



TIBETAN BULLETIN

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Tibetan Task Force Discusses Strategies to Resolve the Issue of Tibet



PRESS RELEASE

The Task Force on Sino-Tibetan negotiations concluded its 26th session on September 7, 2013, after reviewing the developments in Tibet and China. It discussed the overall grave situation in Tibet, including the self-immolations.

While the continuing repressive measures in the Tibetan areas have been counterproductive to China's desire for unity and stability, the Task Force also analyzed substantive discourse in China— on ethnic issues in general and Tibet in particular — as well as some recent mixed signals.

Clear strategies were discussed on the way forward for the peaceful resolution of the Tibetan issue through dialogue between envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and representatives of the new Chinese leadership.

The Task Force, constituted to recommend policy matters and strategies, was expanded in this session with six new members, including the former Kalon Tripa, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, and China analysts.

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, who chaired the session, reiterated the Central Tibetan Administration's firm commitment to the Middle-Way Approach.

The next Task Force meeting will be convened early next year.

The Kashag
September 7, 2013

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US Congressional report documents deteriorating situation in Tibet

The US Congressional Executive Commission on China on 10 Oct. released its 2013 Annual Report on human rights and rule of developments in China, including the situation in Tibet.

The Commission documented the status of Sino-Tibetan Negotiations, Tibetan self-immolations and the Chinese government's repression on fundamental human rights of Tibetans in Tibet, including religious freedom and Tibetan political prisoners.

On the Sino-Tibetan negotiations, the Commission noted with optimism the views of a senior official of the Central Party School, Professor Jin Wei, who said the Chinese government should resume talks with the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. "In June 2013, Professor Jin Wei, with the Central Party School, stated in an interview that, if the Party "can use creative ideas to break the impasse" in dialogue, it would "promote social stability and prevent the creation of long-lasting nationality wounds." Jin noted that the Party "cannot simply treat [the Dalai Lama] as an enemy," recommended "restarting the talks," and suggested discussing that the Dalai Lama visit Hong Kong "in his capacity as a religious leader," the report said.

There was a significant rise in the number of self-immolation protests by Tibetans in the reporting year, the report said, adding that the Chinese government failed to address the grievances of Tibetans and its policy of repression and blame game worsened the prevailing situation. "Instead of addressing the grievances, the Chinese authorities strengthened a security crackdown based on the premise of "stability maintenance" that infringed on Tibetans' freedoms of expression, association, and movement, and curtailed their ability to communicate or share information," the report said.

The report noted the efforts made by the then US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Maria Otero, who urged the Chinese government to "engage in dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his

representatives without preconditions." Ms Otero, in December 2012, pointed out that severe government controls on Tibetans, undermining of the Tibetan language, intensive surveillances and forced disappearances of peaceful Tibetan protesters and intellectuals, as some of the reasons for Tibetans' resentment.

The report also documented the forced resettlement of Tibetan nomads and the exploitation of Tibet's natural resources through illegal mining. It said the Tibet Autonomous Region government would settle 460,000 farmers and herders in 2013, and that "nearly 2.1 million" had been settled (or resettled) during 2006–2012. It pointed out illegal mining activities carried out in Tibet resulting in disastrous consequences like the landslide disaster at a gold mine near Lhasa in March 2013.

Assessing the situation of Tibetan political detention and imprisonment, it noted that as of September 1, 2013, the Political Prisoner Database (PPD) contained records of 642 Tibetan political prisoners believed or presumed currently detained or imprisoned. Of these, 314 are Tibetan Buddhist monks, nuns and teachers or Trulkus. About 88 percent of the Tibetan political prisoners are male, 7 percent are female, and the remaining are of unknown gender.

"The report noted ongoing and tragic self-immolations in Tibetan areas of China and some of the most severe unrest in Xinjiang since 2009 and urged Chinese officials to adopt a more inclusive, democratic approach that fully takes into account the views of Tibetans and Uyghurs and respects their culture, language, and religion," Commission Chairman Sherrod Brown and Cochairman Christopher Smith said in a statement.

"The report recommended that Members of Congress and the Administration urge China to commit to a specific timetable to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to raise this issue at the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of China's human rights record on October 22, 2013," the statement noted.

Amnesty International condemns Chinese police firing on Tibetans

Amnesty International, a prominent human rights group has condemned the Chinese police firing on peaceful Tibetan protesters in Driru county in Nagchu Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), on 6 Oct, which left over 60 Tibetans injured.

"It is outrageous for the police to start firing on a peaceful gathering. This latest incident shows that the Chinese authorities have done nothing to rein in excessive use of force by their security forces or to increase respect for Tibetans' right to freedom of peaceful assembly," Corinna-Barbara Francis, Amnesty International's China Researcher, said in a statement on 9 October.

"Across the Tibetan region the situation remains tense, the Chinese authorities are doing nothing to improve it by continuing to deny Tibetans their most basic human rights. The daily harassment and humiliating treatment have to end," said Francis.

Police Firing and Beating



The police firing on Tibetan protesters at Dathang township in Driru county on Sunday (6 Oct) followed the arrest of a man named Dorjee Dragtsel on 3 Oct. Dorjee Dragtsel was picked by the police from Nagchu township, apparently for his persistent advocacy of freedom and truth on the issue of Tibet.

On 6 Oct, Tibetan residents held a peaceful protest to demand the release of Dorjee Dragtsel. Over 60 Tibetan protesters were injured, some severely, when Chinese police indiscriminately beat them with batons, fired gunshots and tear gassed them. Seriously injured Tibetans include Tagyal, Tsewang and Lobsang Wangchen. Condition of Tagyal was reported to be critical due to profuse bleeding as a result of broken thigh bone in the police firing. Tsewang, who sustained broken jaw bones, was rushed

to a hospital in capital Lhasa.

The authorities have issued orders restricting Tibetans from Driru county, who are in Lhasa and Nagchu, from going to their county, and many of those injured from getting treatment in Lhasa. The whereabouts of a man from Driru county, who went to meet injured Tsering Gyaltzen in Lhasa People's Hospital, remain unknown.

Prison Sentence

Dayang, a 63-year-old Tibetan man from Rudo village in Tsachu township in Driru county, who was detained for raising slogans on 3 Oct was sentenced to 2 years and 5 months in prison. The elderly man was severely beaten after he raised slogans during a propaganda cultural show organised by the local governments. He shouted slogans calling for Tibetan independence and long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. As on 7 Oct, he was receiving treatment at a hospital in Lhasa under strict surveillance.

Mass Protest Against Repression

Days ahead of the police firing on Tibetans in Driru county, the Chinese government dispatched a large number of work teams to the region to carry out a new wave of political indoctrination campaigns, which local Tibetans say are reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution. A large number of officials and work team arrived in the region on 10 Sept to carry out the measures which include forcing Tibetans to denounce their supreme spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and fly Chinese flags on their homes.

On 29 Sept, over 40 Tibetans were arrested when they protested against the repressive measures in Mowa village in Driru county. The protest followed 48-hour crackdown during which residents of Mowa village and their livestock were denied access to food and water at one point.

The arrest drew strong protest from Tibetans in the neighbouring villages of Taklhay, Bahro, Lavog and Kona, who gathered in Mowa village to demand the release of those arrested. Instead of listening to grievances of the protesters, the Chinese police severely beat them.

Over 100 Tibetans, who sustained injuries, were denied access to medical treatment.

Among those arrested, 25-year-old Tsering Gyaltzen was severely beaten by the police and kept in confinement from 29 Sept – 5 Oct. He has sustained life-threatening internal injuries due to beatings and is currently in a hospital in Lhasa.

Freedom of Movement and Travel Severely Restricted in Tibet: BBC

There is a severe restriction on freedom of movement and a complete denial of travelling rights to Tibetans in Lhasa, BBC correspondent Sarah Cruddas said on her show 'New Horizon' on 5 September. She was on a visit to Lhasa to ascertain the social condition and the ground realities inside Tibet.

She has expressed shock and sadness at what she saw. "There is a lot of political intervention in the day to day life of a Tibetan, making it hard to move around freely, let alone, outside the country, she said, adding, "wherever you go, you are greeted by heavily armed Chinese military personnel, a grim reminder of Tibet's occupation by China."

"My Tibetan tour guide told me that she wants to go abroad but the Chinese government hardly issues passports to Tibetans who want to travel abroad," she said. Tibetans are viewed with suspicion and there are numerous checkpoints and surveillance cameras everywhere, she added.



She also noted a huge shift in Lhasa's demographic structure as a result of mass migration of ethnic Chinese into Tibet. "There is about eight Han Chinese to one Tibetan in Lhasa," she said.

EU Special Representative for Human Rights visits Tibet

The EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Mr Stavros Lambrinidis,

who went to Tibet during an official visit to China from 9-18 September, noted worrying trends in key areas of human rights concern.

Mr Lambrinidis's five-day visit to Tibetan areas incorporated into China's Qinghai Province and the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), was hosted by the Chinese Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The EU Special Representative for Human Rights was taken to see herdsmen in an agricultural cooperative and a newly built village for resettled nomads in Tibetan areas in Qinghai. He met with professors and students at Tibet University and editors of the Tibet Daily, and visited the Potala Palace and Jokhang and Sera Monasteries in Lhasa, where he met with monks and members of Monastery Management Committees.

He held talks with several party and government officials, including the Party Secretary of TAR and the Vice-Governor of Qinghai. Issues discussed included security, stability and due process of law, including in the context of self-immolations; the free exercise of religion and expression; sustainable development challenges and urbanization; the livelihood of ex-nomads; the protection of the environment; and the preservation of cultural identity and heritage, including through bilingual education.

In Beijing, Mr Lambrinidis held high-level meeting with various leaders, including Chinese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs. The two sides discussed China's commitments under the UN's Universal Periodic Review, including on early ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the human rights situation in minority areas, including Tibet and Xinjiang. They also deliberated on latest restrictions on the freedoms of expression, information, and association; freedom of religion and belief; death penalty reform; progress on economic and social rights; the universality of human rights and the role of civil society and protection against arbitrary harassment, arrests, and detentions.

Mr Lambrinidis also chaired the first ever EU-China Roundtable on Busi-

ness and Human Rights in Beijing. The meeting gathered over 50 participants from EU and Chinese authorities, business, academia and other stakeholders, to discuss the implementation of the UN's Strategic Framework and Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, exchange best practices, and explore possible future cooperation between China and the EU in this field.

"The visit provided opportunities for the EU and China to engage in in-depth discussions on human rights at a senior level, on the basis of serious concerns. The two sides also discussed ways of promoting enhanced dialogue and results-oriented cooperation on human rights," Mr Lambrinidis said in a press release on Friday (20 September).

"During my visit the Chinese authorities allowed for meetings and open discussions with a broad range of stakeholders. I had the opportunity to be informed of progress on a number of important economic and social fronts, including poverty eradication and education," he said.

"At the same time, I noted worrying trends in key areas of human rights concern, including the heightened monitoring and restrictions placed on freedom of expression on- and off-line, as well as the persecution, arrest, and detention of people for peacefully expressing their views or legally exercising their professional duties," he said.

"Throughout my visit, I underlined the EU's readiness to continue to work with China in promoting respective adherence to international human rights obligations and standards," he added.

"We have a moral debt to the Dalai Lama", says Lithuanian MEP

A Lithuanian member of the European Parliament on Wednesday said Lithuanians have a moral debt to the Dalai Lama and described the Tibetan spiritual leader as a global symbol of non-violence.

"We have a moral debt to the Dalai Lama. He is a global symbol of non-violence," said Leonidas Donskis, the Lithuanian MEP was quoted saying by AFP news agency. Mr Leonadis Donskia is a champion of human rights and

civil liberties in Lithuania. The European Commission awarded him the title of the Ambassador for Tolerance and Diversity in Lithuania in 2004.

Earlier this June, a month before Lithuania took over the EU's six-month rotating presidency, Mr Donskis said that Tibet today is a test for our conscience and compassion. The statement came amid tragic self-immolations by Tibetans to protest against the continued occupation and repression of Tibet by the Chinese government.

"Tibet today is a test for our conscience and compassion and that Lithuanians are especially able to understand the scope of the Tibetan tragedy well. It is a tragedy that today the people of Tibet have to give up their lives to get attention from the international community. Unfortunately, it is the highest and the most terrible price," Mr Donskis said at a panel discussion on Tibet in Vilnius on 14 June. The panel discussion on 'Tibet – the present and the perspectives for the future' was organised on the occasion of Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay's first visit to Lithuania after he took over the political leadership from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Sikyong shared with Lithuanians about experiences about living in exile, the Tibetan people's commitment to non-violence and democracy towards resolving the issue of Tibet.

Mr Donskis said China has to re-evaluate their policies regarding Tibet. "I believe that the moment when China, in an effort to stay influential, will have to acknowledge Tibet, is coming. One day China will become a more democratic and humane country due to Tibet," he said.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is on a three-day visit to Lithuania, during which he meets Lithuanian president, members of Parliament and give public talk on global peace and happiness.

Earlier Wednesday, human rights activists handed Lithuanian president a petition with 6,000 signatures calling on her to raise the Tibet issue on the EU agenda.

In October 1991, a little more than a year after Lithuania regained its inde-

pendence from the occupation of Soviet republic, His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited the country and told the Lithuanian people that their role as an inspirational force has not ended with their success of its struggle for freedom.

New Chinese leadership should use common sense: His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Reiterating that Tibetans do not seek separation from China, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has expressed hope that the new Chinese leadership will use common sense and follow Deng Xiaoping's wisdom of seeking truth from facts.

Delivering a public talk on 'The Virtue of Non-Violence' in New York on 20 October, His Holiness said that over the last 60 years four distinct eras can be seen: Mao's era of ideology; Deng Xiaoping's era of creating wealth; Jiang Zemin's welcoming the better-off into the party and Hu Jintao's not entirely successful attempts to secure a harmonious society. Harmony is essential, but it is secured by trust and respect and not by use of force, he said.

"Now a new era associated with Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang has begun, in which it may be hoped they will exercise common sense and follow Deng's admonition to seek truth from facts," His Holiness the Dalai Lama said.

He said every week 10-20 Chinese come to Dharamsala to see him.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama reiterated that overwhelming number of Tibetans do not seek independence but genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the Chinese constitution.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama further said that most of the world leaders that he met advised him to work things out with the Chinese through dialogue. He explained that if we continue pursuing independence, the international community, not even the UN, would support our cause.

Therefore, we have proposed the Middle Way Approach to deal with the Chinese. This has helped the Chinese policy of opening up Tibet and allowing greater freedom of movements for Tibetans to visit outside and vice versa.

Fact-finding missions were sent to Tibet to assess the situation, His Holiness said.

“We want to modernize Tibet. But we must be able to preserve our fragile natural environment, whose waters serve a billion people in Asia, and we must be able to protect our culture, language and religion. Once again, monastic centers must be revived to be the center of learning for students from all parts of Tibet including Kham and Amdo. This is a unity we seek to restore,” His Holiness said.

Bollywood Stars Pledge Support for Tibet Cause

As part of their solidarity with Tibet campaign, the south zone Tibetan Parliamentary delegation visited Mumbai, the capital city of Maharashtra state and met various members of the Indian film fraternity.

The delegation met noted Indian film producer Firoz Nadiadwala and actress Lakshmi Rai on 30 August. The duo assured full support for Tibet and expressed their desire to do something for the Tibetan cause.

They met noted Indian film actor Anupam Kher on 31 August. The actor expressed his solidarity with the Tibetan people. And at his insistence, the delegation visited the sets of his upcoming movie ‘Mein Tera Hero’ where the delegation met actors Varun Dhawan, Ileana D’cruz, Rajpal Yadav and Nargis Fakhri. The delegation explained the deteriorating situation inside Tibet, caused as a result of the Chinese government’s hard-line policies in Tibet. The actors pledged their continued support to the Tibet issue and said that they would bring up the issue of Tibet through their films.

On 3 September, the delegation visited award winning Indian film director Shyam Benegal and actor Vivek Oberoi. They also expressed their solidarity with Tibet and assured that they will do anything they can, for the cause of Tibet. Actor Vivek Oberoi also expressed his deep respect for His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The south zone Tibetan Parliamentary delegation also visited various other

important personalities and political leaders during their solidarity with Tibet campaign in Mumbai.

Tibetan Scholars Meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Review Buddhist Science Textbook

His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s interest in science is well-known. Conversations he began with modern scientists almost thirty years ago have spawned such thriving collaborations as the Mind & Life Institute a non-profit organization dedicated to building a scientific understanding of the mind to reduce suffering and promote well-being.

In recent years, scientific interest has grown in what ancient Indian thought, and Buddhist literature in particular, has to say about such phenomena as the mind and emotions for example. At the same time, His Holiness has begun to speak of a new way of thinking of the great body of literature translated largely from Indian sources into Tibetan, the more than 300 volumes of the Kangyur (translations of the Buddha’s words) and Tengyur (translations of commentaries by subsequent Buddhist masters). He has recommended classifying some content as Buddhist science, some as Buddhist philosophy and the remainder as concerned with spiritual practice. His view is that while interest in material dealing with spiritual practice might be limited to Buddhists, material related to Buddhist science and philosophy could have a much wider academic and intellectual appeal.

During teachings he was giving at TCV School in 2010 His Holiness asked Abbot of Namgyal Monastery, Thamthog Rinpoche to organize a project to collect material regarding Buddhist science and philosophy and present it in introductory volumes. To begin with almost 70 scholars were recruited to read the Kangyur and Tengyur and collect references. A smaller group of 10 scholars were selected to compile these findings. Thamthog Rinpoche assisted by Yangten Rinpoche and Geshe Thubten Pelsang supervised the work. Geshe Thubten Jinpa Ph.D., Chairman of the Mind & Life Institute, read the preliminary draft and reorganized the contents.

On 23rd September, a group of eight scholars with Thamthog Rinpoche and Yangten Rinpoche met His Holiness to review with him their presentation of Buddhist science. At present the manuscript, in Tibetan, consists of ten chapters spread over two volumes, the first of which deals with objects of knowledge, while the second deals with the mind and the way it engages with objects. Chapter headings include a General Outline, Objects of Knowledge, Time, Subtle Particles, and the Evolution and Destruction of the Universe and its Inhabitants. Chapters in the second volume include a General Presentation of the Mind, Mental Factors, How the Mind Engages with its Objects, Training the Mind and Training in Single-pointed Concentration and Analytical Meditation.

Over four days His Holiness and the group of eminent scholars from the Three Seats, engaged in lively discussions ranging from whether to include textual quotations from the Kangyur and Tengyur in the body of the text, or whether to consign them to end-notes, what emphasis to give to certain points in the presentation and the pros and cons of different technical terms. On the second and third days they were joined by Prof Samdhong Rinpoche who contributed his expert knowledge of Indian sources to the proceedings. Geshe Thutop, former abbot of Gyume Tantric College attended at His Holiness’s personal invitation, while teachers from Namgyal Monastery attended as observers.

Once a review of the science material was completed, an outline of the proposed book on Buddhist philosophy was also discussed.

His Holiness seeming well pleased by the progress made so far said: “We are talking about how to understand reality when we talk about the mind and its objects. Whatever goals we have, they are achieved by employing valid cognition. The mind has the potential to understand reality and this is a realistic presentation.”

UN must hold China accountable to its human rights obligations in Tibet

In its 2009 Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the UN Human Rights Council, the Chinese government accepted a recommendation "to further ensure ethnic minorities the full range of human rights" but failed to take any significant measure to address the long-standing grievances of Tibetans. Instead, the government has further reinforced already stringent curbs on basic rights and freedoms of Tibetans.

"China has failed this test in a sad indictment of its unwillingness to meet the aspirations of its own people for a more modern and accountable government. The UPR process relies on the good will of States. As a result, the HRC's credibility is severely challenged by those who do not have such will and undermine the process," Human Rights Watch said in its critical assessment of the UPR.

In 2009, China released what it called the country's first national human rights action plan, a which the New York Times said is a lengthy document promising better protection of a wide range of civil liberties enshrined in the Constitution but often neglected and sometimes systematically violated.

Since 2009, the situation in Tibet deteriorated with an alarming escalation in desperate forms of protest, including self-immolations, in different parts of Tibet. Over 121 Tibetans set themselves on fire to protest against the Chinese policies of political repression, cultural assimilation, economic marginalization and environmental destruction. The self-immolations have called for freedom for Tibetans and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

In light of the tragic self-immolation protests by Tibet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, in a strong statement on 2 November 2012, urged Chinese authorities to promptly address the longstanding grievances that have led to an alarming escalation in desperate forms of protest in Tibetan areas.

High Commissioner Pillay said she was disturbed by "continuing allegations of violence against Tibetans seeking to exercise their fundamental human rights of freedom of expression, association and religion," and pointed to "reports of detentions and disappearances, of excessive use of force against peaceful demonstrators, and curbs on the cultural rights of Tibetans."

Ms Pillay urged the Government, as a confidence-building measure, to allow independent and impartial monitors to visit and assess the actual conditions on the ground, and to lift restrictions on media access to the region. She noted that there are 12 outstanding requests for official visits to China by UN Special Rapporteurs on various human rights issues, including one by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief.

The government has responded to a string of 121 self-immolations, carried out to protest repressive policies, with increased restrictions on movements, communication, expression, and religion. Authorities have punished and, in some cases, arrested the families and communities of some protestors, treated immolations as criminal offenses, deployed paramilitary forces, and restricted communications and travel in areas where immolations have occurred.

Against this background, China's human rights record was reviewed at the 17th session of Universal Periodic Review in Geneva on 22 October, with several UN member States urging the Chinese government to take necessary measures to improve the human rights situation in Tibet.

Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Switzerland, the US, the UK and Iceland raised their concerns on the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet.

They pressed China over its systematic attempts to undermine the rights to freedom of religion, culture and expression and recommended China take necessary

measures to ensure that the rights of Tibetans and other ethnic minorities are fully observed and protected. Furthermore China, they said should facilitate visits of the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Procedures to assess the real situation in Tibet.

Both New Zealand and the US referred to the Sino-Tibetan dialogue process, New Zealand recommended China resume meaningful dialogue to address the interest of all communities in Tibet, while the US submitted a written question asking "will China resume unconditional direct dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his representatives?"

On behalf of all Tibetans, the Central Tibetan Administration based in India, expresses gratitude towards the UN member states as cited above for their efforts to hold China accountable with regards to its human rights record in Tibet.

Moreover, the issue of China's violations of Tibetan children's rights to freedom of religion, language and culture was raised during the 64th session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child held in Geneva from 16 September to 4 October.

Restrictions on Tibetan language

The Committee expressed its deep concern at and called for an end to the continuous violations of rights and discrimination against Tibetans and other ethnic minorities in China, including their right to freedom of religion, language and culture.

The Committee raised concerns over the lack of measures to promote the use and learning of Tibetan language in schools and reports of closure of schools and detention of teachers.

It recommends the effective implement the bilingual language policy to ensure use and promotion of ethnic minority languages and ensure participation from ethnic minorities, including Tibetan and Uyghur children at the local and regional

levels in the decision-making process of the education system. It called on China to eliminate all restrictions, including the closure of Tibetan schools, that severely restrict the ability of Tibetan children to learn and use the Tibetan language in schools; and to ensure that all teaching and learning materials for the primary and secondary level are also available in ethnic minority languages and with culturally sensitive content, as guaranteed by the Chinese Constitution.

Solution to End Self-immolation Protests

Raising the alarming escalation in self-immolation protests in Tibet, the Committee is deeply disturbed by an alarming escalation of self-immolations by Tibetan children and the failure of the State party to prevent such loss of life by addressing the deep underlying causes and long-standing grievances of Tibet-

ans. It is further concerned about reports of detention and imprisonment of Tibetan children accused of ‘inciting’ self-immolations, and of harassment and intimidation of families of victims, which could exacerbate the situation and lead to more self-immolations.

The Committee specifically recommends that the Chinese government take urgent measures to resolve the deep-rooted grievances of Tibetan children and their families, including by reassessing and reforming policies and programmes, which have led to the immolations and protests by children in Tibet. The Chinese government should ensure that Tibetan children injured after self-immolating have full access to free medical treatment and that their conditions are independently verified and publicly reported. And that it refrain from arresting and detaining Tibetan children and implementing security measures that may exacerbate the

situation and ensure that children arrested or sentenced for ‘instigating’ or ‘inciting’ self-immolation can fully access their right to legal aid and fair trial.

One of the world's most prominent human rights organisation, Human Rights Watch, has urged China to accede to the multiple outstanding requests by UN special rapporteurs to visit China, including Tibet, and extend an invitation to the High Commissioner on Human Rights. It also encouraged China to urgently engage in meaningful discussions with representatives of Tibetan to address fundamental grievances.

With China aspiring to become a member of UN Human Rights Council, the latter should ensure that China should also fulfil its obligations to respect the fundamental principles of the United Nations and make concrete progress on human rights.

Statements of UN member States with regard to Tibet during the 17th UPR of China's human rights record

1. Canada: “Stop the prosecution and persecution of people for the practice of their religion or belief including ... Tibetans ... and set a date for the visit of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief.”

2. Czech Republic: “Protect ethnic and religious minorities including Tibetans and Uyghurs and stop all disproportionate policies against them while addressing their discontent in a non violent dialogical manner.”

3. France: “Given the concerns aroused by the human rights situation of ... Tibet to follow up to the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief to go to this region.”

4. Germany: “Germany remains concerned about a number of issues and would like to offer the following recommendations to the Government of the PRC... To ensure full participation of members of ethnic minorities in political and economic decisions concerning them and to address grievances.

Furthermore, unhindered access to all minority areas, including Tibet, should be a matter of course.

5. Japan: “Human rights and the fundamental freedom must be ensured for minority groups such as Tibetans and Uyghurs. Japan recommends that further efforts be made toward securing all human rights, including cultural rights, for minorities.”

6. New Zealand: “New Zealand has been a consistent supporter of dialogue to achieve meaningful outcomes that address the interests of all communities in Tibet and therefore recommends that China resume the two-way dialogue in Tibet.”

7. Poland: “Poland notes the joint communication of eight special procedures sent in 2012 with regard inter alia to alleged systematic attempts to undermine the rights to freedom of religion, culture and expression of the Tibetan Buddhist community. Poland recommends that China takes the necessary measures to ensure that the rights to freedom of re-

ligion, culture and expression are fully observed and protected in every administrative entity of China.”

8. Switzerland: “Switzerland takes note of the candidacy of China for the council. In this context Switzerland recommends that they facilitate visits of OHCHR and Special Procedures including to Tibetan and Uyghur areas.”

9. United Kingdom: “We also remain concerned about the human rights situation in ethnic minority areas including Xinjiang and Tibet in particular with respect to the protection of cultural rights and religious freedoms.

10. United States of America: “Protect the rights of ethnic minority groups, including Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Mongolians, in accordance with China's Constitution and international human rights commitments.”

11. Iceland: “Facilitate the access of Special Rapporteurs on various human rights issues in Tibetan areas.”

China's New White Paper on Tibet – Another Whitewash

Press Release
26 October 2013

The ultimate judge of China's rule in Tibet should be the Tibetan people. Even after 60 years of China's invasion of Tibet and more than 50 years after Tibet came under the complete control of Beijing in the aftermath of the repression which crushed that year's popular uprising against Chinese rule, today large parts of Tibet are still under martial law like control. The alarming escalation in desperate forms of protest, including self-immolations, in Tibetan areas, is a clear judgment made by the Tibetan people of China's sixty years rule of Tibet.

Since 2009, over 121 Tibetans have set

themselves on fire to protest against the Chinese government's continued occupation of Tibet. The self-immolators have called for freedom for Tibetans and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

The white paper issued by China's State Council on Oct. 22, it is clear that economic and material development have failed Tibetans in their struggle to survive as a people with a distinct culture.

In fact, the latest white paper is an attempt to cover up the darkest period experienced by the Tibetan people after China's invasion of Tibet. No less a figure than Hu Yaobang, the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, who visited Lhasa in 1980, apologized

to the Tibetan people and said the conditions in Tibet were worse than pre-1959 Tibet. The late Panchen Lama, said in 1989, a few days before his untimely death, that China's rule in Tibet brought greater suffering than benefit for the Tibetan people. Over 1.2 million Tibetans died as a direct result of Chinese communist rule and more than 6,000 monasteries were razed to the ground.

Interestingly, no other minorities in China have been the object of so many white papers. In light of growing public awareness and sympathy for the Tibetan cause, China is constantly challenged to justify the legitimacy of its presence in Tibet.

CTA concerned over China's plan for information blackout in Tibet

Press Release
4 November 2013

In light of the recently concluded Universal Periodic Review of China's human rights record by the United Nation Human Rights Council and China's upcoming election to the seat of UNHRC, the Central Tibetan Administration deplors the China's recent hardline stance vis-à-vis His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

In an article published in China's Communist Party's journal Qiushi on 1 November, Chen Quanguo, the Party Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region, openly stated plans to reinforce information blackout about His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Tibet by censoring television, radio broadcast and closely monitoring internet and telephone communications.

As China seeks to defend its human rights record, such statement clearly contradicts the spirit of the UN Human Rights Council for which China is seeking membership.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been a staunch supporter of the Middle-Way Approach, which seeks to resolve the long-standing problems in Tibet by remaining a part of China. This position is also shared by the Central Tibetan Administration based in India.

“Such counter-productive measures by the Chinese government to stifle free flow of information in Tibet will only further exacerbate the resentment of Tibetans inside Tibet. We are deeply concerned that such measures will give Chinese authorities free hand to intensify crackdown on Tibetans,” said Kalon Dicki Chhoyang of the Department of Information & International Relations.

Statement of the Kashag on the 53rd anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day



Today on the occasion of 53rd anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day, the Kashag, on behalf of the people of Tibet, offer our heartfelt reverence and gratitude to His Holiness the Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama and extend warm greetings to all fellow Tibetans, both inside Tibet as well as outside.

Fifty-three years ago, it was on this day, that the first Tibetan people's representatives took oath of office at Dharamshala, India. This was the initial step towards a future in exile, guided by the principles of democracy envisioned by His Holiness the Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet.

Bereft from the loss of their country, Tibetans were uplifted by His Holiness the Dalai Lama's wisdom and prescience. His vision of a democratic Tibetan society empowered them to work towards preserving their culture, language, religion and way of life, thus establishing a solid foundation upon which the community sustained its identity in exile.

Buddha Shakyamuni had already introduced the revolutionary concepts of social equality and democratic processes within the Sangha more than 2,500 years ago.

At the tender age of seventeen, His Ho-

liness the Dalai Lama, while in Tibet, established a Reform Committee to alleviate the burden of indigent Tibetans and poor farmers by reducing their taxes and by re-distributing land equitably. However, the objectives of the Reform Committee could not be fully realized due to several external as well as internal factors.

Under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetan democracy in exile evolved

over the years with major landmark decisions: establishment of Tibetan Parliament in 1960, the framing of the Constitution for future Tibet in 1963, the adoption of the Charter for Tibetans in exile in 1991 and the direct election of Kalon Tripa in 2001. Each of these accomplishments has prepared Tibetans for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's devolution of political authority to the democratically elected leadership in March 2011.

On the day of Kalon Tripa's inauguration on August 8, 2011, Ka-dham Si-shi De-kyi ma, the official seal of the Kashag created by the VIIth Dalai Lama in 1751, was handed over to the democratically elected Kalon Tripa, thus ensuring both historical legitimacy and continuity in leadership.

These significant achievements have taken place in India, a land with a deep understanding and practice of democracy. When His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited India in 1956, he found that the principles of social equality and democratic processes were inherent in the Indian governance system. His Holiness the Dalai Lama was impressed with the robust debates within the multi-party Indian parliament.

India exemplifies the concept of unity in diversity. Despite a diverse populace of different faiths, languages and customs, India remains rooted and united in democratic ideals. This unity in diversity has been conducive to developing a thriving and evolving Tibetan democracy in exile. Words cannot adequately express our gratitude towards India.

In the wake of this historic devolution of political authority, the present Kashag faced a formidable challenge of ensuring a smooth transition and of taking the Tibetan struggle forward. We thus presented a CAN strategy: Consolidation, Action and Negotiation, an integrated three-phased strategy.

The international community also took note of the transition. The International Network of Parliamentarians on Tibet stated, "It is remarkable that an exiled refugee community has been able to organize, for many decades, such an orderly managed democratic exercise." The US Senate Resolution 356 acknowledged that the direct election of Kalon Tripa was "competitive, free, fair and met international electoral standards." The European Parliament resolution of June 14, 2012 commended the very important and successful democratization process in the governance of Tibetans in exile by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the recent transfer by him of his political powers and responsibilities to the democratically elected Kalon Tripa of the Central Tibetan Administration, which represents the aspirations of the Tibetan people.

The most significant expressions of approval and support came from Tibetans inside Tibet through their songs, thangka paintings and offerings of prayers.

The situation inside Tibet, as you know, continues to be grim. This is reflected in the alarming incidents of self-immolations, now numbering 120, including 22 in 2013 alone. 103 of them have died. The only way to end this heartrend-

ing and grave situation is for China to respect the aspirations of the Tibetan people: freedom for the Tibetan people and the return of His Holiness the Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama to Tibet.

We firmly believe that the Middle-Way Approach is the only way, as the basis for negotiations, to peacefully resolve the issue of Tibet. The Middle-Way Approach traverses the middle path between the two positions: one, accepting the current repression in Tibet and two, seeking separation from the People's Republic of China (PRC). Such an arrangement does not challenge PRC's sovereignty and territorial integrity, two of its core concerns.

We hope that the Chinese leadership will take note of the merits of this approach and resolve the Tibet issue, so that we can end the suffering of Tibetans inside Tibet. It is also in China's interest to peacefully resolve the Tibet issue as it will help boost its international image and add to its much-needed soft power. The 26th meeting of the Task Force on Negotiations will be held in the coming days.

Tibetans in exile and in the diaspora must rise to the occasion. We strongly urge all of you to exercise your democratic rights and responsibilities diligently, bearing in mind the need for solidarity and unity with the sufferings of Tibetans in Tibet.

On the 53rd anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day, the Central Tibetan Administration re-affirms its resolve to work in unity to fulfill the aspirations of Tibetans inside Tibet. We call upon all Tibetans to join us in this effort and take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of the Kashag, all our friends for their support and cooperation.

Together, we can and must march forward.

Long live His Holiness the Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

The Kashag

September 2, 2013

Statement of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on 53rd Tibetan Democracy Day



Fifty-three years ago, on this day the 2nd September in 1960, the Tibetan democratic system formally came into existence with the first directly elected representatives taking oath of office in accordance with the advice and wishes of Tibetan people's supreme leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who believed that Tibet should follow the democratic system which was congruent with the general trend of the modern world. It is also more than two years since His Holiness the Dalai Lama devolved all the political and administrative authority to the people's elected leaders. During this period, constant endeavour was made and continues to be so primarily to advance the Tibetan people's struggle for truth and improve the efficiency of the main as well as the branch offices of the Central Tibetan Administration. These are a sign clearly indicating that the Central Tibetan Administration will be able to sustain firmly with progress and development until the issue of Tibet remains unresolved. However, all the Tibetan people must, as per the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, strive ceaselessly to improve the efficiency and progress of this fully democratic Administration.

More than 54 years have elapsed since the whole of Tibet was forcibly occupied by Communist China. During these years China has used various devious

and coercive methods to completely destroy the Tibetan identity, religion, culture, language, custom, etc with the evil design of transforming Tibet into a Chinese land. Tibetan people are oppressed and discriminated. Tibet's environment is being destroyed in every respect. Moreover, the Chinese government has carried out repressive measures against the Tibetan people, who with unwavering loyalty to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and adhering firmly to the unchanging Tibetan national spirit have opposed the Chinese government by expressing their re-

sentment to the above policies. Through various campaigns against the authorities. Due to these repressive policies, so far, 120 Tibetan men and women have self-immolated themselves as a peaceful protest from 2009 till date, thus giving rise to the urgent situation. However, the Chinese government has not shown any understanding of its responsibility of probing into the demands and aspirations of the self-immolators. In addition, the Chinese government has humiliated the self-immolators; falsely implicated His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration for instigating them; attempted to conceal incidents of self-immolation from leaking out; imposed severe restriction in towns and monasteries which are the main sites of self-immolation; innocent relatives are accused, arrested and imprisoned; and are accused of murder for which some are even given death sentences. Such mistreatment and torture continues to be perpetrated. Therefore, contrary to respecting and maintaining the human rights of the Tibetan people, the Chinese government continues to carry out actions, totally disregarding all the appeals made by nations, leaders and organizations who value democracy, freedom, truth and justice.

Recently, Mr. Yu Zhengsheng, Chairman of National Political Consultative

Committee and Member of Standing Committee of Political Bureau of the Government of the People's Republic of China visited Tibet for inspection. At the time he said that the Dalai Lama's demand for 'Greater Tibet' and 'high degree of autonomy' contravenes China's constitution and regional national autonomy law, adding further that such demands breach the basic interest of Tibetan Buddhism. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration have strived for genuine autonomy for all Tibetans as per the provisions contained in the PRC constitution and autonomy law, which clearly spell out the right to regional ethnic autonomy. To say that this breaches the constitution clearly exposes the insincerity, hypocrisy and true face of Chinese communist autocrats who are illegally destroying Tibetan race, religion and culture. No prove is given which would suggest the breach of the PRC constitution. The Central Tibetan Administration has repeatedly explained to the Chinese government the essence of the mutually beneficial Middle Way Policy, which is based upon the coexistence of the two communities within the framework of PRC constitution and the entitlement of equal rights and prerogatives to the Tibetan people as is enjoyed by the other national minorities. However, the Chinese leaders have not only interpreted this incorrectly as breaching the constitution, the Tibetan people's aspiration is intentionally misinterpreted as secessionist. This kind of publicity is a total disregard to all and opposed to the truth; a misrepresentation of reality and a shameless version of astonishing proportions.

Under the so-called policy of helping Tibetan monks, nuns and monasteries, the Chinese government has been forcing the monasteries to fly the Chinese National flag, display portraits of Chinese leaders and purposely carries out activities such as the resented 'patriotic education', purposely setting up of radio and television connections, in the monasteries for which are a source of disturbance to religious studies and meditation. For example, a total number of 6575 Chinese cadres have been

stationed in 1787 monasteries in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region alone. These cadres are used for the political objectives of the Chinese government. Such acts must be stopped and reforms must be carried out.

Since 1 July this year, an exhibition distorting the history of former resident Amban or Chinese Representative in Tibet has been on display, thus spreading lies to the domestic and international tourists and visitors. Likewise, the so-called 'genuine background drama Wenchen-Kunjo has been performed in Lhasa beginning 1st August of this year for which the Chinese government has invested millions of dollars. This is a performance aimed at political necessity to indoctrinate and distort history. Therefore, people of the world including Tibetans and Chinese must be careful not to fall a prey to such deceit and enticement.

Safeguarding the ecology of Tibet is not only in the interest of Tibet and China, it is also linked to the lives of several hundred million sentient beings spread across the eastern and northern parts of the world. It has become a subject of major interest by global environmentalists and meteorologists. But, the Chinese government, on one hand, continues calling for building Tibet and strengthening of environment protection along with long-time stability, development and aid to challenge the opponents. On the other hand, every possible measure is taken to remove Tibetan nomads in order to facilitate the extraction of Tibet's natural resources which is transforming the very appearance of the land.

Implementing the so-called 'Three-Red-Lines' strategy as a principle for the extraction of minerals everywhere, the Chinese government has set up mines in all parts of Tibet to extract valuable minerals such as gold, silver, copper, iron and many other minerals. Huge amounts of Tibet's mineral products and natural resources are transported to China. To fulfill the need of population transfer, the so-called Tibet-Tsongon railway is being expanded and new direct railway tracks are being laid

from the railway station of NaGormo to many cities of China. Another project expanding the railway line from Lhasa to other parts of Tibet has been started. Similarly, under the pretext of modernization and development, numerous dams have been built and continue to be constructed in all parts of Tibet. Consequences of these will befall the globe in general, specially South-East Asia, and particularly severe damage will be caused to Tibet's ecology and protection of Tibetan identity. It is therefore important for everyone to pay due attention to these activities.

Moreover, local Tibetan people of Tsongon, Yulshul and Zatoe counties have been living under critical situation since 12th August, 2013 following severe incidents of suppression unleashed on them in response to their lawful protests against the planned mining of white diamonds. As such, we firmly appeal to the Chinese government to respect the dignity and aspirations of the Tibetan people by immediately putting an end to repression and mining.

This year severe restriction was imposed in the Tibetan areas of Tawu, Kardze, Lithang, Drakgo, Golok Tawo, Labrang, Machu, Chabcha, Kumbum monastery, etc during the celebration of the 78th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Particularly, when the monks and nuns of Nyatso and Gaden Choeling in Tawu together with Tibetan people of the locality were performing the incense offering ceremony on top of Machen Pomra Mountain as part of the birthday celebrations, four Chinese police vans and seven military trucks arrived at the site. Without listening to the explanation given by the Tibetan people, the Chinese police began beating and shots were fired against the gathering.

Similarly, Lama Dawa Rinpoche of Gaden Dargyeling monastery in Nagchu Shagrongpo was accused of maintaining communication with His Holiness the Dalai Lama over the reincarnation of Rongpo Choeje. The monastery was suppressed leading to the detention of monk officials, closure of the monastery, suicide of a monk, etc. These in-

cidents clearly prove that the Chinese policy of religious freedom is a mere empty word.

The unbearable critical situation and problems faced by Tibetans inside Tibet, literally making days and nights extremely difficult to pass is caused, firstly, by the lack of democratic system in Tibet and China till date, and secondly, by the few hardline Chinese leaders. For Tibetans living in foreign countries, including India, it is a matter of great joy that they are able to enjoy a high degree of genuine democracy. Still, we need to tread forward in order to progress higher and higher. It may be pointed out that preparations be made in earnest to present this excellent system of democracy as a gift when Tibetans inside and outside are reunited after a solution to the Tibetan problem is found.

More than fifty-four years have passed since we sought refuge in India and other foreign countries. Especially, India has become like a second home for us. We are profoundly grateful for the extensive aid and protection provided by the people and government of India. Remembering and cherishing forever the kindness and seizing the opportunity provided by this auspicious occasion, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to both the people and government of India, and to the global leaders, nations, Tibet Support Groups as well as individuals who have been steadfastly supporting Tibet.

Pursuant to the profound advise continuously given by Tibet's leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we are appealing to all the Tibetan people in exile to develop and maintain strong friendly relations with the people of host nations, thereby contributing to the Tibetan people's reputation, dignity and security.

In conclusion, we sincerely pray that His Holiness the Dalai Lama live for as long as hundreds of aeons; may all His sacred wishes be fulfilled with spontaneity; and may the just cause of Tibet sees its fruition as swiftly as possible.

TIBETAN PARLIAMENT IN-EXILE

2 September, 2013

14 TIBETAN BULLETIN

Tibet Support Groups must increase and expand their political impact



Welcome Speech as submitted by Kel-sang Gyaltzen, Special Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Europe

First of all let me welcome you all on behalf of my colleague Mr. Tseten Chhoe-kyapa and the Central Tibetan Administration to this meeting in Switzerland. As most of you may know Switzerland is today home to around 5000 Tibetan refugees constituting the largest number of Tibetans living in Europe.

The initiative to bring Tibetan refugees to Switzerland for education and resettlement had significant and far-reaching positive effects for individual Tibetans involved as well as for the Tibetan community in exile as a whole. However, what is less known about the resettlement of Tibetan refugee in Switzerland is that this project has been initiated by few Swiss mountaineers as private persons. In 1959 a group of Swiss climbers in Nepal witnessed the first wave of Tibetan refugees fleeing Tibet to Nepal and were so moved by the plight of the refugees that they decided to help them. On their return to Switzerland they formed an association and lobbied successfully the Swiss government and the Swiss Red Cross to resettle a contingent

of 1000 refugees in Switzerland. The association had also been tremendously successful in raising funds for the resettlement project reflecting the widespread sympathy of the Swiss people for the Tibetan refugees.

This initiative is a good example of how and what difference individuals can make. These Swiss mountaineers created history in humanitarian tradition of Switzerland by making Tibetans the first refugees from outside of Europe who have been granted political asylum in Switzerland. The beneficial impact of their initiative on the lives of individual Tibetans as well as a community with collective social, cultural and political aspirations continues to be of great significance and of far-reaching consequences till today.

Obviously, individuals can make a difference. This is the lesson that we can learn from this history. And it is in this spirit and resolve that we have come together here for the next few days: To discuss how we can make a difference on how Europe reacts to the dramatic worsening situation in Tibet and how we can best persuade and move Europe to play a more proactive, constructive and helpful role in bringing about a peace-

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ful resolution of the issue of Tibet.

In our search for political support we need to face the reality that the political environment in which the Tibet movement has been operating has changed significantly in recent time. For most governments China has become today a very important international partner. Moreover, most governments in Europe are presently wrestling with economic and financial crisis that seems to leave little space for a more robust human rights policy vis-à-vis China.

In this context the challenge for the worldwide Tibet movement is two-fold:

1. to increase public pressure on the governments to act decisively on the Tibet issue and
2. to come up with policy options that governments in Europe consider as non-confrontational, viable and practical and therefore deserving of support.

A hard look at the present state of affairs of the Tibet movement reveals the following areas where improvement is absolutely necessary if we wish to make a significant difference in the attitude of the international community towards the issue of Tibet:

The Tibet Support Groups must increase and expand their political impact and visibility nationally and internationally by becoming major and respected citizens movements with public standing and credibility;

They must aim at becoming more professional in political and public relations work by employing or hiring qualified staff and maintaining permanent offices for sustained and focussed political lobbying campaigns;

They must seek to achieve greater impact of their political work by overcoming fragmentation and lack of coordination and by expanding networking and improving coordination and efficiency.

Furthermore, in recent time some massive and impressive public solidarity rallies for Tibet have been organised in

Europe. These rallies conveyed some important messages. Firstly, it demonstrated to the national governments the strong support for the cause of Tibet and for His Holiness the Dalai Lama among its citizens. These public show of support and strength were, thus, also a strong call on the national governments to act on Tibet. Secondly, it made clear that the issue of Tibet cannot be ignored by the governments in the relationship with China. Thirdly, the rallies sent the message to the Chinese government that it may be sometimes able to exert pressure on governments but that it cannot bully the public and media in free and democratic countries into silence.

On the policy of the Central Tibetan Administration let me assure you and reaffirm that under the political leadership of Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay we remain committed to the path of non-violence and to the process of dialogue and reconciliation. Our position on a mutually acceptable solution is straightforward. We are not seeking separation and independence. What we are seeking is genuine self-rule for the Tibetan people. Our main concern is to ensure the survival of the Tibetan people with our distinct Buddhist cultural heritage and language and the natural environment of the Tibetan plateau that has sustained the Tibetan people since time immemorial. For this, it is essential that we Tibetans are able to handle our domestic affairs and to freely determine our social, economic and cultural development.

The Middle Way Approach continues to be our genuine and enduring policy because it best serves the basic Tibetan needs and interest and comports with the international political reality.

Finally, let me thank you as a deeply grateful Tibetan and as a representative of the Central Tibetan Administration for your friendship. As friends in a common cause we have travelled a long and difficult way together and have experienced many twists and turns in the epic freedom struggle of the Tibetan people. The past has been a challenging time testing our endurance, determination and the strength of our conviction,

solidarity and friendship. On this long march we shared with each other the joy and elation of battles won together and suffered together the pain and disappointment of political setbacks. There is no amount of money or power that can buy such friendship, solidarity and commitment. This is the true strength of the just cause of Tibet and of our movement. Generations of Tibetans to come will cherish the friendship, support and solidarity you have extended to us in our time of greatest need.

Thank you!

The Tibet Support Groups must increase and expand their political impact and visibility nationally and internationally by becoming major and respected citizens movements with public standing and credibility;

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Firstly, it demonstrated to the national governments the strong support for the cause of Tibet and for His Holiness the Dalai Lama among its citizens. These public show of support and strength were, thus, also a strong call on the national governments to act on Tibet. Secondly, it made clear that the issue of Tibet cannot be ignored by the governments in the relationship with China. Thirdly, the rallies sent the message to the Chinese government that it may be sometimes able to exert pressure on governments but that it cannot bully the public and media in free and democratic countries into silence.

Economic Marginalization of Tibetans as a Result of China's Developmental Policies

By *Tenzin Tashi Tseten*

The People's Republic of China began implementing major economic reform policies since the early 1990s in order to channelize growth and improve the nation as a whole through economic means. There is no denial that these policies have aided in the massive growth of the PRC's economic might and created opportunities for people throughout the nation to rise and take part in this social and economic development. Like the rest of China, Tibetan areas have also been part of this development phenomena but the real concern lies with the inability of the majority of Tibetans to take part in this development process. Tibetans as an ethnic group have largely been unable to benefit from this process of development and have been marginalized in the economy. When it comes to employment and economic advancements, Tibetans have stayed disadvantaged. This paper essentially seeks to understand why Tibetans are being marginalized and failed to participate fully in the market even in their own land. In order to do so, it is important to assess the central government's policies that make Tibetans so poorly equipped to respond to and take advantage of the economic development that is taking place in the PRC. It is also crucial to understand the political, social, and cultural factors that play into the process.

Statement of Purpose

As an intern at the EU, UN and Human Rights Desk at the Central Tibetan Administration's Department of Information and International Relations, the desk primarily monitor human rights situation inside Tibet and submit reports and briefings to UN and EU human rights agencies. The information obtained at this desk are used to publish reports, appeals and other documents to make the international community aware about Tibetan issues and pressure world bodies such as the EU and the UN to assess and address these issues.

About the Central Tibetan Administration

The Central Tibetan Administration was established in 1959 by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India, following the complete occupation of Tibet by communist Chinese government that year. The main objectives of the CTA are to rehabilitate Tibetan refugees and restore freedom in Tibet. The CTA serves as the legitimate representative of the Tibetan people both inside and outside Tibet. It has explicitly stated that the present exile administration would be dissolved as soon as freedom is restored in Tibet.

Tibet in Context of this Paper

The term Tibet includes all areas under historical Tibet rather than just the Tibetan Autonomous Region, which is less than half of historical Tibet. The term Tibet takes into account whole of Tibet known as Cholkha-Sum (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo). It includes the present-day Chinese administrative areas of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Qinghai Province, two Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and one Tibetan Autonomous County in Sichuan Province, one Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and one Tibetan Autonomous County in Gansu Province and one Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province.¹

Background Information

The People's Liberation Army took complete control of Tibet in 1959 and since then Tibet has remained under control of the People's Republic of China. Through the establishment of its Western Development Strategy in 1999, the central government of the PRC is completely transforming Tibet in order to accelerate economic development across the plateau. The main strategy of the Western Development Plan includes a huge influx of investment in infrastructure such as

railroads, factories, power plants and etc. in order to urbanize the West including the Tibetan areas. The Tibetan aspect of this plan also includes the forced relocation of Tibetan nomads from their traditional nomadic livelihood to urban settlements. While Tibetan nomads are being forced into urban life despite their lack of skill and education to compete in the urban market; the construction of new infrastructures linking the Chinese interior to the center of Tibet along with other economic incentives is encouraging the movement of Han Chinese migrants into the Tibetan plateau.

Methodology

Due to a limited amount of resource, time and inability to conduct field research, the main methodology/approach used to develop this paper is a comprehensive review of literature and economic development policies in Tibet.

Introduction

Since the implementation of massive economic development strategies and policies by the Peoples Republic of China, specifically the ones targeted at the western region; Tibetan areas have also seen the effects of these policies and gone through major economic changes. While it is true that Western regions have reported increases in growth rates and economic changes, what strikes out is that Tibetans have been unable to benefit from these changes and have been marginalized in the society. Thus, it becomes essential to examine governmental policies in order to understand better why Tibetans are being marginalized and discriminated against both in the marketplace and in society. The main purpose of this paper is to show that Tibetans and Han Chinese in Tibet do not benefit equally from the CCP's economic development strategies. Due to many factors such as politics, culture, educational attainment and the governments' lack of concern for empowerment, Tibetans have fallen victim to both

systematic and societal marginalization.

Growth Without Equity

In order to successfully develop both economically and socially, it is essential that growth be paired with equity. The type of development strategy that the PRC has implemented is completely focused on achieving growth in numbers without any particular interest in achieving equality and empowering minorities. It is of particular importance to note that Tibetans in the market economy have been particularly discriminated since the advent of new economic policies. There is no denying the fact that since the main language of commerce, in China and even in Tibet, is Mandarin, and this leaves Tibetans disadvantaged from the beginning.

Even though Chinese law forbids discrimination, it is still apparent in the society and being deliberately allowed. A report by the International Campaign of Tibet suggests that Chinese enterprises operating in Tibet almost always prefer to hire migrant Chinese employees, who are more familiar with the Chinese work culture and Chinese practices, not to mention the Chinese language.² Such discriminatory acts are reflected in almost all aspects of economic activities in Tibet to a point that “Help Wanted” signs are often seen in Lhasa explicitly stating “Han only” need apply.³

One of the major ways in which job creation has occurred is through large infrastructure projects, such as the Qinghai-Tibet railway and other projects that sought to industrialize Tibet. Such projects indeed were able to create employment opportunities for Tibetans but wage differences continue to exist between Tibetan and non-Tibetan workers. One example of this difference is reflected in the Golmud-Lhasa railway project, where Tibetans earn RMB 1,500-1,800 (US\$ 194-233) a month compared to non-Tibetans workers, who earn as much as RMB 6,000 (US\$776).⁴

While there is no denial that the overall poverty level in Tibet has decreased under policies that were implemented by the

central government, Tibetan areas still remain as some of the most impoverished regions of the People’s Republic of China with poverty levels much higher than that of the poorest region of China proper. The Chinese government’s growth strategy in Tibet is much more focused on short-term goals by providing handouts and subsidies rather than focusing on real development through investment in education and human capital.

Much concern also lies with the continued population transfer of Hans into Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia in recent years that Tibetans are literally becoming a minority in their own land.⁵ The influx of skilled Han Chinese migrants with strong business connections in China’s economic hubs in to the minority regions is forcing these minority groups to face severe competition in terms of employment and economic mobility.

A large amount of the wealth in urban Tibetan areas are dominated by those in privileged positions in the state sector with only a small amount of urban wealth flowing outside of the state sector. Even though it is true that Tibetans make up the majority of government employees in the Tibetan Autonomous Region and Prefectures. However, Han Chinese occupy majority of the important administrative positions in the government and the party.⁶

Essentially, there is a dual economy within the urban areas themselves. “Failure to give sufficient weight to local conditions can leave important market failure unchecked or make matters worse”.⁷ Although, careful assessment of policy design in combination with contextualizing local conditions is crucial, it is equally important to take equity considerations into the center of both diagnosis and policy. Equity is central in having a better investment environment and in the empowerment of minorities.⁸

A Human Rights Watch report perfectly sums up the issues facing unequal development of Tibet by stating that the development of locally-owned businesses and local expertise tends to be sidelined in the process and ownership in the economy is progressively transferred to non-Tibetan

outsiders, in the sense that the economy is less based on where Tibetans do have ownership (the countryside) and more and more based in the urban areas where they do not have ownership.⁹

Western Development Strategy

The Western Development Strategy (WDS) was rolled out as a response to both international and domestic pressures, as well as of political concerns regarding the stability of the PRC’s autonomous regions.¹⁰ In this context, WDS is a political tool, expressed through the desire for ‘common prosperity’ of all peoples, to strengthen national unity. Although the most frequently expressed aims of the WDS are economically driven to benefit China’s underdeveloped central and western provinces dubbed nationally as poverty-stricken areas despite China’s rapid growth in the 1990s, but there are clear underlying political intentions for the WDS.

Officially stated objectives of The Western Development Strategy¹¹

- Modernization
- Changing the ‘relative backwardness’ of the western region’s outlook
- Narrowing the development gap between regions
- Building a prosperous economy, social progress, a stable life, national unity and beautiful landscape
- Bringing prosperity to the people in the western regions

While the above stated objectives paint a rosy picture of the Western Development Strategy, it is important to note that Tibetans as an ethnic group do not appear to be included in the benefits of this development process. The implementation of policies shaped by the Western Development Strategy has increased the economic gap between Tibetans and their migrant Han Chinese counterparts who benefit from state-supported policies and investment-creating opportunities. Moreover, there is a huge advantage for migrant workers and Chinese entrepreneurs having fluency in Mandarin accustomed to Chinese work ethics and con-

nections to businesses in the economic hubs of mainland China.

Although Tibetans make up the majority in many Tibetan areas of China, Tibetan-owned businesses are only about 20% of the total businesses in such areas. From this figure alone, one can see the difficulties faced by the Tibetan community in their own homeland as it reveals the steep competition in seeking employment in their own home areas. Many have labeled such an act of social re-engineering as a “Second Invasion of Tibet”.¹²

It is essential to note that since the adoption of economic reforms such as the Western Development Strategy, Tibetans as a minority group are in a worse condition than elsewhere in China. “Using per capita GDP as an example, most western provinces and regions are far behind coastal provinces. In 1998, the national per capita GDP was RMB 6404 but, of the western regions, only Xinjiang reached this figure. The TAR, with a per capita GDP of RMB 3696, barely reached 57% of the national average.”

A huge gap in the standard of living is also evident in the Tibetan areas when compared to other areas of China even though the major task of the Western Development Strategy was to mitigate the gap between the west and the east. Such a breach in the standard of living not only exist between the west and the east but also between different areas of Tibet and between Tibetans and Han Chinese. More than 80% of Tibetans live in the rural areas but the central government has invested heavily in urban areas while rural areas are completely neglected. For instance, in 1996, TAR’s expenditure in rural areas accounted for only 3% of its total expenditure, but rural areas accounted for 86.2% of the total population.¹³ This has also let to the marginalization of ethnic Tibetans.

In the name of economic reform and social development, the PRC is able to exploit the resources of regions such as TAR and subsidize them heavily to major corporation in the mainland China without raising the living standards of locals

and without enabling them to sustain their livelihoods. Preferential policies and investment programs also do not achieve the stated purpose of overcoming ethnic resistance by satisfying their economic needs because they only tend to benefit the Han Chinese.¹⁴

Unsuitable Development Strategies

The type of development strategy employed in Tibet ignores the real needs of the Tibetan people and focuses primarily on traditional industrialization, which results in the exploitation of natural resources and destruction of environment. Rather than adopting a development strategy that is tailored to the needs and conditions of Tibet, the central government instead has resorted to replication of the same model of industrialization that had been applied to other areas of China.¹⁵ In employment, education and access to government services, both social and economic exclusion are manifested throughout the average life of Tibetans. The government is only interested in meeting the needs and demands of resource hungry corporations in mainland China.¹⁶

Almost all the major investments from the central government are pumped in to the urban industrial sector even though a very high majority of Tibetans have their livelihood in rural areas. Given that the Tibetan population is largely rural with an agrarian workforce, according to a Tibet Watch report, the rural economy has never industrialized and most of the activity outside agriculture is controlled by either the Central Government or by Chinese (mostly state-owned) enterprises that are based outside of Tibet.¹⁷

As previously noted, current development plans in Tibet are focused solely on what China needs rather than what the locals need. Government wise, although the majority of the government employees in the Tibetan Autonomous Region are Tibetans, Han Chinese cadres dominate all the important areas of the administrative departments. The main decision-making power lies in the central government despite the TAR’s autonomous placement. The government of the People’s Republic of China needs to provide meaningful

autonomy rather than a disguised form of autonomy in order to shape policies that better support the needs of the Tibetan people.

Educational Policies

In the type of knowledge-based economy that the world now operates in, education is the main tool for upward economic mobility. Thus, in order to understand the low market participation of Tibetans in their homelands, it is essential to apply a framework that seeks to understand and evaluate the role of education and the impacts of Chinese educational policies on ethnic Tibetans. According to data provided by the Central Tibetan Administration, the approximate literacy rate of Tibet is 25%¹⁸, which is a lot lower than the national average of 90.7% for ages 15 and higher.¹⁹

Despite the progress in education made in the PRC as a whole, according to the UN Human Development Index in education, Tibetans still remain at the lowest with an adult literacy rate in TAR at 38.82 percent, compared to 91.32 in Shanghai.²⁰ Such a low level of educational attainment among the Tibetans in Tibet makes them poorly equipped to successfully participate and compete in the market with other groups. A third of TAR’s students enrolled in primary school complete the mandatory six years of schooling. In the late 1990s, only 42,000 Tibetan students were enrolled in secondary schools and 20,000 Tibetans in high school or university.²¹

The education acquired by most Tibetans is inadequate for them to compete in the market economy and at a national level against the Han Chinese. The inflow of Han and Hui (a Muslim ethnic minority group) people into urban TAR is “crowding out [Tibetan] rural migrants from limited urban employment opportunities, precisely at a moment when rural to urban migration is becoming imperative”.²² According to a brief issued by the International Campaign for Tibet, in urban Tibet, the average female migrant worker from rural China is better educated than the average Tibetan urban male. Tibetans are even further disadvantaged because of the lack of ac-

cess to any meaningful or valuable job or educational training to prepare them for the competition apparent in the job market.²³ Thus, it becomes crucial that high quality education and vocational training opportunities be available for Tibetans but that doesn't seem to be of concern to the central government.

There is various legal provisions for Bilingual education system in autonomous and ethnic minority areas but there has been a subtractive bilingual education policy being employed in Tibetan areas where the medium of instruction is in Chinese language. The PRC's educational policies need to pay greater attention to design a curriculum that suits the regional needs in order to improve the human capital of Tibet. By adapting the curriculum to the realities of the Tibetan society and culture, it could assist retention rates amongst students.

What is apparent in the PRC's so called development policies in Tibet is that there is clearly a lack of concern for developing the skills of local entrepreneurs and a deliberate ignorance from the central government of the importance of local economic control. The system of subsidization and constant inflow of cash from the centre to invest in infrastructure and businesses that clearly do not take in to account local conditions are obviously widening the gap between China's economic centers and the periphery.

Conclusion

The PRC's economic development policies in Tibetan areas have failed to successfully include the Tibetan people but have rather left them marginalized in their own land. Much of the process has been focused on resource extraction and fueled growth without taking into account the situation and the needs of the Tibetan people. Instead the PRC's development strategies have been successful in increasing the economic breach between Tibetans and Han migrants and between the rural and urban areas. In order to achieve real and meaningful development with equity in Tibet, the central government needs to move towards a tailored approach that caters to the needs of Tibetans where they can directly take part

in. Without creating economic opportunities and policies that directly address the needs of Tibetan such as adequate education and employment, one can only envision an increased marginalization of Tibetans and an increase in the wedge between the economic conditions of Han Chinese and Tibetans.

(The writer is a student of University of Wisconsin – Madison. She did an internship at the UN, EU and Human Rights Desk of the Department of Information & International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala, from June – August 2013)

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Lithuania's debt to Tibet

By Edward Lucas
[European Voice]



Lithuania has repaid the Dalai Lama for his support during the last days of the Soviet Union, by resisting Chinese arm-twisting

If I were the Chinese Communist Party, I'd think twice before picking a fight with Lithuania. The pro-independence leadership in Vilnius, armed with nothing more than stubbornness and clear-sightedness, exposed the arrogant, brutal and mendacious approach of Mikhail Gorbachev's Kremlin, and inspired captive peoples and nations throughout the evil empire, speeding its end.

Most outsiders told the Lithuanians that they were rash, unrealistic and even outright dangerous, especially after 11 March 1990, when the parliament issued a declaration restoring pre-war independence: how could a country of 3.7 million take on a nuclear superpower?

Almost the only world figure who backed the Lithuanians in those dark and scary days was the Dalai Lama: he sent a supportive telegram on 4 April 1990. Now it has been the Lithuanians' turn to repay the favour, hosting the Tibetan spiritual leader in Vilnius. President Dalia Grybauskaitė, in a commendable display of political courage,

invited him for a one-on-one meeting (nominally private, but publicised). Lithuanian parliamentarians and public figures met him too, including my friend (full disclosure) Leonidas Donskis, who said his country had a "moral debt" to the Tibetan guest.

Cool geopolitical calculation suggests the Baltic states should be best friends with China. As American power in Europe wanes (now at an accelerating rate in the disastrous second presidential term of Barack Obama) and as Russian power looms (with big military manoeuvres on the Baltic border, and what looks like a trade war against Lithuania), this is no time for small countries to make grand gestures. It is a time to be quiet and cautious, to spread your bets and to make no unnecessary enemies.

But some things count for more than cool geopolitical calculation. The Baltic states know what it is like to be wiped from the map by a foreign occupier who denies that you ever existed as a proper country. They know what it is like to experience forced inward migration and other tactics aimed at destroying your language and culture. Just 30 years ago, resisting the occupation in Estonia, Lat-

via and Lithuania meant exile or even death. What was true there then is true of Tibet now. That is why the Dalai Lama is an honoured guest.

Still, only just. The Chinese tactic is to squeeze the Dalai Lama out of public life: to make Tibet a taboo. The Baltic states are one of the few places in Europe where the Tibetan leader gets any meetings at all (the Czech Republic, where he addressed the Forum 2000 conference this week, is another). Despite accepting that Tibet should remain part of the People's Republic, China maintains a ludicrous campaign of denigration and exaggeration against him.

The arm-twisting of the authorities in Latvia (which the Dalai Lama also visited) was strikingly mean-minded. Chinese officials, with some Latvian help, tried to persuade venues to cancel public events, and pushed to have posters of the Tibetan leader removed from the airport VIP lounge. I wish that more Latvian politicians had been willing to meet him.

The big question now is how China will react. So far I have not heard even a squeak. That may be because a storm is brewing. But if China does try to punish Lithuania, I hope that other European Union members will have the courage to support the country that currently holds the presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Would it be so hard for EU members simply to agree to state jointly that they regard the Dalai Lama as a religious leader of world importance, worthy of public recognition in every civilised country? For Tibetans, it would mean a lot. It would help Europe's self-respect too.

(Edward Lucas edits the international section of The Economist.)

Immolations in Tibet: The Shame of the World

By Paul Mooney, Forbes, 28 October 2013



Holding an image of the Dalai Lama, Tibetan monks take part in a vigil to protest violence against demonstrators by Chinese police in January 2012/AP

In February 2009, Tapey, a young Tibetan monk in the Kirti Monastery in Ngaba upset because prayer ceremonies were canceled at his monastery, doused himself in gas, walked to an intersection and set himself on fire while holding a home-made Tibetan flag with a photo of the Dalai Lama on it. People's Armed Police standing nearby opened fire and shot the monk, and then took him away. He survived, but his whereabouts remain unknown.

Tsering Woeser, a prominent Tibetan poet and commentator, reported the incident in her blog. Over the next four years, she would record a total of 126 incidents of Tibetans setting themselves on fire to express their dissatisfaction with Chinese rule—one more incident occurred following publication.

In her latest book, *Immolations au Tibet, La Honte du Monde, or Immolations in Tibet: The Shame of the World*, Woeser describes in detail the background to this sad trend.

This slim book, running just 40,000 French words (English and Chinese versions will follow), was written between April and June of this year. Woeser provides statistics, the reasons for the self-immolations, and final testimonies, and she explains China's attempts to spin

this phenomenon in a way that does not reflect badly on the government's rule of Tibet.

The topic is highly sensitive and the Chinese have made a huge effort to suppress discussion of it. Woeser says that National Security agents warned her not to write any books about this topic, a threat she bravely ignored.

She is angered that the Chinese media portrays the self-immolators as criminals, alcoholics, gamblers, mentally ill, prostitutes or those manipulated by the "Dalai Lama clique", a disparaging term the government uses to describe Tibet's spiritual leader.

Woeser says that Tibetans consider self-immolators heroes, placing their photos respectfully in their homes and monasteries and writing songs in praise of them.

The incidents cut across all sectors of Tibetan society. Of the 125 cases recorded by Woeser, 104 people died as a result of setting fire to themselves. There was one case in 2009, 14 in 2011, 86 in 2012 and 25 so far this year—one more incident occurred after publication. The oldest person was 64, the youngest 16, with an average age of 26. There were 106 men and 18 women, including 21 fathers and 10 mothers. There were 42 religious people, includ-

ing three rinpoches, or incarnate lamas, as well as 63 herders, three laborers, a carpenter, blogger, tanka artist, taxi driver, forestry worker and a former Communist Party cadre. Two were middle school female students, three were male students.

One of the most compelling parts of this book is the analysis of the 46 final testimonies that Woeser has collected, which gives a clear picture of the motives. The testimonies, some of which run just a few words, include hand-written notes, recordings, and verbal statements told to friends and relatives.

According to bystanders who witnessed people setting fire to themselves, some 50 shouted political slogans as they burned, including, "Allow His Holiness the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet," "Tibet will be free," and Tibetan independence."

The Chinese government has accused the Dalai Lama of instigating the suicide attempts in an attempt to separate Tibet from China.

Woeser counters that the self-immolations are the result of a sharp increase in suppression of Tibetan religious and political freedoms that has not been seen in years. She points to human monitors embedded in monasteries, forced "patriotic education," monks forced to publicly denounce the Dalai Lama or face expulsion from monasteries and possible arrest, and nomads pushed off of their grassland homes, ostensibly to save the deteriorating environment. She says monasteries have been forced to fly Chinese national flags and to hang photos of Communist Party officials, while house-to-house searches are carried out to confiscate photographs of the well-respected Tibetan spiritual leader.

The demure-looking Woeser, who is frequently followed by security agents when she's in Lhasa, the Tibetan capi-

tal, and who is sometimes placed under house arrest in her home in Beijing, describes “Orwellian” means of monitoring and controlling the daily lives of Tibetans.

Communist officials criticize the self-immolations as a contradiction of Buddhist beliefs (forgetting that China openly applauded the self-immolation of a monk in Vietnam 1963 as a sign of opposition to American involvement in the country).

Woeser says she was once careful in speaking about the trend for fear of being criticized for encouraging it. But she says the rise in the number of incidents has forced her to speak out more forcibly.

She emphasizes the non-violent nature of self-immolations and that none of the final testimonies made any mention of harming other people, a point highlighted by the cover of the book.

After the French publisher Indigene asked Woeser to write this book, she asked the well-known and outspoken artist Ai Weiwei to design the cover, which has soft orange flames with the names of the self-immolators inlaid on a white background. She says that the stylistic flames are non-violent and not something that would frighten people. Woeser likens the cover to a khata, or ceremonial Tibetan scarf, and says it’s a tribute to the Tibetans who have sacrificed their lives.

She says that the Chinese government has refused to reflect on the reasons behind the self-immolations, instead intensifying its brutal policies.

And she throws the responsibility back at the government by quoting Mao Zedong, who once said: “Where there is oppression, there is resistance.”

“People must understand that self-immolation is a form of protest,” she writes, “and that as long as the cause is not removed, the protests will continue.”

She says that the brutal police and military clampdown against protests has left people without any outlet to express their feelings, and that this has forced them to channel their anger into a more drastic form.

“With such harsh oppression, and all means to protesting suppressed,” she told me over the phone from Lhasa, “the strongest alternative brave Tibetans have is self-immolation.”

Woeser describes how the police have targeted the friends and relatives of the self-immolators, with some given prison sentences, and at least one sentenced to life imprisonment. Other’s have been punished for smuggling news of these incidents outside of China.

“Under such pressure, news of self-immolations can take days and even months to get out,” she writes. “It’s very possible that the number of self-immolations in Tibetan areas is much higher than the numbers that have been made public.”

She says people who commit self-immolation rarely do so to arouse international sympathy, but rather to awaken Tibetan people and to put pressure on the Chinese leadership to change it’s policies. But she laments the inaction of the international community. She points to the case of Thích Quảng Đức, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk who burned himself to death on a busy Saigon street in 1963, resulting in a huge international backlash against the anti-Buddhist policies of the South Vietnamese government.

“The incidents have risen from a small number to more than 120, but the world still remains silent,” she said. “This silence makes people feel disappointed.”

Woeser quotes from Elie Wiesel’s Nobel Peace Prize speech of 1986 about another time and place where people suffered while the world looked away:

“Can this be true? This is the twentieth century, not the Middle Ages. Who would allow such crimes to be committed? How could the world remain silent?”

She attributes the lack of concern to the world economic downturn, the grim nature of the phenomenon, and the growing economic influence of China, that makes the self-immolations an unpleasant truth.

“Many countries have their own vested interests, and so they cave in when it comes to human rights,” she says.

She says that only when there is pressure from international society will the Chinese oppression of the Tibetan people end.

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The author is a Forbes contributor. The opinions expressed are those of the writer.



Watch www.tibetonline.tv for His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s teachings and programmes, and news on CTA and Tibet.

China is engaged in a push to build hydroelectric dams on a scale unprecedented in human history. While being touted for producing lower-emission electricity, these massive dam projects are wreaking havoc on river systems across China and Southeast Asia.

by Charlton Lewis
[Yale Environment 360]



Water rushes through the Xiaolangdi Dam on the Yellow River in central China's Henan province. Officials released the water to clear sediment in an attempt to prevent summer flooding. (Photo credit: STR/AFP/Getty Images)

In their search for renewable electric power, China's engineers have been building mega-dams at a rate unmatched in human history. Many far larger than the Hoover Dam on the Colorado River — which is 221 meters high and capable of generating more than 2,000 megawatts of power — are being constructed on China's greatest rivers. Best known is the Three Gorges Dam, completed in 2008, which stretches a mile-and-a-half across the Yangtze and can generate ten times the hydropower of the Hoover Dam. Yet the Three Gorges is only a fraction of China's current dam program.

The government is now engaged in a new expansion of dams in great staircases, reservoir upon reservoir — some 130 in all across China's Southwest. By 2020, China aims to generate 120,000 megawatts of renewable energy, most of it from hydroelectric power. The government declares that such dams

are safe, avoid pollution, address future climate change, control floods and droughts, and enhance human life.

These assertions are largely untrue. Instead, China's mega-dams block the flow of rivers, increase the chances of earthquakes, destroy precious environments and shatter the lives of millions of people. Rather than benefiting populations with non-polluting power, China's dam builders are making a Faustian bargain with nature, selling their country's soul in their drive for economic growth.

Since the 1950s the Chinese have built some 22,000 dams more than 15 meters tall, roughly half the world's current total. During the 1990s, as economic growth surged and air pollution spurred the need for clean energy, they turned increasingly to huge mega-dams. Protests from environmentalists have helped slow some of the building in recent years. But under the 12th Five Year

Plan (2011-2015) the government seems to have cast aside restraint. Opposition has been suppressed and the dam builders are now free to move forward.

About 100 dams are in various stages of construction or planning on the Yangtze and its tributaries — the Yalong, Dadu, and Min. Two dozen more will be built on the Lancang, called the Mekong in Southeast Asia, and still more on the last two of China's free-flowing rivers — the Nu, called the Salween in Burma, and the Yarlung Tsangpo, known as the Brahmaputra in India and the Jamuna in Bangladesh. All these rivers flow off the Tibetan Plateau, a geologically unstable region that averages 4,500 meters (14,800 feet) high. As they flow down through the soft, sedimentary rock, the rivers carve steep canyons, many deeper than the Grand Canyon. The risk of earthquakes is high. Probe International, a Canadian NGO, warned in April 2012 that almost half of China's new dams are in zones of high to very high seismic risk, and most of the remainder in zones of moderate hazard.

Dams themselves may cause quakes. The seasonal rise and fall of reservoirs places extra stress on nearby rock formations. When the 50-story-high Zipingpu Dam was begun on the Min River in 2001, seismologists from China's Earthquake Bureau warned that a major fault ran less than a mile away, but they were ignored. In 2007 and 2008, the reservoir filled, with major fluctuations in the water level. In May 2008, the 7.9-magnitude Wenchuan quake occurred only 5.5 kilometers downstream, killing 80,000 people. Since then, more than 50 studies have found evidence that the reservoir triggered small quakes through the fault system, culminating in the large quake.

Five years later, on April 20, 2013, a magnitude-7.0 quake occurred at Ya'an City on the same fault line. Nearly 200 died, more than 5,000 were injured, and thousands made homeless. Fan Xiao, the chief engineer of the Sichuan Geology and Mineral Bureau, believes this quake may have been an aftershock of the Wenchuan quake, thus possibly also dam-related.

By law each proposed dam must go through an environmental impact assessment (EIA), but the process is outdated and flawed. Red tape and corruption prevail. And EIAs have generally only addressed individual projects; until recently, there have been no EIAs for dams in cascades. Since river valleys tend to follow earthquake fault lines, a series of dams down a valley may compound the risk of quakes. Should one dam fail, the rush of water could overwhelm the next dam downstream, causing dams to collapse like dominos. In 1975 the 118-meter Banqiao dam on a tributary of the Huai was breached in a heavy rainstorm. Numerous dams downstream gave way in succession to produce a lake of more than 7,300 square kilometers. Six counties were inundated. By a conservative estimate, 26,000 died in the flooding and another 145,000 in the ensuing epidemics and famine.

Several major cascades are taking shape. On the Yangtze and its upstream stem, the Jinsha, a series of some 15 dams are planned, under construction, or completed. Among them, four huge dams above the Three Gorges — including the Xiluodu, which is 280 meters high — are expected to be completed by 2020. Along the Yalong, a major tributary of the Yangtze's, a cascade of 21 major dams is planned. On the Dadu, which parallels the Yalong, there will be 17 dams, among them the recently approved 314-meter high Shuangjiangkou, only 10 meters lower than the Eiffel Tower. On the Lancang, headwaters of the Mekong, a cascade of 26 dams is planned. The still free-flowing Nu, or Salween, River will have as many as 13 dams. On a map, each projected cascade looks like a string of beads.

Although hydroelectric dams produce considerably fewer carbon emissions than coal-fired power plants, China's assertions that dams provide clean energy are substantially untrue. The rotting of inundated trees and vegetation in reservoirs emits the greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide and methane, that rise from reservoir surfaces. Whenever water levels drop, rotting vegetation is again exposed and methane emissions increase. Estimates of emissions vary widely, depending on the climate where the dam is built, the amount and type of vegetation flooded, and the depth and age of the reservoir. Over a projected lifetime of a dam in temperate regions, emissions could be from roughly one-third to nearly two-thirds that of a natural gas plant. In warm and densely forested areas, such as China's southwest, the emissions could be higher, particularly in a plant's early years of operation. Dam building also includes indirect emissions from development of a dam site, manufacture and transport of materials and equipment, waste disposal, and, eventually, decommissioning.

Nor do big dams protect from floods and droughts. They store water during the wet season and release it during the dry season, thus reversing the natural flow of rivers. Deprived of their annual inundations, downstream marshes, lakes, and wetlands dry out and can no longer absorb floodwaters. Since the Three Gorges Dam was completed, the Dongting Lake in Hunan and the Poyang Lake in Jiangxi, which once absorbed the Yangtze overflow, have shrunk dramatically, and many smaller lakes have entirely disappeared. During the record-breaking summer flood of 2010, the Three Gorges reservoir rose to 12 meters above "alarm level." To protect the dam, its operators opened the floodgates to the maximum. Downstream some 968 people were killed, 507 more were missing and economic losses totaled \$26 billion. The great dam survived its first test, but its floodplain is unlikely to contain big floods in the future.

Drier floodplains intensify droughts; when rivers diminish, dam operators preserve their hydropower potential by

withholding water. During the January to April 2011 drought, water levels in the Lower Yangtze valley dropped steeply, stranding thousands of boats and creating power shortages in central and eastern China. On the upper reaches of the Yellow River to the north, a string of large dams has exacerbated recent droughts on the North China Plain. In addition, as the planet warms, glacial melt will diminish river flows, reservoirs will not fill, and dams may then prove to be a colossal boondoggle.

The damage that dams cause to river ecosystems is immense, turning free-flowing waterways into lifeless lakes, killing plants and trees, blocking fish migration and breeding, driving species to extinction, and devastating established patterns of human life. A looming example of such disruption is the threat hanging over the Three Parallel Rivers area in Yunnan Province, where the Jinsha, Lancang, and Nu flow through separate gorges as deep as 3,000 meters in an area less than 75 kilometers across. Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2003, this spectacular region is one of the most environmentally diverse and fragile on earth. Hydropower companies are now planning some 25 dams in this zone.

The Xiaonanhai Dam, to be constructed above the Three Gorges reservoir, will sever the last remaining migratory route that fish need in order to reproduce, including rare and endemic species such as the paddlefish (the biggest freshwater fish in the world) and the Dabry's sturgeon, whose numbers have already been drastically reduced. The Chinese river dolphin was declared extinct in 2006.

Dams also pollute. Their reservoirs capture chemicals, fertilizer runoff, human waste and all kinds of trash. During the 2010 flood, floating refuse backed up behind the Three Gorges Dam over an area of more than 50,000. Downstream some 968 people were killed, 507 more were missing and economic losses totaled \$26 billion. The great dam survived its first test, but its floodplain is unlikely to contain big floods in the future.

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The Xiaonanhai Dam, to be constructed above the Three Gorges reservoir, will sever the last remaining migratory route that fish need in order to reproduce, including rare and endemic species such as the paddlefish (the biggest freshwater fish in the world) and the Dabry's sturgeon, whose numbers have already been drastically reduced. The Chinese river dolphin was declared extinct in 2006.

Dams also pollute. Their reservoirs capture chemicals, fertilizer runoff, human waste and all kinds of trash. During the 2010 flood, floating refuse backed up behind the Three Gorges Dam over an area of more than 50,000 square meters, so thick, according to the Hubei Daily "that people can literally walk on the water's surface." Without an-

nual floods, dammed rivers fail to flush contaminants downstream. As the rivers percolate into the ground, they deliver pollutants into the aquifers — this in a country where nearly 60 percent of groundwater in 198 cities has been measured as poor, according to a report this year by the Ministry of Land and Resources.

Dam reservoirs trap silt, which decreases their storage capacity and reduces power generation. Silt no longer carries nutrients down the rivers, and without protective silt, salt water encroaches on estuaries and damages croplands. Estuaries also become more vulnerable to rising sea levels.

Great dams also devastate human populations. During the past half-century about 16 million Chinese have been relocated to make way for hydroelectric projects, and of these 10 million live in poverty, according to China Youth Daily. With each new project, communities are fractured and lives disrupted. People are relocated to new towns or forced to resettle on degraded land. Often they do not receive promised resettlement money or job training, driving many to migrate again. The Three Gorges Dam alone has submerged 13 cities, 140 towns, and 1,350 villages. By 2007 its reservoir had displaced some 1.4 million people.

When the two-football-fields-high Pubugou dam was built on the Dadu River between 2001 and 2010, 100,000 persons were driven from their homes. Evictions began even before final approval in 2004. Tens of thousands rioted against the dam, reportedly one of the largest rural demonstrations since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

China's dam projects also threaten livelihoods in other countries. Of the watersheds discussed above, only the Yellow and the Yangtze are wholly domestic. Outside of China the Lancang/Mekong, Nu/Salween, and Yarlung Zangbo/Brahmaputra flow through several countries of Southeast Asia, India, and Bangladesh. Since 1997 China's government has declined to sign the United Nations

water-sharing convention that would govern its major transnational rivers, yet it continues to build dams without consulting its downstream neighbors.

On the Mekong, China's dams are affecting agriculture and fisheries. In Laos and Thailand, crops are regularly washed away before harvest time as upstream dams release their water. Nutrient-rich silt no longer reaches the Mekong delta, which is reducing fish stocks. In Burma and Thailand, environmental groups have spoken out about the threats to wildlife and populations from dams now planned for China's Nu/Salween. A colossal 38,000-megawatt project has been proposed at Motuo on the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet. The project would pose a serious threat not only to the Tibetan Plateau but to India and Bangladesh, where the Yarlung becomes the Brahmaputra and Jamuna rivers.

China's unprecedented construction of dams makes a mockery of the larger vision expressed in its current Five Year Plan to develop clean energy, reduce pollution, and protect the environment. A more accurate vision may be that of the Sichuan geologist Fan Xiao in his 2011 letter opposing the Xiaonanhai Dam.

"These major projects will be synonymous with the worst excesses of this era, and the mark they will leave in history is going to be very difficult to erase." Fan goes on to warn that the great dams will become "a source of permanent grief and regret for future generations yet unborn."

A colossal 38,000-megawatt project has been proposed at Motuo on the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet. The project would pose a serious threat not only to the Tibetan Plateau but to India and Bangladesh, where the Yarlung becomes the Brahmaputra and Jamuna rivers.

Mining in Tibet threatens Asia's rivers

[Source: thethirdpole.net]



In his new book, *Spoiling Tibet: China and Resource Nationalism on the Roof of the World*, Gabriel Laffite analyses the extent and scale of China's mineral exploitation in Tibet.

Here he talks to The Third Pole about the global environmental significance of the Tibetan Plateau and the impact of mining on the region's rivers and countries downstream.

The Third Pole: What's so special about the Tibetan Plateau?

Gabriel Laffite: Can I answer that obliquely with another question? Why did it take centuries of industrial burning of fossil fuels before anyone thought it might affect climate? Even now, after the painstakingly precise reports of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) there are still plenty who doubt human fuel consumption is capable of affecting the planetary climate.

The IPCC was set up by the UN in 1988, at a time when the interconnectedness of all regional climate systems, and their vulnerability to change due to rising levels of carbon dioxide, was scientifically evident.

Science works by reducing complexity to a few variables that can be controlled, observed, manipulated. Only

after the experiments can complex reality be rebuilt.

The interconnectedness of all phenomena is not news to Tibetans, who, for thousands of years, sustainably managed a plateau the size of western Europe, with the light touch of a mobile civilisation. On a great plateau with no fences, wild and domestic herds mixed freely, with room for all, biodiversity conservation accomplished by doing nothing, beyond routine reminders by Buddhist lamas that hunting is bad karma. The Tibetans knew their land was rich in minerals, but mined sparingly, so as to not disturb the earth gods. They knew their many rivers continued, far past the high plateau, in all directions watering abundant populations downstream.

In today's language, they provided environmental services, by doing nothing, other than moving on with their herds to avoid overgrazing any one spot. They knew the climate was highly unpredictable, with sudden snowstorms and hailstorms possible in summer, blizzards and intense cold snaps at just the time the yaks and sheep are moving up to their alpine meadows in spring, or down again to winter pasture in autumn. Adaptability, a capacity to live off uncertainty, flexibility of pasture management and risk management were among the skills that made the Tibetan Plateau humanly habitable. At the extraordinary altitude of the planet's great island in the sky, Tibetans could watch the jet stream divert southwards round the plateau in winter and around the northern edges of the plateau in summer. Tibetans knew, from daily experience, what science has come to call the teleconnections linking all climate systems into a planetary circulation.

But why put this intimate, embodied knowledge of energy flows, atmospheric circulation, and the water cycle in the past tense? The knowledge of interdependence is still there, even if the

plateau is compulsorily fenced, and the wild herds of antelope endangered. The knowledge of grasses, seasons, winds and risks is still in use, in the remaining areas of the plateau where grazing is still permitted, and mobility can still be practiced. The purity of rivers and lakes is still protected by customs that warn against angering the capricious water spirits.

TTP: Aren't you being a bit of a romantic, making too much of ways of seeing that today's world has no room for?

GL: There is nothing particularly romantic or mystical about such premodern, implicit understandings. Buddhists may call it the working of karma, but say that simply means common sense, applicable to anyone, of cause and effect.

TTP: Surely, given the size of the Tibetan Plateau, a few mines aren't going to matter too much.

GL: Today all of the environmental services Tibetans protected are threatened. Extensive land use is giving way to the inexorable logic of intensification, concentrating capital, technology and labour in enclaves designated for resource extraction, feedlot animal production or tourist gratification; leaving huge areas largely depopulated, surplus to the requirement of modernity.

Mining is rapidly turning the Tibetan Plateau from a cost centre, swallowing huge sums for infrastructure construction, into a profit centre focused on the 80 million tonnes of extractable copper, and 2000 tonnes of gold proven by Chinese geological teams. That hardly puts Tibet in the same class as Chile, the world's top copper producer, yet China's new mines are set to operate in Tibet for decades, benefiting greatly from state investment in the roads, railways, communications, hydro dams, pipelines and urban infrastructure needed for profitable extraction enclaves to eclipse the old extensive ways.

At today's gold and copper prices –neither of them even close to their recent peaks- the sale of Tibetan copper will generate revenues of US\$617 billion for China's state owned mining corporations, of which only half need be spent as the cost of production, and gold a further US\$106 billion.

Tibet will be transformed as a result. The copper/gold deposits also contain silver, and usually lead and zinc, or molybdenum, all in demand and extractable at the same time. Meanwhile the world's factory is on the move, from China's coastal belt to far inland, taking advantage of lower labour costs, plentiful hydroelectricity from the hydro dam cascades on the rivers plunging from the Tibetan Plateau, less environmental law enforcement, and proximity to fresh Tibetan sources of raw materials. Chongqing and Chengdu have boomed as manufacturing hubs attracting the biggest global corporations to build new factories. It may not be long before your next smartphone or tablet is powered by lithium from Tibet.

TTP: You're focussing on the big new mines, but isn't mining in Tibet an older story?

GL: The mining of Tibet is not new, but the intensity, scale and capital invested are very different to the picture a decade or two ago, when mining was on the surface, usually by poor immigrant men from the lowlands using mercury and cyanide to extract flakes of alluvial gold from stream beds. Often the mining was financed by local governments keen to make money by assembling giant dredges to chew through river beds for placer gold, destroying pasture and river bank, fish and bird breeding spots, without noticing.

Tibetans have had decades of destructive gold rushes swarming over the land they once took pride in protecting, powerless to resist, their protests quickly labelled as criminally splittist, a threat to the existence of China. That means they are forbidden to form NGOs, or to speak publicly. There is no organised environment movement in Tibet, even though Tibetans care deeply, because it

is politically impossible. At this time, Tibetans need others to speak up. Too many Tibetan environmentalists are in jail.

TTP: Does mining impact people downstream from Tibet?

GL: Geologically, Tibet is a young land, still rising. The rock is often loose, vulnerable to earthquakes and landslides blocking rivers, then giving way in sudden outbursts. Rock from deep within the earth is close to the surface in Tibet and that includes the arsenic that afflicts much of Bangladeshi well water.

Toxic heavy metals naturally occur in Tibetan rivers, so mining, which generates huge waste dumps close to major rivers, must be able to keep tailings waste dams from leaching into the river below – forever. Given the flagrant violations of environmental regulations Tibetans have witnessed, there's little reason to believe the new miners will ensure the safety of their wastes for decades and centuries after mining has exhausted the ore deposits.

The Himalayas are not the natural barrier wall Indians may imagine. Rivers cut through them, monsoon clouds float through, and people have always crossed. South Asia will be affected in many ways, as mining spreads across Tibet, especially in the many areas being depopulated by the grazing ban policy, supposedly to grow more grass, which in practice lets in more miners, without any locals left to resist.

India is used to thinking of itself as upstream of Pakistan and Bangladesh, but India is downstream of Tibet, and is awakening to the strong connection between hydrodamming of Tibetan rivers and mining, which is a major user of hydropower for ore concentrators and smelters. India is learning the discomforts of being downstream, yet also ambitious to capture the hydropower potential of those trans-Himalayan rivers.

TTP: Has mining spoiled Tibet?

GL: Not yet, but that's the way things are rapidly heading. The small scale mining of recent decades was environ-

mentally very destructive, but had little economic impact. The new large scale intensive mines now about to go into full operation, at Shetongmon, Gyama and Yulong, will generate so much wealth for the state-owned corporations that own the mines, they have the potential to integrate Tibet into the global economy, into the commodity value chains that make the cars and computers that will be exported, and bought by people around the world. The new mines establish long-term enclaves of high profitability that attract new waves of immigrants, all further intensifying land use.

The land of Tibet cannot sustain intensive use. The Tibetan Plateau can accommodate extensive land use, mobile pastoralism that moves on well before overgrazing and land degradation start. Because of the long and intensely cold winter, once degradation starts to destroy the hardy native vegetation, it is extremely hard to stop. Because of accelerating degradation, social exclusion of nomads from their pastures, temporary grazing bans becoming irreversible, the loss of land tenure and food security in Tibet, all that will be left will be a depopulated, desertifying grassland, with pockets of intensive production centred on cities, mines and the highways that connect them. That's an alarming prospect, not only for Tibet, but for all the billion people across Asia who daily drink Tibetan water.

Gabriel Laffite is author of Spoiling Tibet: China and Resource Nationalism on the Roof of the World, published by Zed Books 2013.

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Obituary: Mr Robert Ford, Tibet's First Radio Operator



The Central Tibetan Administration expresses deep sadness over the demise of Mr Robert Ford, the first foreigner who served in the Tibetan government service before the Chinese invasion of Tibet. He passed away at the age of 90 in London on 20 September.

Mr Ford first travelled to Tibet in 1945 to join the British Mission in Lhasa as a radio operator. It was during this time that he had his first audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who was then 11 years of age. In 1947, he was asked by the Government of Tibet to join its service to start Tibet's first broadcasting station, train Tibetan radio operators and set up a radio communications network throughout Tibet.

After a year in Lhasa, Robert was asked to go to Chamdo in Kham, eastern Tibet's capital, to establish a radio link between Lhasa and Chamdo and thereby expand the Tibetan radio communications network. In 1949 Robert and three wireless operator students travelled the northern route to Chamdo. He was the first and possibly the only westerner to travel this route.

In 1950 he, along with other Tibetan officials, was captured by the invading Chinese forces. An earthquake had cut off his planned escape route. The People's Republic of China accused him of espionage, spreading anti-communist propaganda and causing the death of Geda Lama. Mr Ford spent nearly 5 years in jail, in constant fear of being executed,

and was subjected to interrogation and thought reform. Only in 1954 was he allowed to send a letter to his parents. At the end of 1954 his trial was held and he was sentenced to ten years in jail. He was eventually released and expelled in 1955. In 1957, he published the book 'Captured in Tibet' about his experience. The book was re-published in 1990 with a preface by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and an epilogue by the author entitled 'The Occupation'.

In 1957 Mr Ford joined the British Diplomatic Service. During his career he served in the Foreign Office in London and at various posts around the world; in Vietnam, Indonesia, the USA, Morocco, Angola, France, Sweden, and finally as Her Britannic Majesty's Consul-General in Geneva, Switzerland, from where he retired in 1983. In 1982 he was awarded a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire).

In retirement Mr Ford was able to actively resume his support for Tibet and its people. He was a founder member of the Tibet Society in 1959 and later served as its Vice President. He has written extensively and lectured on all aspects of Tibetan and Chinese affairs in the UK, the rest of Europe, Australia, and the United States. In 1992, he undertook a country wide lecture tour in India, at the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Lectures took place in a number of locations, including the Indian Army College, Civil Service College and in the Lok Sabha, the Lower House of the In-

dian Parliament. The tour was brought to an abrupt end when Mr Ford and his wife Monica were detained under house arrest in Dharamsala by the Indian authorities. The lectures coincided with the Chinese Premier Li Peng's official visit to India. Mr Ford had to return home early to the UK. In 1996, Mr Ford was able to orchestrate the first meeting between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and a member of the British Royal family. His Holiness met Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, with Robert, on 17th July, at Clarence House.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama presented Mr Robert Ford with International Campaign for Tibet's Light of Truth award in April 2013. His Holiness said at the presentation, "All of you have been longstanding friends and supporters of Tibet, for which we are immeasurably grateful. As you know, the spirit of the Tibetan people is undiminished and the power of truth remains strong."

In his condolence message, His Holiness the Dalai Lama offered his prayers and deep condolences in a personal letter to the family members of Robert Ford at his passing away, office of His Holiness said in a statement on Thursday.

His Holiness stated that Robert Ford occupied a special place in the history of Tibet as the first Englishman employed as an official of the pre-1959 Tibetan Government. His Holiness recalled his many meetings with Robert Ford, most recently this year in April in Switzerland.

"We have learnt with great sorrow of the death of one of the oldest friends of Tibet, Mr Robert Ford. He was a staunch supporter of the cause of Tibet throughout his life. He was one of the founding members of Tibet Society, the first ever Tibet Support Group. Mr Robert Ford would be remembered for his life long support for Tibet and the Tibetan people. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family," said Dicki Chhoyang, Kallon for the Department of Information & International Relations.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama meets Chinese writers in New York



His Holiness the Dalai Lama met a group of 24 Chinese scholars, writers and poets on Monday to discuss promoting secular ethics, particularly in relation to China.

The opening speaker said he was participating as a writer, not a dissident, concerned about the decline of ethical values in China, which he blamed on several factors, totalitarianism among them. His Holiness responded that the intent of the meeting was not overtly political, although there might inevitably be political implications.

He described the Chinese people as realistic and hard-working. He also expressed admiration for the Marxist tenet of equal distribution, but felt this had been spoilt by a Leninist obsession with power. He observed that when Mao Zedong was operating out of the Yan'an caves he seems to have been motivated by original Marxism, but after 1955-56 the drive for power became predominant. As China became increasingly materialistic, socialism gave way to capitalism. This materialistic outlook has resulted in materialist concerns eclipsing inner values.

His Holiness said: "Personally, as far as socio-economic theory is concerned, I'm

a Marxist, but perhaps a Buddhist Marxist. Material development alone cannot solve all society's ills and, unfortunately, China has neither democracy nor a free press. If socialism had been implemented in earnest, there would be no gap between rich and poor in China. This is something for us to think about.

"Last year a group of Chinese came to see me. Some of them were well dressed, but one elderly man was a villager from Henan. His clothes were threadbare and the others treated him with condescension. Since, I tend to support the underdog; I paid him more attention and asked about conditions in his village. He told me they were bad, mentioning that in times of trouble the leaders only cared about money and power, and ignored the law. Simple villagers have no one to turn to for help. In several meetings I've had with him, Chen Guangcheng has also told me about the problems facing farmers in China."

His Holiness remarked that China's judicial system needs to be raised to international standards. He declared censorship in China immoral, saying that the 1.3 billion people in China have a right to know about the reality in which they live and are quite capable of judging right from

wrong. Censorship in China is morally indefensible and shows disdain for ordinary people. Deng Xiaoping's admonition to seek truth from facts is admirable, but the facts should be genuine. People need to be informed about reality.

"China is not only the world's most populous country; it also has a long history. It has the potential to contribute positively to the international community. But it needs to earn the world's trust, starting by trusting its own people. The year before last, the budget for internal security in China was greater than that allocated for defence."

He suggested the gathering discuss these things openly and invited criticism of what he had said. He quoted Mao Zedong's injunction that the Communist Party should face criticism, although Beijing no longer seems to follow this. For telling the truth Liu Xiaobo was sent to prison. He mentioned his happiness during his recent trip to Prague that Aung San Suu Kyi was finally able to attend the Forum 2000 conference. He recalled that at many past meetings of Nobel Laureates, they had kept a chair empty for her. Now that Liu Xiaobo is missing from their meetings, he looks forward to seeing him attend in future.

The first questioner wondered how ethical values can be promoted in a Communist environment. Scholars can only speculate as to why there has been a decline in such values, but can do little to rejuvenate them. Since Taiwan has not seen a similar ethical decline, religion may have a role to play. His Holiness replied that the whole world is facing a moral crisis, but relying on religion alone is not the solution. A recent report suggests that of the 7 billion people alive today, more than one billion assert they have no interest in religion. Their needs also have to be taken into account. Ethical conduct has to be understood in terms of its direct effect on individual happiness and the happiness of the family and

the society in which it lives.

In a multi-faith world no one religion would be universally applicable, this is why, after discussions with scientists and scholars, His Holiness favours the promotion of secular ethics. India has a long tradition of secular thinking in which the views not only of all religious traditions, but even those who espouse no religion, are accorded respect. He said the premise of his book 'Beyond Religion – ethics for a whole world' is that secular ethics are the basis for creating a happier more peaceful world.

“We need to incorporate training in secular ethics into our modern education system.”

To a question about Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping in relation to Tibet, His Holiness said he supported the call to build a more harmonious society. However, because the use of force was the wrong way to achieve it, Hu had been unable to fulfil his objective. Xi Jinping could do so now by according peoples such as the Tibetans, their culture, language and religion, equal respect.

“Harmony and a sense of unity have to be based on trust,” His Holiness said, “and trust only comes about through showing friendly affection. Fear is the opposite of trust and without trust there will be no unity. Harmony will not be secured through the mere provision of food and drink; it has to come from the heart. Thus, there is a need for a change in attitude.”

As to whether Confucianism or Daoism could be a basis for promoting secular ethics, His Holiness said secular ethics was the basis of all spiritual traditions. He said that whenever he speaks in public he explains his commitment as one among 7 billion human beings to promoting human values in the context of secular ethics.

Compassion is the basis of ethics, which is why all our major spiritual traditions promote it.

It was suggested that the problem in China relates to the Chinese Communist Party's setting out to destroy traditional Chinese values since its inception in 1922. His Holiness replied that the atmosphere and fear and suspicion might have something to do with it. He said the very purpose of holding elections in a democracy was because people trusted the government.

He repeated what he has said elsewhere that the world belongs to its 7 billion citizens; the United States belongs to the American people not to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party; Japan belongs to its people and not to the Emperor and similarly Britain belongs to the British people and not to the Queen. Consequently, people in these countries authorize elected representatives to act on their behalf. The basis of this is trust and accountability. When this breaks down there is recourse to other measures such as the moves to impeach President Nixon. In democracy, when people no longer trust their government there are options to remove it.

China today is subject to extremes of corruption, which is not so in Taiwan where they seem able to support democracy and traditional values. Concern was expressed that China's materialistic values would have a negative impact on Tibetans. His Holiness did not entirely agree. He pointed out that some traditional values have drawbacks. In the Chinese Confucian system, for example, the young are expected to revere their elders and students are not supposed to question their teachers. Could this be why there has been no Chinese Sakharov? People like Liu Xiaobo are a modern phenomenon.

“Some Taiwanese have told me,” His Holiness said, “that when tourists come from the mainland, many express a reluctance to return because they recognise that people in Taiwan don't live in an atmosphere of fear. Similarly, Chinese students in India have complained about growing up in an atmosphere of suspicion. Parents don't trust their children and relatives have to be wary of each other. As social animals, we human be-

ings naturally depend on each other for love and affection.”

Regarding a movement that is to be launched in Hong Kong to resist the denial of a properly elected leadership His Holiness said it was necessary to assess what can actually be achieved. It is important to take a broad and realistic view when planning what you are going to do.

One writer reported that in the 1980s, at the age of seventeen, when he applied to join the Chinese Communist Party he was asked to what he would give his greatest loyalty. His first response – the interests of the people – was rejected, as was his second response – the interests of the country. He was told that his foremost loyalty should be to the Communist Party, at which point he realized he could not be a member. He looked forward to the benefit His Holiness's return to Tibet would bring China.

His Holiness agreed that laws were cast to serve the interests of the Communist Party, the main issue being its retaining authority. However, he did not favour the potential chaos that might follow a drastic removal of the Party. He commended a gradual change to democracy, transparency, and the rule of law, but noted that if the situation remains unchanged as it is at present, a breakdown some day is almost inevitable.

His Holiness wondered whether discussions like this could be held inside China and the participants replied that they could not. As the meeting drew to a close the suggestion was made that His Holiness could reach out to people in China through the internet. His Holiness said that he had already done that in conversations he has had with Wang Lixiong and that he was ready to do so again if it does not result in negative consequences for those concerned.

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Brandeis University Graduate Scholarship for Tibetans-Fall 2014

The Department of Education, CTA is happy to share that the Brandeis University, US is offering partial scholarship only for Tibetans in INDIA, NEPAL & BHUTAN on Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development for Master's Degree Program.

Interested applicants are advised to check announcement attached here and university websites link: <http://heller.brandeis.edu/sid> for the eligibility criteria and other details.

Applicants are also requested to send to us the formal application with the attested copies of first & last page of your Green Book (updated) before last date, so that the DOE can endorse application requirements & verify the candidate is bonafide Tibetan.

Kindly note that the applications have to be submitted online <https://apply.heller.brandeis.edu/apply> before 1st May, 2014.

If you have any further questions, please contact us at:

Scholarship Section

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