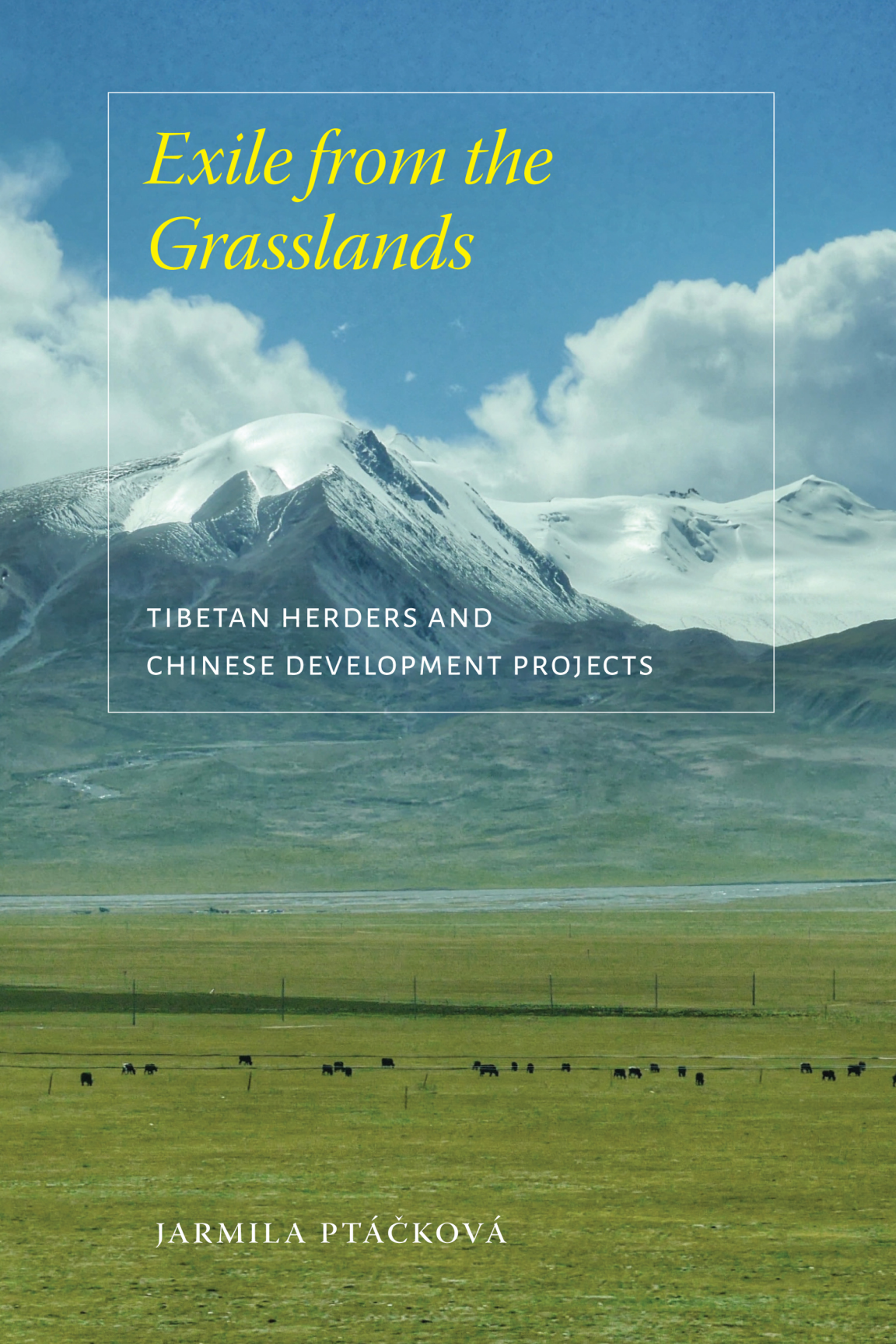
Exile from the Grasslands
TIBETAN HERDERS AND CHINESE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
JARMILA PTÁČKOVÁ

STUDIES ON ETHNIC GROUPS IN CHINA
Stevan Harrell, Editor

EXILE FROM THE GRASSLANDS

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Jarmila Ptáčková

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS

Seattle

Exile from the Grasslands was made possible in part by a grant from the Association for Asian Studies First Book Subvention Program.

Composed in Warnock Pro, typeface designed by Robert Slimbach

24 23 22 21 20 5 4 3 2 1

Printed and bound in the United States of America

All photographs are by the author.
Maps created by author, with graphic adjustments by Iva Holbová

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS
uwapress.uw.edu

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA
Names: Ptáčková, Jarmila, author.
Title: Exile from the Grasslands : Tibetan Herders and Chinese Development Projects / Jarmila Ptáčková.
Description: Seattle : University of Washington Press, [2020] | Series: Studies on ethnic groups in China
Identifiers: LCCN 2020020397 (print) | LCCN 2020020398 (ebook) | ISBN 9780295748184 (hardcover) | ISBN 9780295748191 (paperback) | ISBN 9780295748207 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Tibetans—Cultural assimilation–China–Zêkog Xian. | Nomads—Sedentarization—China—Qinghai Sheng. | Herders—China—Qinghai Sheng. | Tibetans—China—Zêkog Xian—Economic conditions. | Grasslands—China—Qinghai Sheng—Management. | Range policy—China—Qinghai Sheng. | Forced migration—China—Qinghai Sheng. | Pastoral systems—China—Qinghai Sheng. | Economic development projects—China—Zêkog Xian. | Zêkog Xian (China)—Economic conditions—21st century.
Classification: LCC DS793.T7 P73 2020 (print) | LCC DS793.T7 (ebook) | DDC 323.1195/4105147—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020020397
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020020398

The paper used in this publication is acid free and meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48–1984.∞

To the nomads

Contents

Foreword

STEVAN HARRELL

What happens when people living a largely self-sufficient life as nomadic herders get swept up in the throes of economic growth, nation building, and futuristic social engineering? What do they gain, and what do they lose?

The world knows that China is changing rapidly. Moving from being a poor country struggling to feed itself as late as the 1980s to "the world's factory" beginning in the 1990s and to a growing tech powerhouse and engine of the global tourism industry at present, China has transitioned from agrarian to industrial, from rural to urban, from plan to market, from isolated to integrated in the world.

Much of the world also knows that Tibet is part of the People's Republic and that Tibetans and human rights activists around the world have decried Communist policies to restrict religious activity and promote Chinese patriotism among Tibet's population, and more generally to incorporate Tibet (along with the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region) more closely into China's economy and society.

What we know less about is how these two trends come together in the lives of ordinary Tibetans, most of whom are not factory workers or religious activists, though they are devout believers in Buddhism and local religions. In *Exile from the Grasslands*, Jarmila Ptáčková opens a window on a little-known part of China's and Tibet's recent history, showing us how Tibetan nomads interact with the Chinese government's bureaucratic projects that aim to turn them into modern, sedentary, educated citizens.

The drama of sedentarization has played out over the past decade in rTse khog County (Zeku in Chinese) in Amdo (Qinghai Province), a place that Ptáčková provocatively describes as nowhere in particular—no famous monasteries, no stunning scenery, few endangered species, no valuable mineral

resources, no domestic or foreign tourist trade. Just pastures and pastures, where people have run their sheep, yaks, and other livestock for centuries, until the Chinese authorities decided to "Open the West" to development and modernization.

Then everything happened. Plan upon bewildering plan, each administered through a slightly different bureaucracy with different sources of funding, different incentives for supervising officials, different goals, and different timelines, descended upon rTse khog and the surrounding areas. Parts were included in one of the world's largest nature reserves, the Sanjiangyuan, or Three Rivers' Headwaters. Scientists blamed pastoralists' overgrazing for degradation of pasturelands and infestations by cute but destructive little pikas. Most of all, the state built towns for herders to move into when they were dispossessed of their pastures, promising education, medical care, and other services that sometimes materialized, plus jobs that usually did not.

Because she was able to conduct long-term field research in rTse khog and to examine the near-chaos of planning and policy documents relating to the various programs, Ptáčková takes us to the grasslands, the administrative offices, and the new towns appearing overnight in the region and details both the plans and the results when the authorities sort of implemented those plans. The results so far are equivocal. Many pastoralists did get access to education and other services, but a lot of them are spending a lot of time hanging around playing pool and drinking. Young people are often glad for the new opportunities, tenuous as they might be, while older folks miss the grasslands. And in fact, despite all these programs, not everybody has actually even moved.

The story of resettlement on the Tibetan Plateau is a complex one that is far from over. As Ptáčková reminds us, nomadic pastoralism probably was not going to last forever; the herders, or the vast majority of them, would eventually join the settled, connected, built-up world. What matters is how the transition happens. So far, the process has been muddled and has involved unnecessary suffering and frustration. How it will play out in the future is unclear, but *Exile from the Grasslands* gives us the basis for understanding the part of the story still to be told.

We are delighted to have *Exile from the Grasslands* as the twenty-fourth volume in our continuing series, Studies on Ethnic Groups in China.

Preface

The twenty-first century brought a series of new challenges for the Tibetan pastoralists in China. Through its targeted development policy, China's government finally managed to secure full access to the most remote corners of the wide rangelands, both to expand infrastructure and to control the population. China promotes its development policy as finally bringing civilization to the "backward" regions of the Chinese West and providing people with comfortable living and access to consumer markets, private services, and state welfare. Critical Western scholarship, on the other hand, tends to see the implementation of state development policies in Tibetan pastoral areas as an example of forced urbanization and sedentarization that endangers the core of Tibetan culture and identity.

Neither of these two controversial claims is entirely right or entirely wrong. The contemporary state-induced development process affecting the population of Tibetan pastoralists, among others, cannot be reduced to pragmatic integration or forceful assimilation. It is both.

The rural Tibetan population—especially the younger generations—wants better access to the "modern" environment of the cities, to earn more money, and to lead a more comfortable life without the hardships of pastoralism. At the same time, the loss of the grassland connection is the biggest worry of the pastoralists, in terms of both their identity and economic security, as even under the massive contemporary modernization of rural areas, access to pastures continues to offer the most sustainable income for many Tibetan pastoralists. It allows them to herd livestock, gain access to state environmental subsidies, and possibly also harvest caterpillar fungus.

For the state, the rapid development of the high plateau is no less controversial. The new infrastructure offers access to the natural and human resources of China's West, and the removal of the pastoral population from the grasslands through sedentarization or resettlement offers a quick entry

to planned development areas. However, from a long-term perspective—and economically—the state-induced displacement of the pastoral population, which has undermined both livelihoods and established social structures, has presented a much larger financial burden than was expected. Through its top-down planning and accelerated implementation, the development of the high plateau resulting in mass sedentarization of the Tibetan pastoralists has become a very complex issue.

Writing this book has involved disentangling many parallel, overlapping, and often controversial policies to understand the mechanisms of contemporary Chinese policymaking. I hope this book will help others to orient themselves in this turbulent period of the transformation of China's West, the socioeconomic and cultural transformation of Tibetan pastoralist society, and Chinese policymaking and decision-making processes at various levels of administration.

Acknowledgments

This book would not exist without the generous support provided by the people of rTse khog and my friends and colleagues from Qinghai and Sichuan, who unfortunately cannot be named here. I would also like to thank Amdo Ronggan and Tashi Dorje for their assistance during the data collection process and for their help in solving some language issues connected to the policy terms in Tibetan. In addition, I owe special thanks to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive criticism and appreciated suggestions, to the editorial team of the University of Washington Press, to Lorri Hagman and Stevan Harrell for their valuable comments and enormous patience during the editing process, to my mentor Toni Huber, and to my dear friend and colleague Ondřej Klimeš, who helped to turn this manuscript into a book.

Note about Translation

Names and terms are provided in either romanized Chinese or Tibetan, depending on the language of common use in Qinghai. Upon first occurrence, corresponding equivalents are provided in parentheses. Romanized terms are Tibetan unless context indicates that they are Chinese or they are preceded by "Ch."

EXILE FROM THE GRASSLANDS

INTRODUCTION

A RED FLAG FLUTTERS ABOVE THE FLAT ROOF OF THE TIBETAN VILLAGE house. Inside, the family has placed posters of the now five great Chinese leaders—or at least the most recent of them, Xi Jinping. The new family car is parked outside the village, and everyone is dressed in their old clothes. Everything transmits the correct impression of being in need and, above all, grateful to the state and Chinese Communist Party for its national effort to fight poverty and promote modernization in China's countryside. The village, and especially the family selected to receive support, is ready for a delegation arriving to see the progress of the Targeted Poverty Alleviation (Ch: Jingzhun Fupin) Project and to distribute ever-changing amounts of cash.[1]

Such scenes have played out repeatedly in recent decades across the Tibetan Plateau, where communities of pastoralists struggle to respond to Chinese economic goals. Targeted Poverty Alleviation, the latest in a long series of state-instigated projects aimed at changing life in the Chinese countryside with the lofty ambition of finally eliminating poverty and "backwardness" among China's population by 2020, was encroaching on the lives of Tibetan Plateau residents while this book was finalized.[2] The project claimed to focus on indirect aid distribution through the provision of additional skills and the mobilization of local financial and labor resources for sustainable economic development in rural areas. The Targeted Poverty Alleviation Project targeted those households the village leader identified as being among the poorest but able to develop sustainable livelihoods with state assistance. In reality, however, households with good relations with the village leader, rather than those most in need, are sometimes selected for the project. Furthermore, like other socioeconomic development projects previously implemented in China's West, Targeted Poverty Alleviation often

resorted to distribution of subsidies in the form of cash or houses in order to demonstrate income increases.[3]

When I last visited Zeku County (rTse khog), Qinghai, in 2017, the pastoralists there were still waiting to experience the impact of the Targeted Poverty Alleviation Project. Restricted by a tight deadline, however, officials in the Zeku Department for Poverty Alleviation had limited options for raising people out of poverty by creating or supporting local creation of a new production base to generate income. Thus, by 2017 only plans for the construction of housing had been elaborated, with no significant progress in helping settlers integrate socially and economically.

Whether this new project, along with its new and ambitious agenda, will in fact be any different from its forerunners or whether it will also end up using mass house construction and sedentarization to demonstrate development will become clear only in years to come. Statistics from 2020 and beyond will likely show that there are no longer any poor people—those with income below the national poverty line—living on the grasslands of Zeku County and elsewhere. People will be registered as township or county residents, and in cases where there is need, a state subsidy will be used to supplement their income, raising it above the poverty line. If the implementation patterns of top-down control and state-imposed projects with stringent time constraints do not change, real policy outcomes and improvements in the actual lives and livelihoods of the pastoralists will remain illusory.

In parallel with this development, in Zeku County the aim was to gradually bring animal husbandry and the pasturelands under the management of countryside cooperatives, eventually transferring control from the villagers and villages to external enterprises, such as the meat-packing plant scheduled to be built in Zeku to process local livestock.[4] While this might represent a new income source for local pastoralists, it will be feasible only if they retain their access to the grasslands, their usage rights, and their herds—an arrangement that contradicts the objective of urbanization implicit in the local implementation approach of the Targeted Poverty Alleviation Project.

These examples of upcoming change help demonstrate the ongoing, vivid, and generally unpredictable dynamics that influence the present world of Tibetan pastoralists, not only in Zeku, but also elsewhere on the Tibetan Plateau. They represent the omnipresence of change, as well as the impermanency of development policies. They also confirm the view of many pastoralists who have become passive recipients of state-induced programs that it makes little sense to invest effort in creating a new existence because circumstances can change at any time, presenting aid recipients with yet more challenges in yet another place.

The Targeted Poverty Alleviation Project in Zeku also encourages the already resettled or sedentarized pastoralists to move yet again into supposedly improved housing facilities. In this case, the impression of definitiveness or at least of definitive change is created through the requirement that project participants tear down their grassland houses. The participants therefore cannot return to the grasslands, as was possible during previous sedentarization projects; they can only go forward, toward "modernity." The establishment of new countryside cooperatives, which have only a rather dubious potential to benefit the pastoralists economically, was encouraged at the village level. These cooperatives are intended to be shared thereafter by all villagers, ideally expanding in the future to cover the whole county in a system strongly reminiscent of the former communes.

Besides the failure to meet the real targets of the Targeted Poverty Alleviation Project, for example, in the case of the selection of supported households, corruption, and lack of sustainability, other questions are apparent. Can distribution of houses actually lead to modernity or at least help to alleviate poverty? What will happen to the hundreds of abandoned resettlement houses that are not connected to functioning infrastructure or to the thousands of kilometers of wire fencing that have been installed as part of the grassland management policies over the last two decades to help allocate pastures to each household and encourage sedentarization? The fences will hinder the development of a cooperative village- or county-wide herding system. Will the state tear them down? Deinstallation could contribute to the restoration of more balanced livestock distribution patterns and support grassland recovery, but would it be a long-term arrangement or just another temporary measure and another expense the state budget and perhaps the pastoralists will have to carry?

It would be presumptuous to imply that this book can explain the (seeming) irrationality behind many of the development projects and their complex approaches and answer questions associated with the final outcomes of the current Chinese state-induced development policy toward Tibetan pastoralists. But it may serve as a record of the transformation of Tibetan landscapes and peoples during a decade shaped by struggles over contradictory policy designs, inconsequential implementation patterns, and inventive adaptation strategies adopted by officials and pastoralists.

THE COMPLEX ISSUE OF SEDENTARIZATION

This book is about "development" and its effects on the people and rangelands of the Amdo region, a part of the eastern Tibetan Plateau, which

currently lies mostly within the administrative unit of Qinghai.[5] Of particular concern is the case of pastoralists, for whom development means not only a more urban environment and more "modern" household equipment. Promoting a sedentary way of life as more developed, the current Chinese state-initiated development projects encourage pastoralists to change their entire way of life—including housing, livelihood, and daily routine. The Tibetan pastoralists (*'brog pa*; high-pasture ones) are often identified as nomads, referring to their tradition of mobile pastoralism.[6] The attempt to reeducate and "civilize" them and include them in the general social and economic system of China started with the implementation of various state land reforms in the 1950s.[7] Subsequently, not only the land cultivation patterns but also the animal husbandry practices in Tibetan areas have changed so that Tibetan pastoralists have already become more sedentary. Particularly after the introduction of people's communes and the subsequent Household Responsibility System (Ch: Jiating Lianchan Chengbao Zeren Zhi), Tibetan pastoralists lost their flexibility of movement. Unable to avoid the impact of natural weather conditions by relocating to pastures offering better fodder for their livestock, these people are in the process of losing their "nomadic" status. Therefore, the term *nomad* is being increasingly replaced by *pastoralist*.[8] Although the Tibetan pastoralists have experienced varying levels of sedentarization for several decades, the current pressure on sedentarization from the state is unprecedented and aims to gradually include all Tibetan pastoralists inhabiting the grasslands.[9]

The period treated by this book started at the turn of the twenty-first century and is dominated by the Great Opening of the West (Ch: Xibu da Kaifa) development strategy, which aimed to develop and change the landscapes and peoples in China's central and western regions and to end subsistence-based livelihoods such as Tibetan pastoralism.[10] It connected the peripheries and the countryside with the infrastructural networks in the rest of China, enabling those residing there to access modern markets, lifestyles, and livelihoods while enabling the state to gain access to local economically exploitable resources and facilitate the social integration of and political control over China's minorities. It also addressed concerns about the perceived environmental deterioration in pastoral regions, including the Tibetan Plateau.

In this book, the massive "development" of the Great Opening of the West is reflected predominantly on the example of pastoralist communities from Zeku County and surrounding pastoral regions of Qinghai and Sichuan Provinces.[11] It illustrates changes in pastoral society during the turbulent years from 2005 to 2017, a period marked by dynamic transformations

resulting from the Chinese planned development policy, as well as the general impact of globalization and a period of forced transition in the rural areas of the Tibetan Plateau.[12] The example of Zeku County provides insight into how the Great Opening of the West development strategy worked during the key period that was the beginning of state-driven socioeconomic transformation in Tibetan pastoral areas.

In rangeland areas, the development was represented mainly through induced sedentarization, which technically served as the major tool to introduce "civilization" and install "modernity" and which led to extreme changes in the entire living and survival patterns among Tibetan pastoralists. However, sedentarization is a complex network of intertwined, complementing, and overlapping projects, serving in theory or in practice either the officially promoted preservation of the environment and the socioeconomic improvement of households or the less publicly announced goal of political surveillance.[13] Most of the projects serve several of these aims at once. In the West it is common to refer to the current development associated with sedentarization as "forced resettlement" without distinguishing among the different programs and individual project backgrounds or the involvement of the affected pastoralists themselves.

Sedentarization, however, is in reality more complicated. For the general purposes of Chinese state policy, discussion of "development" has been reduced to a series of binary choices: sedentary versus mobile, urban versus rural, and socially and economically integrated versus nature dependent and self-sufficient. All the latter terms characterize pastoralist society and are problems that can in theory be solved through sedentarization. In addition, these narratives coincided with the environmental narrative that pastoralism was degrading the ecology of the plateau. Mass sedentarization thus became a universal solution—it was the way to simultaneously develop the pastoral areas of China's West (by reducing poverty and increasing social and political control) and protect the ecology (by removing the pastoralists from the grasslands). This policy thus became popular among officials, in particular because of its relatively fast execution timescale and the ease of gathering statistical data. As local officials were forced to meet the state's ambitious, top-down-imposed scale and time frames, it is understandable that these officials have resorted to the easiest possible strategies for meeting state policy requirements (as much as possible and as fast as possible). The statistically achievable "development" targets made possible by mass sedentarization programs in pastoral areas consequently result in increased levels of urbanization (settlement construction), thus facilitating the delivery of required results on time. When presenting development strategy

achievements, the size of the urbanized landscape becomes a proxy for the size of an economically developed landscape.

In pastoral areas, building settlements thus enables officials to measure the "development" not only of a landscape but of the people—the number of pastoralists engaged in sedentarization projects equalizing the number of "developed" people. To prove the achievements of the sedentarization policy, it is enough to show the numbers of registered participants. However, in reality, many registered participants return to pastoralism at least to some extent and cannot really be labeled as being "developed" in the sense of abandoning "backward" lifestyles and livelihoods and engaging in the industrial or service sectors of employment. Neither can the movement of former pastoralists into artificial villages be actually considered urbanization.

The new settlements created as part of the pastoralist sedentarization policy are urban only in the sense that they contain fixed houses organized as centralized units. It is often the case that they are not well connected with infrastructure networks and rarely offer their inhabitants a sustainable livelihood. In many cases, the move to centralized settlements places pastoralists in an in-between position, in which they are no longer really rural but not yet quite urban. People may no longer label themselves as herders, but neither are they farmers, holders of urban registration status, or regularly employed.[14] This lack of social and economic security cannot be referred to as a positive development of pastoralists. Neither does it promote the smooth integration of Tibetan pastoralists into modern Chinese society as part of the nation-building objectives outlined in the agenda of the Great Opening of the West.

To achieve tighter control and faster results, China chose the top-down approach in its program for countryside development. However, an evaluation of the actual processes and outcomes indicates that this approach not only results in pastoralists' becoming the passive recipients of "development" and dependent on state assistance but also hinders state representatives—the implementing officials—from developing appropriate strategies that meet real local needs.

In addition, the concomitant projects of environmental restoration have similarly equivocal results. In line with the pattern of quick decision making, planning, and implementation, the government identified the current use of the grasslands predominantly for herding purposes as a major cause of their deterioration and decided to act accordingly. However, recent studies, supported by examples provided elsewhere in this book, strongly

suggest that banning pastoralism might not be helpful in preventing an increase in erosion but might instead lead to an irreversible transformation of the grassland ecosystem, reducing levels of diversity, decreasing the flexibility of local ecology, or even encouraging further degradation.[15] Moreover, the rapid reductions in herd and pasture size promoted by the environmental policy serve only to deprive Tibetan pastoralists of their livelihoods, thus further contributing to an increase in poverty, rather than its alleviation.

After over ten years of implementation, the development strategy of large-scale sedentarization in pastoral areas is showing serious weaknesses. However, it would be inaccurate to suggest that Tibetan pastoralists unambiguously oppose all government efforts. The situation is much more complex, and various factors must be taken into account as part of any evaluation. Tibetans are well aware of global trends and alternative ways of living and wish to share the same material advantages associated with international progress. In particular, the younger generation of Tibetan pastoralists desire to be part of the modern world. They prefer to attune their clothes and habits to new influences and participate in urban occupations rather than continue animal husbandry. These socioeconomic factors inspire an increasing number of pastoralists to relocate permanently or temporarily to cities and other urban areas as they seek alternative or supplementary employment and job opportunities. In fact, in recent years, an increasing number of pastoralists have bought apartments in provincial or prefectural capitals. Usually, they need to obtain mortgages to pay the high real estate prices. In many cases the family does not actually move into the city, and the apartments serve rather as a status symbol.

The complete transition from a rural to an urban population will take time, perhaps one or more generations, before a successful and sustainable urban existence with livelihood fundamentals based on new opportunities can be established. This natural and more realistic time frame is not in accordance, however, with the five-year-plan-oriented Chinese policy, which seeks rapid change. This has led to orchestrated development of rural areas in China, including the Tibetan Plateau grasslands, which may generate impressive figures in the short term but can lead to extremely negative consequences in the long term. In the context of global and local development, the main issue, therefore, is not whether Tibetan pastoralists will eventually lead a more sedentary way of life but how this change will take place and what the impact will be of a sped-up transformation on Tibetan pastoralists and the Chinese state.

This book concentrates not only on the implementation of sedentarization measures on site and the attitudes of the specific Tibetan pastoralists affected by them but also on the theoretical background of the development policy as presented in official government records. The individual development projects resulting in sedentarization look different from these two perspectives, and to draw the necessary distinction between them, we must combine attention to both project theory and implementation practice to build a more coherent and comprehensive picture of the situation.

SOURCES AND METHODS

The findings demonstrated in this book stem from twenty-four months of careful observation in the grasslands of Qinghai and the attached areas of Sichuan and Gansu over more than ten years, repeated interviews with more than two hundred pastoralists and officials, and reading of primary government sources on development policy.

I gained insights into the policy plans by gathering available documents that announced and reported on the implementation of development and sedentarization projects at the township, county, prefecture, and province levels. The majority of the documents were available in Chinese; only a few included a Tibetan translation. I supplemented the information provided in the written materials through interviews with Chinese and Tibetan officials responsible for implementing the respective projects at the provincial and county levels. In semistructured interviews, the interviewees provided explanations of official policy and reported on the eventual project modifications implemented in the areas under their supervision.

The official plans, statements, reports, and statistics alone do not provide a comprehensive picture of the situation.[16] However, they provide the background information necessary to gain an understanding of the general aims and approaches of the state development strategy and to establish the framework needed to conduct a local survey among the pastoralists. Only in this manner has it been possible to understand the transformation in the correct context and to highlight differences between theoretical outline and realization, between the announced objectives and the actual aims and outcomes. This procedure also allows us to identify the complexity of the various policies involved in sedentarization and the attitudes and adaptation strategies the involved people and institutions adopted. The comparison between official policy and on-site implementation also demonstrates the stress placed on speed and quantity rather than sustainability and quality

within Chinese development policy, which can result in conflicts of interest among the institutions and subjects involved.

Information about the actual situation on site, was collected by observation and through qualitative formal and informal interviews with affected Tibetan pastoralists from Zeku County and surrounding areas during about twenty months of fieldwork conducted between 2005 and 2009. Among the interviewees were Zeku and other pastoralists who were still living on the grasslands and also those who were already living in the administration centers of the county after having been offered state-paid positions. The time spent in the field facilitated access to local social structures, and long-term stay among active (and former) pastoralists enabled me to explore their living spaces in the winter and summer pastures and in the "urban" zones, as well as witness the accelerating shift, more economic than social, toward sedentarization in grassland settlements or the expanding areas of the township, county, prefecture, and or even provincial capitals. Between 2011 and 2017 I made several short visits totaling four months to follow up on developments and confirm or question the assumptions made during the previous research stays. Repeated residence in Zeku County and the surrounding areas and repeated contact with same interviewees made possible an in-depth and continuous description of the local transformation toward a "civilized" society.

At the same time, my nearly annual return led to frequent periods of frustration when I was confronted with large changes in local development policies and their implementation. Although the outcome of these shifts often proved to be more rhetorical than real, with little significant impact on the circumstances of the orchestrated development, the constant changes in terminology and the official aims and policy agendas often made it difficult to follow official and actual intentions. On the other hand, only a continuous research program that records the processes involved in the development of policy designs and their interpretation by officials and locals can provide us with a glimpse of the complex and extremely vivid dynamics involved in a challenging state-imposed strategy such as the Great Opening of the West.

After the disturbances in Tibetan areas that began in the spring of 2008, research on development issues in Tibetan pastoral areas, especially those connected to sedentarization measures, has become difficult. Although Zeku County was not one of the main centers of disturbance, it still officially counts as a potential political hotspot. Particularly during the summers of 2008 and 2009, interviews at some settlement and resettlement sites were

hindered by the permanent police presence and the closure of certain areas. Under the current Chinese leadership, the atmosphere for studying China's planned development has not improved. On the contrary, faced with a background of aggressive policies encouraging the "unity of the nationalities" (Ch: *minzu tuanjie*) and the pursuit of corruption, people prefer to avoid taking responsibility, and cooperation with official institutions and their members becomes increasingly difficult.

THE MAJOR STUDY AREA: ZEKU COUNTY

For several reasons, the case study area of Zeku County (map I.1) exemplifies the implementation of development projects in rural areas of western China. It has no particular economically exploitable tourist or cultural sites that would motivate the government to accelerate the implementation of the modernization and development projects introduced into the western provinces of China as part of the Great Opening of the West development strategy. The landscape of Zeku County is mostly open grassland, without any spectacular mountain ranges to attract tourism. Only the Maixiu Forest on the border with Tongren County and the remote Hor monastery, with its stone-carving tradition, have been considered as areas for the further development of tourism by the provincial government, which has also mentioned the possibility of ethnic tourism, identifying the pastoralist traditions present in this area in its 2007 report.[17] There might also be some state mining interests, especially gold mining, in Zeku, though the magnitude of any mining potential is still unknown. There is no large-scale access to caterpillar fungus, so the earnings from this highly valued commodity do not significantly distort the local income.[18] Only small areas of the county, especially in sTobs ldan (Ch: Duofudun Xian), provide average-quality caterpillar fungus, and so the main income of the local pastoralists has until recently been derived from animal husbandry.[19] As a result, the development work carried out in the county began slowly, and in 2005, when I started my research, the administrative seats designated as township or county towns still resembled the remote towns seen in old Western movies.[20]

The approaching socioeconomic shift that would come to the pastoral areas through the radical development measures of the Great Opening of the West first arrived in rTse khog in the form of enthusiastic slogans lining local roads and town streets (figure I.1). The paroles promised wealth, happiness, and harmony, better environment and better living. Eager to learn more about the upcoming changes that promised to turn the pastoral areas upside-down and let them enter the era of development and prosperity,

MAP 1.1. People's Republic of China, with the study area of Zeku County

FIGURE 1.1. Sign in Zeku County town, 2007: Great Opening of the West Means Great Development for Zeku

I started with a survey among the Zeku pastoralists about the concrete changes they experienced and programs they participated in. This approach turned out to be a failure. None of those I spoke with was able to help me out, and no one could make sense of the term *Xibu da Kaifa*. The smaller the awareness among the pastoral population in Qinghai about the launch of the new development program of the Chinese leadership, the bigger would be its impact on every aspect of their lives.

Eventually the changes did come. The most evident changes brought about by government policy have been the creation of increasing number of resettlement and settlement sites, constructed each year since 2003 on the grasslands of Zeku County. The sedentarization measures are especially widespread and more strictly controlled in pastoral areas of Qinghai, such as Zeku County, in particular because of the Three Rivers' Headwaters National Nature Reserve situated there.[21] The presence of the national nature reserve means that Qinghai is eligible for additional funds. Consequently, numerous projects with a strong environmental basis have been

implemented in this area, which has accelerated the need for sedentarization. According to the county government sedentarization plans of 2009, all pastoralists would gradually be affected and the sedentarization of all pastoral households would be completed in Zeku by 2012. Although this ambition plan had a serious impact on every aspect of Tibetan pastoralists' lives, the plan was not realized completely, and even in 2019 a large number of herders and their livestock could still be observed in Zeku and elsewhere in Qinghai.

CHAPTER ONE

CIVILIZING CHINA'S WESTERN PERIPHERIES

DEVELOPMENT TAKES MANY FORMS AND IS PERCEIVED DIFFERENTLY depending on the circumstances and expectations of participants and observers. "Development with Chinese characteristics," as demonstrated in rural Qinghai, involves the expansion of infrastructure networks, including the building of roads, highways, high-speed railways, airports, and phone, mobile, and broadcasting networks, at a pace that is unimaginable in Western contexts. It also entails the creation of huge real estate and housing clusters that enlarge existing cities, turn villages into towns, or sometimes remain empty and become ghost cities or settlements. Development in western China also means placing the latest mobile phone in the hands of each yak herder. It means more children in schools, more pollution and more environmental protection, and more involvement of the state in the daily lives of the people, for whom there will be less control over their own futures, more mobility, and less free time. The monasteries, holy places, and beautiful natural sites are being turned into tourist spots, herds sold, pastures turned into forests, and fields along the roads transformed into flower gardens so that tourists have something nice to look at. People are being relocated to meet the requirements of the development. Development offers new opportunities and new sources of income. Hundreds of thousands have risen out of poverty and similar numbers have become impoverished through the rising costs of living and the loss of their livelihoods. Development does not always mean an improvement. The costs for the state are high and often nonrecoverable. But is there a strategy behind all this?

If we want to understand the mechanisms of what is actually taking place on the ground among the Tibetan pastoralists and elsewhere in western China, we first must examine the national development plan of the Chinese

government. Although the targeted, large-scale rollout of the Great Opening of the West development strategy started only at the turn of the century, it is just another step in China's attempt to secure national stability and the unity of China's peoples and to (re)establish its position among the global economic and political leaders through "development."

CHINA'S QUEST FOR DEVELOPMENT

Development (Ch: *fazhan*), modernization (Ch: *xiandaihua*), and civilizing (Ch: *wenminghua*) became the key concepts of the Great Opening of the West, which was aimed at the reformation of the still "backward" (Ch: *luohou*) areas on China's western peripheries.[1] Expressing the opposite of these key policy words, the term "backward" reflects the lack of urban spaces and networks, the absence of certain material objects in people's daily lives, the type of subsistence-based production adapted to marginal environments, and the persistence of local ethnic customs, beliefs, and values.[2] Use of the term "backward" in state policy discourse also reflects the perception of a certain level of superiority on the part of the sedentary Chinese civilization toward the inhabitants of the peripheral regions and surrounding areas, whose livelihoods are dominated by the steppe. This attitude, which is based on advanced urbanism as well as literary culture, has persisted in China since the imperial period and is still apparent today.[3] It provides the background for the perceived necessity to civilize those sections of the population that diverge from current Chinese standards and refers mainly to the minority areas.[4] The "civilizing mission" of development, which aims to accelerate the social and economic transformation of the western Chinese landscapes and populations, also serves to strengthen internal political stability through the integration of ethnic minority groups and the unification of lifestyles and values among the population of China.[5]

This kind of superior attitude toward "backward" or "barbarian" societies living in a state of close interdependence with nature is not exclusively Chinese. It has also been evident in Western countries, especially during periods of colonialism, when developed countries felt it necessary to "modernize" (or "civilize") the "backward" places by implementing a "comprehensive package of technical and institutional measures aimed at widespread societal transformation."[6] Encouraged and guided development has ever since been regarded as the way to achieve modernization, as demonstrated through economic growth, high technology, schooling, and militarization.[7]

This Western perception of modernity forced on China during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also influences the current direction of

China's own model of modernization, which has been accelerated and expanded, significantly outperforming all the previous achievements of Western countries.[8] Although European societies are slowly beginning to value sustainable lifestyles that are in balance with the natural environment, the general idea of modernity and development promoted in western China is still based on consumerism and industrialization and driven by a pragmatism that aims to shape national consensus and ensure overall political and macroeconomic stability.[9]

In local contexts, the current controlled development objective aims to achieve a certain concept of modernity as defined by the state. The affected people (in this case the Tibetan pastoralists) are prevented from participating in the formation of development policies.[10] Plans and official implementation often do not take into account whether modernization trends are suitable for the local infrastructure, environment, and population. In many cases this approach of orchestrated "modernization at all costs" not only leads to the destruction of existing and well established livelihoods based on sustainability but also bolsters the marginalization of the people involved rather than reducing it.[11] The impression of "backwardness" among pastoral members of the population is thereafter reinforced by imposing on them certain models of "development" and forcing them to comply with the establishment of environments for which they are not adapted. Moreover, influenced by propaganda and confronted with a single general model of development, people in rural areas of China's West, including the Tibetans in Qinghai, often adopt the label of "backwardness," that is, being less civilized or less morally worthy, when referring to themselves, thus agreeing with the state-promoted necessity to be guided toward development.[12]

THE "DEVELOPMENT" STRATEGY BEHIND THE GREAT OPENING OF THE WEST

Modern attempts to develop the western borderlands of China started with the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949. The government introduced reforms in these areas beginning in the 1950s, including two previous Opening of the West (Ch: Xibu Kaifa) campaigns. At that time, the deployment of heavy industry was promoted as a solution.[13] The Great Opening of the West development strategy, however, differs from the previous campaigns. The aim of earlier development measures can be seen as the prevention of wars with neighboring countries and the establishment of an internal relationship between China's West and East based on the exploitation and processing of natural resources, whereas the current development strategy

targets the growing socioeconomic disparities between eastern and western China, which are a result of the "unbalanced development" reforms implemented earlier by Deng Xiaoping.[14]

From the point of view of Tibetan pastoralists in particular, the Great Opening of the West differs greatly from previous development initiatives. Since the 1950s the state has been intervening in the lives of Tibetan pastoralists though the introduction of agricultural reforms, the establishment of people's communes, and the allocation of usage rights over grasslands to individual households. However, until the start of the twenty-first century, animal husbandry remained the main occupation of Tibetan pastoralists.[15] Even though some pastoralists accepted employment by the state, primarily in the administrative or cultural sectors, they maintained connections with their close relatives, who continued to live on the grasslands. Aimed at narrowing the gap between China's East and West, the Great Opening of the West development strategy seeks not only to increase the income levels of rural households and their standard of living but also to acculturate them to a way of life experienced by the majority of Chinese population. Interpreting development as a shift from a mobile lifestyle and a livestock- and environment-dependent economy to a market-economy-dependent life in settlements, the Great Opening of the West encourages the sedentarization of the pastoral population and their engagement in cash-earning livelihoods. Such circumstances force Tibetan pastoralists to face a huge challenge, which requires them not only to adapt to the new modern environment but also to find new occupations and sources of income. This makes the Great Opening of the West development strategy an extraordinary initiative, especially when considered from the perspective of the pastoral society.

THE AGENDA OF THE GREAT OPENING OF THE WEST DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Great Opening of the West's development strategy does not have clearly defined boundaries. It embodies all aspects of numerous subject areas, including infrastructure, the economy, tourism, the administration of natural resources, ecology, culture, social welfare, social control, and so on, and can be described as "an amorphous set of diverse policy agendas and instruments not designed to form a complete and coherent program, but rather to appeal to as many interests as possible simultaneously."[16] At its inception this development strategy established merely a theoretical framework that could be populated in the future with tangible projects. Therefore, it is possible to claim that all state-funded projects introduced since 1999–2000 in western

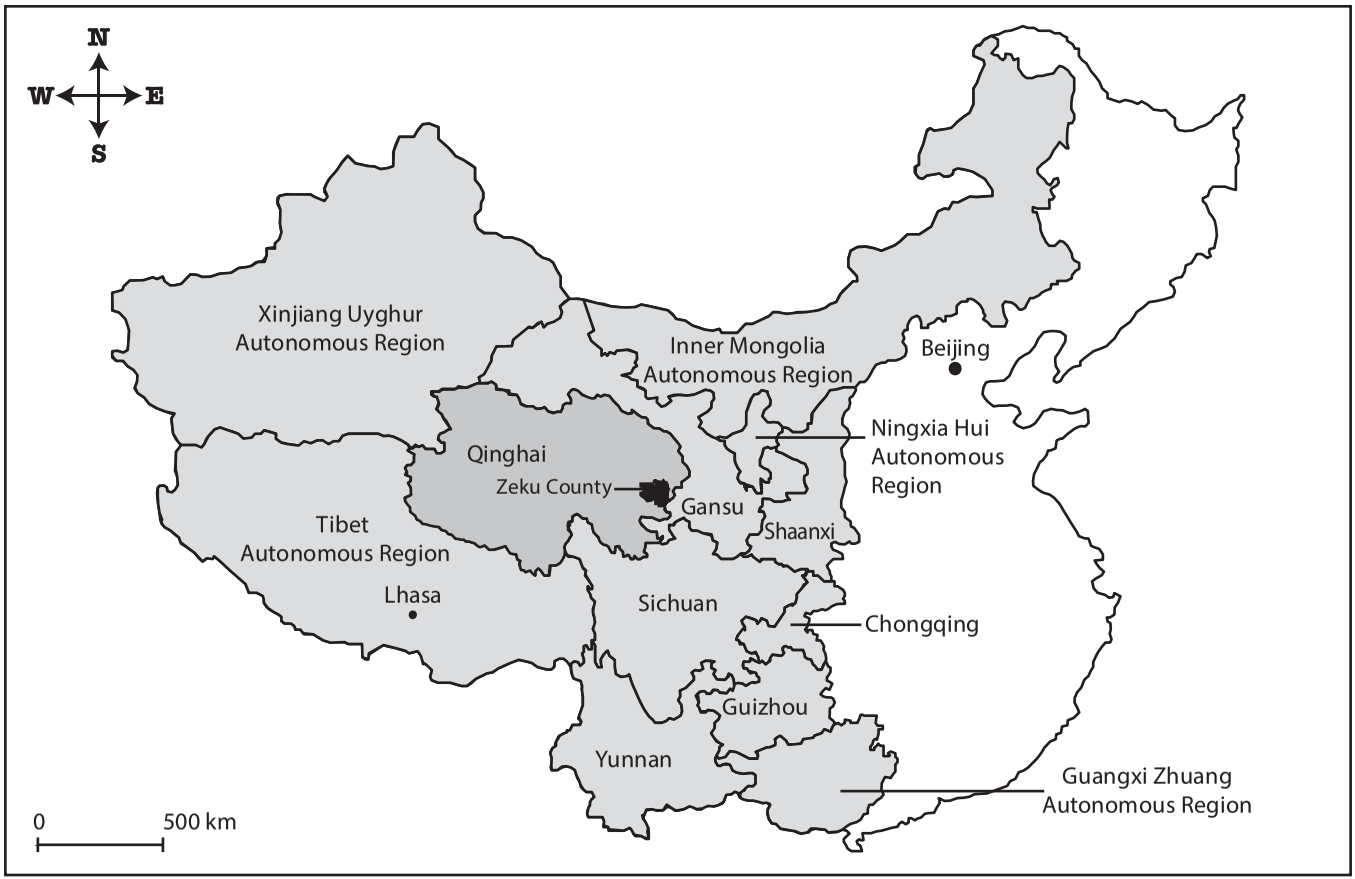
China, either directly or indirectly, as part of the provincial-level budget have been implemented in the name of the Great Opening of the West development strategy. The final interpretation of the state's objectives and the implementation of individual projects lies in the hands of the actual executive actors at the lower administrative levels. This fact leads to a large diversity in local outcomes, even in relation to centrally designed projects; therefore, it is difficult to make general statements for whole areas of Qinghai, let alone the entire territory targeted by the development strategy.

The promotion of the Great Opening of the West development strategy was a major policy initiative of the former general secretary of the Communist Party of China, Jiang Zemin, announced in March 1999.[17] It was he who first accentuated the necessity of speeding up development in central and western China to safeguard both national development and stability. The official launch of this policy followed in June 1999, promising to bring about "a flourishing economy, social progress, a settled life, unified nationalities and a graceful landscape in the west of China."[18]

The definition of "western China" within the concept of the Great Opening of the West development strategy has changed since its first announcement. However, in general it has been defined generously. In 1999 the state identified ten provincial-level jurisdictions that would benefit from the development initiative: Tibet Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and Qinghai, Gansu, Shaanxi, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, and Chongqing Provinces, which together comprise 56 percent of China's territory and 23 percent of its population. The documents issued in 2000 also include Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (see map 1.1).[19]

Finally, in 2001 Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Hunan, Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Hubei, and Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin were also included. This territory covered amounts to 71 percent of China's total area and includes about 29 percent of China's population, as well as the majority of China's minority regions and populations. The selected regions were characterized by their common experience of economic underdevelopment, the lack of economic infrastructure, and large numbers of ethnic minorities.[20]

At its inception, the Great Opening of the West was scheduled to include three phases. The objective of the first phase, scheduled originally for 2001–10, was to prepare the ground and further develop and strengthen the connectivity between the East and the West.[21] It was focused on the development of infrastructure, in particular on regional airport, highway, and



MAP 1.1. Geographical dimensions of the implementation of the Great Opening of the West development strategy, showing the areas under study, Qinghai Province and Zeku County

railway constructions but also on rural infrastructure constructions or relocation of rural population through encouraging returning of farmland into forests and pastureland into grasslands with a total investment of over ¥2.874 trillion.[22] According to a report by the Qinghai Great Opening of the West Leadership Group in 2005, a government investment of ¥700 billion was designated for the building of 350,000 kilometers of roads in western China between 2000 and 2010. For the construction of around 18,000 kilometers of railways in western China, an additional ¥100 billion were spent in the first five years alone.[23] Also included in the list were the west-east electricity and gas projects, the construction of hydropower stations, and mining infrastructure. The program highlighted the intention to enhance growth of the gross domestic product, provide adequate health care and accessible schooling systems, extend the radio and TV broadcasting system in the countryside, manage the restoration of grasslands and forests, and alleviate poverty through granting subsidies and encouraging the resettlement of population groups. Infrastructure development in western China did not end in 2010, however. The major objectives of the Great Opening of the West, such as infrastructure extension, economic development, and the exploitation of western China have been absorbed into the agenda of the current Chinese leadership and now comply with the policy of making western China the gateway of the New Silk Road and the Belt and Road Initiative (Ch: Yi Dai Yi Lu), thus aiming to replace national investments in local development with foreign money sources.[24] Additional rail lines, airports, and highways are being constructed, which will bring the grasslands of the Tibetan Plateau closer to Chinese (and also certain foreign) metropoles and change the lives of the grassland inhabitants.[25] The major infrastructure projects completed in Qinghai since 2000 include the railway connection between Golmud and Lhasa, completed in 2006 and further extended to Shigatse in 2014, as well as the high-speed Lanzhou-Xinjiang rail connection, which includes a link with Xining, Qinghai's capital. Further examples of development include Xining and Yushu airports and increased traffic on the Yangzi River.[26]

The second phase of the Great Opening of the West from 2010 to 2030 is intended to accelerate economic and cultural development. As a result of the final phase, to be completed by 2050, the living standards of China's West are projected to meet the standards of the East.[27]

Publicly, the agenda of the current development efforts is formulated so as to predominantly benefit the targeted regions' populations, economies, and environments, with the state playing the role of generous and altruistic

benefactor.[28] In practice, however, the majority of reforms introduced in the context of the Great Opening of the West development strategy have been designed more to serve nationwide goals.

At the local level, it seems very likely that the objectives of improving the living standards of urban and rural residents in western China, bringing standards into line with the national average, narrowing the gap between eastern and western China, and creating a well-off society in western China will be achieved.[29] It is also the aim to reduce and eliminate poverty, which is still (statistically) widespread in rural areas. From the national perspective, the Great Opening of the West helps to strengthen the state economy through the efficient exploitation of local natural resources and other economic resources, including, for example, the expansion of house building and (eco)tourism.[30] The tourism industry will be able to take advantage of the wonderful natural sights and of the unique cultural features of the ethnic minorities. Additionally, the economic development of the minority population should help to establish social harmony, political stability, and national security.[31] In this regard, the Great Opening of the West can be understood as a nation-building strategy based on the principles of standardization and homogenization and as a realization of the social and cultural unification of China's population.[32] It is hoped that the sociocultural unification, aimed at strengthening administrative and political control over the western regions, will finally lead to the integration of minorities that has been the objective of the government of the People's Republic since it came to power in 1949. This objective has been repeatedly accentuated after each episode of unrest in minority areas.[33] The huge inward migration of predominantly Han peoples from eastern parts of China has taken place as a result of the emerging possibilities created by the Great Opening of the West and could lead to the absorption of the minority population into the sociocultural framework of the majority.[34]

Although the final phase of the decades-long strategy has not yet started as of 2020, the term *Xibu da Kaifa* has already almost vanished from Chinese policy rhetoric. The goal to push forward the development of China's West, however, still remains, though it is wrapped up in different names, such as the national call for the final elimination of poverty through the Targeted Poverty Alleviation Project or the internationally oriented Belt and Road Initiative. Whenever the leadership changes in China, policy strategy labels are often altered so that the new leader can promote his own role in forwarding China's development ambitions, but many of the specific initiatives he pursues remain the same.

THE OUTCOMES AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

In the case of huge undertakings such as the Great Opening of the West, it is difficult to assure effectiveness and avoid the risk of overlap or program contradiction. This is especially so when supervision is undertaken in parallel by multiple state organs and institutions and when the subject of review consists of incoherent programs and projects executed at different administrative levels, with the accent placed on speed and quantity rather than sustainability. Given the lack of communication between policy planners and policy objectives, as well as the omnipresence of corruption, it is no wonder that both aims and implementation suffer from severe contradictions and that the results of the development measures are not always positive. Although the Great Opening of the West covers environmentally and culturally diversified regions of China, insufficient testing to establish appropriate development methods took place before implementation. Nor was the experience of the local people, such as Tibetan pastoralists, with their local landscapes and lifestyles, taken into consideration.[35] The incompatibility between some aspects of state-driven development and the needs and adaptation ability of the targeted landscapes and peoples has in certain cases led to conflicts and, in the longer term, the failure of individual projects.

The major points of contradiction include the different levels of development perception. Local expectations that "development" will involve a simultaneous improvement in local conditions do not always correspond with the goal of boosting the national economy.[36] An example of this is the exploitation of natural resources and the development of secondary industries such as mining and manufacturing, which are now growing significantly in western China, following their decline in the 1980s.[37] Although billed as a benefit to the western regions of China, this kind of industrial development predominantly benefits the East, where most of the natural resources are transported, processed, and used in manufacturing. The problems associated with local economic improvement through orchestrated development are further exacerbated by the tendency toward western migration, a phenomenon that increases as development occurs. While infrastructure expansion, market development, and urbanization all lead to countless new business opportunities, the ones who benefit the most from these new initiatives are predominantly the inhabitants of urban areas, migrants from neighboring provinces, and investors from eastern China, all of whom are

aware of the potential and possess enough capital and knowledge to prosper in such circumstances.[38]

The socioeconomic wellbeing of the majority of the rural population has not improved as fast as envisaged in the development policy statements. Since the implementation of the Great Opening of the West began, the flow of large investments has been directed toward the western regions, and the per-capita GDP in western China has indeed risen, from a 6.6 percent average annual growth rate between 1991 and 2001 to 13.58 percent between 2000 and 2010.[39] However, the eastern Chinese regions also show an increase in GDP growth. By 2010 the eastern Chinese provinces were still generating 59.5 percent of the national GDP, with the contribution made by western territories, including relatively well-off Sichuan and Chongqing, amounting to only 13.8 percent. It seems that, at least in terms of the GDP, the gap between the East and the West still remains significant, and may in fact have increased.[40] Moreover, these figures present only the regional average, not the further disparities that emerged within western China after the initiation of the Great Opening of the West, including intraregional disparities and an urban-rural income divide.[41] Statistics for regional GDP and income increases are also distorted by enormous state subsidies granted directly and indirectly to both provinces and households. The partly illusory economic benefits of the Great Opening of the West and the actual beneficiaries are apparent in analyses of the reality behind the statistical figures, which reveal large discrepancies between the officially proclaimed achievements and the impact on local populations in China's West.[42] We should also evaluate people's economic lives with reference to both income and consumption because in some cases the increase in daily expenses caused by development in fact decreases the socioeconomic status of rural households.[43]

The variations in the economic outcomes resulting from the Great Opening of the West might suggest that the primary aim of the strategy is not local economic growth but rather something else, such as the "incorporation of minority ethnic groups, and the reconsolidation of central state control after two decades of decentralization and localism."[44] The goal of social harmonization through development also raises important questions. It was hoped that the increasing number of predominantly Han inward migrants in areas where the majority of inhabitants belong to a minority group might encourage social integration and erase the significant cultural differences that exist among the fifty-six nationalities of China. This would prevent acts of local nationalism based on cultural distinctions and help to consolidate inter-state stability. In reality, however, the large social, economic, and

cultural transformations, as well as high levels of Han inward migration, have often resulted in expressions of discontent among the minority population, who have been unable to keep up with the pace of development, eventually escalating even in such dramatic acts as self-immolation in the Tibetan areas. When evaluating the outcomes of the orchestrated development, the Tibetans are thus sometimes labeled as being ungrateful and not adequately appreciating the Chinese gift of development.[45]

CHAPTER TWO

THE GIFT OF DEVELOPMENT IN PASTORAL AREAS

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF THE GREAT OPENING OF THE West development strategy, which threatens to transform the whole spatial, social, economic, and perhaps cultural setting in the grassland areas, is sedentarization.

Focus on sedentarization arose in the late 1990s, when the Chinese state confronted the uneven development of the first two decades of post-Mao Reform and Opening (Ch: Gaige Kaifang) and began to implement the Great Opening of the West. It perceived three specific problems in pastoral areas of western China: people were poor, political control was difficult, and the environment was degrading. To address all these problems simultaneously, the state pushed to sedentarize the pastoralists. Mass sedentarization began in the early 2000s but picked up speed as part of the nationwide Socialist New Countryside (Ch: Shehui Zhuyi Xin Nongcun) Program, which promised to introduce comfortable living conditions within a civilized environment, as well as clean, tidy, and democratically managed villages, particularly in the rural areas of China's West.[1] It was partly inspired by the New Village Movement (Korean: Saemaul Undong; Ch: Xincun Yundong), a development program carried out in South Korea in the 1970s and targeted at the impoverished countryside.[2] The Socialist New Countryside Program included support for local production development, construction of road networks in the countryside, exploitation of new energy resources, quality controls for drinking water, and encouragement to sedentarize pastoralists and relocate poor people. The most striking difference between the Korean and the Chinese policies is the local population's active involvement in shaping the actual project. While South Korea's program emphasized motivating the rural population to take the initiative and self-invest in the development programs

that would benefit them, the Chinese strategy accentuated a top-down approach, leaving almost no space for the rural population to take part in the decision-making process or implementation.[3] An evaluation of the ongoing processes and already-achieved outcomes indicates that this approach not only results in pastoralists' becoming the passive recipients of "development" and dependent on state assistance but also hinders state representatives, that is, the implementing officials, from developing appropriate strategies that meet real local needs.

In China, the rhetoric associated with the Socialist New Countryside Program did not last longer than the Eleventh Five-Year Plan of 2006–10, and the project was later referred to as *chengzhenhua*, generally translated as "urbanization," thus shifting the focus from the villages and the rural economy per se to the creation of more townlike settlements that would function as a stronger visual testimony to the successful progress of the Great Opening of the West.[4]

The Chinese leadership has continually stressed intensive sedentarization measures as an important step toward modernization, targeting pastoral nomads both symbolically and practically as major obstacles to progress, and pursuing sedentarization as a simultaneous solution to problems of poverty, lack of social control, and environmental degradation.[5]

ALLEVIATING POVERTY AND IMPROVING THE HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL ECONOMY

In 1999 most of Qinghai was classified as "poverty-stricken." Therefore, the introduction of the Great Opening of the West development strategy has been welcomed by the provincial leadership, who hoped it would solve significant economic problems via the newly available state support or because private investors were likely to be attracted by the potential for growth created by the new infrastructure projects.[6]

Since then the number of financial and material aid packages offered to pastoralists by the state has gradually increased, reaching its peak as part of the Great Opening of the West development strategy. As a result of such measures, being identified as "poor" became desirable. Rural households became eligible for increased subsidies and financial aid provided by the state, which became a regular source of income for the Tibetan rural population.[7] This attitude toward state support was growing costly for the state, and even the more recent shift of the focus of the poverty alleviation policy from "poor" regions, counties, and villages to "poor" households, promoted

as part of the Targeted Policy Alleviation Project, does not seem to have resolved the situation.[8] With development and rising living standards, households' daily expenditure has grown. Subsequently, the poverty line has risen, causing an increase in those defined as "poor."

Poverty in China is usually identified according to cash income per capita or per household. In this regard China has defined its own poverty line, in addition to the World Bank's international definition. The Chinese national poverty line is updated each year and in 2017 was ¥2,952 per person per year.[9] Individual provinces can also promote their own slightly different poverty lines. However, these must be higher than the national level. The provincial poverty lines in 2017 were usually set at between ¥3,100 and ¥3,300. Lower administrative levels can also identify their own individual poverty lines based on the average local income, but these must always be higher than the one defined by their superior administrative level.[10] In pastoral communities, where it is difficult to delineate the exact (cash) income, poverty classification often depends on the local community leader, who is aware of the economic situation of individual households. These leaders' proposals are later approved by the township government. Although this method should help to reveal those households that are really in need, there are still many abuses of authority, preventing subsidies from reaching the targeted population. In order to take advantage of state funds, the Tibetans do not hesitate to use their connections to local offices or find other ways to persuade government representatives to allocate subsidies in their favor.

In order to stem the extensive flow of direct aid to rural areas, the government (in theory) decided to modify its poverty alleviation strategy and stress indirect support via a requalification of the rural population to increase its engagement in production. Distribution of houses belongs to direct distribution of governmental assistance in poverty-stricken areas, but at the same time and particularly in pastoral areas, sedentarization can be understood as a way of indirect support that brings pastoralists closer to the developed infrastructure. The assumption that this would encourage the pastoralists to better integrate into urban society, automatically take up urban livelihoods, and adopt urban lifestyles in many cases proved illusory.

CONTROLLING AN UNRULY POPULATION

The concentration of Tibetan pastoralists in the new centralized villages simultaneously served the state's objective of asserting political control.[11] These new urban settlements are easy to reach and usually contain a small

on-site police station. The presence of police officers is intended to provide better security for the inhabitants of the resettlement or settlement sites and encourage state legal representatives to participate in solving disputes among the pastoralists.[12] At the same time, the close control exercised over relocated pastoralists can be seen as part of an aggressive new policy shift in Tibetan areas, with the disturbances of 2008 acting as a catalyst for the introduction of intensified sedentarization measures.[13] Above all, this shift in emphasis is evidenced in projects such as the Nomadic Settlement Project (Ch: You Mumin Dingju Gongcheng), introduced in Qinghai in 2009 and intended to force sedentarization on the remaining pastoral population. Paradoxically, the accumulation of pastoralists in one spot has also facilitated faster communication and easier assembly, which might also result in potential conflicts and expressions of discontent. Therefore, to prevent political alliances within the resettlement and settlement villages, at least theoretically the size of these villages is restricted to fewer than between 100 and 150 households.[14] In reality, many of the new villages exceed this limit.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

After the consequences of ecological changes in China's West became noticeable in the East, the Chinese state began to take serious notice.[15] The escalating erosion of the western rangelands, resulting in increased sedimentation in local rivers, has affected hydroelectric power systems, including large river dams, and also on the downstream populations, who increasingly face either flooding or a lack of water. A direct impact has been demonstrated, for example, in the droughts in the lower reaches of the Yellow River in 1997 and the massive flooding along the Yangzi River in 1998.[16] Another example is the increase in the amount of sand blanketing the eastern metropolises during the spring sandstorm season, which emanates from the expanding deserts in China's West. It is widely acknowledged that 90 percent of China's grasslands currently suffer from a certain level of deterioration.[17] By 1998 in Qinghai, the degradation had already affected almost 24 percent (about 1,300 million mu or 87 hectares) of the province's grasslands, and according to the data collected by the Nationalities Cultural Committee of Qinghai Province in 2007, only about 58 percent of the grasslands in the Three Rivers' Headwaters protection area in southern Qinghai were still usable for herding due to grassland degradation. About 20 percent of pastoral households in the affected area had reverted to being households with no or few livestock.[18]

Environmental protection is sometimes cited as the essence of the Great Opening of the West initiative.[19] In order to strengthen and emphasize environmental protection, numerous large nature protection areas have been declared, especially in western China. In Qinghai, over half the province has been designated as a nature protection zone. This designation has been used there to substantiate the government's actions in more strictly implementing environmental projects. The environmentally centered initiatives, which call for a halt to human activities in the protected area, however, stand in contradiction to the goal of economic development to expand local infrastructure, industry, and mining, as well urbanization.[20]

Tibetan pastoralists depend on a functioning ecosystem in the high plateau rangelands, so every intervention in the management of the grassland environment affects them directly. The state mechanisms for grasslands development and environmental protection are, therefore, of the utmost interest in the context of the current socioeconomic changes taking place in the pastoralists' lives. Moreover, in the environmental context, the pastoralists are no longer perceived solely as obstacles to the development strategy but as those responsible for the extensive degradation of the grasslands who must be removed and (re)settled.

Who Caused the Grassland Degradation?

In the face of ecological deterioration and in order to repair environmental damage caused during previous decades, environmental protection became the third rationale for sedentarization. The state has identified overgrazing and rodent damage as the salient aspects of environmental degradation and established new environmental protection areas to target these two ecological problems. Thus, ecological restoration policies include extensive restoration of grass vegetation and the afforestation of cultivated land, especially on mountain slopes, as well as rodent control. Reforestation and grassland restoration efforts are largely concentrated in the Returning Farmland to Forest (Ch: Tuigeng Huanlin Gongcheng) or Returning Farmland to Grassland (Ch: Tuigeng Huancao Gongcheng) Projects, predominantly carried out in the more affluent areas of the Yangzi and Yellow River basins.[21] To address rodent damage, the grasslands Project for Prevention of Harm Caused by Rodents (Ch: Shuhai Fangzhi Gongcheng) was designed to reduce the pika (*Ochotona curzoniae*) population through poisoning and manual killing. Other projects that limit pastoral activity include the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project (Ch: Tuimu Huancao Gongcheng), and the Ecological Resettlement Project (Ch: Shengtai

Yimin Gongcheng) (see table 2.1), which operate in areas that have suffered from desertification and wind-blown sand and also in the Three Rivers' Headwaters protection area in Qinghai.[22]

It is clear that some grasslands are degraded. In some areas there is an overpopulation of pikas, which eat grass roots, and excessive grazing eventually leads to the complete destruction of the upper fertile layer of grassland soil, which has been witnessed in pastures where there is an overcapacity of livestock.[23] However, these phenomena are symptomatic of more far-reaching problems. The first wave of environmental policies failed to consider why the deterioration is occurring in recent decades when pastoralism has been practiced on the Tibetan Plateau for at least a thousand years.[24]

Only recently has research begun to suggest that there are other important factors behind the current situation on the grasslands, such as global climate change and the decline in permafrost levels.[25] From a long-term perspective, the whole situation might just be the result of periodic climate fluctuations, which lead to changes in global ecosystems and determine the living conditions for animals and human beings.[26] The causes for overgrazing and an increase in the pika population might also be found in land management reforms initiated by the People's Republic of China, which probably encouraged an unsustainable use of pastureland.[27]

Most aspects of grassland degradation identified by researchers are strongly influenced by governmental policies. These phenomena include inward migration and population growth, increased burrowing of mammal populations due to ineffective controls and rampant hunting of their predators, increased concentration of livestock near winter settlements, reduced mobility levels resulting from restrictive pasture tenure laws, the breakdown of traditional regulatory mechanisms, and the lack of government investment in rangeland and livestock marketing infrastructure.[28]

Major land-use reforms, such as the collectivization drive in the 1950s and the decollectivization of land in the 1980s, have disrupted and changed the attitudes of pastoralists toward both land and livestock. During the period of people's communes, all herders were required to place their animals in collectives and subsequently made collective decisions regarding production and rangeland use. The traditional herding system, which involved the use of pastures within a village community and the periodic redistribution of pastures according to the number of animals a family possessed, was replaced by a new policy that called for an increase in animal husbandry production.[29] Within the communes, new methods of fencing, cross-breeding, veterinary

services, and artificial fodder production supported herd growth.[30] Livestock numbers were no longer naturally controlled by increased mortality rates during harsh weather or as a result of diseases, thus leading to increased demands on grassland capacity.

Beginning in 1983, the Household Responsibility System contracted out the management of the land and animals of the former communes to individual households.[31] This policy further promoted an increase in the production rates in animal husbandry, resulting in even higher livestock numbers.[32] However, there was little improvement in balancing the needs of the ecosystem and grazing methods. The original twenty- to thirty-year contracts associated with the Household Responsibility System could be prolonged to fifty years, with the possibility of an additional later extension.[33] Land distribution led to the fencing off of property, which severely limited herding mobility and flexibility, on which traditional Tibetan pastoralism was based.[34] Moreover, even with a signed contract, the state may reimpose usage rights over state-owned land when deemed necessary.[35]

The fact that the land is not their own and the lack of certainty about the usage rights are two reasons why pastoralists choose not to invest in the land and its sustainability.[36] As a result, some pastoralists exploit the land without taking the long-term consequences of their actions into account and keep as many livestock as possible. In this way, they actually do contribute to grassland degradation by overgrazing. Evidence thus suggests that it is not necessarily Tibetan pastoralism that has been the main culprit for changes in the ecosystem. More probably, the policies implemented by the central government significantly contributed to the disturbances and changes in the frail symbiotic existence of pastoralists in the rangelands. The Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project and the controls imposed on herd sizes more or less aimed to reestablish the more balanced ratio of livestock to grassland capacity that existed in the pre-1950s period, though under a very different system of governance and management.

A similar restorative function seems to underpin the Returning Farmland to Grassland or Forest Projects, which promote a reduction in the number of fields, especially in areas vulnerable to erosion, such as the high rangelands. Inappropriate exploitation of such areas began with the policies of the 1950s, which called for logging forests, draining wetlands, and reclaiming land in Tibetan areas.[37] As a result, in many places the grasslands were plowed up to plant grain.[38] Not all high-altitude sites were suitable for crops, and the consequent destruction of the upper soil strata, which

was necessary for the vegetation, negatively affected the ecosystem and accelerated the degradation of the land.

Although at least theoretically the newer reforms aim to restore the ecosystem and repair the damage caused earlier, the implementation of the current development and environmental protection policies has been launched in an ad-hoc manner similar to the land reforms of the 1950s, with not enough time spent on conducting trials, which would have evaluated the actual and long-term impact of policies such as Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project.[39] In fact, older pastoralists in particular worry about the practice of long-term grassland resting, asserting that if the land is enclosed, not regularly grazed by livestock, and left fallow for several years, the entire vegetation structure will change. In the future, such land will no longer be suitable for animal husbandry, as a new ecosystem will have developed within the enclosures.[40] The animal husbandry office of Hongyuan County in Sichuan reached the same conclusion after conducting an evaluation of the grassland enclosure test results. According to their findings, the maximum land rest period should be five years. After this period, the ecosystem may change irreparably.[41]

Questions relating to pikas' harmful influence on the fragile ecosystem in Qinghai have also been heatedly discussed by scientists, and there is insufficient evidence to prove that pika activity is a main cause of increased grassland degradation.[42] According to pastoralists, there were always large numbers of pikas on the pasturelands. However, their numbers may have increased as many of their natural predators disappeared during the early decades of the People's Republic of China, when many wild animals were killed to feed troops and workers stationed on the plateau. This led to a collapse in the food supply chain for carnivores and a consequent decrease in their numbers. At that time, the killing of wildlife was not moderated by any form of wildlife conservation awareness.[43] The increase in the number of pikas might also be seen, at least in part, as a consequence of the actual deterioration. They prefer to inhabit earth banks that often develop in eroded areas. In addition, the infrastructure constructions on the grasslands also seem to have been welcomed by the pika population, which moves into the bare banks that spring up along construction sites, such as roads. Thus, the pikas might have helped to enlarge areas that had already been degraded. It is also questionable whether the means used to eliminate the pikas has actually significantly contributed to grassland restoration or whether the large-scale poisoning might not instead lead to the next slew of ecological problems.[44]

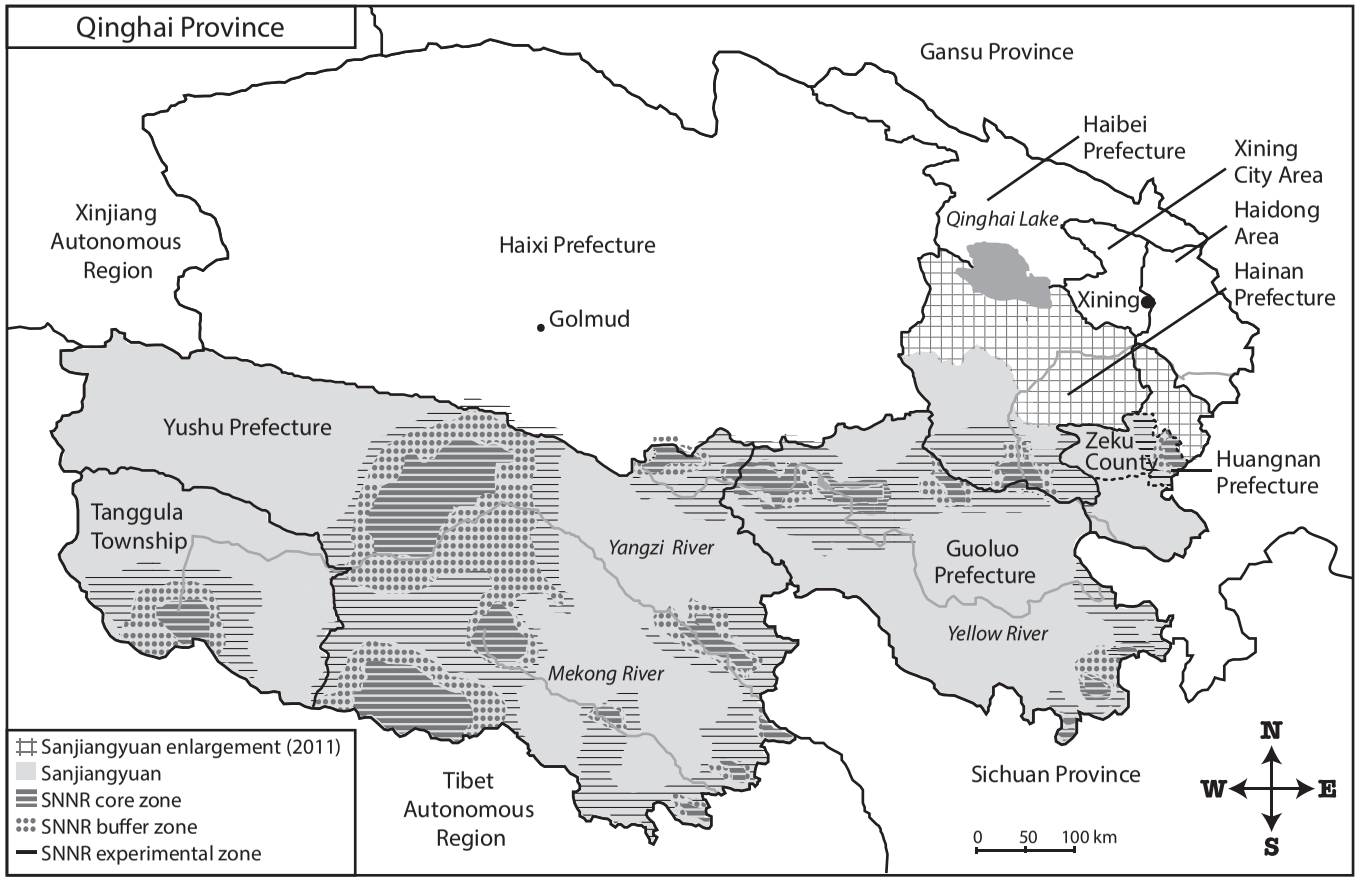
It may be necessary to reconsider environmental policy's attitude toward Tibetan pastoralism, which itself is tightly bound up with the grassland environment, as animal husbandry is an important factor that directly helps to sustain the Tibetan Plateau ecosystem.[45] Unfortunately, the current policy treats the landscape and the people as two distinct elements.

THREE RIVERS' HEADWATERS NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

To emphasize the commitment to protecting nature and restoring ecosystems in Qinghai, especially near the sources of three of China's major rivers—Yellow, Yangzi, and Mekong—the State Forestry Administration and the government of Qinghai established the Three Rivers' Headwaters National Nature Reserve (Ch: Sanjiangyuan Ziran Baohu Qu; hereafter Sanjiangyuan) in May 2000.[46] Tibetans compare these giant rivers that flow down from the Tibetan Plateau to the tears of the Snow Mountains.[47] The Chinese are more pragmatic and refer to this area as the "Water Tower of China" (Ch: Zhonghua Shuita), indicating its national importance.[48] Such rhetoric also helps to justify the scale of the implemented development policy that restricts local livelihoods, as well as cultural and spatial settings in this predominantly pastoral part of Qinghai. Chen calculated the total population of the Sanjiangyuan to be around 650,000, of whom almost 470,000 were engaged in animal husbandry. At that time, more than 90 percent of Sanjiangyuan's population were Tibetans.[49]

The actual watershed of these three rivers covers 318,100 square kilometers in Qinghai, but to ease administration the province has included entire counties in Sanjiangyuan.[50] As a result, the total area of Sanjiangyuan has been enlarged to 363,100 of Qinghai's 720,000 square kilometers. Sanjiangyuan originally included 16 counties (119 administrative areas incorporating townships and towns and one area of pasture in Zeku County) of the Yushu, Guoluo, Hainan, and Huangnan Prefectures and the Tanggula Township (Ch: Tanggula Shan Xiang) of Haixi Prefecture.

To demonstrate the state's growing active involvement in environmental protection, in January 2003 the Sanjiangyuan Nature Preservation Zone attained national status and became the Three Rivers' Headwaters National Nature Reserve (Ch: Sanjiangyuan Guojia Ji Ziran Baohu Qu; hereafter SNNR).[51] The SNNR does not correspond with the entire Sanjiangyuan watershed and actually includes only areas with special protection needs, such as forests, parts of the grasslands, and wild animal habitats for endangered



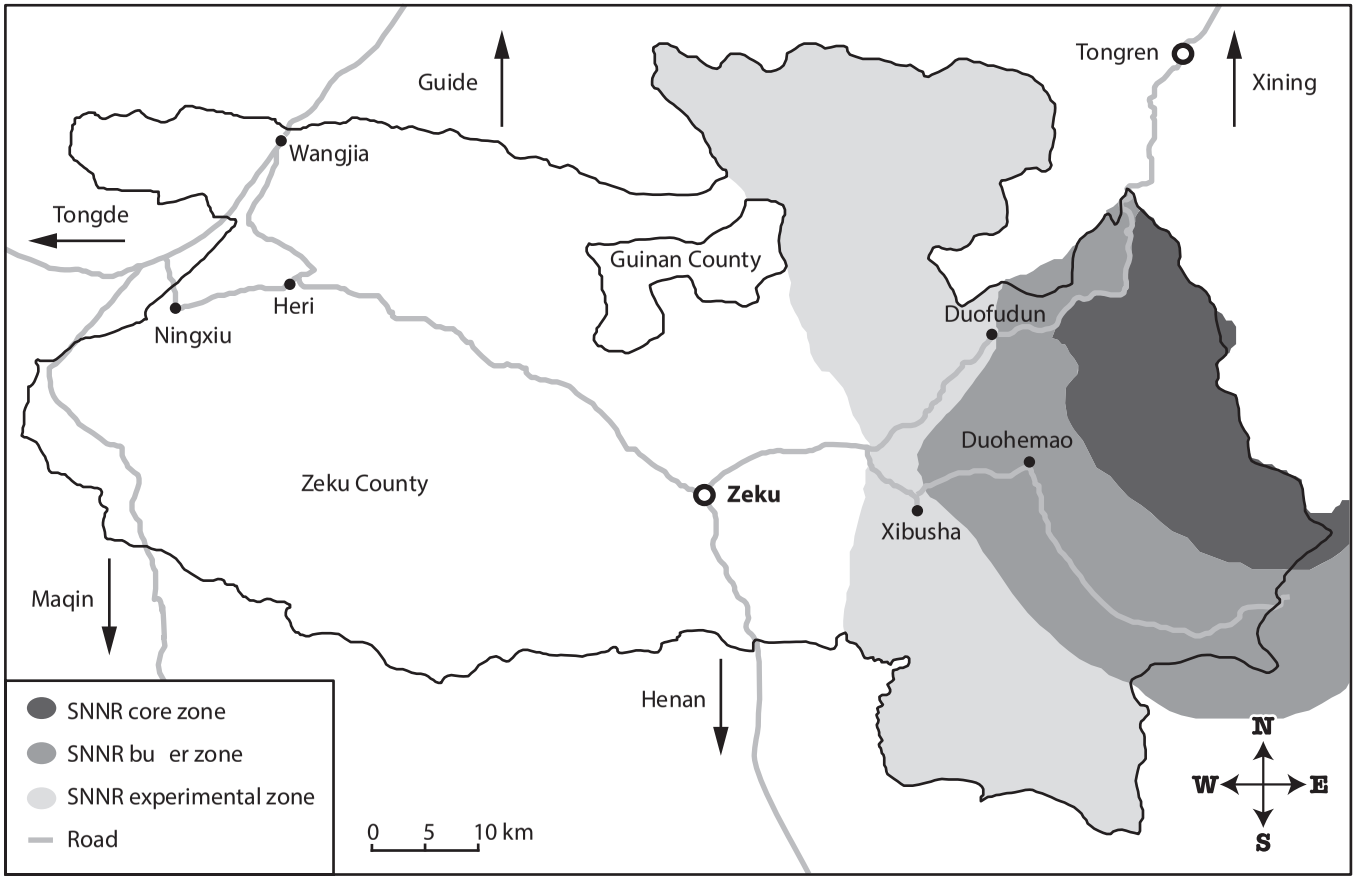
MAP 2.1. Map of SNNR conservation zones within the protection area of Sanjiangyuan

species such as Tibetan antelopes, wild yaks, snow leopards, and black-necked cranes. Its 152,300 square kilometers form the main implementation area of state-financed environmental policies. About two hundred thousand inhabitants live in this area.[52]

The SNNR area is divided into eighteen individual conservation areas, each containing core, buffer, and experimental zones (map 2.1). Each of the eighteen SNNR core zones is surrounded by a buffer zone, which in turn is surrounded by an experimental zone; these zones of special protection form individual patches within the Sanjiangyuan area.

The core zones (31,218 square kilometers total) mainly cover the areas around the major river sources, with the intention of protecting endangered animals and plants. Eight core zones protect wetlands and their ecosystems, nine protect forest areas, and one protects high-altitude grassland. Within the core zones, no human activities are permitted, which implies that all herding activities should be banned there. The aim of the buffer zones (covering 39,242 square kilometers) is to promote environmental conservation, with a limited amount of animal husbandry permitted according to the capacity of the pastures. Hence, Qinghai implements "ecologically" motivated sedentarization measures more widely than other Tibetan regions. The experimental zones (81,882 square kilometers total) may continue to be populated, and they include towns, farmland, and cultural relics and are open to tourism and research activities.[53]

Without establishing new conservation zones, in 2011 the original Sanjiangyuan area was enlarged, and a further 31,400 square kilometers of the northern counties of Huangnan and Hainan were added. Both of these prefectures have since been merged entirely into Sanjiangyuan, which now includes twenty-one counties. The newly attached regions are primarily from the farming regions of Qinghai. Local infrastructure and urbanization is more extensive here compared with the predominantly pastoral areas of the original Sanjiangyuan in the South. Additionally, in the same year, the whole Sanjiangyuan area was renamed Qinghai Three Rivers' Headwaters Integrated National Ecological Protection Experimental Zone (Ch: Qinghai Sanjiangyuan Guojia Shengtai Baohu Zonghe Shiyanqu). The aim within this zone remained to accelerate environmental protection, so-called green development (Ch: *lüse fazhan*), and to improve the living standards of the local population.[54] In practice, this shift has meant that more funds from the environmental budget, invested mainly through the State Forestry Administration, can be spent on construction projects aimed at urbanizing and modernizing the local countryside, such as, for example, the Beautiful Countryside Project (Ch: Meili Xiangcun Gongcheng), whose impact is



MAP 2.2. SNNR conservation zones in Zeku County

visible in the creation of new settlement walls, especially in areas exposed to tourism.

In the era of the current general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, Xi Jinping, Sanjiangyuan has remained a place to exercise extensive rangeland development, poverty alleviation, and ecological protection policies. In 2015, as part of the Beautiful China (Ch: Meili Zhongguo) initiative, Sanjiangyuan National Park (Ch: Sanjiangyuan Guojia Gongyuan) was established within the Sanjiangyuan zone, covering the origins of the three rivers and the Kekexili plain (consisting of Zhiduo, Qumalai, Maduo, and Zaduo Counties, in total 123,100 square kilometers) and overlapping partly with the conservation areas of the SNNR.[55]

Zeku County in Sanjiangyuan

Zeku County and neighboring Henan, representing the pastoral part of Huangnan Prefecture, were already included in the original Sanjiangyuan region. Part of the area of these counties, 2933 square kilometers of Zeku and Henan, also belongs to the special protection area of the SNNR, of which 91.5 percent (2684 square kilometers) belongs to Zeku and 8.5 percent (249 square kilometers) belongs to Henan, representing 1.93 percent of the whole SNNR area in Qinghai.

Three regions of Zeku County (Duohemao Township, Maixiu Town in Duofudun Township, and Xibusha Township), which form the Maixiu core zone, are included in the SNNR special protection area (map 2.2). These regions include 3,636 households (20,005 people), of which 563 households (3,098 people) live within a core zone; 1,198 households (6,590 people) within a buffer zone; and 1,875 households (10,317 people) within an experimental zone within Zeku County. The Zeku core zone includes the Maixiu Forest Region (Ch: Maixiu Linqu) and the Guanxiu Forest Region (Ch: Guanxiu Linqu). The core zones of Zeku and Henan occupy an area of 543 square kilometers (1.74 percent of the province's core zone area); the buffer zones, 1,048 square kilometers (2.67 percent of the province's buffer zone area); and the experimental zones, 1,342 square kilometers (1.64 percent of the province's experimental zone area).[56] The situation of Zeku County within the Sanjiangyuan area and the incorporated special protection zone led this county to experience the full-scale implementation of the environmental projects, including reductions in herding activities, exclusion of pastureland, and relocation of pastoralists from grasslands to new urban areas.

Ecological Protection and Construction in the Sanjiangyuan Area

Between 2003 and 2006, the local government in Zeku County emphasized in particular the following projects and measures of ecological protection: Returning Pastureland to Grassland, Ecological Resettlement and completion of facility sets, Enclosing Hillsides to Grow Forest (Ch: Fengshan Yulin), Fencing, Fire Protection of Forests and Grasslands (Ch: Senlin Caoyuan Fanghuo Gongcheng), Prevention of Harm Caused by Rodents, Constructions to Raise Livestock (Ch: Jianshe Yangxu), Construction of Energy Sources (Ch: Nengyuan Jianshe), Drinking Water Supply for People and Livestock (Ch: Ren Xu Yinshui Gongcheng), Putting in Order Black Earth Banks (Ch: Heitutan Zhili), and Distribution of Solar Cookers.[57] These propositions are summarized in the context of the development policy targeting the Sanjiangyuan grasslands under the term "Ecological Protection and Construction" (Ch: Shengtai Baohu yu Jianshe), designed in 2003. By 2007 their management was divided into three project groups, namely the Ecological Protection and Construction Projects (Ch: Shengtai Baohu yu Jianshe Xiangmu), the Farmers' and Pastoralists' Production and Basic Living Facilities Construction Projects (Ch: Nong Mumin Shengchan Shenghuo Jichu Sheshi Jianshe Xiangmu), and the Sustainability Projects (Ch: Zhicheng Xiangmu; table 2.1).

In the SNNR the central government invests directly only in the areas of special protection; the environmental and socioeconomic projects implemented in the rest of the area must be financed from the annual budget granted to the provincial government.[58] According to *Qinghai News*, at the beginning of the development policy's implementation in the Sanjiangyuan area between 2003 and 2005, central and local governments invested a total of ¥1.23 billion, mainly aimed at prohibiting grazing, resettling pastoralists, and replenishing the ecosystem in about 65,000 square kilometers of grassland. After 2005 a further ¥3.13 billion was invested in the Great Opening of the West development strategy, with the hope of achieving a "sustainable balance between environment and social-economy" in Sanjiangyuan by 2020.[59] By 2007 the total investments spent in the nature protection zone of Sanjiangyuan on policy addressing the degradation of the grasslands had climbed to ¥7.5 billion, and the amount further increased in the following years.

The majority of the projects of the Sanjiangyuan Ecological Protection and Construction initiative (table 2.1) result in the adoption of sedentarization measures. The push for direct sedentarization and resettlement was a

TABLE 2.1. Sanjiangyuan Ecological Protection and Construction initiatives by 2007 and other major development projects that include sedentarization after 2007

MAIN PROJECT GROUPS BY 2007[1]	RESPECTIVE SUBPROJECTS	MAJOR CONTENT	INVESTMENT BY 2007 (MILLION ¥)	AFFECTED AREA OR POPULATION	YEARS IMPLEMENTED IN QINGHAI[5]
I. Ecological Protection and Construction	1. Returning Pastureland to Grassland	Fencing, fodder and grain subsidies	3,127	6,438,850 ha (223,090 affected people)	2003–
		Grazing Ban Resettlement		33,567 herders resettled by 2004[3]	
	2. Returning Farmland to Forest or to Grassland Project	Implemented in counties with nature protection districts	152	6,540 ha	
	3. Putting in Order Degraded Land Project	Enclosing Hillsides to Grow Forest, Putting in Order Desertified Land, Protection of Wetlands, Putting in Order Black Earth Banks	997	800,590 ha	
	4. Fire Protection of Forests and Grassland		52		
	5. Prevention of Rodent Harm	Poisoning, manual killing of pikas	156	2,092,090 ha	

(*continued*)

TABLE 2.1. Sanjiangyuan Ecological Protection and Construction initiatives by 2007 and other major development projects that include sedentarization after 2007 (*continued*)

MAIN PROJECT GROUPS BY 2007[1]	RESPECTIVE SUBPROJECTS	MAJOR CONTENT	INVESTMENT BY 2007 (MILLION ¥)	AFFECTED AREA OR POPULATION	YEARS IMPLEMENTED IN QINGHAI[5]
	6. Water and Land Preservation		150	5,000,000 km^2	
	7. Construction of Nature Reserve Area Management Facilities and Capacities	Management stations and headquarters, boundary markers, wildlife protection schemes, prohibition of fishing in lakes and wetlands	289		
II. Farmers' and Nomads' Production and Living Basic Facilities Construction Projects	1. Ecological Resettlement Project	Relocation of poor households or of households from areas suffering from degradation	630	55,744–55,774 people by 2007[2]	2002–2010?
	2. Small Town Constructions	Construction of settlements for relocated pastoralists	318		

	3. Grassland Protection Set Project	Construction to Raise Livestock Project, Construction of Energy Sources, Construction of Forage Grass and Grain Irrigation Infrastructure	1,119		
	4. Drinking Water Supply for People and Livestock Project		154	131,600 people	
III. Sustainability	1. Artificial Rain		188		
	2. Scientific Sustainability and Environment Monitoring	Responsible for research, monitoring of the environment and technological training	171		
Main Projects after 2007	Nomadic Settlement Project	Construction of houses, construction of animal sheds, grassland fencing, planting of grass, establishment of water supply systems for livestock and people, building of roads, construction of solar and methane gas energy facilities		134,300 targeted households (2009)	2009–

(*continued*)

TABLE 2.1. Sanjiangyuan Ecological Protection and Construction initiatives by 2007 and other major development projects that include sedentarization after 2007 (*continued*)

MAIN PROJECT GROUPS BY 2007[1]	RESPECTIVE SUBPROJECTS	MAJOR CONTENT	INVESTMENT BY 2007 (MILLION ¥)	AFFECTED AREA OR POPULATION	YEARS IMPLEMENTED IN QINGHAI[5]
	Alleviating Poverty through Relocation			67,600 people (2009–2010)[4]	2001– (increased implementation after 2010)
	Targeted Poverty Alleviation				2015–

1 According to Chen 2007, 37–40.

2 The number of pastoralists relocated within the Ecological Resettlement and the attached Small Town Construction Project vary mostly between 55,744 and 55,774. See Chen 2007, 151; Du 2006, 45–46; Zha 2014, 1; Wanma 2013, 9. However, elsewhere in his book, Chen (2007, 143) presents another figure of pastoralists involved in Ecological Resettlement in the SNNR core zones amounting to 11,373 people (1,756 households) by the end of 2005.

3 Yeh 2005, 23. By Chen (2007) and others this figure might be included in the amount of people resettled through Ecological Resettlement Project.

4 The figures stated for Alleviating Poverty through Relocation may also include people resettled within other sedentarization projects such as the Ecological Resettlement Project.

5 The dates found in primary and secondary literature can slightly differ sometimes, depending on whether a pilot phase is included or whether the project has been relabeled.

particular focus of the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project, the Ecological Resettlement Project, and the Small Town Constructions Project. Some other initiatives encouraged the sedentarization of pastoralists indirectly, through further limitation of mobility, for example fencing programs, constructions of ranching facilities, and reduction of pastureland programs, as well as boosts to agriculture, such as the Artificial Rain project implemented as part of the grassland development program.

CHAPTER THREE

SEDENTARIZATION IN QINGHAI

TO SOME EXTENT, IT IS POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THE APPEARANCE OF RAPID urbanization through reclassification. For example, small rural administration centers, formerly labeled *xiang* (townships), are simply reclassified as *zhen* (towns), which raises their urban status.[1] This has occurred, for example, in Duofudun Township, Zeku County, where the township population expanded as a result of pastoralist sedentarization projects and was then renamed Maixiu Town.[2]

This allows for "urban expansion" with minimal construction of new houses and settlements. However, the physical relocation and settling-down of pastoralists serve multilayered functions, so the current development strategy has accelerated the pace of sedentarization in Sanjiangyuan and other grassland areas of China. Table 2.1 suggests this has been the result of many individual projects that have involved a degree of resettlement or settlement, rather than some sort of centrally directed program focused on general sedentarization.[3] In fact, many of the individual projects that involve a degree of resettlement or settlement do not present sedentarization as their major aim—at least not officially. Examining the projects resulting in sedentarization that affected the pastoralists in Qinghai before the introduction of the Targeted Poverty Alleviation Project will help us to better understand the later experiences of the Tibetan pastoralists.

THE SEDENTARIZATION PROCESS IN TIBETAN PASTORAL AREAS

Sedentarization is not a new phenomenon within pastoral societies in China and Central Asia.[4] Previously, the majority of pastoralists had lived in tents year round. The sedentary way of life among the herders was encouraged in

particular by the Household Responsibility System beginning in the 1980s, when the approach to land distribution was grounded on poverty alleviation. This was followed by fencing initiatives, which represented a "transition from a rural 'nomadic' lifestyle towards the increased sedentarization of people."[5] The construction of permanent houses on the allocated winter pastures was directly supported at that time by the Project to Increase Living Comfort (Ch: Wenbao Gongcheng) launched in 1978, as well as the 1990s Set of Four (Ch: Sipeitao) project.[6] The Set of Four project was initiated in the southern part of Qinghai (most of which was later to be designated Sanjiangyuan) in 1991.[7] In the grasslands area, in addition to house construction, the four scheduled improvements included government support for fencing, sowing grass, and animal shelter construction.[8] To persuade the pastoralists of the advantages of fixed housing, pilot households were selected to try out the new housing arrangements. For this purpose, in addition to the families of pastoral community leaders, former monks and prisoners were also selected, since they already had experience of living in buildings.[9]

In Qinghai the mass sedentarization of pastoralists that started in 2003 was primarily the result of the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project (through the included Grazing Ban Resettlement), the Ecological Resettlement Project (and the attached Small Town Constructions initiative) and the Nomadic Settlement Project, which started later, in 2009. All of these projects are clearly defined in policy, but in reality it is often difficult to distinguish between them. Their implementation objectives overlap and are modified locally.

At the beginning of this mass relocation in Zeku County, banners presenting policy details were placed at the sites to ease the implementation process. Since 2008, however, with the growing number of new settlements, the information banners vanished, which made it difficult to trace the individual new villages back to a certain project. Additionally, the confusion was intensified through the Chinese habit of relabeling, that is, changing the name of a policy or project while the content remains (almost) identical. Besides leaders' ambitions to distinguish themselves from their precursors through new project names, there are also financial reasons for relabeling. The agendas of the Grazing Ban Resettlement implemented as part of the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project and the Ecological Resettlement Project are remarkably similar and usually complementary. According to a member of the Nationalities Cultural Committee in Qinghai, these two projects are actually identical, though they are presented distinctly, as means of ecological protection and of poverty alleviation. This distinction places these two projects under the jurisdiction of different institutions, the provincial

Development and Reform Commission, which focuses predominantly on poverty alleviation in degraded pastoral areas (administering the Ecological Resettlement Project), and the Forestry Department and Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Department, which targets the natural protection of grasslands through reducing or banning pastoral activities (administering the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project; table 2.1).[10] This doubles the central government's budget allocation for local resettlement measures. Double subsidies enable twice as many pastoralists to be relocated during an annual administration period.

New terms are also invented to relabel old policies in cases where announced outcomes or deadlines are not being met. The implementation then proceeds under a new name but without significant changes to the rules and methods that actually address the causes of the original setback, such as the Ecological Resettlement Project in Qinghai.[11] According to a member of the Qinghai Nationalities Cultural Committee, the project ended in 2010 as a result of the increasing number of complaints and criticisms being made by pastoralists and local officials.[12] At the same time, another project, Alleviating Poverty through Relocation (Ch: Yidi Fupin Banqian), witnessed an eightfold expansion in Qinghai, resulting in the relocation of 60,000 people in 2010 (compared with only 7,600 people in 2009). The two initiatives shared a strikingly similar agenda.[13] Direct confirmation of such relabeling is, however, not easy to establish, especially when even the implementing officials are sometimes unsure about a project's duration. In 2015, for example, officials from the Zeku County grassland station were still unsure whether the Ecological Resettlement Project was still officially under way, even as they kept paying the associated subsidies to the original project participants.

In Qinghai the differentiation between the areas of special protection of national level interest, labeled as SNNR, and the area of the Sanjiangyuan nature reserve itself sometimes exacerbates label-related misunderstandings regarding the status and dimension of policy implementation. Various environmental projects exist in the SNNR area that include grassland restoration and the prohibition of grazing activities connected to the resettlement process, fencing, and so on. Yet, at the same time, an identical policy is being implemented in the entire Sanjiangyuan region, which means that reports, especially when translated into other languages, can provide misleading figures regarding the impact on pastoral landscapes and populations.[14]

It is therefore difficult to estimate the total number of pastoralist households already involved in the sedentarization process in Qinghai,

let alone in the whole Tibetan pastoralist area. Data on 86 established migration communities suggest that 61,889 people and 13,305 households had moved from the Sanjiangyuan area to cities and towns through the Ecological Resettlement Project by the end of 2007.[15] An alternative figure of 55,773 people relocated in Sanjiangyuan, corresponding to 13.65 percent of the Sanjiangyuan pastoralist population, appears in more recent Chinese studies.[16] For the SNNR, the Qinghai Administrative Institute records the relocation of 15,000 Tibetan pastoralists between 2003 and the end of 2009. Additionally, as part of the implementation of the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project, more than 30 local immigrant communities were built to accommodate relocated herdsmen. By the end of 2009, within the SNNR area, more than 6,800 pastoralist households had been relocated to such sites.[17] However, the entire project implementation area of SNNR includes 42,300 households and about 200,000 people. In contrast with the earlier statement suggesting that 100 percent of pastoralists would be affected by the sedentarization policy, a member of the Qinghai provincial government stated in 2009 that the sedentarization projects being implemented at that time would affect only around 80 percent of local pastoralists. In all of Qinghai, it was intended that the overall sedentarization process would be completed by 2014. By then it was anticipated that 134,300 households, more than 500,000 pastoralists, would have started new lives in the new urban areas.[18] However, the timeline for finalization of sedentarization in pastoral areas has been extended. New settlements were under construction as of 2017, and still more were to be constructed within the Targeted Poverty Alleviation Project in 2019. The pastoralists' creative reactions toward the sedentarization policy have created a gray zone that falls somewhere between a pastoral and sedentary way of life.

Mismatched statistical data and the plethora of overlapping policy projects make it difficult for the implementing officials and the affected pastoralists to maintain a clear overview and also represent a significant challenge for researchers and nongovernment organization involved in this issue.[19] When trying to understand the complex situation around the growing number of new Tibetan grasslands villages, it is therefore not enough to consult only the pastoralists, since they usually do not know the policy background of the relocation project in which they are involved. It is also insufficient to solely study statistics and policy agendas, as practice frequently fails to match theory. Only by comparing the policy agenda with the situation on site can we gain an approximate picture of the state's intentions, the scope for adapting the project to benefit the government or the pastoralists, and the possible

short-term and long-term outcomes of the current mass sedentarization process on the Tibetan Plateau.

RETURNING PASTURELAND TO GRASSLAND PROJECT

The Returning Pastureland to Grassland and Returning Pastureland to Forest Projects are equivalent to the Returning Farmland to Forest or Returning Farmland to Grassland Project implemented in farming areas, which focus on the restoration of destroyed forests, encouraging farmers to plant grass and trees instead of crops.[20]

The situation in which herders were found to be inhabiting places with insufficient grassland capacity was first mentioned in governmental documents concerning the grazing ban in 2003, the year that the large-scale implementation of the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project began in eight provinces and autonomous regions: Inner Mongolia, Sichuan, Yunnan, Tibet, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Gansu, and Qinghai.[21]

The initial trials of this project, however, took place in Qinghai in 2000. One of the test sites was Dari County (Ch: Dari Xian; T: Dar lag) in Guoluo Prefecture, where at that time 70 percent of the grassland was already labeled as degraded, and 16 percent classified as experiencing the worst level of degradation and completely unusable for herding purposes. As a result of the serious damage to grasslands, many local households were required to rent pastureland in neighboring counties and take their livestock there. Even though grazing on the degraded pastures was banned, the resettlement of pastoralists was not part of the pilot project. The area was relatively small, and it was possible to direct the pastoralists to rented land.[22]

Within the Great Opening of the West development strategy, the Returning Pastureland to Grassland or Returning Pastureland to Forest Projects were then announced as two of the fourteen "key projects" to be introduced in the western regions, with the aim of restoring "100 million mu (6.7 million hectares) of pasture to grassland."[23] The Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project was managed by the provincial Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Office and included all the grassland areas of western China.

In 2005 the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project was instated to "restore grassland vegetation, improve grassland ecologies, enhance grassland productivity, and promote harmony between grassland ecologies and pastoral production."[24] The project's rules remained similar to those of the Returning Farmland to Grassland Project, in that pastoralists were required to allocate a part of their pasturelands to grass cultivation and obtain

compensation in money or grain per mu of land protected from herding by fences.[25]

In the SNNR area, the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project was to become an important part of the environmental policy. Between 2005 and 2011 it was scheduled to be implemented on 64,389 square kilometers of land (6,438,900 hectares; approximately 56 percent of the SNNR's total grassland area), with five years of grazing ban and the fencing-off of 20,484 square kilometers (2,048,400 hectares) in the core zones, 15,523 square kilometers (1,552,300 hectares) in the buffer zones, and 28,402 square kilometers (2,840,200 hectares) in the experimental zones.[26] The areas to be protected under the project were identified by the officials directly responsible for the task according to the degree of degradation of the pastureland.[27] Given this rule, not every household would be required to exclude part of the grassland contracted to them from herding activities. Given the uneven distribution of eroded areas, some households would be required to leave part of their grassland fallow, while in other cases the exclosed area would include land allocated to more than one household. Nevertheless, in practice the situation looked different. For example, in Hainan Prefecture, until at least 2007, the pastoralists could decide to fence off more land and accordingly receive a higher subsidy.[28]

In the community of Da'e (sTag mgo) in Hongyuan County, Sichuan, each household was told to select a certain amount of grassland to be fenced off as part of the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project. Local pastoralists were then allowed to select the exact locations themselves; they usually chose remote parts of their pastureland—mountaintops and shaded slopes. The community leader was then responsible for proving that each household had fulfilled its task and fenced off the required amount of land. Based on community leaders' reports, the government distributed compensation subsidies in the form of money or grain.[29]

In locations with less severe degradation, livestock herding was prohibited in fenced-off areas during either spring and autumn or for the entire duration of vegetation growth. This prohibition correlated with zones for rotational grazing or seasonal bans. In areas with a high level of degradation, a complete, year-round grazing ban was implemented in fenced-off areas.[30]

Pastoralists who inhabited the areas under a complete grazing ban could no longer use the pastures and were resettled, at least for the duration of the grazing ban. This corresponds to the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project measure referred to as Grazing Ban Resettlement (Ch: Banqian

Jinmu). The duration of both the pastureland resting approach and the grazing ban approach was normally ten years. During this time, the pastoralist households involved could obtain fodder and grain subsidies from the government. The usual annual fodder and grain subsidy in Huangnan and Hainan Prefectures is ¥3,000 per household involved in the initiative. Households in Yushu and Guoluo Prefectures received a higher annual subsidy of ¥6,000. The distribution of forage and grain subsidies linked to the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project and the Ecological Resettlement Project were managed by the prefecture and the county agricultural and finance departments. According to official records, subsidy funding should have been maintained in a special account and managed by a qualified person. The subsidy amount for each project in each county must have been approved individually by the prefecture agriculture department, after which the county agriculture department would distribute the money to the selected townships according to the prefecture department's criteria.[31] According to the pastoralists interviewed, the subsidy amount changed each year, and payment was irregular.

Livestock Reduction and the Grazing Ban Resettlement Initiative

By 2004 grazing bans had already been implemented on 17 million mu of land (approximately 11,333 square kilometers), and 7,366 households (33,567 herders) had been resettled in Qinghai.[32] According to official records, households subject to the grazing ban that remain in the grasslands must optimize the number of livestock according to the grassland capacity and reduce excessive stocks of animals.[33] The documents further explain that the deadline for livestock reduction could be extended only for households in real economic difficulty, but they must still accomplish the tasks of livestock reduction and grazing ban implementation within two years. The forage and grain subsidy amount supplied by the government must correlate with the livestock reduction quota and the grazing ban. During the whole period of subsidy provision under the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project and the Ecological Resettlement Project, the responsible government representative must conduct an annual check of the livestock reduction quota and the size of pastureland excluded from grazing for each household. It must also be made clear which households are approved for participation on resettlement and which are not. Responsible government representatives must certify the subsidy amounts via subsidy cards.[34]

In practice, the subsidies do not appear to be recorded accurately. In 2017 the Zeku County officials responsible for poverty alleviation claimed that

there were no records regarding the allocation of resettlement houses distributed earlier. These claims might well have been made on purpose, to conceal the sometimes dubious house and subsidy distribution as well as the houses' use, which was not always in accordance with project rules.

The Grazing Ban Resettlement was the main part of the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project designed to be combined with (or sometimes probably replaced by) the Ecological Resettlement Project. According to the project agenda, households that participated in the Grazing Ban Resettlement must dispose of their entire herd.[35] Nevertheless, according to the policy outlines, resettlement was arranged only after the fenced-off grassland was shown to be unable to restore itself in the short term. The records state an exception to this rule for grassland areas such as those in Zeku County in the province's border region, where only an exclusion of the selected pastureland with a grazing prohibition was enforced, without the resettlement of affected pastoralists.[36] This does not mean that the pastoralists in Zeku were exempt from the sedentarization policy because they were not targeted by the Grazing Ban Resettlement. In Zeku the resettlement of pastoralists was primarily taking place under the label of the Ecological Resettlement Project.

The official records list further obligations placed on Grazing Ban Resettlement households, in addition to pastureland exclusion, such as grass planting. The project rules forbade pastoralists from returning to the grasslands to continue herding or to engage in other activities during the entire period of pastureland exclosure and grazing ban. Usage right transfer was only allowed because of a special exemption in Xinghai, Tongde, Gonghe, and Guinan Counties in Qinghai and in communities in the provincial border areas.[37] It was also forbidden to rent out or sell the pastureland and to sell or damage the fences the government financed and constructed for grassland protection.

Officially, households involved in the Grazing Ban Resettlement that continued herding on the exclosed land in violation of management regulations were supposed to be excluded from the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project forage and grain subsidy distribution administered by the township governments.[38] In reality, however, in certain locations pastoralists did let livestock graze within the grazing ban exclosures, especially in remote areas where officials rarely check or during holidays when they knew government representatives would not come to check (figure 3.3). Even when officials discovered grazing ban rule violations, they often tolerated them, as they were aware of the low subsidies and the difficulties of finding livelihood alternatives in pastoral areas.

ECOLOGICAL RESETTLEMENT PROJECT

Ecological Resettlement, in Chinese Shengtai Yimin and sometimes also translated as "Ecological Migration," had existed since the 1980s. In 1982, as part of the national poverty alleviation approach, residents from areas in Ningxia affected by serious degradation had to be resettled in different locations. The relocation concept continued during the Eight-Seven Poverty Alleviation Reinforcement Plan of 1994–2000, and in 2002 the term Shengtai Yimin was adopted as an official name for the socioeconomically driven relocation initiative implemented in thirteen provinces of western China, including Qinghai.[39]

Since 2004 the Ecological Resettlement Project in Qinghai was managed by the Sanjiangyuan office of the Provincial Development and Reform Committee. Besides the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project, Ecological Resettlement was declared to be another of the key projects of the Sanjiangyuan General Plan and part of the Great Opening of the West.[40] The intention of the project was to immediately benefit pastoralists by offering training courses to improve their skills. Additionally, it aimed to increase the income of pastoralist households through reducing livestock mortality rates, improving the price of animal products, and reducing the period needed to fatten lambs so they could be sold within the first year. Part of the plan was meant to increase livestock turnover and improve animal husbandry practices through the use of animal sheds, which could also serve as greenhouses to plant vegetables during the summer. Pastoralists' quality of life would be improved through providing water, electricity, roads, schools, medical and veterinary care, and television broadcasting services to each village in addition to increasing access to science and technology and helping pastoralists to absorb, extend, and apply their newly acquired knowledge. Pastoralists were to be taught how to prevent and treat animal diseases, as well as how to effectively use the sheds for animal shelter and vegetable production. Additionally, resettlements would be situated near roads to grant pastoralists better access to the job market and alternative income sources.

The Ecological Resettlement Project also had an environmental focus. According to the government, the potential benefits from sedentarization measures such as the Ecological Resettlement Project and the adoption of grassland resting and the rotational grazing system included a reduction in pressure on the grasslands, which would stimulate the recovery of grassland vegetation and help to protect high-altitude wildlife and natural resources.[41] The recovery of grassland vegetation would also result in a rise in the water table, which would maintain the water volume of the Yellow River area.

Additionally, it was hoped that grasslands recovery would reduce soil erosion and prevent desertification. The implementation of resettlement measures would also result in better balance between grassland capacity and livestock numbers. Resettled households were required to sell their entire herds before moving into new houses, and the reduced livestock numbers would mitigate the problem of fodder for the remaining animals.[42]

One strategy for resettling pastoralist households was the so-called regional settlement approach, which resulted in the concentration of pastoralist households from one region in a single settlement within their original township or county. Regional settlement targeted pastoralists living in poor conditions in dispersed housing within a nature preservation area. This approach included livestock reduction measures and the implementation of a rotational grazing system for the remaining animals. It also involved the construction of settlements in regions with little vegetation, where, through implementation of livestock reduction measures, the elimination of pikas, and fencing initiatives, grassland degradation could be stopped and the grassland ecosystem restored in a relatively short period of time. A second approach was the process referred to as supra-regional relocation, in other words resettlement away from the original place of residence, beyond the county or even the prefectural boundaries. Such an approach was adopted in places experiencing severe desertification and degradation, where the restoration of the ecosystem within a short period of time was considered impossible.[43] To further differentiate, "village group resettlement" was community group migration between counties or even prefectures and "individual resettlement" referred to households moving within the same county. The main difference in the treatment of these resettlement groups was the amount of subsidy allowances. The subsidies for participants involved in village group resettlement were higher, ¥8,000 per year, but such households were required to permanently relinquish their pastureland usage rights. Participants in individual resettlement initiatives were required to only temporarily abandon their usage rights, such as for a period of ten years, and received only ¥3,000–¥6,000 in annual subsidy payments. The duration of subsidy payments for both groups, however, was scheduled for ten years only, without differentiating between pastoralists who had the possibility of returning to their land and those who did not.[44] However, due to problems with economic adaptation in the resettlements, the amount and duration of state payments had to be increased.

Resettlement construction sites were selected by the government. According to the project agenda, the sites needed to be suitable for further industrial development, convenient for residents, easy to administer, and capable

of offering enough space for potential population growth. Houses should have sufficient light, be airy, and provide access to hygienic facilities and green spaces. The houses must conform to pastoralists' expectations and to the allotted budget. The selected areas for construction of a resettlement site could be near the original location of the affected pastoralist households, in a location with sufficient natural resources and state-owned agricultural land, or close to a nearby township or county town.

In reality, a lack of funds often led to the major curtailment of a project's implementation goals. For the most part, implementation was restricted to building houses, while the building of public facilities and development of service programs were postponed. The majority of resettlements visited consisted of uniformly constructed houses, only sometimes served by paved streets. Other facilities mentioned in the implementation plan and designed according to individual resettlement layout schemes remained uncompleted. Electricity and water networks arrived with significant delays and were rarely connected to every house, public toilets were either lacking or in bad condition, and public waste disposal was nonexistent. Hygiene conditions worsened after the pastoralists moved in. Excrement and garbage often accumulated on the streets and around the resettlement site. Garbage had increased directly with the increase in consumption of commercial goods and packaged food, which was encouraged by the resettlement locations' proximity to towns.

Although moving into a resettlement theoretically provided pastoralists with better access to goods, health-care services, and the job market, without the skills needed by urban secondary and tertiary industries, former herders struggled to find employment. The scheduled vocational training for relocated pastoralists was only rarely provided. When the training did occur, it was often only short term and did not provide participants with enough confidence in their new skills. It often turned out to be inconsequential, not providing the type of management training that would enable people to establish a livelihood via their newly learned skills. That only a small number of people were able to build a new existence on what they learned raised questions about the entire vocational training program.[45]

The idea of double-use greenhouses also seems to be difficult to implement in reality. Although some rural households from farming areas in Gansu explained to me that they used the sheds to grow mushrooms and vegetables and to raise animals such as pigs, in the pastoral areas of Qinghai, growing vegetables was an alien concept for many of my informants. They often claimed they did not know how to plant and take care of vegetables, did not see vegetables as an important part of their diet, and thus had

no reason to grow them. Intensive vegetable production was introduced in Tibetan areas, especially around Lhasa, by the Han inward migrants and was originally intended to feed People's Liberation Army members, but in the pastoral environment there is not a large market for vegetables, so herders find it difficult to sell their surplus produce.[46]

Due to the lack of sufficient income opportunities in the new villages, pastoralists invented ways of bypassing the disadvantageous aspects of the project, while still receiving all the benefits. The main area of subterfuge concerns the requirement to sell herds after relocation.[47] In many areas in Qinghai, including Zeku, Henan, and Maqin Counties, it was possible to find households that possessed new houses but also retained their herds. One reason for this practice is that numerous households have decided to split in two, identifying the grandparents as a separate household unit and thus reaping the maximum benefits from the project. These households thus retain the option of abandoning their new houses and joining the rest of their families on the grasslands if they dislike their new lives in the resettlement.

In accordance with the poverty alleviation approach of the Ecological Resettlement Project, the households initially targeted were those classified as poor.[48] Such households, with minimal livestock, found it difficult to survive on the grasslands, were forced to seek refuge on the new government projects, and were thus more willing to agree to resettlement proposals.[49] From an environmental protection perspective, however, resettling the poor first cannot have significantly contribute to the aim of relieving grazing pressure on the grasslands, as these households did not possess many animals. Project implementation was more concerned with fulfilling the required quota for resettled households than with adhering strictly to the environmental and socioeconomic goals of the sedentarization policy.[50]

Officially, participation was voluntary, but the resettlement quotas set by the government still had to be fulfilled. The project was sufficiently flexible, allowing the resettlement of households from other communities in cases where there was an insufficient number of households from one pastoral community who were willing to move. It was only when an insufficient number of county households agreed to move that the government applied forced resettlement measures.

The responsible local government representative, or an instructed community leader or member of the local village or herders' committee, usually explained only the advantages of a new life in a fixed urban dwelling to the pastoralists. The mediators often said nothing about the political background or about any potential disadvantages connected with the resettlement project, such as the abandonment of pastures. Additionally, numerous

pastoralists were not literate in either Chinese or Tibetan and could not read the contract they were encouraged to sign.[51] The positive representation of the resettlement projects, strengthened by the pastoralists' fear of future negative consequences from the government if they refused to participate, usually led to a high level of compliance.

Another persuasive factor is the stricter control on school attendance in the West of China, adopted in Qinghai in 2007.[52] To enable their children to attend school, many households decide to move closer to a township or county center.[53] As is the case in the majority of pastoralist areas of the Tibetan Plateau, in Zeku County, from the first year onward, children board at the school for the whole semester, only returning home during the winter and summer holidays. The lack of adequate road systems and the long distances from homes to schools made it impossible for children to return home each day. Conditions in the schools, especially in remote grassland places, were often quite poor, as government financial support was not enough to provide suitable standards in classrooms and dormitories. Usually there was not enough space in the dormitories for all the children, so in most cases several children had to share a bed. Boarding schools also lead to increased responsibilities for teachers, who are required to live at the school together with their students. Many are not sufficiently trained as caregivers. Therefore, especially in the case of young children, parents prefer to house their children with relatives in a village or town, where the children do not board at school or to move closer to the school themselves. Even at the beginning of the twenty-first century, compulsory school attendance was seen as a burden by many pastoral families in Zeku County, as it meant a reduction in the labor force.[54] With the gradual economic and social transformation of western China, however, an increasing number of parents have changed their minds concerning the importance of education and have started to see it as a means of enabling their children to have better opportunities in the future.[55]

Increasing cash demands, the result of market expansion, have also led many pastoralists to abandon the pastures. All this has brought about quite a high number of potential project participants. In Zeku County, the number of assigned participants often exceeded the number of available government houses in any given year.

The high level of pastoralist households wishing to be resettled, as referenced in official reports, gives the impression that there is a strong willingness to relocate, and the government uses this impression to justify the mass resettlement. Whether or not the required resettlement quota can be fulfilled within the scheduled period of time depends in turn on the financial grants obtained annually from central and provincial governments. For

various reasons, including corruption, the available funds are reduced as they percolate through all the administrative levels before reaching local governments.[56] The Nationalities Cultural Committee in Xining claimed that the resettlement houses should be distributed among the pastoralists for free. However, as there are too many applicants for resettlement in some regions, including Zeku County, households are required to pay for their new homes.

Resettlements usually consist of one of the following types: two-story houses with commercial premises (figures 4.4 and 5.9) that can serve as shops on the ground floor and a residences on the second floor; bungalows with small yards to plant vegetables (figures 5.4 and 5.5); and blocks of flats (figure 5.2) situated within existing towns.

SMALL TOWN CONSTRUCTIONS

Linked to the Ecological Resettlement Project is the Small Town Constructions initiative, aimed at widening and enlarging small urbanization centers in the SNNR. Planners hope that the growth of small towns in the grassland areas will stimulate the development of local industry, business, culture, and education and strengthen administrative control. To relieve pressure on the grasslands, the initiative intends to relocate pastoralists to small towns such as Zequ, Zeku County, within the nature preservation zone. The main focus of future local development is expected to be trade and tourism.[57]

NOMADIC SETTLEMENT PROJECT

Another project that includes settlement constructions (figures 3.2 and 3.3) is the so-called Nomadic Settlement Project, introduced in Qinghai in 2009.[58] At least in the local Tibetan areas, this project might be seen as representing the culmination of all previous settlement efforts, as it covers all Tibetan pastoral households still living without a permanent house or with an unstable house that is in danger of collapse (Ch: *wu fang hu he weifang hu*)—in reality, this means houses made of earth and wood or stone in the traditional manner (figure 3.1) and thus includes all households that have not participated in any of the previous sedentarization projects. The Nomadic Settlement Project was based on experience gained during the implementation of earlier projects, such as the Returning Pastureland to Grassland and the Ecological Resettlement. However, there is one significant difference: Within the Nomadic Settlement Project, the basis of the households' everyday life does not shift from animal husbandry, at least not yet. Participating households

FIGURE 3.1. Traditional house on the winter pasture built from locally available materials, Hongyuan, October 2009

were allowed to continue their lives as herders and obtain either a government grant to build a new house or a ready-made house constructed by the government. The new house must be inhabited by at least part of the family.

The Nomadic Settlement Project seems in a way to be a continuation of the earlier Set of Four policy. In addition to house building, it promotes the construction of animal sheds, the building of grassland fences, the planting of grass, the establishment of water supply systems for livestock and people, the building of roads, and the construction of solar and methane gas energy facilities.

Eligible households must prove that they were not involved in any other sedentarization project and must consist of at least two family members who have not separated from another registered household unit during the previous two years.[59] This rule intends to prevent the splitting-up of households, popular among pastoralists participating at the Ecological Resettlement Project.[60]

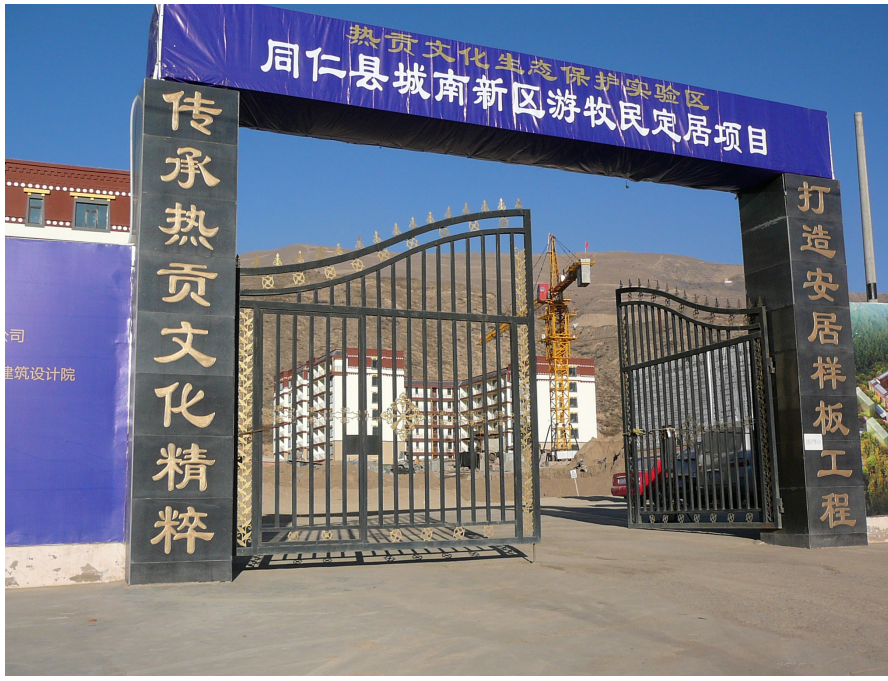


FIGURE 3.2. Nomadic Settlement in Tongren County New Southern District, November 2011

The Nomadic Settlement Project was managed by the provincial Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Office and encompasses thirty-one counties of six Qinghai prefectures: Haibei, Hainan, Huangnan, Yushu, Guoluo, and Haixi. According to a government investigation from 2009, in Qinghai 134,300 households met the requirements of the Nomadic Settlement Project.[61] Project costs were shared between the central government, the provinces, prefectures, and counties, and the pastoralists themselves. The number of houses built in any one year depends on the annual investment of the central government, which contributes more than 50 percent of all expenses. In 2009, the first year of project implementation, the Qinghai government scheduled the construction of 25,710 houses, with a total investment of more than ¥1.2 billion. Pastoralists were expected to pay 13.8 percent of the total costs. In reality, the pastoralists' share of the construction costs was decided by local governmental institutions in accordance with the financial resources supplied by the central government and the number of participating

FIGURE 3.3. Nomadic Settlement built by the government in Ningxiu, Zeku County, October 2009

households. The government required the new dwellings to be constructed of modern materials dominated by brick, concrete, or metal. The size of each house must be at least sixty square meters, regardless of household size.[62]

According to the general agenda, the Nomadic Settlement Project was intended to improve both pastoralists' quality of life and regional development. The new village houses were promoted as a living base for each pastoralist household. In these houses, families would no longer need to move household equipment throughout the year and could accumulate material belongings. The government also hoped that moving the headquarters of pastoralist households closer to urban areas would increase engagement in business and services. However, as with people relocated earlier, only a small number of pastoralists actually tried to obtain additional employment as drivers or planned to open restaurants or accommodations for tourists and transients. The majority of people in the settlements just used the free time to rest, relying on the food supplies from their livestock in the grasslands and financial subsidies from the government. Although household splitting

had been made more difficult and, moreover, unnecessary within the Nomadic Settlement Project, the participating pastoralists found other ways to bypass the regulations and obtain the greatest benefit from this kind of state support. Households that lacked children of school age or who had no compelling reason to remain in an urban area often rented out or sold their new houses.

Implementation Variations

The main regional differences in the implementation of the Nomadic Settlement Project are apparent in the following examples of Maqin County (rMa chen) in Guoluo Prefecture, Qinghai, Hongyuan County (rKa khog) in Aba Prefecture (rNga ba), Sichuan, and Zeku County in Huangnan Prefecture, Qinghai.

The government scheduled the construction of 5,128 new houses in the pastoralist areas of Maqin in 2009. According to a prefectural government announcement, these houses were to be built by the pastoralists themselves. The construction had to include a house of at least sixty square meters, a toilet, an animal shed, and an animal yard. According to a public

FIGURE 3.4. "Tibetan style" house, built in accordance with the regulations of the Nomadic Settlement Project in a winter grasslands location, Maqin County, October 2009

announcement of the Guluo Prefecture government, ¥48,500 were allocated to each house unit.[63] According to research conducted on site in Maqin County, any pastoralist household could apply to participate in the project. Even households that already possessed a permanent concrete house started the construction of new ones. Most households built their houses themselves. While it was possible to hire laborers for the construction, doing so would mean additional costs for the pastoralists. The new houses could be constructed either in the winter grasslands or in a new village settlement next to the prefecture seat. Only after building a house in "Tibetan" style, interpreted as a house of the right size with a tiled front (figure 3.4) and a toilet, mostly outside dry ones, was the owner authorized to receive financial support. According to my informants, the amount of the available aid for the house construction was ¥40,000.

The construction of animal sheds was contracted out separately, and participant households had to prepay ¥6,000 to the government in order to

FIGURE 3.5. House constructed by pastoralists within the Nomadic Settlement Project in Hongyuan County, October 2009

FIGURE 3.6. Interior of a new house constructed and equipped by the pastoralists, Nomadic Settlement Project, Hongyuan County, October 2009

later obtain double the total allocation of ¥12,000. By the end of 2009, this money had still not reached the pastoralists, despite the fact that house and animal shed construction preparations had been completed months before.

The grassland conditions in Sichuan are much better than in Qinghai. Nevertheless, large-scale sedentarization is also being implemented there. In Hongyuan in 2009, each household that applied and was chosen to participate on the Nomadic Settlement Project obtained ¥20,000 to build a new house. The total amount spent on the constructions, however, was usually much higher, sometimes even more than ¥100,000, and the pastoralists used their savings to build and equip their new houses with high-quality modern and expensive goods (figure 3.6). In Hongyuan, the pastoralists could apply for a state loan of a further ¥25,000, to be repaid over the three following years. Poorer households, identified as such by the township and county government, received a ready-built house for free (figure 3.7), together with a small governmental subsidy.

FIGURE 3.7. Nomadic Settlement Project one-family house constructed by the government and distributed for free to poor households, Hongyuan County, October 2009

FIGURE 3.8. Nomadic Settlement built by the government near Zeku County town, October 2009

In Zeku County, inhabited mainly by pastoralists with lower incomes when compared with the pastoralist households of Maqin or Hongyuan, the government decided to take charge of all house construction projects.[64] The houses were designed to be built in separate, uniformly designed villages (figure 3.8) near roads or administrative centers. Here, the pastoralists had to pay a certain amount to the government to get the new house.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPMENT IN ZEKU COUNTY

ZEKU COUNTY WAS FOUNDED BY THE PEOPLES' GOVERNMENT OF CHINA on December 5, 1953, and since then has become one of the four counties of Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Ch: Huangnan Zangzu Zizhi Zhou) in Qinghai.[1] The new county town of Zequ was constructed on the edge of the grasslands of the Zequ River Valley, the geographical center of the county.[2]

The name Zeku is a Chinese phonetic transcription of the Tibetan name rTse khog, which means "basin between the mountains." The rTse khog area spreads between latitude 34°45′ and 35°32′ north and longitude 100°34′ and 102°8′ east. The total county area is 6,658 square kilometers, which is 37.18 percent of the prefecture area and 0.91 percent of the total area of Qinghai.[3] The average altitude of the region is 3,500 meters, and the highest point of the whole Huangnan Prefecture (Zamari ridge, 4,931 meters) also lies in Zeku County. The lowest part of Zeku County is in Maixiu (dMe shul) at 2,800 meters. Grassland comprises 98 percent (6,525 square kilometers) of Zeku County, and of that 94.94 percent labeled as usable grassland.[4] There were 16,676 people living in 4,143 households when the county was founded. Because of its high altitude, Zeku was traditionally a purely pastoral area. Local grassland quality is described as low, in comparison, for example, with the neighboring Mongolian Autonomous County of Henan (Ch: Henan Mengguzu Zizhi Xian; T: rMa lho sog rigs rang skyong khul or Yul rgan nyin) that lies at a slightly lower altitude. Measured by statistical income, Zeku is one of the poorest pastoral counties in Qinghai.[5]

By 1974 a visible urban area associated with Zeku County town was already connected by road to Tongren and Henan and surrounded by camps housing pastoral communities.[6] Since the foundation of the local government and incorporation into the Chinese administration system, members of other

nationalities have started to move to Zeku, previously inhabited purely by Tibetans.[7] Groups of Han and other nationalities were sent here by the central government to help start the wave of development and modernization. In 1995 the total population of Zeku County grew to 45,845 people (8,295 households), of which 44,357 people (96.75 percent) were Tibetans.[8]

The development of local infrastructure continued. By 1989 thirty-five electric wire lines had been laid from Tongren to Zeku. Administration buildings, schools, a hospital, and also a market and business center had been constructed. As a purely pastoral county, Zeku did not produce enough income and cash to pay for the new government and public facilities. Although the government started to collect taxes in 1954, heavy subsidies from the central government were still necessary to finance the new infrastructure developments. In 1954 the collected taxes amounted to only 27.79 percent of the total county income of ¥511,000, and by 1995 government subsidies still made up 19.74 percent of the total annual county income of ¥13.9 million.

FIGURE 4.1. Zeku County town, with Zeku TV station, army quarters, and local governmental area, 2007

FIGURE 4.2. Grasslands community school in Zeku County, 2007

After the Great Opening of the West began, the central government increased its investment in improving the infrastructure in Zeku County, but significant changes did not appear immediately. In 2005, during my first visit to Zeku County, the county town (figure 4.1) consisted of two streets, with Chinese and Tibetan hospitals, one middle school, two primary schools, a children's nursery, a bank, a post office, a television station, a government building complex, an army quarters, several stores and motorcycle repair services, a petrol station, a pharmacy, a meat and vegetable market, one abandoned cinema, a small police station, housing for government workers, a sacred hill site, a solitary hotel with a disco, and a prison, which was one of the first buildings to be rebuilt and enlarged as part of the development strategy. In addition to the county town, the only urban areas in the county were small township centers along main roads, with an administration building, few houses, small restaurants, and a school. The rest of the county area was grassland, where the only buildings were the pastoralists' winter houses and small village primary school yards, often without suitable road access or electricity supply (figure 4.2). There were more than fifty primary schools in the county, one in almost every pastoral community.[9]

From 2007 the government started to rebuild and enlarge some of the school buildings in the county seat and township centers, and in 2011 a second middle school was built in the county town. The primary schools in the grassland areas had to wait for reconstruction or rely on support from nongovernmental organizations, in some cases only to be closed in 2011, often soon after their renewal, due to an announcement on rural education modernization.

PASTORAL PATTERNS AND GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT IN ZEKU COUNTY

The 2009 population records for Zeku County show 62,044 people, 97.98 percent of them Tibetan. Of all county residents, 56,361 (90.84 percent of the county population) were still involved in animal husbandry.[10] The pastoralists in Zeku alternate their residence between winter and summer pastures. At the winter pasture sites, most families have houses that were built during the 1990s, when the state encouraged the construction of fixed homes after the allotment of pastures to individual households. The majority of these houses are built of stamped earth, the main construction material found in the farming regions of Qinghai as well.

Only in around 2005 did some households start to use new industrial materials, specifically concrete and bricks, to build their houses, using tile to decorate the facades. The winter pastures are now fenced off, and the grasslands have been divided up using long strips of wire netting. These fences are intended to mark the boundaries of the pasturelands allocated to each household after the dissolution of communes in Zeku County in 1983.[11] During the decollectivization process, the land usage rights and livestock were allocated to the pastoralists according to the number of family members in each household. In 1996 local land was redistributed among households, and each person obtained about one hundred mu (approximately 6.7 hectares) of grassland.[12] Afterward, the government ordered each household's land to be fenced to avoid land disputes and prevent one household's animals from grazing on a neighbor's pasture.[13]

Land allocation and fencing usually involves only winter pastures. The summer pastures in Zeku County, which are mostly up in the mountains, are not fenced. They are managed by communities in a manner similar to the way they were administered before the state land reforms. Depending on the weather conditions, families usually move to the summer pastures in early June and depart at the end of August. The location of the summer pastures varies considerably. Some households have summer pastures that

are only several hundred meters from their winter pastures, just on the other side of the road. However, even in such cases these families pitch tents during the summer, camping there rather than staying in the nearby houses. Other households move up to fifty kilometers away in the summer. Recently, the method of traveling between pastures has changed. Nowadays, families load their belongings onto pickup trucks instead of yaks and travel on motorbikes instead of horses. Some households still use the traditional black tent made of yak hair in the summer pastures of Zeku County, but more often they now use white cotton tents, sometimes of a traditional shape, combined with black strips of yak wool, or modern white or green shelters with metal frames in the shape of army tents. In the lower part of the county, in Duofudun Township, some households use additional spring and autumn pastures that lie on the route between the winter and summer camps. Families that use such pastures spend about a month there while on their way to and from the summer pastures. These pastures are also unfenced.

Poorer families clearly profited from the land redistribution program since they have retained their land usage rights, even if they possess only a small number of livestock, or even none. Through exercising their usage rights, they thus can obtain additional income by renting out their allotted pastures to households with larger herds in need of additional fodder.

Pastureland fencing has reduced the workload of the herders, but according to my observations, the free time gained through the fencing program is in most cases not used as an opportunity to start new activities or businesses. The older generation uses the time to stay at home, chant, and worry about the youngsters, who in turn prefer to visit towns and spend the day enjoying leisure activities, such as playing pool or drinking alcohol. The fences have also resulted in new responsibilities and financial burdens for pastoralists, who are required to contribute financially to their construction, maintenance, and repair.[14] According to the Qinghai Province Grassland Station, based on the annual budget supplied by the central government, the Qinghai provincial government is currently required to meet only up to 40 percent of the fencing material costs. By the end of 1995, 88,700 hectares of Zeku grasslands (about 14 percent of the area and limited mainly to winter pastureland) had already been fenced off, and the fencing program still remained part of government development policy in Qinghai, at least until 2009.[15]

The allocation and fencing of pastureland is a controversial issue in relation to its environmental and economic benefits and drawbacks. In Zeku County fencing may well have contributed to the impoverishment of some households and has also caused environmental problems. In the 1990s, when fencing was introduced, population density in Zeku was about 6.5 people per

square kilometer. Since then, due to a relatively large native population and the relaxed implementation of family planning policy on the part of the local administration unit, population numbers have been constantly growing, and by 2009 population density had increased to about 9.4 people per square kilometer.[16] The population in Zeku County grew faster than the economy, which led to a growing discrepancy between the number of livestock and the availability of grazing pastures. Livestock growth statistics in Zeku County show that between 1954 and 1995 livestock numbers almost doubled, not only as a result of population growth among the pastoralists, but also as a direct result of government actions.[17] My pastoral informants from Zeku County estimate that during the past twenty years the number of pastoral households has increased by about 30 percent and has resulted in a further shrinking of the pastures available per household.[18] This process has led to a no-win situation: in some parts of Zeku County, where the pastoralists have tried to respect the local grasslands capacity, even when the population increased, the number of livestock decreased because the available pastureland became smaller, leading to a reduced income for such households. In cases where the number of livestock increased to meet household needs, overgrazing was inevitable.[19]

In addition to using fences to mark the boundaries between each household, other kinds of enclosure can be identified as having had an influence on local grasslands management and land availability. In the 1970s, following the example of Inner Mongolia and its experience with fencing, the government ordered the enclosure of "grass reservoirs" on the grasslands, with fences installed to protect areas of degraded pastureland so that the grass could regenerate.[20] Additionally, the fenced-off areas served as reserve grasslands in times of natural catastrophe and for newborn animals. The original aim of this process was to achieve the ratio of one animal to one mu of grassland, with Zeku County serving as a model for the whole province. During the ten years this strategy was in place, 340 such grass reservoirs were created across the entire county. The total enclosed area measured 82,000 hectares, and the surrounding walls, built of sod bricks, totaled 123.4 kilometers in length. According to the livestock statistics at that time, a ratio of one animal per 1.16 mu of land was achieved, which exceeded the original aim of the fencing project. Similar sod walls have also been used to enclose fields in Zeku County. During the period of the people's communes, large arable fields were established in pastoral areas, though this attempt to grow crops was often unsuccessful due to the high altitude and unfavorable climate. In Zeku County, however, for example in Wangjia and Heri Townships, some fields still remain, farmed by local

FIGURE 4.3. Settlement site constructed by the government in Wangjia Township, Zeku County, November 2011

pastoral communities and planted with rapeseed. The current sedentarization policy has further encouraged local agriculture development by equipping each Wangjia community that moves to a new settlement with a new tractor and other farming machinery (figure 4.3).

The extensive use of sod bricks to create the walls has resulted in large parts of the grasslands being destroyed. To mitigate the erosion caused by digging up sod to make bricks, iron wire netting has been used as a fencing material since 1981. Wire fences now mark the boundaries of individual pastures and are also used by projects such as the Returning Pastureland to Grassland initiative to exclude degraded grassland areas. In Zeku County, by 2007, the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project had initiated fencing of 115,100 hectares of grassland.[21] This further limited the available grazing area, which increased pressure on household economies. To address this situation of shrinking animal husbandry production spaces and increasing poverty levels in pastoral areas and to facilitate the regeneration of the fragile ecosystem, the government declared its intention to resettle around 50 percent of pastoralists in Zeku County.

ENFORCING DEVELOPMENT IN PASTORAL AREAS THROUGH SEDENTARIZATION

The second phase of the Great Opening of the West development strategy brought about significant changes in the lives of Tibetan pastoralists in Zeku County, including the first wave of sedentarization, which was environmentally motivated and scheduled for the period between 2003 and 2006.[22] It targeted 1,093 households (4,985 people), a number generated in accordance with the level of degradation and the then-current grassland capacity in each affected area.[23] Affected households were required to give up their livestock completely and move to one of the nine new resettlement sites: Laka in Tongren County (Tongren Laka); the Communist Party school in Tongren Town (Tongren Dangxiao); Zeku County Town (Zeku Xiancheng); Longzang Village in Duofudun Township (Longzang); Duolong Village in Duofudun Township (Duolong); Duofudun Township Administrative Center (Duofudun Xiang Zhengfu); Duohemao Township Administrative Center (Duohemao Xiang Zhengfu); Ningxiu Township Administrative Center (Ningxiu Xiang Zhengfu); and Heri Township Administrative Center (Heri Xiang Zhengfu).[24]

First, in 2003, 128 households (676 people) from Ningxiu Zhigeri were selected to resettle to the Ningxiu Township Administrative Center. Investment costs for the relocation were scheduled at ¥3.8 million. Of this amount, the government paid ¥3 million, ¥670,000 were paid by the involved pastoralists themselves, and ¥200,000 were paid by local modernization funds and other sources. Each household was required to obtain a sixty-square-meter house, a toilet, five mu of land to plant forage, and a one-hundred-square-meter double-use insulated shed, to be used in summer as a greenhouse to plant vegetables such as radishes or onions. According to calculations, each insulated shed was intended to increase household income by up to ¥1,200 through the summer period. In winter these sheds could house two hundred domestic animals and increase the life expectancy of livestock by 3 percent. In the sheds, the animals generally lose less weight—statistically three kilograms per individual beast–which with a price of ¥12 per kilogram (report from 2005), and with two hundred animals in one shed, means a theoretical income increase of ¥7,200 during the winter season.[25] However, in reality, the double-use sheds/greenhouses were only constructed after a long delay or, sometimes, not at all, and vegetable production in pastoral areas was in most cases unsuccessful, at least during the period of my research.[26] Moreover, according to an official at the Grassland Station in Tianzhu (Gansu), the method of keeping animals inside sheds usually requires different and more expensive breeds and special fodder, which involves spending

more money. This had the potential to further decrease the net profits from shed-animal production.

In 2004 200 households (750 people) were scheduled to be resettled in the Heri Township Administrative Center, the Ningxiu Administrative Center, and Duolong Village in Duofudun Township from Heri village (100 households), Ningxiu Village (70 households) and Duofudun Duolong Village (30 households). In 2004 the total scheduled investment amounted to ¥8.3 million. This sum was again shared between the government, which paid ¥6.2 million, and the people themselves, who were to pay ¥2.1 million. In the end, the pastoralists paid a total of only ¥1.2 million (¥6,000 per household on average). The construction of 200 60-square-meter houses began in June 2005. According to the report, by July 2006, 168 houses and double-function greenhouses had been completed, and the pastoralists had started to move in.[27]

In 2005 an additional 665 households (3,109 people) from Zeku County were assigned for relocation, a number that included 441 households from Duofudun Township and 224 households from Duohemao Township. Some 125 households were resettled at the Laka site, and 162 households at the Communist Party school site in Tongren County. Further, 51 households were assigned for resettlement at Zeku County town, 47 households for Duolong Village, 71 households for Longzang Village, 69 households for Duofudun Administrative Center, and 176 households for Duohemao Administrative Center. During this period, the resettlement of 433 households (2,018 people) took place as part of the implementation of the Ecological Resettlement Project, introduced in Zeku County in 2005. Another 232 households from Zeku County (1,091 people) were to be resettled through the parallel Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project. The total scheduled investment for both projects amounted to ¥31.2 million. Government investment accounted for ¥23.4 million, the investment made by the people involved was scheduled to be ¥7.8 million. However, the final amount was only ¥6.3 million. Each household had to pay ¥30,000 for an apartment in a multistory housing project in Tongren or ¥3,000 for a bungalow in a rural resettlement site. Construction started in May 2007 and was completed in September 2008.[28]

In 2006 a further 100 households (450 people) from Xibusha Township and Ningxiu Village were scheduled to be resettled at Laka in Tongren County and at Ningxiu Administrative Center. The new houses offered to selected households were to have an area of sixty square meters and were built in rows. It was planned that some of them would also be equipped with a greenhouse, a small piece of land to grow fodder grass, and a toilet. The total scheduled investment for the year 2006 was ¥5.5 million. Here the

government share amounted to ¥3.5 million, and the pastoralists again only paid ¥3,000 per household (altogether ¥300,000), from their originally proposed share of ¥1.8 million.[29] Here also, the construction started in May 2007 and finished in September 2008.[30] The reduction in the scheduled investment amount required from participating pastoralists explains why simple house constructions were used in comparison with houses in settlements in other resettlement and settlement sites, for example in Sichuan. Zeku pastoralists' lesser financial resources required higher state engagement levels, which also had negatively affected the amount of subsidies paid out.

Despite the original plan, a county update from 2006 states that between 2003 and 2006 in Huangnan Prefecture, including Zeku County, only four hundred households were actually relocated according to the abovementioned schedule.[31] The successful relocation during this first sedentarization period occurred at the resettlement sites in Ningxiu and Heri Townships, which had been partly finished by the end of 2005 and 2006. Construction work on the remainder of the scheduled resettlement sites was not started until May 2007.[32] According to the official report, one of the main reasons for the delay was that there were management problems with the new Sanjiangyuan office that had been established to supervise the resettlement. Officials rotated in and out of the Sanjiangyuan office while still holding other posts. The lack of a stable staff responsible for the implementation of the resettlement program and the construction work caused organizational difficulties and, inevitably, delays.

In addition, the assigned construction company, originally from Gansu Province, was not able to fulfill its contract and was later replaced by another company from Qinghai. The price of the building plots needed for resettlement sites in the Tongren area was also significantly higher than had been estimated, and the budget did not cover expenditures. As a result, the facilities designated for each resettlement site could not be completed in accordance with the schedule.[33] According to the original plan, government support for pastoralist house construction was estimated to be ¥30,000 per house in resettlements within the county and ¥35,000 per house in resettlements outside the county.[34] Each household had to pay an additional ¥18,000 to participate in the house construction initiative. However, pastoralist households in Zeku County are comparatively poor, and the households that were to take part in the relocation process were among the poorest, often owning no livestock. For this reason, it was decided that in Zeku County the resettlement construction cost to be contributed by the pastoralists would only be ¥3,000 per household, which of course caused further financial pressure for the government construction plan.[35] In addition to receiving a

new house, over a ten-year period the resettled households in Zeku County were also to obtain an annual grain and fodder subsidy of ¥3,000, plus an additional ¥500 for fuel. Households who moved into resettlements site between 2005 and 2006 also received a one-time payment of ¥5,000 to help them establish an alternative income base in the new location.[36]

In addition to livestock reduction and Grazing Ban Resettlement, a rotational grazing policy linked to the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project, the Ecological Resettlement Project, and Resettlement Community Project (Ch: Yimin Shequ Peitao) were introduced during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. The pastoralists were required to use only half of their pasture and allow the other half to lie fallow. Grasslands where vegetation roots remained intact were to stay unused for a period of six months to one year. In places where the roots had already been damaged, the land had to remain fallow for three years. The grassland protection measures, together with livestock reduction and the subsequent resettlement measures, were financed through the Sanjiangyuan environmental policy projects.[37] In Huangnan Prefecture, 26,234 hectares of grassland was reserved for seasonal herding, and the total livestock number was reduced by 24,619 sheep units.[38]

A total of 274 households inhabit the so-called ecological constructions provided by the Ecological Constructions for Semi-confined Feeding Initiative (Ch: Juju Ban Shesi Shengtai Jianshe). The total investment involved in this measure was ¥28.2 million.[39] Even in the first resettlement phase in Zeku County, the government designed opportunities for establishing new income sources for the resettlers. These included activities such as farming, trading, demonstrating Tibetan traditions to tourists, and planned vocational training. Consequently, the pastoralists who were resettled near Tongren County were encouraged to concentrate on farming, while those moving to the prefecture town were advised to secure income by collecting caterpillar fungus and engaging in trade. The remaining resettlements in the Zeku area were to concentrate on tourism.[40] Unfortunately, at least during the period of my research until 2017, most of these plans were not converted into action, either at all or not in an effective way.

AN EXAMPLE OF RESETTLEMENT FOR PASTORALISTS FROM RMA STOD

After 2006 the pastoralists of Zeku County were able to acquire additional resettlement experience at a new site constructed on the border between Zeku and Tongde Counties. Built as part of the Ecological Resettlement Project, this site was reserved for 735 pastoralists (189 households) from Maduo

County (Ch: Maduo Xian; T: rMa stod) and Guoluo Prefecture (figure 4.4), and its planning and construction led to several incidents with local inhabitants of Zeku and Tongde, which ensured that project implementation was initially blocked.[41]

The grasslands of rMa stod had become quite severely degraded, and snowstorms had killed many animals in previous years. Locally affected pastoralists had little choice but to look for new living opportunities elsewhere.[42] Their resettlement site consists of bungalows with small courtyards and a row of two-story houses with a business unit on the ground floor and a residence on the second floor, situated along the main road. This site has its own school and a small number of additional communal facilities, for example an activity room for young people. The resettlement participants were from among those affected by the environmental challenges. None of the rich households with sufficient livestock took part in the resettlement project. Due to the high level of grassland degradation in rMa stod, the

FIGURE 4.4. Ecological Resettlement of rMar stod pastoralists providing two-story apartment complexes, with commercial units on the ground floor and living quarter at the upper level, Tongde County, May 2007

government also decided to relocate most of the pastoralists to relieve the pressure on the grassland. The task of the local government was to persuade a targeted number of pastoralists to leave.

The relocated rMa stod pastoralists received the houses for free, as well as an annual subsidy of ¥8,000 per household.[43] However, the living conditions in the resettlement site do not appear to have improved the living standards of the pastoralists in any significant way so far. They have courtyards to plant vegetables but lack the necessary skills to conduct more intensive farming. Due to the high altitude, the vegetables remain small, even if planted and tended correctly. In any case, vegetables certainly cannot satisfy a household's demand for food.

The business units situated along the main road are intended to enable several households to open shops, restaurants, or other services for passing travelers. However, because of a lack of experience and required knowledge on the part of the rMa stod pastoralists, most of these units are run by people, who come from nearby Wangjia or Heri Township centers. The most radical change the resettled have had to face is that suddenly everything, including food, must be paid for; without livestock they are unable to produce anything (except a few vegetables) to eat. Unfortunately, the government subsidy is not enough to cover daily expenses. Sixty-seven-year-old Lobsang, a herder relocated to the resettlement site for rMa stod pastoralists, described the situation after resettlement as follows:

> Why did I come here? In rMa stod the pastures are getting worse and worse; there are many pikas. . . . They told us that the grass must rest for twelve or eight years, then we would be able to return. When we came here, we sold all our animals for a very low price. If I wanted to buy new livestock now, it would be really expensive. Here, we do not have any pastures. A small number of families have a few goats. . . . People able to work cannot find jobs. The only option is to collect caterpillar fungus or go to other places to find work. We must buy everything, all our food. Therefore, we must earn money. But there is nothing to do here, no work. We have no experience in such life and work. . . . There is a school here. In rMa stod it was not easy to attend school and it was expensive. We were told that if we moved here, it would be easier for the children to attend school. They told us it would be good and advantageous for us to move, but it is not really good here. . . . The good thing here is the easy connection to communications. It is easier to travel, to visit a doctor.[44]

Pastoralists who have resettled here no longer own livestock and have temporarily transferred usage rights on their pastureland back to the government. After spending ten years in the resettlement site, these pastoralists will be able, at least theoretically, to apply for return authorization to their original grasslands. The young people who are too old to attend school are unemployed and spend their days drifting. Tashi, a twenty-five-year-old informant, said he would prefer to return to the grasslands immediately, since he would be able to herd animals there rather than spend his life doing nothing:

> The grass in rMa stod was bad and there was not enough to feed all the animals. Then, a snowstorm came and many animals died. That is why we came here. I cannot say if I like it here or not. I prefer the grasslands in rMa stod. Here, I have nothing to do. I do not have the required skills to take part in the opportunities provided here. That is the reason why I prefer my own pastures. . . . If I could, I would return. . . . We cannot go back and continue to live as pastoralists. Once we come here, the government does not allow us to return. Only when the government considers it to be a good idea to do so, would it be possible to return to the mountains and be pastoralists again, otherwise there is no chance.[45]

Between 2003 and 2006, the majority of Zeku County pastoralists considered the resettlement issue to be something that they might have heard of but that did not affect or concern them directly. The rMa stod resettlement site on the Zeku border became an attraction where young pastoralists from the rTse khog grasslands could spend their days enjoying themselves, as it offered several small shops that sold alcohol and held a few pool tables.

CHAPTER FIVE

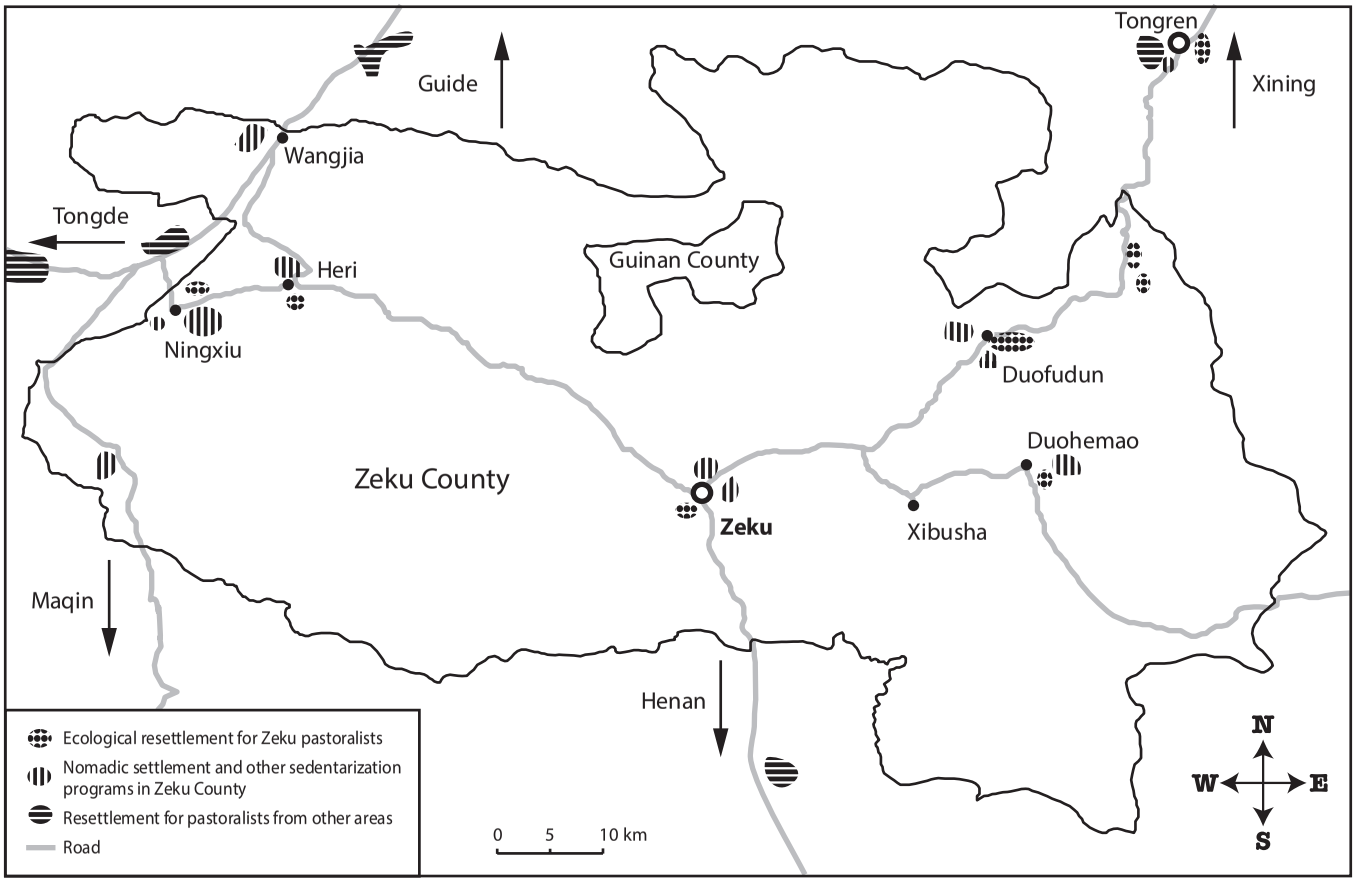
SEDENTARIZATION OF PASTORALISTS IN ZEKU COUNTY

RELOCATION AND SEDENTARIZATION IN PASTORAL AREAS OF ZEKU County started as a response to immediate environmental challenges and as a tool for poverty alleviation. Gradually, the scale of sedentarization measures increased, with increased focus on population control.

FROM 2007 TO 2009

In 2007, after the Ecological Resettlement Project achieved top priority status in Zeku, mass sedentarization accelerated and gradually involved all the county's townships, especially when these measures were extended to cover situations other than acute poverty and ecological deterioration during the Eleventh and Twelfth Five-Year Plans. Starting in 2007, from each office at the township and county levels, a member was selected to participate in the Ecological Resettlement Project as part of the new Sanjiangyuan office. These people were responsible for selecting future resettlement sites, planning the new villages, and supervising construction works and the resettlement process.[1]

Most of the originally designed resettlement sites planned during the annual Ecological Resettlement conference in Zeku County in 2005–6 did not begin construction until May 2007. They became part of the second resettlement round in Zeku County, which targeted 765 households (3,627 people) from the core zones of the SNNR and other rTse khog areas.[2] It was now termed the Sanjiangyuan Ecological Resettlement Project in Zeku County, and the opening ceremony for the construction work was held on May 14, 2007, at the Laka resettlement site in Tongren. During this round, 125 households were to be resettled to the Laka site, 162 to the Communist



MAP 5.1. Orientation of settlement and resettlement sites in Zeku County, visited by 2015

Party school site in Tongren, 71 to Longzang Village in Duofudun, 69 to the administrative center in Duofudun, 47 to Duolong Village in Duofudun, 51 to Zeku County town, 176 to the administrative center in Duohemao Township, and 64 households were to be moved to the administrative center in Ningxiu Township.[3] In 2007 resettlement sites started to spring up on the grasslands without any prior announcement. In places where only grass had been growing a few weeks before, there suddenly appeared the first walls of new villages. Most of the resettlement sites were close to township centers, except those in Maixiu and Duofudun Townships on the border with the SNNR core zone of Maixiu Forest, which became part of the local villages. All of them were constructed close to an existing urban area.

The original timetable for the construction work was extremely tight, with only three to five months allowed for the establishment of each new resettlement site. According to public information sources, such as the banners displayed at the constructions sites, construction work that started in May 2007 was due to finish by August or October of the same year, and the pastoralists were to start their new lives in the resettlement areas as early as the winter of 2007–8. In reality, most of these spots remained under construction and uninhabited until the end of 2008. A report of the National People's Congress, composed after an investigative journey in July 2007, also found fault with the construction delays at the resettlement sites. According to its findings, by July 5 only 30 percent of the construction work had been completed, which, according to the schedule, left only one to three months to complete the remaining 70 percent of all the construction work. The report complained about the lack of sufficient coordination between the offices in charge of the resettlement and about the insufficient speed of the construction work, which was in turn caused by the low number of workers and bad weather conditions. Additionally, the report criticized the quality of the construction work. The material used did not meet required standards, the employed workers had been trained poorly, and they did not follow the instructions provided.[4]

The actual results of the sedentarization process are hard to measure on the basis of a single report. Additionally, regional variations depended on the previous local conditions and on the way the programs were carried out. However, it is particularly interesting that the preliminary results of sedentarization contrast strongly with many of the original aims, for example, preventing ecological deterioration, modernizing the "backward" and outdated way of life of mobile pastoralists, supporting urbanization, and involving the rural population in secondary and tertiary industries. The environmental benefits of sedentarization are hard to prove, and the social, economic,

and even existential circumstances the pastoralists continued to face after relocation often suggest a decrease in living standards, not significant modernization.

RESETTLEMENT SITES FOR PASTORALISTS FROM ZEKU COUNTY IN TONGREN

Two resettlement sites were planned outside the Zeku County area in the neighboring county of Tongren: the Laka site and the Communist Party school site.

The Laka resettlement, announced as part of the Ecological Resettlement Project, is situated about one kilometer from Tongren Town, the capital of Huangnan Prefecture, and adjacent to the prison on the new road to Xining. A banner displayed at the construction site, which comprises 7,500 square meters, claimed that work started on May 12, 2017, and will be finished by August 30 of the same year. The total costs were scheduled for ¥3.6 million. The buildings at the Laka site are two-family bungalows. Each house has two flats, each taking up half of the building. Most of the workers on the construction site in the summer of 2007 were Han or Hui Chinese Muslim seasonal workers from Ledu County or Gansu. Tibetan workers were rarely found on such construction sites at that time. In fact, even in 2016, when construction works became an important source of additional cash, Tibetan pastoralists were usually contracted to take on less sophisticated projects, such as paving village streets or building resettlement courtyard walls.[5] These jobs were often created by the government to occupy former pastoralists, rather than to perform truly necessary tasks.

According to my worker informants, the houses at the Laka site were built for older pastoralists and small children from Zeku County. There was a plan to build a school within the site, which would make it easier for the children of the pastoralists to attend school regularly. The middle generation, the young parents of the children, were to remain on the grasslands to herd the livestock and support the family members in the resettlement with dairy products. This arrangement reflects the pastoralists' practice of household splitting and was not part of the agenda of the resettlement project.

Even though the pastoralists selected for resettlement at the Laka site did not have to immediately give up all their pastureland, they did not appear enthusiastic about the opportunities that life in an urban resettlement area could offer them. While they felt that possessing a house and being on the government's subsidy list was positive, they were nevertheless reticent to shift the focus of their life entirely to the village. Tsering, a

twenty-seven-year-old pastoralist from sTobs ldan, expressed the opinion of the majority of pastoralists affected by resettlement measures: "I do not know if we can split our family and leave someone on the grasslands [if we move to the resettlement]. I hope we can do so. Anyway, even though I do not want to move there, I do want the house."[6]

The social identification with their pastoral identity might mean that the resettled herders are less flexible in adapting to the new environment. The additional challenge has been the lack of income options for the resettled people. Dorje, a thirty-two-year-old pastoralist from sTobs ldan, described local concerns and attitudes toward the resettlement policy:

> We do not know what to do [in the resettlement] for a living. If we really have to go there, then there is nothing we can do. At the moment, I do not intend to move there because I do not like the place. . . . Usually, I just follow the others in what they say or do. For example, the people from our village area who were assigned for resettlement wrote a proposal to the government that they should construct buildings where we could do business, a place with shops and restaurants inside, so we could make some money. The committee offered us the chance to join this [resettlement project] and said that if we succeeded, this project would be helpful for us. I do not have any ideas myself, so I just told them I was of the same opinion as the others.
>
> . . . For me, being a pastoralist is best. We can do nothing in a city like Tongren because we do not speak Chinese and we do not have any skills. What can we do there? We are just hoping that we do not need to move at all in the future, as the prefecture leader has said that the new house is just a kind of help from the government to us. . . .
>
> The villagers said that the resettlement houses were very good and that we would be stupid not to want them. So, we thought the resettlement idea must be something really good for the pastoralists.
>
> . . . Sometimes, I feel happy and sometimes I am scared. I am happy that we received some support with the house, but I am scared when I hear about what happened to pastoralists who resettled in mGo log [rMa stod].[7]

The pastoralists find themselves in a complicated situation. They increasingly desire the benefits from such government projects, especially since the demand for cash among pastoralist households has increased and it has become difficult to earn enough through animal husbandry alone. They know no occupation other than herding, and they do not wish to change their habits and adopt a sedentary lifestyle. Many pastoralists apply to participate in resettlement projects only because the government expects them to comply and they want to avoid trouble. They continue to retain the hope that the benefits will outweigh the negatives and that it will be possible to reduce the changes to a minimum. Some pastoralists, like the thirty-eight-year-old Nima from sTobs ldan, decide to resell the new house even though doing so is against the conditions set by the resettlement project:

> I do not want to go to the [resettlement] house. I have some yaks, sheep and horses and I love being a pastoralist. If I go there, there will be nothing I can do. I do not speak Chinese and I do not even know how to read and write in Tibetan. Therefore, it would not be a good place for me to live. Because of that, I sold the house to my brother, but the government does not know what I have done. We changed the names and all the information. I did not give up my land and I did not sign my name to do that. . . . My brother paid me ¥10,000 for the house. I paid ¥6,000 to the government, so the actual amount I earned was ¥4,000.[8]

Reselling apartments built directly in the town of Tongren, such as those at the Communist Party school resettlement site, was even more lucrative. This resettlement site was designed for 162 households from Maixiu. Its position in the middle of an urban area and the buildings in the form of blocks of flats (figure 5.1) are completely different from all other resettlement sites designed to be built in 2007. It has no courtyard around it. Moving to such apartments will probably represent the biggest challenge for pastoralists since doing so will involve a major change of lifestyle.

Some of my older Tibetan informants from traditional farming villages that had been absorbed into the urban area of Tongren Town at an earlier stage expressed their discontent with the plan to move the pastoralists from Zeku County to Tongren. They described the pastoralists as dirty, lacking in any tradition of living in houses.[9] The farmers were afraid that the pastoralists, having no work and not enough money, would come to town to steal and make trouble. Historically, Tibetan pastoralists and farmers have usually had a good relationship with each other. Each group had its own area

FIGURE 5.1. Ecological Resettlement site of the Communist Party school, Tongren County, June 2009

to live and to work, and the two partly depended on one another. Pastoralists supplied the farmers with milk products in exchange for grain. Both groups lived in areas defined by nature and their specific living conditions, and they met only for the purposes of trade. Both parties respected the lifestyle of the others. However, by moving from Zeku County to the resettlement site near Tongren Town, the pastoralists invaded the space of the farmers, who subsequently perceived such physical coexistence as a kind of threat.

RESETTLEMENT SITES IN DUOFUDUN TOWNSHIP

Other sites are situated within Zeku County. In the majority of cases, the pastoralists who become engaged with the resettlement project have a choice between local resettlement within the township or a resettlement site near the county center or in Tongren. In Duofudun Township, three sites were designed during the first resettlement wave. The resettlement site in Duofudun Township Administrative Center, designed as a part of the Zeku

County Sanjiangyuan Ecological Resettlement Project plan for 2005–6, was built as an extension of the small town along the road between Tongren Prefecture town and Zeku County town. A public banner announced that at the resettlement in Duofudun the construction of shelters for sixty-nine households including communal water, electricity, roads, broadcasting connection, and hygiene facilities would be completed between May 8 and October 5, 2007. Each household would be allocated a total area of 467 square meters with a house and greenhouse of sixty square meters each. The courtyard should enable to keep a small number of livestock. The houses were built as two-family bungalows, same as at the Laka site in Tongren, which is also the type of house used in the majority of all recent resettlement sites in Zeku County (though some have single-family houses as well).

Other houses that belong to the resettlement project in Duofudun Township were completed in Duolong and Longzang Villages. In Longzang, close to the Maixiu Forest, the new resettlement site was simply integrated into the local village. The Maixiu Forest and surrounding area is the lowest part of Zeku County and is famous for the valuable medicinal herbs that are traditionally collected there for trade.

The Maixiu grasslands area is not large, so herding is not practical, nor is the local terrain suitable for farming. The pastoralist households resettled in Longzang had to pay for their new houses. In 2008 there were only around thirty households inhabiting these houses. The circumstances under which the houses were distributed did not comply with the guidelines of the central government's Ecological Resettlement Project.

The final administration and distribution of the houses is under the jurisdiction of the county government, and this official body applies methods that are most suitable for the local situation, which often contradict the rules. In Longzang Village, local government officials offered the houses for public sale, which meant that several houses were sold to young married couples who originally came from Longzang Village and simply took the opportunity to buy a cheap house. About half of the constructed houses remained empty in 2008.

Local pastoralists from sTobs ldan, such as seventy-year-old Drolma and thirty-three-year-old Tsering Lhamo, admit that life as a herder is full of hardship. Nevertheless, they prefer it to resettlement because as pastoralists they are self-sufficient:

> It is nothing great being a pastoralist . . . but it is better to live on the grasslands and herd animals than to live down in the village.

> [At the resettlement] there is no grass and no livestock; we would be hungry. The money will not rain from the sky on its own. . . . [As pastoralists] we have our own food, provided by our own animals. Tsampa we must buy from the state. . . . We sell milk and yogurt and with the money we earn we buy other food. Some people from our village moved down into the new houses in Maixiu. . . . They do not like it there. There is no income. No one was forced to move. Those people went of their own free will. Those who wanted to are now living in a house.[10]

My informants from the resettlement in Longzang Village in Maixiu confirm this statement. They were unable to imagine how life in a village would be before they moved into the new houses. They sold all their herds and simply moved into the resettlement houses, and although the pastures still remain the contracted property of each household, without livestock it is impossible to return. However, the pastures are currently rented out to other pastoralists who still live on the grasslands, providing those who have moved into the village with some income. Longzang Village does not offer many alternative income possibilities; there are neither fields nor pastures belonging to the resettlement village. For women in particular it is difficult to find a new occupation, and the majority of the resettled people regard their new situation as worse than their former lives as pastoralists.[11]

rGyal bo Community

The implementation of the sedentarization measures and the selection of participants are particular to each township and depend on the decisions of the implementing officials and community leaders. The following example is a standard pastoralist community from Duofudun Township in Zeku County, which I will call rGyal bo.[12] The community inhabits an area above four thousand meters near a river. In 2007 it had about 250 inhabitants, who all made a living from pastoralism, except for one government official, who received a salary of about ¥1,200 per month from the state. A local school that accommodated about eighty students in four classes was established in the community in 1998.[13] In 2007 only one university student and two high school graduates lived in the community. Ninety-five percent of the inhabitants were illiterate, as no one older than forty had ever attended a school. Prior to 2007, before the government strengthened the regulations regarding school attendance, about half of the school-age children remained at home helping their parents herd animals.

In 2007 the community leader, instructed by the local government, introduced a project designed within the framework of environmental protection for the Sanjiangyuan. Even now, the pastoralists have obtained no further information about the project details, but the position of the rGyal bo community, near a river, would suggest it was part of the Ecological Resettlement Project. Moreover, the resettlement sites the families could choose from were among those built in 2007, which were equipped with information boards describing the agenda of the Ecological Resettlement Project. The pastoralists learned that the government would offer them a new house under advantageous conditions, either in the township center of Duofudun or in Zeku County town. The vicinity of Tongren Prefecture town was also an option. Furthermore, the community leader mentioned that sooner or later all of the pastoralists would have to resettle and that households should therefore take advantage of the currently offered benefits. It was argued that the resettlement measures that might follow would lack the original benefits for the pastoralist population.

Encouraged by the promise of advantages, almost the whole community applied for this project. Due to the lack of availability of houses (only thirteen in the first round), the community leader excluded all those households that had benefited from the government's free solar panel supplement in previous years. The community leader then put the names of the remaining households into a hat, from which he selected the future participants of the housing project. Sandrub, a thirty-nine-year-old pastoralist from rGyal bo, described the selection process: "At first, all the families who had not received solar panels got together and put their names in a hat. Then the community leader selected thirteen names. My name was also selected and I was very happy about that. At that time, we did not know that we would have to give up 50 percent of our land to the government."[14]

After the participating households had been selected, their representatives were invited to the township to complete the contract with the government. This procedure was performed without the pastoralists' being provided any more information about the project. Sandrub explains the second step in the process:

> After our names had been selected, the community leader informed us that we had to go to the township government office to sign papers for the new house. So we went to the township government office. There were also people from other communities, but no one had a clear idea about what exactly we were expected to do there.

> . . . We signed something, but I do not know if it was the contract or not. I think it was. . . . We received a form from the official leader with several questions on it. The first question was about whether we already had a house in the township seat which was in as good a condition as the new resettlement houses would be. In cases where we had such a house, the government would provide us with financial support but would not build a new house for us. We would still have to move to that house and give the land to the government. The government would give us financial support for several years. I did not have such a house so I answered 'no.' Another question was about the number of livestock we kept. I wrote down the number of my yaks, sheep and horses. . . . The form said, that I had to sell 50 percent of my livestock. Another question asked if I would be prepared to give either all my land or 50 percent of it to the government. When I read that, I felt very sad that I was going to lose my land. I did not know what else I could do so I wrote 50 percent of my land.
>
> . . . At that time, I did not say anything. I asked other people about it but they were also really confused. Somebody suggested we should write that we would give up all the land, arguing that then we might get more support from the government. Somebody else said we should only give up half the land as we did not know whether we would get any benefits or not.[15]

Although many of the participants in the meeting did not know how to read or write, nobody explained the conditions of the contract to them. As Dorje explains, they were just expected to sign the paperwork: "I am not sure what we did there. I signed my name with my fingerprint on a piece of paper. I do not know how to read and write so I did not know what the paper said. No one explained it to us. I just followed the other people and put my mark on it. . . . At that time, many people said that if we did not sign, we could not get any government help in the future. That is why I did it, to get help from the government in the future."[16]

Although the majority of my informants from the rGyal bo community claim that the condition of the grasslands in their village had deteriorated in comparison with the situation before the 1980s, only 10 percent believe that the resettlement, as implemented by the government, will improve grassland vegetation. On the contrary, pastoralists such as forty-eight-year-old Norbu claim that a long period without livestock grazing on the pastures

will actually harm the ecosystem: "I do not think that the resettlement is favorable to the grasslands because the grasslands need to be grazed every year. . . . If livestock do not graze on the pastures for a long time, then this will be very bad for the land. The rotten grass left lying on the top would not allow the fresh grass to grow. Old Tibetan people say that if a grassland area is not grazed for nine years, then it becomes what they call useless land. The livestock will not eat such grass anymore."[17]

Primarily, the pastoralists blame the pikas living above- and below ground (Ch. *dishang shu*, *dixia shu*), and black caterpillars for the degradation of the grasslands and support the extermination program. The pastoralists also suggest that gold mining on the grasslands, which severely damages the land and vegetation, should be banned. In Qinghai mines can be found that have been set up without following professional advice. In such mines metals are extracted by using poisonous substances, and no measures are taken to protect the surrounding land.[18] According to the pastoralists, such mines affect not only the vegetation but also the wildlife inhabiting these areas.

Participation in resettlement projects officially happens by choice; individual households are usually not selected by the government and forced to move. However, the description of environmentally initiated resettlement as involuntary should not be dismissed out of hand.[19] Although the policy is promoted as voluntary, the pastoralists do not have many options if they resist. While it is true that pastoralists have to apply to join the schemes, their decision is based on insufficient and sometimes misleading information. As described in the example of the rGyal bo community, even in 2016 the most frequent selection method for relocation and sedentarization in Zeku County was the lottery. In the case of the rGyal bo community, none of my informants who were involved in the project approved of the resettlement methods. Their main objection was the loss of land and livestock connected with the purchase of the new houses, as explained by Dorje: "I do not like living there [in the resettlement]. I liked the project because we could get a house for a very low price and they [the government] would also help us by providing some money. I mean that if the government had not insisted on taking our land away, it would have been a really good thing. In cases where they really do take the land, then we have no chance of survival."[20] The pastoralists from the rGyal bo community paid ¥6,000 for each new house in the resettlement. For the years 2007 and 2008, each household received ¥3,000 per year in financial support from the government along with ¥500 for fuel each winter.

The subsidy is low, and there is uncertainty about whether it will be paid. The pastoralists speculate that the duration of the governmental subsidy will

be five years for households that moved into the township seat of Duofudun and ten years for households who chose to move out of the township, to Zeku and Tongren County seats. Because of the lack of income alternatives in the resettlement village, the majority of the pastoralists from the rGyal bo community who contracted to take part in the resettlement project still remained on the grasslands in 2009. Those who had already moved into the resettlement houses had split their households, leaving part of the family on the grasslands to continue herding animals and supplying their resettled relatives with food. Those who remained on the grasslands were prepared to remain there until they were forced to move. According to Kelsang, a thirty-nine-year-old pastoralist from rGyal bo, even then they hope it will be possible to split the household between the grasslands and the resettlement site: "The government did not tell us whether it was OK or not [to split the household], but we are doing it this way. Some family members live on the grasslands where we have some livestock left and other family members came to live in the new house. If the government people came to visit us and nobody was living in the house, they would stop giving us help. Therefore, some family members must live in the new house."[21]

If the government forces the pastoralists to give up their usage rights over the grasslands, it could be difficult to survive in the resettlement without the food supplements provided by the livestock. Tsampa, a thirty-eight-year-old pastoralist from rGyal bo, described the situation after moving into a resettlement: "Here we have nothing but an empty house. Our life is really bad here. We cannot drink milk tea as before. We even have to buy yak dung and meat, butter, cheese and everything else. It is very difficult if one does not have money. This is not a good place to live. We just hope to get some support from the government."[22]

According to my 2008 and 2009 interviews with ten of the thirteen households assigned for the first resettlement wave in the rGyal bo community, the pastoralists had already reduced their livestock numbers far beyond the lowest required quota of 50 percent mentioned in the contract that the pastoralists had to sign. In the participating households, the number of yaks had been reduced by 77 percent, the number of sheep by as much as 96.5 percent, and the number of horses by 63 percent.[23] The people from the rGyal bo community did not have clear information about the project's duration or about the possibility of returning to the grasslands. Nevertheless, they hoped that sooner or later a return to a fully pastoral way of life would be allowed again and viewed life in the resettlement as a temporary measure. Therefore, it was difficult for them to adapt their thinking regarding their main source of income and start a completely new life in an urban environment.

In the following years, the number of new houses at the resettlement site at Duofudun Township Administrative Center gradually increased, and new settlement sites were also added under the label of the Nomadic Settlement Project. The majority of the new houses were occupied. At first, pastoralists without livestock and with school-age children moved into the settlement, followed by elderly people who could not take care of the herds anymore.[24] Some of them soon chose to rent out the houses and return to their original lands, giving the lack of alternative livelihoods as among the main reasons.

Over time, however, about 80 percent of the rGyal bo households came to own houses in the new settlement. The center of the pastoral community shifted to the new site, and owning a house became a sign of community affiliation. This approach meant that housing prices rose enormously, and by 2016 the average price was between ¥80,000 and ¥100,000. This was for a house with no private access to water and no toilet (in 2013 prices had still been about ¥6,000 for a house). However, this does not mean that the pastoralists have finally managed to integrate into modern society and have found new and sustainable urban livelihoods. In the community, only about five households have opened small shops, and one has managed to establish a motorcycle service business. Norwe had the opportunity to enroll in a training course organized by a nongovernmental organization and learned how to repair motorcycles. He now owns a shop in Duofudun Town: "For us, [the vocational training] was free, when I enrolled. At the end of our course they gave us certificates. Then you were able to set up in business if you could manage it. I worked as an assistant for six months over there before I started the short-term training course. I was helping there as best I could."

Norwe's shop has no regular business hours, and the majority of his customers come from his pastoral community and call in advance when they need his services. Sometimes, the shop remains closed for several weeks, for example during the caterpillar fungus harvest. This is not the best way for a business to survive when competing with many similar service providers in a settlement or town of only a few thousand inhabitants. However, Norwe claims that without caterpillar fungus his family would not be able to generate enough income:

> I also collect caterpillar fungus. When I go, I have to close the business. There are many places over there which repair motorbikes [when this place is closed]. . . . For all of us, it is much better to collect fungus instead of working here. The income from it is good. You can earn ¥2,000 to ¥3,000 a day when you collect fungus. . . . And here, on a very good day, I can only earn

> around ¥1,000. . . . Now, on good days, we earn only about ¥400 to ¥500. The average is about ¥200 to ¥300.[25]

The rGyal bo community is one of the lucky few in Zeku County that has access to caterpillar fungus. This substance allows the majority of the community members to stay at home in the settlement and even give up herding or other seasonal occupations. Caterpillar fungus is treated here as a collective commodity. All community households can harvest it and pay ¥1.5 per harvested fungus into a communal cash box. This money is later divided among community members who are unable to actively participate in the harvest. This encourages people who left the traditional lands, such as young people who went in search of state jobs elsewhere, to buy a house in the settlement to demonstrate their community membership.

In comparison, other households in the same settlement, but from different pastoral communities where the grasslands have no caterpillar fungus, have a very different life. They fully experience the hardship of searching for alternative jobs and seasonal occupations. For people without qualifications or competence in Chinese, it is not unusual for them to only find work for one or two months per year. Although the development strategy has seen the establishment of numerous construction sites in the grasslands area, the contracted companies bring their own workers in or hire externally. They prefer to employ better qualified Han or Hui workers or Tibetan women, who are said to work harder than Tibetan men.

For such people the state offers vocational training to provide them with new qualifications. The most recent vocational training program in Duofudun, in 2016, was a cooking course to learn how to prepare Chinese food. A set quota of participants from the village had to take part, and people were paid to attend. The participants were required to speak Chinese, which ruled out those in greatest need of additional education. Participants were provided with recipes but no information on how to run a restaurant. Unsurprisingly, none went on to open a restaurant.

Since 2013 the new settlement in Duofudun Town has also been included in the Beautiful Countryside "rural beautification project," which has brought additional funds to the village. The money has been used to build decorated water columns in the main courtyard, the place where the people go to fetch water. Each courtyard has also been provided with a wall including an incense stove, demonstrating regional Tibetan traditions. In 2013, after a significant delay, a public toilet was finally built at the settlement as part of another development project.

RESETTLEMENT IN NINGXIU TOWNSHIP

Ningxiu was one of the townships that saw the successful establishment of a resettlement village during the first wave, between 2003 and 2006. By 2008 the new village already exceeded the number of originally scheduled houses. As in the other sites in Zeku County, the houses erected here were one- or two-family brick bungalows (figure 5.2). A school building has also been provided on site.

Government reports describe a slight increase in income levels among the affected households after their move to the new urban site in Ningxiu. The 328 households scheduled to resettle there from Zhigeri during the first resettlement phase saw an increase in their income of 16.4 percent (from ¥1,224 to ¥1,424), 2.46 percent higher than the average township income. The report further stated that the income of the resettled households came from the following sources: planting vegetables, 60 households; fattening

FIGURE 5.2. Ningxiu Township resettlement site constructed by the government, one-family houses with allocated yard to plant vegetables or graze animals, Zeku County, June 2008

cows and sheep, 18 households; providing transportation services, 12 households; business activities, 35 households; external construction activities, 46 households and; other activities, 48 households.[26] The report does not comment on whether government subsidies were counted as part of the income of the resettled households, nor does it make clear whether only cash incomes were counted or if livestock, as an important part of the pastoral household economy, was included. Furthermore, no reference is made to monthly expenditure and the comparison between the cost of purchasing food in the settlement and living off the land in the grasslands.

Grasslands with a total area of 87,000 mu belong to the Ningxiu resettlement, of which 81,800 mu can be used for herding (implying about 17.9 mu per person). The official records say that in 2009, 4,845 livestock grazed on these grasslands. The pastoralists who moved permanently to this resettlement reduced their livestock by 6,174 sheep units. The records further state that livestock reduction, together with seasonal herding, helped to reduce the grazing pressure and improve the balance between grasslands and livestock. As a result, the vegetation coverage rate increased by 10 percent, and the grass density increased by 15 percent.[27]

According to my pastoralist informants from the resettlement near Ningxiu Township Administrative Center, the people came here in search of an easier lifestyle. In the grasslands, the pastures had been deteriorating, and there was insufficient grass to feed the livestock. In Zeku County, the population is still growing, and in some parts the capacity of the grasslands has been exceeded. To reach the resettlement quota identified by the central or provincial government, local government officials visit the pastoralist communities to offer people the opportunity to give up herding and move into a modern house. State financial support has also been promised to those who move.[28]

In Ningxiu the houses were not distributed at no cost; the pastoralists who moved in had to pay ¥3,000 per house. After settling down in the new houses, most of my informants stated they would immediately return to the grasslands if they were allowed to do so and if their pastures were not in such a poor condition that they would be unable to keep sufficient livestock. They agreed that making a living in the new urban environment was sometimes even harder than working as herders. Dawa Tsering, a sixty-one-year-old pastoralist relocated to the Ningxiu resettlement, summarized the situation:

> The government built some houses here. It is good for the children and also we get some support from the state. That is why we wanted to move here. . . .

It used to be better in the grassland. We had our own livestock and we could wander around the grassland. We are pastoralists. We used to have our own milk and butter and we knew there was always something to eat. The disadvantage was that in recent years there has not been enough grass to feed our animals. Also, we have to keep our animals inside a fenced courtyard, while wild animals eat the grass. What shall we do in the future? There are more people and the grasslands are decreasing. They told us they had a solution for us, a house in the village. So now we are here, but there is no work to make a living. We have no pastures. There is a school for the children and a house, but what about the elderly people? The land belongs to us, but it is still not better than before. There is nothing to live on. . . .

They told us we would have our own garden where the elderly people could work, but we do not know how to grow vegetables. They told us that everything would be just great. A house provided by the government and electricity is great, but there is still nothing here to provide us with food. Where shall we get our tsampa? That is why the new place is truly bad. . . .

What do I wish for? An old person of 61 like me, a herder, I wish to be in the grasslands, full of flowers, herding my livestock, drinking milk and yogurt . . . to go where the good grass grows. . . . But recently, there was not enough grass and many animals died and so the people became unhappy. They went to the town and cried and asked the government for help. So the government built these houses for children and old people. So it is like this and we cannot return. Except for some vegetables there is nothing here. Old people like me must earn money, so we take what work there is, collect caterpillar fungus or work on road construction. Still we do not earn enough.[29]

RESETTLEMENT IN HERI TOWNSHIP

A more optimistic situation seems to prevail among the pastoralists from the Hor community in Heri Township in Zeku County. Because of the local tradition of stone carving in Hor, these households found it easier to adapt to the new living conditions in the resettlement; 185 households with 746 people belonged to the original Hor community. Between 2006 and 2009,

100 households (510 people) resettled in the Heri Township Administrative Center.

During the first stage, the Heri resettlement consisted of one hundred houses, each with an area of sixty square meters. The resettlement constructions also included thirty-two double-function greenhouses, a refuse tip, a public toilet, a hospital, an assembly room for public gatherings and performances, and an activity center for party members. The total poverty alleviation investment in the Hor community was ¥1.5 million, of which ¥600,000 was designated for subsidy payments to the resettled households, ¥740,000 was designated to alleviate poverty among the villagers, and ¥105,600 was designated for vocational training for the resettled pastoralists. The rest of the invested money was divided up as direct aid to the poorest and oldest people, to pay subsidies to party members, retired people, and members of the welfare program, for medical insurance and treatment, and as a subsidy for a demobilized soldier.[30]

The ¥600,000 designated for the resettled households works out at only ¥6,000 for each of the one hundred households in the Heri resettlement project. This calculation correlates with the statements of my informants, who claimed they had received ¥3,000 in annual subsidy, plus an additional ¥500 to buy coal or yak dung to provide winter heat in 2007 and 2008. Considering that each household in this village had to pay ¥6,000 to acquire a new house, the balance between income and expenditure was about zero, at least during the initial years.

In Hor the government also announced that resettlement was necessary because of the severe degradation of the pasturelands. Nevertheless, only two of my informants described the quality of their grasslands as being bad; none of them believed that the resettlement measures would improve the condition of the grasslands. However, local pastoralists said they actually agreed with the government's resettlement proposal. In each of the interviewed households, at least one of the family members was involved in stone carving. There seemed to be a demand for their products, as all of the stone-carving households claimed to have achieved a higher income through selling these carvings from the resettlement, resulting in an improvement in their way of life.[31] Rgyalo, a pastoralist from the Hor community, was one of those who decided to try out life in the new village: "We decided to move [to the resettlement]. We heard that the people who decided to move would be supported by the government. Our family does not have much livestock and we mainly depend on stone carving. That is why we wanted to move here, because we can make more money."[32]

After moving to the new village, the people had more free time and could concentrate on the stone-carving business. Dondrub, a pastoralist from the Heri resettlement, confirms that there has been an improvement of his household's living conditions: "In our community, everybody can carve stones, like my family. . . . Our life is getting better here [in the resettlement]."[33]

In 2007 in the Heri resettlement, according to government records, there were 208 people engaged in stone carving, 100 people planting vegetables in the available greenhouses, and 236 people working elsewhere. The majority of these workers were involved in collecting caterpillar fungus, while the others collected *droma* (T: *gro ma*; Ch: *juema*; *Potentilla anserina*), which is desired for its tasty roots. Some people earned money by collecting and selling yak dung or were short-term workers on construction sites. As a result, the average income of the resettled pastoralists in Heri had increased.[34] The highest six-month income figure in 2009 was achieved by people involved in the stone-carving business. They earned on average ¥1,680 per person, while caterpillar fungus harvesters earned an average income of only ¥1,115 per person.[35]

The stone-carving tradition is also being promoted for purposes of tourism, which brings additional income to this resettlement village. Cepten Tashi, the leader of the Hor pastoral community, has stated that without the income opportunities provided by the local tradition of stone carving, Hor households would probably not be as enthusiastic about moving into the new village: "In the case of my community, I do agree with the resettlement methods as our community has a tradition in stone carving. Through this we can acquire an income. But in the case of other pastoral communities, I do not agree with resettlement, because they end up with nothing."[36]

However, the stone-carving success of the Heri resettlement would wane somewhat, and by 2013 the majority of resettlement inhabitants had moved into work on construction sites in order to earn money instead of continuing with stone-carving. This change occurred because of the absence of orders for carvings from the state. In previous years the state had placed large orders for carved stones with this village, creating artificial demand. However, with the end of such orders, it soon became obvious that no stable marketing infrastructure had been established, and the business collapsed.[37]

Although during the first stage the majority of the resettled Heri inhabitants seemed to be satisfied with the resettlement conditions, as was also the case in other localities, the households were reluctant to exchange their

land for a life in the resettlement site. All of my informants split their households and kept family members on the grasslands as well as in the resettlement, or at the very least they rented out their pastures to other pastoralists. In contrast with the members of the rGyal bo community in Duofudun Township, the local pastoralists stated they had not signed any contract with the government. They believed that the land remained their property and that they had the right to return at any time. The community leader corrected such claims and said that the resettled households could only return to the grasslands in winter, not during the summer. He nevertheless confirmed that in his village no contract had been signed with the government. It is interesting that in the case of Heri, after the state orders had disappeared, the pastoralists did not actively seek to develop their own sales networks but instead took up work as seasonal workers on construction projects. In the pastoral communities I observed, there often seemed to be a lack of awareness of the need to develop new, sustainable, and long-term livelihoods. People still rely on animal products from their remaining herds, on caterpillar fungus, or on work at construction sites. Increasingly there is also a growing dependence on various kinds of government subsidies to counteract the growing socioeconomic problems at the household level.

EXAMPLES OF RESETTLEMENT IN HENAN COUNTY

In Henan, the second pastoral county of Huangnan Prefecture, the condition of the grasslands is better than in Zeku, in part because of the lower altitude of Henan. However, the government also decided to apply resettlement and grassland management measures there. The same Ecological Protection and Construction Project (table 2.1) that was implemented in Zeku County was also introduced in Henan. The major project was Ecological Resettlement. In Henan County, however, the Sanjiangyuan resettlement construction plans seemed to be more successful and more in line with the schedules. By 2007, 432 households had been resettled. These households reduced their livestock by 318,400 units and retained only 4.25 mu each to practice seasonal herding.[38]

According to the interviewed pastoralists, who moved into the new resettlement site near Henan County town in 2007, the houses were distributed free of charge by the government. The local pastoralists do not complain about the lack of forage for their animals, but present other reasons for participating in the resettlement, mainly the compulsory school attendance for children and the difficulty in getting to school from the grasslands. The households who obtained houses here also claim they were allowed to keep

their original grasslands and their herds. For this reason, they had no complaints about the implementation of the resettlement project.[39]

However, the report from the Henan County Development and Reform Department admits that there were difficulties connected with the implementation of the above-mentioned ecological constructions. For example, it complains about the unequal implementation of the ecological construction projects throughout the county. Only a few townships implemented the projects according to the plan. And the implementation of scheduled projects sometimes brought about additional problems. For example, as a result of the closing of hillsides for tree planting, the size of the grasslands shrank, which caused a shortage of fodder for livestock.[40] The project also included the planting of grass where the grasslands had already deteriorated. Each household had to plant grass on five mu of land, yet some households could not afford to do so and relinquished the land. As a result, these households often dig up the grassland in places where good grass already exists to avoid having to plant. This of course results in additional erosion, rather than an improvement in the condition of the grasslands. As with the resettlements in Zeku County, in Henan the livelihood of the resettled pastoralists was not secure, and there were not enough alternative opportunities to make a living without livestock. Therefore, some households, not being able or willing to remain in the resettlements, returned to their original grasslands and risked breaking the law.[41]

Completing the "Development" of the Pastoral Population in Zeku County?

After numerous disturbances among the Tibetan population in China in 2008, the central government intensified its focus on the Tibetan pastoralists. Under the label Development of Tibetan Areas, the government designed additional projects, such as the Nomadic Settlement Project, to support Tibetan pastoralist households and complete their development and transformation as part of a modern Chinese society. The intention behind these projects was to persuade Tibetan pastoralists of the government's good intentions. Additionally, by accelerating the sedentarization process, the government hoped to obtain better control of the pastoralists, who live on the grasslands and are thus physically disconnected from direct administration and the political system, which accords them a certain level of political autonomy.[42]

As a result, since 2009 the majority of constructed settlements in the Zeku grasslands have been built under the Nomadic Settlement label. The

earlier Ecological Resettlement Project, according to Zeku local government officials in charge of grasslands management and settlement constructions, should have only affected pastoralists with land bordering rivers. The Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project was designed to stop erosion and the accumulation of mud in the watercourses, which had a negative impact on the China's major rivers and their sources in the grassland areas of the Tibetan Plateau. Both of these projects required participating households to sell all their livestock and resettle. By contrast, the Nomadic Settlement Project was designed to affect the whole county and all remaining pastoralists registered as living on the grasslands. According to a local official, in 2009 new settlement villages were built in each township of Zeku County, targeting about 30 percent of the pastoralist population every year. At this rate, within only three years, by 2012, it was planned that all Zeku County pastoralists would be involved in the Nomadic Settlement Project.

At the beginning of the project implementation phase in 2009, each participating household had to pay ¥5,000 for its new house, with the balance, approximately ¥40,000, to be covered by the government. The pastoralists were allowed to keep their livestock and land and move only part of the household into the new house, as favored by the majority of my Tibetan pastoralist informants, who want to benefit from a comfortable house without giving up pastureland and livestock.[43]

At the beginning of the implementation process for the Nomadic Settlement Project, the affected pastoralists in Zeku County were not allowed to choose the location of their new houses. In 2009 all houses were built as part of uniform settlements, situated near existing administrative centers or at least close to a road so as to ensure easy access for the construction materials and workers. Often, the new houses were built on the same sites as the former resettlement villages and frequently ended up as a single cluster of houses or part of a small nearby settlement. Another settlement option in Zeku was the two-story houses along the streets of enlarged towns, such as the Zeku County administrative center (figure 5.3). It was envisaged that these houses would provide the pastoralists with the opportunity to start a business or open up a shop on the ground floor.

After two years of project implementation, the Tibetan pastoralists in Zeku County tried to negotiate with the officials and requested the right to construct new houses on their winter pasturelands (as had occurred in Maqin County, for example).[44] The county government finally agreed, and since 2011 it has been possible in Zeku to choose between a house in a new village and a house near the original pastureland (figure 5.4).

FIGURE 5.3. Two-story apartment complexes, with commercial units on the ground floor, constructed as part of the Nomadic Settlement Project around Zeku County administrative seat, November 2011

The decision to construct homes on individual pastureland increased costs and led to a rise in the price pastoralists had to pay for their new houses, increasing from the original ¥5,000 required in 2009 to ¥18,000–¥20,000 per house in 2011. The practice of allowing the construction of homes on the grasslands seems to be a step backward in relation to the modernization policy, which aimed to establish a sedentary and centralized society. However, it might only represent a temporary loosening of the timeframe regulations, a response to the overwhelmingly negative results associated with the earlier settlements. At the same time, 2011 was also the year when the government intended to close down the primary schools in pastoral communities on the grasslands in Zeku County, thus increasing the pressure on pastoralists with children to move to the centralized settlements. The announced cancellation of small community schools was justified by the need to improve schooling conditions and the quality of education.[45] In

FIGURE 5.4. New house at the winter pasture, after the Nomadic Settlement Project allowed construction of houses on the individually allocated land, Zeku County, November 2011

the end, not all small schools in Zeku were closed, as the sedentarization process had not proceeded as fast as initially intended, and some of them still remained open in 2017.

Although the resettlement and settlement houses look the same from the outside and are often mixed together within a single urbanized area, the conditions for the inhabitants differ significantly, depending on whether the house was built within the Ecological Resettlement Project or the Nomadic Settlement Project.[46] In the new village in Heri Township, for example, only the first one hundred households that relocated as part of the Ecological Resettlement Project are eligible for state subsidies. Households that moved later as part of the Nomadic Settlement Project receive no regular financial support. Even when state subsidies were augmented in 2013, due to the worsening economic situation caused by the lack of livelihood alternatives as well as the loss of state orders for carved stones, these subsidies only applied to the first one hundred households of the Ecological Resettlement Project.

At the establishment of the resettlement site, the subsidy was ¥3,000 per year per household. Later it has increased to ¥4,500 and was granted to all children younger than sixteen and seniors over the age of fifty-six.[47]

Despite the obvious negative aspects of sedentarization projects, the majority of pastoralists still wish to acquire a new house. Simultaneously, they seek to identify ways they can benefit from the advantages associated with this policy, while avoiding the disadvantages. Such behavior often violates state regulations, but in the majority of cases the officials in charge do not police the regulations very carefully or simply ignore these activities. For example, one of the rules of the Nomadic Settlement Project states that at least some members of the family must inhabit the house. However, when checking on the project efficiency rate, officials frequently only check that someone is living in the house and do not verify the inhabitant's identity. Thus, house owners are not prosecuted for violating project rules by renting out the houses.

Moreover, as we saw in the example of the rGyal bo community, houses obtained as part of the Nomadic Settlement Project are increasingly regarded as business assets. This situation convinces many pastoral households with sufficient livestock and good-quality grasslands to also apply for a new house in an urban area. Some households now own several such houses, each registered with a different family member, and they are occupied, rented out, or sold as necessary. The buyers are mainly households with pastoral backgrounds who, because of their work, are registered in the town and therefore have no right to obtain a house within the government sedentarization projects. These people want to own a house in the township of their origin, and the new settlement houses are the easiest way of achieving this aim. Such ownership can have also clear material advantages, as in case of the rGyal bo community, where the owners qualify for a share of the caterpillar fungus harvest. Obviously, it is up to the officials to react to recent developments and adjustments in the sedentarization projects. They can either adapt the policy to fit the current situation or make use of the abuse of sedentarization projects to introduce further restrictions targeted at individual pastoralists and the pastoral way of life in general. In the most cases, due to poorly conceived policies and implementation plans, as well as the lack of alternatives, officials until recently have usually decided to tolerate violations of the rules by pastoralists.[48]

In 2017 there were still pastoralists in the rTse khog grasslands who continued to follow the pastoral way of life while owning a new house. Many were still waiting for the allocation of a house as the project completion delayed. The need to increase subsidy levels and maintenance allowances to

existing settlements also probably contributed to slowdowns in implementation. The attitude of the interviewed pastoralists toward the sedentarization projects did not significantly change in the ten years of this research, and those families with sufficiently large herds remained lukewarm to the idea of relocating to the newly urbanized areas.

In 2017 the new Targeted Poverty Alleviation initiative took over the pastoralist settlement constructions. Additionally, the accentuation of countryside cooperatives significantly alters the traditional grassland pastoralism, proving that a Zeku County official responsible for grassland distribution and settlement constructions was right when he stated in 2009 that the whole system of "backward" Tibetan pastoralist activities was earmarked for modernization, a concept that is likely to entail a focus on the rapid fattening of animals in cattle sheds.[49] He had already admitted that the government was preparing further initiatives "to protect the grasslands" and that these would also include the "protection" of Tibetan yaks and sheep, meaning pastoralists would not be allowed to kill these animals in an uncontrolled manner. Instead, yak and sheep products would be sold as medicine and organic food in eastern China.[50] In 2017 this policy was soon to be realized through the Zeku meat-processing factory, which, through a countywide system of cooperative grassland management, would gradually oversee the grassland and livestock management in the whole county.

CHAPTER SIX

AMBIVALENT OUTCOMES AND ADAPTATION STRATEGIES

THE MAJOR FINDINGS DEMONSTRATED IN THIS STUDY CORRESPOND WITH those of scholars who focus on cultural, social, and economic transformations among Tibetan pastoralists.[1] State-induced development in pastoral areas of western China is, however, far from complete. It is clear that in implementation of sedentarization policies and other development efforts in pastoral areas, severe contradictions remain in relation to aims and the outcomes, conflicts of interest, misinterpretations of policy, and other issues, all of which need to be resolved by both the state and the pastoralists. The failure of often well-conceived development policies to achieve the stated objectives of improved living and economic conditions is not simply the fault of the top-down Chinese policy approach. The differences that exist between project plans and project implementation are often the responsibility of the officials in charge on the ground. Not only are they under enormous pressure to execute state projects effectively within a typically short timeframe, but they often place their own financial and career interests before those of policy recipients, the pastoralists.

NATIONAL GOALS VERSUS LOCAL EXPECTATIONS

One key issue is the misunderstandings that occur concerning policy aims and policy content. We should keep in mind that the local population is not always regarded as the major beneficiary and that national goals often outweigh local interests, resulting in an initiative's failure to meet local expectations. In this context, some aspects of the development policy that appear ineffective at a local level start to make sense from a national perspective. The environmental policy aimed at restoring the grasslands, for example, is

not simply about enabling pastoralists to continue their traditional way of life. The objective is rather to ensure that sufficient water supplies from the Tibetan Plateau meet the needs of the rest of China and to prevent desertification and limit the amount of sand brought to the coastal cities by sandstorms. The plans of the Returning Pastureland to Grassland and Ecological Resettlement Projects include the possibility that pastoralists will return to the grasslands and resume animal husbandry after a minimum period of ten years. However, when viewed from the perspective of the pastoralists, the return option is likely to become impossible for many of them, for obvious reasons. These include the fact that the grasslands will become unsuitable for grazing purposes after lying fallow for so long, as well as the high levels of investment needed to acquire new herds. In addition, the younger generation will have spent time in residential schools and will simply be ignorant about the animal husbandry industry.

From a national point of view, the sedentarization process aimed at environmental protection, which removes the pastoralists from the grasslands and provides the opportunity for infrastructure developments, at the same time distorts the social and cultural structures of the pastoralists. Potentially, this might facilitate the integration of the Tibetan minority and lower the risk of resistance. Most probably, the policymakers believe that few pastoralists will actually return to the grasslands after the ecosystem regeneration period and that their time in the settlements will convince them of the benefits of market oriented occupations. However, due to the lack of clear information, many pastoralists believe that the resettlement process, especially in connection with environmental projects, is a temporary measure and that they will one day return to the grasslands. Consequently, they fail to actively seek alternative sustainable sources of income. Promoting economic and existential disorientation is therefore one of the major weak aspects of the development policy.

The Nomadic Settlement Project can be viewed in a similar way. It appears to reflect the desires of Tibetan pastoralists: a comfortable house without the need to renounce land and livestock. The government, however, has taken precautionary steps to allow it to enforce its control over the pasturelands if necessary. Locally, where contracts for the Nomadic Settlement Project exist, they include an additional paragraph that secures for the government the right to request the pastoralists to sell their land at a minimum price at any time (in some parts of Zeku County in 2011, ¥6 per mu was offered). The long-term aims of the Nomadic Settlement and succeeding sedentarization projects also include modernizing Tibetan animal husbandry. Moreover, a

new approach of cooperatives, which includes greater levels of government involvement, is scheduled to replace the traditional and "backward" ways of Tibetan pastoralism. This all suggests that the current sedentarization projects are a clear attempt to move pastoralists away from the grasslands and animal husbandry and toward integration into the urbanized society that is modern China. Pastoralists' acceptance of projects such as the Nomadic Settlement is also based on the assumption that the pasturelands and livestock will remain available to the pastoralists, not only so that they can access animal products, but also so they can continue to harvest caterpillar fungus. As a result, other occupations are seen as providing only a secondary or temporary income.

IMPROVING LIVING STANDARDS BY DESTROYING LIVELIHOODS

The shift of attention from the local to the national level could also help to explain the major problems that appeared after sedentarization. Being only of secondary interest, the welfare of the pastoralists after they move to the new settlements has largely been ignored. Within both the Ecological Resettlement and the Nomadic Settlement Projects, sedentarization is advertised as being a measure aimed at poverty alleviation and the socioeconomic improvement of pastoralist households.[2] In reality, it is disputable whether the actual socioeconomic situation of Tibetan pastoral households really does improve as a result of the sedentarization process or whether it actually deteriorates. Statistically, the net income of pastoralist households is—due to their traditional subsistence and barter-based economy—significantly below the national average. The general statistics are based mainly on cash incomes and are unsuitable as an indicator of the actual wealth of pastoralist households, which is based on the size of their herds and allocated pastures.[3] By obtaining subsidies, the cash income of many households increases, but the small subsidy amounts and tax releases scheduled do not compensate for the loss of livestock that provided them with dairy products, meat, and fuel, which leads to a hefty increase in daily expenditures.[4] The cost of living rose further as a result of the expansion of the infrastructure, which promoted urbanization and an increase in accessibility to the market and services, accompanied by rampant inflation. Cash is required when paying for children's education, health care, religious rituals, and also for a variety of new goods appearing in almost every corner of the country as a result of the developing market. Items that were once luxuries have now become

indispensable for the pastoral population. Therefore, although thanks to the subsidies the cash income of the pastoralists might be higher, their living standards might actually be falling.

At the same time, income from traditional livelihoods such as animal husbandry has been curtailed as a result of the expansion of environmental exclosures and infrastructure construction, and can frequently no longer provide this necessary surplus money. Life in the settlements, however, often also does not provide suitable livelihood alternatives. Securing the livelihoods of people moving to the new resettlements and settlements is one of the main issues that feature in almost all of the studies and reports on managed sedentarization in pastoral areas.[5] Poorer households, which are among the first to apply for sedentarization and be selected, move into a town, or more accurately a townlike settlement, in the hope of finding an alternative source of income to replace animal husbandry. These poor households usually lack the means to establish private businesses, and the settlements and small towns do not offer enough other employment opportunities, especially for pastoralists who lack appropriate skills and experience in sectors other than animal husbandry.

The state's promised free vocational training courses are thin on the ground and usually ineffective, as demonstrated by the example of the cooking course in Duofudun. Other alternative occupation opportunities, as envisioned in the government's plan for resettled and sedentarized pastoralists in Zeku County, such as tourism, are difficult to realize in practice. Although provincial campaigns seek to entice visitors to explore the exotic features of China's ethnic minorities and their authentic culture, Zeku is low on the list of tourist destinations. In order to increase Zeku's tourism appeal, the original prayer flag hill, referred to as the Happy Mountain, was rebuilt by the government. A huge temple building was erected on the summit, together with a new circumambulation path around the hill. Unfortunately, this has not attracted many tourists, though locals have swiftly adopted these constructions as part of their regular rituals. A bright new square, dedicated for public activities, is dominated by a statue of Gesar, a legendary Tibetan hero, which marks the beginning of the stairway leading toward the hilltop. This large new monument was built at the expense of a number of relatively new settlement houses that had been constructed at the foot of the hill only a few years earlier and that had to be demolished to make space for the new square and the circumambulation pathway.

The majority of Chinese tourists demand to travel in comfort, which is difficult for the still-developing tourist infrastructure in Zeku to provide. On the other hand, tourists seeking out native culture and "undeveloped"

Tibetans might well be deterred by the growing levels of urbanization and modernity, the very things being sought by both the government and an ever-increasing number of local Tibetans.[6] To improve access, highways are being constructed in the direction of Zeku. An airport is also being planned for a site directly next to the county town. The income from the slowly expanding tourism industry in Zeku County does not benefit the whole population. Only the government and a small number of families are engaged in providing the most significant and lucrative services. The important families are not the pastoralists arriving from the grasslands as part of the sedentarization initiative but the well-off households whose wealth is usually linked to one member's having good employment with the state. The exception to this rule are the hoteliers, who have received huge compensation payouts by transferring their land for development purposes, such as the construction of the airport.

The majority of sedentarized pastoralists have not, therefore, had many options regarding alternative employment. For those with access to certain grasslands, caterpillar fungus constitutes the best chance of economic security.[7] Others rely on their savings, work as drivers, or find employment on state construction sites in the area, where they can earn between ¥80 and ¥100 per day. The idea of providing shops on the ground floors of settlement houses does not prove efficient in small towns. Where such shops exist, they often offer the same products as their neighbors, for example, sweets, drinks, and small utility items, and the local demand for such items fails to cover the outlay.

In these conditions, the state should do more than organize the building of new houses. More focus should be placed on providing pastoralists with customized support that matches their abilities. Insufficient government assistance in the new urban environment contributes to the inability of many pastoralists to fully adapt. Unable to swiftly find new sources of income that maintain their traditional standard of living, it is no wonder that they begin to resent the sedentarization initiatives.[8]

Suggestions appear in the official reports regarding how to improve the sedentarization policy and thereby ease the transition process. These include increasing subsidy levels and extending the support period. For example, in 2007 the Zeku County Sanjiangyuan office recommended raising the government subsidies for house construction from ¥30,000 to ¥60,000 within the county and from ¥35,000 to ¥100,000 for households that agree to resettle in a different county. Additionally, it suggested an increase in the production support amount to ¥30,000, pointing out that it is insufficient to provide only ¥5,000, a walking tractor, and a greenhouse and expect pastoralists

to immediately begin a new life that brings in an adequate income. Finally, this report proposed an extension of the period of the ¥3,000 state subsidy from ten to at least twenty-five years.[9]

Although the major failures concerning economic adaptation after sedentarization have been noticed and described by an increasing number of scholars, both abroad and in China, the Chinese government has not dealt with the problems either swiftly or effectively. As a result, the number of challenges connected to the implementation of sedentarization projects grows swiftly, as does the financial burden for the government trying to resolve them. The question remains whether this kind of development policy was truly designed to benefit the pastoralists or whether other motivations were more important.

BUILDING A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY BY CREATING DISCONTENT

The discourse of a harmonious society is currently being emphasized as the long-term goal guiding state development efforts.[10] According to former Communist Party of China General Secretary Hu Jintao, a harmonious society is synonymous with a "democratic society ruled by law, fair and just[,] . . . stable and orderly and maintaining harmony between man and nature."[11] The current sedentarization initiative in Tibetan pastoral areas, however, looks more like an attempt to create a harmonized society, that is, to reduce cultural differences in order to create a homogenized society less prone to political unrest. Through the introduction of policy measures such as the Nomadic Settlement Project, the central government has sought to secure its control over the Tibetan pastoralist population in a nonviolent way. The Nomadic Settlement Project has attempted to speed up the relocation of Tibetan pastoralists from the grasslands into villages, for example in Qinghai, where it has targeted the remaining pastoralist households.[12] The offer of a comfortable house under the surveillance of a nearby police station, along with the enhanced access provided by infrastructure projects, has made possible an additional demonstration of the state's authority and the capacity to quickly deploy troops to the remote corners of the grassland areas in the event of a political emergency.

The national interest with regard to this political objective does not appear to have been fulfilled. On the contrary, the measures aimed at increasing state control and involvement in everyday matters of Tibetan society, together with the fact that the development measures associated with the mass sedentarization have led in some cases to lower living standards, have the

potential to become a source of discontent with the state's approach and policy. Instead of melding with China's objective of achieving a harmonious society, the extreme and orchestrated development measures may lead to the radicalization of opinions and the stressing of cultural differences, thus generating social and political disturbances.[13] The feeling among pastoralists that they have lost control of their future is strengthened as a result of the ever-changing program titles, agendas, and rules and the frantic pace of sedentarization project implementation—an approach aimed at maintaining momentum and the impression that local people are involved in aspects of development and overall transformation while concealing the failures of the mass sedentarization program.[14]

The pastoralists' discontent with the sedentarization projects also stems from more concrete issues, such as the government's failure to provide the promised facilities and the overall poor quality of the new houses in the resettlement and settlement areas, especially where house construction is supervised by the government, as in Zeku County. Amenities in the settlements, such as streets, and water and electricity supplies are rarely delivered. In Zeku County, it is normal to carry water from open streams, as in the past, as the construction of drinking water supply networks is typically delayed by several years. Even when installed, the water is only available in public places and does not reach every house.

Electricity supply networks and public toilet facilities experience similar delays or are not provided at all, leaving pastoralists to live in an environment that is clearly neither developed nor modern. Nonexistent waste disposal systems only increase the unhygienic conditions that prevail in the settlements.

The buildings themselves lack insulation and have no bathrooms or even plumbing systems. The "Tibetan" ornaments required by the project agenda in Zeku County settlements and resettlements are made of poor-quality material and are only glued onto the top of the facade. After as little as one year, these parts tend to fall off, exposing the basic brick and concrete walls. Simultaneously, the ever-changing government policies encourage some pastoralists to avoid investing in the maintenance of their homes, which adds up to the fast deterioration of the housing conditions in the settlements and resettlements. Many settled and resettled people are simply unable to make the necessary repairs because they lack the funds to do so. Thus, the maintenance of the new settlements often remains the responsibility of government officials, who must design yet more projects and release additional funds to deal with these problems.

The issue of providing and maintaining public urban spaces is a problem not only in the new villages but also in the majority of townships and county

seats in the Qinghai grasslands. This is often the case even with other urban construction projects elsewhere in China. Thus, it is not only the contradiction between the promises the government makes to the relocated population and the actual situation on site, but also the contradiction between the objective of promoting speedy development toward urbanization and the slow process of developing the necessary urban infrastructure. Due to the numerous failings, such as the poor quality of settlement houses, the irregularity of subsidy payments, the lack of facilities such as water, electricity, and communications infrastructure, and the difficulty in accessing education in some of the settlements, it is estimated that 20 percent of the resettled pastoralists in the Sanjiangyuan area return to the pastures totally or at least as seasonal migrants during the summer.[15]

Furthermore, the aim of modernizing or urbanizing the population, integrating the minorities into Han society and developing the landscapes through infrastructure and industrial networks, is in contradiction with the discourse on multicultural and traditional China, which addresses potential tourism, both home and abroad. Some people argue that the sedentarization process presents a challenge to the objective of preserving Tibetan culture. This is demonstrated, for example, in the lack of public religious spaces.[16] The situation in Qinghai reflects this trend, as the majority of the visited new settlements, with the exception of some of the most recent ones near Guide County, did not include facilities for the completion of daily religious rituals. There are no communal temples, stupas, or labtses, nor are there places to worship mountain deities, the local protectors of Tibetan communities. Moreover, the protector deity is bound to its mountain, tied to the original place, and can therefore not easily be shifted along with the resettled community. There are some cases where the original labtse has been brought to the new village by community members after a number of years, such as in Guinan County, but according to my other informants who left their place of origin through resettlement, people usually must travel back to their former pastures to perform labtse rituals.[17] Also, for those who have attuned their lifestyle to the demands of the market economy or have found employment, it is not always possible to participate in the traditional rituals. Further some new settlements do not provide space for the performance of traditional Tibetan sky burials. As a result, the dead must often be cremated, and the funeral cannot be completed according to Tibetan traditions. Traditional burials involve at least seven monks who read various sutras for forty-nine days. Through relocation, the community may move too far from their monastery (such as in the case of the rMa stod resettlement)

and the monks may not be willing to travel long distances to conduct the rituals.[18]

The ending of certain pastoral traditions can be seen as a sign of modernization—the adoption of the lifestyle and values of an urban and global society. But on the other hand, the disappearance of certain aspects of Tibetan culture, especially when enforced involuntarily, can also be perceived as a threat to the entire notion of Tibetan identity.

SUMMARY AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The current approach to the sedentarization of pastoralists extends beyond the urgent need to relocate communities in order to alleviate the effects of poverty and restore the environment. It also reflects the desire to address the backwardness and underdevelopment of pastoral societies and integrate them more fully into the national economy.[19] In order to better assimilate the inhabitants of the Tibetan Plateau and to secure stricter controls over China's western regions, the government's aim is to transform the pastoralist way of life into a more settled one, eliminating the current form of Tibetan pastoralism.

Lifestyle change is a natural process based on environment transformation, development choices, and other extra-regional factors. With the transformation of the Tibetan Plateau as an outcome of the Chinese drive for modernization and global influence, changes in Tibetan pastoralists' lifestyles are inevitable.[20] The important issue is that this societal change process should operate in harmony with the needs and abilities of particular groups. Many Tibetan intellectuals fear that a hasty and compulsory lifestyle change, as witnessed in the case of state-directed mass sedentarization, might lead to the loss of important cultural aspects of Tibetan pastoralist society, those connected with their life on the grasslands.

In addition, there is a danger that mass sedentarization will lead to severe problems for the Chinese government. Currently, the challenge is how to deal with a society that, while appearing to be "backward," has nevertheless been economically self-sufficient, due to its ownership of land and livestock. The overly rapid sedentarization of Tibetan pastoralists aimed at meeting the requirements of scheduled development projects, together with the removal of these households' income base without replacing it with an alternative source of income, might result in Tibetan pastoralists being further forced to the margins of society and becoming financially dependent on the Chinese government. In turn, this situation could again stimulate new tensions

within Tibetan society and be counterproductive in relation to the Chinese government's objective of securing improved political stability. Furthermore, the rapid changes in the lifestyle of the pastoralist society might also have a negative impact on the environment. The lack of mobility caused by enclosing the living spaces of both people and livestock through grasslands management and sedentarization only exacerbates the situation where the grasslands have become severely degraded.[21]

The question is not simply about the merits or demerits of the modernization and development of the Tibetan Plateau, or even the sedentarization of Tibetan pastoralists. There certainly exist valid arguments for and against the process emanating from both the pastoralists and the government. It is particularly important to consider how best to initiate and realize these changes in order to bring about the greatest benefit for the affected participants without endangering cultural and economic sustainability.[22] This aspect is the weakest point within the specific projects presented in this book, providing an important reason for skepticism regarding current sedentarization efforts. Moreover, the pastoralists' extraordinary identity and general worldview further adds to the complexity of the adaptation challenges they face within "modern" environments and urbanized and sedentary society. This requires exceptional patience and support on the part of the state.

In redeveloping both landscapes and people in accordance with the present Chinese concept of modernity, the Great Opening of the West has severed the sustainable relationship between pastoralists and their land. The implementation of the settlement and resettlement projects in Tibetan pastoral areas has, however, only recently reached its peak and still continues. Some households made the move a number of years ago, while others, especially those involved in the more recent projects, have experienced the settled life for only a few years, or are even just about to start life in a new village. Although it will only be possible to evaluate the definitive impact of the mass sedentarization process after one or two decades' time, it will most likely not mean the complete demise of pastoralism on the grasslands of the Tibetan Plateau. Although both statistics and the existence of large settlement units across the Tibetan grasslands might suggest this, human factors, as represented by participating pastoralists and officials, as well as the ineffective implementation process, provide a more complex picture.

Moreover, at least for the near future, access to the grasslands will continue to play an important role in pastoralists' household economy. If not used for herding directly, the grassland can still offer income from caterpillar fungus, it can be rented out or qualify the pastoralists for environmental

subsidies, and in the most recent case of countryside cooperatives, it secures the holders of the usage rights a share from the communal income.

Whatever the final outcome of the current sedentarization policy, the ability of the pastoralists to cope with the current state-induced development in general will have a decisive influence not only on the development of pastoralism but also on involvement of Tibetans in the decision-making processes regarding the future development of their society and homeland.

Glossary of Chinese and Tibetan Terms

In the text, names and terms are provided in either romanized Chinese or Tibetan, depending on the language of common use in Qinghai. Upon first occurrence, corresponding equivalents are provided in parentheses. Romanized terms are Tibetan unless context indicates that they are Chinese or they are preceded by "Ch." Glossary entries are presented as follows: English, Chinese, Tibetan.

Alleviating Poverty through Relocation Yidi Fupin Banqian 易地扶贫搬迁 gzhan yul dbul skyor gnas spor
Amdo area Anduo Diqu 安多地区 A mdo sa khul
Artificial Rain Rengong Zengyu 人工增雨 mis thabs kyis char 'beb pa

Beautiful Countryside Project Meili Xiangcun Gongcheng 美丽乡村工程 mdzes pa'i grong gseb las grwa
bush forests guanmu lin 灌木林 spen ma

caterpillar fungus dongchong xiacao 冬虫下草 dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu
Communist Party school, Tongren Town Tongren Dangjiao 同仁党校 Thun tin tang zhol
Construction of Nature Reserve Area Management Facilities and Capacities Baohuqu Guanli Sheshi yu Nengli Jianshe 保护区管理设施与能力建设 srung skyob khul gyi sgrig chas do dam 'dzugs skrun
Construction to Raise Livestock Jianshe Yangchu 建设养畜 phyugs gso 'dzugs skrun

Dari County Dari Xian 达日县 Dar lag rdzong
drinking water supply for people and livestock renchu yinshui 人畜饮水 mi phyugs kyi 'thung chu
Duofudun Duofudun 多福顿 sTobs ldan

Duofudun District Aarea Duofudun Qu 多福顿区 sTobs ldan sa khul
Duofudun Township Duofudun Xiang 多福顿乡 sTobs ldan zhang
Duofudun Township Administrative Center Duofudun Xiang Zhengfu 多福吨乡政府 sTobs ldan zhang srid gzhung
Duohemao Township Duohemao Xiang 多禾茂乡 rDo dkar mo zhan
Duohemao Township Administrative Center Duohemao Xiang Zhengfu 多和茂乡政府 rDo dkar mo zhang srid gzhung
Duolong Village Duolong 多龙 rDo lung

Ecological Protection and Construction Project Shengtai Baohu yu Jiangshe Xiangmu 生态保护与建设项目 skye khams srung skyong dang 'dzugs skrun bzo skrun
Ecological Resettlement Project Shengtai Yimin 生态移民 skye khams gnas spor
Enclosing Hillsides to Grow Forest Project Fengshan Lühua 封山绿化 ri bkag ljang bsgyur
Enclosing Hillsides to Raise Trees Fengshan Yulin 封山育林 ri bkag nags gso

Farmers' and Nomads' Production and Living Basic Facilities Construction Project Nong Mumin Shengchan Shenghuo Jichu Sheshi Jianshe Xiangmu 农牧民生产生活基础设施建设项目 rong 'brog mang tshogs kyi thon skyed 'tsho b'i rmang gzhi sgrig chas 'dzugs skrun
Fire Protection of Forests and Grassland Project Senlin Caoyuan Fanghuo 森林草原防火 nags tshal dang rtswa s'i me skyon sngon 'gog

Gansu Province Gansu Sheng 甘肃省 Kan su'u zhing chen
Gonghe County Gonghe Xian 共和县 gSer chen rdzong/ Chab cha/ Gung ho
Grassland Protection Set Caodi Baohu Peitao 草地保护配套 rtswa s'i srung skyob zhogs 'degs
Grazing Ban Resettlement Banqian Jinmu 搬迁禁牧 phyugs bkag gnas spo
Great Opening of the West Xibu da Kaifa 西部大开发 nub rgyud gsar spel chen mo
Guanxiu (tribe) Guanxiu 官秀 mGon shul
Guanxiu District Area Guanxiu Qu 官秀区 mGon shul sa khul
Guanxiu Forest Region Guanxiu Linqu 官秀林区 mGon shul nags khul
Guashenze (tribe) Guashenze 瓜什则 mGar rtse
Guashenze Township Guanshenze Xiang 瓜什则乡 mGar rtse zhan
Gudegarang (tribe) Gudegarang 古德尕让 Ko'u sde ka rong
Guinan County Guinan Xian 贵南县 Mang ra rdzong/ Kos nan
Guoluo Prefecture Guoluo Zhou 果洛州 mGo log khul

Hainan Prefecture Hainan Zhou 海南州 mTsho lho
Haixi Prefecture Haixi Zhou 海西州 mTsho nub
Henan County Henan Xian 河南县 Sog po rdzong/Hi nan rdzong
Heri (tribe) Heri 和日 Hor
Heri District Area Heri Qu 和日区 Hor sa khul
Heri Township Heri Xiang 和日乡 Hor zhang
Heri Township Administrative Center Heri Xiang Zhengfu 和日乡政府 Hor zhang srid gzhung
Household Responsibility System Jiating Lianchan Chengbao Ziren Zhi 家庭联产承 包责任制 rtswa s'i 'kan gtsang len
Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Huangnan Zangzu Zizhi Zhou 黄南藏族自治州 rMa lho bod rigs rang skyong khul

Keriqina (tribe) Keriqina 克日其那 Khe ru'i chu rnga

Laka site in Tongren County Tongren Laka 同仁拉卡 gNyen thog la kha/ Thun rin la kha
Longwu (tribe) Longwu 隆务 Rong bo
Longzang (Village) Longzang 龙藏 Lung bzang

Maduo (County) Maduo 玛多 rMa stod
Maixiu (tribe) Maixiu 麦秀 dMe shul
Maixiu Forest Maixiu Linchang 麦秀林场 dMe shul nags tshal
Maqin County Maqin Xian 玛沁县 rMa chen rdzong
Mekong River Lancang Jiang 澜沧江 rDza chu

Ningxiu Township Ningxiu Xiang 宁秀乡 Nyin shul zhang
Ningxiu Township Administrative Center Ningxiu Xiang Zhengfu 宁秀乡政府 Nyin shul zhang srid gzhung
Nomadic Settlement Project You Mumin Dingju Gongcheng 游牧民定居工程 gnas spo 'brog mi'i gtan sdod

One-Child Policy Jihua Shengyu 计划生育 'char ldan bu skyes

pika dishang shu 地上鼠 ab bra
Prevention of Rodent Harm Shuhai Fangzhi 鼠害防治 ab bra'i gnod pa sngon 'gog
Project to Increase Living Comfort Wenbao Gongcheng 温饱工程 lto gos gnyis 'dzoms las grwa
Putting in Order Desertified Land Shengtai Ehua Tudi Zhili 生态恶化土地治理 skyi khams zhan 'gyur rtswa sa bcos skyong

Qiake Township Qiakeri Xiang 恰科日乡 Cha gor zhang
Qiang (Tribe) Qiang 羌 Chang
Qinghai Province Qinghai Sheng 青海省 mDo smad/mTsho sngon zhin chen

Rebgong Longwu 隆务 Rib gong/ Rong bo/ Thun ri
Resettlement Community Yimin Shequ Peitao Sheshi 移民社区配套设施 gnas spo yul mi 'dus sdod sa khul gyi spyi pa'i sgyig chas
Returning Farmland to Forest Project Tuigeng Huanlin Gongcheng 退耕还林工程 rmo skyur nags skyong
Returning Farmland to Grassland Project Tuigeng Huancao Gongcheng 退耕还草工程 rmo skyur rtswa 'debs
Returning Pastureland to Forest Project Tuimu Huanlin Gongcheng 退牧还林工程 phyugs skyur nags skyong
Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project Tuimu Huancao Gongcheng 退牧还草工程 phyugs skyur rtswa 'debs

Sairi District Area Sairi Diqu 赛日地区 gSer sde'i chu
Sanjiangyuan Office Sanjiangyuan Bangongshi 三江源办公室 gTsang gsum 'byung yul gzhung sgrub khang
Scientific Sustainability and Environment Monitoring Keji Zhicheng yu Shengtai Jiance 科技支撑与生态监测 tshan rtsal gyi gzhogs 'degs dang skye khams lha zhib tshad len
Set of Four Sipeitao 四配套 'phel rgyas bzhi
Small Town Constructions Xiaocheng Zhen Jianshe 小城镇建设 mkhar grong chung ba 'dzugs skrun
Suonaihai (tribe) Suonahai 琐乃亥 So nag
Suonaihai District Area Suonahai Qu 琐乃亥区 So nag sa khul
Sustainability Project Zhicheng Xiangmu 支撑项目 skye khams srung skyong rogs skyor 'dzugs skrun

Targeted Poverty Alleviation (Project) Jingzhun Fupin 精准扶贫 gnad 'khel dbul skyor
Three Rivers' Headwaters National Nature Reserve Sanjiangyuan Guojia Ji Ziran Baohu Qu 三江源国家级 自然保护区 gTsang gsum 'byung wul gyi rgyal khab rim pa'i rang byung srung ekyob sa khul
Tongde County Tongde Xian 同德县 'Ba' rdzong/ Thun te
Tongren Tongren 同仁 Reb gong/ Thun rin

Wangjia (tribe) Wangjia 王家 Bon rgya
Wangjia Township Wangjia Xiang 王家乡 Bon rgya zhang
Water and Land Preservation Shuitu Baochi 水土保持 sa chu srung 'dzin
Water Tower of China Zhonghua Shuita 中华水塔 krung hwa chu mdzod

Xiade Township Xiaderi Xiang 夏德日乡 Bya dar zhang
Xibusha (tribe) Xibusha 西卜沙 dPyi sa
Xibusha Township Xibusha Xiang 西卜沙乡 dPyi sa zhang
Xinghai County Xinghai Xian 兴海县 Brag dkar sprel rdzong/Zhin he

Yangzi River Changjiang 长江 'Bri chu
Yellow River Huanghe 黄河 rMa chu
Yushu (Prefecture) Yushu 玉树 Yul shul/Yul hrub

Zeku County Zeku Xian 泽库县 rTse khog rdzong
Zequ region Zequ Diqu 泽曲地区 rTse khog sa khul
Zequ River Zequ 泽曲 rTse chu
Zhigeri (Village) Zhigeri 智格日 'Bru dkar

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 See, e.g., Rogers 2016; based on information from Jianzha County informants, 2019.
2 See Xi Jinping 2017. An earlier goal to eliminate poverty by 2020, which was to have been achieved through the project Alleviating Poverty through Relocation (Ch: Yidi Fupin Banqian), was declared in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (National Development and Reform Commission 2012).
3 Ptackova 2019.
4 Ptackova 2019.
5 Amdo is "one of the three major ethno-linguistic regions of Tibetan cultural geography, referring to parts of present-day Sichuan, Qinghai, and Gansu provinces" (Yeh 2003a, 499).
6 The term *'brog pa* (high-pasture ones) originally described all Tibetans who live (or used to live) off animal husbandry and particularly differentiates the pastoralists from farmers, who are referred to as *rong ba* (those from a valley; Ekvall 1968, 3, 49–51). See, e.g., Ekvall 1968, 2; Scholz and Janzen 1982; Gruschke 2005, 17–21; Merkle 2005, 9–10; Manderscheid 2001, 2; Goldstein and Beall 1990.
7 See also Gruschke 2006; Levine 2015.
8 Modernization and orchestrated sedentarization has changed the meaning of the Tibetan term for nomads or pastoralists, *'brog pa*, which has gradually acquired a meaning of social affiliation and remains in use even after people no longer practice the activities associated with the status. In most cases, even after two or three generations of life in town, the former pastoral families continue to describe themselves as *'brog pa*.
9 See, e.g., Foggin and Phillips 2013.
10 When describing the current development strategy in the West of China, I use the term "Great Opening of the West," which is closest to the

Chinese term *Xibu da Kaifa*. "Kaifa" means "to open up" or "exploit" but can also be translated as "to develop." In Western literature, different terms describe this development strategy: "Open Up the West" (Goodman 2004a; Holbig 2004; McNally 2004; Foggin 2008; Yeh 2005), "Go West" strategy or the "Great Development of the West" (Yeh 2003a), "Great Western Development" (Cooke 2003), "Great Western Development Strategy" (Mackerras 2003), "Western Development" (Lu and Deng 2011; Flower 2009), "campaign to develop the western regions" (Halskov Hansen 2004; Bulag 2004), "Develop the West Campaign" (Goldstein, Childs, and Puchung 2010), "Western China Development Programme" (Wang 2006), and "China's Western Development" (Bauer and Nyima 2009). I use "opening" instead of "development" because it describes more accurately the current undertaking of opening up China's West for access through expansion of infrastructure and establishment of transportation links with central and eastern China. It is only the provision of this access through "opening" that enables the implementation of further "development" measures. The term "strategy," in connection with *Xibu da Kaifa*, is also more accurate than "campaign," as the *Xibu da Kaifa* is more than just a framework for the implementation of concrete programs, and includes the numerous projects that are constantly subject to modification and change during the implementation phase. In Chinese, the term *Xibu da Kaifa* also appears together with the term *zhanlüe* (strategy). The Tibetan expression for *Xibu da Kaifa*, nub rgyud gsar spel chen mo, is also closer to "Great Opening of the West" than "Development of the West."

11 In the context of the state-initiated development policy, where the topic of modernization and development projects is mostly referred to in Chinese, I predominantly use Chinese terms. In addition, Amdo, including Qinghai as a Tibetan ethnic area on the border of the Chinese ethnic regions, has been increasing influenced by the Chinese language, which has penetrated into the vocabulary of local people. Since the political disturbances of 2008, although the usage of Chinese borrowings in daily language has decreased, it is still common for the Tibetan population in Qinghai to use Chinese for certain terms, such as days of the week, numbers, certain place names, and especially terms associated with government policy. Some Chinese terms are at least as widespread as the Tibetan terms (see also Schrempf and Hayes 2010). If there is no fixed English expression, Chinese terms for administrative units are used, as many of these were created only under the Chinese administration (see Shabad 1972, 24–56, 319–32). Some of these entities have adopted the local Tibetan names of the area and rendered them in Chinese, while some have not. Also, the terminology of policy programs is predominantly Chinese. Other local names and terms are provided in either

Tibetan or Chinese, depending on the language of common use. Tibetan and Chinese equivalents are presented in parentheses and in the glossary.

12 The core material presented in this volume was collected during a research period that spans the years 2005 to 2016. The most intensive part of the research was conducted, and the majority of information was collected between 2007 and 2013. Between 2009 and 2011 the research was supported by the project "Range Enclosure on the Tibetan Plateau of China: Impacts on Pastoral Livelihoods, Marketing, Livestock Productivity and Rangeland Biodiversity," funded by the European Commission. My most recent visit to the Zeku area was in 2017. However, the new program of Targeted Poverty Alleviation, which was introduced in Zeku in 2017, is not addressed in the main body of this volume. The final stage of this book was supported by the Lumina Quaeruntur program of the Academy Council of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

13 See, for example the speeches made to launch the Great Opening of the West in 1999: Jiang Zemin's statement of June 9, 1999 (Yan 2001, 1); Jiang Zemin's statement of June 17, 1999 (Yan 2001, 2); the statement by Prime Minister Zhu Rongji of August 1999 (Yan 2001, 2).

14 Du 2014, 249.

15 Urgenson et al. 2014; Foggin and Phillips 2013, 15; Du 2014, 252–53.

16 See, for example Kolås and Thowsen 2005, 17–18.

17 Zeku Xian Renmin Zhengfu 2007b, 5.

18 See for example Gruschke 2012; Winkler 2008; Tan 2017.

19 In 2005 only 4–5 percent of the local population was involved in an occupation other than animal husbandry (Chen 2007, 2; China Statistical Yearbook 2007).

20 Chinese territorial administration is divided into six levels. On the first level is the central government (*zhongyang*), followed by provinces (*sheng*) and autonomous regions (*zizhiqu*), prefectures (*zhou*) or the administrative areas (*diqu*), counties (*xian*), townships (*xiang* or *zhen*), and communities or villages (*cun*).

21 Outside of the Sanjiangyuan area, we can also find new housing settlements, which are said to be beneficial for socioeconomic development to improve the living standards of pastoral households. Other new villages accommodate people resettled from areas disturbed by construction projects such as dams.

CHAPTER 1: CIVILIZING CHINA'S WESTERN PERIPHERIES

1 Since the Mao era, land without agriculture has been perceived as being "empty, uninhabited and desperately in need of civilization" (Yeh 2013, 63). The same rhetoric appears as part of the current policy (see also Lin 2007, 933–48). For more on the Chinese interpretation of a "backward

Tibet," see also the *White Paper on Successful Practice of Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet*, issued by the Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, September 6, 2015.

2 Manderscheid 2001, 2. See Kardulias 2015, 3; Hillman 2003, 86.

3 Harrell 2001, 28. See also Seitz 2006, 63–68; Lovell 2007.

4 See also Cannon 1989, 164–79.

5 Scott 1999, 82.

6 Arce and Long 2000, 2.

7 Appadurai 2005, 10.

8 Golden 2006, 7; Zhao 2010, 419.

9 Zhao 2010, 423.

10 Kolås and Thowsen 2005, 160.

11 Kreutzmann 2012b, 53.

12 Harrell 1995.

13 The first campaign targeting the western regions was labeled the Distribution of Productive Forces toward the West (Ch: Shengchanli Xiangxi Buju) and was proclaimed during the First and Second Five-Year Plans, 1953–62. The second campaign, promoted during the Third and Fourth Five-Year Plans, was called the Southwest Third Front Construction (Ch: Xinan Sanxian Jianshe). For more information, see Lu and Deng 2009, 13–22.

14 Lu and Deng 2011, 1–2. Since the Communist Party took over in China, the state development strategy has experienced several stages. These can be summarized as "balanced development," as represented by the period of collectivization and Mao Zedong's campaigns to gain control over both people and nature (see, for example, Shapiro 2001), followed by the "unbalanced development" of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms (see, for example, Phillips and Yeh 1989, 112–35), which targeted the regions in the East and encouraged national and foreign investment and led to rapid socioeconomic growth in the coastal areas. The unidirectional focus of investments and development led to the emergence of a growing economic gap between the industrialized urban East Coast and the predominantly rural parts of central and western China (see, for example, Howe, Kueh, and Ash 2003: 25; Cieślik 2013, 26; China Statistical Yearbook 2011). In accordance with Deng Xiaoping's Two Overall Strategies (Liangge Da Ju; Li 2019) and with the aim of preventing any possible dissatisfaction among China's population that might be caused by the social and economic imbalances, a supportive program to strengthen China's West had to be designed. It became known as the Great Opening of the West.

15 According to Ma Rong, in the Tibet Autonomous Region 87.1 percent of the Tibetan population was engaged in agriculture, referring to both the cultivation of fields and animal husbandry, in 1982. In 2000 86.6 percent

of the Tibetan population was still engaged in agriculture in the Tibet Autonomous Region (Ma 2011, 63, table 3.8).

16 Holbig 2004, 335–36.

17 Jiang Zemin chose to add "Great" (Chi: *da*) to the title Great Opening of the West in order to emphasize that this development would not be conducted on a small scale (Li 2019). This development strategy indeed deserves such a title as it includes a huge number of programs and projects, implemented at all levels, from the supra-regional to the household level.

18 Qinghai Sheng Xibu Kaifa Lingdao Xiaozu Gongshe 2005, 78, 79; Yan 2001, 1.

19 Heath 2005, 193; *Guowuyuan guanyu Xibu da Kaifa ruogan zhengce cuoshi de shishi yijian*.

20 Goodman 2004a, 320. See also Holbig 2004, 352.

21 Paul and Cheng 2011, 170–71.

22 Lu and Deng 2011, 5, table 1.

23 Qinghai Sheng Xibu Kaifa Lingdao Xiaozu Gongshe 2005, 82.

24 On the New Silk Road and the Belt and Road Initiative, see, for example, Zhang 2015.

25 Zhong 2010: 55; Branigan 2010.

26 Guojia Fazhan he Gaige Weiyuanhui 2007, special column 3.

27 Paul and Cheng 2011, 170–71.

28 The major points articulated in Yu Zhengsheng's keynote speech at the Fiftieth Anniversary of the TAR included additional state support for the building of a well-off society in Tibet; social and economic development in Tibet; building a better new Tibet; and giving people a happier new life. He further stressed the necessity of developing Tibet by focusing on long-term stability and national unity in order to reinforce national security ("Yu Zhengsheng Delivers Keynote Speech at 50th Anniversary of Tibet Autonomy Ceremony," September 8, 2015; english.cntv.cn).

29 See also Yu Zhengsheng's keynote speech at the Fiftieth Anniversary of the TAR (September 8, 2015); *Guowuyuan guanyu shishi Xibu da Kaifa ruogan zhengce cuoshi de tongzhi* 2000, 1, 2.

30 Kolås 2008, 1. To attract more visitors and investors, Xining, the capital of Qinghai, has been promoted as the "summer capital," offering a mild climate in the summer time to people from the hotter parts of southeast China. In addition, after 2000 Qinghai started to organize many different exhibitions and events, showcasing various skills, crafts and products, such as photography, poetry, carpets, and cheese. Another attraction is the international bicycle race, the Tour of Qinghai Lake, first held in 2001, which is intended to draw attention to Qinghai in the rest of China and abroad. Xining city is now well known, not only as a

gateway to remote Qinghai, but also to the entire Tibetan Plateau, including the Tibet Autonomous Region.

31 Holbig 2004, 352.

32 Goodman 2004a, 317, 325.

33 See, for example, the 1993 speech by Chen Kaiyuan, party secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region: "An all-out effort must be made to eradicate Tibetan Buddhism and culture from the face of the earth so that no memory of them will be left in the minds of coming generations—except as museum pieces. . . . We must teach and guide Tibetan Buddhism to reform itself. All those religious laws and rituals must be reformed in order to fit in the needs of development and stability in Tibet, and they should be reformed so that they become appropriate to a society under socialism" (statement made by Chen Kuiyuan, Communist Party secretary in Tibet [1992–2000]; Heath 2005, 151). See also Yu Zhengsheng's keynote speech at the fiftieth Anniversary of the TAR (September 8, 2015).

34 Fischer 2014, 28.

35 See also Fischer 2014, xxx.

36 See, for example, Heath 2005, 216–17.

37 Lu and Deng 2011, 11.

38 See also Yeh 2013, 103.

39 Lu and Deng 2011, 10.

40 Cieślik 2013, 19–34, 26; China Statistical Yearbook 2011.

41 Lu and Deng 2011, 14.

42 Fischer 2014, 152–65; Ma 2011, 212; Fischer 2014.

43 Ma 2011, 191. For a demonstration of the increase in expenditure after resettlement, see Bauer 2015, 212–14.

44 See for example Yeh 2013, 106; Zukosky 2007, 119.

45 Yeh 2013, 231.

CHAPTER 2: THE GIFT OF DEVELOPMENT IN PASTORAL AREAS

1 In Qinghai, the relocation and sedentarization aims of the Socialist New Countryside initiative were predominantly realized as part of the Ecological Resettlement Project (Ch: Shengtai Yimin Gongcheng; Guojia Fazhan he Gaige Weiyuanhui 2007). See also Looney 2012, 204–85; Guojia Fazhan he Gaige Weiyuanhui 2007, special column 2; *Beijing Review* 2008.

2 Sun and Wang 2007.

3 Asian Development Bank 2012; So 2016.

4 Rtse khog rdzong mi dmangs srid gzhung gi rdzong dpon 2007; personal interview with a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, November 2015. See also Shih 2013.

5 Kreutzmann 2012b, 53–66.

6 See, for example, Goodman 2004b, 379–89; Qinghai Sheng Renmin Zhengfu 2011; Lijia 2005.
7 In order to accelerate poverty alleviation, since 2013 the reported number of poor people is only allowed to decrease and can no longer officially increase (for further details, see Ptackova 2019).
8 Rogers 2016.
9 Zhao 2019.
10 Interview with a member of the School of Economics at Sichuan University, October 2017.
11 See also Yeh 2005, 24.
12 Regarding the sedentarization of Tibetan pastoralists, two terms appear in this book: *resettlement* and *settlement*. The term *sedentarization* is used as a generic term to describe all development measures that aim to shift the center of the pastoralist life to an urban environment, which in Chinese are either called "resettlement" or "migration" (*yimin*) or "settlement" (*dingju*). These two are different. "Resettlement" was originally understood as a temporary measure encouraged through unacceptable living conditions at the original place and can mean a relocation of Tibetan pastoralists even to another province, while "settlement," by contrast, takes place mainly within the original county, targets the whole pastoral population and is expected to be permanent.
13 Richardson 2007, 6.
14 Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan Bangongshi 2007a, 6. The resettlement site size limit was suggested after several demonstrations during the resettlements of people from the Three Gorges dam construction area, which was used as a model for the Sanjiangyuan resettlement program (Jing et al. 2007, 197–205).
15 See, for example, the speech of the Chinese premier, Wen Jiabao, February 2005 (Yeh 2005, 10).
16 Yeh 2005, 11. The first environmental law in China was promulgated in 1978; the first Grassland Law was issued in 1985 (Chen 2010, 143–45).
17 Jiang 2006; Wang 2007, 20–3.
18 One mu is equivalent to 0.0667 hectares. Qinghai Sheng Xumuting 1999, 100. Households classified as such possess fewer than twenty sheep units of livestock per person. In Zeku this situation concerns the majority of the population (Lijia 2005).
19 Wen 2001, 1.
20 Tibetan Plateau 2012; *Guowuyuan guanyu shishi Xibu da Kaifa ruogan zhengce cuoshi de tongzhi* 2000, 3; 3.
21 The permitted scale of the Returning Farmland to Forest policy is limited by the rule that in the southwestern areas there must remain at least 0.5 mu and in the northwestern areas at least 2 mu of arable field per person to secure a sufficient grain allocation (Zhongguo Gongchandang 2010).

In Qinghai "in 2000 and 2001, 500,000 mu of farmland was returned to forest and grassland in an experimental 16 counties. From 2002 it was planned to plant 2.27 million mu with trees and grass in the Qaidam Basin (where desertification has been most severe) and to retire a further 1.8 million mu of farmland to forest and grassland" (Goodman 2004b, 391).

22 Guojia Fazhan he Gaige Weiyuanhui 2007, article 7.
23 Smith and Foggin 1999, 235–40.
24 Goldstein 1996, 3.
25 Du 2014, 260.
26 See Behringer 2010.
27 Ho 2005; Harris 2010, 1–12.
28 Richard et al. 2006, 84.
29 See also Goldstein and Beall 1990, 69–71; Goldstein 1996, 2.
30 Miller 1999, 17.
31 Miller 1999, 17. According to my informants in Guoluo Prefecture, taxes have been raised on contracted land and redistributed animals. After the contract period is over, the animals become the property of the herders, but the land remains the property of the state, which can further grant usage rights to individual households. In order to obtain land use rights, pastoral households must pay a tax to the state, which varied between ¥10–¥30 and ¥5–¥10 per mu, depending on the size of the contracted land. Pastoral households from remote and poor areas, defined as such by the township and county government, may sometimes be exempt from paying state land taxes (Qinghai Sheng Zhengfu 2009, Article 4 and 8).
32 *Mtsho sngon bod yig gsar 'gyur*, May 10, 1994; Luosan 1996, 156–58.
33 Bauer and Nima 2009, 23–33; *Guowuyuan guanyu shishi Xibu da Kaifa ruogan zhengce cuoshi de tongzhi* 2000, 3.
34 Bedunah and Harris 2002.
35 In such case some sort of compensation must be provided (*Guowuyuan guanyu shishi Xibu da Kaifa ruogan zhengce cuoshi de tongzhi* 2000, 3). The possession of use rights for the state-owned land remains an essential economic asset in pastoral areas even with the advancing development and modernization.
36 Ho 2005.
37 Yeh 2013, 64–66; Lu and Deng 2011, 19.
38 Miller 1999, 17.
39 See, for example, Shapiro 2001.
40 Zhou et al. 2003, 15–22.
41 Former member of the Animal Husbandry Office in Hongyuan, interviewed in October 2009.
42 For example, at the Institute of Zoology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences ("Pika wrongly accused," *China Daily*, May 20, 2004, www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-05/20/content_332171.htm).

43 Goldstein 1996, 7.
44 The poisoning of the pikas had already begun by 1958 and up to now, in Qinghai Province alone, 208,000 square kilometers have been brought under control, with some areas experiencing several phases of poisoning (*China Daily* 2004). In Qinghai, according to the Chinese statistics on the elimination of both underground rodents and those living aboveground, during the period of 1982–94 elimination activities were carried out in an area of 129,974 square kilometers (in Zeku County, in an area of 14,701 square kilometers; Qinghai Sheng Xumuting 1995, 80). In 1998 the elimination area in the whole province covered 25 million mu (16,705 square kilometers); in Zeku County 5 million mu (c. 3,378 square kilometers; Qinghai Sheng Xumuting 1999, 117).
45 See Kardulias 2015.
46 The Yangzi River, with a length of around 6,300 kilometers, is the longest river in Asia and supplies about 32.2 percent of the Chinese population with water. The Yellow River is the second longest in China (5,464 kilometers) and supplies about 8.2 percent of the Chinese population with fresh water. The Mekong River, with a length of 4,200 kilometers, is one of the most important rivers of southwest China and Southeast Asia.
47 See the Tibetan poem by Dpa' dar (Dpa' dar and Upton 2000, 17).
48 Gong 2006b, 83–8.
49 Chen 2007, 1, 32, 157.
50 For the purpose of this volume, I will use the term Sanjiangyuan to refer to the entire administrative area of the Three Rivers' Headwaters Nature Reserve spreading over 394,500 square kilometers (the original 363,100 square kilometers plus the 31,400 square kilometers added in 2011). The abbreviation SNNR will be used to refer only to the conservation areas of the Sanjiangyuan.
51 Foggin 2005, 5; Gong 2006b, 356.
52 *Guojia ji ziran baohu qu minglu* 2005.
53 Chen 2007, 34.
54 *Guowuyuan dangwu huiyi jueding jianli Qinghai Sanjiangyuan guojia shengtai baohu zonghe shiyan qu* 2011.
55 National Development and Reform Commission 2018, 1–4.
56 *Huangnan Zhou Sanjiangyuan Shengtai Yimin gongzuo jingyan yu silu* 2007, 1.
57 *Huangnan Zhou Sanjiangyuan Shengtai Yimin gongzuo jingyan yu silu* 2007, 1.
58 "For instance, Qinghai Province invested ¥780 million to establish and protect the Sanjiangyuan area, closing off 5.11 million hectares of pasture and relocating 7,048 households (33,572 people)" (Li 2011, 74).
59 *Qinghai News*, 2005, qhnews.com/1028/2005/09/02/35@246114.htm.

1 Ma 2011, 193.
2 The name sTobs ldan (Ch: Duofudun) has remained in general usage among the local population as a description for this area. Therefore, it also appears in this book.
3 See, for example, Andrew Jacobs, "China Fences in Its Nomads and an Ancient Life Withers," *New York Times*, June 11, 2015.
4 Among current research reports, we can also find examples of pastoral societies shifting the base of their livelihoods away from animal husbandry in order to adapt to socioeconomic and environmental or political changes, population growth, globalization or other extra-regional factors. See, for example, Nüsser, Holdschlag, and Rahman 2012, 31–52; Ahmed 2009, 145–51; Dollfus 2004, 200–13; Kreutzmann 2009b.
5 Foggin 2008, 28.
6 In some areas, pastoralists constructed permanent houses on the winter grasslands even before the adoption of the reforms of the central government. See also Gruschke 2005.
7 Qinghai Sheng Xumuting 1995, 70.
8 In 1995 the largest fenced-off areas in Zeku County were in Duokamao and Xibusha Townships. The total length of fencing erected in Zeku County in 1995 was 184,800 meters (in the whole of Qinghai Province 6.2 million meters), with a total investment of ¥1.8 million, of which ¥811,400 was paid for by the pastoralists and the rest by the provincial government (Qinghai Sheng Xumuting 1996, 114–19). The most grass planted was in Ningxiu (475.8 hectares) and Duofudun (413.1 hectares) townships (Lijia 2005, 111–13). Qinghai Sheng Caoyuan Zongzhan 2003, 25–30. For examples of the implementation of the Set of Four project in Golok, see Horlemann 2002, 241–70.
9 For example, in Dangqian village in Maqin County, Qinghai, the government suggested the building of a winter home for each pastoral household in 1980. Until then, the villagers had been accustomed to living in tents and were suspicious of buildings. Therefore, the government decided to test out the houses with five households of ex-prisoners and monks. The test house experiment eventually persuaded the rest of the village that the houses were actually warm and dry and so it was agreed to build one for each household. These houses were built of wood and earth, with financial and material support coming from the government (Tibetan pastoral community leader from Maqin County, interviewed in October 2009).
10 See also Ptackova 2017.
11 Tibetan member of an NGO engaged in environmental protection in Qinghai Province, interviewed in July 2007.

12 Tibetan member of the Qinghai Nationalities Cultural Committee, interviewed in May 2015.
13 For more details, see Ptackova 2017.
14 Foggin 2005, 2; Chen 2007, 37–40.
15 Wang et al. 2010, 444.
16 See, for example, Zha 2014, 1; Wanma 2013, 9. The figures describing the number of involved households differ in these references. On the completion of this relocation project, a total of 10,165 households (56,000 people) should have been resettled, corresponding with the figures provided earlier by Du (2006, 45–46) and Chen (2007, 151). At the beginning of its implementation, the Ecological Resettlement Project declared its intention to resettle 4,965 households (24,000 people) in Qinghai Province, with the aim of achieving a future total of 10,165 resettled households (56,000 people; Tibetan member of the Qinghai Nationalities Cultural Committee, interviewed in May 2007).
17 Chen presents a number of 11,000 people (approximately 2,066 households) scheduled for Ecological Resettlement in the core zones of the SNNR. By the end of 2005, this objective had already been realized, and 11,373 people (1,756 households) had been resettled (Chen 2007, 143).
18 Presentation made by Qinghai Administration Institute leadership member in Halle in December 2009.
19 The official numbers of people affected by the sedentarization projects presented in this book should be regarded as approximate data that simply serve for orientation purposes. Du Fachun (2006, 46) mentions a relocation figure of about eighty thousand Tibetan pastoralists by the end of 2005. This number refers to the total number of people resettled within the Returning Pastureland to Grassland and Ecological Resettlement Projects. See also, Chen 2007, 36–151; Tongren Xian Fagai Ju 2007.
20 As part of these projects, farmers are required to plant trees or grass instead of crops. Land suffering from severe degradation and sloping fields with a gradient of 25 percent or more (Qinghai Sheng Xumuting 1996, 92) are excluded from use and earmarked for protection. Additionally, farmers can decide voluntarily to let other land lie fallow. For each excluded mu of farmland, farmers receive compensation either in cash or grain from the government. The plan for 2000 aimed to implement this policy on 343,505 hectares of land in the West of China (Qinghai Sheng Nongmuting 2008f, 83). During the Tenth Five-Year Plan (2001–2005) the Returning Farmland to Forest Project was implemented on 5.2 million hectares. The afforestation of desolated hills and land has been carried out on 7.6 million hectares so far, the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project implemented on 19.3 million hectares, and 1.2 million poor people relocated (Guojia Fazhan he Gaige Weiyuanhui 2007, Article 1).

See, for example, Shapiro 2001, 10; Flower 2009, 42; Qinghai Sheng Nongmuting 2008c, 3.

21 Qinghai Sheng Nongmuting 2008b, 16.

22 Yeh 2005, 17–21.

23 *Guowuyuan dangwu huiyi jueding jianli Qinghai Sanjiangyuan guojia shengtai baohu zonghe shiyan qu* 2011, 2; "China to Invest US$15.7 Billion in Western Region This Year," *Xinhua*, April 9, 2003, http://japanese.china.org.cn/english/BAT/61510.htm; Yeh 2005, 10.

24 Bauer and Nima 2009, 31–32.

25 In Guinan County, Hainan Prefecture, Qinghai Province, inhabited mainly by Tibetan farmers, semi-pastoralists and pastoralists, local people decide by themselves the size of the area for implementing the Turning Pastureland or Farmland into Grassland policy. The annual compensation consists of ¥20 and 200 kilograms of grain per mu of farmland and of ¥160 per mu of pastureland. The pastureland must remain unused for at least eight years before it can be used for herding again (member of Guinan County Office for Nature Preservation, interviewed in July 2007).

26 Chen 2007, 43.

27 Qinghai Sheng Nongmuting 2008e, 117.

28 Member of the Guinan County Office for Nature Preservation, interviewed in July 2007.

29 Twenty-seven-year-old pastoralist from the Da'e community, interviewed in October 2009.

30 Yeh 2005, 16.

31 Qinghai Sheng Nongmuting 2008a, 112–13.

32 Yeh 2005, 23.

33 Qinghai Sheng Nongmuting 2008d, 142. The households affected by the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project have an obligation to reduce their livestock numbers. Pastoralist households that inhabit the grasslands are supposed to be aware of the grassland capacity rules and adjust the number of animals accordingly. Currently, officially authorized experts measure the local grassland capacity and eventually present the results to local community leaders, who then allot the necessary livestock reduction quota to the pastoralist households. Livestock that overload the grasslands must be sold in the same year in which the Returning Pastureland to Grassland Project is implemented.

34 Qinghai Sheng Nongmuting 2008a, 112–13.

35 Qinghai Sheng Nongmuting 2008d, 142.

36 Qinghai Sheng Nongmuting 2008e, 117. In reality this means that even when the pastoralists in Zeku are theoretically not the target of the Grazing Ban Resettlement, they can still be involved in other sedentarization projects, such as the Ecological Resettlement or the Nomadic

Settlement Projects. In Zeku County, the resettlement of pastoralists is taking place under the label of the Ecological Resettlement Project.

37 In several documents, there are project implementation exceptions mentioned in connection with province border regions (see Qinghai Sheng Renmin Zhengfu 2011, 135; Chen 2007). So far, I have been unable to identify the reasons for these exceptions and they remain unclear.

38 Qinghai Sheng Renmin Zhengfu 2011, 135.

39 Du 2014, 262–63.

40 Du 2006, 45–46.

41 Chen 2007, 143.

42 Member of Qinghai Nationalities Cultural Committee, interviewed in July 2008.

43 Chen 2007, 144.

44 Du 2014, 266–68. For a similar classification, see also Bessho 2015, 190–91.

45 See Childs, Goldstein, and Wangdui 2010.

46 See Yeh 2013, chapter 2.

47 Zeku Xian Renmin Zhengfu 2007b.

48 *Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan ziran baohu qu 2003–2006 nian yidi banqian banqian xiangmu shishi qingkuang huibao*, 5. See also Bessho 2015, 196.

49 Richer households with sufficient income from the grasslands are only willing to participate in the resettlement schemes as long as they assume that they can keep their original pastures in addition to receiving a new house, some hoping to obtain urban residency registration (see Du 2014, 268). The transfer of registration status is, according to my experience, not granted in reality to the relocated households and remains at the original location.

50 In each county is a Sanjiangyuan local government office, responsible for the implementation of livestock reduction measures and pastoralist sedentarization. After this local bureau is informed about the numbers of households to be resettled by the higher administrative level, it must ensure that enough households participate in the project.

51 In 2006, 27,809 middle-aged people were recorded as illiterate in Zeku County. The entire population of Zeku County was 60,733 (Zeku Xian Renmin Zhengfu 2009, 3–4).

52 Obligatory school attendance had already been introduced in 1999. Nevertheless, in countryside areas in particular, school attendance was not strictly enforced. In 2007 the government decided to take action to address the relatively high illiteracy rates in the countryside. From that year, all school-age children had to attend school. They were divided into grades according to their age, regardless of whether or not they had received education previously (government social worker from Yushu Prefecture, interviewed September 2009).

53 See, for example, Gyal 2015.

54 For a discussion on the issue of education among Tibetans, see also Zenz 2014.

55 According to a director of a primary school in Zeku County in 2008, even with compulsory school attendance in China and free primary school education for the children from pastoralist households in Zeku County, in remote rural areas only about two thirds of the children attend school regularly. Each school records the number of school-age children in their statistics, irrespective of whether they actually attend or not, and this is the figure that is reported to the higher authorities. According to a local government report, in 2006, 9,790 children reached school enrollment age. Of these, 95.83 percent actually attended the first class (Rtse khog rdzong mi dmangs srid gzhung gi rdzong dpon 2007, 6).

The main reason schools include all children in the statistics is to so they can obtain the full grant from the government, as the amount of money the school receives depends on the number of students they have. When the prefecture or provincial education bureau conducts a supervisory visit, the school head teacher, who knows of the visit in advance, arranges for students from other schools to attend their school in order to make up the required number. As a consequence, when the delegates ask children how they like the school, they sometimes answer that they are not sure yet, as this is their first day.

56 Chen 2008, 170–237.

57 Chen 2007, 148–55.

58 This project also seems to operate in parallel with the Comfortable Housing Project in the Tibet Autonomous Region, as described by Goldstein (2010).

59 Qinghai Sheng Xibu Kaifa Lingdao Xiaozu Gongshe 2005, 5–6.

60 Rtse khog rdzong mi dmangs srid gzhang 2009, 2.

61 Rtse khog rdzong mi dmangs srid gzhang 2009, 2.

62 Qinghai Sheng Xibu Kaifa Lingdao Xiaozu Gongshe 2005, 9.

63 Public announcement, Guoluo Prefecture government, September 14, 2009.

64 In Maqin the household economy is reinforced by the income from the caterpillar fungus collection and trade (for more details, see, for example, Sulek 2011).

CHAPTER 4: DEVELOPMENT IN ZEKU COUNTY

1 Today's Zeku County used to be under changing or overlapping influence of the Tibetans, Chinese, and Mongols until the thirteenth century, when the Mongols founded here first a so-called Tibetan area controlled by a pacification commissioner and later the administrative unit of Gansu Province (Gansu Xingzhong Shusheng). Zeku County was first

part of an administrative unit of ten thousand households, established south of the Yellow River and later, during the Ming Dynasty, part of a thousand-household unit. In 1762 Zeku switched to the jurisdiction of the newly established Xunhua (T: Ya tsi rdzong) government department and remained a part of it until 1913. In 1929 Tongren County (T: Reb gong rdzong) was separated from Xunhua, and since 1931 Tongren has been under direct jurisdiction of Qinghai. After 1932 rTse khog was shifted to Qinghai as the fourth district of Tongren County. In 1953 Zeku County was created from the fifth, sixth, and seventh districts under the Tongren jurisdiction built by ten Tibetan tribes: the Hor, Rong bo (Ch: Longwu), Bon rgya (Ch: Wangjia), So nag (Ch: Suonaihai), mGar rtse (Ch: Guashenze), dMe shul (Ch: Maixiu), mGon shul (Ch: Guanxiu), dPyi sa (Ch: Xibusha), Ko'u sde ka rong (Ch: Gudegarang) and Khe ru'i chu rnga (Ch: Keriqina; Lijia 2005, 7–13). Between 1954 and 1956 Zeku County was divided into seven districts with their own administrative seats: Heri (Ch: Heri Qu), Suonaihai (Ch: Suonaihai Qu), Duofudun (Ch: Duofudun Qu), Guanxiu (Ch: Guanxiu Qu), Sairi (Ch: Sairi Diqu), Guashenze Township (Ch: Guashenze Xiang), and Xibusha Township (Ch: Xibusha Xiang) (Lijia 2005, 52–65). For more information about Zeku County and its history see also Weiner (2012) or Joseph Rock (1956).

2 See photograph of Zeku by Rock 1956, plate 27.

3 Lijia 2005, 1.

4 Ch: *keliyong caochang*: grassland that is in use or usable for animal husbandry, meaning that there is a suitable water source in that area. Lijia 2005, 1.

5 Measured by statistical annual cash income. In 2005 the per-capita average income of the pastoralists in Zeku County was ¥1,370, which made Zeku County the second-poorest county behind Dari County with ¥1,359 of average per-capita income (Chen 2007, 2). According to the national statistics from 2008, the Tibetan areas of Qinghai Province still remain the most backward region with the lowest per-capita income of China. The poorest prefectures are Yushu, Guoluo, and the pastoral part of the Huangnan Prefecture with per-capita annual incomes of ¥2,177, ¥2,291, and ¥2,369. The national average per-capita income in 2008 was ¥4,761 (*Qinghai Daily*, April 24, 2009).

6 According to a map produced by the Soviet army for its general staff (*China, Provinces Qinghai and Gansu*, sheet Zeku, I–47–XII, edition 1976).

7 Men comprised 48.98 percent and women 51.22 percent (Lijia 2005, 471). The male and female percentage proportions mentioned in this book form a total greater than 100 percent and might thus be inaccurate. The high level of unreliability in relation to population statistics in remote Tibetan areas was noted for example by Andrew Fischer (2014, 87), especially with reference to pre-1982 figures.

8 The rest of the population consisted of 1,146 Han (2.5 percent), 205 Hui (0.45 percent), 54 Salar, 54 Mongour people, 12 Mongolians, 10 Baoan people, and 7 members of other nationalities (Lijia 2005, 471).
9 Zeku Xian Renmin Zhengfu 2007a, 3.
10 Zeku Xian Renmin Zhengfu 2009, 1.
11 In 1958 the entire county was divided into eleven people's communes. In July 1962, eight townships were founded: Heri (Ch: Heri Xiang, T: Hor), Ningxiu (Ch: Ningxiu Xiang, T: Nyin shul), Duofudun (T: sTobs ldan), Duohemao (Ch: Duohemao Xiang, T: rDo dkar mo), Xiade (Ch: Xiade Xiang, T: Bya dar), Qiake (Ch: Qiake Xiang, T: Cha gor), Wangjia (Ch: Wangjia Xiang, T: Bon rgya), and Xibusha (Ch: Xibusha Xiang, T: dPyi sa), which were converted back into communes during the period from 1970 to 1983 (Lijia 2005, 52–65). In 2001 Xiade Township was renamed as the town of Zequ (Zequ Zhen). In 2006 Qiake Township was integrated into the administrative unit of Zequ Town.
12 The first land distribution with land use being contracted to individual households had taken place as early as 1984 (Lijia 2005, 39).
13 See also Yeh (2003a, 500), who found that after fence construction, disputes among pastoralists over land actually increased.
14 Banks 2003, 2137–39.
15 Member of the Qinghai Province Grassland Station, interviewed in October 2009.
16 See the chapter on family planning in Lijia 2005, 480–81.
17 See Livestock statistics in Zeku County from 1954 to 1995 in Lijia 2005. *Mtsho sngon bod yig gsar 'gyur*, October 5, 1994.
18 Sixty-year-old pastoral community leader from Wangjia Township, Zeku County, interviewed in May 2007.
19 See also, Singh 2009, 65–8.
20 Ch: *cao kulun*; comes from a Mongolian word that means "surrounded land." Parts of the land are fenced by off using branches, grass, wooden pillars, earthen walls or iron wires. Such fenced-off land is used for the protection of degenerated grass, to grow grass or to graze animals.
21 Chen 2007, 43.
22 As a response to the degradation of local grassland and diminution of grassland vegetation, the government ordered a reduction of livestock and people inhabiting grassland areas (Ch: *yikexue ding xu*; *yi kexue ding ren*).
23 In 2008, according to a Tibetan member of the Qinghai Nationalities Cultural Committee, the grassland capacity was usually calculated as 8–15 sheep units per mu. The exact number of households to be resettled during a specified period of time at a given location identified in government resettlement plans had to correlate with grassland capacity

research evidence, which was used to set resettlement quotas for each region.

24 Listed in the *Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan ziran baohu qu 2003–2006 nian yidi banqian banqian xiangmu shishi qingkuang huibao*. These households shall obtain government subsidies as part of the resettlement process. According to the government's vision, they should be able to return to the grasslands and keep a stipulated amount of livestock after a period of ten years.

25 Zeku Xian Fazhan he Gaige Ju 2007, 4.

26 See also Yeh 2013, 91.

27 *Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan ziran baohu qu 2003–2006 nian yidi banqian banqian xiangmu shishi qingkuang huibao*; Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan Bangongshi 2007b.

28 *Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan ziran baohu qu 2003–2006 nian yidi banqian banqian xiangmu shishi qingkuang huibao*; Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan Bangongshi 2007b.

29 *Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan ziran baohu qu 2003–2006 nian yidi banqian banqian xiangmu shishi qingkuang huibao*.

30 Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan Bangongshi 2007b.

31 328 households in Zhigeri village in Ningxiu (Zeku Xian Fazhan he Gaige Ju 2007, 4); Rtse khog rdzong mi dmangs srid gzhung gi rdzong dpon 2007.

32 *Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan ziran baohu qu 2003–2006 nian yidi banqian banqian xiangmu shishi qingkuang huibao*.

33 Zeku Xian Renmin Zhengfu 2007b.

34 Rtse khog rdzong mi dmangs srid gzhang 2009.

35 *Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan ziran baohu qu 2003–2006 nian yidi banqian banqian xiangmu shishi qingkuang huibao*.

36 Rtse khog rdzong mi dmangs srid gzhang 2009.

37 A Tibetan member of the Zeku County government, interviewed in May 2007.

38 Sheep unit (Ch: *yang danwei*), unit used to measure the amount of livestock in relation to the grassland capacity. Four sheep units equal one cow unit ("Qinghai Lageri hezuoshe fazhan shengtai xumu jiyue hua jinying diaocha," *Nongmin Ribao*, November 2, 2016, http://grassland.china.com.cn/2016-11/02/content_9128414.htm.

39 *Huangnan Zhou Sanjiangyuan Shengtai Yimin gongzuo jingyan yu silu* 2007, 2.

40 *Protocol of the Annual Meeting of the Zeku County Government* from 2006.

41 Richardson 2007, 65.

42 Du 2009.

43 Sixty-five-year-old pastoralist from rMa stod from the resettlement site in Tongde, interviewed in June 2008. For similar findings, see also Bessho 2015.
44 Lobsang, a resettled pastoralist from rMa stod in Tongde resettlement, age sixty-seven, interviewed in June 2008.
45 Tashi, a resettled pastoralist from rMa stod in Tongde resettlement, age twenty-five, interviewed in June 2008.

CHAPTER 5: SEDENTARIZATION OF PASTORALISTS IN ZEKU COUNTY

1 Zeku Xian Renmin Zhengfu 2007b; Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan Bangongshi 2007b.
2 Between 2006 and 2007, it was planned that 851 households would be resettled in the entire area of Huangnan Prefecture: 86 households from Henan County and 765 households from Zeku County. Another document by the National People's Congress indicates the same number of households to be resettled in Zeku County (765), but the number of people it includes is different (3,559 people; Zeku Xian Renda Changweihui 2007). The document *Huangnan Zhou Sanjiangyuan Shengtai Yimin gongzuo jingyan yu silu* (2007, 2) identifies 765 households with 3,620 people. The total population of Zeku's core zone was 16,389, whereas local grassland capacity could only sustain 12,292 people (2,235 households). Therefore, it was decided to relocate the excess 745 households (4,097 people; Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan Bangongshi 2007a, 4).
3 Rtse khog rdzong mi dmangs srid gzhung gi rdzong dpon 2007. The report of the National People's Congress identifies that only forty-four households were to be resettled in the resettlement site in Zeku County town, and for seven households there was no fixed resettlement location (Zeku Xian Renda Changweihui 2007, 1).
4 Zeku Xian Renda Changweihui 2007, 4.
5 See also Zha 2014.
6 Tsering, a twenty-seven-year-old pastoralist from sTobs ldan, assigned to resettle in Tongren, interviewed in June 2009.
7 Dorje, a thirty-two-year-old pastoralist from sTobs ldan, assigned to resettle to Tongren, interviewed in June 2009.
8 Nima, a thirty-eight-year-old pastoralist from sTobs ldan, assigned to resettle to Tongren, interviewed in June 2009.
9 Tibetan village representative and local government member, age fifty-nine, interviewed in August 2007.
10 Two female pastoralists from Maixiu, Drolma, age seventy, and Tsering Lhamo, age thirty-three, interviewed in June 2008.

11 Female resettled pastoralist from sTobs ldan, aged twenty-six, interviewed in June 2008.
12 For security reasons, I do not provide the real name of the community here.
13 The local school was built with private help. In 2011 this school was closed down by the government, together with other village schools in Zeku County.
14 Sandrub, thirty-nine-year-old pastoralist from the rGyal bo pastoral community, registered for resettlement to Duofudun Town, interviewed in June 2009.
15 Sandrub, thirty-nine-year-old pastoralist from the rGyal bo pastoral community, registered for resettlement to Duofudun Town, interviewed in June 2009.
16 Dorje, thirty-two-year-old pastoralist from rGyal bo pastoral community, registered for resettlement in Tongren Town, interviewed in June 2009.
17 Norbu, forty-eight-year-old pastoralist from rGyal bo pastoral community, registered for resettlement in Zeku Town, interviewed in June 2009.
18 For similar observations from other Chinese areas, see, for example, Lora-Wainwright 2014.
19 Du 2014, 247; Yan and Fei 2009, 7.
20 Dorje, thirty-two-year-old pastoralist from rGyal bo pastoral community, registered for resettlement to Tongren Town, interviewed in June 2009.
21 Kelsang, thirty-nine-year-old pastoralist from rGyal bo pastoral community, registered for resettlement to Duofudun Town, interviewed in September 2009.
22 Tsampa, thirty-eight-year-old pastoralist from rGyal bo pastoral community, registered for resettlement in Duofudun Town, interviewed in September 2009.
23 Due to the sensitive situation and limited access during 2008 and 2009, some of the interviews had to be recorded with my local colleague.
24 Interviews with settlement inhabitants, July 2013.
25 Norwe, thirty-year-old pastoralist from rGyal bo pastoral community, registered for resettlement in Duofudun Town, interviewed in July 2013.
26 Zeku Xian Fazhan he Gaige Ju 2007, 4.
27 Zeku Xian Renmin Zhengfu 2009, 6.
28 Sixty-one-year-old pastoralist, resettled to Ningxiu resettlement, interviewed in June 2008.
29 Dawa Tsering, sixty-one-year-old pastoralist from the Ningxiu resettlement site, interviewed in June 2008.
30 Zeku Xian Renmin Zhengfu 2009, 8–9.

31 Yang L., ed., "Stone-carving leads Qinghai's ecological migrants to prosperity," *Xinhua*, December 29, 2009, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-12/29/content_12720621.htm.
32 Rgyalo, pastoralist from the Heri resettlement, interviewed in September 2009.
33 Dondrub, pastoralist from the Heri resettlement, interviewed in September 2009.
34 Chen 2007, 143.
35 Zeku Xian Renmin Zhengfu 2009, 9–10.
36 Leader of the Hor pastoral community in the Heri resettlement, interviewed in September 2009.
37 See Ptackova 2015.
38 Henan Xian Fazhan he Gaige Ju 2007, 1–2.
39 Interviews with resettled Henan pastoralists, August 2007.
40 Similar developments were also observed by Urgenson and colleagues (2014, 489) in parts of Jiuzhaigou, in northern Sichuan.
41 Henan Xian Fazhan he Gaige Ju 2007, 2–3.
42 See also Kardulias 2015, 2.
43 Tibetan member of Zeku County government responsible for grassland distribution and settlement constructions, interviewed in October 2009.
44 Zeku County civil servant, interviewed in December 2011.
45 For their remote locations and lack of comfort the small community schools are not popular among better qualified teachers. Usually, mainly teachers who have grown up in pastoral areas return to their home village to work. To become a teacher, applicants with a bachelor's degree or a minimum *dazhuan* (vocational college) qualification are allowed to participate in government examinations for a certain prefecture or county. If they pass the government examinations, they will be employed as teachers. Teachers are required to complete a special teacher training program. However, the selection of the subject they teach does not seem to be bound to a particular qualification. Such circumstances have contributed to the lower quality of education in primary schools in remote Tibetan areas when compared with the Chinese average (see Rui and Mei 2009). Places where minority languages are spoken and bilingual education allowed (such as in Tibetan autonomous areas of Qinghai) have an even more difficult situation because the children have to follow a bilingual education program. In Zeku County all schools were Tibetan schools when the research was conducted. The teachers used the Amdo Tibetan language to teach students in all subjects, except the Chinese language. The children started with Tibetan and Chinese language lessons in the first grade, with English added in the third grade. Accordingly, their Chinese was often not as good as that spoken by Han children, for example.

46 Houses constructed in Zeku County since 2010 as part of the Nomadic Settlement Project, whether or not they are in a settlement near the pastoralists' grasslands or in town, are easy to distinguish. They have a small plate on each door, stating that they are part of the Nomadic Settlement Project. The year of construction is also identified.
47 See Ptackova 2015.
48 See also, for example, Bessho 2015, 204.
49 "Jiakuai Zangqu You Mumin Dingju Gongcheng jianshe," *Qinghai Daily*, April 24, 2009, http://xz.people.com.cn/. Construction of animal sheds has recently become part of various governmental modernization programs. Together with fencing, house constructions, and grass planting, it was included, for example, in the new Set of Four program of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, which was completed in 2010 (Tongren Xian Fagai Ju 2007, 8).
50 Tibetan member of Zeku County government, responsible for grassland distribution and settlement constructions, interviewed in October 2009.

CHAPTER 6: AMBIVALENT OUTCOMES AND ADAPTATION STRATEGIES

1 See, for example, Cencetti 2014; Du 2014; Fischer 2014; Foggin and Phillips 2013; Gruschke 2012; Zukosky 2007.
2 Fan et al. 2013.
3 In the statistics of per capita net annual income of rural households in 1990–2016, the rural population in Qinghai remains among the poorest in the PRC (with ¥559.78 in 1990, ¥5,364.38 in 2012, and ¥8,664.4 in 2016). Statistics of productive fixed assets in rural households, however, show Qinghai among the first three (1998) or first nine (2012) regions respectively with the biggest value in livestock (¥21,919.34 per household; China Statistical Yearbook 1999–2017; see also Fischer 2005, 55).
4 Chen 2007, 147.
5 See, for example, Cencetti 2013; Foggin and Phillips 2013; Fan et al. 2013; Du 2014.
6 Kolås 2008, 126. See also Zimmermann 2014.
7 For more details concerning the caterpillar fungus economy, see, for example, Gruschke 2012; Winkler 2008, 2010; Sulek 2010.
8 Cai et al. 2005, 37–59. See also Ma 2011, 212.
9 Zeku Xian Sanjiangyuan Bangongshi 2007a.
10 See, for example, Nyima 2014.
11 Yeh 2014, 235.
12 Foggin and Phillips 2013, 1.
13 See, for example, Cencetti 2014; Yeh 2014.

14 Tibetan member of the Qinghai provincial government, interviewed in May 2015.
15 Du 2014, 250.
16 See also Gyal 2015.
17 See also Ptackova 2016.
18 Thirty-year-old former pastoralist from mGo log, interviewed in September 2008.
19 Fan et al. 2013.
20 Mackerras 2003, 57–61.
21 See also, Humprey and Sneath 1999, 1.
22 Foggin and Phillips 2013, 6.

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