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FROM THE EDITOR

China's battle for superiority has veered from the political to the economic, military and now even to the spiritual. Buddhism, is what China is seeing as a trump card to up the ante of their one-upmanship. It is no secret they have been striving hard to claim the mantle of Buddhist hegemony to extend its global soft power mileage.

China is the largest Buddhist nation by population with at least 300 – 400 million Buddhists and has identified Buddhism as crucial in its geopolitical strategy and dealings. Despite being a self-declared atheist state, China is also trying to build a global Buddhist image using its financial and political clout to upstage India in the race for Buddhist soft power.

This runs in contrast with its erstwhile belief and policy. Since the Communist party took over China from the Kuomintang in 1949, the country became an officially atheist state, and all religion, including Buddhism was severely repressed. Mao even famously referred to religion as poison.

At the peak of its onslaught on religion during the Cultural Revolution, China effectively dismantled the foundation of Buddhism in China, including destroying 98% of monasteries and nunneries in Tibet and forcibly disrobing 99% of the Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns. As a result, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibet's foremost spiritual leader along with the heads of the major schools of Tibetan Buddhism fled persecution and escaped into exile to India.

However, under President Xi Jinping, China's current strongman, the country has embarked on a campaign to reassert control of religion particularly Buddhism in China. Although, it is not clear whether Xi Jinping himself is a Buddhist practitioner or not, but one cannot deny that he has exerted efforts to transform China not only into an economic giant but also into a spiritual powerhouse.

A point in case is China's relentless efforts to fund Buddhist organisations. China not only hosts the World Buddhist Forum, but plans to develop Lingshan County in China's Southeast as a global Buddhist hotspot.

China also controls the World Buddhist Sangha Council founded in Sri Lanka in 1966. In 2014, it hosted the World Fellowship of Buddhists meet. Across Theravada and Mahayana countries, the Chinese are helping repair, renovate and resurrect Buddhist institutions.

Recently, an article reportedly by a Chinese professor making the bizarre claim that Buddha was of Chinese-origin went viral on Chinese social media. Although the claim was ridiculed in China itself, the extent to which China can go to claim the Buddhist image can be gauged from these incidents.

While it is noteworthy that China is embracing Buddhism and touting Buddhist heritage, it is ironic that the same country employs a severe high handedness in Tibet, a predominantly Buddhist nation which is under Chinese occupation since 1951. It routinely denounces His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the world's most popular Buddhist teacher, and tries hard through policies and practices to delink Dalai Lama from Buddhism, thus hurting the sentiments of Tibetans and millions of his followers.

Monasteries and nunneries in Tibet are placed under severe surveillance and are subject to constant interference from Chinese authorities. The monks and nuns are forced to undergo patriotic educations and act as informants on each other.

Even today, China sees Tibetan Buddhism and His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the main threat to the leadership of the Communist Party in Tibet. To counter these, China has notoriously declared a regulation in 2007 according to which all incarnate lamas or tulkus must have state approval. This regulation which goes against the centuries old tradition of selecting reincarnate Tibetan lamas is an attempt to rule the land and people of Tibet through state-sponsored lamas. It has also undertaken a project to demolish some of the largest Tibetan Buddhist institutes in Tibet such as Larung Gar and Yarchen Gar.

Therefore, it would be prudent on part of China to acknowledge that His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Buddhism are inseparable, allow Tibetans in Tibet to freely practice religion, strengthen its outreach to the Tibetan Buddhists around the world and restore the faith of the Tibetan people in their leadership, before aspiring to hold the mantle of Buddhist powerhouse. In failing to do so China's ambitions to harness global Buddhist soft power is doomed to fail.

Jamphel Shonu
Editor

Tashi Wangchuk's Trial and Sentencing will Determine China's Commitment to Upholding Constitutional Rights: CTA President

As Tashi Wangchuk, a Tibetan language rights advocate, is set to go on trial today for allegedly 'inciting separatism', CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay expressed



Tashi Wangchuk, Tibetan education advocate

his concern and urged Chinese authorities to uphold constitutional rights while pronouncing the sentence.

"Tashi Wangchuk has on his own volition advocated for a constitutionally guaranteed right, that of bi-lingual education for Tibetans and ethnic minorities. His trial and sentencing will determine largely whether the Chinese Government is committed to upholding the internationally recognised laws and domestically accepted rule of law in China," Dr Lobsang Sangay, President of the Central Tibetan Administration said.

Tashi Wangchuk was detained on 27 January 2016 after appearing in a New York Times video in which he advocated for the rights of Tibetans to learn and study their mother tongue. He was formally charged with "inciting separatism" in March 2016 despite his stance that he doesn't seek to separate Tibet from China.

The trial is set to take place at Yushu Intermediate People's Court in Qinghai Province. If declared guilty, Tashi Wangchuk could face up to 15 years in

prison.

It is reported that a number of foreign diplomatic representatives in Beijing will travel to Yushu to witness the hearing.

As an advocate for Tibetan language, Tashi Wangchuk has maintained a blog writing about greater autonomy for Tibetans within China and has been vocal about language education. He has called for schools in Tibet to adopt a true system of bilingual education so that Tibetan children can become fluent in their mother language. None of his writings have called for Tibetan independence.

He has also said that the dearth of effective Tibetan language education, and the fact that the language is not used in government offices, violates the Chinese Constitution, which guarantees cultural autonomy for Tibetan and other ethnic regions.

Since his detention in 2016, Tashi Wangchuk's case has attracted the attention of numerous international rights groups and agencies such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, PEN America and International Campaign for Tibet. These groups have repeatedly called on China to drop the charges and release him.

CTA President and Finance Kalon Call on New Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh

President of the Central Tibetan Administration Dr Lobsang Sangay and Finance Kalon Karma Yeshe paid a courtesy visit to Shri Jairam Thakur, the new Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh at the circuit house in Dharamshala.

The chief minister is accompanied by the Principal Secretary and several members of his cabinet including Shri Kishan Kapoor, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affair Minister; Shmt Sarveen Chaudhary, Urban Development Minister; Shri Bikram Singh, Industries Minister; Shri Vipin Singh Parmar,

Health and Family Welfare Minister; Shri Rajiv Saizal, Social Justice & Empowerment Minister among others. President Dr Sangay offered khataks (ceremonial Tibetan white scarves) to the ministers and a thanka (traditional Buddhist applique) to the chief minister.

Speaking to reporters following the meeting, President Dr Lobsang Sangay said: "We have just come to meet with and make a courtesy call with the new chief minister of Himachal Pradesh Shri Jairam Thakur ji."

"He has a very inspiring background. And it was an honour to meet him. During the meeting, we conveyed our best wishes to him and wished Himachal Pradesh as a state and the new government the very best and peace and prosperity for all."

"We also conveyed to him the best regards of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. His Holiness is very appreciative of the Himachal Pradesh government. The Chief Minister informed us that he also wants to call on His Holiness the Dalai Lama and I am going to relay the message to His Holiness the Dalai Lama today."



CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay and Finance Kalon Karma Yeshe offering a Tibetan thanka to Shri Jairam Thakur, new chief minister of Himachal Pradesh at the Circuit House in Dharamshala. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

Dr Sangay also expressed his gratitude to the people and government of Himachal Pradesh for hosting His Holiness the Dalai lama and the Central Tibetan Administration. "As I always say, the government and the people of India has done the most for Tibet and the Tibetan people especially Himachal Pradesh because this is where His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been residing for the last

50+ years and this is where the Central Tibetan Administration is based. It is the love and kindness of the people of Himachal Pradesh for which we remain eternally grateful,” he said.

Responding to questions regarding expectations from the new government, President Dr Lobsang Sangay said: “When I came here for the first time, there was a BJP government. And in between there was a Congress government and now again there is a BJP government.”

“The previous BJP governments have always supported the Tibetan people and we hope the support will continue. One of the ministers assured us that everything that needs to be done for the Tibetan people will be continued from the new government,” he expressed.

The meeting lasted for about 15 minutes.

CTA President Meets Visiting Media Delegation of Himachal Pradesh

About 40 editors, reporters and camerapersons representing the media fraternity of Himachal Pradesh called on CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay at the Kashag secretariat today. The media personnel who are mostly from the state capital Shimla are in Dharamshala to cover the ongoing winter session of the state legislative assembly.

President Dr Lobsang Sangay is accompanied by members of the 15th Kashag including Religion and Culture Kalon Ven Karma Gelek Yuthok, Home Kalon Sonam Topgyal Khorlatsang, Finance Kalon Karma Yeshe and Health Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk at the meeting.

During their interaction, CTA President discussed a wide range of issues concerning India, Tibet and China. He spoke about China’s growing expansionist designs, the Doklam standoff, Sino-Tibetan relations, Sino-Indian relations, the democratic structure of the Central Tibetan Administration, etc.



CTA President speaking to reporters following the interaction. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

He highlighted His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s great contribution towards world peace and commitment towards revival of ancient Indian values particularly the Nalanda school of thought in India. He also expressed gratitude to India and particularly Himachal Pradesh for hosting His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration. He further outlined the Kashag’s upcoming programmes for ‘thank you year 2018’ to be organised by the Tibetan administration to express gratefulness to all the governments across the world for their consistent support for the Tibet cause.

Speaking on Sino-India relations, he cautioned India against China’s deceptive policies and warned that what happened to Tibet could happen to India. “The Doklam stand off and the repeated cross border incursion of Chinese soldiers into Indian territories is a sign of China’s expansionist mindset. India needs to be wary of China’s belligerent attitude,” he said.

The interaction lasted for about an hour.

Thank You Taiwan Billboards Adorn Major Taipei Roads

Following the release of 2018 Desk Calendar titled Thank You Taiwan, the International Association of Tibetan Buddhist Dharma, Taiwan, in collaboration with the Office of Tibet, has now placed Thank You Taiwan billboards on all major roads in Taipei.

Since 31 December 2017, as many as sixty Thank You Taiwan billboards adorned the sidewalks and bus stops on all the major roads of Taipei, including

Zhongshan, Renai, Mingquan, Heping, Zhongxiao East Road and Dunhua.

The calendar and billboards constitute a prelude to a series of events and activities scheduled ahead to mark, as planned by the Kashag, 2018 as ‘Thank You Year’ to express appreciation to the people and governments of countries across the globe for supporting the cause of Tibet and the Tibetan people.

Further, the Tibetans in Taiwan will also commemorate this year the 20th founding anniversary of the Taiwan Office of Tibet.

The billboards commemorating both the 20th founding anniversary of the Office of Tibet as well as Tibetans’ 60th year in exile read: “Thank you to the Taiwanese government and people for your concern and support for Tibetan freedom.



Thank You Taiwan Billboards hosted by the International Association of Tibetan Buddhist Dharma, Taiwan, in collaboration with the Office of Tibet, Taiwan adorn major Taipei roads. Photo/Office of Tibet/Taiwan

“Thank you to Taiwanese followers of Tibetan Buddhism for your contribution to promotion of Tibetan religion and culture.

“Thank you to Taiwanese democracy.”



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New Tibet Museum will Present Tibet's Power of Truth: CTA President



CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay with DIIR secretaries Sonam Norbu Dagpo and Tenzin Dhardon Sharling launching a booklet on Tibet Museum, at the press conference, 12 January 2018. Photo/Tenzin Phende/ DIIR

The Tibet Museum of Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) organised a press conference to inform the public about its new Tibet Museum project. The new Tibet Museum will be based at the Tibet Building currently under construction at Gangchen Kyishong.

CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay accompanied by DIIR Secretaries Sonam Norbu Dagpo and Tenzin Dhardon Sharling chaired the press conference. Tashi Phunstok, Director of The Tibet Museum, delivered the introductory remarks.

President Dr Lobsang Sangay spoke about the Kashag's Five-Fifty vision and how the Tibet Museum's exhibition of Tibetan cultural and historical facts and artifacts can strengthen the Tibet narrative on the global stage.

"Following His Holiness the Dalai Lama's advice of preparing for the worst and hoping for the best, the Kashag devised the 5/50 vision. Under the 5/50 vision, we will try to achieve genuine autonomy for Tibet through the Middle Way Approach in the next five years," Dr Sangay said.

"In case we aren't able to do that in the next five years, we need to strategise in order to strengthen and sustain our cause for the next 50 years. And The Tibet

Museum's role of raising awareness about Tibet and presenting Tibet's history play a critical part in the fifty year strategy," he added.

"Raising awareness about Tibet is pivotal to strengthening international support for the Tibet issue. The Tibet Museum will present Tibet's sixty years of tragic history under Chinese occupation and the several thousand years of history as an independent nation to build an understanding of what happened to Tibet under China," he explained.

"The new museum will also serve as a center of truth that will convey the tragic fate of Tibet and would let the visitors experience the destruction and the suffering that Tibetans went through under Chinese occupation," he added.

Dr Sangay also underlined the huge financial costs that accompany the development of the new museum and encouraged Tibetans to donate financially.

"The New Tibet Museum under construction will cost around 600 Lacs. A major chunk of the fund (about 350 Lacs) has already been raised. The rest will also be raised over time. However, if individual Tibetans are willing to contribute, it will serve as an inspiration for others to do the same," he said.

He also thanked those who have donated ancient artifacts, photos and relics to the museum.

Secretary Sonam Norbu Dagpo announced a master's scholarship worth two lacs to one Tibetan student.

"In our effort to groom and incubate competent and qualified staff for the new Tibet Museum, we are announcing a master's scholarship worth two lac rupees for one student willing to pursue studies in museology or related to museum management," he said. However, the student will have to serve at the Tibet Museum for at least three years after completing the course.

Secretary Dhardon Sharling announced an open competition on concept brief for

the new museum's memorial project.

"The most profound objective of any museum is to preserve memories. The memory of the 1.2 million Tibetans who died as a result of the Chinese occupation in Tibet is a poignant one. To preserve their memories and pay obeisance to their sacrifices, we are developing a memorial project in the new museum," Secretary Dhardon Sharling said.

"For the project's concept brief, we invite applicants to submit their concept notes. The selected concept will receive a prize of one lac rupees. The competition will be open till 10 March 2018," she added.

Director Tashi Phunstok spoke about the objectives of the new Tibet Museum and how it will serve not only as one of the centers of Tibetan cultural and political memory, but also as a center of education for students, researchers, scholars etc.

"Our main hope is to develop the Tibet Museum in such a way that it doesn't feel like the museum of CTA or DIIR or any organization, but one that belongs to Tibet and the Tibetan people. It would carry the hopes and aspirations of the entire Tibetan people," he said.

The press conference also saw the launch of a promotional T-shirt and a booklet on the new Tibet museum.

The new Tibet museum is build to overcome the space limitations of the current Tibet Museum based in His Holiness the Dalai Lama's temple premise. The current museum is not large enough to present, in one space ,Tibet's history, culture and current situation inside Tibet, and the resilience of Tibetans in exile and at home.

The new Tibet museum is larger, technologically more advanced and will provide visitors a unique opportunity to explore and experience an uncensored version of Tibet. The development of the new museum is expected to be completed before the end of this year.

For detailed news visit:

www.tibet.net

“Tibet” Among China’s Top Censored Search Keywords

A report titled “Freedom on the net 2017: Manipulating Social Media to Undermine Democracy”, published by Freedom House, highlighted that a number of governments, including China, restrict mobile internet service for “political or security reasons”, particularly in ethnic or religious minorities-inhabited areas. China is ranked the “world’s worst abuser of internet freedom, followed by Syria and Ethiopia” in 2017.

Xinhua, China’s official state mouthpiece mentioned that China has blocked as many as 128,000 “harmful” websites last year. It further reported confiscation of 30.9 million “illegal” publications in its effort to maintain “social stability”.

The three topics that are heavily censored are three Ts: Tibet, Taiwan and Tiananmen in China.

Under the facade of “social stability” and “state secret,” China enforces various regulations that limit free speech and expression on the Internet. All internet users are required to identify themselves with real name to access the web.

In September last year, China’s Public Security Bureau of Machu (Ch: Maqu), Kanlho Tibetan area in Gansu Province issued a public notice entailing a list of instructions to online chat group administrators. The notice warned all chat group administrators and owners of public online accounts to regulate and take responsibility for the contents shared in the group. The regulations were said to promote “healthy and orderly development of online community” and “uphold socialist core values”.

Any information that China deem as sensitive, subversive and seditious are blocked. In addition to sophisticated technology in place, 2 million cyber police are deployed to “purify the internet”. Their role, of internet purification, includes monitoring, blocking and removing contents that are

critical of the communist party and the Chinese government by using keyword searches constantly. China’s biggest taboos- the Three Ts: Tibet, Taiwan and Tiananmen Square- are enlisted among sensitive keyword search phrases.



Courtesy: Tenzin Jigme/ Social Media Journalist/ DIIR

In Tibet, a number of Tibetans have faced arrest and sentence for sharing information over the internet.

In March last year, Gedhun, a young Tibetan from Sersul county in Karze, Eastern Tibet (incorporated into China’s Sichuan Province), was beaten severely and arrested for sharing online an image of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the banned Tibetan national flag.

In February 2016, a prominent Tibetan blogger, Druklo, popularly known by his pen name: Shokjang, was given a three-year imprisonment term. Shokjang was accused of “inciting separatism” and “causing instability” for writing about the heavy military presence and crackdown on Tibetans in his hometown Rebkong. He had shared the images on WeChat, a popular Chinese messaging app widely used by Tibetans inside and outside Tibet.

In a separate case, September 2014, two Tibetans; Jamyang Gyatso, 32, and Namgyal Wangchuk, 43, were sentenced to five years and seven years in prison respectively for sharing on Wechat images related to the anti-fur campaign.

Despite severe clampdowns on information flow, reports of crackdown on Tibetans having expressed views both online and offline continue to emerge out of Tibet thus keeping the global audience updated of the developments inside Tibet.

CTA President Inaugurates Gangjong Development Finance Pvt. Ltd.

President Dr Lobsang Sangay of the Central Tibetan Administration today inaugurated Gangjong Development Finance Private Ltd, a non-banking financial corporation of the Department of Finance, Central Tibetan Administration.

The inauguration was announced at a press conference attended by the three Board of Directors namely Finance Kalon Karma Yeshe, Chief Planning Officer Dr Kunchok Tsundue and Alok Prasad, a renowned MFin expert. Finance Secretary Trinley Gyatso was also present. The new company is registered under the Companies Act administered by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

Addressing the press conference, President Dr Lobsang Sangay said the Gangjong Development Finance Pvt. Ltd. is the culmination of a series of deliberations by successive Kashags over the need of a financial corporation in the Tibetan community. He said this initiative is a part of the Kashag’s 5/50 vision and the principle of self-reliance, one of the three guiding principles of the Kashag.

“This is one of the most strategic programmes of CTA conceived and designed to drive forward the Kashag’s 5/50 policy addressing the critical need of financial literacy and inclusion services for Tibetans in general and Tibetan enterprises and start-ups in particular,” he said.

“Under this initiative, we have already rolled out a 100-million rupees loan scheme for Tibetan hosiery and sweater traders at a relatively low interest rate of 3%. The scheme was highly successful with at least 90% of the loans already recovered,” he added.

“With the success of the sweater seller loan scheme, we are now planning to



From left: Finance Secretary Trinley Gyatso, Finance Kalon Karma Yeshe, CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay, MFin expert Alok Prasad, and Chief planning Officer Dr Kunchok Tsundue at the press conference on 17 January 2018. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

expand the next scheme to 200 million rupees covering not just Tibetan sweater sellers but also Tibetan-owned micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), and education loans,” Dr Sangay explained.

However, he added that the details of the scheme would be announced following an in-depth assessment by the board members including market research, consultations and need analysis of the applicants.

“The formal registration of the Gangjong Development Finance Pvt. Ltd is only the first step. Our hope is that it will become a normal commercial bank after several years,” he said.

Finance Kalon Karma Yeshe said that the most important objective of the company is to strengthen Tibetan economy and transform it into an economically self-reliant community, eradicating the dependence syndrome prevalent among many.

He lauded the public for participating in the Tibetan hosiery loan scheme, and the fact that 90% of the loan is recovered is a testament to the fact that Tibetans are by and large trustworthy.

“Unlike normal banks, we haven’t asked for any collateral when the loans are provided. Trust was the only collateral that we sought and was repaid with,” he said.

He also informed that about 40% of the loans were given to women-led enterprises which not only helped economic advancement of the Tibetan

community but also empowerment of women in the community.

Finance Kalon further spoke about the finance department’s various other initiatives to sensitise Tibetan public about the new financial rules and regulation announced by the Indian government such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST). He spoke about the month-long GST training provided by the department to a select group of field officers who will then go on to help the Tibetan public in the settlements.

In his address, Chief Planning Officer Dr Kunchok Tsundue said that the registration of the NBFC is the first step towards the company becoming a full-fledged bank.

He said the formation of the company is part of the Kashag’s 5/50 vision to strengthen Tibetan economy and alleviate the economic hardships faced by Tibetans in exile.

He also explained the differences between a normal commercial bank and an NBFC.

“The only difference is that normal banks accept deposits and give withdrawal facilities. However, in the case of an NBFC, deposit and withdrawal facility is not available but you can buy shares of the company,” he said.

The Solidarity Rally is a wake-up call to the United Nations and the International Community: CTA President in New York

President of Central Tibetan Administration, Dr Lobsang Sangay and Education Kalon Ven Karma Gelek Yuthok today called on Shri Anil Swarup, Honorable Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

In the meeting, President Dr Sangay sought support of the HRD Secretary in



President of Central Tibetan Administration, Dr Lobsang Sangay and Education Kalon Ven Karma Gelek Yuthok, Secretary Karma Singhe called on Shri Anil Swarup, Honorable Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 18 January 2018. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

the smooth transaction of the third-phase transfer of CTSA Schools.

In response, Secretary Anil Swarup offered his full support and assured that the third-phase transfer of the remaining schools of CTSA will be expedited at the earliest.

Secretary of Department of Education, Karma Singhe was also present at the meeting.

President Dr Lobsang Sangay had earlier remarked that the third phase of the transfer was especially significant because it marked the complete transfer of all the senior secondary schools in the Tibetan settlements.

CTA President Launches Yearlong Thank You India Campaign 2018

President of the Central Tibetan Administration Dr Lobsang Sangay accompanied by Secretaries Sonam Norbu Dagpo and Tenzin Dhardon Sharling of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) launched the yearlong ‘Thank You India’ campaign at a press conference at the Press Club of India in New Delhi.

Kalon Ven Karma Gelek Yuthok of the department of Religion and Education accompanied by Education Secretary Karma Singhe and Representative Dongchung Ngodup accompanied by Tsewang Gyalpo Arya, Secretary of

Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, were also present at the press conference.

In his address, President Dr Lobsang Sangay said that the year 2018 is significant since 31 March 2018 will mark the beginning of the 60th year of His Holiness the Dalai Lama stepping on Indian soil. His Holiness the Dalai Lama entered India on 31 March 1959 through Arunachal Pradesh followed by 80,000 Tibetans.

“It also marks 60 years of Tibet under China which is the sad and tragic chapter of Tibet’s history. However, the last sixty years of Tibetan community in exile has been a story of success,” President Dr Sangay said.

“The success of the Tibetan people, also referred to as the most successful refugee community in the world, is due to the support of the international community particularly India and its people,” he said.

“For this reason, the CTA is organising a series of events to mark 2018 as thank you year. It is a gesture of our gratitude to India for the support and encouragement that have enabled exile Tibetan community under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to survive as a productive and cohesive community outside Tibet,” he announced.

Explaining the importance of India in strengthening the Tibetan movement, President Dr Lobsang Sangay first spoke about His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his respect for India.

“His Holiness the Dalai Lama calls himself as a ‘son of India’ because His Holiness has survived on the nutritious Indian Dal roti for the better part of the last sixty years, and also because his mind is filled with the rich knowledge of ancient India,” he said.

Dr Sangay also explained how the Tibetan movement is closely linked to India. He said the Tibetan movement follows Ahimsa; the Gandhian principle of non-violence, and how Tibetan democracy is also emulated from the Indian system of democracy.

He further explained that the current crop of leaders heading the Tibetan movement is mostly educated by Indian teachers in the schools established with the support of the Indian government, jokingly referring to the Tibetan movement as the first and original product of India’s ‘Make in India’ initiative.



From left: DIIR Secretary Sonam Norbu Dagpo, CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay, Kalon ven Karma Gelek Yuthok, Representative Ngodup Dongchung and DIR secretary Dhardon Sharling launching the thank you India calendar 2018 in New Delhi, 18 January 2018. Photo/Tenzin Phende/ DIIR

Dr Sangay therefore appealed India to continue the support and resolve the Tibet issue by making Tibet a core issue during Sino-Indian bilateral dialogues. He said that the success of the Tibetan movement will both determine and reflect the success of India, as only India has the legitimacy and credibility to resolve the Tibet issue.

Speaking about the Nalanda Tradition, Dr Sangay said that the Nalanda tradition of developing the heart and mind has enriched the Tibetan people for centuries. However, he lamented the fact India which is home to Buddhism has only few Buddhist followers today.

Dr Sangay then highlighted His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s efforts to revive Nalanda tradition in India. He said His Holiness the Dalai Lama has successfully revived Tibetan culture and Buddhism from the ashes of China’s destruction in exile.

“China has destroyed almost 95% of Tibetan monasteries and nunneries. However, under the visionary guidance of His Holiness and the support of Indian government, Tibetan Buddhism is thriving now,” he said.

“Not just in Tibetan community, Tibetan Buddhism is now also thriving

in the Himalayan belt as a result of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s efforts. His Holiness now wants to revive this ancient knowledge throughout India,” he explained.

Secretary Sonam Norbu Dagpo said that Tibetans have been able to preserve and promote its rich culture in exile only with the support of the Indian government and people. Therefore, he said that the Tibetan administration will observe 2018 as year of gratitude with a series of pan-India events spanning 12 months.

“Tibetans will thank India for ensuring the success of the efforts of the Tibetan people: promoting its rich ancient culture and unique identity, assuring the viability and sustainability of the Tibetan leadership and Tibetan communities and leading the Tibetan struggle through steadfast commitment to non violence and dialogue,” he said.

Secretary Dhardon Sharling explained that the ‘thank you India’ programme will be executed both on the ground and on the virtual space to publicly express gratitude to both the Indian government and the people.

She also outlined some of the programmes of the yearlong campaign which include a ‘Pray for India’ interfaith prayer meeting, an initiative to feed the hungry, cover the cold, mass tree plantation drive, mass participation in India’s Yoga day, cleanliness drive, etc.

She further said that all the activities will also be featured on social media with #thankyouIndia2018.

The press conference also saw the launch of the Thank You India souvenir – a dharamachakra, wheel of universal truth- and calendar 2018.

Around forty media persons from leading newspapers, magazines, agencies and TV channels including The Times of India, Tribune, PTI, ANI, DD News, ETV, NDTV, etc took part in the press conference.

Former Tibetan Prisoner Detained in Sog County After Lhasa Protest

A well-known former Tibetan political prisoner who went “missing” after he staged a lone protest last week in Lhasa has been located in Sog County where he has been detained by the Chinese authorities. Lodoe Gyatso, also known as Sogkhar Lodoe, shouted slogans in the ground in front of the Potala Palace on 28 January, following which he was



Lodoe Gyatso

unheard of.

Just before his demonstration on 28 January, Lodoe Gyatso circumambulated the Potala Palace. According to our sources, Chinese authorities immediately arrested Lodoe Gyatso and later took him to Sog County where he is currently held in detention. It is unclear what were the slogans and demands Lodoe Gyatso raised.

In a video recording of less than two minutes duration, apparently shot just before his peaceful protest, Lodoe Gyatso shares about his plans to organize a peaceful demonstration. Lodoe Gyatso talks about the Tibetan people’s commitment for world peace and non-violence under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. “On this day of 28 January, 2018, I commit to organize activities for world peace. Tashi Delek,” Sogkhar Lodoe says in the video.

Lodoe Gyatso, 57, was jailed for 21 years during which he was subjected to torture. On 17 January 1993, he was first sentenced to 15 years in Drapchi Prison in Lhasa by the Nagchu Intermediate People’s Court. On 4 March 1995, Lodoe Gyatso led a protest inside the notorious Drapchi prison and shouted, “Tibet is independent”, “China out of Tibet”, “May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live for ten thousand years”, and “Six million Tibetans be united”. He also distributed over 300 hand-written pamphlets. Within three days of his protest, local authorities decided to procure execution order for Lodoe Gyatso. However, international intervention and pressure resulted in the extension of Lodoe’s prison term by six more years instead of execution, amounting to 21 years’ imprisonment in total. He was released in May 2013 but was put under house arrest for the next four years.

In 2016, Lodoe Gyatso was arbitrarily detained in Tsamda prison in Driru county after he criticized the local authorities’ actions. The local government of Sog county and Driru county had ordered all monks and nuns from the area studying in other parts of Tibet to return. The monks and nuns were threatened of consequences such as imprisonment of family members and ban on caterpillar fungus (Tib: Yartsagunbu) harvesting if not complied with. Lodoe Gyatso protested that it is against the international law and the Chinese law to do so, since the Tibetan monks and nuns have not committed any crimes. He was released after few months in weak health.

According to our sources, Lodoe Gyatso was planning to stage peaceful political protests and raise slogans after his house arrest ended in May 2017.

Lodoe Gyatso is from Sogkhar village in Tsadog township, Sog county, Nagchu Prefecture in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

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Like South Africa, Tibet will succeed and Non-Violence will Succeed: CTA President in Cape Town

The President of Central Tibetan Administration Dr Lobsang Sangay addressed students and faculty of the University of Stellenbosch’s Law Department yesterday.

Despite verbal and written protests by the Chinese embassy in South Africa to cancel the event, the Department went ahead with the event. Faculty members and number of interested students attended the address, which lasted about 30 minutes.

In his address, President Dr Sangay spoke about His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people’s reverence



Students and faculty of Stellenbosch University at CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay’s address.

and admiration for Nelson Mandela and the values that South Africa as a country represents to the world.

“His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people have always expressed appreciation for Nelson Mandela for the non violent revolution that he led in South Africa,” Dr Sangay told the students and faculty.

“Nelson Mandela’s book ‘Long Walk to Freedom’ shaped my thinking and my political ideology. My growing up years was heavily influenced by Nelson Mandela’s struggle for freedom and this sowed the seeds for the quest for freedom for my homeland Tibet. I have had the honor of meeting Archbishop Desmond Tutu and I feel close to the

values for freedom, justice, democracy and non-violence that South Africa continue to fight for," he added.

"Tibetans have and will always admire the South African spirit and we are convinced that if South Africa can do it, then Tibetans can do it too," he exclaimed.

Appealing for South Africa's support for the Tibetan cause, Dr Sangay noted that the success of any freedom struggle is dependent on the support of the international community.

"During my university days two and half decades ago in Delhi, I marched along with millions of people across the world, to call for an end to apartheid and for South Africa's freedom," Dr Sangay recalled.

Dr Sangay expressed confidence that South Africa will continue to support the Tibetan people and the Tibetan movement.

Speaking about the issue of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's South Africa visa delays, Dr Sangay said: "The denial of visa for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, not just once but three times, showed how the values cherished by South Africa is diminishing."

"For His Holiness the Dalai Lama, it is not much of a loss because it is simply a case of not going to one more country. But for South Africa, it was a compromise of the values of freedom, non violence and justice that you fought for, that you went to prison for," Dr Sangay pointed out.

"South Africa's moral authority became questionable and therefore with the unfortunate episode, South Africa lost more than just His Holiness the Dalai Lama," he said.

Dr Sangay also explained in detail the grim situation prevailing in Tibet under the Chinese communist rule and how according to Freedom House's annual report Tibet is ranked as the second least free country in the world after Syria.

Urging the students and faculty to look

at Tibet as a moral lesson, he said: "Let's not repeat the mistake. Tibet provides a chance for South Africa to prove its moral and legitimate authority" and lauded the Law Department of the University for upholding the values of freedom and democracy that is rightfully enshrined in the constitution of South Africa."

Tibetans have not given up their struggle for freedom: Dhondup Wangchen meets with US State Department

Former Tibetan political prisoner and prominent Tibetan filmmaker, Dhondup Wangchen met with Scott Busby, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Multilateral Organizations, and Amb Mike Kozak, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor at its headquarter on 12 February.



Former Tibetan political prisoner and prominent Tibetan filmmaker, Dhondup Wangchen with Scott Busby, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Multilateral Organizations, and Amb Mike Kozak, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor on 12 February 2018. Photo/International Campaign for Tibet

According to reports from Filming for Tibet, Dhondup Wangchen was invited by Scott Busby and Mike Kozak, who both serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and for multilateral and global issues.

"There was a great interest for Dhondup Wangchen's personal story and his view on the present situation in Tibet. Dhondup Wangchen assured them: Tibetans in Tibet have not given up their



Dhondup Wangchen with US State Department staff from different bureaus, 12 February 2018. Photo/International Campaign for Tibet

struggle for freedom," the report said.

Wangchen had further meetings with Laura Stone, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific and State Department staff from different bureaus.

He was accompanied by Matteo Meccaci, International Campaign for Tibet, Jamyang Tsultrim and Dechen Pemba, Filming for Tibet.

In its latest tweets, the International Campaign for Tibet said, "Dhondup Wangchen received a warm welcome at the State Department today. He had a productive meeting with Scott Busby, Dep. Ass. Sec. of State for Multilateral Organisations and Amb. Mike Kozak, Dep. Ass. Sec. of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

Dhondup Wangchen will testify before the US Congress at a Hearing organised by the Congressional Executive Commission on China on 14 February. The Hearing will take place on Wednesday, February 14 from 10am to 12pm in 301 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC. Dhondup will also meet Congressional and Administration officials.

This is Dhondup Wangchen's first visit to Washington, DC after his escape from Tibet.



Updated-Contrary to Reports, Fire not at Jokhang Chapel: Central Tibetan Administration

In light of the news reports of a massive fire that was believed to have emerged from Jokhang chapel (chapel that houses the Jowo-Buddha Shakyamuni's statue) in the temple premises, in the heart of Lhasa city, reliable sources have told the Central Tibetan Administration leadership that the source of the fire is not the Jowo chapel but from an adjacent chapel within the Jokhang temple premises known in Tibetan as Tsuglakhang.

Images and videos circulating on social media show the Jokhang temple premises, one of the holiest Buddhist temples in Tibet engulfed in flames. A bystander is heard wailing and chanting a prayer in the name of Tenzin Gyatso (His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama).

It is reported that the fire that broke out at 6:40 pm (Lhasa time) on February 18, the second day of Tibetan New Year was doused and there was no casualties and damage to property is yet to be ascertained.



Screen grab of fire in Jokhang Temple Premises

CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay who is currently on a six-day official visit to Japan sighed relief that the fire did not affect Jokhang chapel but cautioned Tibetans in Tibet to remain alert at large public gatherings especially during occasions such as Losar.

“At this point of time I cannot comment much until the cause of the fire is brought to light, but it is disturbing to see tragic accidents take place at Jokhang temple

premises, one of the most hallowed sites in Tibet and a UNESCO World Heritage site,” lamented Ven Karma Gelek Yuthok, Minister for Religion and Culture.

State-run Xinhua news agency today reported that the Barkhor market in Lhasa is reopened to the public today after a temporary closure following yesterday's fire and that the situation is brought back to normal.

“It is mandatory to have adequate safety measures put in place at holy sites such as Jokhang, considered as the spiritual heart of Tibetan Buddhism and at places of large congregation,” said Dr Sangay. He also expressed hope that more information about cause of the blaze will be divulged in the coming days.

The Jokhang chapel at Tsuglakang (temple) has a history of more than 1,300 years and houses many cultural treasures, including a life-sized statue of the 12-year old Buddha also known as Jowo Sakyamuni.

Chorig Kalon Attends Enthronement Ceremony of 34th Kyabje Menri Trizin

Kalon Karma Gelek Yuthok of Department of Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration attended the enthronement ceremony of the 34th Kyabje Menri Trizin, spiritual head of Bon Tradition, at Menriling monastery today on 20 February.

The ceremony began with the arrival of the 34th Menri Trizin Rinpoche, followed by offering of prayers and presentation of Kashag's statement by Kalon Karma Gelek Yuthok.

Kalon expressed Kashag's congratulatory greetings to the new Menri Trizin and wished him all the success in his new responsibility as the spiritual head of the Tibetan Bon tradition.

Kalon also expressed profound gratitude to his benevolent activities and



Kalon Karma Gelek Yuthok greeting 34th Menri Trizin Rinpoche at the enthronement ceremony, 20 February 2018. Photo/Department of Religion and Culture

contribution towards Tibetan Buddhism.

The ceremony was attended by Geshe Monlam Tharchin and Tsewang Tashi Bhara, Members of Tibetan parliament representing Bon tradition, Tibetan Settlement officer and members of the monastic community.

Finance Kalon Speaks on 'Why India should support the Tibetan freedom struggle'

Youth Liberation Front of Tibet (YLFTM) a community-based Tibet support organisation organised an event on Tibet at Namberdar Farm House, on 20 February to create awareness among the people of Katewara District in Delhi.



Chief guest Kalon Karma Yeshe, Department of Finance, CTA addressing the talk on 'Why India should support the Tibetan freedom struggle' organised by Youth Liberation Front of Tibet at Katewara, Delhi. Photo/ITCO

The Chief Guest of the program Kalon Karma Yeshe, Minister, Department of Finance, Central Tibetan Administration graced the event along with other Guest Speakers- Acharya Hanumath Prasad Upadhaya, President of Arya Samaj Gurukul, Shri Chowdhary Ramesh Nambardar, Sarpanch of Katewara.

Chief Guest Kalon Karma Yeshe, spoke about the historic bond of friendship that India and Tibet shared, and how Tibet's Buddhist heritage is derived from the Nalanda tradition of India.

He expressed gratitude to India and its people for hosting His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration. He said that with the help of India, Tibetans have been able to restore its culture and religion in exile. He sought India's continued support for the Tibetan people and the Tibetan struggle for genuine autonomy based on the Middle Way Approach. He stated that even after 60 years of Chinese rule in Tibet, Tibetans in Tibet continue to fight for their basic fundamental rights and have refused to yield to China's brutal repression.

Kalon further said that the event at Katewara is a small step in the right direction and expressed his hope to see more such events not just in and around Delhi but all over India so that the general Indian public understands the issue of Tibet and its geopolitical significance to India.

The program themed "Why India should support the Tibetan Freedom Struggle" drew the participation of more than 150 local residents.

Shri Narendar Chaudhary, President of the organisation, in his inaugural address, said that the mission of the organisation is to create awareness and build momentum across States of Delhi and Haryana to free Tibet from the colonial rule of China and for the security of India's own boundaries.

Acharya Hanumath Prasad Upadhaya in his speech stated that People and the Government of India will support the cause of Tibet until it is resolved. He pays his solidarity with the movement and support for the cause of Tibet.

The program concluded with vote of thanks by Shri Sanjay Tomar of Youth Liberation Front of Tibet. India Tibet Coordination Office distributed Tibet related books and "Thank You

India" Calendar to the participants and audience.

The Youth Liberation front of Tibet, East-Turkistan, Manchuria and Inner-Mongolia, is a Jat youth based Tibet support group and was founded on 5th May 2001 under the leadership of Shri Narendar Chaudhary at Katewara, Delhi. The program was widely covered in national paper of Dainik Jagran, Hari Bhumi and Lok Satya. The Youth Liberation Front of Tibet has raised awareness on Tibet issue in Delhi and in neighbouring States of Haryana and Chandigarh.

US Mayors Call on His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Mayor Greg Fischer of Louisville, Kentucky and Tom Tait of Anaheim, California on Wednesday called on Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his official residence in Dharamshala.



Mayor Greg Fischer of Louisville, Kentucky and Tom Tait of Anaheim, California calls on His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamshala, 21 February 2018. Photo/Grey Fischer/Twitter

"It was an honor to speak with the Dalai Lama — an iconic figure for peace, justice and compassion — about the tremendous compassion work happening in Louisville," Mayor Greg Fischer tweeted of the meeting.

Both the mayors had met the Tibetan spiritual leader several times before. His Holiness was invited as keynote speaker at the US Conference of Mayors, a summit of 200 mayors dedicated to building more compassionate communities, in 2016. In the same year, His Holiness met both the Mayors and Mayor of Rochester, MN to discuss a

practical human value based education curriculum for American schools.

In 2011, Louisville adopted the name 'City of Compassion' and Anaheim declared itself as 'City of Kindness'. Both cities have led a parallel movement on promoting human kindness and compassion, a cause championed by His Holiness.

Chorig Kalon Greet Kyabje Kathok Getse Rinpoche, 7th Nyingma Head



Kalon Karma Gelek Yuthok, Department of Religion and Culture, CTA with 7th Nyingma head, Kyabje Kathok Getse Rinpoche. Photo/Department of Religion and Culture

Ven Karma Gelek Yuthok, Kalon for Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration paid an official greeting to Kyabje Kathok Getse Rinpoche this morning at Bodh Gaya. Kathok Getse Rinpoche was recently appointed as the spiritual head of Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism during Nyingma Monlam held in Bodh Gaya.

Kalon offered Mendrel Ten-Sum and presented a written message of Kashag to Rinpoche.

During the meeting, Kalon updated upcoming events and programs of the Department of Religion and Culture and also expressed his serious concern on declining numbers of monks and nuns in many monasteries and the increased need of improving scholarship of present monks and nuns, studying in respective monasteries.

Kalon also paid greeting to Gyaltzab Rinpoche while visiting Tergar monastery.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Graces the Golden Jubilee Celebration of CIHTS

Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama graced the Golden Jubilee Celebration of Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in the holy city of Varanasi.

The landmark celebration was attended by Gaden Tripa Kyabje Jetsun Lobsang Tenzin Palsangpo, Thrangu Rinpoche, Professor Samdong Rinpoche, former Governor of Sikkim B.P Singh, the President Dr Lobsang Sangyal, Central Tibetan Administration, Speaker of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Gaden Tripa and Vice-Chancellor Geshe Ngawang Samten and over 250 alumni of the Institute.

The culmination of three-day golden jubilee celebration was held on the theme 'Mind in Indian Philosophical Schools of Thought and Modern Science', attended by hundreds of eminent scholars, philosophers, sanskritists and experts including Swami Atmapriyananda, Vice-Chancellor of the Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute, Prof Asanga Tilakratne, Pali and Buddhist Studies at University of Colombo, Sri Lanka and Michel Bitbol, Directeur de Recherche at CNRS, Paris among others.

Speaking at the golden jubilee celebration, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, "Since this is an institute of higher Tibetan studies, I would like to speak the beautiful dialect of Central Tibet. First of all as we celebrate this golden jubilee, we are reflecting back on the great achievement of this institute. When we talk about the great achievements of this institute, we are talking about achievement over long period of time. Many of the key people who are part of the great achievement are no longer with us. As we celebrate, we must remember their contribution as well.

"Another important point I would like to emphasise here, given that this is an institute of learning, there is the need to constantly to shake up our brains. The best way to do that is to make sure that



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetan religious heads and President Dr Lobsang Sangyal lighting the auspicious butter lamp at the inaugural ceremony of the Golden Jubilee celebration of CIHTS.
Photo/Tenzin Jigme/DIIR*

we are not fixated on single point of view. We must develop multifaceted reality which then throws up all sort of angles of approaching a situation. In order for us to utilise our brain in constructive way, the brain and education alone is not adequate. So therefore what is required is a skilful union of intelligent brain as well as compassionate motivation."

While congratulating everyone on the 50th anniversary, His Holiness also wished them Happy New Year. He inspired the gathering to approach the new year in fresh spirit, with conscious intention to make transformation within oneself in order to drive change outside. "Infact if an individual were to make conscious intention to live his or her life with sense of purpose, live it in a good way. The ripple effect of that really spreads. First form individual to family, then to community, to friends and neighbors and so on. This is how society gets changed and affected. Otherwise when we talk about transformation of society, the transformation really has to start from individual, from inside to outward."

President Dr Lobsang Sangyal congratulated the members of CIHTS on behalf of the Central Tibetan

Administration. He lauded the former teachers for their contribution to the Institute's development and complimented the Vice-Chancellor for his leadership. He praised Ven Samdhong Rinpoche for the 30 years of his life dedicated to the Institute.

President Dr Sangyal encouraged students and members to emulate His Holiness's commitment to promoting human values and inter-religious harmony, preserving Tibetan language, religion and culture, protection of Tibet's natural environment, and the reviving of ancient Indian knowledge in modern India.

"With the occupation of Tibet, Chinese Communists tried to eliminate the Tibetan identity, culture and its Buddhist traditions and they thought they had succeeded, but they had underestimated His Holiness efforts to re-establish the Nalanda Tradition among Tibetans, the peoples of the Himalayan region and even among Chinese Buddhists. Under the leadership of His Holiness, the traditions of the Nalanda Mahavihara that were destroyed in Tibet continue to flourish in exile," CTA President said, while offering prayers for His Holiness' long life and the dignified to Tibet.

CTA President on Why His Holiness the Dalai Lama is Committed to Reviving Nalanda Tradition in India

In his remarks, Vice-Chancellor Geshe Ngawang Samten expressed profound gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Prime Minister Jawarharlal Nehru for co-founding the institute and the Government of India for its continued support.

“In due course, Prime Minister Jawarhalal Nehru also lent his support to the founding of an Institute of Higher Education, which was launched in affiliation with the Sampurnanand Sanskrit University in 1968. Zong Rinpoche served as Principal for the first three years and he was followed by Samdhong Rinpoche, who served for 30 years. Renowned scholars, such as Pt Upadhyaya and Smt Kapila Vatsyayan contributed to the development of the Institute. The intention was to produce students who were wise, skilled and also kind, motivated to contribute to society. They were encouraged to aim high.

“Another early purpose of the Institute was the restoration in Sanskrit and translation into Hindi of classic texts that had been translated into Tibetan. So far about 80 such texts have been translated. Another 100 or so have been translated from Sanskrit into Hindi and English. There have also been efforts to revive the Indian tradition of debating different philosophical points of view. Results of research into the Tibetan medical tradition have been encouraging. A centre has been opened to focus on the study and history of Tibetan literature. In addition a substantial project is envisaged with the Government of Bihar to translate the entire collection of texts that Rahul Sankrityayan brought out of Tibet,” the Vice Chancellor said.

The Registrar, Dr RK Upadhyay delivered the vote of thanks. He described the celebrations as an auspicious occasion and harked back 50 years to His Holiness’s original vision. He said that in trying to fulfil and spread His Holiness’s message of peace and compassion, there is hope for the world.

For detailed news visit:
www.tibet.net

President of the Central Tibetan Administration Dr Lobsang Sangay highlighted the unparalleled contribution of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the Tibetan freedom struggle, and expressed his deep gratitude for the same. President Dr Sangay was speaking at the 50th founding anniversary of Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS) at Sarnath, Varanasi on 1 January 2018.

“The Chinese government has destroyed almost 98% of the Tibetan monasteries during its brutal occupation of Tibet in 1959. It was an attempt to completely annihilate Tibetan Buddhism. However, after coming into exile, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has successfully revived Tibet’s Buddhist heritage from the ashes of China’s destruction,” President Dr Lobsang Sangay said.

“Not only did His Holiness revive Tibetan Buddhism in exile, he also made sure that this tradition is strengthened in the lower Himalayan regions who share the Tibetan Buddhist culture. Today, Tibetan Buddhism is flourishing all over the world and this is an undisputed legacy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” Dr Sangay remarked.

“Even inside China, it is estimated that there are at least 300 – 400 million Buddhists, making it one of the largest Buddhist countries in the world. India in contrast is the birthplace of Buddhism but has only a miniscule population of Buddhists,” he added.

“Therefore, to revive the rich Nalanda Tradition of ancient India on which Tibetan Buddhism is based is one of the four main commitments of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This ancient Indian knowledge has the potential to bring peace and tackle the destructive emotions of the modern world,” he said.

Dr Sangay also highlighted the rich achievements of CIHTS and lauded the institute for producing distinguished



CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay speaking at the 50th founding anniversary of CIHTS. Photo/ Tenzin Jigme/DIIR

students who have contributed significantly to the Tibetan cause in various capacities. He particularly expressed gratitude to former Kalon Tripa Prof Samdhong Rinpoche, who has dedicated over 30 years of his life at the institute and Geshe Ngawang Samten, the current Vice Chancellor of the institute.

President Dr Sangay said the past 50 years of CIHTS is a glorious one, but added that it is now a time to revitalize the institution with a fresh approach for the next 50 years. He underscored the Kashag’s 5/50 vision and said that this institute can contribute significantly in making the 5/50 vision a success by strengthening Tibetan language, reviving Tibetan Buddhist culture, and sustaining the Tibetan movement in the long run.

For detailed news visit:
www.tibet.net



CIHTS is one of the Pillars of Tibetan Education and Culture: Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel

Speaking at the 50th founding anniversary of Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS) at Sarnath on 1 January, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile lauded the institute for its distinguished achievements in the field of Tibetan education over the last 50 years and wished it success in the next 50 years.

“The achievements of this institute and its goals for the next 50 years can be gauged from the international conference that it organised in the past two days and the blessed presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at this celebration,” Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel said.

“If we look back at the last 60 years since Tibetans took political exile, we have made a lot of progress. The establishment of a democratic administration and the support and appreciation that we have received from world leaders for our efforts in the revival of political freedom in exile are just few examples,” he added.

“Inside Tibet before Chinese occupation, the monasteries and nunneries used to be the main centers of education and learning. As a result, these centers have served as the custodians of Tibetan culture. However, during the military occupation of Tibet by China in 1959, over 6000 Tibetan monasteries were destroyed. Along with the destruction, numerous Tibetan scholars, academics and literary luminaries were killed which was a hard blow to the Tibetan education system,” Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel recalled.

“However, after coming into exile, we have been able to successfully revive Tibetan culture and education. This is particularly due to the indomitable spirit and efforts of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the support that we received from the Indian government,” he said.

Lauding the institute for its distinguished service in the field of education for the last 50 years, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel said that CIHTS, which is one of the oldest and highly respected



Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel of the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile at the 50th founding anniversary of CIHTS in Varanasi on 1 January 2017.

institutes of learning in exile, is a pillar of Tibetan education in exile.

“Over the last 50 years, this institute under the visionary leadership of former Kalon Tripa Prof Samdhong Rinpoche, has produced many scholars, bureaucrats and politicians, who have contributed immensely to the Tibetan cause especially in the field of education. Therefore, I deeply thank the institute, particularly Prof Samdhong Rinpoche and Vice Chancellor Geshe Ngawang Samten for the same,” he said.

TED invites applications for Business Development Support

Tibetan Entrepreneurship Development (TED) initiative of Department of Finance, Central Tibetan Administration invites application from aspiring Tibetan entrepreneurs to avail the pre-incubation business training and incubation services.

Pre-incubation training is especially for the ideation and recently startups entrepreneurs. They will be provided Business Development support which includes business idea validation, marketing, product development, business plan development, knowledge enhancement and building networks. The training will be provided at Dharamsala.

Unlike the previous year, TED has increased its intake slot this year. There will be 10 seats and the entrepreneurs



are requested to apply on or before the 30th April 2018. The selection will be done on the basis of their application, feasibility of their business idea and entrepreneurs viability. The application will be assessed by both internal and external selection committee. The eligibility criteria are, an updated green book and class 12 pass certificate.

Marketing collaterals have been provided to all the Tibetan Settlements in India and can be found all around the Settlements and any information required can be availed from the Local Settlement office.

The application forms are available at the local Tibetan Settlement Offices and also can be found on our website. TED contact details:

Tenzin Wangyal : 9805-035-128
Tenzin Norsang : 981-676-8569.

For more information, please visit www.tibetanentrepreneurs.org

Tibetan Buddhism is the heir to ancient India's Nalanda Tradition: His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Gracing the second day of CIHTS's Conference on Mind in Indian Philosophical Schools of Thought and Modern Science on 31 December, His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave comments and expressed opinions on the presentations by the esteemed panelists. His Holiness also spoke about the Sanskrit tradition and Pali tradition of Buddhism, and the general acknowledgement of Tibetan Buddhism as the heir to the Nalanda Tradition of ancient India.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with President Dr Lobsang Sangay at the conference, 31 December 2017. Photo/Tenzin Jigme

Buddhist scholars, neuroscientists, sociologists, and researchers attended the second day of the conference including Prof Jay Garfield, a Professor of Philosophy, Logic and Buddhist studies at Smith College; Michel Bitbol, Directeur de Recherche at CNRS, Paris; Dr Thupten Jinpa, adjunct professor at the School of Religious Studies at McGill University; Dr Renuka Singh, a sociologist from Jawarhalal Nehru University; Ceon Ramon, a retired Neuroscientist, etc.

In his comments during the presentations, His Holiness remarked that the term Theravada is a division of the Vinaya. He said that he prefers to talk about the Pali tradition, which refers to the Buddhist traditions of Burma, Sri Lanka and so on, and the Sanskrit tradition, which by and large refers to the Indian tradition. He added that he prefers not to use the terms Hinayana and Mahayana because there is a tendency for those following the Mahayana to look down on those belonging to the Hinayana, and for the

latter to question whether the Mahayana is actually the teaching of the Buddha.

“In the Sanskrit tradition there is a talk of the three turnings of the wheel of dharma, among which the first represents the Pali tradition—including the Vinaya, shamatha, vipassana and the 37 factors of enlightenment—while the two other turnings refer to the Sanskrit tradition,” His Holiness said.

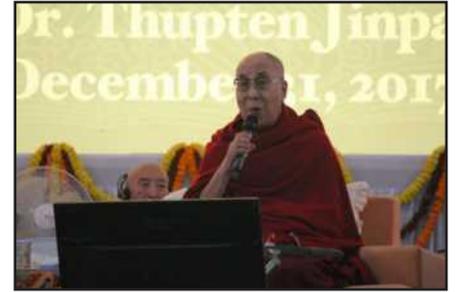
His Holiness further clarified the misconception of some about Tibetan Buddhism as simply Lamaism and not pure Buddhism. “In the past some writers referred to Tibetan Buddhism as Lamaism as if it was not an authentic Buddhist tradition, but today it is universally acknowledged as the heir to the Nalanda Tradition,” His Holiness said.

In his final remarks of the conference, His Holiness spoke about his admiration for the potential of ancient India's knowledge in tackling modern problems, and how a confluence of Buddhism and science can contribute towards creating a more peaceful world.



Members of the audience listening to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's comments on the second day of the conference on Mind in Indian Philosophical Schools of Thought and Modern Science at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, Varanasi, India on December 31, 2017. Photo by Lobsang Tsering

“There is much to be learned from ancient Indian thought that is relevant today in terms of learning to tackle destructive emotions. As a result, India is the only country that could combine the benefits of modern education with



His Holiness the Dalai Lama offering comments to the presentations by the panelists. Photo/Tenzin Jigme

ancient Indian knowledge to enable more people to achieve peace of mind,” His Holiness said, explaining that Tibetan monasteries in South India are already teaching science with Buddhism to hundreds of monks, who after 20 years rigorous study, would be well-qualified to teach about this.

Prof Asanga Tilakratne spoke about the Theravada analysis of the mind—one of the most sophisticated analyses of the mind in any Indian philosophical system. Michel Bitbol spoke about the duality of mind and matter, a belief that there are inherently existing objects with inherent properties is just naïve. He drew attention to Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger, who was instrumental in the development of quantum physics and who took inspiration from Advaita Vedanta and Madhyamaka Buddhism. Dr Thupten Jinpa spoke about the three core features of consciousness in Buddhist philosophy of the mind. Neuroscientist Ceon Ramon spoke about the nature of the mind from the perspective of neuroscience and physics.

Following the conference, His Holiness met a group of blind and partially sighted women and girls from the nearby Jeevan Jyoti school. His Holiness greeted them warmly as old friends, telling them he remembers them and thinks of them often.

For detailed news visit:
www.tibet.net

Tibetan Language Rights Advocate Tashi Wangchuk's Trial Ends Without a Verdict



Tashi Wangchuk's family members outside the Yushu Intermediate People's Court in Qinghai province.

The highly anticipated trial of Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk has ended without a verdict today. Tashi Wangchuk was put on trial for allegedly 'inciting separatism' at the Yushu Intermediate People's Court in Qinghai Province.

The trial, which lasted for about four hours from 9:30 AM to 01:30 PM, was adjourned with no final verdict by the judge. It is still possible that a verdict and sentence may be announced sometime later.

During the trial, the prosecution has shown a New York Times video in which Tashi Wangchuk can be seen advocating the rights of Tibetans to learn and study their mother tongue. The video also details his attempts in Beijing to sue Yushu government officials for sidelining Tibetan language in schools.

"The New York Times video 'A Tibetan's Journey to Justice' was projected as the major evidence," Liang Xiaojun, Tashi Wangchuk's lawyer said via Twitter.

"Other related evidence was also shown. The prosecution, the defense and Tashi Wangchuk himself have all expressed their points of view. Tashi's expression

was very clear and his views were concise," he added in the tweet.

According to reports, the prosecution also tried to prove that Tashi Wangchuk smeared Chinese government's policy on language rights of ethnic minorities and fabricated information regarding self-immolation, etc. to incite separatist sentiments.

A number of foreign diplomatic representatives based in Beijing traveled to Yushu to witness the hearing but they were not let in, according to the New York Times. About fifteen members of Tashi Wangchuk's family also came to attend the trial after the Chinese authorities promised to let them in. However, only three relatives were allowed to attend the trial.

Tashi Wangchuk was detained on 27 January 2016 after appearing in a New York Times video about minority language rights in China. He was formally charged with "inciting separatism" in March 2016 despite his stance that he doesn't seek to separate Tibet from China.

As an advocate for Tibetan language, Tashi Wangchuk has maintained a blog

writing about greater autonomy for Tibetans within China and has been vocal about language education. He has called for schools in Tibet to adopt a true system of bilingual education so that Tibetan children can become fluent in their mother language. None of his writings have called for Tibetan independence.

He has also said that the dearth of effective Tibetan language education, and the fact that the language is not used in government offices, violates the Chinese Constitution, which guarantees cultural autonomy for Tibetan and other ethnic regions.

Since his detention in 2016, Tashi Wangchuk's case has attracted the attention of numerous international rights groups and agencies such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, PEN America and International Campaign for Tibet. These groups have repeatedly called on China to drop the charges and release him.

Before the trial went on this morning, CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay has expressed his concern and urged Chinese authorities to uphold constitutional rights while pronouncing the sentence.

"Tashi Wangchuk has on his own volition advocated for a constitutionally guaranteed right, that of bi-lingual education for Tibetans and ethnic minorities. His trial and sentencing will determine largely whether the Chinese Government is committed to upholding the internationally recognised laws and domestically accepted rule of law in China," Dr Lobsang Sangay, President of the Central Tibetan Administration has said.



“Fair and transparent trial” for Tashi Wangchuk: Latvian Parliamentarians



Parliamentarians from Nordic and Baltic countries including Latvia's speaker of parliament and Finland's speaker of parliament with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Members of the Latvian Parliament have issued a joint statement on the case of Tashi Wangchuk, the Tibetan language advocate who faced a court trial on 4 January. The statement was signed by twenty Latvian parliamentarians who called on China to ensure a “fair and transparent trial of Tashi Wangchuk” while urging China “to implement a judgement process that is constant with international legal standards, with

the presence of observers at his trial”, reported the U.S.-based International Campaign for Tibet.

Just two weeks before the adoption of this statement, the Speaker of the Latvian Parliament Honorable Inara Muriece visited China earlier in January. According to the Finland Chinese embassy, on 10 January, delegates comprising of seven parliamentarians from Nordic and Baltic countries including Latvia's speaker of parliament and Finland's speaker of parliament, met with the Chinese president Xi Jinping to develop “high-level exchanges and deeper cooperation”.

The Latvian parliamentarians' statement on Tashi Wangchuk follow a series of similar statements and resolutions calling for Tashi Wangchuk's release and/or a fair trial. The European Parliament adopted an urgency resolution calling

for the immediate release of Tashi Wangchuk and Tibetan monk Choekyi. German Parliamentarians and French Senators have also issued statements urging the Chinese government to implement a fair judgement process.

Tashi Wangchuk appeared for his trial on 4 January after remaining in detention for nearly two years. Foreign diplomats from United States, Germany, Britain, Canada, and the European Union based in China, have travelled to Yushu to observe the trial but were denied access to the court proceedings. Tashi Wangchuk's trial ran for four hours but ended without a verdict.



Six Tibetans Profiled Among 35 Political Prisoners at 10th Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy

A group of political prisoners around the world have been highlighted at the 10th Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy with posters of the political prisoners raised at the conference venue on 20 February 2018. The posters of around 35 political prisoners depicted the number of days that each political prisoner have remained incarcerated or “disappeared”. Six Tibetan political prisoners were profiled among the 35.

Tibet's 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was profiled as one of the longest serving political prisoners in the world being wrongfully imprisoned for 8,315 days. Gendhun Choekyi Nyima went “missing” on 14 May 1995, at the age of six, after His Holiness the Dalai Lama recognized him as the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama. Since then, Gendhun Choekyi Nyima and his parents have not been heard of. The Chinese authorities have admitted



Six Tibetan political prisoners profiled among 35 political prisoners across the world at the 10th Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy. Photo/Kalden Tsomo/DIIR

taking him but have not divulged any information about his whereabouts.

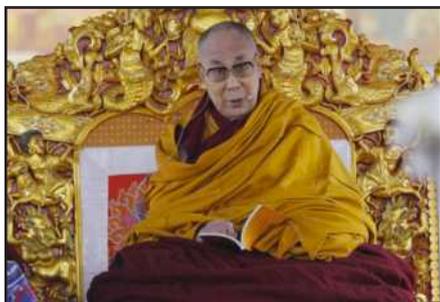
The other five Tibetans profiled besides the 11th Panchen Lama were: Lobsang Kunchok, a Kirti Monastery monk who was given a suspended death sentence for self-immolation of Tibetans in Amdo Ngaba (1,907 days); Dolma Kyab, the husband of Kunchok Wangmo who

self-immolated protesting against Chinese rule (1,804); Karma Samdrup, the Tibetan environmentalist sentenced to 15 years (2,970); Yeshe Choedon, a retired doctor who was given a 15-year imprisonment for sharing information about 2008 mass protests (3,643); and Bonkho Kyi (823) who was sentenced to 7 years for celebrating His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday.

From the political prisoners profiled at the venue, more than a third are imprisoned by the Chinese government, including the six Tibetans. Others have been imprisoned by states such as Cuba, Russia, Iran, Cambodia, Venezuela, etc.

For detailed news visit:
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Buddhist tradition which spread all over Asia is India's tradition: His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Bodh Gaya



His Holiness the Dalai Lama begins three-day teaching on Dharmachakra Parivartan Sutra on The Four Noble Truths (chokyi khorlo korwe do) & Sutra on Dependent Origination (tendrel chi do). Photo/Tenzin Jigme/DIIR

“The teachings of Buddha which have spread all over Asia originated in India. With regard to origin, Buddhism is India’s tradition, not China or Tibet,” His Holiness the Dalai Lama told over 50,000 devotees at the Kalachakra maidan in Bodh Gaya today.

Inaugurating the first of the 3-day teaching for Indian devotees, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said that the teachings of Buddha and Nalanda tradition of reason, logic and empirical investigation is India’s cradle of wisdom.

“Buddhism’s emphasis on validation based on logic and experience is gaining prominence in the scientific world. Such a unique teaching in this world originated in India. The master of Nalanda, Nagarjuna and his disciples were Indian masters and pundits,” His Holiness averred.

Therefore Buddhism in general and of the Sanskrit tradition, Indians should preserve that tradition. This is your traditional treasure, His Holiness said.

The Tibetan spiritual leader, who often describes himself as messenger of Indian thoughts offered the Indian devotees to be the main disciples for the three-day teachings on Dharmachakra Parivartan Sutra on The Four Noble Truths) & Sutra on Dependent Origination.

“The main disciple of the three-day teachings are the Indians. Giving this discourse to my Indian dharma friends, I am very fortunate for the opportunity because the teaching of Buddha originated in India and great masters of Nalanda were from India,” he noted.

Celebrating India’s secular ideals and religious harmony, he said, “India can be a role model in terms of harmony of religious traditions and secular thoughts. All the world’s major religions have flourished here for 1000 years. There are the indigenous traditions like the Samkhya, Jain and Buddhist traditions, and they have been joined by Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

“This is the land where we can find all these traditions living together in mutual respect. India’s secular ideals affirms respect not only for all religions but non-believers too. Such is the rich culture of India.”

Following the brief introductory teaching, His Holiness began the main teaching on the Dharmachakra Parivartan Sutra on The Four Noble Truths (chokyi khorlo korwe do) & Sutra on Dependent Origination (tendrel chi do). The teaching concludes on 7 January.

42nd Sakya trizin, 104th Gaden Tripa and many other Tibetan religious heads and scholars attended the inaugural teaching. Total devotees in attendance exceeds more than 50,000 from over 68 countries around the world.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama Calls for Greater Awareness on Inner Wellbeing

In a brief preamble to his second day teaching on Buddhist text of Four Noble Truths and Dependent Origination at Bodh Gaya, His Holiness the Dalai Lama exhorted his devotees to pursue happiness and peace through training and disciplining one’s mind.

“As long as there is a lack of the inner discipline that brings calmness of mind, no matter what external amenities you have, they will never give you the feeling of joy and happiness that you are seeking. On the other hand, if you train your mind to be calm and at peace, then even if you lack various amenities that you would normally consider necessary for happiness, it is still possible to live a happy and joyful life,” His Holiness said addressing the Buddhist gathering at Kalachakra maidan.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama on second day of teaching on Dharmachakra Parivartan Sutra on The Four Noble Truths (chokyi khorlo korwe do) & Sutra on Dependent Origination (tendrel chi do) at Bodh Gaya, 6 January 2018. Photo/Tenzin Jigme/DIIR

The method of training the mind, according to His Holiness centers on the idea that any experience at mental level is more dominant than sensorial experience and therefore, one could achieve happiness and counter afflictive emotions through the practice of disciplining the mind.

“According to ancient Indian tradition, sensory faculties are only a medium, main experience of happiness and suffering has to be on basis of mind itself. Therefore there are practices of



His Holiness the Dalai Lama on second day of teaching on *Dharmachakra Parivartan Sutra on The Four Noble Truths (chokyi khorlo korwe do)* & *Sutra on Dependent Origination (tendrel chi do)* at Bodh Gaya, 6 January 2018. Photo/Tenzin Jigme/DIIR

single-pointed concentration (Samatha) and penetrative insight (Vipasana).

His Holiness emphasised that the world needs to pay serious attention to the Indian tradition of workings of mind as a reference for deeper understanding of the mind. “India is the place where Buddha appeared and most importantly in this land, Buddha achieved enlightenment. Therefore we need to pay serious attention to the Indian tradition of workings of mind.”

Alluding to the recent scientific discovery of basic human nature, His Holiness said that the seed of compassion and warm-heartedness is within us, and can be strengthened through the awareness of our innate human desire for happiness and aversion for suffering.

“The seed of compassion and warmheartedness is not something that comes from religion,” He said. “Compassion is universal and more so, basic quality of human nature.”

“Just as you appreciate compassion and love from others, you also have the potential to spread that love and compassion to others as well. Therefore we need to train our mind to reflect on this fact that others also want happiness, wish to avoid suffering,” His Holiness said, as he proceeded into the main teaching.

For detailed news visit:
www.tibet.net

In Historic Move, His Holiness the Dalai Lama Releases first volume of ‘Science and Philosophy in the Indian Buddhist Classics’

Etching an extraordinary moment in the history of Buddhist thought, Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama along with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar released the first ever volume of ‘Science and Philosophy in the Indian Buddhist Classics’ on Sunday at Bodh Gaya, Bihar.

“Thanks to His Holiness’s vision, contemporary readers have, for the first time, an opportunity to engage from a scientific perspective with ideas and insights of Indian Buddhist thinkers like Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti,

It brings together classical Buddhist scientific and philosophical explorations into the nature of reality within a framework that is accessible to the modern reader. Of the 4 volumes with in the series, first volume which is being released here today is on science of the physical world.”

Speaking on the occasion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, “When we first arrived in exile in India we had a wide range of problems to deal with. However, in due course it became clear that the psychology, philosophy and logic that



His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar releasing “*Science and Philosophy in the Indian Buddhist Classics, Vol. 1: The Physical World*” in Bodhgaya on 7 January 2018. Photo/Tenzin Jigme/DIIR

Asanga, Bhasubandhu, Dignag and Dharmakirti,” the General editor of the series, Dr Thubten Jinpa said.

In his introduction of the book, Dr Jinpa said, “The creation of this series represents a truly historic achievement . Firstly the careful extraction and organisation of the views and insight of the great Indian buddhist thinkers within a framework of scientific enquiry is in itself a revolutionary achievement in the history of Buddhist thought. This series was conceived by His Holiness, and compiled under his supervision by a team of scholars over many years.

we studied in Tibet from childhood had a wider relevance in the world today. It seemed to me that the science of mind, philosophy and logic in our literature could be studied in an academic way beyond the context of religion.”

“If we think of our literature in terms of science, philosophy and religion, the religious part is only of interest to Buddhists, but the science and philosophy can be of interest to anyone. I believe we can profitably incorporate ideas and values from these writings into the modern education system. In a world in turmoil because of people’s

unruly minds, what we are doing is not propagating Buddhism but exploring how we Buddhists can contribute to the well-being of humanity," he said, emphasising the vision behind the project.

By coming to better understanding of the workings of the mind, we can learn to tackle our disturbing emotions and mental afflictions, something we can't do with either weapons or money, he reminded.

His Holiness thanked Bihar Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar for joining the auspicious event and presented him with a portrait of the Buddha as a special token. "My friend, the Chief Minister

is a sincere man and the release of this book here today is a special occasion for us all. He has already revealed his spiritual interests with the establishment of the Buddha Memorial Park in Patna. Perhaps he has a karmic connection reaching back to the time of the Buddha." The Chief Minister expressed his gratitude towards His Holiness for blessing the state and his people with his visit. "I feel deeply happy and gratified whenever the Dalai Lama visits Bodh Gaya. His discourses have inspired and transformed a countless number of people. I am hopeful that this new book, which has been compiled under his supervision, will serve as an inspiration for promoting peace in the world."

"It is most fitting that this series is being launched in Bodh Gaya which lies in state of Bihar where the great Indian monastery of Nalanda and Vikrama Shila once flourished."

Committee members for the compendium project are Tromthok Rinpoche, Abbot of Namgyal Monastery, Geshe Yangteng Rinpoche, of Sera Me Monastic College; Geshe Jangchup Sangyey, Abbot of Ganden Shartse Monastery; Geshe Chisa Drungchen Rinpoche, of Ganden Jangtse College; Geshe Lob-sang Khechok of Drepung Gomang College, who were all present on the stage, and Geshe Ngawang Sangye of Drepung Loseling College, who was unable to attend.

Nalanda Shiksha Expresses Gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and His Office

In an exclusive interview with Tibet TV of Department of Information and International Relations, Dr Anita, organiser, Nalanda Shiksha expressed gratitude for the utmost support and assistance lent by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his office towards the successful organisation of the three-day teachings, which concluded in Bodh Gaya.

Nalanda Shiksha is a group of 17 different centres from all over India, committed to work for the entire Buddhadharma and its authentic traditions and teachers, without bias to any specific school or lineage.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama greeting the young members of the Nalanda Shiksha on the final day of the three-day teaching in Bodh Gaya, Bihar on 7 January 2018. Photo/Lobsang Tsering/OHHDL

"About eight years ago, we had requested His Holiness for teachings. and at that time, his office said to bring



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with members of Nalanda Shiksha on the final day of the three-day teachings in Bodh Gaya, Bihar on 7 January 2018. Photo/Lobsang Tsering/OHHDL

all the centres, not just one or two centres together. We are from all different parts of India. Last time we had a sankissa with 60,000 Indians, Mumbai with 8000 Indians, we had it at Dharamshala. Now this is the first teaching in Bodh Gaya. This is our seventh year," Dr Anita told Tibet TV.

"Without His Holiness' help, his office's help, I don't think we would have been able to put this teaching together," she said. "His office has been extremely supportive. Without this kind of support and help from His Holiness' foundation, His Holiness' trust and his private office, I think it would have been very very difficult."

Nalanda Shiksha group taking part in the teachings in Bodh Gaya number about

2000. They include 300 college students from Delhi, Chandigarh, Jammu, 200 from Buddhist communities in Sankisa, 600 local students from Bodh Gaya and other people from Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Sikkim and Odisha.



Members of Indian audience at the three-day teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Bodh Gaya, Bihar. Photo/Tenzin Jigme/DIIR

Since 2012, Nalanda Shiksha has requested and received series of teachings from His Holiness the Dalai Lama; In Dharamsala in 2012, 2013 and 2016, in Mumbai in 2014 and in Sankissa in 2015 and Bodh Gaya in 2018. They declare an avowed interested in keeping alive in India today the practices of listening, contemplation and meditation that were an integral part of the Nalanda tradition.

Only education can serve to promote more peaceful and compassionate world, His Holiness the Dalai Lama at National Teachers' Congress

21st century should imbibe peace, dialogue, disarmament and oneness of humanity. In order to create peaceful century, first we need to promote compassionate mind through education, His Holiness the Dalai Lama exhorted 5000 plus teachers of post graduate and undergraduate colleges of all disciplines from India and 1000 teachers of Indian origin serving globally.

Addressing the inauguration of the 2nd National Teachers' Congress here in Pune, chief guest of the event, His Holiness the Dalai Lama hailed India's unique potential to combine modern technology and science with its ancient knowledge on the workings of mind and emotions.

"In today's world we are facing emotional crises, but technological developments alone cannot solve our emotional problems. We can only deal with them by training the mind and this we can learn from the psychology of ancient India. Therefore, only India can combine modern education and technology with ancient Indian knowledge of how to tackle our emotions," he averred.

Advocating the inclusion of ancient Indian knowledge as academic curriculum, His Holiness argued that education system should take care of inner wellbeing as much as it focusses on physical. "The existing system of modern education is largely oriented towards material growth, but we have to include inner values too. We should include in education both physical and inner wellbeing".

This is in consistent with scientific findings that tell us of evidence that negative emotions undermine our immune system, he said. "They also observe that constant anger, fear and hatred undermine our immune system and so are bad for our health. This is why in addition to physical hygiene we need to cultivate emotional hygiene, a focus on achieving peace of mind. As

social animals, we appreciate affection and genuine concern of others'. That is our innate nature; compassionate".

In his keynote address, His Holiness stressed that the knowledge contained in the ancient Indian tradition is much relevant today when tackling destructive emotions is so urgent.

"I have committed the rest of my life to the revival of these knowledge. I think of myself as student of Nalanda tradition. These are in Buddhist text, but these knowledge of human mind, emotions, we should consider academic subject. Teachers play very important roles, you can really make some change. But in order to make some contribution to humanity level, first the ancient Indian knowledge must be revived in India," he appealed the largest Indian confluence of educators of all disciplines.

While calling himself a messenger of ancient Indian thought, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said he also admired India's 1000-year old Ahimsa and religious tolerance. "Really remarkable. In this country, homegrown different religions like Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism flourish alongside religions that have come from outside, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism and Judaism together in harmony. India most populated democratic country with rule of law and religious harmony, wonderful!"

The 82-year-old Nobel laureate reiterated his lifelong campaign for peaceful, demilitarised world. "The next century should be a century of dialogue and discussion rather than one of war and bloodshed. We must embrace oneness of humanity, not nationalistic views. We must strive towards making the later part of this century a demilitarised world. Use of force is outdated. Then in tackling our differences with others, we should embrace compassionate approach, with the conviction in the oneness of humanity and learn to live on this planet together as human brothers and sisters".



His Holiness the Dalai Lama delivering the keynote address at the inauguration of 2nd National Teachers' Congress in Pune, 10 January 2018. Photo/National Teachers' Congress

Ravi V Karad, Vice President, MAER's MIT group and founder, MIT school of government, National Women's Parliament called His Holiness guru of the gurus. "Today your presence, I have no words to express my happiness. You blessed this campus first time in 1996 when you came for world peace conference, second time in 2013 for Indian Students Parliament, then in 2017 for National Women's Parliament. I am grateful from the bottom of my heart. I look at him, as he is a guru of various gurus."

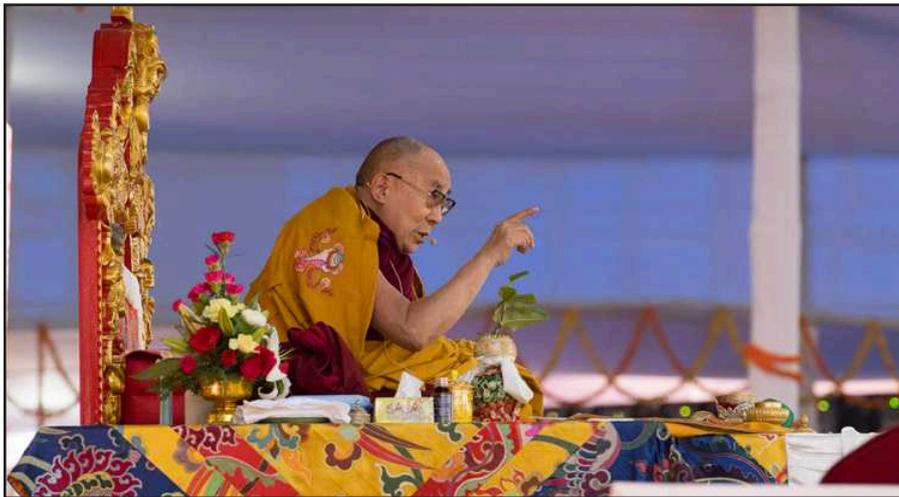
He also thanked President Dr Lobsang Sangay of Central Tibetan Administration.

The second edition of the National Teachers' Congress is India's first confluence of eminent teachers worldwide, connecting more than 8000 spirited teaching fraternity of higher education across India and teachers of Indian origin serving globally.

Other speakers at the 2nd NTC were Mayor of Pune, Smt. Mukta Tilak, Shri. Rahul V. Karad – Executive President, MIT World Peace University, Dr. Anil Kakodkar – Padma Vibhushan & Eminent Scientist (Atomic Energy), Dr Vishwanath D Karad, Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe among others.

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Cultural Revolution has failed, Brute Forces Can Never Subdue People's Belief: His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Chinese Buddhists



Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Photo/OHHDL

“Although the Cultural revolution unleashed a decade of violent extirpation of religion and religious institutions in China, today we can tell that it was a total failure. External forces cannot subdue the thousand-year-old spiritual heritage of the Chinese people and today in China, not only Buddhism but other traditions are being revived. People’s faith are only growing,” His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, while he was giving Buddhist discourse to devotees from mainland China in Bodh Gaya.

Inaugurating his two-day teachings on Diamond Cutter Sutra for the Chinese devotees, His Holiness said that Buddhism has been part of the cultural heritage of the Chinese people and praised their earnest efforts to preserve it.

“Traditionally, Chinese people and culture have been closely associated with Buddhism. The Sanskrit tradition

first spread to China, then Korea, Vietnam, Japan, Tibet and Mongolia. In fact Sanskrit tradition flourished in China before it came to Tibet from India. Therefore historically, Chinese have had a natural propensity towards Buddhism. So this is your hereditary treasure, and your preserving this tradition is admirable,” he told the Chinese disciples.

However he insisted that the tradition must be preserved through study not merely through faith. “I have been encouraging Tibetan monastics, whether big or small centre, should become a centre of learning. Even in Tibetan community, not only in the Buddhist universities, but in community of monks and nuns, I have urged them to study the Buddhist philosophical tenets. That’s the reason why we have new graduated geshemas who have spent years on study. I advise the same for our Chinese friends”.

His Holiness criticised the way people tend to see religion as a custom to follow, rather than a subject of study. He pointed out that the Buddha had encouraged his followers to test his teaching as goldsmith tests gold. Experiment, investigation and analysis are the tools to use.

“Many scientists and western philosophers say that Buddhism is a science of mind and not religion; I think there is some truth in it. In the Buddhist investigation of reality, we traditionally employ four principles of reasoning: dependence, function, nature and evidence,” he said, emphasising the parallel approach between Modern Science and Buddhist Science.

Following his introductory remarks, His Holiness started conferring the main discourse on the Diamond Sutra text, Dorjee Chodpa. In his description of the text, His Holiness said, “The text is called Perfection of Wisdom, not just to say that it is any kind of wisdom but the wisdom that leads to the final goal of enlightenment. The wisdom is the main factor which actually leads one from lower to higher stages and for making progress along the path. In the same way that diamond cannot be cut, but it can cut all the other objects. Similarly, this wisdom realising of true existence is the wisdom which cuts the root of ignorance because it understands the reality as it is. Therefore it is titled as vajra or diamond.”



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His Holiness the Dalai Lama Inaugurates New Thai Buddhist Temple in Bodhgaya

His Holiness the Dalai Lama on Thursday inaugurated the Thai Bharat Society's Wat Pa Buddhagaya Vanaram Temple near the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya.

The Tibetan spiritual leader was received at the new Thai Temple by Chief Abbot of Buddhist Thai Bharat Society, Dr Phra Bhodhinandhamunee and General Secretary, Dr Ratneswar Chakma with a Thai ceremonial welcome.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the temple, His Holiness told the Thai devotees that as followers of the Pali tradition, they were the senior most disciples of Buddha. He said that historically the Pali Tradition derived directly from the Buddha's first teachings, which make its followers the most senior disciples. "Followers of the Sanskrit Tradition also rely on the Perfection of Wisdom teachings that came about as part of the second turning of the wheel of dharma".



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with members and supporters of the Wat Pa Buddhagaya Vanaram Temple, Bodh Gaya, 18 January 2018. Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

His Holiness offered that the Buddhist teachings had much to contribute to the world, particularly in promoting peace of mind and compassion. "The essence of Buddhism is compassion or karuna. Since the world needs more compassion we should look into how we Buddhists can contribute to it. It's not a question of converting others to Buddhism, but of seeing how we can contribute to human peace of mind, by, for example, showing how to tackle our negative emotions. That would really benefit humanity," he said.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama playfully wearing a garland over his head at the inaugural ceremony of the new Wat Pa Buddhagaya Vanaram Temple, Bodh Gaya, 25 January 2018. Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

"Today, even scientists are showing interest in what Buddhism has to say about the mind and emotions. The knowledge we've kept alive remains relevant because it can help reduce our negative emotions and the power they have over us".

His Holiness also proposed that the Tibetan and Thai Buddhist communities should engage in dialogue and exchange of knowledge for the greater benefit. "There are some Buddhist teachings only available in Pali and others only available in the Sanskrit tradition. We should engage in research and an exchange of experience. We need closer relations and a common effort to present Buddhism in the 21st century".

"In the 70s, some of our monks went to Bangkok where they learned Thai as well as participating in various aspects of practice. They're old now, but we could send young monks again and welcome Thai monks to our monasteries. Tibetans could learn Thai and Thais could learn Tibetan".

The chief abbot, Dr Phra Bhodhinandhamunee thanked His Holiness for blessing the temple and announced that the Thai Bharat Society would provide opportunities for all visitors to learn and practise meditation in the new temple.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Adds Revival of Ancient Indian Knowledge Among Principal Commitments

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has always expressed profound admiration towards ancient Indian knowledge for its contribution toward the understanding of the human mind, and the imbibing of practices to tackle negative emotions.

As a result, His Holiness has spoken on numerous occasions to revive this particular wealth of knowledge for the benefit of the entire sentient beings. His Holiness has even dedicated the rest of his life in the pursuit of this humanitarian service.

In that vein, the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama has added a new text to the three principal commitments and the fresh addition refers to revival of ancient Indian knowledge among His Holiness the Dalai Lama's principal commitments in life.

"His Holiness has lately spoken of his commitment to reviving awareness of the value of ancient Indian knowledge among young Indians. His Holiness is convinced that the rich ancient Indian understanding of the workings of the mind and emotions, as well as the techniques of mental training, such as meditation, developed by Indian traditions, are of great relevance today," read the texts on website.

The fresh addition further mentions... "Since India has a long history of logic and reasoning, he is confident that its ancient knowledge, viewed from a secular, academic perspective, can be combined with modern education. He considers that India is, in fact, specially placed to achieve this combination of ancient and modern modes of knowing in a fruitful way so that a more integrated and ethically grounded way of being in the world can be promoted within contemporary society."

How China Used a Times Documentary as Evidence Against Its Subject

Jonah M. Kessel/The New York Times



Protesters gathered in support of Mr. Tashi outside the Chinese consulate in New York on Monday. Credit Jonah M. Kessel/The New York Times

During the eight years I lived in China, people would often say they felt as if they had no voice under Communist Party rule. This was especially true for minorities.

So when Tashi Wangchuk, a Tibetan herder turned shopkeeper, showed up at my apartment in Beijing in the spring of 2015, I of course wanted to listen to his story.

He told me the Chinese authorities on the Tibetan Plateau had been slowly eradicating the Tibetan language from schools and the business world. Mr. Tashi believed prohibiting the study of the Tibetan language went against China's constitution.

The New York Times was not Mr. Tashi's first stop in his attempt to raise this issue, I learned. Chinese state-controlled media had refused to listen to him. And years earlier, the Chinese authorities had briefly jailed him for expressing his opinions on social media. Foreign media were his last resort to be heard.

Last week, more than two years after our first meeting, Mr. Tashi was tried in court for "inciting separatism," a criminal charge that largely amounts to seeking independence from the Chinese state. No verdict has come down yet, but the sentence could hold a punishment of 15 years in prison. (For those hoping

for an acquittal, it's important to note that China's courts have a 99 percent conviction rate.

But the root of his crime, it seems, was talking to me.

In 2015, after I met Mr. Tashi, I made a nine-minute film for The Times about his efforts to raise the issue of Tibetan education to the central government and Chinese state media. Last week, that documentary was shown in court as the main evidence that Mr. Tashi was inciting separatism.



Protesters gathered in support of Mr. Tashi outside the Chinese consulate in New York on Monday. Credit Jonah M. Kessel/The New York Times

The use of my film as evidence against Mr. Tashi gets at the heart of one of the thorniest issues that can plague foreign journalists: How do we justify instances when our work — aimed at giving voice to the voiceless and holding the powerful to account — ends up putting its subjects at risk or in danger?

Before I made this documentary, Edward Wong — then The Times's Beijing bureau chief — and I talked at length with Mr. Tashi about the risks he assumed in speaking with us and appearing on video.

Mr. Tashi thought that people wouldn't believe his story if they couldn't see him. I agreed that it wouldn't hold the same power. He believed he was acting within the guidelines of the law. I believed in giving him the agency the Chinese government and state media had refused him. He believed his voice must be heard at all costs.

But for Mr. Tashi, speaking out has come at a price.

In early 2016, Mr. Tashi — who specifically told me that he was not advocating Tibetan independence — was kidnapped and held in secret detention, without contact with lawyers and family members for months on end. He was subjected to constant interrogation. For two years, he has waited in jail, silenced.

But along with his struggles came renewed hope in a story long plagued by news fatigue: The international community began speaking up for Mr. Tashi and his cause.

United Nations officials, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, PEN America and the United States Embassy in Beijing have all publicly criticized the Chinese government over the case. Last March, the European Union and Germany voiced concerns at the United Nations Human Rights Council over Mr. Tashi's arrest. His case has been covered by countless publications around the world, and his arrest has transformed him from an ordinary shopkeeper with a fifth-grade education into a cultural icon of both justice and oppression.

One of Mr. Tashi's lawyers told us that community members in Yushu, his hometown, had said that Mr. Tashi had

“made a big impact on local Tibetans” and that “people admire him.”

The International Tibet Network awarded him the Tenzin Delek Rinpoche Medal of Courage, recognizing his “courage and dedication to promoting Tibetan human rights and justice for the Tibetan people.”

Meanwhile, some have asked me if I regret making my film. I’ve fielded a variety of queries on the topic — from Tibetan advocacy groups, journalists, students, press freedom groups and social media. Some have been critical, saying I shouldn’t have made the documentary. A former State Department official raised the question of whether I am “complicit in exposing a person vulnerable for his ethnicity.”

I’ve struggled with some of these issues on my own. I’ve wondered: Is our discussion of Tibetan rights worth more than a decade of one man’s freedom? Has Mr. Tashi’s arrest ultimately furthered his cause?

These are important and difficult questions. And while I don’t have definite answers, I do know this: Mr. Tashi and his concerns are now being acknowledged throughout the world. On Monday, protesters gathered outside the Chinese consulate in New York City to demand language rights for all Chinese — as well as the release of Mr. Tashi. Similar gatherings have happened in London. A political cartoonist in Australia has turned his message into pop art. His voice, at last, is resonating on an international stage.

I know, too, that Mr. Tashi has asked these kinds of questions himself and that he came to his own conclusions: that language rights are human rights, that they are protected by both China’s constitution and international human rights law, and that it was his duty to help protect his culture, no matter the cost.

For detailed news visit:
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Exiled Maldives leader accuses China of ‘land grab’

The Strait Times, AFP

Exiled Maldives opposition leader Mohamed Nasheed on Monday (Jan 22) accused China of seizing land in the politically-troubled Indian Ocean archipelago and undermining its sovereignty.

Nasheed said Chinese interests had leased at least 16 islets among the 1,192 scattered coral islands and were building ports and other infrastructure there.

The 50-year-old former president said the increased Chinese presence could threaten the Muslim-majority nation of 340,000 and the wider Indian Ocean region.



Former Maldives president Mohamed Nasheed accused China of conducting a “land grab” in the Indian Ocean archipelago. PHOTO: AFP

During a visit to Colombo, where his Maldivian Democratic Party activists are based, Nasheed called the Chinese action a “land grab.”

“This is colonialism and we must not allow it. We want other countries (in the region) to join us and speak the same language (against Chinese expansion). We are not against any country, not against direct foreign investment, but we are against relinquishing our sovereignty.”

Nasheed said 80 per cent of the Maldives’ foreign debt was owed to China and the nation could end up handing over more land and infrastructure as it may not be able to repay the loans.

He was referring to Sri Lanka’s experience under former president

Mahinda Rajapakse who borrowed heavily from China. The new government had to sell projects to repay debts.

Nasheed, who wants to contest this year’s presidential election, said he would renegotiate contracts with China if successful. He said the current administration had entered agreements with China without making them public.

He was the Maldives’ first democratically elected president in 2008, but was narrowly defeated in 2013 by President Abdullah Yameen.

Nasheed was later jailed on terrorism charges he says were politically motivated. He has lived in exile for two years after Maldives authorities let him travel to London for medical treatment.

He is almost certain to be arrested on return to the Maldives, whose reputation as an upmarket honeymoon destination has been battered by years of political unrest.

The Maldives constitution bars Nasheed from being a candidate because of a 2015 criminal conviction. But he hopes the restriction will be lifted in response to international pressure.

A UN panel has ruled that Nasheed’s imprisonment was illegal and ordered authorities to pay compensation. The government has refused.



'The 1962 war was already planted in the Panchsheel agreement'

By Sonia Sarkar, The Telegraph

Tibetan President-in-exile Lobsang Sangay tells Sonia Sarkar that China's growing presence on the global stage has helped increase awareness over the Tibetan problem

Lobsang Sangay speaks a broken Bengali: "Amar baari Darjeeling achhe... My home is Darjeeling." But it is Lhathang in Tibet, the place his family hails from, that Sangay is homesick for. And that's the way it has been for many years now. The 49-year-old's movement for Free Tibet hasn't yielded results all these years, but Sangay rallies on. In fact, he is just about to leave for Switzerland, followed by Brussels and Paris – a trip he is undertaking to spread awareness about the movement and to raise funds for his administration. Though he is back now, hours before flying out of Delhi, he had spoken to The Telegraph about China, the Dalai Lama and, of course, what Tibetans want. Excerpts:

Q Where do you see your movement going?

Till the early 1980s, Tibet was almost a non-issue to the world. With the growing influence of China, there is a renewed awareness. What happened to Tibet in the past 60 years, could happen to anyone. All the neighbouring countries let the occupation happen because they thought it's only happening with Tibet and nothing will happen to them. But now they see Chinese presence everywhere. Even in India, there was interest about Tibet but not much awareness; suddenly with Doklam there's both.

Q There are allegations of human rights violations by the state agencies in Kashmir, Chhattisgarh and Manipur. Do you see similarities between what is happening in these parts and the Chinese position vis-à-vis Tibetans?

There are human rights violations in India and those need to be addressed. (Fiddles with his prayer beads.) But here, there is a mechanism to address the

violation of human rights. Indians can cast their vote and replace their leaders. In Tibet, there is no such space – you cannot vote, you cannot go to court or think of getting a fair judgment. There is no freedom of speech in Tibet.

Q Your demand for Free Tibet has also been diluted. Now you want autonomy within the framework of the Chinese Constitution and within China. Why did you compromise?

This policy of middle-road approach started in the 1970s and solidified in the 1980s. One has to be realistic. We follow non-violence; we have to solve the problem through dialogue. China says sovereignty and territorial integrity cannot be compromised. We told them, we accept your premises, so give us genuine autonomy as per your laws. But there has been no breakthrough; this is an ongoing movement.

Q Do you think the Dalai Lama failed the people of Tibet?

The Dalai Lama has done whatever he could. People in Mongolia or Taiwan or Hong Kong tell us that the Tibet issue has the highest profile across the world because of the Dalai Lama.

Q In 1959, when the Dalai Lama fled from China to India, there were speculations that he was a CIA agent.

During the Cold War, the United States supported our cause but it all ended when American diplomat Henry Kissinger went to China in 1971. Former CIA agent John Kenneth Knaus in his book, *Orphans of the Cold War*, writes that he (Knaus) tried to meet the Dalai Lama but couldn't, even though he was involved in helping the Tibetans. Finally, when he met the Dalai Lama, he got such a cold reception from him, he wished he had never met him. So speculation about the Dalai Lama being a CIA agent is misleading. [But Sangay didn't mention that in the same book, the author who helped direct a Tibetan

guerrilla campaign against the Chinese occupiers, that lasted from 1956 to 1968, writes about how the Dalai Lama thanked the CIA for organising some of the guerrillas who protected him during his flight into Indian exile in 1959.]

Q China expert and author Bertil Linter, in his book *China's India War*, writes that India's problem with China starts with the Dalai Lama – from the time India gave shelter to him.

He is wrong.

Q Why do you say so?

There is China's military presence in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Burma, Bangladesh and Nepal. What has the Dalai Lama got to do with it? Remember, in 1914, the Simla agreement was signed between the Tibetan government and the British government of India. It was decided that the McMahon Line would be the borderline between the Tibetan and the northeast region of India, as proposed by British colonial administrator Henry McMahon at the Simla Convention. At the same convention, we had a trade agreement with British-ruled India, which was renewed after every 10 years till 1944. There was no trade issue. Then came the Panchsheel agreement in 1954. It was actually a renewed agreement of trade with Tibet, but with a new preface. China decided that the agreement would be renewed every eight years and not 10 years. The eight years were over in 1962. So the 1962 Sino-Indian war was planned long back in the 1950s. The 1962 war was already planted in the Panchsheel agreement. It has nothing to do with the Dalai Lama.

Q The Dalai Lama holds all the power. You just have a designation. How does it feel to be a president without powers?

The Dalai Lama's words are more powerful than mine. But Tibetans do listen to what the Tibetan administration says. The administration takes important

decisions on issues related to education, health, geriatric care, etc., and Tibetans living in exile in 40 countries across the world follow these decisions. Even when the Tibetans living in Tibet visit India, they cry, they tell me – “Come back to Tibet.”

Q How important is the movement for you?

I have lived in the US for 16 years; I am a doctorate from Harvard, I had a job in the US. I had all the comforts in life. Now my salary is Rs 30,000 per month. Ours [the Tibetan administration] is the most kanjoos system. Who would work for such a little salary these days? But I want freedom, dignity and identity, so I came back to India to fight for my cause.

Q But once you get freedom, all the money that you raise for the cause would stop coming in. How would the Tibetans survive?

Once we get freedom, we will look for means of livelihood. We don't want the cause to keep running for the sake of money.

Q You were invited to the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014. Don't you think the idea was to irk China and that India is using Tibetans in its fight against China?

If at all India is using us, then we are under-utilised. (Laughs.) China says, Tibet is their core issue. India should also say, it is their core issue – it's, after all, a 3,000-kilometre-long border [India-China].

Q What do you have to say about the Buddhist monks of Myanmar who have unleashed terror against Rohingya Muslims?

The Buddha would never appreciate this. Discriminating in the name of religion is not right. When a Buddhist resorts to violence, he is not a Buddhist anymore.

‘Dictator for life’: Xi Jinping’s power grab condemned as step towards tyranny

The Guardian

The news broke at three minutes to four on a chilly winter’s afternoon in a two-sentence bulletin.

“The Communist party of China central committee proposed to remove the expression that the president and vice-president of the People’s Republic of China ‘shall serve no more than two consecutive terms’ from the country’s constitution,” Xinhua, China’s official news wire, reported. “The proposal was made public Sunday.”

It was a typically dreary communique from the party-controlled propaganda agency. But to those who have spent their lives battling to decrypt the enigma that is elite Chinese politics, the text’s historic significance was unmissable.

“A bombshell,” said Susan Shirk, one of the United States’ foremost China specialists.

“I wasn’t anticipating such an open declaration of the new regime ... I thought maybe he would stop short of this.”

“He” is China’s 64-year-old leader, Xi Jinping, a man who, after Sunday’s sensational and unexpected announcement, appears poised to lead the world’s second largest economy and one of its largest military forces well into next decade and quite possibly beyond.

“It means that for a long time into the future, China will continue to move forwards according to Xi’s thoughts, his route, his guiding principles and his absolute leadership,” said Shi Yinhong, an international relations professor from Beijing’s Renmin University.

Bill Bishop, the publisher of the Sinocism newsletter on Chinese politics, said the move confirmed Xi’s mutation into a species of “Putin-plus” – only Xi was “much more effective, much more powerful and, frankly, much more ambitious” than his Russian counterpart.



Shirk, who was US deputy assistant secretary of state under Bill Clinton, said: “What is going on here is that Xi Jinping is setting himself up to rule China as a strongman, a personalistic leader – I have no problem calling it a dictator – for life.”

The first five years of Xi’s reign, which began after he was named the Communist party’s general secretary in late 2012, have seen what many call the worst political crackdown in decades. Activists, dissidents and intellectuals greeted Sunday’s move with trepidation.

“It will get worse, for sure ... the consequences will be very severe,” warned Wu’er Kaixi, a prominent Chinese dissident who fled into exile after helping lead the 1989 Tiananmen protests.

Wu’er, who now lives in Taiwan, was among those who signed an “emergency statement” condemning Xi’s decision to scrap presidential term limits as another step towards “tyranny”. “We shall not stay silent ... this country is our country, and we cannot allow the ambitions of a few people lead [it] into a dark abyss,” the petition read.

Predictably, state media – from which China’s authoritarian leader has demanded “absolute loyalty” – put a more positive spin on the decision to scrap rules that were introduced in the 1980s to guard against the kind of catastrophic cult of personality that grew up around Chairman Mao.

An English-language editorial in the *Global Times*, a party-run tabloid, claimed “all Chinese people” backed the move and saw Xi as the right man to lead them into “a new era for a hopeful China”. “The change doesn’t mean that the Chinese president will have a lifelong tenure,” the newspaper claimed.

“Removal of the two-term limit of the president of PRC doesn’t mean China will restore life-long tenure for state leader. Such speculation is misreading,” tweeted the paper’s editor-in-chief, Hu Xijin.

Shirk, who now chairs the 21st Century China centre at the University of California, San Diego, disagreed.

“This was the one formal rule that could have blocked him from staying on and being leader for life. So eliminating it really brings the intentions out into the open and I think it eliminates any ambiguity about what is going on here,” she said. “He’s really made a power play that is stunning in its success.”

Jerome Cohen, a New York University expert in Chinese law and human rights, said China appeared to have forgotten “one of the main lessons of Mao’s long despotism” and be slipping into “another long period of severe dictatorship.”

For all Xi’s apparent dominance – achieved through a ruthless purge of rivals within China’s political, military and security establishment – experts believe his political project is not guaranteed to endure.

“A lot will depend on how the economy goes over the next 10 or 20 years,” said Steve Tsang, the director of the Soas China Institute. “If the economy continues to grow at 6% or 7% then the world will be a different one in 20 years time because China will be dominant.” A sustained economic slowdown, however, could consign Xi’s rule to the history books. “He knows that,” Tsang added.

Shirk agreed China’s “tragic” return to what she called “a kind of neo-traditional dictatorial system” was fraught with danger for both the country and its leader.

“When you are surrounded by sycophants, yes men, people who are too afraid to tell you what they really think, then there is a risk that the leader makes bad decisions,” she said.

“I’m not saying that we are going to have a famine like the Great Leap Forward or that China is going to turn into chaos like the Cultural Revolution. But ... already there are some bad decisions

being made.”

To illustrate her point, Shirk pointed to a new city being built near Beijing (“That is the sort of thing dictators always do. Don’t they love to do that?”) and Xi’s “overblown” signature foreign policy project, the Belt and Road infrastructure campaign which she claimed was facing a growing global backlash.

Xi’s relentless tightening of political and social controls also carried risks. “It’s hard for me to see how this kind of police state that puts such severe restrictions on civil society and on information and on the educational system is really going to be a successful modern China,” Shirk said. “I expect there is going to be some form of push back eventually – he’s already lost the intellectuals.”

Wu’er said was outraged but not surprised by Xi’s power grab and hoped it would serve as a wake-up call to western leaders who had ignored dissidents’ warnings about China’s leader and instead “nurtured” Xi’s ambitions to become “a new 21st century dictator”.

The international community had enabled Xi by showering him with gifts and praise, the veteran activist claimed.

“Now he has become this monster that we are about to see.”

Open competition worth INR 1 Lac : The Tibetan People’s Memorial Project

The Tibet Museum of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) is pleased to announce an open call for a unique project: The Tibetan People’s Memorial.

The Tibetan People’s Memorial will occupy a central position in the new Tibet Museum, which is due to open in 2018 in Gangchen Kyishong, Dharamshala, H.P., India.

The most profound objective of any museum is to preserve memories. The

memory of the 1.2 million Tibetans who died as a direct result of the Chinese occupation in Tibet is a poignant one. To preserve their memories and pay tribute to their sacrifices, we are developing a memorial project in the new museum.

The Tibet Museum now seeks concept briefs and design for this permanent installation from both Tibetans, and non-Tibetans. The selected concept (see template for concept brief) will receive a prize of one Lac Indian rupees. The competition will be open till March 10, 2018.

The successful applicant will work with The Tibet Museum, DIIR during 2018 to create the memorial in time for the museum’s opening. Due credit will be given to the selected concept briefs and design in the museum space.

All decisions made by Project leadership and an independent panel of jury constituted by The Tibet Museum, DIIR will be deemed final and irrevocable.

For any questions contact:
tibetmuseum@tibet.net

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QUOTES

“There is much to be learned from ancient Indian thought that can be relevant today in terms of learning to tackle destructive emotions. As a result, India is the only country that could combine the benefits of modern education with ancient Indian knowledge to enable more people to achieve peace of mind,” His Holiness the Dalai Lama during Golden Jubilee celebration of CIHTS on 1 January 2018

“Hygiene of emotions is equally important for peace of mind. In today’s world...people and particularly politicians need to study ancient knowledge of India for peace of mind...In flow of emotions one can’t see the reality. With too much of desire and with too much of anger one can’t have peace of mind,” His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh during audience at his residence on 1 February 2018

“Not only did His Holiness revive Tibetan Buddhism in exile, he also made sure that this tradition is strengthened in the lower Himalayan regions who share the Tibetan Buddhist culture. Today, Tibetan Buddhism is flourishing all over the world and this is an undisputed legacy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” President Dr Lobsang Sangay during Golden Jubilee celebration of CIHTS on 1 January 2018

“Inside Tibet before Chinese occupation, the monasteries and nunneries used to be the main centers of education and learning. As a result, these centers have served as the custodians of Tibetan culture. However, during the military occupation of Tibet by China in 1959, over 6000 Tibetan monasteries were destroyed. Along with the destruction, numerous Tibetan scholars, academics and literary luminaries were killed which was a hard blow to the Tibetan education system,” Speaker of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Khenpo Sonam Tenphel during Golden Jubilee celebration of CIHTS on 1 January 2018
