



TIBETAN BULLETIN

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2017

Focus

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Confers the 34th Kalachakra Initiation in Bodh Gaya

Feature

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Speaks to Delegates of First Tibetan Women's Empowerment Conference

World Press

Rights Groups Ask China to Free Tibetan Education Advocate



His Holiness the Dalai Lama giving the 34th Kalachakra discourse on the final day of teaching at Bodh Gaya, 13 January 2017. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

His Holiness the Dalai Lama with Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, Kalon Sonam Topgyal Khorlatsang of Department of Home and members of the organising committee and speakers of the first ever Tibetan Women's Empowerment Conference at His Holiness' residence on 23 February 2017. Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL



Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay extended Losar greetings to Tibetans inside and outside Tibet on the occasion of traditional Tibetan New Year – Losar 2144 – the year of the fire bird. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

FOCUS

- 13. His Holiness the Dalai Lama Begins Preliminary Teachings of 34th Kalachakra
- 14. His Holiness the Dalai Lama Leads an Interfaith Prayer for World Peace at 34th Kalachakra
- 16. Sikyong Pays Tribute to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Indian Government on Auspicious Initiation of 34th Kalachakra
- 19. His Holiness the Dalai Lama Calls for Practical Compassion and Warm Heart on 34th Kalachakra

FEATURE

- 22. His Holiness Participates in Inauguration of National Women’s Parliament
- 24. Ground-breaking Ceremony for the South Asia Hub of the Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and a Public Talk
- 25. His Holiness the Dalai Lama Speaks to Delegates of the First Tibetan Women’s Empowerment Conference

WORLD PRESS

- 26. Tibetan PM-in-Exile Lauds Indian Government’s Open Support
- Hindustan Times
- 27. Rethink in New Delhi: Dalai Lama, Karmapa to be in the Public Gaze.
- Indian Express
- 28. Hundreds of Tibetans Defy China, Gather at Birthplace of Buddhism in India.
- Washington Post
- 29. Rights Groups Ask China to Free Tibetan Education Advocate.
- New York Times

REGULARS

News From Tibet & Exile4
Contact 31

Quotes32



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Editor
Jamphel Shonu
Email: tibbul@tibet.net

Asst. Editor
Tenzin Phende
Tenzin Saldon

Layout & Design
Tenzin Phende

Circulation Manager
Tenzin Rabka
Email: circulation@tibet.net
Tibetan Bulletin is published by:
Department of Information and International Relations,
Central Tibetan Administration,
Dharamshala - 176 215 H.P. India
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UN Special Rapporteurs Question China on Larung Gar and Yachen Gar

UN Special Rapporteurs Question China on Larung Gar and Yachen Gar, Seeks Response to Nine Areas of Concern in Tibet.

On the eve of the 34th session of UN Human Rights Council, the Special Procedures of United Nations Human Rights Council made public a joint intervention communication made to the Chinese Government on the case of Larung Gar and Yachen Gar, both Buddhist learning centres in Tibet facing wide-scale demolition.

The mandates of the Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights; the Special Rapporteur on the issue of Human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment; the Special Rapporteur on the rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of association; the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to Non-discrimination in this context; the Special Rapporteur on minority issues; and the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief made the communication on November 7 last year and was kept confidential till now.

Communications report to session 34 of the Human Rights Council include communications sent from 01 Jun 2016 to 30 Nov 2016 and their replies are received until 31 Jan 2017. The report is put together thrice a year by special procedures to the HRC. When the report is issued the communications send in the prior months become public.

According to the report, the experts brought attention to “the severe restrictions of religious freedom in Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture: mass expulsion of religious practitioners from Larung Gar and Yachen Gar, demolitions of monastic homes in Larung Gar and the cultural and environmental impacts of the mining activities at the Holy Gong-ngon Lari Mountain as well as excessive use of force against, and arbitrary arrest and detention of, peaceful protesters.”

The report further mentioned Larung Gar is a “living, vital center of Tibetan Buddhist teachings that is renowned worldwide and across China, and is of great significance in terms of Tibetan language, culture and religion as well as for a new generation of Chinese Buddhist scholars and pilgrims. In September 2016, it was reported that many Tibetan religious practitioners had faced mass expulsions from Larung Gar and Yachen Gar, two of the major Buddhist Tibetan institutions that have become important centres for study, practice and promotion of Buddhist teachings in recent years. At least half of more than 10,000 monks and nuns at Larung Gar face eviction following the demolition of numerous residences. Reportedly, about 1000 religious practitioners were compelled to leave Yachen Gar. Family members of certain nuns at Larung Gar and Yachen Gar were allegedly pressured by the authorities to summon them home or face punishment, such as confiscation of family identity cards.” The UN experts sought the Chinese Government’s response to the following eight areas of concern...

1. Please provide detailed information concerning the legal grounds for the demolition of the monastic residences and expulsion of nuns and monks as referred to above, specifying how these measures are compatible with international human rights norms and standards, in particular those relating to freedom of religion or belief and cultural rights, including the right to access and enjoy cultural heritage.

2. Please explain the rationale for the lack of consultation with local religious leaders in relation to the decision of the demolitions that took place in Larung Gar. Please explain the need for limiting the number of monks, nuns and lay practitioners in Larung Gar to only 5,000 people in total by 2017 as described in the seven point demolition order. Please also provide explanation in relation to the need for involving Government officials in the monastic affairs.

3. Please indicate what measures have been taken to ensure that persons belonging to national, or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, including the Buddhist Tibetans, have the right to protect their own cultural and religious heritage and sites, to study, profess and practise their own religion freely and without interference or any form of discrimination, and to enjoy their right to take part in cultural life without any discrimination.

4. Please indicate what measures have been taken to ensure that the right to housing of the monks and nuns as well as other lay practitioners is protected. Please provide detailed information of resettlement and compensation plans for those people made homeless or expelled from Larung Gar and Yachen Gar.

5. Please indicate if all feasible alternatives to eviction and demolitions have been explored in consultation with the residents of Larung Gar and Yachen Gar and if so, please provide details of the process and results of those consultations. Please also explain why proposed alternatives to the eviction have been deemed unsuitable.

6. Please confirm whether a court order was issued authorizing the eviction, whether the religious community was provided a copy of the order in advance, and whether they were given the opportunity to appeal such decision before a court. In addition, please explain what administrative or judicial mechanisms are available for individuals to challenge their immediate eviction from their homes.

7. Please indicate what measures have been taken to ensure that the mining projects in Amchok Township do not adversely impact the environment of the holy site areas. Please also specify how these measures are compatible with the laws on environmental protection stipulated in the Chinese constitution.

8. Please provide detailed information indicating what measures have been taken to ensure the right of all persons to

peacefully assemble in accordance with international human rights standards. Have the authorities investigated the incidents that took place on 1 June 2016 in Amchok? While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible for the alleged violations.

The Official website of Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights mentioned that the Chinese Government has responded to the questions on December 5 last year and is being translated and said they would be presented to the Human Rights Council for its consideration.

Larung Gar, one of the largest Buddhist study centers in the world is facing wide-scale demolitions under the directions of the Chinese authorities. In July 2016, the authorities began as a part of a multi-year plan aiming to downsize the institute by 50 percent. The demolitions paused in October last year and is reported to resume in February this year but owing to communications crackdown, no further updates are made available.

On September 16 last year, Swiss Tibetan communities and Tibet support groups organized a 'Tibet Solidarity Rally for Larung Gar' in Geneva which was attended by over thousand people. Escaped activist, human rights defender and niece of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, Nyima Lhamo addressed the rally.

On December 5 2016, both Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay of Central Tibetan Administration and TPIE Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel addressed a joint press conference urging the UNHCHR to take immediate action to save Larung Gar. Paralleling the press conference, Office of Tibet in Geneva sought various urgent meetings with Special Procedures Office. This was followed by a high level weeklong lobbying in Geneva undertaken by Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) along with Office of Tibet Geneva early this year.

Niece of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche among "UN Human Rights Heroes" in Geneva Summit

In the lead up to the UN Human Rights Council opens its 2017 session, with China starting a new three-year term, Human Rights Defender, escaped Activist and niece of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, Nyima Lhamo addressed the 9th Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy's session on "the Fight For Freedom and Democracy."



Nyima Lhamo speaking at the Geneva Summit.

Nyima Lhamo along with other guest speakers held a closed-door meeting with UN Diplomats at the office of permanent mission of Canada. She briefed the diplomats about the pressing human rights abuses facing Tibetans in Tibet and urged the diplomats to engage with China to ameliorate the deteriorating human rights situation inside Tibet. "No country is immune to pressure. International pressure and attention alone can make China accountable for its human rights violation in Tibet," said Nyima Lhamo.

Besides Nyima Lhamo representing Tibet, other guest speakers represent Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Vietnam and other countries.

Mr Hillel Neuer, Executive Director of UN Watch said some of the most honorable "UN human rights heroes" are gathered to testify their personal struggles for human rights, democracy and freedom.

Nyima Lhamo moved the 300 plus audience including UN diplomats, human rights NGOs by narrating personal anecdotes of her life in Tibet and why she risked her own life and the

safety of her aging mother and 6-year old daughter to speak about the story of her uncle Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, a Tibetan spiritual leader who died of torture, ill-health and under suspicious circumstances in a Chinese prison in Tibet.

Nyima Lhamo confessed that her uncle's only crime was his faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama, his leadership in the community and his work as a social and environmental advocate.

She further said, "while incarcerated, my uncle would secretly send recorded messages advising us to stop harming all sentient beings including small insects like ants. He confessed saying the thought of harming others had never crossed his mind. He was a man of principles who put the welfare of Tibetans before himself. While in prison, my uncle recounted his experience of torture in prison and told my mother that the prison authorities subjected him to severe torture and consequently made him subconscious. The prison authorities repeatedly beat him up and ridiculed his title as 'spiritual leader' and asked him to display his spiritual prowess by deflecting the beatings," Nyima Lhamo revealed how her uncle was subjected to torture.

She concluded with final words, "I am committed to call for international investigation into the case of my uncle. I stand here today, with the hope that international community who stands for human rights, freedom and justice will thoroughly investigate and press China to come clean on the circumstances that led to the death of my uncle in prison. Therefore international pressure alone can make China accountable for its gross human rights violations in Tibet."

Finally, I truly believe that a peaceful solution for Tibet advances respect for international human rights and human dignity."

Strengthening Political Advocacy for Tibet in the United Kingdom

The Office of Tibet London organised a weeklong official visit of Dhardon Sharling, Secretary of Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) from February 4-12, 2017 to United Kingdom. The weeklong engagements aimed to strengthen academic discourse, advocacy for and political engagement on the Tibet issue in light of the changing international political climate and shifting positions of governments on China.



Dhardon Sharling, Secretary of Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) with All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet Chair Tim Loughton MP, Marion Fellows MP and Chonphel Tsering, Representative, Office of Tibet, London.

Secretary Dhardon was invited by the Borderline Conferences as one of the speakers for the conference 'Religion, Nationalism and Identity' held at the University of Cambridge. Dhardon spoke on the topic 'Diaspora Identity: the Notions of Belonging in, and Longing for, a Homeland,' along with distinguished speakers such as Sir Jeremy Greenstock, former UK Ambassador to the UN and UK Special Envoy for Iraq and Karen Armstrong OBE Historian of Religion among others.

The University of Westminster hosted a talk by Dhardon on the topic – 'Resolving the Tibet Question: The Strategic Relevance and Importance of the Middle Way Approach.' Prof Dibyesh Anand, Head of the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster, moderated the discussion.

Secretary Dhardon held a meeting with members of the All Party Parliamentary

Group for Tibet and lobbied UK government officials and members of the UK Parliament – Tim Loughton, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet; Catherine West, Labour Party, Shadow Foreign Minister; Tom Brake, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Marion Fellows, Scottish National Party.

The visit featured interactions with journalists specialising in Asia from leading global news organisations and discussions with China experts from key London based think tanks and academic institutions.

Secretary Dhardon also held detailed discussions with representatives of UK based Tibet Support Groups. The visit concluded with an interaction with the council and members of the Tibetan Community in Britain on CTA's future priorities and role of Tibetans in diaspora in strengthening CTA's 5/50 vision.

Richard Gere talks Tibet with German Chancellor Angela Merkel

Hollywood actor Richard Gere met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel Thursday morning in the Chancellery. According to Chancellor Merkel's spokesperson Steffen Seibert, the talk between Gere and Merkel was officially "about the current situation in Tibet."

Further details of the talk are not revealed.

Richard Gere is a long time supporter of Tibet, a devout Buddhist and a friend of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Kai Muller, the Executive Director of International Campaign for Tibet, Germany said "his high level engagement on Tibet in Germany is very encouraging at a critical time. Richard Gere updated the Chancellor on recent developments in Tibet and spoke about ways in which the international community could help mitigate the plight of the Tibetan people."

Conference held in European Parliament – Reincarnation of Dalai Lama: Why it Matters to China

Office of Tibet Brussels organised a two-hour long conference in the European Parliament (EP) on Reincarnation of Dalai Lama: Why it Matters to China, yesterday. And it was co-hosted by the major political groups in the EP, European Peoples Party (EPP), Socialists and Democrats (S&D), Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) and the Greens/European Free Alliance.

Two experts on the subject presented their views. At first Ven. Dago Rinpoche drew the attention of the conference dispassionately on how the reincarnation system came into being in the Tibetan society, how the system has benefitted the society, what are occasional pitfalls of the system, who has the authority to decide the reincarnation of a particular reincarnate and what has been the process of seeking the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. His presentation brought out the singular aspect of this tradition in the Tibetan society as a societal custom and tradition.

Ven. Dago Rinpoche is a highly respected Tibetan Buddhist master who studied under eminent masters in several monasteries, notably at Dago Shedrupling. He arrived in France in 1960 with a scholarship from the Rockefeller Foundation and taught Tibetan language and philosophy at INALCO (Paris-Dauphine University) for nearly thirty years.

Ms Marie Holzman on the other hand highlighted the contradictory outlook of a Communist Chinese regime vis-à-vis religion. While China is an atheist country currently there are over 10 million Christians, 20-30 million Muslims and over 300 million Buddhists. In her view, the practice of spirituality is a way of dissent in the highly material and controlled society. The Chinese interest to have the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama is a way to control Tibet.



(L-R) MEP Tokes, MEP Scott-Cato, MEP Mann, MEP Preda, Ven. Dgapo Rinpoche, Ms Patton (translator) and Ms Holzman

Ms Marie Holzman is a Sinologist specialising on Contemporary China. She also taught at Paris 7 University for twenty years, gives conferences in a number of circles and is an active contributor to various monthly and quarterlies such as *Politique Internationale*.

The conference was opened by MEP Thomas Mann. MEP Preda moderated the panel. MEP Molly Scott-Cato and MEP Laszlo Tokes made opening remarks strongly expressing their views in support of Tibet and the incredulous way China is misrepresenting worldwide the concept and the tradition of reincarnation. MEP Csaba Sogor also recalled his country's experience under the Communist regime of Ceausescu. He said that spirituality will not be cowed down by military and forcible Communist theology.

Representative Tashi Phuntsok made the closing remarks. He reiterated that the reincarnation is a Tibetan tradition and not Chinese system. He recalled that His Holiness the Dalai Lama had made clear as early as in 1969 that the institution of the Dalai Lama will be decided by the Tibetan people. He quoted the recent remarks of His Holiness the Dalai Lama made in Delhi repeating the stand. Finally he quoted from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 2011 September 24 public statement on the issue, "When I am about ninety I will consult the high Lamas of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Tibetan public, and other concerned people who follow Tibetan Buddhism, and re-evaluate whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not... responsibility for doing so will primarily rest on the concerned officers of the Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Trust... I shall leave clear written instructions

about this. Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognized through such legitimate methods, no recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People's Republic of China".

The conference was attended by 7 MEPs, 15 Parliamentary Assistants, the Press, Politicians, NGOs, Tibet Support Groups and the staff of Office of Tibet with total of 60 participants. It may also be recalled that this is one of the series of advocacy events being carried out by the Office of Tibet, Brussels.

Representative Ngodup Dorjee Meets Vice-Prez of Czech Republic Senate

Representative Ngodup Dorjee, the Tibet Bureau in Geneva, met Ms. Miluse Horská, Vice-President of the Senate of the Czech Republic, Senator Petr Bratsky, Petr Silar and Jiri Sestak and Member of Parliament Mr Marek Benda on 18 January 2017 in Prague.



From left: Senator Mr. Petr Bratsky, Senator Mr. Petr Silar, Senator Mr. Jiri Sestak and Senator Mrs. Miluse Horská, Vice President of the Senate

Representative updated the Vice President and group of Senators on current human rights situation inside Tibet and presented briefing note with list of consolidated documents on Chinese violation of basic fundamental rights in Tibet in 2016. The briefing note included pressing issues on Serta Larung Gar and Yarchen Gar nunnery.

Representative also had chance to meet with Mr. Mark Martin, President of Amnesty International office in Prague and discuss in detail about the current human rights situation inside Tibet and particularly on Larung Gar. He also met with all TSGs in Prague, Potala,

MOS, Lungta, Forum2000, Tibetan Community and Tibet Open House and representative from People in Need, NGO in Prague.

Trump Administration to Support Tibet Issue



In response to written questions on Tibet from members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the process of confirmation of Rex Tillerson, Cabinet nominee of President Trump for the Secretary of State, responded favorably to all the questions.

In his reply, Mr. Tillerson said that he commits to ensuring Human Rights issues including the cases of political prisoners that will be incorporated into US Diplomatic engagements with China. He considers the issues of religious freedom of Christians, Tibetan Buddhist, Uygyur Muslims, Falun Gong practitioners as high priority. He added that evaluations on state of religious freedom should continue to be included in the annually released International Religious Freedom report, while emphasizing that in 2016 China was re-designated as a country of particular concern.

In response to US commitment on Sino Tibet dialogue he mentioned that while recognizing Tibet as part of the People's Republic of China, he will continue to encourage dialogue between Beijing and Representatives of Tibet's "Government in Exile" and/or the Dalai Lama. He will also encourage Beijing and the Governments of all nations to respect and preserve the distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of the Tibetan people worldwide.

On whether he would commit to meeting with the Dalai Lama, he answered with an emphatic 'Yes'. He also said denial of visas to media, civil society actors,

diplomats and others to places like Tibet that restrict freedom of movement and information as 'problematic'.

Mr. Tillerson further commits to assess as to what should be the best policy, recognizing that reciprocity in treatment is a principal in bilateral relations in response to whether it would be advisable to limit the number of visas allowed to executives or administrative personnel from Chinese state owned media enterprises operating in the US or on Chinese officials who are responsible for denying access to Tibet to US citizens with visa sanctions.

Tibetan Singer Phuljung Released After Serving Four Years in Prison



A popular Tibetan singer named Amchok Phuljung, imprisoned for singing songs of praise for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, was released from Sichuan's Mianyang Prison on 2 February, after serving his four-year sentence.

According to TCHRD reports, this is the first information on Amchok Phuljung after his arbitrary detention on 3 August 2012 in Barkham County. The physically challenged singer was held in prolonged incommunicado detention and sentenced in secret on unknown charges. In June 2012, following an arrest warrant issued in his name, Phuljung went into hiding for about two months but was eventually captured by the police.

Phuljung was arbitrarily detained in August 2012 shortly after the release of his music DVD that contained songs of praise for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan political leader Sikyong Lobsang Sangay.

Many of Phuljung's songs, including Kind Lama, Yeshe Norbu expresses his reverence and admiration for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay. His songs, the Heroes and We have Support reflects the sufferings of Tibetans inside Tibet.

At the time of his release, the local Chinese authorities had warned the family members against gathering near the prison to welcome him.

Singer Amchok Phuljung is a native of Kakhok County in Ngaba town, Amdo region of eastern Tibet. He was 33 years old when he was arrested in 2012.

Sikyong Urges Japan to Support Middle Way Approach

The Tibetan political leader Dr Lobsang Sangay urged the Japanese government to support the Middle Way Approach of the Tibetan people towards seeking genuine autonomy for Tibet as it does not contradict China's sovereignty and is a win-win solution for Tibetans and Chinese.

"We are seeking genuine autonomy for Tibet through non-violence and Chinese government can't say no to this. During their meetings with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, former US Presidents Barack Obama have expressed their strong and consistent support for the Middle Way Approach as it does not contradict China's sovereignty and One China Policy. Your support is not for the 6 million Tibetans but it is a support for justice, human rights and environment of Tibet," Sikyong said during a public talk on the way forward to resolve the problem of Tibet in Tokyo. Around 300 people including writers, journalists and Tibetan supporters attended the talk.

Responding from question from Kyodo news agency, Sikyong said, "We also hope President Trump will continue the past tradition of US presidents meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, support the Middle Way Approach and human rights of the Tibetan people,"



Sikyong's public talk for writers, journalists and Tibetan supporters on the way forward to resolve the problem of Tibet in Tokyo.

said Sikyong. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said he will continue to encourage dialogue between Beijing and representatives of the Dalai Lama or Tibetan "government in exile". I will also encourage Beijing and the governments of all nations to respect and preserve the distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of the Tibetan people worldwide.

Sikyong said to understand China, one must understand Tibet. "China is everywhere in Asia. All these happened because people did not paid attention to what happened in Tibet 60 years ago. Had Tibet was supported by the International community by all the Asian Buddhist countries, then we could have put a wall to China to move forward. When China occupied Tibet, many Asian countries or the international community supported us, then it kept expanding its influence to South East Asia and Senkaku island in east China sea," Sikyong said.

Underlining the importance of Tibet's natural environment, Sikyong said Tibet is considered as the water tower of Asia as 10 major rivers of Asia originate from the Tibetan plateau. Besides Antarctic and Arctic, Tibet has the largest reserve of ice. When ice in Antarctic and Arctic melts it flows into ocean, but when the ice in Tibet melts it forms rivers which becomes lifeline for more than a billion people in neighbouring Asian countries like China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Sikyong said His Holiness the Dalai Lama assured us that he will live up to 100 years and when he visits Japan this year, you will see him healthy and robust. He has outlived many Chinese communist leaders. Tibet is a land of

Chenresig, the Buddha of Compassion, Tibet cannot be separated from the Dalai Lama.

There over 300-400 million Buddhists in China and thousands of Chinese come to Dharamsala in India to meet and listen to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Few thousands came to Kalachakra teaching in Bodhi Gaya. So there is no problem between Chinese and Tibetan people. The problem of Tibet is not Chinese people, but the Chinese government's hardline policy.

Earlier in the morning, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay visited the Office of Tibet and addressed members of the Tibetan community.

Sikyong explained that in the short, mid and long term interest of Tibet, the present Kashag has envisioned 5/50 policy in its effort to preserve the identity of the Tibetan people and restore freedom and dignity of the Tibetans. In order to realise our goal, we need to preserve our unique language, culture and religion. To keep alive our identity, we should have a sound knowledge of our religion, language and culture. As long as Tibetans remain, Tibet and our cause will remain alive.

Underlining that Tibetans in exile have the sacred duty to realise the Middle Way Approach, Sikyong said the Central Tibetan Administration, in the five years, will focus its effort towards resuming dialogue between His Holiness the Dalai Lama's representative and the Chinese government to end the ongoing political repression, cultural assimilation, economic marginalisation and environmental destruction.

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Sikyong addresses Japanese Parliament Members at Parliament Building

Tibetan political leader Dr Lobsang Sangay received multiple rounds of applause when he addressed the members of the Japanese Parliament at the National Diet building which is Japan's bicameral legislative based in Tokyo. Members of Parliament, including advisers to Japanese government agencies and committee on foreign relations welcomed Dr Sangay at the Parliament of Japan. 70 members of Japan's parliament attended the address by Tibetan political leader Dr Lobsang Sangay.



Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay addressing the members of the Japanese Parliament at the National Diet building in Tokyo.

In his address, Mr Shimura Hakubun, former Education Minister of Japan and the current Chairman of Japanese Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet, underlined the need to support the preservation of Tibet's Buddhist culture, which says is spreading across the world and effective in dealing with conflicts in the world.

Describing Japan as the country which respects human rights, democracy and morality, Ms Yoshiko Sakurai, a veteran journalist and head of think tank, Japan Institute of National Fundamentals, urged Japan to reinvigorate their effort to support the Tibetan people. She appealed to the members of Japanese parliament to host His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetan political leader Dr Lobsang Sangay whenever they visit Japan. "This will send a very important message to the international community," she said.

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay addressed the members of the Parliament on Tibet and freedom.

Congratulating the establishment of Japanese Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet consisting of 87 members of parliament, which is largest in the parliamentary support group in the world, Sikyong said the group sends a very powerful message of hope and encouragement to Tibetans suffering repression inside Tibet."

Sikyong congratulated Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's successful meeting with US President Donald Trump. As Prime Minister Abe has said Japan will play a leading roles in the international community by coordinating its foreign policies with the US, Sikyong urged him to support Middle Way Approach of the Central Tibetan Administration towards seeking genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people.

"Tibet was historically an independent nation and a great empire which at one time extended to China, central and south Asia. But it is now under occupation of China and there is political repression, economic marginalisation, social discrimination, environmental destruction and cultural assimilation," he said.

"China's constitution allows for religious freedom and Chinese government claims there is religious freedom in Tibet, but the destruction of Larung Gar and other monasteries clearly demonstrate that the reality is otherwise," he added.

Sikyong said Tibetans in exile under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama rebuilt all the major monasteries brick by brick that were destroyed in Tibet and managed to revive Buddhism in Tibet. "That is spirit of the Tibetan people. No matter how much you destroy us, we will rise up again and again," he said.

Sikyong reiterated that the Chinese communist government has no legitimacy and credibility in recognising

the next Dalai Lama. “Look at their track record. They have destroyed 98% of the monasteries and nunneries, expelled 99.99% of monks and nuns and criticised His Holiness the Dalai Lama throughout his lifetime. So what credibility they have in recognising the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. So it is similar to Fidel Castro recognising the pope and expecting Christians to follow which is not going to happen,” Sikyong said.

Sikyong said “China’s expansion in borders of India, neighbouring Asian countries and Senkaku Islands has already happened in Tibet over 50 years ago. Satellite images showing the building of airfields on the disputed islands by China. But China has already 5 airfields in Tibet. Hence, had the neighbouring countries prevented China from invading Tibet, its expansion would not have happened.”

Sikyong said China is controlling Tibet, known as water tower of Asia, and its rivers which are the lifeline of billions of people in neighbouring downstream Asian countries including India, China, Bangladesh and Asean countries. “Experts and scientists says before wars were fought over land, nowadays wars are fought over oil, and soon wars will be fought over water. In the last 50 years, 50% of glaciers in Tibet have melted and disappeared, and by the year 2100 the remaining glaciers will melt and disappear. If that happened there will be major crisis of Tibet in the Asian continent.”

Sikyong said “Tibet is a litmus test for countries for their moral standard and their expectation for human rights. So it is a collective responsibility of the Asian countries who share Tibet’s Buddhist civilisation and those who depend on Tibet for water to address the issue of Tibet.”

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay addressed the parliament with national flags of Japan and Tibet in the background.

Sikyong Inaugurates First Ever Tibetan Women’s Empowerment Conference

The Tibetan political leader, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay inaugurated the first ever CTA-organised ‘Tibetan Women’s Empowerment Conference’, at Gangchen Kyishong on 21 February 2017.

The Tibetan Women’s Empowerment conference—an undertaking of Women’s Empowerment Desk of Department of Home—witnessed an awe-inspiring attendance of more than 340 participants, including Tibetan nuns, lay women and men, from across the social and political spectrum.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Chief Justice Commissioner Kargyu Dhondup, Justice Commissioners Ngawang Choedak Choetri Tenga and Dr Ngawang Rabgyal, Speaker of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Deputy Speaker Acharya Yeshe Phuntsok, members of the Kashag and officials at the helm of the Central Tibetan Administration.

Unveiling its premier Women’s Empowerment Conference, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay said that the organisation of the conference is a step in the right direction to carry forward the shared vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration to promote leadership and compassionate qualities of women in social and political development of the Tibetan community.

Sikyong also lauded Tibetan women’s crucial role in safeguarding Tibet’s unique and rich religious, linguistic and cultural traditions beginning from the non-violent Tibetan women’s uprising against the repressive policies of the Chinese government on 12 March 1959.

Highlighting the consistent increase in representation of women in Tibetan administrative bodies, Sikyong said that the vision of the conference is aimed beyond gender equality and on furthering women’s role in all socio-economic and political activities.



Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay and members of the 15th Kashag with members of the organising committee of the first ever ‘Tibetan Women’s Empowerment Conference’ on 21 February 2017.

“The Charter for Tibetans in exile and CTA rules and regulations provide for equal opportunity for men and women. Women parliamentarians were elected as early as 1964 when even some advanced economies still did not have women parliamentarians. In fact, today women constitute over 20% of the elected representatives in the Tibetan parliament. Women now make up forty-five percent of the overall workforce of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). Forty-eight and sixty percent of the staff of Education and Health departments respectively are women. Over half of all new and incoming CTA staff are women,” Sikyong prided.

As part of its commitment on women empowerment, the Tibetan political leader also announced that 12 March on every year will formally be observed as Women’s day. “The observance of Tibetan Women’s Day on 12 March will reflect the collective will of the Tibetan leadership and people to accelerate the Women’s Empowerment Policy agenda. Also with the implementation of affirmative action through various upcoming initiatives, the departments of CTA will continue to prioritise Tibetan women’s empowerment initiatives as its flagship agenda,” he said.

Introducing the background and objective of the three-day conference, Kalon Sonam Topgyal Khorlatsang of the Home Department said the conference aims to rake in intellectual and public discourse on the understanding of the

revised 'Women's Empowerment Policy' and to garner recommendations on the effective implementation of the clauses of the policy. He further highlighted His Holiness the Dalai Lama's emphasis on promoting women's leadership in the world, and quoted a recent remark made by His Holiness at a National Women's Parliament that 'In order to produce warm hearted and compassionate humanity, women should take more active role in promoting deeper human values. In all professions, we need promotion of values.'

The Home Kalon hoped that the vast participation of over 300 Tibetan women and women will bode well for further scope in empowering our community.

The revised seven-point women empowerment policy was drafted by a committee composed almost entirely of

senior women officials of the CTA and was adopted by the Kashag following due consultations and comprehensive deliberations with women from all walks of life including ground level women leaders, students, teachers, nuns, homemakers, etc.

The revised women empowerment policy outlines seven key points in its stated objective of making Tibetan women equal partners in all aspects of Tibetan society. The points include Women and human rights, Education, Health, Economy, Governance and Leadership, Social, and Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV). On Sexual and Gender-based Violence, the Kashag has promised to adopt a zero tolerance policy. It further promised to sensitise community members on SGBV and establish a redressal mechanism

for those who have experienced gender based harassment and discrimination.

Based on the WEP policy, the conference will feature four plenary sessions—Governance and Leadership, Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives into the Development Process, Achieving Social Empowerment of Women and Tackling Sexual and Gender Based Violence. Today's plenary session on Governance and Leadership will be led by esteemed speakers including Kalon Karma Gelek Yuthok, Department of Religion and Culture, Mr Lobsang Jinpa, Secretary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Ms Lynda Lepcha, corporate trainer and author, Kalon Ngodup Tsering, Department of Education, Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk, Health Department, Ms Asha Ramesh, Gender and Development Activist.

Sikyong wishes everyone on Losar (Tibetan New Year)

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay extended Losar greetings to Tibetans inside and outside Tibet on the occasion of traditional Tibetan New Year – Losar 2144 – the year of the fire bird. The Tibetan new year begins from 27 – 01 March 2017. Click here to watch the video message.

Sikyong's Message:

I, personally as well as on behalf of the Kashag, extend my heartiest greetings and wish a happy Tibetan new year (Losar 2144 – Year of the Fire Bird) to our deeply revered spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama, heads of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and Bon religion, Tibetans living inside and outside Tibet, the people and government of India, and friends of Tibet from all over the world.

Losar is an important traditional festival of Tibet, and therefore it is celebrated with wholehearted thrill and joy to bring auspiciousness. However it is also an occasion to look forward with renewed hope and faith. Tibetan people have the most precious responsibility to preserve our unique identity, rich culture, heritage and Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Meanwhile, the situation inside Tibet continues to remain grim under repression and oppression. Those of us who are in exile should be aware of it and summon courage and determination to carry forward the Tibetan freedom movement-based on truth, justice and non-violence.

This year, as requested by the Central Tibetan Administration, His Holiness the Dalai Lama consented to give the

34th Kalachakra Initiation at Bodh Gaya and the Kalachakra initiation turned out exceptionally well and successful for all devotees.

During the Initiation, His Holiness the Dalai Lama affirmed the prayers of the Tibetan people and promised to live for over a hundred years. This is an immense blessing to the Tibetan people. On that note, Tibetans should express gratitude in their hearts and earnestly work towards fulfilling the aspirations of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

In conclusion, expressing my profound prayers for long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, I once again extend my heartiest greetings on the Tibetan new year, and hope that Tibetans inside and outside Tibet reunite soon.



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His Holiness the Dalai Lama Commences Ritual Ceremony for 34th Kalachakra Initiation

Historically the Kalachakra is closely associated with the Dalai Lama and Namgyal Monastery, His Holiness said. His Holiness the 7th Dalai Lama first began providing Kalachakra Initiations to large communities of ordained and lay practitioners in Tibet during the 18th century. Since then the subsequent Dalai Lamas have continued this tradition of bestowing the Kalachakra Initiations. His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama has bestowed 33 Kalachakra Initiations through out the world.

Enlightening his disciples on motivation for drawing blessing from the Kalachakra teachings, His Holiness said: “Many of you have come here, leaving the comforts of your home, for spiritual practice and dharma. But regarding spirituality, you need to practice in order to draw



His Holiness the Dalai Lama walking towards the main chapel of the Kalachakra teaching accompanied by Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, 2 January 2017. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

blessings of the Kalachakra. Through mere prayers, you can't draw this kind of inspiration and therefore you must strive



His Holiness the Dalai Lama offers prayers before the base for the Kalachakra Sand Mandala on the first day of the Kalachakra ritual ceremony at Bodh Gaya, 2 January 2017. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

for transformation of your mind and to the best your ability, try to integrate the teachings and train your mind.”

“The purpose of receiving the Kalachakra initiation is to make transformation within oneself. Therefore, having come here for the Kalachakra, your goal should be that you will become better in your spiritual practice. If you can do that, the purpose of coming here is served.” His Holiness advised his devotees.

Regarding the transformation of mind, it cannot happen by receiving teaching in few days. You are sowing the seed for enlightenment, he said.

His Holiness conduct the ritual ceremony to consecrate venue for the next two days and therefore, told the devotees to use the time to make pilgrimage at holy places in and around Bodh Gaya.

On 5 January, His Holiness begins the

“Teaching on Shantideva’s A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life (Chodjug) and Kamalashila’s The Middling States of Meditation (Gomrim Barpa).

On the next day His Holiness the Dalai Lama, along with monks of Namgyal Monastery, led the Kalachakra venue consecration ceremony at the Kalachakra teaching ground.

As part of the consecration ceremony, the monks of Namgyal Monastery performed ‘Earth Ritual Dance Ceremony’ later in the afternoon.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama looks on as monks from Namgyal Monastery perform the Earth Ritual Dance on the second day of preparations for the Kalachakra Empowerment in Bodhgaya, Bihar, India on January 3, 2017. Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

His Holiness concludes the ritual ceremony following which he start the preliminary teachings on Shantideva’s ‘A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life (Chodjug) and Kamalashila’s The Middling States of Meditation.

Obituary: Karma Tsewang Gyurmey, former settlement officer of Pokhara Tashi Palkhyil



Late Mr Karma Tsewang Gyurmey (1927 – 2017)

Mr Karma Tsewang Gyurmey, former Tibetan settlement officer of Tashi Palkhyil in Pokhara, Nepal, passed away on 6 January 2017 after a prolonged illness.

Mr Karma Tsewang Gyurmey was born in 1927 in Ngari region of western Tibet to father Dawa Tenzin and mother Rinchen Khando. Before coming into exile in 1962, he served as the headman of Dong Bharyang, his ancestral village in Tibet for several years.

After coming into exile, he was appointed as the settlement officer of Tashi Palkhyil settlement in Pokhara, Nepal, by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He also served as the manager of the regional Tibetan

cooperative society till 1991 and was the chairman of the local Tibetan assembly for many years.

He has spent more than 29 years of his life in the service of Tibet and the Tibetan people.

The Department of Home, Central Tibetan Administration, expressed its deep condolences and prays for his noble rebirth.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Begins Preliminary Teachings of 34th Kalachakra

His Holiness the Dalai Lama began the first of the four days preliminary teachings on Shantideva's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* (Tib: Chodjug) and Kamalashila's *The Middling Stages of Meditation* (Tib: Gomrim Barpa) at Bodh Gaya.

The preliminary teachings began with recitation of Heart Sutra in Pali, Sanskrit and Tibetan language, salutation from Abhisamayalankara and one verse of the mandala offering.

Before commencing the main teaching, His Holiness the Dalai Lama greeted the audience and met with members of sponsors and dignitaries.

His Holiness said that he had been keen on giving teachings to the devotees that would really benefit them in their daily lives. The chosen texts: Chodjug, Bodhisattva's way of life consists of ten chapters dedicated to the development of Bodhicitta (the mind of enlightenment) through the practice of the six perfections; *The Middling Stages of Meditation* lays emphasis on the sequential understanding of the practice of teaching of Buddha.

His Holiness said he received the explanatory transmission of the Bodhisattva's Way of Life from Khunnu Lama Rinpoche in Bodh Gaya and the transmission of *The Middling Stages of Meditation* from a Sakya abbot.

His Holiness explained that it is more important to put dharma to practice, rather than praying and performing rituals. "Whatever dharma discourse we do, its important to turn the dharma into practice. We are doing this dharma discourse in accordance to perfection of wisdom teaching, therefore we will have to do the practice of cultivating spirit of enlightenment in order to pray for all sentient beings."

His Holiness, very passionately, spoke about the need for Tibetan Buddhists to bring primary focus on quality in their religious pursuits and focus on



Members of audience listening to His Holiness' teaching on Shantideva's A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life (Tib: Chodjug)

contributing to the world through their rich traditional knowledge. "The cultural tradition and knowledge of Tibet is a treasure for the world. Through the knowledge of our cultural heritage, we could make immense contribution to the world. Tibetan ancestors worked really hard to have the study of logic, science of mind and epistemology translated in Tibetan language. We should strive to benefit the world with these ancient knowledge."

He emphasised that his main commitments, since he devolved the political authority in 2011, has been to work for promotion of human values; promotion of religious harmony; and the preservation of Tibet's rich cultural heritage.

Speaking about universal responsibility and promotion of oneness of humanity, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said he considers himself as one among the seven billion human beings. "Although I am sitting on this throne to introduce the teaching of Buddha, we are all same human being. Irrespective of whether we are believers or non-believers, we all want happiness and do not want suffering. Moreover environmentally and economically, we are living as one human community. If something is going wrong in one community, it affects other

communities as well. Living divided won't fit in today's reality."

"Although we pray for all sentient beings, we cannot really do much for them. In the practical sense, what we can do is promote love and compassion through secular means and not through religious views," His Holiness observed.

Contending that people of all faiths should respect and accept the common message, His Holiness said, "All religions and beliefs are beneficial for the followers and therefore it all must co-exist peacefully. But all traditions have same message and that is love, compassion, helping heart. The goal is to promote love and compassion. The philosophical differences are needed because of the difference in our mental dispositions."

"As a Buddhist monk, even in dreams I always feel that I am a monk. From my own experience I know that the practice of teaching helps me and therefore I feel that people who follow their religion sincerely, could really benefit from their practice," he opined.

His Holiness then started the formal teachings of the text of Shantideva's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* (Tib: Chodjug).

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Leads an Interfaith Prayer for World Peace at 34th Kalachakra



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with the leaders of major world religious traditions at the 34th Kalachakra at Bodh Gaya. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

On the occasion the 34th Kalachakra Initiation for world peace, The Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, inaugurated an interfaith prayer, along with representatives of major world religious traditions at the Kalachakra teaching ground, Bodh Gaya.

Inaugurating the ceremony, leaders of major religious traditions including Hindu, Islam, Jain and Sikh joined together in prayers for world peace, promotion of religious harmony and promotion of common message of love and compassion.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama exchanged an emotional greeting with the representatives and expressed his delight at being able to gather the major religious leaders and share their messages of love and brotherhood at the holiest Buddhist pilgrimage in the world.

Reiterating one of his lifelong commitments for promotion of religious harmony, His Holiness said it's important to establish harmonious relationship among religious beliefs on the understanding that different philosophical views suit and benefit different people. "For 7 billion human beings, there are different

mental dispositions and mindsets. It is impossible to have all the 7 billion people follow one religion and be able to benefit from it as effectively."

He further emphasised that even within one tradition as Buddhism, there are different vehicles and philosophical tenets to benefit different followers. "Similarly, we are all following the same message but practising different religions in order to reap effective benefits."

Offering India as a model of religious harmony and brotherhood, His Holiness said, "I think religious harmony in India is truly wonderful. Although there are occasional problems created by mischievous people, India is one among the 200 countries in the world where all different religions coexist harmoniously since thousands of years."

In order to mark the auspicious event, His Holiness and the religious leaders participated in symbolic ceremonies such as tree-planting and pouring water over a model of globe which symbolises cleansing and rejuvenating the earth.

His Holiness applauded the spirit and contribution of the representatives in their respective communities and

encouraged them to continue the efforts.

A Jain representative, in his remarks, expressed deep reverence and admiration for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his leadership in promoting religious harmony. "His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is supreme leader among the global interfaith congregation. He has taught the world the teaching of all religions are to bind people together; not break them. Due to the blessings of His Holiness, this kind of conference are going on all over the world," he said.

Describing His Holiness as an world icon for love and compassion, a Sikh representative said, "His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the only leader who can drive the world citizens towards the path of compassion and peace. In this world, if everyone should look up to someone for guidance in compassion, it can only be achieved through the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama."

The representatives had attended the ceremony of 350th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th Sikh guru, at Patna. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Bihar Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar had graced the celebration.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressing the interfaith gathering and prayer held on fifth day of 34th Kalachakra teachings at Bodh Gaya, 6 January 2017. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

His Holiness resumed his teachings on Shantideva's A Guide to the Bodhisatva's Way of Life (Tib: Chodjug) and Kamalashila's The Middling Stages of Meditation (Tib: Gomrim Barpa).

I hope His Holiness will Confer the Kalachakra in Tibet in the Future



As the most prominent Buddhist teaching, the Kalachakra Initiation concludes in Bodh Gaya, one could see thousands of devotees, young and old, throng the streets to receive a glimpse of their most revered spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Among the sundry of devotees, an old man, bundled in a puffer jacket, smiles through his toothless lip and prays with his rosary. 90-year-old Lobsang Choedon from Phendeling Old People's Home, Mundgod has received 11 Kalachakra teachings from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The first time being in Tibet in 1954 in Norbulingka, Lhasa before the Chinese invasion of Tibet. His eyes sparkled as he reminisced the first Kalachakra conferred in exile in Dharamshala in 1970. "That time there were very few people because we

didn't have any money then", chuckled Lobsang.

Like Lobsang Choedon, Thupten Ngodup, a 78-year-old destitute, from Phendeling Old People's Home and 93-year-old Choedon from Kalimpong have both received the first kalachakra teachings in Tibet.

From the pain of leaving behind one's home-country to coping with challenges in exile, one thing the senior citizens remain hopeful about is a future in Tibet. While their life were spent in the throes of unrelenting challenges in exile, it is yet again made beautiful with their hope to return once again to their motherland.

87-year-old Dakpa Sangyal from Lugsam Samdupling Old People's Home, Bylakuppe, a former monk at

Loseling monastery, Tibet said, "Some people opined that this could be the last Kalachakra. But I don't think it's true. I have seen His Holiness up and close. His Holiness is very healthy. I hope His Holiness the Dalai Lama will confer the Kalachakra in Tibet in the future."

The Central Tibetan Administration arranged for over four hundred senior citizens to receive the 34th Kalachakra Initiation at Bodh Gaya.

Although their body has shrunk into lean sloughed shoulders, eyes bespectacled and voices childish treble, yet within them burns the flame of hope, the hope to see His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Tibet, conferring the Kalachakra teaching once again.



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Sikyong Pays Tribute to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Indian Government on Auspicious Initiation of 34th Kalachakra

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, in an address at the 34th Kalachakra gathering, expressed his profound gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for conferring the 34th Kalachakra teaching at the request of Central Tibetan Administration, and also thanked the central and local Indian administration for support and assistance.

“On behalf of the Tibetan people, I offer my deepest gratitude and reverence to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for blessing us with the 34th Kalachakra Initiation. Secondly, I extend special thanks to Bihar CM Shri Nitish Kumar for taking a personal initiative and all the concerned authorities for providing us as much facilities and assistance as we sought in organising the Kalachakra.” Sikyong said.

Marking the soaring number of physical and virtual participation in the 34th Kalachakra teaching, he said. “On top of the 200,000 devotees attending the teaching here at Bodh Gaya, we have over 150,000 people from all over the world participating in the Kalachakra teaching through our live telecast. For those Tibetans who were not able to attend this teaching, CTA arranged a direct WiFi access and enabled thousands of Tibetans in over 15 Tibetan settlements

to receive the teachings virtually from their respective settlements.”

“Most importantly, as His Holiness has affirmed, our brothers and sisters living inside Tibet can also receive the blessing of the Kalachakra teaching through prayers,” Sikyong exulted, welcoming the auspicious start of the 34th Kalachakra Initiation.

Sikyong further informed that the Tibetan spiritual leader is very healthy and urged Tibetans to continue their efforts in accumulating collective merit of Tibetan people.

“The Central Tibetan Administration has fervently encouraged Tibetans to accumulate and enhance collective merit of the Tibetan people in order to ensure long and healthy life of our supreme leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The most effective means is through accumulating virtuous deeds and implementing his teachings.”

The Tibetan political leader prided the growing acclamation for His Holiness the Dalai Lama across the world and said His Holiness’ noble vision and thoughts are being implemented as models in schools and in the leading modern science communities.



Sikyong addressing devotees at the 34th Kalachakra teaching at Bodh Gaya, 7 January, 2017. Photo/ Tenzin Phende/DIIR

He further informed the gathering that secular ethics as prescribed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama will soon be implemented in Tibetan schools education system.

Concluding his remarks, Sikyong appealed all devotees to participate in the teaching in good and kind spirit. “As attendees of the teaching, you are all now spiritual friends for this life and therefore begin the practice of His Holiness’ teaching from here and move on to spread to the world,” he told.

The Tibetan political leader also thanked sponsors of 34th Kalachakra, the staff of Central Tibetan Administration and volunteers for their selfless work.

Obituary: CTA Mourns Demise of Mr Ngawang Dhondup Narkyi



Late Ngawang Dhondup Narkyi (1931-2017)

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), expressed its deep sympathies and condolences at the demise of Mr Ngawang Dhondup Narkyi, a former Secretary. He passed away at 09:05 PM on 13 February 2017 at the age of 87.

As a mark of respect to the deceased, a prayer service was organised at Gangkyi Nyatri hall from 02:00 -03:00 PM to pray for his noble rebirth. All the offices of the Central Tibetan Administration were shut after the prayer service as an official gesture of mourning.

The eulogy for the late former Secretary was delivered by Topgyal Tsering Zongkha, secretary of the Kashag.

Ngawang Dhondup Narkyi was born on 6 September 1931 in Dagpo in U-tsang province. He had an illustrious education in 1942 beginning from his schooling at the Tse School in the Potala and

completed Tsedung in 1948. He was member of Reformation Committee in 1957. He also did Mayor of Lhasa in 1958. In 1959 he escaped from Tibet and continued his service in Central Tibetan Administration.

He worked as Secretary for Department of Information and International Relations from 1960-68. He also worked in Library of Tibetan Works and Archives from 1971-78.

Since 1983, he worked in Private Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and even worked on biography of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Kalachakra Organising Committee Provides the Best Facilities Leaving the Devotees Happy and Contented

Devotees residing in the tents provided by the organising committee of the 34th Kalachakra expressed their deep satisfaction over the excellent facilities made available for them.



Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay inspection visit to the temporary tent city near Magadh University on Monday, 9 January 2017.

Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay made an inspection visit to the temporary tent city near Magadh University on Monday, 9 January, housing a major chunk of the over 2 lakh devotees.

During the visit, Sikyong held frank interactions with the residents and inquired about the availability of regular power and water supplies, maintenance and cleanliness services, and suggestions to further improve the facilities.

The devotees expressed their contentment with the facilities and thanked the Central Tibetan Administration for the effective organising of the Kalachakra.

The 34th Kalachakra initiation by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which is on its way to becoming one of the largest congregation of Tibetan Buddhists in recent history, is organised by the Central Tibetan Administration.

The Central Tibetan Administration has constituted a core organising committee and sub-committees to oversee the preparations of the Kalachakra.

The subcommittee for tents is headed by Karma Senge, Acting Secretary of Department of Education and looks after the accommodation needs of the devotees

staying in the tents. The subcommittee has provided four different kinds of tents, namely EP tents, Dormitory tents, Swiss cottage tents and Plywood rooms.

There are 855 EP tents with accommodation capacity of 8 individuals each, 40 dormitory tents with accommodation capacity of 30 individuals each, 170 premium quality Swiss cottage tents with accommodation capacity of 4 individuals each and 285 plywood rooms with a capacity of 6 individuals each.

The tents are guarded round the clock by volunteers from the Tibetan Youth Congress to pre-empt thefts or any other untoward incidents. Fifty students from Benares Hindu University are also providing voluntary services in terms of keeping the area clean. The state government of Bihar has also provided assistance in terms of security personnel and emergency fire relief services as well as regular transport vehicles to and from the main teaching ground.

The subcommittee for water and sanitation is headed by Mr Karma Choeying, Additional secretary from the department of Home. This subcommittee takes care of water supplies for the devotees staying in the tents and provision of running water in the toilet and bathrooms- over 300 toilets, 160 urinals, 260 bathrooms and more than one hundred water taps.

The public health and education department of the Bihar Government has also facilitated five borewells at the request of the Central Tibetan Administration to provide adequate water supply to the devotees. They have also provided a 5000 litre water tank to store water during the teachings.

This subcommittee is also looking after the maintenance of the more than 200 temporary toilets and urinals set up for the devotees.

The subcommittee on electrical power supply is headed by Mr Sonam Tenzing, Additional Secretary of Tibet Policy Institute. This subcommittee works in close cooperation with the Bihar Government and India Power House. This subcommittee provides electricity to 2735 electric bulbs, 3645 sockets and charging points through four electric transformers. Four large generators are always on standby to provide instant electricity in case of power cuts.

The sound and display subcommittee is headed by Mr Jigme Tsering, Acting Secretary of the Public Service Commission. The subcommittee handles the sound system and telecast of the Kalachakra teachings through 16 large LEDs and 18 television in the main teaching ground and at the two mega tents outside the teaching ground. The subcommittee also facilitates media section of DIIR and the 20 FM booths established to provide simultaneous translations of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings in various languages. The Kalachakra Reception subcommittee headed by Mr Tashi Topgyal, Acting



The subcommittee for water and sanitation provides drinking water to residents. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

Secretary, Office of Auditor General, CTA oversees reception arrangement for revered lamas, rinpoches and dignitaries. The subcommittee has provided 11 vehicles for the use of CTA officials and dignitaries.

The subcommittee for collection of donations offered by devotees during the teachings has provided 9 swipe machines for the convenience of devotees and is supervised by 6 staff of CTA.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Confers the 34th Kalachakra Initiation at Bodh Gaya



His Holiness the Dalai Lama preside over the torma, ritual cake offering ceremony to confer the 34th Kalachakra Initiation at Bodh Gaya, 11 January 2017. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

The Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama conferred the actual Kalachakra Initiation for World Peace and Harmony in the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage site, Bodh Gaya.

The key purpose of the initiation is to provide an opportunity for people from all walks of life to gather in a peaceful atmosphere to listen to teachings on compassion and to reinvigorate the compassionate and enlightened nature of all beings. For vigorous Buddhist practitioners, the Kalachakra initiation is the foremost tantric yoga practice.

The main teaching ground and the adjoining streets were packed with devotees including monks, nuns, incarnate lamas and laypeople. According to the Kalachakra Organising Committee, the 34th kalachakra has attracted more than 200,000 devotees from 92 countries, making it one of the highest attended Kalachakra in recent history.

The conferment of the main initiation began with recitation of heart sutra, offering of homage to holy dharma and the emaculate masters of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, ritual cake offering and the offering of mandala by Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay.

While introducing the Kalachakra teaching to the devotees, His Holiness the Dalai Lama remembered the Tibetans

inside Tibet and thousands of Chinese in China who couldn't attend the teachings because of a travel restrictions imposed by the Chinese government. His Holiness said, "There are people in China and Tibetans inside Tibet who have difficulty coming here. So I have told them that if they could keep their devotion strong and direct their mind towards the Kalachakra teachings for today and following days, they could receive the initiation through the power of their faith and will."

"As mentioned in Vinaya, there was an ordination given by way of letters. So similarly with the modern tool of communication, the Tibetans and Chinese could visualise taking the initiation. As we go through the teachings here, if they could accordingly, think and follow my instructions, then they will receive the initiation from today onwards," His Holiness said while offering prayers for dispelling any obstacles that they may face in taking the initiation.

Leading into the main initiation, His



Thousands of devotees following the instructions of His Holiness the Dalai Lama as he confers the 34th Kalachakra Initiation, 11 January 2017. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

Holiness guided his disciples on grasping the essence of the Kalachakra teachings. "We have come across the profound and extensive teaching of Buddha, which has been clarified by masters like Nagarjuna and his disciples. The essence of these teachings come down to bodhichitta and wisdom of emptiness. It is not just about receiving some blessing, but since we have the potential for attaining the four buddha bodies and these potentials are manifested more and more within

ourselves. So, in order to invigorate this potential, we are taking the initiations," he told the devotees.

His Holiness advised the devotees to reflect on the principles of Bodhichitta and wisdom of emptiness at all times during the teachings. He said the union of wisdom and compassionate action is indispensable for a practitioner to attain higher realisation, adding that every individual with intelligence has the potential for altruism.

Addressing the practitioners, His Holiness said the wish to free from cyclic existence is the most important requirement for a practitioner in order to receive the Kalachakra yoga tantra initiation. He said, "To confer the highest yoga tantra initiation, as I explained if you don't have wish to be free from cyclic of existence it is difficult to become Buddhist practitioner. With an understanding of impermanence and enlightenment, you should identify the negative emotions and have the wish to overcome them. Most importantly, cultivate the wish to liberate all sentient beings across the space from suffering."

In order to motivate devotees towards compassionate action and thought, His Holiness bestowed the Bodhichitta vow and tantric vows.

Sakya Gongma Rinpoche, Gyalwang Karmapa Rinpoche, Gaden Tripa Lobsang Tenzin, Rizong Rinpoche, former Gaden Tripa, Taklung Shabdrung Rinpoche, Bokar Rinpoche, Kalon trisur Professor Samdong Rinpoche, Jangtse Choje Rinpoche, Sharpa Choje Rinpoche and many other venerable lamas took part in the first day conferment of Kalachakra Initiation at Bodh Gaya.

Kalons, secretaries and officials of Central Tibetan Administration, along with sponsors and other dignitaries were also present.

Connecting Faith Through Technology—Why the 34th Kalachakra is a Divine Gift for the World

The 34th Kalachakra Initiation by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which attracted people of faith from across the globe, is special for many reasons. It is taking place in Bodh Gaya, the land where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment, is being organized by the Central Tibetan Administration for the first time in exile history and the entire initiation was broadcast Live on Tibet TV.

According to Tibetan Political Leader Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, “Besides the 200,000 devotees attending the teaching from 92 countries here at Bodh Gaya, we have over 150,000 people from all over the world participating in the Kalachakra teaching through our live broadcast of the event.”

The Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama broadcasted the Kalachakra Initiation in eight languages: English, Chinese, Tibetan, Vietnamese, Hindi, Korean, Russian and Mongolian.



Beijing based Tibetan Writer Tsering Woesser receiving the Kalachakra Teachings via Live Webcast. Photo: Pazu Kong

“The response from across the globe is overwhelming. We are inundated with online messages from viewers from scores of nations: from China to Chile, from South Africa to Sri Lanka, thanking us for the broadcast,” said Tsering Yangkey, Additional Secretary, DIIR.

Tibetans in Tibet who couldn’t attend the Kalachakra initiation owing to travel restrictions and China’s recall policy, have been assured by His Holiness the Dalai Lama that they will receive the

could visualize taking the initiation. As we go through the teachings here, if they could accordingly, think and follow my instructions. I will pray for all of them and then they will receive the initiation from today onwards.”

Beijing based Tibetan writer Tsering Woesser, winner of 2010 Courage in Journalism award expressed her indomitable faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama and her spiritual fulfillment over having received the Kalachakra Initiation through the Live Webcast.

Tibet based Tibetan writer Tashi Rabten (Theurang) shared a moving image of an elderly Tibetan woman in Tibet receiving the Kalachakra teaching online and wrote ‘travel permits can be seized but the devotion in our heart cannot be subdued.’

CTA arranged for public screening of the Live Webcast in the Tibetan settlements in India to benefit the exile Tibetans, mostly the senior citizens who couldn’t attend the Kalachakra.

“It is my dream to attend the Kalachakra but I couldn’t do so because of my age and ill-health. It is quite unbelievable that I am able to receive the teachings daily through Tibet TV and attain ordination despite being away in a remote village in Ladakh. I now feel blessed by the living Buddha, His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” said Tseten Dorjee, 80, Ladakh.

Organized screening of the Live Webcast were also arranged by volunteer groups in India, Nepal and the United States.



Public Screening of Live Webcast of Kalachakra in Majnukatilla. Photo: Kalsang Jigme/ In Frame

Tibet TV, CTA’s official web-station streamed the teachings live on its YouTube and Facebook page.

“This is the first time we used the Facebook live video feature for Kalachakra. Tibet TV’s Facebook page registered a record 3-million reach during the Kalachakra and garnered over 200,000 views for a single broadcast,” said Namgyal Tsewang, Tibet TV.

initiation in spirit.

On the first day of Actual Kalachakra Initiation, His Holiness remembered the absentee devotees and said, “As mentioned in Vinaya, there was an ordination given by way of letters. So similarly with the modern tool of communication, the Tibetans and Chinese and devotees across the globe having faith in the Kalachakra Teachings

“The Live Broadcast of the Kalachakra is a successful model of connecting faith through technology. By leveraging technology, we have been able to reach out to a global audience including devotees in Tibet and China, and offer them the divine gift of virtual participation in the auspicious Kalachakra Initiation,” said Dhardon Sharling, Information Secretary, DIIR.

34th Kalachakra Initiation Concludes with Long Life Prayer Offering

On the finale of the 34th Kalachakra Initiation, a day marked with spectacular offering of long life prayer to the highest revered spiritual leader of the Tibetan people by Central Tibetan Administration, International Tibetan Business Association and Worshipping Congregation from the Himalayas of Nepal, His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave a powerful moral message for all Tibetan people across the world from Bodh Gaya on 14 January 2017.

Tibetans worldwide have gained a reputation as being kindhearted and generous people, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, while presiding over the Avalokiteshwara empowerment ceremony in the morning. “Many of the Chinese visitors to Tibet have said Tibetans in Tibet are very good people and Tibetans in other countries across the world, are equally praised for their kindness and warmheartedness. We must hold up these good qualities and continue expressing these values for the



His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressing devotees during the closing ceremony of the 34th Kalachakra Initiation at Bodh Gaya, 14 January 2017. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

people of the world,” he said, expressing gratification over the relentless perseverance of the Tibetan people.

He told them to move on with those principles in heart and to shed the warped sense of biases to regions and sects. “I urge Tibetans everywhere to remove their regional and sectarian partisanship from their thoughts, words and actions. It is wrong to create these superfluous differences as sects and regions; its small minded. Remember that all of us



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with Chief Minister of Bihar, Shri Nitish Kumar, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay and Richard Gere, longtime Tibet supporter during the closing ceremony of the 34th Kalachakra Initiation at Bodh Gaya, 14 January 2017. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

are followers of the same teaching of Buddha and the 17 Nalanda masters.”

The Tibetan spiritual emboldened the spirit and aspirations of the Tibetan people by reasserting that he would live for atleast 100 years and take rebirth to continue to serve humanity. “I have reached 81 years of age and I can see the benefit that I can do to others. Tibetans have a special karmic connection with me. As long as i am able to benefit you, I should live to that extent to do my best,” His Holiness said, during the long life prayer offering ceremony led by Central Tibetan Administration, International Tibetan Business Association and Worshipping Congregation from the Himalayas of Nepal.

Recalling to mind a prayer made by His Holiness the first Dalai Lama, Gedrun Drup, on taking rebirth in impure lands, to assuage sufferings of sentient beings, the 14th Dalai Lama said he feels inspired to follow the example.

Addressing the Chinese government’s recall of Tibetans devotees attending the Kalachakra Initiation, His Holiness said such actions on the part of the government only contradicts their proclaimed goal of harmony and stability. “So many of

Tibetans had come from Tibet to attend the teachings but they were called back. They were told that their family members will be punished if they didn’t return. So these actions, on the part of Chinese government, do not help anyone. They talk about harmony and stability but their actions are opposed to these goals,” His Holiness criticised.

The closing ceremony of the 34th Kalachakra was hailed as an unmitigated success with the presence of honorable Chief Minister of Bihar, Shri Nitish Kumar as the chief guest, District Magistrate, dignitaries of the Gaya district administration, heads of the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism, other leading members of the monastic communities, sponsoring party of the 34th Kalachakra, leading and former dignitaries of Central Tibetan Administration, actor and longtime Tibet supporter Mr Richard Gere, members of organising committee and packed crowd of 200,000 devotees from all corners of the world.

Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar, in his address, conveyed deepest gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, for conferring Kalachakra teaching for the fifth time in the state of Bihar.

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, the patron of the Kalachakra organising committee and the political leader of the Tibetan people, extended hearty greetings in different languages. He exhorted that the most important reciprocation for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's blessings and teachings is to heed his advice and continue to strengthen the collective merit of the Tibetan people.

Celebrating the auspicious and smooth conclusion of 34th Kalachakra, Sikyong said, "To all those who have attended the teaching in person, and all those in Tibet, China and around the world who were following the teachings, His Holiness the Dalai Lama have blessed each one of you to receive the teachings. The 34th Kalachakra, organised with the sole objective to spread peace around the world, has been exceptionally successful and best organised."

There is no greater venue to receive the kalachakra teachings than the seat of Buddha's enlightenment and no greater teacher than the Buddha of compassion himself, Sikyong said in words of reverence for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He further offered prayers for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to be able to confer Kalachakra Initiation in Lhasa in future.

The Tibetan political leader reiterated his commitment towards the welfare of the Tibetan people, especially on educating Tibetan youth.

He thanked the Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar for taking a personal initiative in the organising of the kalachakra, the Indian finance ministry and RBI for granting special ATM facilities, District Magistrate Kumar Ravi, SSP Mrs Garima Malik, all the security personnel and staff of the 34th Kalachakra organising committee for their support and concerted efforts in the success of the Kalachakra.

"As people of Bihar, we are honoured and privileged to be able to serve in organising the 34th Kalachakra teaching here in Bodh Gaya, for the fifth time by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is the blessing of His Holiness and his



Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay addressing the closing ceremony of the 34th Kalachakra Initiation at Bodh Gaya, 14 January 2017. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

boundless teachings that has united all the people of different culture and nationality together to take part in the teaching. The practice of the Kalachakra Initiation is for the benefit of all sentient beings and it will really enhance love and compassion in the world."

He offered prayers for His Holiness to live for 113 years as revealed in prophecies and thanked him for supporting the complete alcohol ban in Bihar, a policy initiated by the CM himself. The Indian leader said he feels inspired by His Holiness' words and will do more for the betterment of the people of Bihar.

Hollywood actor and long time supporter of the Tibetan people, Richard Gere said in his brief address, "Tibetan brothers and sisters inside Tibet are really the focus of our love and compassion. For many of them, the voyage to Bodh Gaya has been made especially difficult by the Chinese government. Many of them who came here had to go back for fear of losing their job, education, identity and security." He hoped that the extraordinary teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama will inspire more kindness, compassion and transformation in the world.

The loudest applause at the ceremony was reserved for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the supreme spiritual leader of the Tibetan people, who called all his devotees to carry a warm heart as they return home and practice the Bodhichita, mind of compassion and view of emptiness in their thoughts and actions from today onwards.

"Having discussed dharma for the last many days, you should be able to go back home with a warm heart. An

individual with a warm heart and healthy body can help other people and they will in turn help the next person, that way the practice of compassion could exponentially increase throughout the world. Bodhichitta is sense of taking responsibility of all sentient beings. It is not only matter of dharma but in accordance with reality. Buddhism emphasises the practice of love and compassion through reason. From your individual pursuit of happiness, or for world peace and harmony, you need the principles of Bodhichitta," His Holiness said firmly.

Calling attention on preserving the classic teachings of Buddha, he pressed the leaders of Buddhist community to focus on producing more learned people in the study of Buddhism. "If we are able to produce more learned people in the study of Buddhism, the teaching will be preserved for long time. Otherwise, mere festivities will not preserve the teaching," His Holiness said, adding that the Tibetan people with its knowledge of nalanda tradition has been able to preserve the Buddhist tradition alive. His Holiness commended the excellent preparation by the organising committee of 34th Kalachakra and said there was no



His Holiness the Dalai Lama waves to devotees as the 34th Kalachakra Initiation concludes at Bodh Gaya, 14 January 2017. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

dearth of facilities and arrangements on the part of Central Tibetan Administration in ensuring smooth teaching experience for all.

The chairman of the organising committee, Kalon Ven Karma Gelek Yuthok recited the financial account of the 34th Kalachakra Initiation. The vote of thanks was delivered by vice chairman Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk, Department of Health, CTA.

His Holiness Participates in Inauguration of National Women's Parliament

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It was chilly and dark when His Holiness the Dalai Lama left his Delhi hotel and start a journey that would take him to Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. Fog at Gannavaram Airport delayed the landing of his flight, but Andhra Pradesh Speaker, Dr Kodela Siva Prasada Rao, Ministers Palle Raghunatha Reddy and D Umamaheshwara Rao as well as Vijayawada Police Commissioner Gautam Sawang were waiting to welcome him with bouquets and breakfast. He told journalists who flocked to catch a word from him that peace of mind was essential to human happiness and that he was happy to return to Andhra Pradesh, which he regards as home to great Buddhist masters of the past like Nagarjuna.

Morning was warm and bright as His Holiness drove to the venue of the first National Women's Parliament, a huge marquee at Ibrahimpatnam on the way to Amaravati. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu was delighted to receive him and escort him inside. His Holiness spent some time in conversation with him and fellow guests Shri Venkaiah Naidu, Smt Kiran Bedi, Smt Ela Ben Bhatt before they took their places on the huge stage.

The National Song and State Anthem were sung and an inaugural lamp was lit. Chairman of the Conference, Speaker Dr Kodela Siva Prasada Rao welcomed guests and participants alike and introduced the occasion saying how privileged and happy he felt to be participating in this first National Women's Parliament. The aim, he said was to achieve women's empowerment and their increasing participation in decision making as leaders.

In a long, rousing speech, mostly in English, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu welcomed all the guests and members of the 10,000 strong audience. He expressed his deep happiness to be hosting the event, remarking that he regarded it as historic and significant that it should be taking place at the confluence



His Holiness the Dalai Lama along with fellow speakers at the National Women Parliament's inaugural ceremony pose for a group photo after lighting the traditional lamp in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, India on February 10, 2017. Photo by Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

of the Krishna and Godavari rivers and adjacent to a region associated with Nagarjuna of whom His Holiness counts himself a student. He added that NT Rama Rao, founder of the Telugu Desam Party that he now leads had paved the way by introducing women's property rights and better educational opportunities. He reiterated his aim of fully empowering women and introducing 33% reservation for many opportunities for women. He hoped women's dreams would become a vision that in turn would become a reality.

Chief Guest, Union Minister for Urban Development Shri M Venkaiah Naidu spoke spiritedly in a mixture of English, Telugu and Hindi. He too announced how happy he was to attend the National Women's Parliament where women's issues could be discussed, debated and decided—the very principles of democracy. He noted that women already do a great deal of work caring for their children, their families and their homes, but this work is not included in the national GDP. He referred to women as unsung heroes.

A short film introduced the extent of His Holiness's activities to the audience before he was invited to address them.

“Although I usually start by greeting my brothers and sisters, today I'd like first to salute my elder sisters and younger sisters, and then my younger brothers as well.

It is my fundamental belief that we are all the same as human beings. All 7 billion human beings alive today are essentially the same physically, mentally and emotionally. I believe we need to work together with a sense of the oneness of humanity. Many of the problems we face today are of our own making, deriving as they do from our tending to view others in terms of 'us' and 'them'.

“Children don't discriminate in this way, they take others as they are. But, as they grow up, they pay more attention to the differences between us—such as nationality, religion and gender—rather than to what we have in common. Fundamentally, as human beings, we are the same.

“I'm committed to the promoting a sense of sisterhood and brotherhood, based on the oneness of humanity. I often tell people that in the early days of human society, people hunted and gathered their food, sharing what whatever they had. Later, as agriculture and an idea of property emerged a need arose for leadership. And

since physical strength was the criterion, men became predominant. Since then improved education has brought about the prospect of equality, but today our education system itself is inadequate. Children are naturally honest, open and compassionate, but since these qualities are not regarded as relevant to making money or exerting power, they grow up to adopt more material goals.

“We have to make a greater effort to promote kindness and compassion, qualities in which women are more naturally adept, so the leadership of women is necessary if we are to succeed.

“If the 21st century is to be different from the 20th we cannot be complacent with things as they are, if nothing changes there’ll be nothing but suffering. Here and now we are peaceably discussing the empowerment of women, while elsewhere people are killing each other. We have to recognise others as like our sisters and brothers and if we do, we can make the 21st century an era of peace.

“Peace in the world depends on peace within. If we have that we’ll approach problems in a spirit of dialogue, compassion and respect for the rights of others—always a better solution than resorting to a use of weapons and force. External disarmament depends on inner disarmament in which women have a special role to play. In my own experience, my first teacher of compassion was my mother. I never saw anger on her face. All 7 billion human beings are born from a mother and most of them enjoy the shelter of her affection.

“Through experiment and investigation scientists have concluded that basic human nature is compassionate. This is a source of hope. They have also established that women are more sensitive to others’ suffering and distress. Since warriors and others who disrupt the peace are men, if the majority of our countries were led by women, I believe the world would be a much safer place.

“We need not only warm-heartedness, but also to use our intelligence to the full. Anger clouds our intelligence and our ability to look at things from a wider

perspective, whereas education should strengthen our basic human values.

“Women should develop greater self-confidence. Don’t think of yourselves as meek. You already have the potential to develop compassion, but what you need in addition is steadfast determination.”

His Holiness concluded that he had little to add to the rousing ambitions of the previous speakers who had spoken so eloquently, but he joined them in looking forward to the real uplift of women.

Convenor of the meeting Shri Rahul Karad explained how he had brought the idea of a Parliament for Women to Shri Chandrababu Naidu’s attention and had won his support. However, Naidu stipulated that it should take place under the auspices of the State Assembly which is how the Speaker became Chairman of the meeting. Karad was fulsome in his praise for the Chief Minister’s vision and commitment.

Kiran Bedi, who was the first woman to be an officer of the Indian Police Service and who has, since her retirement, become a social activist and politician, spoke next. She began by repeating “Hello everybody” until she received an audible response from the audience. She declared that women are as good as the opportunities they get, whether they are in the family, the village or wider community. If they get the opportunity there’s nothing to stop women reaching for the top. Using opportunity to create opportunity is a way to create leadership. With courage women can be better parents, teachers and leaders.

She cited the example of the Swachh Bharat or Clean India campaign and her experience as Governor of Pondicherry of the amount of money being poured into cleaning drains that would not need cleaning if people were more attuned to the disposal of rubbish. She believes that such common sense leadership comes easily to women and the money saved could be better used to support education.

Smt Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh, where both Prime Minister and Leader of the

Opposition are women, asked why we are still talking about the empowerment of women, offering the reply that it’s because it is still not a reality for most women. She clarified that participatory democracy has to be inclusive democracy.

Patron of the event, veteran Gandhian Smt Ela Ben Bhatt asked if women really have a voice if 48% of voters are women, but they only have 11% representation. She added that women’s issues are the nation’s issues.

Actress and goodwill ambassador Smt Manisha Koirala asked if anyone has seen a bird fly with only one wing, suggesting that it was as absurd as promoting the interests only of men, but limiting the empowerment of women. She suggested that in a patriarchal society the birth of a boy is celebrated with joy. Is it the same for a girl? She reported that when she was born and her grandfather was told he pulled a face. Her mother was hurt and wouldn’t speak to him for weeks and she herself was hurt when the story was told to her much later. She recounted that when she was younger and encountered such double standards in the way men and women were treated she rebelled against them.

As His Holiness left the event, a steady stream of well-wishers and other members of the public hoping to pay their respects or take selfies with him clustered around him. At the same time journalists hefting video cameras and others thrusting microphones in his direction clamoured to catch his views in response to their questions. Eventually he reached his car and was able to leave for his hotel.

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Ground-breaking Ceremony for the South Asia Hub of the Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and a Public Talk

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Governor of Telangana State Mr. Ekkadu Srinivasan Lakshmi Narasimhan and His Holiness the Dalai Lama unveiling the foundation stone for the South Asia Hub of The Dalai Lama Center for Ethics in Hyderabad, Telangana, India on February 12, 2017. Photo by Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

His Holiness and HE ESL Narasimhan, Governor of Telangana, unveiled the foundation stone together and then took part in a symbolic planting of saplings, which will grow on the campus. They were joined in these observances by Deputy Chief Minister, Mohammad Mahmood Ali and Minister of Industries, MA&UD and IT Kalvankutla Taraka Rama Rao. The Governor remarked that peace is commonly invoked in Hindu ceremonies. His Holiness agreed and suggested that prayer also needs to be augmented by action such as training the mind.

At the Hitex Open Arena nearby Ven Tenzin Priyadarshi, founder of the Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values greeted an audience of more than 1000 in the marquee and another 15000 online. He requested the Deputy Chief Minister, Mohammad Mahmood Ali to formally welcome His Holiness and then invited KT Rama Rao to introduce him. His Holiness began his address in his customary way.

“I always begin by greeting an audience as brothers and sisters, because I consider myself to be just one among the 7 billion human beings who I view as brothers and sisters. The way we are born and the way we die is the same whether we

are kings, queens, spiritual leaders or beggars. This is why having a sense of the oneness of humanity is important. Wherever I go and whoever I talk to I try to promote this idea in an effort to break down barriers between us. Whenever I can I smile which mostly prompts others to smile in return, making us both happy.

“Although we are physically, mentally and emotionally the same, there are differences between us. I’m Tibetan, I’m Buddhist and I’m the Dalai Lama, but if I emphasize these differences it sets me apart and raises barriers with other people. What we need to do is to pay more attention to the ways in which we are the same as other people.

“Most of the problems we face we create ourselves by stressing secondary differences of nationality, religious faith and so forth. How sad it is that today religion is becoming a cause of conflict and violence. When people are being killed in other parts of the world, we can’t remain complacent, we have to think of how to ensure the well-being of these suffering people.”

“Differences of nationality and ideology that were important in the early 20th century seem less powerful today. In Europe, having fought and killed each other for generations, after the Second World War the European Union was created. My physics tutor von Weizsäcker told me that in his youth in every French and German eye the other was an enemy. But, by the 1990s, he said that had all changed. Recognising that nothing good comes from the destruction of war, people had realized that it’s better to live together. It is this spirit of the European Union that I admire and that we need to see adopted in other parts of the world—in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

“In the long run I look forward to a global union and a demilitarized world. As long as human beings are involved there

will be some problems, but we need to learn to deal with them through dialogue without resort to the use of force. This will entail developing moral principles because it won’t be achieved on the basis of mistrust and jealousy.”

Comparing the ancient civilizations of Egypt, China and the Indus Valley, His Holiness suggested that the Indus Valley ultimately gave rise to the greatest number of thinkers and varied schools of thought, including Buddhism. Ancient Indian psychology with its profound understanding of the workings of the mind and emotions has much to teach us today.

“More than 30 years ago I entered into discussions with modern scientists that have allowed Buddhists and contemplatives to learn more about the physical world, but also for the scientists to learn about the mind and emotions. Ahimsa—non-violence motivated by karuna—compassion is a way of dealing with destructive emotions. For more than 1000 years we Tibetans have kept these traditions that flourished at Nalanda alive. Modern Indians today have a special opportunity to combine modern education with the values and insights of this ancient Indian heritage. Many young people are already doing so. This Center for Ethics with its various programs and activities is making a contribution in this direction. I appreciate my friend here and the State Government for supporting it.

“The Center is named after the Dalai Lama, but I am just one student of the Nalanda Tradition, a student of Nagarjuna. Nevertheless, when I visit other countries I often tell people I meet that I’m a messenger of ancient Indian knowledge—a son of India. I justify this because my mind is filled with Nalanda thought, while my body has been nourished for 58 years by Indian rice, dal and chapatis.”

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Speaks to Delegates from the First Tibetan Women's Empowerment Conference

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His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking at his residence to delegates participating in the first Tibetan Women's Empowerment Conference in Dharamsala, HP, India on February 23, 2016. Photo by Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressed more than 300 delegates participating in the first Tibetan Women's Empowerment Conference. The conference, organised by the CTA, has been taking place in Gangchen Kyishong and has involved representatives of the Tibetan settlements right across India. He began by asking if they were happy with the discussions they'd been having and suggested that rather than simply talk about gender equality it was better to work on putting it into effect.

"We are all part of the 7 billion human beings alive today, but some of us are very well off, while elsewhere others are starving. I believe we can address this disparity if we work hard and develop self-confidence. That in turn depends on cultivating inner strength and the root of inner strength is developing compassion for others."

Noting that Tibetans have been in exile for almost 58 years, His Holiness recalled meeting Indian leaders like Rajendra Prasad and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who, in addition to being President and Vice President of the country respectively, impressed him with their scholarship. Listening to Radhakrishnan elegantly declaim verses from Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti in Sanskrit brought tears to his eyes, he said. However, he added that he also secretly suspected that he both understood and could explain better what the verses meant.

His Holiness attributed this confidence to the rigorous training he'd undertaken in Tibet, which was founded on the system originally established in the 8th century by Shantarakshita. This combined an exploration of philosophy with a strict command of reason and logic. This approach encourages investigating the topic in hand from different angles, something that can be useful in any branch of education.

He observed that since scientists are increasingly recognising that a disturbed state of mind is bad for our health, there is a growing appreciation of the need to learn more about our emotions and most particularly how to tackle our destructive emotions.

"Many of the world's problems can be attributed to anger," His Holiness explained. "The ever growing arms trade is based on a mixture of anger and fear and yet weapons bring no benefit. They don't provide food. Their only function is to maim and kill other human beings."

Many Indian traditions pursued concentration in meditation and gathered a deep understanding of the workings of the mind. Although this ancient knowledge has tended to be neglected more recently in India, it was kept alive in Tibet. What's more, the efforts that were made to translate mostly Sanskrit Buddhist literature into Tibetan resulted in a profound enrichment of the language such that today Tibetan is the medium through which this ancient knowledge can most accurately be conveyed.

His Holiness mentioned how he had encouraged monasteries that traditionally focussed on rituals to introduce study and education. Similarly he had encouraged nunneries to do the same. One result, he proudly declared, was the recent award of the first Geshe-ma degrees to twenty fully qualified nuns. Addressing the three Geshe-mas in the room, he advised that it was now their responsibility to teach in their nunneries and schools.

His Holiness also touched on recent proposals for the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education in conjunction with the University of Mysore to offer PhD programs for lay-people to study Buddhism and the inner science of the mind.

Alluding to the position of women in Buddhism, His Holiness affirmed that the Buddha had described men and women as having equal potential and had provided full ordination for both. He discussed the as yet unresolved difficulties in introducing or restoring the Bhikshuni tradition, but pointed out that a specific Vajrayana precept encourages respect for women in forbidding looking down on them. Furthermore, in Tibet there was an established tradition for recognising female reincarnations such as Samding Dorje Phagmo.

Referring to the role of women in the world, His Holiness reported scientific findings that women are more sensitive to the sufferings of others in addition to the great affection they provide as mothers. He explained how human society has developed from a time when hunter gatherers simply shared what they had to the emergence of agriculture and a sense of property. This led to a need for leadership and since the criterion was largely physical strength, male dominance emerged. Education has since restored a degree of equality between men and women. His Holiness wryly observed that since women are generally less aggressive than men, if more countries were led by women, the world would probably be a more peaceful place.

His Holiness concluded by congratulating the Kashag on taking the responsibility to promote women and encouraged the women to take full advantage of the opportunity. The meeting ended with his posing for photographs with different groups who are attending the conference.

Tibetan PM-in-exile Lauds Indian government's Open Support

Hindustan Times

and Modi government had 'publically acknowledged' the obvious.

China had raised objection to the Dalai Lama being invited to the ceremony as it considers the spiritual leader a 'splittist'.

The Tibetan sovereignty issue continues to remain a speed bump in the India-China ties but Sangay said that sending a direct message to China was the best option. "Sending the message upfront to China is the best way... For ten years now, countries took up the human rights issues with China in private, in bilateral formats. They didn't want to be seen confronting China in public. The human rights situation in China and Tibet showed no improvement all this while", he said.

Sangay criticised Nepal for being hand in glove with China and said the Himalayan country was behaving like the dragon nation's "satellite", which has resulted in those trying to escape to India from Tibet being sent back.

He also hoped the new US president Donald Trump would support the Tibetan cause.



The Narendra Modi government's public display of traditional Indian support to the Tibetan cause is a welcome move that would send a direct message to China, Prime Minister of Tibetan government in exile Lobsang Sangay said on Tuesday.

The 48-year-old leader said that while all Indian governments followed the stated Indian policy on the issue of a sovereign Tibet, the Modi government has decided to make 'the obvious' public.

Sangay, who had attended the swearing-

in ceremony of the Modi government in 2014, said President Pranab Mukherjee hosting of the Dalai Lama at the Rashtrapthi Bhavan last year was an example of this policy.

The President had hosted the Dalai Lama and other Nobel Peace laureates at a conference on children's rights.

In an interview with HT, Sangay said that political leaders in the past had met Dalai Lama in private but by hosting him at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the President

China admits it discouraged Tibetans from attending Kalchakra ritual in Bodhgaya

Chinese officials have confirmed that the government was discouraging people in Tibet from visiting India to attend the Buddhist ritual, Kalchakra, which will be attended by the Dalai Lama this month. But they rejected allegations that the Chinese government was forcing Tibetan travellers who are visiting India to return to China.

Earlier, Karma Gelek Yuthok, chairman of the Kalchakra organizing committee, alleged that nearly 7,000 pilgrims from China had gone back to the country because local officials were putting pressure on their relatives back home. Preparations for the ritual, which will be presided over by the Dalai Lama, began at the place where Buddha attained enlightenment, on Wednesday.

A Chinese official said there were still some pilgrims with Chinese passports attending the ceremony in Bodhgaya.

"Therefore, the government by no means threatened them to return, although the government does not encourage them to attend the ritual," Xu Zhitao, deputy director of the bureau of the Tibet question at the United Front Work Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee told the Global Times.

Another official said that the Chinese government had told Tibetans to avoid attending the ritual in India because it has a political purpose.

"The number of Tibetans attending the ritual decreased dramatically in recent years after the local governments clarified to local Tibetans that the ritual is

about separatism, and also due to tightened border control," Zhu Weiqun, chairman of the Ethnic and Religious Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, told the paper.

"Considering that the large-scale ritual needs years of preparation, the India-based ceremony frequently degenerates into a political tool," he said. The ritual is used as an opportunity to meet the Dalai Lama and see him propagate ideas of "hating the Chinese government," Zhu said.

Last July, the Chinese government encouraged Panchen Lama to organize and preside over a Kalchakra event, the first by the Panchen Lama in 60 years, in Tibet. It was attended by 426,000 pilgrims over four days, the official media said.

Rethink in New Delhi: Dalai Lama, Karmapa to be in the Public Gaze

Indian Express

Tibetan spiritual leader to attend international meet in Rajgir-Nalanda in March, Karmapa will travel to Sikkim.

Two years after he was taken in a car with darkened windows and no personal aide to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his residence in New Delhi, Tibetan Buddhism's holiest leader, the Dalai Lama, is being given pride of place at an international Buddhist conference to be held in March in Rajgir-Nalanda, Bihar.

Equally significant, Delhi has finally come around to accepting that the Karmapa Lama, the head of the Karma Kagyu sect, is "not a Chinese spy" 17 years after he fled from the Tsurphu monastery in Tibet, but a genuine leader.

These moves are being quietly welcomed by the large Tibetan community as well as the influential strategic affairs establishment which believes "there is nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about" publicising the Dalai Lama's activities even if it bothers Beijing.

Delhi, highly placed sources said, has come to the realisation that the Dalai Lama is an "asset, not a liability".

As China exercises its muscle vis-à-vis Buddhist leaders living in India or those visiting abroad — for example, the Dalai Lama's visit to Mongolia in November was so heavily criticised by Beijing that the Mongolian foreign minister has since promised it will never happen again — Delhi has taken the decision to nevertheless allow Tibetan Buddhism's two most senior monks to increasingly move into the public gaze.

The Dalai Lama will travel to Arunachal Pradesh from the Buddhist conference in Rajgir-Nalanda, which takes place from March 17-19.

Beijing had objected to the visit at the time it was announced in October last year. It will be the Tibetan leader's fourth visit to that state.

While the Karmapa is expected to soon visit Sikkim — the only state in the country from which he had been barred for the last 17 years, because the Rumtek monastery located there contains the ceremonial "Black Hat", said to be the ultimate adornment of the rightful heir of the Karma Kagyu sect — although not yet to Rumtek, because a case against his presence there is still valid in court.

The Nalanda conference, called "Buddhism in the 21st Century", is being formally hosted by the Ministry of Culture. The presence of the Dalai Lama for two whole days at Nalanda, along with all the top Buddhist monks, especially from Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar — as well as, possibly, Richard Gere, who is attending the ongoing Kalachakra celebrations in Bodh Gaya and may or may not be able to come back to Bihar so soon — is certain to draw international attention.



Dalai Lama at the Kalachakra in Bodhgaya on Tuesday. PTI photo

Government sources said it is one way of returning the compliment to the Dalai Lama, who has always said that as a "son of India," he owes a great deal of his learning to the "Nalanda masters".

But in the new year, Delhi wants to take a leaf from Beijing's book — as well as its calendar, which has marked 2017 as the Year of the Rooster — and hopes to crow about its own strengths as well. "Buddhism took birth in India, so we must use it as our soft power," the sources said.

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval is

leading the charge on the invocation of Buddhism as strategic gain. Minister of State (Home) and MP from Arunachal Pradesh Kiren Rijiju has been the public go-between the Dalai Lama's people and the government. Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar, who wears a Buddhist rosary since he went to China as ambassador just under a decade ago, is brushing up his contacts with the Tibetan community in India.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of External Affairs is carefully watching the unfolding spat between Mongolia and China, in the wake of the Dalai Lama's visit to Ulaanbaatar.

After a Chinese paper called it "politically hare-brained" for Mongolia to seek help from Delhi at the same time it has asked for a cash loan from Beijing, Mongolian foreign minister Tsend Munkh-Orgil told the local 'Onoodor' newspaper that he "feels sorry" for allowing the Dalai Lama to visit and that he "probably won't be visiting Mongolia again during this administration".

The Dalai Lama's emergence from purdah in recent weeks has been nothing short of extraordinary. He was seen at Rashtrapati Bhavan, sitting beside President Pranab Mukherjee, only a few weeks ago. During his visit to Mongolia, he announced that the Jebtsundama Khutuktu — the third most important leader in the Gelugpa school, after the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama — had been reincarnated. And his teachings, in Dharamsala and Delhi, in several languages including Russian, have only grown.

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Hundreds of Tibetans defy China, Gather at Birthplace of Buddhism in India

The Washington Post

The young Tibetan monk was taking his elderly aunt and uncle on the trip of a lifetime — a tour of holy Buddhist sites in India and a chance to meet the Dalai Lama. But halfway through, word came from China: The family was to return right away.

Chinese police had descended on the monk's home five times in December, fingerprinting his parents and forcing them to sign documents guaranteeing his return.

But the monk and his family were determined to see the Dalai Lama speak at Bodh Gaya, the Indian city that many consider the birthplace of Buddhism. So they defied Chinese authorities and continued their journey, risking imprisonment, harsh questioning or loss of identity cards on their return home.

"I'm very worried," the monk said on a chilly evening, sitting in a tent not far from a teaching ground where thousands have gathered daily since Jan. 3 to pray, meditate and hear their religious leader. "If we are put in prison, they will interrogate us: 'Why did you go to India?' This can be very dangerous."

Authorities from the Tibetan government-in-exile say the Chinese government barred an estimated 7,000 Tibetan pilgrims from attending this month's 10-day gathering in India, an unprecedented move that further erodes the rights of 6 million people who live in the Tibetan region of China. It was also a fresh reminder that the Chinese are threatening to control the selection of the next Dalai Lama after the eventual demise of the renowned religious leader, who is now 81.

"It's tragic," said Lobsang Sangay, the head of Tibet's government-in-exile, which is based in India. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime trip for Tibetans, like Muslims going to Mecca. It's a sad commentary on the Chinese claim to have religious freedom — or any kind of freedom in Tibet."

The Dalai Lama told reporters that the move was "unfortunate."

China has denied threatening pilgrims or blocking their departures, but local authorities in Tibet declared this ritual gathering, called the Kalachakra, illegal in 2012, the last time it was held in Bodh Gaya. Most of the 7,000 already had traveled legally to India and were forced to return early. Only 300 have remained.

"The government by no means threatened them to return, although the government does not encourage them to attend the ritual," Xu Zhitao, an official with the Central Committee of China's Communist Party, told the *Global Times*, a tabloid associated with the party.

Since unrest broke out across the Tibetan plateau in 2008, the Chinese government has enacted sweeping measures that have curtailed freedom of expression, notably by prioritizing Chinese over the Tibetan language in schools, posting police in monasteries and increasing surveillance.

Activists say the Communist Party seeks to break the connection between Tibetans and their revered leader to ensure compliance with ambitious party objectives in Tibet, a region rich in mineral and water resources.

"What we're seeing is new," said Kate Saunders of the International Campaign for Tibet. "It's a systematic attempt to prevent Tibetans from having any access at all to the Dalai Lama."

An estimated 10,000 Tibetans attended the 2012 Kalachakra in Bodh Gaya, but many were jailed or detained for "re-education" in military camps when they returned, Saunders said.

About 200,000 maroon- and saffron-robed monks and nuns as well as Buddhist devotees from around the world — including American actor Richard Gere — converged on the town in eastern India for days of chanting and lessons on

Buddhist thought. As darkness descended, many of them performed prostrations and encircled the ancient stupa next to the tree — a descendant of the original — where the Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment.

Since the Dalai Lama escaped over the mountains from Tibet to India in 1959, Indian governments have treated him as an honored guest in Dharamsala, a hill town in the country's north, but they long kept him at arm's length to avoid offending the Chinese. Now, that may be changing.

The Dalai Lama appeared prominently at an event with India's president in Delhi last month. And Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made preserving India's ancient heritage a priority, becoming the first prime minister in decades to visit Bodh Gaya.

"I don't believe it's a fundamental shift of position, but certainly what you're seeing is trending towards perhaps a less self-

conscious expression of our sentiments and our support for the Tibetan cultural identity and the high standing the Dalai Lama enjoys here in India," said Nirupama Menon Rao, a former foreign secretary and ambassador to China.

The support is key, as the Tibetan exile community faces uncertain times. The Dalai Lama has said that when he dies, he may choose not to be reincarnated, as Buddhist belief holds, or that he could come back as a woman. But China has signaled that it will control the search for the next Dalai Lama by anointing its own Panchen Lama, another important religious figure in Tibetan Buddhism.

Some of the attendees said they are worried that this year's Kalachakra will be the last the Dalai Lama will perform. The octogenarian moves and speaks more slowly now, and he had to be helped to the elaborate throne on the dais by two monks.

“He can’t go into top gear anymore,” said Gaden Tashi, a Tibetan from Kathmandu, Nepal. “But he keeps saying he’s happy and healthy.”

One young Tibetan-language tutor who made the risky journey from China recalled that when he unrolled his prayer mat at Bodh Gaya and got his first glimpse of the Dalai Lama, “I couldn’t control myself; I thought it was a dream.” The tutor, 29, arrived Jan. 3, weeks after his trip began in a small village in the Tibetan area of Amdo. He paid a guide

to take him to Kathmandu, where he received legal papers from the Indian Embassy to make the pilgrimage.

Almost immediately, he said, speaking on the condition of anonymity, frightening messages began appearing on his WeChat, China’s popular social-media platform. He said police sent a warning through his parents that he should return by Jan. 3, the day the Kalachakra would begin. His mother cried and begged him to come home soon. Others sent photos of pilgrims who were met at the airport

only to have their passports sliced into pieces by police.

He said he now feels he cannot return to China, but he believes his sacrifice has been worth it.

“Every Tibetan has a dream — to meet the Dalai Lama,” he said. “I told my parents I have no regret, even if I die.”

Luna Lin in Beijing and Swati Gupta in New Delhi contributed to this report.

Rights Groups Ask China to Free Tibetan Education Advocate

New York Times

International human rights groups are calling on China to drop charges against a Tibetan entrepreneur and education advocate who was indicted by court officials this month for “inciting separatism.”

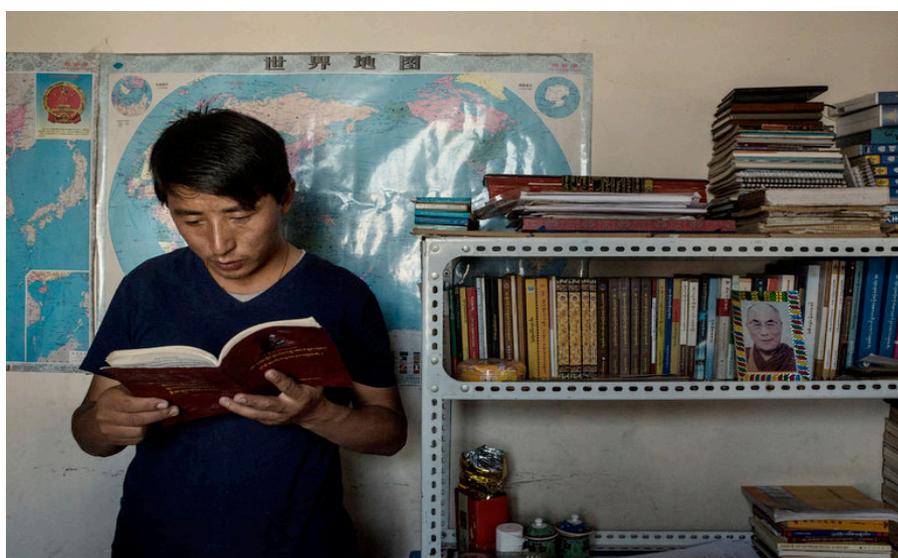
The Tibetan advocate, Tashi Wangchuk, was detained nearly one year ago after speaking to The New York Times for a documentary video and two articles on Tibetan education and culture.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have both issued statements in recent days asking for China to release Mr. Tashi, 31.

A lawyer for Mr. Tashi, Lin Qilei, said judges in the Yushu Intermediate Court, in western China, would probably not schedule the trial until after the annual Lunar New Year holiday, which runs from Jan. 27 to Feb. 2.

Mr. Tashi said he was not guilty of the separatism charge, Mr. Lin said. In interviews in 2015 with The Times, Mr. Tashi said he did not support independence for Tibet.

Another lawyer for Mr. Tashi, Liang Xiaojun, has said the Yushu police focused their investigation of Mr. Tashi on the nine-minute Times video produced by Jonah M. Kessel, which showed Mr. Tashi’s attempts to file a lawsuit against local officials to compel them to expand Tibetan language education. Mr. Tashi had also written about the language issue on his blog.



Defendants who go on trial in China are almost always convicted. In political cases like that of Mr. Tashi, orders are sent from senior officials to the court. If convicted, Mr. Tashi could be sentenced to up to 15 years in prison.

Mr. Tashi’s legal case has taken some unusual turns. The groups issuing statements are hoping that Mr. Tashi’s case will not go to trial and say international pressure could be critical now.

Amnesty International said in a statement Wednesday that it was calling on the public to ask specific officials in China to free Mr. Tashi. It listed contact information for prosecutors and the police in Yushu, Mr. Tashi’s hometown, and Qinghai Province, as well as the governor of Qinghai.

Amnesty said Mr. Tashi was a “prisoner of conscience, detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.”

Human Rights Watch released a detailed chronology of the case and called it “politically motivated.”

“Tashi Wangchuk has joined the ranks of those prosecuted in China by simply calling for rights to be respected and the law to be upheld,” said Sophie Richardson, the group’s China director. “Cultural rights, which include the right to use one’s own language, are protected under both the Chinese Constitution and international human rights law.”

Mr. Tashi’s case has drawn intense international attention. In December, Max Baucus, the United States ambassador to China, mentioned Mr. Tashi and several

other political prisoners in China in a long statement emphasizing the importance of human rights. PEN America, a group that promotes freedom of expression, noted Mr. Tashi's detention in a 76-page report in September that criticized China's attempts to censor foreign reporting.

A campaigns director with Students for a Free Tibet, based in New York, said Wednesday that the group planned to ask its members to publicly advocate for Mr. Tashi.

Lawyers for Mr. Tashi were allowed to visit him briefly last year in a Qinghai detention center. Mr. Lin said Mr. Tashi was in good spirits, given the circumstances, and was writing up points to make in his defense during a trial. When interviewed by The Times in 2015, Mr. Tashi insisted repeatedly that his remarks be on the record and said he knew he could be imprisoned after

publication of the video and articles, given the political sensibilities in China over Tibet.

Mr. Tashi traveled to Beijing in 2015 to look for lawyers to help him file his lawsuit and to try to get China Central Television, the state network, and foreign journalists to document his efforts and the lack of robust Tibetan-language education in public schools in Tibetan regions.

Mr. Tashi said he wanted to use Chinese laws to expand language education, and he praised President Xi Jinping for having "promoted a democratic and law-abiding country these last few years."

Mr. Tashi was detained by the Yushu police on Jan. 27, 2016, two months after publication of the video and the first article. Prosecutors sent the case to the court in September to have the court

indict Mr. Tashi and schedule a trial, but then took the case back in December for further investigation, a move that was "very rare," Mr. Lin said. Prosecutors resubmitted the case in early January.

Tibetans living under Chinese rule often say they are concerned about the dwindling use of their language, especially among younger Tibetans. Tibetan teachers and students in Qinghai Province have held protests over language education in recent years.

Mr. Tashi ran a shop in central Yushu from which he sold local goods in person and online. Alibaba, China's biggest e-commerce company, chose Mr. Tashi to be featured in a video for the company's investor roadshow before a high-profile initial public offering. The founder of Alibaba, Jack Ma, met with President-elect Donald J. Trump in New York early this month.

Letter to the Editor: Why I'm Against My Chinese Peers at UCSD

The Triton

This letter is a response to "Chinese student organizations denounce Dalai Lama as commencement speaker."

I am a Chinese student from the University of Georgia. Here is a comment (in English) and a personal statement (in Chinese, I'm sure you have some people who read Chinese) which I would like to share with The Triton.

As one of the "countless Chinese students in the U.S.," despite studying in another school, I very much like the idea of having His Holiness the Dalai Lama to speak on such a special occasion and I feel insulted by being forcibly represented by the Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA) which states that "our" feelings have been hurt. Here are a few points:

1) It is intolerant of the CSSA to demand the university cancel an apolitical spiritual speech by a speaker whose politics they dislike.

2) In disparaging this globally-revered sage, they lack the fundamental respect

for the culture and religion of the Tibetan people.

3) It would be His Holiness's right to speak freely and truthfully on his people's plight, including China's ongoing demolition of the Larung Gar Academy and its recent arrest of Tashi Wangchuk, an educator of the Tibetan language.

4) It was the ruling Communist Party that compromised the territorial integrity of China by establishing a Soviet satellite state during the Japanese invasion and splitting the country across the Taiwan Strait through a bloody rebellion.

5) The Communist regime, which my Chinese peers in your university are actually defending, is no synonym for the motherland of the Tibetans and Chinese whose lost their beloved ones in the barbarian air raid on the Byams-chen-chos-skor-gling Temple in 1956 and the murderous bloodbath of Beijing streets in 1989.

6) My experience of being a young dissident who narrowly escaped prison

keeps on reminding me how fortunate I am now to live in America and have the freedom to speak without fears.

7) The Communist regime is kidnapping, torturing and imprisoning less fortunate millennial dissidents at home, including my ethnic Korean friend Kwon Pyong, an Iowa State University alumni, who is waiting behind bars for an imminent trial on his outspoken opposition to Communism.

8) The CSSA, a self-proclaimed apolitical independent student body, admits on Chinese social media that it reports to a foreign consulate and follows its instructions, violating the law and school rules.

9) Their attempt to curb free speech on an American campus indicates that the evil hand of Communist censorship has reached us by the agency of patriotic Chinese students.

Yi Sulaiman Gu is a member of the Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars and a student at the University of Georgia.

TIBETAN MEDIA

Sheja (Official Tibetan monthly)
Department of Information & International
Relations, Dharamshala-176215, HP, India
Email: sheja_editor@tibet.net
Web: www.bod.asia

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Relations, Dharamshala-176215, HP, India
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Contacts for the Central Tibetan Administration

INDIA

Department of Information & International
Relations, Central Tibetan Administration,
Gangchen Kyishong, Dharamshala - 176 215
H.P., India Tel: +91-1892-222510/222457
Fax: +91-1892-224957 Email: diir@tibet.net
www.tibet.net

Bureau of H.H. the Dalai Lama, 10-B Ring Road,
Lajpat Nagar IV, New Delhi 110 024, India
Tel: +91-11-26474798, Fax: +91-11-2646-1914
Email: rep.in@tibet.net www.tibetbureau.in

Chief Representative (South Zone), No. 7,
Sampangiramaiah Garden, Srinivagalu Tank,
Viveknagar Post, Bangalore-560047
Karnataka, India Tel: +91-080-5506842 / 5506843
Fax: +91-080-5506966
Email: chiefrep@bgl.vsnl.net.in

NEPAL

The Office of Tibet, Tibetan Refugee Welfare Of-
fice, Gaden Khangsar, Narayan Gopal Marg-270.
Lazimpat, Ward 2, P.O.Box No. 310,
Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977-1-4419903/4420799
Fax: +977-1-4411660 Email: rep.np@tibet.net

UNITED STATES

The Office of Tibet, 1228, 17th Street NW, Wash-
ington, DC - 20036, U.S.A. Tel: +1-212-213-5010,
Fax: +1-703-349-7444
Email: rep.us@tibet.net www.tibetoffice.org

BRAZIL

Tibet House
Alameda Lorena, 349 Jardim Paulista,
Sao Paulo, SP, 01424-001 Brazil, South America
Tel: +55(11)989635128
Email: latin@tibet.net

SWITZERLAND

The Tibet Bureau, Place de la Navigation 10
1201 Geneva, Switzerland Tel: +41-22-7387-940
Fax: +41-22-7387-941 Email: rep.ch@tibet.net
www.tibetoffice.ch

JAPAN

Liaison Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama, Tibet House
Nishi Ochiai 3-26-1 Shinjuku-ku,
Tokyo 161-0031, Japan
Tel: +81-03-5988-3576, Fax: +81-03-3565-1360
E-mail: rep.jp@tibet.net www.tibethouse.jp

UNITED KINGDOM

The Office of Tibet, 1 Culworth Street, London,
NW8 7AF, U.K. Tel: +44-207-722-5378,
Fax: +44-207-722-0362 Email: rep.uk@tibet.net
www.tibet.com

FRANCE

Bureau Du Tibet, 84 BD Adolphe Pinard, 75014,
Paris, France, Tel: +33-1-46-565-453,
Email: tibetoffice@orange.fr

BELGIUM

Bureau du Tibet, 24 Avenue des Arts,
1000 Brussels, Belgium Tel: +32-2-280 4922
Email: rep.be@tibet.net

AUSTRALIA

Tibet Information Office, 8/13 Napier Close, Dea-
kin, Canberra, ACT 2600, Australia Tel: +61-2-6285-
4046 Fax: +61-2-6282-4301
Email: rep.au@tibet.net
www.tibetoffice.com.au

RUSSIA

Tibet Culture & Information Centre,
Korn # 110, POB # 7, St. Bolshaya Novodmitrovs-
kaya - 14 Moscow 127015, Russia
Tel: +7-495-786-4362 Fax: +7-495-685-11-32
Email: rep.ru@tibet.net
www.savetibet.ru

SOUTH AFRICA

Office of Tibet, P.O. Box. 16812, Lyttelton 0140,
Republic of South Africa. Tel: +27-12-664-1193
Fax: +27-12-664-1194
Email: rep.sa@tibet.net
www.officeoftibet.com

TAIWAN

Tibet Religious Foundation of H.H. the Dalai Lama
10th Fl. 4 & 5, No. 189, Sector - 2, Keelung Rd.,
Taipei, Taiwan (ROC)
Tel: +886-2-2736-0366 Fax: +886-2-2377-9163
Email: rep.tw@tibet.net/www.tibet.org.tw

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QUOTES

“I urge Tibetans everywhere to remove their regional and sectarian partisanship from their thoughts, words and actions. It is wrong to create these superfluous differences as sects and regions; its small minded. Remember that all of us are followers of the same teaching of Buddha and the 17 Nalanda masters.”” His Holiness the Dalai Lama during 34th Kalachakra Initiation Concluding with Long Life Prayer Offering on 14 January 2017.

“Most of the problems we face we create ourselves by stressing secondary differences of nationality, religious faith and so forth. How sad it is that today religion is becoming a cause of conflict and violence. When people are being killed in other parts of the world, we can't remain complacent, we have to think of how to ensure the well-being of these suffering people.” His Holiness the Dalai Lama during Ground-breaking Ceremony for the South Asia Hub of the Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and a Public Talk on 10 February 2017.

“The Central Tibetan Administration has fervently encouraged Tibetans to accumulate and enhance collective merit of the Tibetan people in order to ensure long and healthy life of our supreme leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The most effective means is through accumulating virtuous deeds and implementing his teachings.,” Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay during the 34th Kalachakra at Bodh Gaya on 7 January 2017.

“Referring to the role of women in the world, His Holiness reported scientific findings that women are more sensitive to the sufferings of others in addition to the great affection they provide as mothers. He explained how human society has developed from a time when hunter gatherers simply shared what they had to the emergence of agriculture and a sense of property. This led to a need for leadership and since the criterion was largely physical strength, male dominance emerged. Education has since restored a degree of equality between men and women. His Holiness wryly observed that since women are generally less aggressive than men, if more countries were led by women, the world would probably be a more peaceful place.,” His Holiness the Dalai Lama during public talk to delegates from the First Tibetan Women's Empowerment Conference on 23 February 2017.
