

sides of a political divide, have been examined as one indivisible whole by later scholars.

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*Tibet: Survival in Question.* By PIERRE-ANTOINE DONNET. [London: Zed Books, 1994. 267 pp. Hard cover £36.95, \$59.95, ISBN 1-85649-129-3; paperback £14.95, \$25.00, ISBN 1-85649-130-7.]

Pierre-Antoine Donnet is a French journalist who worked for AFP in Beijing in 1984–89, after several years in Taiwan and Hong Kong. This volume is a translated and updated version of his book *Tibet: Mort ou Vif* which was published in 1990. Donnet visited Tibet once, in 1985; he entered from Nepal and writes lyrically of the journey to Lhasa through the Eternal Snows. He remains fascinated by Tibet and is increasingly fearful that the Chinese are deliberately destroying a unique (but, for them, tiresome) culture by encouraging a growing avalanche of Han immigrants. “How long will it take for this stratagem to obliterate the Tibetan identity?” he asks. “Twenty years? Ten? Even fewer?” It is hard to escape his conclusion that it won’t take long.

The book is a fairly comprehensive narrative of events in Tibet since 1950, with a background chapter on earlier history. This is a journalist’s book, not a historian’s, but this style suits the latter part of the book, much of which uses interviews and (well-supported) anecdote to flesh out the unattractive skeleton of Chinese policy in the region. Some of Donnet’s evidence was gathered on the spot in Tibet, some from exiles and some from careful reading of the Chinese press. He has tried to be objective, giving the Chinese case. Yet the facts of China’s occupation and treatment of the region speak for themselves, and they are not to Beijing’s credit.

Donnet gives a summary of the pre-1950 history, and this provides helpful background to the real theme, events in Tibet during the last four-and-a-half decades. The book also includes a useful series of appendices (the 1951 Sino-Tibetan 17-point agreement, and a critical speech by the Panchen Lama in March 1987, for example), a list of Tibet-related organizations and four pages of bibliography.

Sadly for Tibet, the world paid little attention when China occupied it in 1950–51. The Chinese propaganda – that “the people of Tibet were longing for the arrival of the PLA to help bring an end to their sufferings” – was conveniently swallowed by outside nations. The 1950s were a time of rebellions and repressions with purges and the dreaded “struggle sessions.” Tensions were high, and the Dalai Lama himself fled to India in 1959 with tens of thousands of his followers. Monasteries were raided and closed, monks and “counter-revolutionaries” sent to labour camps. Importantly, Donnet notes the reorganization of the region in the 1960s, when huge areas of traditional Tibet were allotted to adjoining Chinese provinces. Outsiders tend to think of the division of Tibet as part of history and therefore too difficult to reverse, but it is a comparatively recent event.

With the 1966 Cultural Revolution came disaster. Brutality and destruction followed, focused mainly on the monasteries. At the end of the catastrophe, only a handful of a reputed 6,000 religious foundations were left standing. Donnet quotes eyewitness reports of the Red Guard fighting, which are indirectly confirmed by the extent of the desolation visible at the end of the 1970s.

The 1980s began better, with invitations from Beijing to the Dalai Lama to return. But Beijing had no serious negotiations to offer. Tibetan discontent culminated in the protest movements of the late 1980s. As a result, Beijing now thinks of Tibet as a problem to be solved by harsh treatment, a strong military presence and yet more colonization. Much of old Lhasa has been pulled down, and what is left is surrounded by acres of Chinese housing, markets and shops. Donnet chronicles these latest policies and events, and they leave him with little hope for the survival of a distinctive Tibetan culture. The evidence that he has gathered from Tibetans and others suggests that his pessimism is well-justified.

COLINA MACDOUGALL

*The Common Law System in Chinese Context.* By BERRY FONG-CHUNG HSU. [Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992. 284 pp. ISBN 0-87332-845-0.]

*Turmoil in Hong Kong on the Eve of Communist Rule.* By DEBORAH ANN BROWN. [San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993. 447 pp. ISBN 0-7734-2242-0.]

M. E. Sharpe's multi-volume series, "Hong Kong Becoming China: The Transition to 1997," edited by Ming K. Chan and Gerard A Postiglione, is aimed at attracting an international readership to the many challenges Hong Kong will confront in its transition to Chinese sovereignty. Berry Fong-Chung Hsu's book is one of the first to be published in the series.

*The Common Law System in Chinese Context* describes the historical process by which Hong Kong's current legal system has evolved from Britain's pure common law system to the common law system with Chinese characteristics of today. Berry Fong-Chung Hsu's timely analysis is best considered within the context of the ongoing warnings which continue to go back and forth between Beijing and Hong Kong, and are regularly quoted (and perhaps distorted) by the Hong Kong press. To many observers, including the author, the preservation of Hong Kong's existing legal system is crucial to the maintenance of "the high degree of autonomy" promised to post-1997 Hong Kong under the Joint Declaration between Britain and China.

The book first traces the historical origins of Hong Kong's legal system and then sets out to assess systematically "the absorption of common law notions by the Chinese population of Hong Kong" using various empirical studies aimed at gauging local attitudes towards the common law in Hong Kong. Some of the author's survey findings are particularly telling. He points to "weaknesses in the Hong Kong legal culture" including an inadequate understanding of the separation of powers in Hong Kong