



China's
Peaceful
Development
Series

China's Key Construction Projects

Li Ning



Foreign Languages Press



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图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

国家重点建设工程: 英文 / 李宁著; 金绍卿译.

—北京: 外文出版社, 2007

(和平发展的中国丛书)

ISBN 978-7-119-05134-5

I. 国... II. ①李...②金... III. 重大建设项目 - 概况 - 中国 - 英文

IV. F282

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2007) 第 157306 号

作 者 李 宁
责任编辑 崔黎丽 薛 芊
英文翻译 金绍卿
英文审定 John Mcmillan 王明杰 韩清月
内文及封面设计 天下智慧文化传播公司
执行设计 姚 波
制 作 外文出版社照排中心
印刷监制 冯 浩

国家重点建设工程

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© 外文出版社

外文出版社出版

(中国北京百万庄大街 24 号)

邮政编码 100037

北京外文印刷厂印刷

中国国际图书贸易总公司发行

(中国北京车公庄西路 35 号)

北京邮政信箱第 399 号 邮政编码 100044

2007 年(大 32 开)第 1 版

2007 年第 1 版 第 1 次印刷

(英)

ISBN 978-7-119-05134-5

17-E-3816P

First Edition 2007

ISBN 978-7-119-05134-5

© Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, China, 2007

Published by Foreign Languages Press

24 Baiwanzhuang Road, Beijing 100037, China

Website: <http://www.flp.com.cn>

Email Addresses: Info@flp.com.cn

Sales@flp.com.cn

Distributed by China International Book Trading Corporation

35 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Beijing 100044, China

P. O. Box 399, Beijing, China

Printed in the People's Republic of China

China's Key
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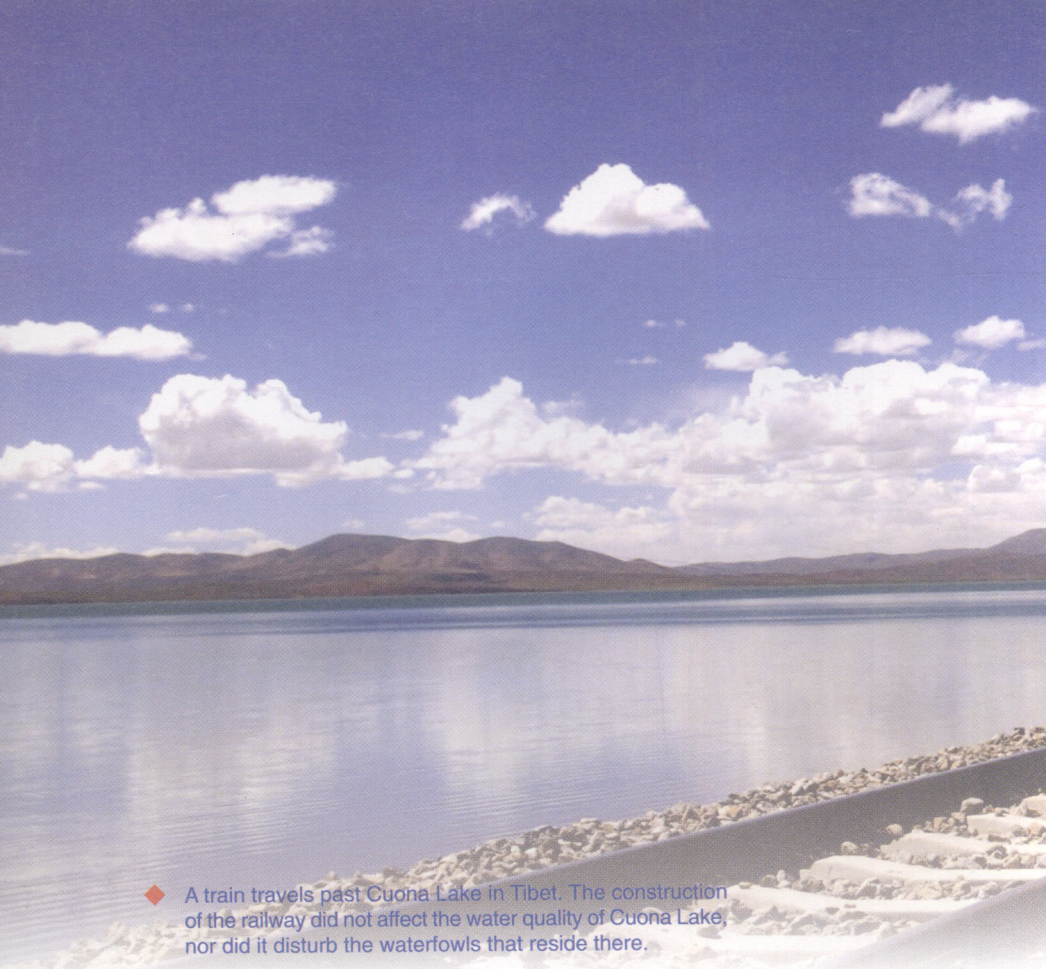
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Foreword

On July 1, 2006, trains departed from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chengdu on their first journey to Lhasa. The enclosed streamlined trains sped at more than 100km/h on the 5,000-m-high Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The vast Hoh Xil Grassland flashed across the train windows, with occasional Tibetan antelope or Chiru nibbling at the verdant grass and Tibetan wild ass running after the trains. Far-away snow-capped mountains radiated under the golden Sun...

The first phase of the 1,956-km-long Qinghai-Tibet Railway, which covers 814km from Xining to Golmu, was completed in 1979.



◆ A train travels past Cuona Lake in Tibet. The construction of the railway did not affect the water quality of Cuona Lake, nor did it disturb the waterfowls that reside there.

The second phase of the project, which covers the 1,142km from Golmu to Lhasa, was started on June 29, 2001. Over 960km of the line lies higher than 4,000m above sea level. The highest point is 5,072m at the Thanglha Mountain Pass—higher than Mont Blanc, the highest peak in Europe, and more than 200m higher than the highest point of the railway on the Cordillera de los Andes in Peru, formerly the world's highest railway. It took Chinese railway workers a little more than four



years to get the train running after overcoming untold difficulties.

The Qinghai-Tibet Railway sets new standards for railway building worldwide. It is the world's highest and longest railway. It is also the railway which covers the longest stretch of permafrost in the world. The train can travel at 100km/h on permafrost and at 120km/h on regular earth. This is the fastest speed any train has reached on permafrost. Since we entered the new

century, China has invested a great deal of material and human resources to make sure this key construction project is a success.

Whenever it is necessary and possible, China undertakes key construction projects in order to develop the economy and society as a whole. These projects have greatly benefited the country's socialist modernization program.

Ever since New China was founded in 1949, the government has been carrying out key construction projects. They have helped bring China's socialist industrial system and economy to a reasonable level, raised China's level of science and technology, and strengthened national defense. This has ensured the stable, sustainable and healthy development of the national economy.



1

Success of Key Construction Projects

Promoting the Formation of the Industrial System

The key construction projects completed before the 1980s have promoted the formation of the basic industrial system of the country.

In the 1950s, when the economic base of the country was weak, China undertook 156 crucial projects with the assistance of the Soviet Union. Projects were carried out in energy, iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, chemicals, machinery and electronics, light industry and national defense. These projects cost 20.3 billion yuan, 12.4% of the total investment in capital construction. Most prominent among them are the Anshan Iron and Steel Works, Wuhan Iron and Steel Works, Changchun First Automobile Works (FAW), Harbin Motor Plant, Harbin Boiler Plant, Harbin Steam Turbine Plant, the Huaihe River Control Project and the Gansu Baiyin Non-Ferrous Metals Production Base. These projects continue to play an important role in the national economy right into the 21st century.

In the late 1960s, the central government committed a huge amount of financial, material and human resources to key construction projects in national defense. Projects were carried out in weaponry, space flight, nuclear energy, electronics and shipbuilding. These projects cost 28 billion yuan and, as a result, 24 research and production bases were constructed improving China's national defense capabilities and level



At 8:53 am on December 8, 2006, the Long March 3A rocket successfully carried the Fengyun 2D meteorological satellite into its preset orbit.

of advanced scientific research. During this period, the country also undertook such projects as the Daqing Oilfield, the Panzhihua Iron and Steel Production Center, Liujiaxia Hydropower Station, three major railways (Chengdu-Chongqing, Baoji-Chengdu and Chengdu-Kunming) in southwest China and the Yangtze River Bridge in Nanjing. These projects gave impetus to industrial development in the middle and western parts of the country. From 1964 to 1978, China launched a large scale capital construction drive in national defense, science and technology, industry and communications. A total of 205.2 billion yuan was invested in these projects. At one time, four million people were involved in the construction of the projects. More than 1,100 projects were completed in 15 years over three Five-Year Plan periods. More than one thousand large and medium-sized enterprises and research units sprang up, becoming the “accelerators” of industrialization in the middle and western parts of the country.

In the 1970s, the central government made the decision to import advanced technology and equipment from Western countries to accelerate the construction of the emerging petrochemical industry. At the same time, some equipments and devices were also imported for the weak sections of the basic industry. Beginning in 1972, China imported 26 complete sets of equipment from Japan, Germany, the United States, the Netherlands,

France, Italy and Switzerland, with a total expenditure of 20.5 billion yuan, 7.4% of the total investment in capital construction. Among the imports were the 1.7m continuous sheet rolling mill installed at Wuhan Iron and Steel Works, 13 sets of chemical equipments and four sets of chemical fiber equipments. These raised China's science and technology to a new level and quickened the formation of the industrial system.

Improving Basic Industries

The key construction projects in the 1980s advanced the formation of China's basic industries.

Toward the end of 1978, the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) decided at its third plenary session to shift the focus of work to socialist modernization. Correspondingly, the central government decided to make agriculture, energy and communications, education and science the strategic focus for economic development. In the 1980s, the country completed the coal production bases in Shanxi, Anhui and the west of Inner Mongolia, built the Datong-Qinhuangdao Railway and the Qinhuangdao wharf for transporting coal. The government also undertook the first phase of the Baoshan Iron and Steel Works. The projects helped accelerate the pace of economic development.

Starting from 1982, the state gave financial priority to backbone projects in material allocation, equipment,

transportation, designing and engineering. By the end of 1989, the state had chosen 319 projects, investing 248.6 billion yuan or 29% of the total investment in capital construction. The projects were distributed in the following areas:

Energy industry

During 1982-1989, the country launched 123 energy projects, investing a total of 108.9 billion yuan, over half of the total investment for all key industrial projects. They included:

Nineteen coal projects, with a total investment of 23.7 billion yuan, 55.8% of the total investment in the coal industry of the same period. Shenhua mine is a typical example of those modern, large-scale mines built at the time. By the end of 1989, China's coal output had reached one billion tons.

In this period, 58.4 billion yuan was invested in 87 power projects, 53.2% of the total investment in the capital construction of the power industry. Completed projects included the Gezhouba Hydropower Station, where investment was the biggest; the Longyang Gorge Hydropower Station, which is known as the No. 1 dam on the Yellow River; and China's first nuclear power plant at Qinshan, which was designed and built by China on its own. By the end of 1989, China's total installation capacity reached 135 million kW, making China



- ◆ The first oil field on the Chinese mainland, the Shaanxi Yanchang oil field already has one hundred years of history behind it. This is the Yongping Oil Refinery of the oil field at night.

one of a few countries in the world with a total installation capacity topping 100 million kW.

Communications and telecommunications

Before the 1980s, China mainly invested in industrial projects and channeled little investment into com-