



TIBETAN BULLETIN

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DIIR Secretary Meets Deputy Foreign Minister of South Africa

Secretary Tashi Phuntsok of DIIR had a meeting with Ms. Nomaindia Mfeketo, Deputy Foreign Minister of South Africa. The Minister began the meeting by enquiring about His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The meeting lasted for 45 minutes which took place at the Minister's office. Mrs. Nangsa Chodon, Representative, Office of Tibet, South Africa and Mr. Guy Lieberman, friend of Tibet accompanied him.



Secretary Tashi Phuntsok of DIIR with Ms. Nomaindia Mfeketo, Deputy Foreign Minister of South Africa and Representative Nangsa Choedon

The Secretary briefed the minister on the current visit of the His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the States and Switzerland. He also drew her attention to the Middle Way Approach of the Central Tibetan Administration towards resolving the issue of Tibet. He outlined the current repressive rule in Tibet under China. In this context he recalled the establishment of Office of Tibet in South Africa 1997 with full support of the Government of South Africa and the then President, Nelson Mandela.

The Minister recalled her meeting with His Holiness in 1999. While acknowledging the need for continuous persistence in our effort, she recalled the South African experience during its struggle. She acknowledged also the need for patient dialogue and discussion.

Mr. Phuntsok emphasised the need for support for Tibetans' non-violence struggle. He also informed the Minister about the handing over of political power by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the

Tibetan elected leadership in 2011. The minister desired that relationship be continued and the contact maintained.

A two-day meeting cum workshop on strategic planning for Africa was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 7-8 February at Lamrim Centre. Participants include delegates from South African cities Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town.

The participants deliberated on the Strategic Plan Framework for 2014 – 2017. The meeting focused primarily on the common objectives and drew concrete action plans.

Mr. Tashi Phuntsok, Secretary, DIIR guided the workshop. Mrs. Nangsa Chodon, Representative, OTSA, Mr. Guy Lieberman (Long-standing friend of Tibet), Mr. Klasie Wessels, Mr. Philip Wyse (Trustee, Lamrim Buddhist Centre), and Laura and James (TSSA) and other Individual Tibet supporters were the main participants.

Human Rights Deteriorating in Tibet Despite Promised Reforms: TCHRD Annual Report

The human rights situation inside Tibet is continuing to deteriorate despite the promise of reforms by the Chinese government, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) said at a press conference in February to launch their 2014 annual report.

Ms. Tsering Tsomo, Executive Director of TCHRD, gave a brief outline of the human rights situation inside Tibet, followed by remarks from researchers Mr. Tenzin Nyinje, Mr. John Gaudette and Ms. Fan Xuan Li at the press conference.

A press release issued by TCHRD said the annual report demonstrates the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet, particularly highlighting death in detention, collective punishment, and restrictions imposed on the right to freedom of assembly and association. It further said that Tibetan prisoners are frequently subject to torture, beatings, and denial of medical care. "In 2014, an increasing

number of Tibetans died because of mistreatment in detention," it said.

The annual report also highlighted the consistent and systematic problems with health care and education in Tibet, with claims that it has uncovered disturbing trends in Tibet by examining official census data that showed education and healthcare for Tibetans has fallen behind other parts of China.

"By most metrics, healthcare in Tibetan areas is worse than almost anywhere else in the PRC. Similarly, Tibetans receive less school and that schooling is generally ineffective and inefficient," it said.

The TCHRD report further documented the prevalence of collective punishment inside Tibet. "The PRC expanded the scope of its punishment of Tibetans by announcing that entire families and villages would be punished if there was a self-immolation protest or if someone attended religious festivals," it said.

The annual report also addressed the violation of civil and political rights, including the right to privacy, and the expansion of the security state, economic, social and cultural rights including the resettlement of Tibetan nomads.

A comprehensive political prisoner database including information from various sources on 2,110 known political prisoners is also included in the 206-page report.

This year's annual report is available in English, Tibetan and Chinese. The Chinese version is a fresh attempt by the rights group to reach out to people ideally in China, and also to the Chinese speaking population in the world, said one of the researchers at the press conference.

TCHRD is a non-governmental organisation based in Dharamshala. It works to promote and protect human rights of Tibetans in Tibet and to educate the exile Tibetans on human rights concept and democratic principles.

Tibet Watch publishes report on Environmental Protest on Tibetan plateau

“China’s vision of development and hunger for economic growth are both powerful driving forces and the environmental exploitation of Tibet shows no sign of slowing down”, said a new report titled “Environmental Protest on the Tibetan plateau” released by Britain based Tibet Watch, a human rights group.

The report finds creative responses by Tibetans to the challenges of opposing China’s policies in Tibet but a consistent failure by authorities to address their grievances and the frequent use of force to suppress protest.

The report examined 12 confirmed protests across Tibet’s three regions, U-Tsang, Amdo, and Kham. “Mining is the most common trigger for demonstrations, with damming and river pollution also provoking opposition. Tibet’s rich natural resources include fresh drinking water and large-scale mineral deposits, such as gold, copper, silver, chromium and lithium. The rivers running off the Tibetan plateau are ideal for the generation of hydropower,” it said.

Speaking in an interview with Tibet Watch, a Tibetan mentioned, “Tibetans do not learn the value of the earth through science but through our religion and the way our ancestors protected our land over thousands of years. They saved the land for the next generation to enjoy as pure land, the beauty of nature and to have a clean and peaceful environment to live in. Therefore destruction of the land, the mining of sacred mountains and holy lakes, are more than pollution and destruction of the environment. It is a violation of our tradition, religious beliefs and the destruction of our forefathers’ legacy.”

According to the report, despite consistent protests by the Tibetans, China shows no sign of slowing down the exploitation and addressing the grievances of the Tibetan protesters. Although a handful of protests have been met with assurances of action, these have rarely led to positive outcomes.

The report also mentioned that many Tibetans have committed suicide in protest against the environmental exploitation

and at least two self-immolations have taken place near mining sites in Amchok Township on November 2012. Tsering Dhondup, 34, a father to three children and Kunchok Tsering, 18, set themselves on fire and died.

“But the deep bond between the Tibetans and their land is equally strong and environmental protests are likely to continue, and likely to continue evolving, as long as China continues to ignore the people and the environment of the Tibetan plateau,” it said.

DIIR Kalon Dicki Chhoyang visits Chennai, Mangalore and Bangalore



DIIR Kalon at Bangalore

Ms. Dicki Chhoyang, Kalon for the Department of Information & International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, successfully completed an official visit to South Indian cities of Chennai, Mangalore and Bangalore from 25 – 30 January.

DIIR Kalon arrived in Chennai on 25 January and participated in an interaction with Tibetan college students studying in Chennai. The interaction was organised by TSAM, a Tibetan student organisation based in Chennai.

She also gave a talk on ‘Tibet: Core Issue in Sino-Indian Relations’ at Madras University on 27 January.

From Chennai, she left for Mangalore city in Karnataka state on 28 January. She participated in programs organised by local associations while in Mangalore.

Kalon Dicki Chhoyang arrived in Bangalore city on 29 January. Upon her arrival

in the city, she went to St. Joseph’s evening college where she was welcomed by Father Victor Lobo, Principal, Father Ronnie Prabhu, Director, Provincial Karnataka State Jesuit schools and, Mr. Shiv Anand and Mr. Niranjana from the Indo-Tibetan Friendship Society. She gave a talk on Tibet at the college, which was attended by hundreds of students including Tibetan college students studying in various colleges in Bangalore.

Following her talk at the college, she visited the Tibetan Youth Hostel where she addressed the resident Tibetan students on issues facing Tibet currently.

On her final day in Bangalore yesterday, Kalon Dicki Chhoyang visited the Sri Sarvajna College of Education, to give a talk on ‘Tibet: Core Issue in Sino-Indian Relations’. The talk was attended by teachers and students of the college.

Human Rights Watch: Political Repression in China at a High Mark

The Chinese government under president Xi Jinping has unleashed the harshest campaign of politically motivated investigations, detentions, and sentencing in the past decade, marking a sharp turn toward intolerance of criticism, Human Rights Watch said in its World Report 2015. In its 656-page world report, the rights group reviewed human rights practices in more than 90 countries.

“Under President Xi, China is rapidly retreating from rights reforms and the Party’s promise to ‘govern the country according to law,’” said Sophie Richardson, China director at Human Rights Watch. “Repression of critics is the worst in a decade, and there appears to be no end in sight.”

In China, the report said, authorities have unleashed an extraordinary assault on basic human rights and their defenders with a ferocity unseen in recent years. The government targets activists and their family members for harassment, arbitrary detention, legally baseless imprisonment, torture, and denial of access to adequate medical treatment.

The Chinese government's hardline approach was particularly discernible in Xinjiang and Tibet, areas that are nominally autonomous. Indiscriminate anti-separatism campaigns fueled rising tensions, resulting in several clashes on the Tibetan plateau – including at least one in which security forces used live fire against unarmed demonstrators – and a marked increase in violence in Xinjiang, the report said.

A series of self-immolations by Tibetans protesting Chinese government repression appeared to have abated by early 2014, the report said, adding that the authorities punished families and communities for allegedly inciting or being involved in these protests; punishment of individuals included imprisonment, hefty fines, and restrictions of movement.

Authorities were intolerant of peaceful protests by Tibetans, harshly responding with beatings and arrests to protests against mines on land considered sacred and against detention of local Tibetan leaders, it said.

China's mass rehousing and relocation policy has radically changed Tibetans' way of life and livelihoods, in some cases impoverishing them or making them dependent on state subsidies. Since 2006, over 2 million Tibetans, both farmers and herders, have been involuntarily "rehoused"—through government-ordered renovation or construction of new houses—in the TAR; hundreds of thousands of nomadic herders in the eastern part of the Tibetan plateau have been relocated or settled in "New Socialist Villages," the report noted.

"The most significant legal trend in 2014 has been the government's effort to further strengthen an already powerful, unaccountable state security apparatus. It adopted an overly broad counter-espionage law and the publication of a draft counterterrorism law that equates peaceful dissent with terrorism, strengthens control over civil society groups that receive foreign funding, and appears to target specific ethnic minority groups," the report said.

This year's report also flagged weakening international concern about human rights abuses in China. Some, including United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, instead praised the government for "its contributions to the promotion of ... human rights." China continues to refuse meaningful engagement with UN human rights mechanisms and voted down resolutions spotlighting abuses in Belarus, Iran, North Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, and Ukraine. China repeated its calls for "political solutions" in Syria, Sudan, and South Sudan in 2014, but took steps that prolonged human rights crises in all three.

In his introductory essay, HRW's Executive Director Kenneth Roth has urged governments to recognize that human rights offer an effective moral guide in turbulent times, and that violating rights can spark or aggravate serious security challenges. The short-term gains of undermining core values of freedom and non-discrimination are rarely worth the long-term price.

"China under Xi Jinping is escalating hostility to human rights and democratic pressures, at home and abroad, yet the international community remains largely silent," Richardson said. "Abetting the systematic suppression of basic freedoms is a short-sighted and dangerous policy, one that only encourages Beijing's growing intransigence."

'Europe Stands with Tibet' campaign launched

The Tibetan communities in Europe have launched 'Europe Stands with Tibet' campaign to mobilise support from Europeans and friends to join a rally to commemorate the upcoming Tibetan National Uprising day in Paris on 14 March. Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the democratically elected Tibetan political leader, will address the rally, the organisers said in a press release.

"This year's motto, Europe stands with Tibet, reflects the wish of many friends in Europe to express their solidarity with the Tibetan people more effectively," Wangpo Tethong, a member of Tibetan

Parliament from Europe, said in a press release.

Ven. Thubten Wangchen, a member of Tibetan Parliament from Europe, strongly appealed to the Tibetans in Europe to mobilize for the rally: "We want the Tibetans to ask their European friends and neighbours to join us for the rally."

The declaration "Europe stands with Tibet – On the Freedom Struggle of the Tibetan People" will be presented to the European public on 14 March 2015 at Eiffel Tower, Paris. The first signers of this "Paris Declaration" will be European public figures who will express their support for the Tibetan people and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's non-violent efforts to solve the Tibetan issue. The text of the declaration will be spread throughout Europe and European politicians as well as figures of public life



will be asked to join this declaration. The outcome of this campaign will be presented to the public at the occasion of the birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in July 2015, the organisers said in the press release.

Plans are afoot to carry out various activities within the framework of 'Tibet Lobby Day' to address the EU institutions as well as the national governments in Europe and seek their support for the 'Paris Declaration'.

The website www.europe-stands-with-tibet.org contains detailed information about the rally.

Sikyong Congratulates India on 66th Republic Day

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay congratulated India on its 66th Republic Day celebration on 26 January and hoisted the Indian national flag at a brief ceremony held at the Kashag Secretariat. The ceremony was attended by members of the

Kashag and senior officials of the Tibetan administration.

Expressing his warm greetings on the occasion, Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay said, "On behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration, I wish the government and people of India a very hearty congratulation in observing and celebrating its 66th Republic day."

Answering a query from a reporter regarding the visit of US President Barack Obama to India, Sikyong said: "I am very happy to see that the President of the United States of America, Mr. Barack Obama, is here in India to take part and be the Chief Guest of the Republic Day celebrations."

"Since America and India are the two largest democracies of the world, it's a celebration of democracy that we are witnessing today. It's also fitting because today is the day that India promulgated its constitution in 1950, so the President of the United States to come here on this day is a reflection of renewed energy in their bilateral engagement. As a Tibetan, I welcome and celebrate the get together of these two great nations," he said.

Following the brief ceremony at Central Tibetan Administration, Sikyong accompanied by Mr. Sonam Norbu Dago, Secretary of the Department of Information and International Relations, attended an official ceremony hosted by the local Indian Administration at Police Ground in Lower Dharamshala. The chief guest at the ceremony was Shri. G.S Bali, Technical Education and Transport Minister of Himachal Pradesh government.

Sikyong also visited the War Memorial along with the Minister to pay respects to the Indian martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for their country.

Karnataka State Dental Council opens its Registration for Tibetan Dentists

Exile Tibetans with Indian Registration Certificate (RC) have been facing various difficulties due to their registra-

tion status in India. Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has approached Government of India (GoI) for the last many years to help solve these problems through a Central Government notification.

Thus, in light of the announcement of "The Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy 2014" formulated by the Ministry of Home Affairs (FRR Division) GoI, the Department of Home (CTA) & the Chief Representative Office of Southern settlements approached the MHA and the concerned state department of Karnataka for registration of Tibetan dentist in Karnataka.

This has led to the registration of a Tibetan Dentist Dr. Kunchok Dolma J from Bylakuppe settlement with the Karnataka State Dental Council.

A copy of the certificate is enclosed here for the kind attention of the general public.

China would benefit from fruits of dialogue on Tibet, says US

The US government said that China would benefit from the fruits of dialogue and urge the Chinese Government to seize the opportunity to further engage with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Responding to 'reports of exchange of emissaries between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government about possibility of talks between the two', US State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki in a daily press briefing said: 'I've seen the reports. I don't have any confirmation, but I can convey that we've long encouraged the Chinese Government to hold direct and substantive discussions with the Dalai Lama or his representatives without preconditions aimed at resolving differences.'

'We believe that all people in the PRC would benefit from the fruits of dialogue and urge the Chinese Government to seize the opportunity to further engage with the Dalai Lama,' Ms Psaki said.

The comments by the US State Department also came on the heels of a meeting of the Task Force on Negotiations held in Dharamsala from 5-6 January on the political developments in China and on issues relating to the future of dialogue with the Chinese leadership.

Tibetan political leader Dr. Lobsang Sangay, who chaired the two-day meeting, reiterated the Tibetan leadership's commitment for the peaceful resolution of the Tibetan issue through dialogue between envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and representatives of the Chinese leadership. The Tibetan leadership remains firmly committed to non-violence and the Middle Way Approach, and strongly believes that the only way to resolve the issue of Tibet is through dialogue.

Task Force Meeting on Negotiation concludes

The 27th meeting of the Task Force on Negotiations held in Dharamsala from January 5 to 6, 2015 had in-depth discussions on the political developments in China, on issues relating to the future of dialogue with the Chinese leadership, and on developments in the international political landscape.



With deep sense of urgency the meeting also discussed the tragic cases of 135 Tibetan self-immolations in protest against the ongoing repression in Tibet.

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, who chaired the two-day meeting, reiterated the Tibetan leadership's commitment for the peaceful resolution of the Tibetan issue through dialogue between envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and representatives of the Chinese leadership.

The Tibetan leadership remains firmly committed to non-violence and the Middle Way Approach, and strongly believes that the only way to resolve the issue of Tibet is through dialogue.

The Task Force on Sino-Tibetan Negotiations was constituted to help recommend policy matters and strategies to find a peaceful and mutually acceptable negotiated resolution to the issue of Tibet.

Second leadership summit of Tibetan students held In Lower TCV

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay inaugurated the second leadership summit of Tibetan students at the lower TCV school in Dharamshala. The eight-day summit, organised by the Department of Education, Central Tibetan Administration, is being held to build on the success of the first leadership summit organised by the department last year.

Over 300 class X students from Nepal and India are participating in this year's summit. The chief guest of the inaugural ceremony was Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay. Education Kalon Mr. Ngodup Tsering and Education Secretary Mr. Topgyal Tsering were also present.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay noted that this is the first initiative of the Kashag as well as the education department in the year 2015, and expressed optimism towards the symbolic value of the year's first activity.

Since it was only the second day of the new year, Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay asked the students about their new year's resolutions. Amidst incomprehensible responses from the students, Sikyong encouraged them to make new resolutions i.e, to make tireless efforts towards becoming future leaders of Tibet.

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay also spoke about the importance of education including leadership qualities to have a successful career, reiterating that educa-

tion is one of the most important component of the present Kashag's policies.

He urged the students to use the insights and information inculcated during the summit for practical purposes at school and in life.

Education Kalon Mr. Ngodup Tsering, in his speech, spoke about the aims and objectives of the education department to organise these leadership summits. "We recognise the importance of good leaders to lead a movement. Therefore, we have started this summit last year to impart leadership qualities to our students at an early age. It will help nurture their ambitions and produce effective leaders in the future," he said.

Explaining the reasons for organising these summits at Dharamshala, he said: "There are two central reasons for organising the leadership summits at Dharamshala. First, Dharamshala is the abode of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and secondly, it is also the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration. Therefore, we organise these summits here to help the students receive these various experiences."

This is the second leadership summit for Tibetan students being organised by the Education Department. The first summit was held last year and was attended by 310 students from 31 different schools in India and Nepal.

This year's summit have 302 students including 140 boys and 162 girls from 33 different schools. The eight-day summit will introduce the students to various kinds of leadership skills including participatory leadership and emotional intelligence. The summit also include activities to foster acquaintances between the students to create a leadership network.

Some notable personalities who will be taking the leadership sessions during the summit include Tibetan political leader Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, Mr. Penpa Tsering, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament, Mr. Ngodup Tsering, Education Kalon, and various other experts from diverse fields of work.

Education Kalon launches new web-portal on career counseling for students

Mr. Ngodup Tsering, Kalon of the Department of Education (DoE), Central Tibetan Administration, today inaugurated a new web-portal on career counseling 'Lamton.org'.

Speaking at the web inauguration, he said that the website is a 'New Year's gift' for the high school Tibetan students. He recalled the earlier days when people did not have such facilities and explained that the present generation should make optimum utilisation of these facilities to excel in their respective fields.

The website, an initiative of the career counseling desk of the education department, is aimed to help Tibetan students in accessing information on career options and providing updates on DoE scholarships.

"The primary vision of the website is to serve as a gateway for the students and parents to access information required for career planning and update the people about the latest information on college admission and entrance examinations," a statement from the education department said.

"The new website contains rich resources related to career and career planning for our students, School Guidance, and parents. It contains sections such as Career profile, career options after class XII, Entrance examination, Scholarship, List of top colleges & professional institutes, list of Coaching Institutes, Admission Alerts, Useful Career links and Career videos etc.," it said.

With the launch of this website, the Department of Education said it hopes to minimise Tibetan students' challenges of shortage of information and resources on careers and career planning.

The website project was fully funded by USAID through Tibet Fund.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Joins President Obama at National Prayer Breakfast

Amidst predictable outcries and protests from the Chinese government, US President Barack Obama joined His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the annual National Prayer Breakfast held in Washington DC on 5 February.

Although a direct meeting between the President and the Tibetan spiritual leader did not take place, President Obama offered a special welcome to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, describing him as a good friend and an inspiration for freedom and dignity.

As the presiding Senator was introducing His Holiness at the event, President Obama looked over, folded his hands together and greeted him with a nod of his head and a smile. He then acknowledged him later in his remarks, saying:

“I want to offer a special welcome to a good friend, His Holiness the Dalai Lama — who is a powerful example of what it means to practice compassion, who inspires us to speak up for the freedom and dignity of all human beings. I’ve been pleased to welcome him to the White House on many occasions, and we’re grateful that he’s able to join us here today,” President Obama said in his address at the gathering.

“There aren’t that many occasions that bring His Holiness under the same roof



as NASCAR,” the president said drawing laughter and applause, and added: “This may be the first. But God works in mysterious ways.”

Prominent White House adviser Valerie Jarrett sat at His Holiness’s table while the President spoke.

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the elected political leader of Tibet, welcomed the public greeting of His Holiness the Dalai Lama by the US President. He said:



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with Valerie Jarriet, White House Advisor during the Annual National Prayer Breakfast

“We thank President Obama for offering a special welcome to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and we believe that His Holiness’ commitment towards promotion of harmony among world religions and secular ethics will bear positive impact on the humanity.

The meeting reflects the American government and people’s continued commitment to freedom and democracy.”

In the current world scenario, the public greeting of His Holiness the Dalai Lama by the US president gives hope to the Tibetan people, said Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay to the BBC on 6 February in an interview.

President Obama has met His Holiness

the Dalai Lama thrice in the past in 2010, 2011 and 2014. China has protested each of the three meetings, which were always held privately without any news coverage due to the sensitivity of these meetings.

The 2015 National Prayer Breakfast was

the first public encounter between the two leaders. As expected, the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the annual event became the main focus of media attention and drew sharp criticisms from the Chinese government.

“Obama is acquiescing to the Dalai Lama’s attempt to split Tibet from China,” an op-ed in the China Daily, the Chinese government’s English-language mouthpiece said. “Tibet is an inseparable part of China,” it continued.

However, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has always said that he seeks genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people based on the Middle Way Approach Policy, rather than complete independence.

Sikyong Speaks on ‘Religion in Storm or Storm in Religion’ at 5th national conclave of Indian students

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the democratically elected political leader of the Tibetan people, addressed the 5th annual national conclave of Indian student parliament at Pune in Maharashtra on 13 January.

During his address on the topic ‘Religion in Storm or Storm in Religion’, Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay touched on several themes including ‘Religion to Religiosity to Religionism’, ‘Originality to communalism to fundamentalism’, ‘Inclusive to Exclusive to Exploitative to sometimes explosive’, and ‘Secularism: Anglo Franco definition, Maoist/Marxist definition and the Indian/Gandhian definition’.

He explained, in his address, that the original teaching of all religions is all-inclusive enveloping humans, animals and the natural environment. It is all about love, compassion, respect and tolerance.



However, he said, when a community is formed around a religion, it gives religion a societal dimension. “At this point, separation starts between communities in identity, in interest and in mindset leading to formation of nations such as the Hindu nation, Muslim nation, Christian nation etc. This portends to formation of civilizations in terms of religion. Therefore, we have to distinguish between



religion, religiosity and religionism,” Sikyong noted.

Speaking on Secularism, Sikyong said that the greatest strength of India is its spiritual soft power of being a deeply secular country comprising of diverse religious traditions. He said: “India is the abode of 9 spiritual traditions of which 4 originated in India itself. In the true sense of the word, India is the epitome of unity in diversity. This unity in diversity is the beauty of India, it’s the pride of India and the strength of India.”

Sikyong also asserted that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the living example of India’s rich ancient knowledge that has been preserved and enriched by the Tibetans who call themselves the ‘Chelas’ and India their ‘Guru’.

Summing up, Sikyong urged the students to practice religion but to be careful of religiosity and to stay away from religionism. He also eloquently quoted Mahatma Gandhi, Guru Nanak, Rabindranath Tag-

ore, Karl Marx, Samuel Huntington, and Max Weber among others to elucidate his case made during the address.

Sikyong’s address was followed by a thunderous applause and a standing ovation from the over 10,000 students attending the national conclave.

Sikyong also met, on the sidelines of the conclave, Mr. Natwar Singh, former External Affairs Minister of India, Mr. Brij Behari Lal Butail, Speaker of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly, Mr. Haribhau Bagade, Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and Mr. Anna Hazare, prominent social activist.

Later in the evening, Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay attended the closing ceremony of the three-day conclave and addressed the gathering. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shri. Shivraj Singh Chauhan and Maharashtra Chief Minister Shri. Devendra Fadnavis were also present on the dais along with other dignitaries.

Current Human Rights Situation in Tibet

January 2015

UN, EU & Human Rights Desk
Department of Information and International Relations
Central Tibetan Administration

Introduction

The human rights situation of minority nationalities, including Tibetan has become a major issue in China today. Although the Constitution of the People's Republic of China guarantees its citizen freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, demonstration and religious belief, the double standard in its implementation has become a glaring reality.

Tibetans' petitions, street protests, peaceful assembly and demonstrations against the denial of their fundamental rights bring more arrests, prison sentences and torture in Tibet. Arbitrary detention, sentencing, disappearances, interrogation and torture of Tibetans have become a common practice. Due to which, Tibetan of all ages and walks of life across the Tibetan plateau have resisted through the drastic acts of self-immolation protests in the last few years.

Spate of Self-Immolation Protests

Since 2009, 135 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibet. 116 of them have died on the scene or shortly thereafter. The whereabouts and conditions of the surviving self-immolators remain unknown. All the self-immolators have called for "freedom in Tibet" and "return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet". However, instead of addressing the underlying grievances of Tibetan, the Chinese authorities have responded to these self-immolations with further repressive policies by heightening restrictions in Tibetan areas and dismissing the self-immolations as an "act of terrorism" and criminalize partners,

friends and relatives of the self-immolators, as a preventative measure. In its annual report, released in April 2014, US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) confirms this by stating that the self-immolation protests are directly related to Chinese efforts to control religious practice and culture of Tibetans, but Chinese authorities view these expressions of protest as criminal activities.

In August 2013, a 32 year-old Tibetan man, Dolma Kyab, husband of fatal self-immolator Kunchok Wangmo, was sentenced to death under an alleged crime of killing his wife. Similarly, in January 2013, a 40 year old, Lobsang Kunchok, monk of Kirti monastery was sentenced to death with two years reprieve and his nephew Lobsang Tsering was imprisoned for 10 years for alleged involvement in self-immolation protests in Ngaba (incorporated into China's Sichuan Province) Tibetan area, where more than 40 Tibetans have self-immolated. In May that year, People's Court in Malho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, imprisoned a 36 year-old Gartse Jigme, a Tibetan monk and writer, to 5 years in prison for writing a book on Tibetan struggle and the causes of self-immolation protests in Tibet.

In April 2013 officials in Dzoegé, Ngaba Autonomous Prefecture, issued new rules extending criminal penalties to family members, fellow villagers, and monasteries of self-immolators. The document issued consists of 16 Articles: blacklisting family members of self-immolators (Art. 16), deprivation of political rights (Art. 2), deprivation of government employment (Art. 1), exclusion from all welfare benefits for 3 years

(Art. 4), denial of ownerships of lands and houses (Art. 10), preventing from starting business (Art. 10), travelling embargo to Lhasa and foreign countries (Art. 11), deprivation of financial assistance (Art. 5) and villagers, monks and nuns are subjected to 'legal education' campaign (Art. 13).

Furthermore, the rule also requires villages and monasteries to deposit 16,000-500,000 (USD 1604-80211) as deposit to ensure that no self-immolations occur and in case self-immolation occurs, the deposit is forfeited and a new deposit is required (Art. 7).

Till date, we have cases of more than 35 Tibetans who have been sentenced to varying prison terms under the alleged link with self-immolation protests. China's prosecutions of Tibetans in response to the self-immolation protests, which China thinks is a preventive measure to stop the self-immolation protest is actually, in a way compelling Tibetans to stage more tragic protests, including the self-immolation.

In her first ever statement on Tibetans self-immolation protests released on 2 November 2012, Navi Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights urged the Chinese authorities to promptly address the longstanding grievances that have led Tibetans to take desperate form of self-immolation protest. She said she was disturbed by "continuing allegations of violence against Tibetans seeking to exercise their fundamental human rights of freedom of expression, association and religion," and emphasized the "reports of detentions and disappearances, of excessive use of forces against peaceful demonstration,

and curbs on cultural rights of Tibetans.” She also urged China to consider 12 outstanding requests by various UN Special Rapporteurs and, to allow independent and impartial monitors to visit and assess the actual situations in Tibet.

For further information about the self-immolations in Tibet, see the documentary “The Burning Question: Why Are Tibetans Turning to Self Immolation?” available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HhKF4_-9g8

Freedom of Religious Belief and Practice

For centuries, Tibetan Buddhism has been a core element of Tibetan culture. The Chinese government has instituted consistent repressive policies against the practice of Tibetan Buddhism with intense regulation and control over religious institutions. This has been demonstrated through “patriotic education”, state propaganda and other political campaigns that are fundamentally opposed to the basic tenets of Tibetan Buddhism, including rhetorical attacks on Tibetan religious leaders. Monks are forced to pledge their allegiance to the Chinese government and denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Possessing a photo of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is illegal. Tibetan monasteries and nunneries are required to hang portraits of Chinese communist leaders and the Chinese national flag under the nine measures or Nine Must-Haves campaign.

Additionally, to tighten control over the religious practice in monasteries, the government controlled Democratic Management Committee (DMCs) has taken over the administrative role of abbots, traditional heads of monastery. Reportedly, the Chinese government has so far established Monastery Management Committees in 1,787 monasteries since November 2011.

In January 2007, China’s State Administration of Religious Affairs issued a new regulatory measure called “Order no. Five” on “Management Measures for

the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism.” The decree makes it compulsory for all the tulkus (reincarnated teachers) to get government approval.

The worsening religious freedom in Tibet is documented in various global reports, including the annual report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, released in April 2014. The report states that the “conditions of Tibetan Buddhists are worse now than at any time in the past decades”. The report also highlighted the intensified efforts of the Chinese government to discredit religious leaders, issued new measures to increase government oversight of monasteries and implement new program to ensure the political loyalty of Buddhist monks.

Enforced Disappearance, Detention and Harsh Sentencing of Tibetan Religious Leaders

Enforced disappearance, detention and harsh sentencing of Tibetans, including religious leaders are rampant in Tibet. The Chinese authorities have arbitrarily arrested, tortured, and sentenced thousands of Tibetans, including hundreds of religious leaders, mostly due to their religious belief and faith towards the Dalai Lama.

Disappearances of XIth Panchen Lama

Panchen Lama is one of Tibet’s most revered religious leaders. The Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama share special spiritual relation and they are commonly referred to as the “sun and the moon” of the Tibetan Buddhist firmament.

The Chinese authorities abducted six-year old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family three days after His Holiness the Dalai Lama named Gedun Choekyi as the XIth reincarnation of the Panchen Lama. Repeated requests from international human rights groups and UN mandate holders to visit him were de-

nied by the Chinese government.

In 1962, the Xth Panchen Lama, 24 years old then, made the first major criticism of Chinese policy in Tibet in the form of “70,000-character petition,” submitted to the then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. The petition recorded the mass starvation, imprisonment of Tibetans and destruction of Tibetan monasteries, which he pointed out, was unheard in Tibet before the Chinese “liberation.”

The years of public humiliation and solitary confinement had not stopped him from speaking against the China’s misrule in Tibet.

In his address to the monks of Tashi Lhunpo monastery and the Tibetan people in Shigatse on 24 January 1989, the Panchen Lama said that the Chinese rule in Tibet had brought more destruction than benefit to the Tibetan people. On 28 January, five days after delivering this intense criticism of Chinese rule, the Panchen Lama was found dead at his monastery. He was then 51 years old.

Tenzin Delek Rinpoche: Tenzin Delek Rinpoche is a Buddhist religious leader, widely known for his social works in Karze, eastern Tibet (Chinese: Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province), where he has established schools, clinics, orphanages, and old-age homes. He was arrested from his monastery in Nyagchu in April 2002 along with his attendant Lobsang Dhondup.

Given his leading role in public welfare and efforts in preserving Tibetan Buddhism, the Chinese authorities viewed him as a threat to the “social stability”. Hence, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, along with Lobsang Dhondup, was charged with masterminding a bomb blast in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province and sentenced to death. Lobsang was executed on 26 January 2003 and Rinpoche’s sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on 24 January 2005 following international protest.

Reportedly, the imprisonment of Rin-

poche has subsequently led to the closing down of his projects.

Repeated appeals by Rinpoche's relatives and disciples for his immediate release and for a medical parole in April 2014 have been rejected, instead, his youngest sister was threatened to face a severe consequences if they continue to run the appeal. He is 64 years old and his health condition remains critical.

Freedom of Opinion, Expression and Information

At present, Tibet is virtually closed and foreign journalists are barred from visiting restive regions. All communication channels, including internet and phone lines are inaccessible or being strictly monitored in regions where protests have occurred.

Any independent information or expression other than the Chinese government viewpoints are restricted and considered "subversive". Tibetans who speak to foreign reporters, share information regarding protests through mobile phones or e-mail are charged with "leaking state secrets" and are given lengthy prison sentences.

Tibetan writers, bloggers, singers, teachers, documentary filmmakers and environmentalists are especially targeted since the 2008 Beijing Olympics Games, a year during which over 342 protests took place across the Tibetan plateau. For instance, on 27 February 2014, a popular Tibetan singer, Kalsang Yarphel and Pema Rigzin, a producer of Tibetan music album, were sentenced to imprisonment of 4 years and 2 years and 6 months respectively by a court in Chengdu, Sichuan Province for singing songs with political message and organizing concerts.

On 23 August 2014, Dawa Tsomo, a Tibetan blogger, was detained in Zatoe County, Yushul Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province. She blogged articles that are considered po-

litically sensitive.

Besides official state media, information received from sources outside Tibet are considered offensive and violators are subject to imprisonment. In a move to clampdown on access to information through various foreign radios and television, the Chinese authorities launched a massive crackdown by eradicating satellite dishes and other equipments used by Tibetans in Malho (Ch: Huangnan), Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Karze (Ch: Ganzi) and other Tibetan inhabited areas in eastern Tibet.

As reported by Radio Free Asia, the Chinese authorities in Malho (Ch: Huangnan) prefecture have seized and burned hundreds of satellite equipments used by Tibetans to listen to Radio Free Asia and Voice of America programs.

Freedom to Use and Develop the Tibetan Language

Tibetan language plays a crucial role in the preservation of Tibetan culture and distinct Tibetan identity. Schools run privately by Tibetan individuals to teach Tibetans language and culture face severe restrictions.

The Chinese authorities often present their concept of bilingual education as a progressive education policy that confirms their commitment to protect minority cultures and languages. However, in Tibet, bilingual education has generated 'subtractive' bilingualism where Tibetan children are taught only Chinese language, neglecting Tibetan language. For instance, on 1 November 2014, following a remark on importance of Chinese language in schools for successful life by the head of Ngaba (Aba) education board, a large number of Tibetan primary and secondary students in Dzoge (Chinese: Ruo'ergai) County in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture staged protest calling for protection for their native language and equality in education.

As reported by Human Rights in China, an international Chinese NGO, minority children have limited opportunity to become fluent in their own language. Tibetan language is increasingly restricted to homes, reducing scope in public sphere (schools, universities and job market) to master one's native (Tibetan) language.

Former Special Rapporteur on Education, Ms Katarina Tomasevski in a mission report on China urged that "an education that would affirm minority rights necessitates full recognition by the majority, of the worth of minority languages and religions in all facets of life. Otherwise, education is seen as assimilationist".

Violation of Tibetan Nomads' Rights

For centuries, Tibetan nomads and herders have lived successfully with their herds using their centuries-old local knowledge and by keeping a mobile lifestyle. However, the current forced 'villagization' policy in the name of development undermines the inherent skills of nomads, restricts their mobility, and raises serious concerns about the long-term socio-economic impact of removing nomads from their traditional form of livelihood without adequate planning.

The grassland rehabilitation policy referred to as the "Restore Grassland Policy", implemented throughout Tibet's nomadic areas, has affected the lives of the nomads. China's measures of resettlement of nomadic herders under different name tags – 'ecological migrants' or 'comfortable housing projects' are in violation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the 1992 Convention on Biodiversity, documents ratified by People's Republic of China.

Tibetan people have no say in or a voice against the hydropower projects that are displacing them from their ancestral lands. Worse affected Tibetans are mostly illiterate, and live under a cli-

mate of fear. They hesitate to raise their voice against government projects. The few brave local leaders who raise their voice, even on environmental grounds, are often convicted of “political motivation”. According to Human Rights Watch, Chinese government asserts that all the relocation and re-housing are entirely voluntary and respect the local Tibetans. However, Tibetans coming from both farming and herding communities interviewed by Human Rights Watch between 2005-2012 say that large number of Tibetans relocated did not do so voluntarily or worse never even consulted .

The Chinese government grandiose its radical relocation policies by describing its long-term benefits and claimed that

its strategy is succeeding in terms of growing GDP rates in TAR higher than national average . However, the ground reality is different, with increase living costs, difficulties in integrating into urban economies, abandonment of traditional grasslands, losing economic independence and ineffective employment schemes. In all, Tibetan nomads are left worse off than they were before.

Conclusion

Tibet’s human rights situation is deteriorating and requires urgent international intervention. The cycle of self-immolation in Tibet sends an unequivocal message about the need for China to re-assess its Tibet policy and to heed the

aspirations of Tibetan people and their calls for greater freedom.

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) based in Dharamshala, India, calls upon the international community to urge the People’s Republic of China to immediately stop the ongoing “patriotic re-education” and “strike hard” campaigns in monasteries and nunneries; allow free and unrestricted access to Tibet by international media, observers, UN mandate holders and respect the rights of Tibetans to live in dignity, and address their underlying grievances through dialogue - the only viable path towards a long-term sustainable solution to the current situation.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s Teaching Schedule

Teaching in Tokyo, Japan on April 12 & 13: His Holiness will give a Buddhist teaching based on The Heart Sutra (sherab nyingpo) & Nagarjuna’s Commentary on Bodhichitta (jangchub semdrel) and confer the Avalokiteshvera Empowerment (chenresig jenang) organized by the Liaison Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for East-Asia at Showa Joshi Hitomi Hall. Contact Website: www.tibethouse.jp

Teaching in Leura, Blue Mountains, New South Wales, Australia from June 5 to 9: His Holiness will give five days of teachings on Commentary on the Five Stages of Guhyasamaja and confer the Yamantaka Initiation (jigje wang) organized by the Dalai Lama in Australia at the Fairmont Resort, Luera, Blue Mountains. Contact Website: www.dalailamainaustralia.org

Public Talk in Leura, Blue Mountains, New South Wales, Australia on June 6: His Holiness will give a public talk on The Wisdom of Forgiveness organized by the Dalai Lama in Australia in the afternoon at the Katoomba Public School. Contact Website: www.dalailamainaustralia.org

Multi-Faith Event in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia on June 11: His Holiness will participate in a multi-faith event organized by the Dalai Lama in Australia in the morning at the Cathedral of St. Stephen's. Contact Website: www.dalailamainaustralia.org

Teaching in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia on June 11 & 12: His Holiness will give teachings on Nagarjuna's Precious Garland (norbu trengwa) organized by the Dalai Lama in Australia at the Brisbane Convention Center. Contact Website: www.dalailamainaustralia.org

Public Talk in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia on June 12: His Holiness will give a public talk on The Wisdom of Compassion organized by the Dalai Lama in Australia in the afternoon at Riverstage. Contact Website: www.dalailamainaustralia.org

Public Talk in Perth, Western Australia, Australia on June 14: His Holiness will give a public talk on The Wisdom of Giving & Receiving organized by the Dalai Lama in Australia in the afternoon at Perth Arena. Contact Website: www.dalailamainaustralia.org

Long Life Offering Ceremony in Dharamsala, HP, India on June 21: As part of His Holiness' official 80th Birthday Celebration, he will participate in a long-life offering ceremony organized by the Central Tibetan Administration, Geluk Association & Domey Association at the Main Tibetan Temple.

Speech of Ms. Claudia Roth, Member of Green Party & Vice President of German Bundestag

Today is a special day for every Tibetan, and a special day for human rights worldwide.

We have gathered here in Dharamsala to mark the 56th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising of 1959.

This Uprising is an important chapter in Tibetan and, indeed, in recent world history.

This day has become a symbol for self-determination and the right to a homeland.

So being here with you today is a very special, a very emotional moment for me.

- Many of you were forced to leave Tibet,
- Forced to leave your families,
- And your country.
- You found sanctuary here in India.

So today really is a day to celebrate and give thanks.

- Thank you for 56 years of nonviolent resistance by the Tibetan people
- Thank you for your strength and your commitment
- Thank you for your courage
- Thank you for your immense, your endless patience
- And thank you, because the Tibetan people have become a voice of hope and a voice of peace and understanding throughout the world.

I would like to thank Dr Lobsang Sangay, Prime Minister of the Central Tibetan Administration, for inviting me to visit Dharamsala in my capacity as a friend of the Dalai Lama and as a friend of the Tibetan people.

Dear friends,

80,000 Tibetans lost their lives in the Tibetan Uprising in March 1959.

But the tragedy of Tibet began earlier, with the invasion of Tibet by the Chinese People's Liberation Army in 1949 and 1950.

At the time, the world paid no attention.

There were many reasons for this:

- Post-war Europe was still in chaos,
- The Beginning of the Cold War
- And the colonies in Asia were engaged in their struggle for independence.

These problems, rather than Tibet, were the issues preoccupying the international community.

It was only with the Uprising and the events in Lhasa on 10 March 1959 that the world started to take notice of the terrible problems facing the Tibetan people.

The message sent by the Uprising, the desire for freedom and self-determination, and its continued commemoration and remembrance are important sources of hope and strength, which are so important for the Tibetans today, 56 years after the Uprising was crushed so brutally and His Holiness the Dalai Lama was forced into exile.

March 10, this a day of immense significance. It is a warning from history, as we commemorate the past.

It is a day for being mindful of our responsibility for the present. And it is a day of remembrance – for the future.

So today is a day against forgetting.

And I am worried that the Tibetan people's struggle, which has justice on its side, might be forgotten by the world community.

So today is also a day against silence and indifference. My message to the international community is this: Don't forget the Tibetans, forgetting kills. Or, like the author and Nobel Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel once said: 'To forget the victims

is to kill them a second time.'

Countless Tibetans fled after the Uprising, and many more are still being forced to leave their country. Today, around 200,000 Tibetans live in exile.

For such a small nation – indeed, for any nation – too many people have been uprooted, and too much has been lost. These Tibetans have suffered

- The loss of their people
- The loss of their homeland
- The loss of their culture
- And the loss of their freedom to determine their own future.

For far too long, the Tibetans in exile were regarded as nothing more than representatives of a "reactionary feudal clique", in line with an anti-democratic ideology promoted for decades by the Chinese rulers. Since then, the image of the Tibetans worldwide has changed.

Today, the Tibetans are recognized as victims of callous great power politics. The Tibetans' struggle has become a symbol of peace.

This is due, not least, to the wise policies pursued by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration here in Dharamsala.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my most profound respect and gratitude to Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama.

At a time of so many wars,

At a time of so many dreadful crises,

The Tibetans and, indeed, the international community have a figurehead who, throughout the world, has come to symbolize

- Building bridges instead of widening divisions,
- The charting of peaceful pathways for and into the future,

DOCUMENTATION

- And freedom from bitterness about the past.

The Dalai Lama truly is a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, for he is truly an ambassador for the vision of a world without violence and oppression, without hatred and exclusion.

These are the principles which guide his life and his struggle. He is

- An Ocean of Wisdom
- And spiritual power
- The embodiment of endless compassion, kindness and love
- Who never fails to bring sunshine into our hearts
- Even when dark clouds are gathering overhead
- And who dries our tears of despair with smiles of hope.

Hope for a world free from hate and repression, a world which - thanks to people like the Dalai Lama - still seems within reach.

We will not accept, that in the 21st century, national power interests and the politics of violence continue to determine the international relations and violate day by day international law and the Charta for Human Rights.

That is why I support the Tibetan people and the Tibetan's nonviolent resistance, out of deepest conviction.

So today is also the day to stand together and to send out a strong signal.

It is a political day, for it is a day for human rights.

Human rights, that are universal and indivisible.

And yet in Tibet, they are trampled underfoot every day.

The Chinese government's way of dealing with the Tibetan people is incompatible with fundamental human rights and democracy.

The Tibetan people are being forcibly deprived of their rights:

- The right to self-determination,
- The right to physical integrity,
- The right to life,
- The freedom to practice a religion,

- And freedom of faith and culture.

Flying the flag for Tibet means demanding that China

Finally abandons its blockading tactics,

Finally engages in serious and credible political dialogue, in its own interests as well, and finally end the ongoing repression.

In its 2014 Freedom in the World report, released in January, Freedom House ranked Tibet "Worst of the Worst" alongside North Korea, Syria and Saudi Arabia, describing them as the world's most repressed societies:

Repression such as the "rectification campaign" and the arbitrary restriction of religious freedom opens the way for

- The Chinese authorities' destruction of religious sites - the monasteries and the Mani stones which are such a characteristic feature of the Tibetan landscape,
- The expulsion of 26 nuns from a nunnery in Driru because the official number of nuns had allegedly been exceeded,
- The six months of compulsory "patriotic education" for nuns and monks accused of the nebulous offence of "political involvement",
- And punishment for citizens found to possess a photo of the Dalai Lama.

Repression such as inequality in schooling

- When every subject must be taught solely in Chinese
- And the Tibetan people's mother tongue is merely taught as a foreign language.

Repression such as forced resettlement, but also the forced settlement of Tibetan nomads in so-called "socialist" villages, which pose a threat to traditional nomadic life, and certainly cannot be said to improve the lives of the Tibetans concerned; and repression such as the systematic surveillance of monasteries by in-house police units:

This attempt to bring the monasteries under government control is a provocation which worsens tensions and further em-

bitters the Tibetan people.

All these forms of repression are unbearable. So for me, it is a given that in Germany and in Europe, we show solidarity with Tibet and fill this solidarity with life through our vigorous advocacy for the rights of the Tibetan people.

Today is also a day to voice our concern, Our most heartfelt concern for the many prisoners

Like Lama Khenpo Kartse, who was sentenced to two and a half years in prison based on spurious allegations and accusations. He has been in prison since December 2013 and his health is steadily worsening.

Prisoners like 20-year-old Losang Gyatso and 19-year-old Losang Tenpa. Both are monks at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba,

- Who staged solo peaceful protests for freedom for Tibet, and for the Dalai Lama
- And who were sentenced to several years in prison
- Where they have been tortured.

Like the prisoners in Loshu, who are being denied medical treatment by the authorities despite being seriously injured when security forces opened fire on protesters last March.

And as if that wasn't enough, the authorities then arrested all the males in the protesters' home village of Shugba.

All these people, and many others, are campaigning

- For human rights and for freedom
- For the protection of the environment
- For the protection of Tibet's natural resources, which are essential to sustain life,
- For the preservation of the Tibetan people's rich culture,
- And for the Tibetan language.

This is definitely not a crime - but a fundamental right. Therefore I call for the immediate release of all political prisoners in Tibet!

Dear friends

Change is essential. And change is pos-

sible, as long as we don't look away, And don't let ourselves be intimidated by pressure from China. So today is a day against silence and indifference.

We stand here today, under the open sky, on the rich soil of Indian democracy, the world's largest democracy, in Dharamsala, not far from your home country, which lies just beyond these mountains.

Perhaps the people in Tibet will hear our heartfelt messages in their hearts – messages that are carried to them by the strong winds of the Himalayas.

This is our message:

- Let the people in Tibet live in freedom,
- Give them the power to decide their own destinies,
- Give Tibetan culture the opportunity to thrive and flourish!

The leaders in Beijing don't want to hear any talk of the Tibetan people's rights. The People's Republic of China prefers to criminalize the Tibetans and ensure that the Tibetan representatives' advocacy for their people never bears fruit.

Of course, as a world power, China should not be underestimated. The reality is that its global contacts and integration into the world economy make China a force to be reckoned with.

Indeed, China is well on the way to becoming a global power. China is already the world's second largest economy after the United States, and could well overtake the US in the next 12 months or so.

China's total military budget is also the second largest in the world after the US.

But in order to assert its claim to a leadership role in the international community, there needs to be cultural leadership – which was provided for so long by the American dream, the American way of life.

So let me ask the politicians in Beijing this:

What about the people around the world who are pleased that China is emerging as a world power? How are they supposed to support China

- If China tramples the human rights of its own people underfoot?

– If China oppresses, enslaves and expels an entire nation?

– If China is unable to safeguard peace and understanding in its own country?

This is my message to the politicians in Beijing: Find a way of reaching agreement with the Tibetans, the Uighurs and the Mongolians! End the repression and release all the political prisoners from your jails!

That would be such an important symbol for the world community – a symbol of peace and understanding.

Such a move would be worthy of China's status as an emerging world power, instead of the fearful policy of oppression that is reminiscent of the 18th century.

And there is something else that a world and regional power like China cannot afford.

The fact is that Tibet not only possesses a rich and diverse culture.

Its natural environment is equally rich and diverse, and is of vital importance for the Asian and global ecosystems.

Tibet is sometimes known as the Third Pole:

- Seeing, that one-sixth of the world's glaciers are found in Tibet.
- Seeing, that Tibet contains the world's third largest ice mass after the Arctic and Antarctica.
- But we see that 20 per cent of Tibet's ice mass has already vanished.
- And 50 per cent is likely to disappear in the next 40 years.
- Seeing, that Tibet's 1.6 million square kilometers of permafrost contain more than 12 million tons of climate-killing CO₂.
- And seeing, that global warming affects Tibet more severely than the rest of the world.
- Seeing all this, the vital importance of Tibet's natural environment should be obvious to everyone.

Tibet is also known as the Water Tower of Asia.

- Seeing, that 70 per cent of the water in the Ganges comes from Tibetan

glaciers.

– Seeing, that these glaciers also provide 30 to 50 per cent of the water in rivers in India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia.

– Seeing, that in China alone, 300 million people depend on water from the Himalayas.

– And seeing, that the total number of people who depend on Himalayan water is 1.3 billion!

But the glaciers are melting.

- It results in less water, and less rainfall.
- It worsens the sandstorms in China.
- It accelerates soil erosion.
- In other words, if Asia's Water Tower dries up, there will be more deserts and less water.

And yet the Chinese Government is planning to build more reservoirs, uncontrolled mining is adversely affecting the rich fauna and flora of Tibet and polluting groundwater,

Heavy industry and a massive increase in traffic are causing black soot deposits on glaciers, which, according to the NASA, are the cause of half of all glacial melt.

New dams do not only destroy nature but also threaten the survival of farmers - of the whole culture in the rural area.

That's why, dear friends, today is also a day for protecting the climate and the environment. And to praise the deity Kawalori - the eternal snow!

The Tibetans' culture and religion would never allow such destruction of the environment. Here, Chinese politicians can learn lessons from Tibet.

They can learn how to protect the precious resources that the Chinese urgently need for their own survival.

The Tibetans can only respond to China's might with intelligence, honesty, a sense of realism, and an iron will to gain their freedom.

That's why the course adopted by the Tibetan Administration and the Dalai Lama, namely to achieve genuine autonomy through dialogue and nonviolence, is the approach that we must support, out

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of a sense of conviction, but also out of realism.

As a human rights activist and a politician who believes in realistic politics, I know how difficult it is to advocate for a policy that holds no promise of rapid results.

I know how strong despair can be in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles!

The Middle Way Approach (UMAYLAM) pursued by the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala is a genuine exercise in diplomatic balancing act. It is fraught with risk.

And the Tibetan people don't need me to tell them about the dangers of walking a steep and difficult path.

You know the mountains well and have walked in them all your lives!

This Middle Way Approach is underpinned by The Dalai Lama's own philosophy,

The philosophy that he teaches and whose message is that all conflicts can be resolved through sincere dialogue

If conducted in a spirit of openness

If conducted in a willingness to move towards reconciliation.

It is up to China to make use of the Tibetans' openness and willingness for dialogue, in order to move towards a peaceful and partnership-based solution to the Tibet question.

Without a joint approach very soon, we must expect the situation in Tibet to become even more complicated.

Beijing's economic and military might cannot and will not solve the problem.

An escalation of the situation in Tibet is not a prospect that any of us wants to witness. More escalation and radicalization will claim more lives and cause even greater loss. That is not something we would wish on anyone, for every life is precious.

But the situation is escalating; we see this from the alarming rise in the number of self-immolations.

And so, dear friends,

Today is also a day of mourning and remembrance.

For the 136 people, perhaps more: the monks, the nuns and the schoolchildren who have burned themselves to death.

I am profoundly moved by this expression of their despair. It is a silent scream for solidarity with the Tibetan people.

That's why today is also a day of solidarity.

Solidarity is vital to make it crystal clear:

To express solidarity with you, the Tibetans does not mean to be an enemy of the Chinese people. Not at all.

And so I stand here to express my, to express our solidarity with you.

Our remembrance of the victims of the 1959 Uprising is as vivid today as it was 56 years ago.

Tibet has not been forgotten. Today, hundreds of cities across Germany are flying the Tibetan flag.

All over the world, countless Tibetans and activists from Tibet initiatives will be out on the streets, standing in front of the Chinese embassies.

On 14 March, a mass demonstration – called "Europe stands with Tibet!" – will take place in Paris. It will culminate in the release of a declaration, sending a clear message that:

- Europe stands with you, the Tibetan people, and
- There is a strong European alliance for Tibet.

We will show our solidarity and signal

to China that the Tibetans have a right to self-determination and a right to dialogue.

The Tibetans are ready for this dialogue, as I have learned in all my encounters here in Dharamsala

Ready for a serious, credible dialogue.

So China should take heart and open itself up to dialogue. That is surely a hallmark of a state's true greatness.

I myself have a profound belief and heartfelt conviction that the solution to the Tibet conflict can only be found in dialogue.

So today is also a day of dialogue and an outstretched hand. Freedom and human rights are universal and indivisible.

The Tibetans' struggle and the living example of the Dalai Lama have become symbols of the universality of human rights all over the world.

My profound wish is that China will soon move forward on this issue so that you will soon be able to live in freedom and contentment in your own country!

My dear friends,

I am honored to join you in this profoundly moving ceremony of remembrance.

I will never forget

And be sure

We will never give up!

Tashi Delek - for you all!

UMAYLAM 中間道路
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Statement of Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay on the 56th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day

We are gathered here to remember the brave men and women who gave their lives for the cause of Tibet fifty-six years ago. We are also gathered here to remind ourselves to carry forward the non-violent struggle of the Tibetan people with great determination, courage and resolve.

My fellow Tibetans, I report to you that the situation in Tibet remains grim but the enduring spirit of Tibetan people is strong and getting stronger. Ever since the 2008 peaceful protests erupted, and the ongoing self-immolation protests throughout the plateau, Tibet is under virtual lockdown. Restrictions on movements of Tibetans have greatly intensified. At multiple checkpoints in major urban centers under constant surveillance cameras, Tibetans must swipe their identity cards that are embedded with sophisticated second generation chips. As one Tibetan has described this indignity: "Your identity card is like your shadow. Without it you cannot move." The situation of increased restrictions is so excessive that even Chinese tourists have been moved to comment that the present conditions in Tibet are like a 'war zone'.

Of particular concern to Tibetans is the China State Council's announcement in 2014 to upgrade the status of the towns of Shigatse and Chamdo to that of cities. Though Tibetans welcome economic development in the form of modernization, their experience in the face of urbanization is one of economic marginalization, social exclusion and environmental destruction. Lhasa is a prime example. The city has seen an exponential urban expansion that has attracted migrant Chinese workers from all over China. This population shift has transformed the heart of Tibetan culture into another "Chinatown", where Tibetans live in small ghettos surrounded by an expanding urban China. We fear the same negative transformation will happen to

Shigatse and Chamdo, immeasurably reducing the ability of the Tibetan people to preserve their culture and identity. At the same time, Tibetans equally fear that Chinese settlers will overwhelm and swamp rural and nomadic Tibet.

These are some of the many challenges we confront in Tibet. Yet I believe that we have the determination, resolve and the collective will to surmount them. Tibetans in Tibet have survived one state-sponsored disaster after another. Disasters like the Great Leap Forward in the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s have not shaken the enduring spirit of the Tibetan people. From the martial law imposed in Lhasa in 1989, to the "strike hard campaigns" to stifle

tions, the Tibetan will to live as one cohesive people and fight for justice remains firm.

In Tibet, artists sing, paint and write, all with an emboldened spirit and a heightened sense of responsibility to the Tibetan cause. Within Tibet, a new spiritual, cultural and intellectual renaissance reinforces Tibetan pride and unity. From the humble gatherers of dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu (caterpillar fungus) to the tireless truck drivers, farmers and nomads, to monks and nuns, Tibetans talk the night away in common aspiration to live in dignity and with a common identity. These pockets of ideas and oases of Tibet's common aspirations will merge into a bright future for all people of Tibet.



Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, delivering the 10th March Statement on 56th Anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day

dissent, and campaigns like the Western China Development programme have not diminished the courage of the Tibetan people. From the 1959 uprising, which we honor today, through the decades of peaceful protests, including the 2008 pan-Tibet demonstrations and more than one hundred self-immola-

The rhetoric coming out of China today is that Tibetans have become their own masters. To make this rhetoric a reality, we urge the Chinese leadership to let Tibetans govern Tibet. As China plans to observe the 50th anniversary of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), hardliners in Beijing should heed that repression will only generate resentment.

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We have noted President Xi Jinping's comments that Tibetan culture and language should be preserved yet, the local authority's 20-point internal directives in Amdo undermines both.

On the part of the Kashag, we remain fully committed to the Middle Way Approach of not seeking separation from China but genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people. In order to realize genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people, the Task Force, an advisory body to the Kashag, held a conclave in the first week of January to undertake an in-depth discussion on the political developments in Tibet, on issues relating to the future of dialogue with the Chinese leadership and on developments in the larger international political landscape. The Tibetan leadership strongly believes that the only way to resolve the issue of Tibet is through dialogue between the Envoys

the fruits of dialogue and urge the Chinese Government to seize the opportunity to further engage with the Dalai Lama."

We also welcome President Barack Obama's comments at the annual breakfast prayer in Washington D.C, describing His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a "good friend" and "a powerful example of what it means to practice compassion" and a person who "inspires us to speak up for the freedom and dignity of all human beings."

I am glad to report that within India, we see increasing awareness of the importance of Tibet and more platforms provided for the discussion of the issue of Tibet. There is also the realization that the Central Tibetan Administration is both a genuinely democratic political entity and an effective one. The pride of

resilience which should be embraced by younger generations. This is our political capital as well as political resource.

Above all, the first priority of the Kashag is education. In this effort the Kashag encourages Tibetans from all walks of life to be deeply involved in their children's education.

I take this opportunity to thank all our Tibet support groups from Berlin to Brussels and Canberra to Cape Town and from Tokyo to Taipei, in their noble efforts and for supporting justice and freedom for Tibetans. Amid extremism and violent conflicts around the world, Tibet is a model of moderation and non-violence which is worthy of your continued support. We also express our profound gratitude to the people and Government of India for their generosity and hospitality.

My fellow Tibetans, once again, and with profound hope and gratitude, on behalf of six million Tibetan people, I offer my sincere prayers for the long life of His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama. Today, we honor and pay our deepest respects to the brave men and women who sacrificed their lives for the cause of Tibet. With enduring spirit, may all Tibetans remain steadfast to the cause our forefathers and mothers, our sisters and brothers, and to all those who have devoted their lives to end the suffering of Tibetans and restore freedom for Tibet.

Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Bod Gyalo.

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay

March 10, 2015

On the part of the Kashag, we remain fully committed to the Middle Way Approach of not seeking separation from China but genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people

- Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay



Tibetans and Tibet supporters carrying Tibetan National Flag during the commoration of the Tibetan National Uprising Day

of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the representatives of the Chinese leadership. The Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama are ready to engage in dialogue with their Chinese counterpart any time and any place.

In this regard, we remain deeply appreciative of the recent U.S. State Department's statement that encourages dialogue between the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese leadership: "We believe that all people in the PRC would benefit from

our democracy is its public participation and we continue to encourage the Tibetan public's deeper engagement in the democratic process.

This year, the Tibetan people and our friends throughout the world will celebrate His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday. On this landmark occasion, we pray for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's long life and continued good health. The hallmark of the Tibetan people is non-violence, and the values embraced by our elder generation: humility, integrity and

Statement of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on the occasion of the 56th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day of 10th March 1959

Today is the 56th anniversary of the momentous day in 1959 when the Tibetan people rose in a peaceful, spontaneous uprising for freedom and to protest the oppression of communist China in Tibet's capital Lhasa. It is also the Tibetan Martyrs' Day, dedicated to the patriotism of the heroic men and women of Tibet. On behalf of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, I would like to commemorate with great ferventness the patriotic men and women of Tibet who had sacrificed their all, including their very lives, for the religion, polity and people of Tibet, and to express solidarity with those who continue even today to suffer oppression and torture under the policy of violent repression of the communist party government of China.

Immediately after establishing the so-called People's Republic of China in 1949, the communist Chinese government entertained an ambition to gobble up Tibet in its entirety, including the land and people of this ancient Snowland. With this end in view, it launched an armed invasion through successive onslaughts through the borders of all the Three Provinces of Tibet. It resulted in hundreds of thousands of Tibetans being killed. Besides, the invading Chinese devised a plot which posed an imminent danger to the life of Tibet's supreme temporal and spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It was when the Chinese were on the point of carrying out this diabolical plot that on 10th March 1959, thousands of Tibetans rose in a spontaneous protest demonstration across the Lhasa city, targeting the communist government of China and the Chinese occupying forces. This is indelibly etched in the history of Tibet as a vital evidence of the events of that time. While it re-

mained in occupation of Tibet, the communist government of China resorted to distortion of Tibet's history and its sovereignty. It took to amalgamating Tibet's culture with its own despite the fact that the two were entirely incompatible, thereby seeking to destroy its unique identity. It deprived the Tibetan people of their religious faith and freedom. It vandalized and recklessly exploited Tibet's territory and its resources, thereby setting out to destroy the environment of the Tibetan Plateau. It trampled on the Tibetan people's rights as human beings and put an end to the Tibetan people's freedom of speech. In the name of economic development, it carried out vicious colonial practices. It sought to destroy the ethnic integrity of the Tibetan people by splitting them up. And it treated with contempt the aspirations of the Tibetan people. Apart from carrying out a litany of such abuses, China has never implemented in Tibet a policy that genuinely addressed in a meaningful manner the real conditions there. Rather, it invariably adhered to a policy of violence and brutality. Because of this vicious policy, there has never been a period through generations both old and new when peaceful Tibetan protests against Chinese rule ever came to an end. The Chinese leadership should understand that it is impossible for the peaceful Tibetan protests to come to an end so long as there is no just resolution of the issue of Tibet.

Since assuming the temporal and spiritual leadership of the Snowland of Tibet, His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama has taken a series of initiatives designed to reach a settlement on the Sino-Tibetan dispute, keeping in mind the interests of Tibetans both in Tibet and in exile. His outstanding efforts

directed at reaching a just solution to the issue of Tibet has been well recognized by the international community which honoured him with more than a hundred prestigious awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize. Nevertheless, successive leaderships of China have invariably taken recourse to nothing but subterfuge, never even remaining true to their own words. Apart from numerous other breaches of faith, they did not respect even the so-called 17-Point Agreement which was entirely dictated by them and which they forced the Tibetan side to sign at the point of their gun. After putting the entire blame for all the excesses of the Cultural Revolution on the Gang of Four, China began implementing the so-called policies of opening up and liberalization. However, these were only in name when it came to Tibet, for it has never, thus far, implemented any policy there that is in any substantive way beneficial to the local Tibetan people. It was therefore not surprising that in 1987 the second generation of Tibetans who were said to have been nurtured and brought up under the Red Flag of China and in 2008 the third and so on led protests which were widespread and took place on successive occasions in all the three traditional provinces of Tibet, including in the city of Lhasa. In particular, available information suggests that from 2009 to 5th March, 2015, a total of 136 Tibetans immolated themselves in acts of protest against Chinese rule. Of them 117 were known to have died. Developments and incidents such as these shows that Tibet, which was once a religiously endowed land of peace and tranquility has now become something like a slaughterhouse, filled with weapons of violence and bloodshed. The basis for this is, of course, the policy of violent repression pursued by the

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government of China and the attitude of the Chinese government leaders. The communist Chinese government's policy of violent repression has led to the death of more than 1.2 million Tibetans. Besides, the tragedy of the situation in Tibet today is such that it still remains impossible for anyone to estimate how many Tibetans still remain imprisoned and suffer torture of such severity as a hell on earth.

Since 1959, governments, parliaments, non-governmental organizations and numerous other bodies and leaders across the world have held discussions and passed a series of resolutions on the just cause of the Tibetan people, as well as provided economic assistance and so on. These have been of invaluable fraternal help towards the internationalization of the issue of Tibet and our gratitude to them for their support for our just cause remain limitless. Nevertheless, in substantive terms, the main responsibility for achieving a solution to the just cause lies with the Tibetan people ourselves and we must rise to the challenge of discharging it. No cause remains to issue any further urging when it comes to talking about the courage and determination shown by the Tibetan people inside Tibet. Including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, most of the top leaders of the four great schools of Tibetan Buddhism and of the Yungdrung Bon religion as well as many others who had carried out temporal and spiritual leadership roles in Tibet managed to escape into exile. In order to be able to preserve, defend and spread the substance of the Tibetan religious traditions and Tibetan culture in the free foreign countries and places, including India, institutions such as the Central Tibetan Administration, complete with the three pillars of democracy were established. Settlements providing safe and secure homes for Tibetans living in exile were built. And flourishing religious centres complete in all respect as places for carrying out prayer services, engaging in practices and imparting religious education, were established. Publicity efforts were made to raise awareness about and understanding of the just cause of

the Tibetan people while both modern education and traditional knowledge were imparted to all the Tibetan youngsters living in exile. In such ways it was ensured that, unlike any other community of political refugees across the world, the Tibetan people stood out

make efforts to ensure that we do not become Tibetans who are ashamed to call ourselves Tibetan.

While ruling the country over the past several years, the new leaders of China have been contending that in order to



Mr. Penpa Tsering, Speaker of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, delivering the statement of the Tibetan Parliament on 10th March

with excellent accomplishments both religiously and politically. Nevertheless, the new generation of today must prove itself up to the task of carrying forward the accomplishments and aims of the older generation. All sections of the Tibetan people must therefore make concerted efforts by assuming responsibilities in an all-round manner and without any shortcoming. In particular, it must be understood that the most important essence of the life of a people is its linguistic culture, both spoken and written.

All the young Tibetans in exile in general, and especially the Tibetans youngsters growing up in Western countries, must make special efforts in learning the Tibetan language and script. Otherwise, there is a real big danger of facing a situation where Tibetans do not know their own language. We must look up to the young Tibetans in Tibet for the kind of efforts they are making towards protecting the Tibetan linguistic heritage under the violent repression of the Chinese government. It is important for us to

govern China, the border areas should be governed well; that for the purpose of administering the border areas properly, stability must be ensured in the Tibetan regions. Through the use of such remarks, tens of thousands of Chinese officials were sent as work teams to all the Tibetan inhabited areas, including in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Such team members took up long-term residence within the Tibetan communities, including in the monasteries, and began carrying out surveillance on the activities of the local Tibetans day and night. In doing so, they harassed the monastic communities by rendering them unable to devote their times to prayer services and religious studies. They began exercising tight controls and restrictions on the local Tibetan people's political rights, freedom of speech, their day-to-day occupational pursuits, their freedom of movement, and so on. This situation continues even today. In addition, using its ongoing anti-corruption campaign, China has also been making all kinds of criminal accusations against many Tibetans for such

alleged violations as being followers of the so-called “Dalai separatist clique”. Subjected to such diverse kinds of harassment and persecution, Tibetans are deprived of all freedom to campaign for anything connected with their just cause. The situation in Tibet continued to remain grave and tragic in 2014, leading to continued protests, including through self-immolations, by the Tibetan people. There was also no let up in China’s reckless exploitation of Tibet’s mineral resources and the destruction of the environment. Not a week passed without there being at least one arrest or imprisonment of a Tibetan. The actual history of Tibet continued to be distorted in documentaries shown over state television channels. Tibetans were executed by being fired on by special armed security forces. The prevalence of gross inequitable treatment, including through ethnic discrimination, in this so-called great Chinese motherland ensured that achieving stability in the Tibetan areas was virtually impossible. Also, in their reports in 2014, many international human rights monitoring or-

of being true to their own words in addressing the situation in Tibet.

It is also important that we the Tibetan people living in exile should continue to carry out campaigns without any let up in connection with the issue of Tibet. It was with this understanding that during 2014, members of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, including the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, were divided into groups and travelled to many countries both in the East and West to meet with political leaders, including parliament members, and prominent public figures. They briefed those leaders and influential public figures with information about the critical situation in Tibet today, including on the continuing incidents of protest self-immolations. These visits and meetings also included making efforts and presenting a range of appeals to garner support for the Tibetan issue and yielded appreciable results. In particular, members of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile met with more than 100 lawmakers who

Parliament, and it has already begun its work.

There is absolutely no change in our resolve to seek a negotiated solution through the middle way approach, which is mutually beneficial to China and Tibet, as a part of our efforts to resolve the current critical situation in Tibet and the wider issue of Tibet. We would therefore like to reiterate our call on the leadership of the People’s Republic of China to give up engaging in a blame game and, instead, make use of the opportune moment today to enter into a peaceful Sino-Tibetan negotiation with the urgency the issue deserves.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express immense gratitude to the countries, organizations, and private individuals – including especially the government and people of India – who have been extremely kind in giving support on the issue of Tibet and in providing humanitarian and other forms of assistance to the Tibetan people living in exile.

Finally, as we are all aware, the Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration had declared 2014 as the year for remembering the gratitude we owe to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Therefore, the Tibetan Parliament in Exile also takes this opportunity to express immense gratitude for every bit of the infinite concerns His Holiness the Dalai Lama has shown and the deeds he has accomplished for the benefit of the Buddhist faith as well as all sentient beings. And we again pray with single-minded devotion that the lord of the entire corpus of the Buddhist faith and sentient beings of the three realms remain steadfast in continuing to live for a hundred eons.

The Tibetan Parliament in Exile

Dharamshala

10th March, 2015



A minute’s mourning for the Tibetan self-immolators who have lost their lives for the cause of Tibet during the Tibetan National Uprising Day

ganizations explained that the situation in Tibet had continued to remain critical. Given this background, we would again like to make an emphatic call on the Chinese leadership to implement a policy of seeking truth from facts and

had just recently got elected to the 16th Lok Sabha, or Lower House, of the Indian Parliament, and successfully lobbied for the re-launch of the All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet, the Tibet Support Group in the Indian

Vice-President of German Bundestag praises Tibetans' Non-violent Struggle, Urges China for Talks on Tibet issue



Ms. Claudia Roth, member of Green Party & Vice Chairman of German Parliament (Bundestag) addressing the 56th Anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day

Presence of a senior German parliamentarian in Dharamsala today gave a special political significance to the Tibetan national uprising this year. The parliamentarian joined the 56th Tibetan national uprising day as a gesture of strong support and concern for the Tibetan cause, urging the international community to strengthen their support for the non-violent struggle of Tibetans to achieve genuine autonomy in their homeland. A group of Chinese supporters from the US, Australia, Taiwan and Japan also took part in the function.

"Today is really a special day for every Tibetan and a special day for human rights worldwide. We have gathered here in Dharamsala to mark the 56th anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprising. This uprising is an important chapter in Tibetan and indeed in the world history. This day has become a symbol of self determination and right to a homeland. So being with you here today is very special, emotional and touching moment for me," said Ms Claudia Roth, Vice-President of German Bundestag, in her address to tens of thousands of Tibetans on the occasion.

Ms Claudia, who visited Dharamsala on the invitation of Sikyong Dr. Lobsang

Sangay, said the world thank Tibetans for their 56 years of non-violence resistance. "Thank you for your strength, commitment, courage and an endless patience in their struggle for freedom. Because Tibetans have become a voice of hope and understanding throughout the world. Thank you Lobsang Sangay for inviting me as the friend of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people."

"10 March is a day of immense significance as it is a warning from history to commemorate the past and a day of being mindful of our responsibility for the present and a day of remembrance for a better future. Today is a day against forgetting and I am worried that the Tibetan people's struggle which has justice on its side might be forgotten by the world community. So today is a day against silence and indifference," she said.

My message to the international community is that don't forget the Tibetans as forgetting kills, she said, quoting Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel that to forget the victims is to kill them second time. We won't forget dear friends.

At the time of so many wars and dreadful crises, the Tibetans and the international community have a leader who has

throughout the world has come through a symbol of peace and reconciliation and his vision for a world without violence, oppression, hatred and exclusion.

She said the world must stand together to support Tibetans to send a strong signal to safeguard universal human rights. "The Chinese government's treatment of Tibetans is not compatible with the fundamental human rights and democracy. Tibetans are being forcefully denied their rights to self-determination, physical integrity and live and freedom to practice their religion and culture."

She attributed repressive policies pursued by the Chinese government in Tibet to suppress the language, culture, forced resettlement of Tibetans nomads, systematic control of monasteries are a provocation which worsens tension and further embitters the Tibetan people. All these forms of repression are unbearable for Tibetans.



Self-Immolations. Threats From Beijing.

Playing Politics with the Dalai Lama

By Isaac Stone Fish, 4 February,

(Foreign Policy.com)

All in a day's work for Lobsang Sangay, the Harvard-educated prime minister of the quixotic Tibetan movement in exile.

DHARAMSALA, India — These days, the Dalai Lama seems to make news mostly when world leaders decide whether or not to meet with him. On Feb. 5, the Dalai Lama will attend the annual U.S. National Prayer Breakfast — a rare victory for the globetrotting



Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay

spiritual leader of the Tibetan people, as President Barack Obama will also be in attendance. More typical is what happened to the Dalai Lama in mid-December, on the 25th anniversary of his Nobel Peace Prize, when he visited Rome for a summit of Nobel Peace laureates. He requested a meeting with Pope Francis, but the pontiff declined for what a Vatican spokesman called “obvious reasons” — i.e., the Church’s relationship with Beijing. Much of the Western world views the Dalai Lama as a superstar: He regularly addresses tens of thousands in stadiums across Europe and the United States. But Beijing sees him as a dangerous separatist (a “splittist” as the Chinese like to say), and has punished governments and agencies that engage

with him.

Tibetan exiles in Dharamsala, the remote Indian town that serves as their headquarters, also wanted to mark the anniversary of their leader’s Nobel. In the Dalai Lama’s absence, the job of master of ceremonies fell to Lobsang Sangay, the prime minister of the Tibetan government-in-exile. The Dalai Lama stepped down from his role as political head of the Tibetans in March 2011, and since then he’s been trying to unload power and responsibility — much of it to Sangay, a Harvard-trained legal scholar elected in April 2011.

On a makeshift stage in a Buddhist temple outside the Dalai Lama’s residence, the 46-year-old Sangay spoke about the bravery and courage of the Dalai Lama to an audience of a few thousand. Smiling and regal in his flowing black robe, he watched Tibetan dances and listened to long Indian speeches. If he was bored, he didn’t show it.

Time, however, is not on Tibet’s side.

If interacting internationally is getting more difficult for the Dalai Lama, it’s easy to forget how much that problem is compounded for the small, quixotic, and increasingly irrelevant Tibetan movement in exile, and for Sangay himself. There are an estimated 6.5 million Tibetans worldwide, of whom all but a few hundred thousand live inside China. Sangay won the election for prime minister with roughly 27,000 votes, including exiles — a number that seems more at home with a mayoral election in a small American city. His annual operating budget is reportedly around \$30 million — roughly the revenue Apple makes every two hours.

The Tibetan refugee population in Dharamsala, the town in the foothills of the Himalayas where the Dalai Lama made his home after fleeing China in 1959,

is just 14,000, out of a total of roughly 20,000 people. The town is growing. When I visited in December, new apartments and hotels were springing up along the mountain, and the widening of one of the town’s only roads led to traffic snarls that were bad even for India. But the numbers of Tibetans are increasing slowly, if at all. “Before 2008, there was an average of a few thousand refugees” from China arriving to Dharamsala every year, says Thubten Samphel, who runs the Dharamsala-based Tibet Policy Institute, a government think tank. “For 2014, I’ve heard we only had eight.”

A man for all seasons

Prime Minister Sangay’s challenges are many. He has to keep the door open to negotiations with China, while not seeming too pro-mainland. He has to keep his constituents happy — in Dharamsala, in Tibet, and in scattered communities across India, the European Union, and North America. When I interviewed him during my December visit, Sangay made a point of telling me that he’s been to all of the major Tibetan communities in the United States. “Maybe there’s a few Tibetans in Montana,” he added. “But I’m not counting those.”

But his main task is keeping the Tibet independence cause relevant in a world where voicing support for it can lead to stern reprisals from Beijing. The closest Sangay said he came to meeting a head of state was an encounter around 2007 at Harvard with Ma Ying-jeou, who later became the president of Taiwan — an island claimed by China, that only 21 nations still recognize as an independent country. Sangay said he has not met any heads of state: “We don’t even try; it’s too sensitive for them.”

The Dalai Lama, on the other hand, has met with dozens of heads of state and

global figures, and — despite the heavy hand of Beijing — maintains strong links with governments around the world. “The United States, because it considers Tibet a part of China, doesn’t have any official relations” with the Tibetan government-in-exile, the U.S. State Department’s Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Sarah Sewall told me. “And yet we have met repeatedly, and routinely, with the Dalai Lama, as a cultural and religious leader.”

It’s always useful to meet with His Holiness, said Sangay. (Like everyone I spoke to in Dharamsala, Sangay referred to him by that phrase.) “We talk quite regularly,” he said, comparing his relationship with the spiritual leader to that of the British prime minister: “They have this weekly luncheon with the queen.”

That’s probably overstating it. Shortly after the Nobel Prize anniversary ceremony concluded in Dharamsala, I struck up a conversation on the stage with Penpa Tsering, the Tibetan speaker of Parliament, a charismatic man with a friendly frown. When I asked about the relationship between the Dalai Lama and Sangay, Tsering said that “His Holiness is always...” — he lifted his hand high — “and we are all down here.”

The next morning, I met Sangay at his massive office overlooking Dharamsala’s green hills. A visit to the Dalai Lama’s compound earlier that morning required a thorough security check, and I was expecting a similar exercise here as well, but Sangay’s office was unguarded. An aide apologized about a scheduling miscommunication because the phones weren’t working. The elevator didn’t seem to be working either, so I took the stairs.

Behind Sangay’s desk hung a life-sized picture of the Dalai Lama, in his trademark red robe. During the anniversary ceremony, Sangay had worn a black robe; today he wore a dark suit from Joseph A. Bank, a mid-range American menswear brand. “You buy one, you get another one for free,” he told me.

A Harvard man

Sangay was born in 1968 in Darjeeling, a former British Hill Station of roughly 200,000 in the mountains in north India. Besides its eponymous tea, Darjeeling is famous for being the home of Tenzing Norgay, the Sherpa climber who, along with Sir Edmund Hillary, was the first to summit Mount Everest. Sangay, who grew up poor, was the first Tibetan to attend Harvard Law School. He received an S.J.D., a research doctorate in law, and wrote a thesis entitled: “Democracy in Distress: Is Exile Polity a Remedy? A Case Study of Tibet’s Government-in-Exile.”

Sangay spent 16 years at Harvard, most recently as a senior fellow at the law school, before campaigning for the prime minister’s position in 2011. His fancy degree, coupled with what his critics deemed “American-style campaigning,” helped propel him to victory, defeating ex-Prime Minister Tenzin Tethong, who received 37.42 percent of the vote. (A third candidate won the remaining 6.44 percent of the vote.) “He gives good sound bites, knows how to talk, and how to dress up for the media,” said a young Tibetan in Dharamsala, who asked to remain anonymous.

Tethong, who now serves as the head of the Tibetan language section for Radio Free Asia in Washington, D.C., told me that Sangay “is very capable, and he’s able to communicate well, and that’s a large part of his appeal.” He praised Sangay’s ability to translate complicated ideas into easy-to-understand slogans about the need for progress and modernization. “Of course, I thought I was the better candidate, and still think I am,” Tethong told me. The 65-year-old Tethong has decades of experience working on Tibet issues; he helped set up the first visit of the Dalai Lama to the United States in 1979, while Sangay has spent most of his professional life at Harvard.

Tsering, the Tibetan Parliament speaker, said that some of the old guard “sometimes feel a little uneasy” about Sangay’s more populist governing style. “But we talk it out.” Besides, he added, “people seem to like him —” in part because of his emphasis on education for Tibetans. “His main focus has always

been on education,” Tsering said. “Securing funds for education, sponsorship, scholarship — on those areas, he has done well.” And Sangay appears to have a good relationship with some members of Congress and the State Department. “Always great seeing Lobsang Sangay, the free leader of #Tibet,” Sen. John McCain tweeted in November 2013. Sangay has met with Sewall, who’s also an under-secretary for civilian security, democracy, and human rights, several times. “He’s an extremely earnest and energetic person,” she said.

It’s hard to know how much support Sangay receives from Tibetans inside Tibet, however. Since riots in Lhasa broke out in March 2008, it’s been extremely difficult to get foreign journalists into or information out of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, a massive, windswept plateau that’s home to about half of the Tibetans in China (the rest live mostly in neighboring provinces). In a May 2013 speech at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in Washington, Sangay said that “many artists inside Tibet have composed songs in honor of the election and my victory.” Several people told me that Tibetans inside of China have great respect and high expectations for Sangay — in no small part because the Dalai Lama publically praises him. Hanging in Sangay’s office is a Tibetan ceremonial painting known as a Thangka — with his own face on it — which he says he received from a supporter inside Tibet.

But some Tibetans in exile I spoke with feel he hasn’t done enough to engage in dialogue with the Chinese. “He’s reactive, not proactive,” the young Tibetan man told me, over dinner at an Italian restaurant in Dharamsala. “He keeps saying [to Beijing] we’re always ready to talk — but you can’t just be waiting!” he said.

His wife, a young Tibetan who also asked to speak anonymously, concurred. She criticized Sangay’s lack of response to the wave of an estimated more than 130 self-immolations that have swept Tibetan areas since 2009. Outside the Dalai Lama’s compound stands a memorial to the self-immolators, featuring protesting Tibetans subsumed inside a

rock. It's called "Burning Tibet." The government "wasn't able to do anything except pray for the deceased," she said.

Sangay has spoken up about the issue, though. In his CFR speech, Sangay said that self-immolation reflects "the desperation and determined act on the part of Tibetan people that occupation is unacceptable, repression is unbearable," but also that his administration discourages "drastic action by Tibetans, including self-immolation."

Sangay says that his policy on dealing with Beijing is the same as that of the previous Tibetan governments-in-exile. Rather than seeking independence, or making do with the status quo, the Dalai Lama in 1974 conceived of a policy known as the Middle Way Approach. It calls for "genuine autonomy" for Tibetans living in China, and allows Beijing to maintain "the security and territorial integrity of the motherland." Samphel of the Tibet Policy Institute, who thinks Sangay is "doing a wonderful job," admits that there's little the prime minister can do. "Whether China thinks it's within its interests to engage with him or not, that's for China to decide. But at the moment, it seems that they don't want anything to do with him."

Between 2002 and 2010, Beijing had nine rounds of talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama. Possibility of dialogue between the two s re-emerged in October, when the Dalai Lama indicated he was discussing with Beijing the possibility of returning to China for a visit — but that seems unlikely.

The Dalai Lama is a household name in China, owing in large part to the constant attacks on him in Chinese media. Beijing appears to think Sangay isn't worth slandering. One rare exception was a July 2012 article in the nationalistic tabloid the Global Times, which referred to him as "the so-called administrative head of the 'Tibetan government in exile.'" The Chinese Foreign Ministry didn't respond to repeated requests for comment — nor does it attempt to communicate with Sangay. But a Chinese foreign-policy expert, who asked to speak anonymously, told me that dialogue with Sangay is possible. "The

Dalai Lama has to first apologize that he committed the crime [of trying to split China] and ask for forgiveness. He has to do this first," he said. "We already give some autonomy to Tibet. But no one who asked for independence of Tibet should be entitled to autonomy."

It's hard to see how Tibet can win. "In the name of development, many things are happening," said Tsering. "Mainly the migration of Han Chinese into Tibet." The Han population inside Tibet is a very sensitive issue — there are no reliable statistics. But the percentage of Han Chinese in Tibetan areas, especially Tibet's spiritual center and capital Lhasa, is almost certainly increasing. "In another 20 to 30 years, autonomy might not even make sense," said Tsering. "I hope we will not be reduced to the status of Red Indians in America, where tourists come and take pictures of Tibetans in their natural dress."

I asked Sangay about the uphill battle of returning Tibet to the international consciousness, and the likelihood of getting major countries to press China for genuine autonomy. He told me the story of a meeting he had with Jose Ramos-Horta, the Nobel Prize-winning activist who became East Timor's first foreign minister after the country achieved independence from Indonesia in 2002. "Ramos-Horta had an invitation to speak somewhere in the southern part of the United States. Texas or something. What Ramos-Horta walked into was 'six people interested in East Timor in a cafeteria,'" said Sangay, recounting the story. "So Ramos-Horta sat down, and he had a good coffee and a good conversation." Like Gandhi, who started in South Africa, Sangay says, you have to start somewhere.

The fifteenth coming

The biggest unanswered question about the future of Tibet is what will happen when the Dalai Lama dies. At 79, he's still in excellent health; he has said that he will deal with the issue of reincarnation when he nears 90. At the Italian restaurant in Dharamsala, I asked the young Tibetan woman what would happen if the Dalai Lama passed away before 90. "He won't," she said. "He says he'll live to the age of 113." This

is presumably a reference to a prophecy by Nechung, the state oracle of Tibet, who has said the Dalai Lama will live to 113 if the Tibetans successfully "maintain morality, unity and enhance their collective merit." Sangay also seems to believe the Dalai Lama will live for a long time. "If he says he'll live until 90 — we'll take his word for it," he said. "He's very healthy."

In September 2011, the Dalai Lama released a statement laying out three possibilities for his successor: reincarnation, succession, and emanation. (More recently, he has also hinted that the line of Dalai Lamas, of which he is the fourteenth, may stop with him.) Sangay told me he favors emanation, wherein the Dalai Lama himself picks a successor while he's still alive. Beijing, however, feels that the decision is its own to make. Only Beijing "can decide on keeping, or getting rid of, the Dalai Lama's lineage, and the 14th Dalai Lama does not have the final say," Zhu Weiqun, executive vice director of the United Front Work Department, the Chinese Communist Party body believed to play a major role in Tibet policy, told the nationalist Chinese newspaper Global Times.

The Chinese foreign policy expert I spoke with concurred. "After he dies, we will find another Dalai Lama," he said. That is, someone other than Sangay, who appears quite happy about where his karma has taken him. Sangay told me that Harvard Law School mentions his name on its list of famous alumni, one that includes Barack Obama as well as Taiwanese President Ma — a fact that he said he found embarrassing. "Whoever did it, did it for the wrong reason," he told me. "I don't run a country."

The Tibetans' struggle and the living example of the Dalai Lama have become symbols of the universality of human rights all over the world

- Claudia Roth, Vice President of German Bundestag

China's super-rich communist Buddhists

January 29, 2015

By John Sudworth, BBC News,

Could China be bringing Tibetan Buddhism in from the cold? There are new signs that while a crackdown on Tibetan nationalism continues, the atheist state may be softening its position towards the religion – and even the Dalai Lama.

That a former senior Communist Party official would invite the BBC into his home might, to most foreign journalists in China, seem an unlikely prospect.

Especially if that official was rumoured to have close links to the Chinese leadership and to have worked closely with the country's security services.

But the idea that such an official would then invite the BBC to witness him praying in front of a portrait of the Dalai Lama, would seem a preposterous one. Laughable – insane even.

That, though, is exactly what Xiao Wunan did. Inside Xiao's luxury Beijing apartment, in pride of place atop his own private Buddhist shrine, sits a portrait of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, a man long reviled by the Chinese government as a dangerous separatist.

For Tibetan monks even the possession of the Dalai Lama's photograph is a risky proposition and the displaying of his portrait in monasteries is prohibited.

But there, beneath that same image sat Xiao, with a Tibetan Buddhist guru, Geshe Sonam, sitting beside him.

It's really no big deal, the 50-year-old Xiao explains. "In regard to the political problems between the Dalai Lama and China... we hardly pay any attention," he says. "It's really hard for us to judge him from that angle. As Buddhists, we only pay attention to him as part of our Buddhist practice."

Xiao was introduced to the BBC by a Chinese businessman, 36-year-old Sun Kejia – one of an unknown, but reportedly growing number of wealthy, drawn in recent years to the mysticism of Tibetan Buddhism.

The increasing popularity of religion in general in China has been well documented and is often explained in terms of China's rapid economic expansion.

Millions of Chinese today may now have the kind of wealth that previous generations could only dream of, but economic growth has been accompanied by seismic social upheaval and many of the old certainties have been swept away.

"I was once confronted with great difficulties and problems in my business," Sun says. "I felt they couldn't be overcome by human effort and that only Buddha, ghosts and God could help me."

Sun, Xiao and Geshe Sonam next to Xiao's shrine in his apartment.

Sun, Xiao and Geshe Sonam next to Xiao's shrine in his apartment. So Sun became a follower not of merchant bankers or money managers, but monks – Tibetan monks in particular. And he has indeed since earned his fortune, which he estimates at more than \$100m.

He now runs a chain of Buddhist clubs, and pays from his own pocket for Tibetan gurus like Geshe Sonam to come and preach there, giving them badly needed funds for their missions and monasteries back in Tibet. But while Sun's invited guests – businessmen, party officials and property owners – find comfort and spirituality, he finds something else.

"What I want is influence," he says.

"My friends who come here are attracted to this place. I can use the resources they bring to do my other business. From that angle, it is also my contribution for spreading Buddhism. This brings good

karma and so I get what I want." And it seems to be working. Sun invites us to meet other well-connected individuals who use his club.

Geshe Sonam (right) blesses the beads and watches of Sun (left) and his friends. Seated on the floor with Geshe Sonam is a woman who Sun says is connected through family ties to the highest echelons of Chinese politics.

She and a man she introduces as a senior official at China's National Development and Reform Commission, and who appears to be her driver, are placing watches, prayer beads and necklaces into the centre of the circle for Geshe Sonam to bless. A luxury banquet follows the religious ceremony, and later the monk admits to being a bit uncomfortable with the whole thing.

"No matter how good the food is, it's still just food," he says. "Sometimes it takes so long and I really feel I'm wasting my time. I become a bit anxious. But this can also be a way to preach. If I don't go here, or don't go there, would it be better for me to just stay in a cave and never come out?"

Buddhist monks need the money and dozens, perhaps hundreds, are now prospecting for funds in China's big cities.

Given that China is still, officially, an atheist country, that may seem odd, especially because of the links between Buddhism and political activism in Tibet. China however is not only allowing this Buddhist evangelism to take place but may now be actively encouraging it.

There have been reports that President Xi Jinping is – relatively speaking – more tolerant of religion than his predecessors, in the hope that it will help fill China's moral vacuum and stem social unrest.

And there have also long been rumours of the Chinese elite have been interested in Buddhism, including Xi Jinping's wife, Peng Liyuan.

The president's father, Xi Zhongxun, a Communist Party revolutionary and leader, is himself reported to have had a good relationship with the Dalai Lama before he fled China in 1959.

And that's perhaps where Xiao Wunan comes in, because another unsubstantiated rumour has it that his father was also close to the president's father.

Much of this is speculation, of course, but the important question is whether Xiao's permission for the BBC to witness him worshipping at a Buddhist altar is meant to send a signal.

Xiao had yet another surprise up his sleeve, handing the BBC some video footage of a meeting he had with the Dalai Lama in India – his place of exile – in 2012. Formal talks were last held in 2010 but even they were only between representatives of the two sides.

Xiao's footage is rare evidence of face-to-face talks between the Dalai Lama himself and someone close to the Chinese government.

There were at the time a few unconfirmed newspaper reports about it in the Indian press, full of speculation about the significance, but there was never any official confirmation that it took place – until the BBC received the video.

At one point in the conversation the Dalai Lama tells Xiao he is concerned about the activities of fake monks in China. "I am also concerned about this," Xiao replies. "Therefore, we are really in need of a Buddhist leader and that's why I think your holiness can play such an important role."

Elsewhere, the Dalai Lama complains about China's whole approach to Tibet.

"Let's be honest, the Chinese government has been thinking like a crazy person on their Tibetan policy," he says.

"They haven't been facing up to it. This

tough policy is not beneficial to China or to Tibetans and also gives China a very bad international image."

Xiao Wunan's exact role when he was in government is unclear – "just call me a former high official", he says. He also insists that he was not acting as a Chinese government envoy when he met the Dalai Lama.

He says he was in India in his capacity as the executive vice chairman of an organisation called the Asia Pacific Exchange and Cooperation Foundation (APECF).

APECF is often described as being backed by the Chinese government and is involved in some pretty substantial influence building, including a multi-billion-dollar investment in developing a Buddhist site in Nepal.

The Dalai Lama has lived in exile in India since he was forced to flee Tibet in 1959.

The Dalai Lama has lived in exile in India since he was forced to flee Tibet in 1959.

Either way, it seems unlikely that any former senior Chinese official would be able to visit the Dalai Lama in India, or for that matter be filmed worshipping in front of his picture, without some pretty powerful backing in Beijing.

So what might it all mean? I put this question to Robbie Barnett, a Tibet specialist at Columbia University in New York. Barnett advises against reading too much into Xiao Wunan's meeting with the Dalai Lama, but says it is nonetheless symbolic.

"I can detect no politically significant activities in that meeting," he says, "but it is significant as a symbolic indicator, a glimpse of a shift that might be under consideration in, or near, the policy-making heights of the Chinese system."

He suggests that Xiao's confidence in releasing the video does not necessarily mean he has the backing of the whole of the Chinese leadership, but that he probably has the backing of a powerful faction within it, at the very least.

"We know it is meant to symbolise something," Barnett says. "They want us to see that something might be happening, that a debate may be taking place."

There can be little doubt that the ban on the portrait of the Dalai Lama and the tightening of Chinese control over the past two decades have served to heighten tensions in Tibet.

Throughout that period there have been talks between the two sides, both formal and informal, but little has changed.

In recent months, however, some reports suggest that the unofficial dialogue has become more substantial, even raising the possibility of the Dalai Lama being allowed to return from exile for a historic visit.

So, should the release of the video by Xiao Wunan be seen as evidence that Xi Jinping really is changing China's approach to Tibetan Buddhism, or is it simply a smokescreen, designed to give the appearance of a softening line, while the harsh crackdown in Tibet continues?

If nothing else, Xiao Wunan and his Dalai Lama shrine appear to be proof that well-connected members of the Chinese elite are now taking an active interest in Tibetan Buddhism – and that monks are now being given license to encourage them.

"They may not be able to buy their way into Nirvana," Geshe Sonam says, "but in Buddhism, you can get more karmic reward the more money you spend on rituals."

There is absolutely no change in our resolve to seek a negotiated solution through the middle way approach, which is mutually beneficial to China and Tibet, as a part of our efforts to resolve the current critical situation in Tibet

- Penpa Tsering Speaker of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

Xi Jinping: the Great Balancer

By Thubten Samphel*



Thubten Samphel

There is no shortage of commentators trying to figure out what China's rise means to the international system. Lately their focus has shifted to Xi Jinping, the party secretary and the country's president, whose ability to consolidate his power within the party structure has been swift and unrelenting. What does a strong country with a strongman once again at the helm mean for China, the neighbourhood and the world?

Before we try to come to grips to these questions, Xi Jinping's rise within the ranks of the party is unprecedented, even by the party's own hoary history. Deng Xiaoping's eventual rise to power was in part aided by public revulsion at the carnage brought about by Mao's Cultural Revolution. Chinese public opinion then was solidly for Deng and against the reviled Gang of Four.

Xi Jinping does not have this advantage. Nor does he have the advantage of being anointed by Deng Xiaoping, China's last true revolutionary, as he did with Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. Their appointment to China's top job was grudgingly respected by even those senior leaders who felt slighted by being superseded by younger and less experienced hands. At a conclave of the party central committee, Xi Jinping received

the most votes as the most promising candidate to succeed Hu Jintao. Even this form of inner party democracy did not burnish Xi's credentials for the top post in the eyes of some leaders. Challengers to Xi, Bo Xilai and Zhou Yongkang, were brought down.

Now that Xi Jinping has down away with his most immediate rivals, what should he do? There are many pressing issues that he and his team need to address. A slowing economy, rising inequality, falling real estate prices, polluted environment and growing water scarcity are some. Of course, there is Xi's anti-corruption campaign, which is still going full steam, and to which according to some reports, he's staking his life and reputation. Some observers call this campaign Xi's great purge, reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution, Mao's war on his own party. Other observers who are less cynical say that if corruption is not eliminated, it would destroy the party and China's last chance for its great rejuvenation. This explains Xi's sense of urgency at revamping the party and burnishing its image in the eyes of the Chinese public. And this anti-graft campaign seems to be going down very well with the public.

By most accounts Xi's track record till now is glowing. His two predecessors, Presidents Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, left behind a dysfunctional party of competing vested interests overseeing a free-for-all economy whose profits, or at least some of it, seem to have gone in the pockets of the overseers. Xi, by accumulating enough power in his hands, wants to change this predatory nature of the Chinese state. And he may well succeed.

But one area where Xi needs to tread cautiously is the balance he strikes between keeping the economy humming and the military in the barracks. Any military adventurism on the part of China, especially in the East and South Chi-

na Seas, might prove disastrous for the country's slowing economy. Till now the world and China believed that the country's economic boom is a one-way street, Chinese munificence benefiting all. That was true. And China used this economic clout to the full hilt. Any country whose head of state dared meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama was punished. Scholars call this the Dalai Lama effect on international trade. Trade ties were either cut off or suspended for a limited period. This worked well with countries which had not invested heavily in the mainland.

However, any provocative action in the East and South China Seas might prove disastrous for China. In November last, The Economist magazine carried a news item which said that 88,000 Taiwanese companies employ about 15.6 million Chinese workers in the mainland. 23,000 Japanese companies operating in the mainland employ about another 11 million. South Korea employs about 2 million. If you add to this number other companies in the troubled neighbourhood which employ Chinese workers in the mainland, the total number of Chinese in the payroll of neighbouring non-Chinese companies is about 30 million. That's far more than the total population of either Nepal or Taiwan.

In case of full military action in the region, these companies would pull out of China. Troubling signs are there already. Even in peace time, Japanese investment in China dropped from \$13.5 billion in 2012 to \$9.1 billion in 2013. 30 million relatively well-salaried Chinese workers suddenly out of jobs is a task even the redoubtable Xi Jinping might find hard it to handle.

**Thubten Samphel is the director of the Tibet Policy Institute, a research centre of the Central Tibetan Administration*

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's two days visit at Palpung Sherabling Monastery Upper Bhattu, HP, India - March 12, 2015



*A view of Palpung Sherabling Monastery before His Holiness the Dalai Lama's arrival in Upper Bhattu, HP, India on March 11, 2015.
Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL*



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking at Lungrik Jamphel Ling Institute at Palpung Sherabling Monastery in Upper Bhattu, HP, India on March 12, 2015.
Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL*

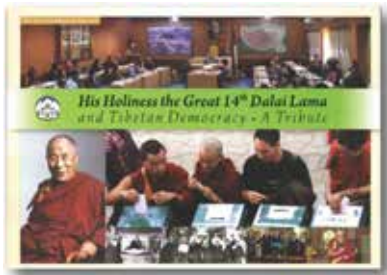


Tai Situ Rinpoche making ritual offerings during the Long Life Prayer for His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Lungrik Jamphel Ling Institute at Palpung Sherabling Monastery in Upper Bhattu, HP, India on March 12, 2015. Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL



Members of the Central Tibetan Administration and special guests listening to monks debating during His Holiness the Dalai Lama visit to Palpung Sherabling Monastery in Upper Bhattu, HP, India on March 11, 2015. Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

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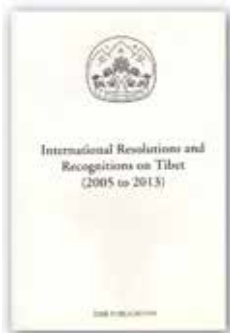
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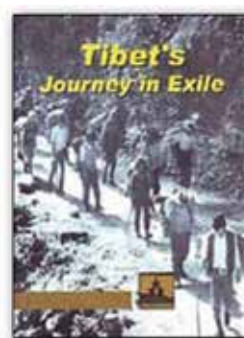
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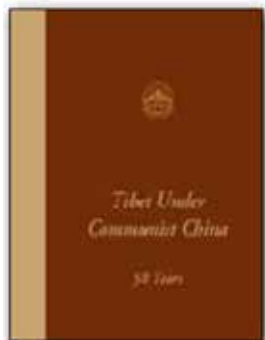
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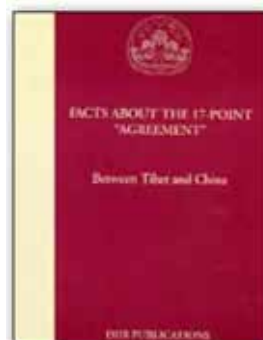


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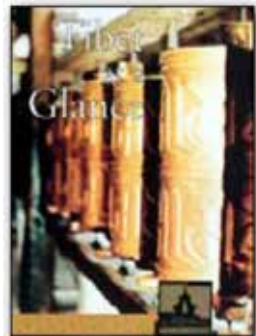


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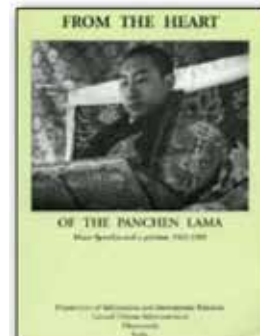
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