

# The Battle for Fortune

State-Led Development, Personhood, and Power among Tibetans in China

CHARLENE MAKLEY

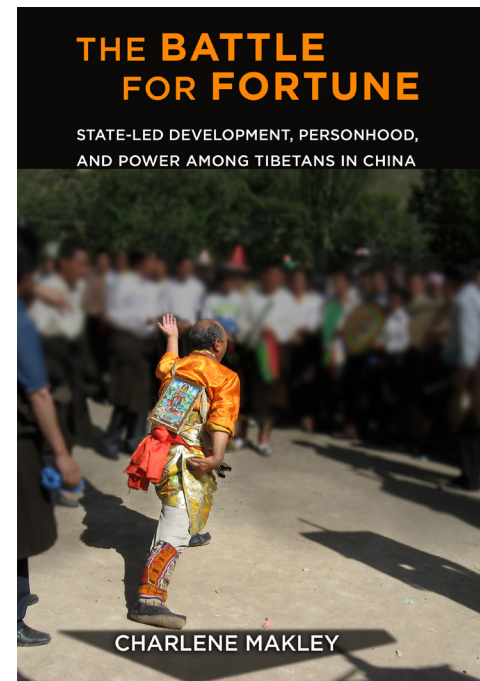
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In a deeply ethnographic appraisal, based on years of in situ research, *The Battle for Fortune* looks at the rising stakes of Tibetans' encounters with Chinese state-led development projects in the early 2000s. The book builds upon anthropology's qualitative approach to personhood, power, and space to rethink the premises and consequences of economic development campaigns in China's multiethnic northwestern province of Qinghai.

Charlene Makley considers Tibetans' encounters with development projects as first and foremost a historically situated interpretive politics, in which people negotiate the presence or absence of moral and authoritative persons and their associated jurisdictions and powers. Because most Tibetans believe the active presence of deities and other invisible beings has been the ground of power, causation, and fertile or fortunate landscapes, Makley also takes divine beings seriously, refusing to relegate them to a separate, less consequential, "religious" or "premodern" world. *The Battle for Fortune* therefore challenges readers to grasp the unique reality of Tibetans' values and fears in the face of their marginalization in China. Makley uses this approach to encourage a more multidimensional and dynamic understanding of state-local relations than mainstream accounts that portray Tibet and China as a kind of yin-and-yang pair for models of statehood and development in a new global order.

**CHARLENE MAKLEY** is Professor of Anthropology at Reed College. She is author of *The Violence of Liberation: Gender and Tibetan Buddhist Revival in Post-Mao China*.



"The analysis in *The Battle for Fortune* is fresh, original, and packed with insights. It is based on fieldwork in a region that is very difficult to work in, conducted during an extremely politically sensitive time. *The Battle for Fortune* also makes significant interventions into much broader sets of inquiries on development, capitalism, and anthropological inquiry writ large."

—Emily T. Yeh, University of Colorado at Boulder

"*The Battle for Fortune* conveys a wealth of new insights about the deeply ambivalent, contradictory, and precarious experiences of Tibetan life in the contemporary PRC. Charlene Makley's rich ethnography and brilliant use of theory will change the way we think of Tibet in these tumultuous early decades of the twenty-first century."

—Ralph Litzinger, Duke University

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