A Note to the Reader

I first came across Fazun's *Modern Tibet* in Chengdu, while conducting research at the Sichuan University Center for Tibetan Studies between 2005 and 2006. The library contained a 1937 edition of the book, published by the College of Chinese and Tibetan Doctrine (Hanzang jiaoliyuan 汉藏教理院) in Chongqing, and I scanned its text for later review. I digitized that book in 2023 for the purpose of this publication, and it has consistently been my primary resource.

The 1937 Chongqing edition of *Modern Tibet*, published by the College of Chinese and Tibetan Doctrine, is a 147-page book printed with vertical movable type on paper. The cover is unadorned, displaying just the title, Fazun's name, and the phrase *Liuxiang shanjian* 劉湘善檢, 'Examined and approved by Liu Xiang', accompanied by Liu Xiang's seal. The publication adheres to the norms of classic Chinese printing, with text presented in vertical columns, read from top to bottom, and the columns organized from right to left on the page. It opens with Taixu's preface and a carefully arranged table of contents, then proceeds directly into the main text. The book features distinct chapter breaks, but an index, a glossary, or a map is missing.

What makes the publication unique is a collection of twenty-four photographs embedded directly in the text. Each carries a brief caption. The plates display images of contemporary Tibetan masters, like Amdo Géshé, the thirteenth Dalai Lama, the ninth Panchen Lama, and Radreng Rinpoché. Additionally, they display a statue of Tsongkhapa, vistas of the Potala Palace, depictions of daily life, including a man traveling on a yak-hide coracle boat, and an array of natural and monastic environments. Even though these visuals are sometimes small and black-and-white, they offer actual

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landmarks related to the people and settings that Fazun describes. Two photographs, one portraying Fazun, the other portraying Amdo Géshé, were reproduced in this publication. In its physical form, the book is austere. The limited resources of the press at Chongqing's College are reflected in its simple design. Still, by incorporating Taixu's introduction, an organized contents list, and an assortment of pictures, the College clearly sought to portray *Modern Tibet* as both a pilgrimage account and a photographic record of Fazun's journey.

Modern Tibet opens as a memoir. The first part of the book narrates Fazun's travels and the people he met in China and Tibet between the early 1920s and the mid-1930s. Subsequent parts of the book consider Tibetan geography, history, economy, administration, religion, education, culture, art, architecture, and foreign affairs, before concluding with a statement of principles on how the government of Republican China should deal with Tibet. The table of contents illustrates this combined design. Stylistically, the first chapter resembles a travelogue, whereas subsequent chapters condense extensive details into brief sections. Fazun's prose is modern Chinese, intended for readers from the Republican period. Fazun writes in *baihua*, the vernacular language championed by the *Wusi yundong* 'May Fourth Movement' of 1919. His aim was to make Tibet intelligible to his readers in the very language in which the leading authors of early-twentieth century China wrote their essays and novels.

Translating *Modern Tibet* was a project I first undertook in 2006. To begin, I surveyed every Chinese term, highlighting the Tibetan terms that needed reconstruction from the Chinese for their phonetic presentation in English. From 2008 to 2023, no additional progress was made on the translation, except for the translation of excerpts that I used in my Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Michigan in 2014. My earnest translation endeavors began in summer 2023, when I developed a first draft containing Tibetan terms transcribed into the Pinyin phonetic system from Chinese. I subsequently composed a second draft, incorporating Tibetan words rendered into Wylie transliteration. In the third draft, Tibetan terms were incorporated using Wisdom Publications' Style Guide for books on Indian and Tibetan Buddhism (2015). For Buddhist technical terms, I followed the English usage established in the *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (2014). At the same time, footnotes were added to specify Fazun's original Chinese term along with its Wylie reconstruction. The footnotes also include a small glossary of frequently used Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan Buddhist terms.

As for Buddhist technical terms, I preserve Fazun's choices. For the Buddhist concepts he renders into Chinese, I supply English equivalents. Where he utilizes a Chinese phonetic rendering of the Sanskrit, I provide the original Sanskrit terms. This method applies not only to Buddhist doctrinal terms but also to his descriptions of religions more broadly. Fazun often uses the modern term *zongjiao* 宗教 'religion', which reflects a twentieth-century assimilation of a Western category based on Japanese sources. This contrasts with the older term *jiao* 教, which in classical Buddhist usage meant 'teaching' or 'doctrine'. Whereas *jiao* referred to specific doctrinal systems such as *Fojiao* 佛教 'Buddha Teaching' or *Daojiao* 道教 'Dao Teaching', the modern term *zongjiao* conveys the sense of Buddhism, Christianity, and other traditions together as 'world religions'.

Fazun commonly associates *jiao* with expressions that draw their origins from Buddhist terminology, for instance, *xiejiao sixiang* 邪教思想 'wrong

religious ideals'. The crucial component in this is the term *xie* 邪 (S. mithyā; T. log pa), which functions as a Buddhist qualifier meaning 'wrong', 'erroneous', or 'misguided'. Combined with *jian* 見 (S. dṛṣṭi; T. lta), it forms *xiejian* 邪見 (S. mithyādṛṣṭi; T. log lta), literally 'wrong views'. *Mithyādṛṣṭi*, in Buddhist morality, represents a significant transgression rather than a casual mistake. It stands as the tenth among the ten unwholesome courses of action (C. yedao 業道; S. karmapatha; T. las kyi lam), conveying a lack of belief in karma and reincarnation—the idea that one's conduct lacks consequences. Such a perspective is regarded as very destructive, as it fundamentally weakens the principle of moral accountability. When Fazun refers to Western religions as *xiejiao* or *xiejian*, he is both pointing out the doctrinal errors of Christian theology and connecting it to one of the most serious moral transgressions in Buddhist practice. His choice of terms illustrates how he interprets foreign religious ideas through Buddhist categories, measuring them against standards of the Buddha's dharma. Within this framework, he characterizes Christianity as *xiejiao sixiang*, 'wrong religious ideals'. Elsewhere, he illustrates the integration of Buddhist or Tibetan concepts and ideas with common Chinese expressions, for instance, by referring to the Potala Palace by its colloquial Chinese name, *Dalai Shan* 達賴山, 'Dalai's Mountain'. It is also worth noting Fazun's phrase *lama si* 喇嘛寺. This expression, which translates to 'lama temple' in English, was common during the Republican era and continues to be used in the People's Republic to identify Tibetan monasteries (T. dgon pa). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the term 'lamasery', derived from the Chinese *lama si* and now considered archaic, was commonly encountered in European and American publications concerning Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism.

Dates required careful handling. Fazun wrote during the Republican period, when China observed both the Gregorian solar calendar and the traditional lunar calendar. He occasionally mentioned Chinese or Tibetan lunar months or celebration days, which I have kept with concise explanations in the notes. All Gregorian years are presented in CE or BCE notation. Fazun's chronology is generally reliable, yet it is not always perfectly accurate. Where his timelines differ from accepted historical records, I mention the inconsistency in the footnotes but refrain from correcting his narrative. In order to maintain his original phrasing, I display dates according to the Republican-era method, providing Gregorian years within brackets. For instance, he chronicles occurrences as "the first month of the twenty-third year of the Republic [January 1934]". This dual system highlights Fazun's movement across two distinct time frameworks. He contextualized Tibet's ancient past within classical dynastic periods and its contemporary history based on modern Republican calculations.

In the context of premodern Tibetan history, Fazun reconstructed the timelines of significant events by referring to Chinese dynastic records. For instance, he mentions that Tibetan King Trisong Détsen came into power during the fourteenth year of Emperor Xuanzong's 玄宗 *Tianbao* 天寶 era, determining this by taking 742 CE as the beginning and adding 13 years to reach 755 CE. He likely would have confirmed this date by comparing it with key historical incidents, notably the eruption of the An Lushan 安祿山 Rebellion in that very year. In order to verify its precision, Fazun compared this with Xuanzong's reign, starting in 712 CE, confirming that 755 CE coincided with the 43rd year of the emperor's rule and the penultimate

year of the *Tianbao* period. His methodology enabled him to deduce that Trisong Détsen's rise to power occurred in 755 CE, corresponding to the fourteenth year of *Tianbao*.

Likewise, Fazun computed the length of King Trisong Détsen's time on the throne by linking the king's efforts to promote Buddhism in Tibet to the reigns of Tang emperors Suzong 肅宗 (756-762 CE) and Daizong 代宗 (762-779 CE). It was Fazun's deduction that Trisong Détsen's reign occurred concurrently with this era, and his efforts to promote Buddhism endured during the reign of these Tang emperors. Even though his calculation method was accurate, Fazun neglected to state that Trisong Détsen's rule extended into the period of Tang Emperor Dezong 德宗 (779-805 CE). It seems Fazun also incorrectly calculated the year Atiśa arrived in Tibet. Contrary to Fazun's statement, Atiśa visited Tibet when Emperor Renzong 仁宗 was in power in Song-dynasty China, not in the seventh year of Emperor Taizong's 太宗 rule. Historical records show Emperor Renzong governed from 1022 to 1063 CE, and Atiśa is recorded as having arrived in Tibet in 1042 CE, which corresponds to the twenty-first year of Emperor Renzong's rule.

Fazun also employed the revised measuring standards from the Republican era, which I have transformed into contemporary metric and imperial measurements in the footnotes, although the original designations are kept in the primary body. These include, among others, *chi* 尺 (about one-third of a meter), *zhang* 丈 (about 3.3 meters), and *qing* 頃 (about 6.7 hectares). These units were common in the early twentieth century and would have been familiar to Fazun's readers.

Fazun uses a rich array of terms when describing the Tibetan terrain. He consistently refers to Tibet, which he considers a nation, as Xizang. He observes that Chinese sources designate Tibet as Kang-Zang 康藏, distinguishing between Qianzang 前藏 'Anterior Tibet', and Houzang 後藏 'Posterior Tibet' based on Qing materials. Conversely, he writes, Tibetans typically employ a threefold classification when discussing Ü (C. Wu 烏; T. Dbus), Tsang (C. Zang 藏; T. Gtsang), and Kham (C. Kang 康; T. Khams). Fazun points out that the concepts of 'Southern Tibet' and 'Northern Tibet' are nonexistent among Tibetans. He defines Ü as Anterior Tibet; Tsang corresponds to Posterior Tibet, and Kham denotes the highland areas located between Dartsedo and the upper Yangtze River valleys. He also remarks on the lack of definition in this arrangement, noting that Nakchu (T. Nag chu) and Golok (T. Mgo log) are conventionally perceived as separate from Ü. Still, he does not mention the region of Amdo (T. A mdo) in either Chinese or Tibetan usage. Thus, he puts forth a fivefold classification of the Tibetan regions. He integrates Ngari (C. Ali 阿里; T. Mnga' ris) along Tibet's western boundary. Furthermore, he recognizes Bhutan (C. Butan 不丹; T. 'Brug yul) and Sikkim (C. Zhemengxiong 哲孟雄; T. 'Bras mo ljongs) as southern proximity countries, for they share historical and cultural ties with Tibet, despite their distinct political autonomy in the modern era.

In contrast to Tibet, he uses numerous distinct designations for China, contingent on the specific circumstances. He sometimes employs the term *Neidi* 內地, which I render in English as 'Inner Lands'. From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, this term was referred to in English as 'China Proper'. This idea originated under the Qing dynasty, which maintained the Ming's administrative structure for China's heartland while excluding its various other territories, such as Manchuria, Mongolia, East Turkestan, and Tibet, from this system. The fifteen administrative divisions of the

Ming were restructured into the *Neidi shiba sheng* 內地十八省, known as the 'Inner Lands' Eighteen Provinces'. Conversely, areas beyond this central core, such as Manchuria, Mongolia, Mongolia, East Turkestan, and Tibet, were designated *Waifan* 外藩 'outer feudatories'. By the 1920s, when Fazun set out for Tibet, the term *Handi* 漢地 'Han Lands' also began to be used in the Republic of China, to denote the Ming's former 'Inner Lands'. He also utilizes the term *Hua* 華, an ancient ethnonym for 'China'. Fazun uses place names current in the Republican period, such as Beiping 北平 for Beijing and Pingjin 平津 for Tianjin 天津. When these names differ from present-day usage in the PRC, I retain the original form in the text and supply the modern equivalent in a note. In general, his chosen words illustrate both the political tensions and the historical complexities regarding how China and Tibet were perceived during this period of nation building in Asia.

Fazun gathered information for Chinese Buddhism from various editions of the Chinese Buddhist Canon, supplemented by recent Chinese and Japanese books covering history and doctrine, and various dictionaries. I could not confirm which printed versions of the Chinese Tripiṭaka he utilized. For the sections on Tibetan Buddhist history, he consulted the Tibetan *Depter Ngönpo* (T. *Deb ther sngon po*, 'The Blue Annals'). *The Blue Annals*, written by Gö Lotsāwa Shönu Pal (T. 'Gos lo tsā ba gzhon nu dpal, 1392-1481) between 1476 and 1478, provides one of the most detailed accounts of the history of Buddhism in Tibet, especially the introduction of texts and practices from India. Nevertheless, Fazun usually omits citing his sources within the text. When he describes the Phakpa Lokeśvara chapel within the Potala Palace, for example, he does not state how he obtained his information on the legend. Beyond his published writings, it is clear that his information came from a great many Tibetan individuals, both from the monasteries where he studied and from other places. It is probable that the discussions he had with those informants were recorded in his journals and subsequently revised for the ethnographic segments of *Modern Tibet*, particularly those concerning the various peoples of the Tibetan nation, as well as the structure of government, finance, economy, commerce, and the major Geluk monasteries.

Finally, while Fazun refrains from directly citing Western authors or their books, his description indicates an awareness of European and American publications concerning Tibet, even the most recent. He probably accessed these materials at Taixu's Institute in Wuchang, in Beijing while studying the Tibetan language with Dayong, or even later at Chongqing's College during the time of writing. For example, it appears he is referencing William Montgomery McGovern (1897-1964), the American explorer who went into Lhasa in 1924 and released *To Lhasa in Disguise* that same year. In *Modern Tibet*'s first chapter, Fazun observes, "I once came across a Westerner's account in which he claimed to have reached Lhasa, the very heart of Tibet". Comments like these suggest that Fazun consulted accounts in European languages as he wrote his account.

As noted in the preceding *Introduction*, Fazun published more on Tibet in 1937 than just the first edition of *Modern Tibet*. In June 1937, he published *Tibet, As I Once Passed Through*, a work that more explicitly addressed current political affairs between the administrations of the thirteenth and fourteenth Dalai Lamas. Six years afterward, during the Sino-Japanese War, Fazun then combined the two into a single updated volume, which appeared in Chengdu in 1943. The combined edition sharpened his institutional and

international analysis but condensed some narrative details. The present translation employs the 1937 *Modern Tibet* as its foundational document. Footnotes provide documentation for major variations found in Chapter 1 and Chapter 10 of the 1943 revision.

For simpler cross-referencing, I included the original page numbers, bolded and in square brackets, in both the Chinese and English versions, which enables readers to easily transition between my English translation and Fazun's original Chinese.

I completed the translation and the introduction to *Modern Tibet* in Sardinia, Italy, in August 2025, in a writing retreat that was graciously provided for me in the town of Gonnoscodina (see the Acknowledgements).