



TIBETAN BULLETIN

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NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2014

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Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay and Himachal Pradesh minister Dr. Sudhir Sharma inaugurating the International Himalayan festival at TIPA on 10 December 2014.



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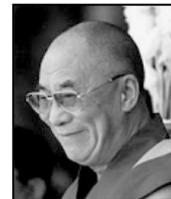
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DIIR releases books on His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's leadership

The chief minister of Himachal Pradesh Virbhadra Singh released three books published by the Department of Information and International Relations on the celebration of 25th anniversary of Nobel Peace Prize and the year of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 10 December.

The books give insight into the key moments of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's contribution to the sustenance of the Tibetan cause since he assumed the spiritual and political leadership of Tibet at the tender age of 16.

In her foreword to the book, DIIR Kalon Dicki Chhoyang wrote: "His legacy is multifold, but the key achievement is his success in shepherding the Tibetan nation from a centuries-old traditional system of government to a functioning democracy in exile."

"As a young democracy, the Tibetan community in exile and its governing administration, the Central Tibetan Administration, is a work in progress and a collective responsibility. As we carry out our responsibilities to strengthen our democratic system, we have been blessed with a solid foundation to build upon through His Holiness the Dalai Lama's vision and unwavering faith in his people's capacity to overcome adversity, and march forward with changing times," said DIIR Kalon Dicki Chhoyang.

Two books are in English language and one in Tibetan. The book titled 'His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama and Tibetan Democracy- A Tribute' has a chronology of the democratic reforms initiated by His Holiness for Tibet, pictures of his meetings with many world leaders and four essays written by noted

personalities like Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, Kalon Trisur Prof Samdhong Rinpoche, Mr O.P.Tandon and Mr Thubten Samphel.

The book in English titled 'His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet- Souvenir' is the fourth edition updated with the latest information. It contains 116 books authored by His Holiness, his meetings with world leaders from 1954/55 till 2014, 33 Kalachakra initiations, foreign visits and list of 151 awards and honorary conferments presented to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The book in Tibetan language titled 'Evolution of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's leadership in exile' provides key achievements of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's leadership in exile from 1959 till the devolution of his political power to the an elected leadership in 2011.

Three Tibetans set themselves on fire against China in December

Three Tibetans, Sangye Khar, 34, Tsephe Kyi, 19, and Ven. Kelsang Yeshe, 32, set themselves on fire in protest against the Chinese government's repressive policies in Tibet on 16, 22 and 23 December respectively.

With the three latest self-immolations in December, at least 11 Tibetans have burned themselves this year taking the total self-immolation toll inside Tibet to 135 since 2009.

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the democratically elected political leader of the Tibetan people, has repeatedly urged the Chinese authorities in Tibet to address the genuine grievances of the Tibetan people to alleviate their sufferings.

He has said that the blame as well as the solution for the self-immolations lies with the Chinese government and has urged the Chinese government to end its political repression, religious perse-

cution, cultural assimilation, economic marginalization and environmental destruction in Tibet which remain the main causes of the Tibetan self-immolation protests.

The CTA has also consistently appealed to the Tibetan people inside Tibet to refrain from resorting to drastic actions including self-immolations.

China sentences two Tibetan monks to prison

Two Tibetan monks, Lobsang Tempa and Lobsang Gyatso, have been sentenced to two and three years in prison respectively by a Chinese court in Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (incorporated into China's Sichuan Province).

Lobsang Tempa, a 19-year-old Tibetan monk, who was arrested for staging a protest against the Chinese government in April this year, was sentenced to two years in jail by the Barkham Intermediate People's Court on 7 November.

Lobsang Gyatso, 20, was sentenced to three years imprisonment on similar charges. He held a peaceful protest against the Chinese government on 2 April 2014. He raised slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

He was arrested by Chinese authorities for the protest a few days later in April this year from his monastery. He was not heard from till his sentence in November this year.

The repressive policies of the Chinese government inside Tibet have so far led to the arrests and imprisonment of thousands of Tibetans, who have resorted to peaceful protests to express their grievances.

The Tibetans arrested were severely beaten and in most cases, they were detained without any access to legal intervention in complete violation of their basic fundamental rights.

DIIR Secretary praises role of Tibet Support Groups

Mr Tashi Phuntsok, the Secretary for Information of the Department of Information and International Relations, said the Tibet Support Groups have played a vital role in strengthening the Tibetan freedom struggle.

Speaking at the Steering Committee meeting of the International Tibet Network, a global coalition of over 180 Tibet support groups, in London on 31 October, Secretary Tashi Phuntsok said the situation in Tibet remains tense with the self-immolation by more than 130 Tibetans in protest against China's political repression, religious suppression, economic marginalisation and environmental destruction. "Tibet is, in all aspects, a giant prison. Impinging on their dignity and life on daily basis, Tibetans in Tibet suffer constant indignity and fear," he said.

He further said: "The tremendous role of Tibet support movement in bringing about immense support for Tibet in the last few decades is well-known. The movement has brought about a robust-

ness that has greatly strengthened the Tibetan struggle. His Holiness the Dalai Lama considers the TSG movement as the Fourth Refuge of the Tibetans. No other recognition will be higher than this sincere appreciation of the work of the TSGs."

"In the recent years TSGs have undertaken innumerable campaigns and impressive rallies nationally and internationally. The impact has been far reaching and countries across the world have witnessed the public support for the Tibetan issue."

He expressed hope for support from the Tibet Support Groups towards the essential priorities of the Tibetan Administration to revitalise the youth outreach, to create more awareness of MWA and to expand on the Chinese outreach.

The DIIR Information secretary Mr. Tashi Phuntsok also participated in the All Party Parliamentary Group's meeting at Portcullis House, Westminster London on 29 October.

The Secretary also met British Parliamentarians and Tibet supporters during his visit to the UK. He met Mr Fabian Hamilton, Member of Parliament from the Labour Party at the Office of Tibet on 3 November.

During their meeting, Secretary Tashi Phuntsok reiterated the Middle Way Approach (MWA) as a pragmatic approach to ensure a lasting and meaningful solution for the issue of Tibet and expressed the Central Tibetan Administration's firm commitment to resolve the issue of Tibet through dialogue. He requested Mr. Hamilton to find ways of raising the issue of Tibet in the British parliament.

In the afternoon, the Secretary met the board members of UK Tibet Support Groups at the Office of Tibet. He explained to them the essential priorities of the Tibetan Administration to revitalise youth outreach, to create more awareness of the Middle Way Policy and to expand outreach to the Chinese community.

Conference on Tibet, Russia, India And Mongolia Held in Moscow

The Russian Academy of Sciences' branch in Moscow of the Institute of Oriental Studies organised a Round-Table Conference on "Historical and Spiritual Relations of Tibet with Russia, India and Mongolia" in the capital of Russia on 12 November. The chief organiser of the Round-Table, Dr. Tatiana L. Shaumian, announced that it was dedicated to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, as Tibetans observe 2014 as the "Year of His Holiness the Dalai Lama"

Dr. Shaumian welcomed the scholars and guests from several cities of Russia and briefly introduced the importance of the conference. It was opened by the Deputy Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Such Round-Table Conference on Tibet, Russia, India and Mongolia was held first time in the capital of Russia, according to Dr. Shaumian.

Telo Tulku Rinpoche, Shajian (Head Lama of Kalmyk Buddhists, gave his speech on "The Dalai Lama and the Post-Soviet Era", touching on the spiritual connection between the Dalai Lama and traditionally Buddhists in three Republics – Buryatia, Kalmykia and Tuva.

Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Russia and CIS, Dr. Nawang Rabgyal, while expressing the deep appreciation to the Institute for organising the conference, presented his paper on "A Brief Survey of Tibetan-Russian Relations from 17th to 21st Centuries", focusing on historical, spiritual, cultural and political aspects of relations.

It was followed by the presentation of paper by Buryat nun scholar, Dr. I.S. Urbanaeva on "Comparative Aspects of the Formation of Tibetan and Chinese Tradi-

tions of Buddhism in the context of the Problem of Authentic Buddhism".

Geshe Ngawang Thugje of FPMT spoke on "Buddhism and Science". Prof. S. Y. Lepekhov delivered his paper on "Some Problem of Preservation of the Tibetan Culture and Return of Buddhism to India".

Dr. Andrey A. Terentyev, Editor of Buddhism in Russia and H.H. the Dalai Lama's translator during the visits to Russia in 1991-95, spoke on his experience and observation of "Meeting with the Dalai Lama".

During lunch break, an excursion was arranged to the Tibetan Collections in the Institute. Then continued the presentation of papers by several scholars. Dr. Sergei Kuzmin, a distinguished Tibet scholar.

Tibet Museum attracts thousands of visitors at Nainital Autumn Festival

Thousands of local Indians and tourists thronged Tibet Museum's photo exhibition during the four-day long Nainital Autumn Festival also known as Shar-dotsav – 2014, from 11 – 14 November.

Besides attracting local residents of the city, the exhibition also saw the small community of Tibetan refugee in Nainital coming together to see the rare photo exhibition. The exhibition was organised by the Tibet Museum of the Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration as

part of “2014 – Year of His Holiness the Dalai Lama” programme, and facilitated by Nainital Tibetan Refugee Foundation and its president Mr. Pema Sithar.

Over 70 photo panels featuring His Holiness the Dalai Lama's three commitments in life, the historic relations between India and Tibet, and extensive photographic and textual information on the causes of the self-immolation inside Tibet, were displayed during the festival.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Ms.

Sarita Arya, Member of Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Secretary of Uttarakhand on 11 November 2014. Ms. Sarita Arya was very appreciative of the photo exhibition and the Tibetan administration's initiative to educate and inform Indians about Tibet's history, culture and the present situation inside Tibet. She also called for more such informative exhibition in other cities in Uttarakhand.

The exhibition was covered by leading national dailies like Amar Ujala, Dianik Jagran and Hindustan Times.

Sikyong encourages Tibetans to invest in education

Addressing Tibetans in Kunphenling settlement in Ravangla in Sikkim on 2 November, Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay underscored the need to channel our efforts to education to realise the full potential and aspirations of the Tibetan people.

The Sikyong spoke about the policies and works carried out by the 14th Kashag since the devolution of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's political authority to an elected leadership in 2011. He said the Middle-Way policy of the CTA for resolving the Tibet issue has been get-

ting increasing support from the international community.

Sikyong said education is an indispensable factor for sustaining and strengthening the Tibetan community and urged the parents to make education of their children a top priority. He urged students to study hard and to avail various scholarships offered by the education department of the Central Tibetan Administration.

He said Tibetans should remain grateful to India for their magnanimity and sup-

port for the last 50 years in exile.

Speaking about the Dolgyal issue, Sikyong said allegations of Dolgyal followers against His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration are completely baseless.

Following the public talk, Sikyong held a meeting with local Tibetan authorities. Sikyong also addressed students and faculty members at the National Institute of Technology Sikkim at their invitation. He said education is not only for livelihood, but also to serve the community.

Eight Tibetans sentenced to varying prison terms over self-immolation links

Eight Tibetans from Meruma, Ngaba county, (incorporated into China's Sichuan Province) were sentenced to five years in prison by the Ngaba intermediate people's court for their alleged involvement in Kunchok Tseten's self-immolation protest last year. The court passed the verdict on 4 October.

The eight Tibetans including Dolma Tso, a mother of 12 year old daughter was sentenced to 3 years in prison. Others include Konme who was sentenced to 3 years while Gephel was sentenced to 2 years in prison. Five unidentified Tibetans have also been sentenced to five years.

Dolma Tso from Meruma, along with 20 other Tibetans were arrested by Chinese authorities on 3 December last year. They were accused of instigating Kunchok Tseten to self-immolate at Serde village.

Although some of them were released later, ten people have been kept in detention for eleven months including Dolma Tso. They were forced to undergo severe torture and beatings during their detention.

At a press conference organised by the Gu-Chu-Sum movement at McLeod Ganj yesterday, Kungam, brother of

Dolma Tso, told media persons that Dolma Tso's generosity and kind nature led her to lift the charred body of Kunchok Tseten into the vehicle after his self-immolation. This simple humanitarian act have been twisted to fit the politically motivated charges of the Chinese government, he said.

“She didn't murder Kunchok Tseten. He died out of self-immolation. When she came to pick his body up, he was already dead. She simply lifted his body up and put it into the vehicle. She didn't committed any murder at all. At the time, I was the only person there. That's why she helped him” Kungam said.

Tibet discussed during EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights

The European Union raised with China the denial of human rights in Tibet during the 33rd round of EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights in Brussels.

The one-day meeting held on 8 December discussed the rights of minorities especially in Tibet and Xinjiang. Freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, the due process of law, arbitrary detention, and the death penalty were discussed between the EU and Chinese officials.

Also the imprisonment of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti, the Mongolian activist Hada, Nobel Laureate Liu Xiabo, Gao Yu, Pu Zhiqiang, Xu Zhiyong, and Gao Zhisheng were raised at the meeting by the EU officials.

The Chinese delegation also met EU Special Representative Lambrinidis on 8 December.

In a press statement issued at the end of meeting by the EU, it said that the

dialogue allowed the two sides to have a detailed exchange of views on a wide range of human rights issues.

The EU High Representative Federica Mogherini re-emphasized that human rights is universal in her Human Rights Day, 10 December 2014 statement. She said that the theme for this year's International Human Rights Day – Human Rights 365 – “reflects the aspiration that each one of us, everywhere, at all times, is entitled to the full range of human rights.”

French city flies Tibetan flag to honour DIIR Kalon's visit

Begles, a city in south western France hoisted the Tibetan national flag in front of their town hall to honour the visit of DIIR Kalon Dicki Chhoyang during her six-day visit to France. She was received at the city by the Mayor and member of French Parliament Mr. Noel Mamere.

During her visit, Kalon visited Bordeaux, Toulouse, Lavaur, Paris and Grenoble where she attended public conferences, met parliamentarians as well as Tibet support groups, and addressed the local Tibetan community members.

During her meeting with the French elected representatives, Kalon Dicki Chhoyang underlined the importance to strengthen awareness about the situation inside Tibet, particularly among the youth. She also discussed ways to promote the policy of Middle Way Approach that seeks to resolve the issue of Tibet through dialogue based on a non-violent and peaceful method.

The French deputies and elected members of municipal council showed their keen interest in furthering the just cause of Tibet and assured their continued support.

Kalon Dicki Chhoyang was also invited at the Institute of Political Science of the University of Bordeaux, to give a talk on the situation inside Tibet.

More than one hundred students and invitees attended the talk where she spoke on the genesis of the Tibetan struggle and the solution, in the form of Middle Way Approach of the Central Tibetan Administration. The talk, organised by Political Science's student body of the University, was followed by a question/answer session.

Kalon Dicki Chhoyang met with the members of the Tashi Delek Bordeaux, a local Tibet Support Group and thanked

them for their support and urged them to continue lending their hands in disseminating the true information about the situation inside Tibet and the position of the Central Tibetan Administration, to counter the Chinese government's propaganda on Tibet.

During her visit to France, DIIR Kalon also gave a public address to the local Tibetan community on 10 December coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace prize on His Holiness the Dalai Lama.



Kalon Dicki Chhoyang of the Department of Information and International Relations, with the Mayor and member of French Parliament Mr. Noel Mamere at the Town Hall of Begles, close to France's south west city of Bordeaux.

Sikyong speaks on “Enduring Peace in South Asia” at India Ideas Conclave

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the elected political head of the Tibetan people, attended the three-day India Ideas Conclave 2014 at Goa from 19-21 December.

The inaugural session of the conclave was attended by Shri Manohar Parrikar, Union Minister of Defence, Shri Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister of Railways, Shmt. Nirmala Sitaraman, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Shri. Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Power and Energy, Shri Jayant Sinha, Minister of Finance, Shri. Laxmikant Parsekar, Chief Minister of Goa; and Ms. Tulsi Gabbard, Congresswoman from the US.

The keynote address of the conclave was given by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Speaking at the plenary session on “Enduring Peace in South Asia” with former Prime Minister of Bhutan, Dasho Jigme Thinley, Sri Lankan Ambassador Prasad

and moderated by former Ambassador G Parthasarthy, Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, stated that Tibet is key for enduring peace in South Asia. He made the case based on spiritual, historical, geopolitical and environmental factors.

“Buddhism was introduced to Tibet by the highly acclaimed Indian masters of the Nalanda tradition. A culture of peace prevailed coinciding with the pacification of the military empire of Tibet. Historically Tibet maintained a neutral status, and at times followed an isolationist and hermetic policy,” Sikyong said.

“However, Tibet was caught in the geopolitics of the Great Game and was occupied by China in 1950. The occupation brought China and India, the two largest populated countries of the world, face to face for the first time in history. In 1962 India-China war broke out. Since then tensions remained between the two countries with border incursions

occurring every year.”

“Environmentally, Tibet also known as the third pole is the main source of ten major rivers of Asia and the plateau affects the climate and monsoon patterns in South and South-east Asia. The Middle Way Approach of the Central Tibetan Administration is a win-win proposition for both China and Tibet,” Sikyong said.

The conclave, organised by the state government of Goa and India Foundation, was attended by over 250 eminent participants from around the world with parliamentarians, diplomats, journalists, educationists, security experts, and former heads of government of Jordan, Netherlands, Slovenia, and Lithuania.

Ms. Sushma Swaraj, Foreign Minister of India and Ms. Mridula Sinha, Governor of Goa gave the valedictory address at the conclave, with Pujya Swami Dayanand Saraswati as the Convenor.

Tibetan MPs Urge Indian lawmakers to revive Parliamentary Forum for Tibet

A 10-member Tibetan Parliamentary delegation following its week-long Tibet advocacy campaign in Delhi revived the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet (APPFT). The campaign began from 7-15 December, and saw the Tibetan delegation calling upon 100 Indian lawmakers from 31 major political parties including a former Prime Minister and former Union ministers, former Speakers, a Chief Minister and former Chief Ministers and several Party leaders.

On 15 Dec, a dinner reception was organised at the Shangrila Hotel, in honor of the Indian political leaders and the formal revival of the All Party Parliamentary Forum for Tibet (APPFT) being initiated with the unanimous approval of Shri Shanta Kumar, a former Union Minister and a former Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh as the Convener of the Forum.

30 Indian MPs from 28 major political parties attended the Dinner Reception

and extended their overwhelming support for the APPFT. Speaker Penpa Tsering, Sikyong Lobsang Sangay, Representative Kungo Tempa Tsering, Tibetan Parliament members and the staff of TPPRC and ITCO attended the Dinner meeting.

Earlier, Speaker Penpa Tsering addressed the gathering of the Indian lawmakers on the Tibet situation in general and the history of APPFT and the importance of its revival. Mr. Tsering further urged the Indian leaders to bolster their Tibet advocacy in the Indian Parliament and various international platforms through a revitalized APPFT Forum. This was followed by Shri Shanta Kumar addressing the gathering with an acceptance speech.

Since the time of great Indian leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Loknayak Jai Prakash Narayan, Shri M.C. Chagla, Acharya J.B. Kripalani, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhaya, Baba Sa-

heb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar and many others, Indian parliamentarians have vehemently raised their voice in the Indian Parliament and outside, against the Chinese aggression on Tibet.

Support for Tibet culminated in the formation of All Party Parliamentary Forum for Tibet in the 1970s under the leadership of Shri M.C. Chagla. Since then besides raising the issue of Tibet in various international forums and organizing and participating in World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet (WPCT), APPFT had also successfully facilitated His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s address to the Indian Parliamentarians in the Parliament House Annexe. APPFT is revived every five years following the Lok Sabha elections and new members inducted in the Forum as required.

Former Union Minister Shri Yashwant Sinha was the former Convener of APPFT supported by leaders of various political parties as its co-convener and core committee members.

Tibetans celebrate 25th anniversary of the Conferment of Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness the Dalai Lama



Shri Virbhadra Singh, chief minister of Himachal Pradesh and dignitaries at the celebration to mark the 25th anniversary of the conferment of Nobel Peace Prize to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay delivering the Kashag's statement on 10 December 2014.

Thousands of Tibetans and Tibet supporters gathered at Tsuk-la Khang to mark the 25th anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The celebration was honoured by the gracious presence of Mr. Virbhadra Singh, the honorable chief minister of Himachal Pradesh who was in Dharamshala to attend the winter session of the state legislative assembly.

Addressing the joyous occasion, the chief minister exclaimed that his family has had a long historical relationship with the Tibetan people since the time of the 5th Dalai Lama. He expressed his happiness for the invitation and paid his deep reverence to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He referred to His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a symbol of true spiritual guru, who works for the Tibetan people as well as for world peace. He concluded his speech with best wishes for a quick resolution of the Tibet issue.

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay the political leader of the Tibetan people, in his address at the occasion, said that the celebration was not only for the Tibet-

ans in-exile but for the Tibetans in Tibet as well. He said that His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is the life and soul of Tibet and the Tibetan people, hence the 14th Kashag announced the observation of 2014 as the year of Gratitude to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Sikyong mentioned that the CTA takes deep pride in its democratic form of administration, a legacy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's leadership.

Sikyong also added that the Middle Way Approach, the official policy of the Tibetan administration to resolve the issue of Tibet is a win-win solution for both China and Tibet, and the best way to solve Tibet's issue is to have dialogue with the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

“His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, who regards himself as a simple Buddhist monk, continues to prove himself to be a shining beacon of peace, non-violence and compassion to millions of people across the world. Through the decades, His Holiness has relentlessly endeavoured to achieve his three commitments: promotion of basic human values, inter-religious harmony, and preservation of

Tibet's peaceful and non-violent Buddhist culture”, Sikyong mentioned in his statement.

As 10 December is also marked as the International Human Rights Day, Sikyong, on behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration prayed for the Tibetans inside Tibet who continues to suffer untold brutalities under Chinese authorities. "Since February 2009, 132 Tibetans have self-immolated themselves against the brutal invasion of Tibet. Out of which 113 Tibetans have died, his statement said.

Sikyong reiterated that the Chinese govt. should release Tibetan political prisoners including the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, Tulku Tenzin Delek, Jhadrel Rinpoche, and lot more.

Sikyong thanked the people and the Government of India for their continued support to Tibet including the recent announcement of Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy 2014.

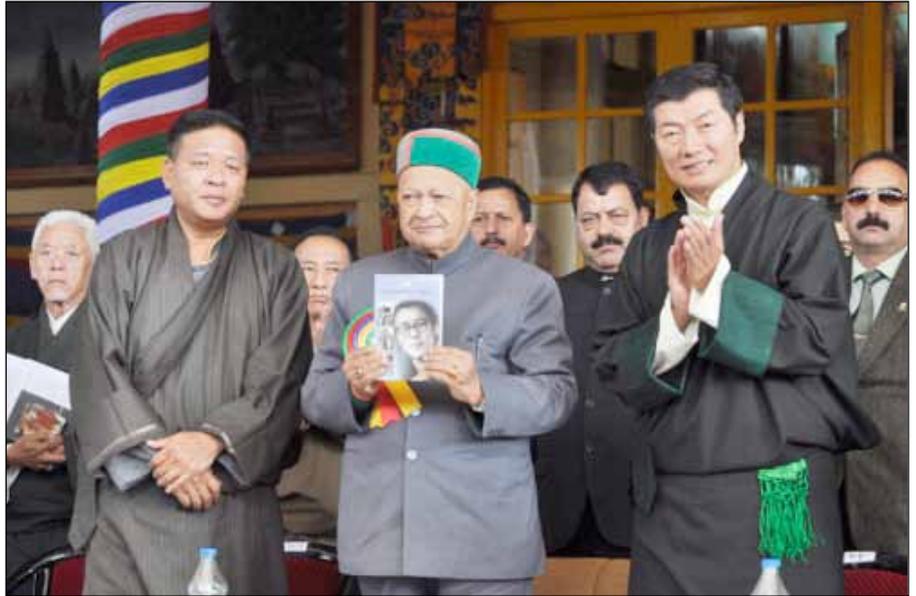
Mr. Penpa Tsering, the Speaker of Tibetan Parliament paid his deep gratitude and sincere thanks to the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh for his gracious presence and the people of the state for all the support bestowed on the Tibetan people.

He said that His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is the true legacy of Ahimsa, proposed by the great Mahatma Gandhi. He took this opportunity to congratulate child activists Mr. Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai for their contribution in child's rights and winning the Nobel Peace Prize 2014. The speaker added that, in this world of violence and harm, there is a great need of work to be done for peace and liberation.

Extolling His Holiness the Dalai Lama's contribution to peace and harmony around the world, he quoted from the acceptance speech made by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 10 December, 1989.

“I am very happy to be here with you today to receive the Nobel Prize for Peace. I feel honoured, humbled and deeply moved that you should give this important prize to a simple monk from Tibet. I am no one special. But, I believe the prize is a recognition of the true values of altruism, love, compassion and non-violence which I try to practise, in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha and the great sages of India and Tibet.”

The Speaker of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative assembly Mr. Brij Bihari Lal Butail also spoke at the occasion. He said it is a matter of great pride for Himachalis to have His Holiness the Dalai Lama reside in Mcloed Ganj, Himachal Pradesh. He expressed his appreciation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s love towards India and the world at large. He called His Holiness the Dalai Lama an apostle of peace, not only for the Tibetan people, but also for the entire mankind.



Shri Virbhadra Singh, Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh launching the book on His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the celebration.

The celebration concluded with the launch of several books on His Holiness the Dalai Lama, cultural performances

by Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, and distribution of sweets and refreshments to the public.

International Himalayan Festival at Dharamshala



A cultural troupe from Mongolia performing a traditional dance.

A two-day International Himalayan festival to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness the Dalai Lama was held at the Tibeta Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA) on 10 December.

This event holds significance since it is a sign of international recognition to His Holiness the Dalai Lama initiatives towards restoring peace and harmony in the world.

The Himalayan Festival was first started in early 90's to commemorate the Nobel peace prize awarded to His Holiness the

Dalai Lama. However, the festival discontinued due to financial constraints.

The festival resumed this year due to financial support from the state government and the CTA.

Mr. Sudhir Sharma, minister for Urban Development and tourism along with Sikyong Dr. Lob-sang Sangay of the Central Tibetan Administration inaugurated the festival at the TIPA.

Cultural troupes from various Himalayan countries like Bhutan, Mongolia, Kalmykia, and 7 Himalayan states of India namely Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim participated in the festival.

The Tibet Museum of the Department of Information and International Relations also participated in the exhibition on Indo-Tibetan relations at the festival.

Tibet Festival at Delhi

The Tibetan community in Delhi organised a 5-day Festival of Tibet at Dilli Haat, Delhi from 10 December. The festival is a part of 2014 - Year of His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama, announced by the Tibetan Administration.

The festival is co-sponsored by the Karnataka State Tourism Board and the Central Tibetan Administration based in Dharamshala.Smt.

Sheila Dikshit, former Chief Minister of Delhi inaugurated the festival. Other dignitaries include Mr. Pema Chhinjor, Kalon for the Department of Religion and Culture, Mr. Tempa Tsering, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and Mr. C.G Suprasanna, Joint resident commissioner of Karnataka Bhavan, Delhi.

The aim of the festival is to showcase the different aspects of Tibetan culture including Tibetan dances, crafts, and artefacts.

Exhibitions include a stall by Tibet Museum, Sand Mandalas, Tibetan arts & crafts etc..

Chinese Intellectuals' Message on the 25th anniversary of Nobel Peace Prize Awarded to His Holiness the Dalai Lama

From International Campaign for Tibet's website

To mark the 25th anniversary of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama on December 10, 2014, several Chinese writers, lawyers, scholars and political activists have sent messages highlighting his contribution. These have been published on Chinese news websites, including in Boxun. ICT has translated four of them into English.

The Dalai Lama has great love in his heart, with three aspects: one is his selflessness, with over half a century of endlessly striving for Tibetan rights, Sino-Tibetan unity, and peace in China and the world. The second is his compassionate spirit, comprised of the fair and broad-minded way he treats people equally. The third is his spirit of non-violence.

The Dalai Lama's influence over the Tibetan cultural sphere and the entire world isn't limited to Tibetan religious faith, but is also related to his personal noble character.

Exile was an option of last resort for the Dalai Lama, but despite this predicament His Holiness has always been able to play his role as Tibet's spiritual leader, and fifty-five years into his exile he has made three great contributions for Tibetans and all mankind:

First, spreading Tibetan Buddhism across the world.

Second, the Dalai Lama is the defender of Tibetan rights, proposing the Middle Way Approach, the core of which is defending Tibetan rights and maintaining Sino-Tibetan unity. Over 55 years in exile he has pushed Tibetan cultural circles in India and Europe towards the path of democratization and modernity.

Third, the Dalai Lama is an advocate of interfaith dialogue and solidarity, and a defender of world peace.

**Yan Jiaqi was the first director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Politi-*

cal Science Institute, currently living in the Washington area.

This International Human Rights Day is the 25th anniversary of when His Holiness the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Herein I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to His Holiness on the 25th anniversary of receiving this honor! His Holiness has for a long time consistently advocated his peaceful and nonviolent philosophy, proposed resolving the Tibet issue through the Middle Way Approach, thereby protecting traditional Tibetan culture. By continuously promoting the idea of peace across the world, and advocating tolerance and brotherhood, he has made a tremendous contribution to peace in China and the rest of the world.

To date, His Holiness's idea of peace and tolerance still hasn't put a stop to the desecration of universal values and human dignity practiced by repressive regimes. But with advances in information technology, I hope His Holiness will put more energy into influencing ordinary Chinese people so that they come to understand the philosophy and tolerance of his position, advocating genuine autonomy under the Chinese constitution for Tibet instead of independence. Fraternal human rights values can reverse the Chinese Communist Party's media propaganda meant to give common people the erroneous idea that the Dalai Lama is calling for Tibetan independence. This would play a very important role in China's peaceful turn towards democracy.

**Chen Guangcheng, Senior visiting scholar at Catholic University, Witherspoon Institute Senior Fellow for Human Rights Issues, currently living in Washington, DC.*

The Dalai Lama is an important leader for the movement to promote peace and nonviolence, and he has made outstanding contributions towards promoting democracy for the Tibetan people, fighting to give Tibetan people autonomy, promoting exchanges and reconciliation between the Tibetan and Chinese ethnicities, advocating ethnic unity and religious tolerance, and promoting the

human soul and harmonious self-liberation.

A prelude to the collapse of the tyrannical Communist regime began in 1989, when Chinese students and citizens made their great sacrifice. The Dalai Lama, who had recently been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, said that the efforts of these victims were not made in vain. Over the next 25 years democracies have become more and more numerous, while tyrannical regimes still act perversely. Communist China has a powerful economy and military, but it has rejected political civilization, wantonly abusing the freedom and dignity of all human beings. People of all ethnicities, particularly Tibetans and Uyghurs, are suffering enormous human rights disasters under Chinese Communist rule. Politicians from around the world either treat it casually, or turn a blind eye. In this cynical world, in an international order in need of thorough reform, there are too few world leaders who incessantly call for freedom and human rights like the Dalai Lama.

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama was an important even which must be remembered. I would like to express my highest respect and sincere congratulations to His Holiness!

**Teng Biao, human rights lawyer, Chinese independent PEN member, Harvard University visiting scholar, currently in Boston.*

The 14th Dalai Lama has performed miracles, not only spreading Tibetan Buddhism to the world before it went extinct, but also using Buddhism to give rise to harmonious ethics between man and nature, a universal value. For China, which is experiencing an exploitative "economic takeoff" by plundering the environment, there is a need for new cultural values and resources to repair the social and ecological damage. Chinese civilization has an old tradition of going west to find the Dharma, and today's west lies on the Tibetan plateau.

**Su Xiaokang, Chinese exile writer, currently living in Delaware.*

Statement of the Kashag on the 25th Anniversary of Conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama



Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay delivering the statement of the 14th Kashag on the 25th anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize conferred on His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Mcleod Ganj, 10 December 2014.

On behalf of 6 million Tibetans, the Kashag pays its most humble respects and deep reverence to His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama.

Kashag also extends its warmest greetings to fellow Tibetans, friends and well-wishers around the world.

Today is the Silver Jubilee of the momentous occasion of the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Back in 1989, the Nobel Committee's citation read: The Committee wants to emphasize the fact that the Dalai Lama, in his struggle for the liberation of Tibet, has consistently opposed the use of violence. He has instead advocated peaceful solutions based upon tolerance and mutual respect in order to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of his people.

Over the past twenty-five years, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has unwaveringly continued to confirm and strengthen the ideals of the Nobel Peace Prize. His Holiness, who regards himself a simple Buddhist monk, continues to prove himself to be a shining beacon of peace, non-violence and compassion to millions of people across the world. Through the decades, His Holiness has relentlessly endeavoured to achieve his three commitments: promotion of basic

human values, inter-religious harmony, and preservation of Tibet's peaceful and non-violent Buddhist culture.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has travelled the five continents, meeting presidents, prime ministers, religious heads, kings, scientists, academics, youths, ordinary citizens, the poor and the underprivileged. He has been lauded with 151 major awards and honours. Even fellow Nobel Peace Laureates refer to him as a "Super Laureate".

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's unswerving pursuit of a non-violent resolution to the issue of Tibet, based on dialogue and mutual benefit, has dramatically advanced the cause. Global citizens of conscience for Tibet have grown from a handful of small groups to a strong international campaign for human rights for Tibetans, including support through the production of a multitude of Page 1 of 5 documentaries about the Tibetan struggle, and also Hollywood films, as well as in books and worldwide media coverage.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama promotes a mutually beneficial solution for the problem of Tibet, which takes into account the prevailing international environment and China's domestic position and with the full mandate of the Tibetan

people. With the adoption of the Middle-Way Approach, more than 20 contacts and consultations were made with the Chinese government from 1979 till formal contacts came to an end in 1993. When talks resumed in 2002, nine formal rounds of dialogue and one informal consultation were held between the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the concerned PRC officials. The Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People sought genuine autonomy within the framework of the Chinese Constitution.

It is ironic that just recently, the Chinese government chose to designate December 4th as National Constitution Day to advance the Rule of Law and promote the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. If the Chinese government really deems the Constitution important, then it must put the document into practice and grant the Tibetan people the genuine autonomy it promises.

The Middle Way approach has enabled open support from governments and parliaments across the world. Many Chinese scholars and academics have also conveyed their support for the just cause of Tibet. Their interest in and understanding of the Tibetan cause increases by the day. The Central Tibetan Administration remains steadfastly committed to the Middle Way Approach. A meeting of Task Force on negotiation will be held shortly.

One of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's greatest contributions to and legacies for the Tibetan people has been in building the institution of democracy in exile. Even against the will of many of his people, he successfully implemented democratization of Tibetans-in-exile because of his conviction that ensuring Tibetans a say in their governance is in their best interest. Over the past 25 years, major milestones along this road have included the election of the Kalons by the parliament in 1990, the adoption of the Charter of the Tibetans in Exile in

1991, the first direct election for Kalon Tripa in 2001, and most recently in 2011, the devolution of all political authority by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the directly elected leader. Under His Holiness' visionary leadership, the Central Tibetan Administration has come to thrive and evolve into a self-sustaining institution with the democratic mandate of its people.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the life and soul of Tibet and the Tibetan people. The 14th Kashag therefore with joy announced the observation of 2014 the "Year of Gratitude to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama." It is an appeal to all elder Tibetans to engage with young Tibetans in retelling the story of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's life, so that the legacy, vision and mission of the Great 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet will be etched in the hearts and minds of Tibetans for generations to come.

To celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Nobel Peace Prize, the Central Tibetan Administration organized an event on October 2nd, 2014 in Dharamsala to coincide with the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. Fellow Nobel Peace Laureates Shirin Ebadi and Jodi Williams also graced this special event.

The Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to individuals as well as organizations. The efforts of the following Laureates, ● Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams' led to the Good Friday Agreement, and paved the way for cooperation between the British and Irish governments.

● Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk, have brought racial equality to South Africa.

● Aung Sang Suu Kyi was released from house arrest and freed to pursue democracy in her native Burma.

● Jose Ramos-Horta and Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo of East Timor have actualized their aspiration for a free East Timor.

Other Peace Laureates have also been successful in turning their efforts and aspirations into actual achievements. It is now time for His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama's vision to be realized. The Nobel Peace Laureates summit pre-

viously scheduled in South Africa was cancelled due to the boycott of the summit by other Laureates when visa was denied to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We appreciate and welcome the summit now being held in Rome which will be attended by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Today is also International Human Rights Day, commemorating the United Nations' 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as the common standard to measure the freedoms by which all peoples and nations should live. Unfortunately, even 66 years after the proclamation, Tibetans have very little to celebrate. Instead, China consistently negates the provisions of the declaration, and human rights standards in Tibet continue to deteriorate. Tibet is still under occupation and the Tibetan people suffer political repression, economic marginalization, social discrimination, environmental destruction and cultural assimilation.

Countless demonstrations in Tibet since the Tibetan National Uprising of 1959 have called for human rights and basic freedoms for Tibetans. It is worth noting that, in 2008, the demonstrations spread to all regions where Tibetans reside in the three traditional Tibetan provinces, indicating that all Tibetans are united and share the same aspirations. It showed, too, the relevance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's aim to bring all the Tibetans under a single autonomous administration.

The 132 self-immolations also include Tibetans of all ages and walks of life on the Tibetan plateau. On November 14th this year, an anonymous testimony by the survivor of a self-immolation protest reads: "Compared to other countries, we don't have freedom of religious belief, freedom of speech, and our spiritual leader cannot return home. The restrictions are ongoing. I was unable to bear the suffering of living under Chinese aggression, so I thought about a self-immolation protest."

Today, we pray for those who have sacrificed their lives for basic freedom and human rights in Tibet. We remember

the Tibetan political prisoners still suffering in Chinese prisons, including the 11th Kunzik Panchen Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, Chadrel Rinpoche, and many others.

We hope for their speedy release and stand alongside them in their aspirations. We also urge Chinese authorities to release the 2010 Nobel Peace Laureate, Liu Xiaobo, and to finally, also after 25 years, to meet the aspirations of the tragic events at Tiananmen Square.

A genuinely civilized democratic world cannot be achieved as long as injustice is inflicted in any corner of that world. The Kashag reiterates on this 66th Human Rights Day that the only way to end repression and the deteriorating situation of Tibet is for China to change its current hard line policy and respect the needs of the Tibetan people.

On this occasion, we deeply thank the citizens and Government of India. All the achievements of Tibetan refugees in reconstructing a cohesive and strong community would not have been possible without the constant support of India. We especially value and give thanks for the recently announced Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy 2014. We also wish to thank all Indian state governments, especially the beautiful state of Himachal Pradesh, for hosting the Central Tibetan Administration. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in the two-day International Himalayan Festival to be held in Dharamsala in honor of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

Finally, we also express our deep gratitude to all friends of Tibet and well-wishers across the globe. We end today with fervent prayers for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's long and healthy life. May all his wishes be fulfilled, including all the Tibetans be united together in our homeland.

Thank You

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Speech of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile on the 25th anniversary of the conferment of Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Today is an outstanding day marking 25 years since His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the supreme protector of all Tibetans in Tibet and in exile, their guide, and a champion of world peace, having been awarded the globally acclaimed Nobel Peace Prize, graciously accepted it. Undaunted by the enormity of the difficulties of time and circumstances, His Holiness remains resolute in devoting his unimaginably exceptional deeds of body, speech and mind for the benefit of others – benefits which are freely availed by all sentient beings across the universe for their happiness and well being. On behalf of all Tibetans in Tibet and in Exile, and with feelings of happiness, devotion and joyousness, I take this opportunity to offer greetings to His Holiness with a sense of immense gratitude.

Twenty-five years ago on this day, in the year 1989, His Holiness the Dalai Lama was presented the Nobel Peace Prize. His Holiness was awarded this globally acclaimed peace prize because he relied solely on non-violent means based on the noble teachings of Buddhism and the profound thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi in his actions which were designed to benefit others in general and, especially, to revive or, as the case may be, preserve and promote the globally beneficial Tibetan people and their culture in the course of his efforts to seek a just end to the Tibetan issue. Likewise, by viewing things from the long term perspective of benefiting the attainment of mutual accommodation, friendship, fairness, and compassion across the world, His Holiness achieved appreciable results in his attempts to address international disputes and through his assumption of responsibilities to promote human rights and protect the environment. For these admirable efforts and accomplishments, which are an ongoing endeavour, His Holiness won the hearts and minds of the people of this world and the Nobel Peace Committee rightly awarded its acclaimed Peace Prize to him.

Even now, His Holiness continues to as-



Mr. Penpa Tsering, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile delivering the statement of the Tibetan Parliament on 10 December 2014.

sume truly numerous responsibilities in his efforts to bring peace, freedom and happiness in this world. Undaunted by personal difficulties, he travels again and again to numerous countries of the East and West, offering profound, yet appropriate and definitely easily digestible messages about kindness and compassion, tolerance, altruism, non-violence and so on with a view to bring about peace, freedom and happiness in this world. In particular, His Holiness continues to make efforts to bring about interreligious harmony and solidarity on the basis of the followers of the different religions remaining true to their particular faiths. He also continues to promote through lectures and other means the concept of secular ethics and to build on his initiative of carrying out a dialogue between Buddhism and modern science as a part of his special interests. For his multitude of deeds and accomplishments which have earned him – and continue to earn him – enormous number of awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize, we can all be justly happy and proud.

This year, which mark 25 years since he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the Nobel Peace Committee of Norway especially invited His Holiness the Dalai Lama to an unprecedented ceremony to commemorate the event and to pay compliments to him. This was a clear

recognition once again of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his continuing efforts to champion the cause of global peace.

Earlier this year, many awardees were scheduled to gather in South Africa to hold a major summit of Nobel Peace laureates. However, in an action resembling the bullying of a humble person who had no protection, the Government of South Africa refused to grant a visa for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. As a result, many Nobel Peace laureates took a firm stand in support of him and for the just cause that he embodied. As a result, the summit had to be suspended. On behalf of all Tibetans in Tibet and in exile, I offer these exceptional and noble persons who offered fruitful support for a just cause infinite gratitude.

In this year of 2014, the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded jointly to the Indian child rights activist Mr. Kailash Satyarthi and the teenaged Pakistani girl Malala Yousafzai. They were chosen for the award because in this 21st century many children of the world are still not given educational and other opportunities while in some countries and regions girls are denied such opportunities. These two Nobel Peace laureates courageously struggled for these rights. I take this opportunity to compliment them and to offer congratulations. In

this world of today marked by a period of mutual harm and violence caused by fighting and so on, we can but only offer the highest level of praise for the Nobel Peace Prize winners.

In 2010, Liu Xiaobo, a writer who had for the past more than 20 years championed the cause of human rights and democracy in his country, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. However, the government of China, being not happy with his advocacy of human rights, democracy, and so on, put him under arrest and he continues to remain imprisoned to this day. This shows nothing but the Chinese leaders' determination to continue to strengthen its monopoly on political power by using all their powers. The action clearly shows that the Chinese leaders are paying only lip service to the protection of human rights, for in reality they are not at all concerned about the rights of the Chinese people. We strongly appeal to the Chinese leaders to immediately release people like him who advocate for human rights, democracy and related issues and who continue to suffer torture and persecution in prison. The Chinese leaders must consider enabling these people to enjoy the same rights that all human beings everywhere are entitled to. They also must ensure their all-round well being, if they are to truthfully abide by their commitments to uphold the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other treaties that make up the international bill of human rights.

This is also the World Human Rights Day which is designed to commemorate the protection of human rights. I, on behalf of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, would like to make an appeal to the governments of countries and territories, parliaments, organizations, well known political figures, scholars, and the general public who give great importance to the protection of human rights across this world. Since the invasion and occupation of Tibet, the government of China has carried out massive violations of human rights; countless number of totally innocent Tibetans have been detained and imprisoned and subjected to all manners of unrestrained and limitless persecution and torture, including

with endless streams of killing. Such deplorable state of affairs continues today. I appeal to them to raise their protests to the government of China about this tragic situation. I also strongly appeal to them for result-oriented support in terms of pressuring the government of China to immediately end the persecutions and thereby lend their support to our just cause. At the same time, I also strongly call on the government of China to respect international law and conventions and thereby ensure a humanistic reorientation of its practices accordingly.

Taking the opportunity offered by the occasion today, I would also like to refer to some of the recent reports about human rights and other violations in Tibet by way of examples. At the end of September this year, a Chinese ethnic affairs meeting and the 6th meeting of the State Council for awarding outstanding contributors to the national ethnic unity was held in Beijing. At that meeting China's leader Xi Jinping and other top leaders said that the fact that China was a multiethnic country was a characteristic feature of the nation, that this was an asset for the country's progress, that the relationship between the people of China as a whole and that between the different ethnic groups was like that between a big family and the individual members of that family, and that the relationship between the different ethnic nationalities was like that among the different members of the same family. And they expressed opposition to the ideas of great Han chauvinism and narrow nationality-ism. They made a great show of being very emphatic in these assertions in their various speeches. In actual practice, however, the government of China has never entertained any of the suggestions designed to enable the entire Tibetan people to enjoy the kind of genuinely meaning autonomy that is in keeping with the basic features of the constitution of the People's Republic of China. Rather, it has been firm in its practice of implementing what is nothing less than a policy of colonial subjugation. It bears no mentioning that under it the Tibetan people have been denied their political freedom. What is more, in the commercially profitable bigger cities and towns of Tibet, ethnic Tibetans

have been reduced to a minority, and they have been marginalized and pushed to the fringe areas. And this is still an ongoing process. In addition, there are strong restrictions on the Tibetan people in the exercise of their human rights, in the practice of their religious belief, on their freedom of movement, and in their learning and use of their linguistic heritage. Tibet's environment continues to be subjected to such enormous degrees of destruction that it would be very hard to restore them. In the face of these realities, the above remarks of the Chinese leaders are nothing but naked lies, asserting as true something which is false, and presenting as existing something which does not exist. They are nothing but empty talks designed to deceive and mislead both the international community and all the different ethnic nationalities of China. On the other hand, if the Chinese leaders claim to be sincere and factual in their above remarks, while rejecting our criticisms, we call on them to undertake concrete, on the spot implementation of their assertions so as to realize them thereby.

According to a report which recently appeared in the official Tibet Daily newspaper, a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region Committee of the Communist Party of China was convened on the 4th of November to announce a speech by President Xi Jining on the matter of the dispatch of a central inspection team to the region. During that meeting, a report called investigation of the corrective actions work on the recommendations given by a four-member central inspection team for Tibet was reported to have been presented. That report had said that the campaign to oppose separatism should be strengthened and cadres who harbour fantasies about the 14th Dalai Group, follow the Dalai Group, participate in supporting separatist infiltration sabotage activities, will be strictly and severely punished according to the law and party disciplinary measures. All this is despite the fact the government of China is fully in the know that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been seeking – and continues to seek – to resolve the issue of Tibet only through the mu-

tually beneficial middle way proposal. We therefore feel that the Chinese government is merely using the pretext of campaigning against separatism as an evil ploy to begin a campaign to ruin the careers of Tibetan cadres by using the device of legal measures.

Again, on the 7th of November this year, the website of China's Tibet magazine carried a report about the holding of a function in Beijing for the inauguration of a project to make a realistic film about the Tibetan Buddhism's system for the recognition of reincarnations of tulkus. The report spoke about the work for the supervision of the system in Tibetan Buddhism for the recognition of the reincarnations of tulkus having now been brought under legal restrictions. It also referred to the fact that in 2007, China's State Administration of Religious Affairs had issued and announced a set of Regulation on Reincarnation of Living Buddha in Tibetan Buddhism. It added that these regulations lay down in clear terms the fundamental points underlying the system for the recognition of reincarnations of tulkus, the hierarchy of state authorities empowered to determine the fulfillment of conditions for the recognition and to grant permissions thereby. But the communist government of China is a professed atheist and knows absolutely nothing about religious matters. It is therefore patently obvious that by establishing legal regulations in a historically unprecedented action as a means to interfere in the Tibetan Buddhists' system for the recognition of reincarnations of tulkus, China is simply making political misuse of this sacred religious practice. This is extremely uncalled for and there is no way anyone can accept it. We express absolute protest against it.

Across the length and breadth of Tibet, all centres of religious faith, including the monastic institutions, remain under as tight a set of restrictions as one can imagine. This also remains the case with Jhada Nunnery located in Kham Driru County. In particular, since September this year, work teams of particularly large numbers of Chinese cadres arrived there and forcibly ordered the nuns to carry out blasphemy against His Holiness the Dalai Lama. And because the

nuns refused to comply, some 26 of them were expelled from the nunnery and thereby put under immense hardship. These facts clearly show that China still has not stopped imposing restrictions, control, and pressure on the Tibetan people's religious rights and freedom.

Recently, it was reported by China's official Xinhua news agency that the country had completed the building of the Zam Hydroelectric power station dam over the Yarlung Tsangpo river and that it had begun generating electricity. This project remains a source of great concern due to its potential for inflicting environmental damages in Tibet as well as for causing destructions in the downstream countries of India and Bangladesh. This has become a matter requiring urgent attention and we call on the concerned governments, scholars in the relevant fields and others to show a heightened level of concern over this development.

Since the 27th of September 1987, the general masses of Tibetans in Tibet have continued to carry out successive campaigns of peaceful protests. In particular, since the year 2009, a total of 132 Tibetans of all age groups have felt driven to carry out protest self-immolations, sacrificing their precious lives with an utterly selfless motive to hopefully accomplish something meritorious both for themselves and others. Everyone knows that the compelling mental pressure which drove all those Tibetans to make this ultimate sacrifice was the brutality beyond all limits with which the human rights of the Tibetan people were trampled on under the repression of China's armed forces. I take this opportunity to reiterate by way of a further reminder that the leaders of the government of China take full responsibility for this very tragic development.

The unparalleled heroism and determination underlying the deeds and accomplishments of the utterly selfless patriotic men and women in Tibet, both living and dead, will be empathized with and extolled by all Tibetans across the globe. Besides, in order to accomplish the fundamental cause of the Tibetan people, namely the speedy resolution of their just cause, His Holiness the Dalai Lama,

the incomparable leader of the Tibetan people, and the entire body of Tibetans living in exile will continue to carry out peaceful campaigns that are in addition to the numerous ones that are already being implemented.

Along with observing the glorious and victorious day of today, we pledge to keep in the centre of our hearts the peaceful and non-violent methods that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has shown us through his deeds. On this basis, we will remain motivated to carry out our duties to the best of our capabilities at each individual level so as to be of benefit towards achieving immediate as well as long term objectives both globally in general terms and for Tibet as a whole in particular. This is the essence of the objectives underlying our sense of gratitude towards His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the reason why we are observing this special occasion. I emphatically urge everyone to keep these in mind and carry them out in their day to day life.

Along with observing the day on which His Holiness the Dalai Lama was presented the Nobel Peace Prize, Himalayan Festival will be held for some days starting from this afternoon. People from the local Indian host community too will offer compliments to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his deeds and accomplishments. As this symbolically represents the existence of an unassailable bond of friendship and fraternity between the Indian and Tibetan peoples, I offer my thanks to all the organizers of the festival. The gratitude we owe to the people of India and their central and state governments for all their help and friendship can never be forgotten. I again take this opportunity to reiterate our thanks and gratitude. I also appeal to everyone to continue to work together towards further strengthening the friendship between the two peoples.

Finally, I offer prayers that His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all our other great spiritual masters live a long, long life, that all their wishes be spontaneously fulfilled, that the happiness and well being of all the sentient beings in this world be ensured, and that the just cause of the Tibetan people see a speedy resolution.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Attends World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates



His Holiness the Dalai Lama and fellow Nobel Peace Laureates meeting with members of the press at the conclusion of the 14th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Rome, Italy on December 14, 2014. Photo/Paolo Tosti

His Holiness the Dalai Lama took part in the 14th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates held at Rome, Italy from 12-14 December. The summit originally scheduled at Cape Town, South Africa was mired in controversy after the South African government refused to issue a visa to His Holiness the Dalai Lama under Chinese government pressure. The summit was later relocated to Rome at the requests of other Nobel laureates.

Besides His Holiness the Dalai Lama, other Nobel Peace Laureates attending the summit include Mrs. Shirin Ebadi, Mrs. Leymah Gbowee, Mrs. Tawakkol Karman, Mrs. Mairead Maguire, President José Ramos-Horta, Mr. David Trimble, President Lech Walesa, Mrs. Betty Williams and Mrs Jody Willaims. There were also representatives from organisations that have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama arrived in Rome on 11 December after a brief stop over at Frankfurt, Germany. Amidst a light rain falling from a grey Rome sky, His Holiness arrived at the airport and was received by Mr. Enzo Cursio, the Vice President of the Permanent Secretariat of the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates.

Upon his arrival at the hotel, His Holiness was greeted by Tibetans, old friends, well wishers, and the media. On the first day of the summit, His Holiness the Dalai Lama met first with the Mayor of Rome, Ignazio Marino, and then greeted old friends like Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi and Mairead Maguire and new friends like Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkol Karman as they arrived.

Inaugurating the summit, the Mayor, Prof Marino, urged those attending the summit to aim for the globalization of human rights, ensuring that the younger generation will be naturally committed to working for peace. He asked everyone present also to remember this year's laureates, Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi and repeated Nelson Mandela's maxim, "Freedom without peace is not true freedom".

Co-chair of the summit and former Mayor of Rome, Walter Veltroni, made some remarks before Mairead Maguire came to the lectern on behalf of the assembled Peace Laureates. She said that peace is a human right for everyone and that it is a necessary precondition of all the other human rights. She clarified that everyone has a right not to be killed and a responsibility not to kill. She expressed

a wish to address a message to His Holiness the Pope to replace the theory of 'a just war' with a theory of peace, quoting His Holiness the Dalai Lama as saying that violence is always wrong and never justified.

Prof David Ives, Executive Director of Albert Schweitzer Institute told the gathering that although the proposed meeting in Capetown had been cancelled, the Institute had taken a group of students there to engage in a dialogue about diversity within global unity. He said that in so doing they had stood by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He invited student representatives to report some of their experiences.

The first session of discussions, focussed on 'Living Peace, Living Democracy - Reflecting on 20 years of democracy in South Africa: goals achieved and continuing challenges' began with moderator Peter Popham, a veteran journalist with the Independent, introducing the panellists.

Patricia De Lille, the mayor of Cape Town and the only South African who was able to attend the summit, spoke on how South Africa has changed since Nelson Mandela. She began by apolo-



One minute of silence is observed one minutes silence remembering the victims of Ebola n Liberia and Sierra Leone at the start of the final session of the 14th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Rome, Italy on December 14, 2014. Photo/Olivier Adam

gising on behalf of the people of South Africa for the behaviour of their government that had led to the summit's venue being moved to Rome. She noted that the world lost Nelson Mandela one year and one week ago. He had led his country to a peaceful transition. She affirmed that there is no peace without justice and looked forward to working to preserve those things that Mandela had worked for.

The second session, focussing on 'Living Peace for Human Development - Threats to Sustainable Human Development' was moderated by Yalda Hakim, correspondent with BBC World. She began by inviting His Holiness to explain how peace is more than an absence of war. He began by saying that he felt the other Peace Laureates were more experienced than he was, but stated:

"Peace or violence is ultimately related to our emotions. The demarcation between violence and non-violence lies here in the heart. If we have genuine concern for others, then naturally we defend their rights and our actions become non-violent. So long as we are motivated by anger and fear, the opposite will be true. Fundamentally all 7 billion human beings are the same, so we need to develop a sense of the oneness of all

human beings. Too often we focus on secondary and superficial differences like nationality, race, colour, whether we are rich or poor, educated or uneducated and so on, rather than on what we have in common.

"We can change our way of thinking by changing our education system. At present the education system and our way of life are very materialistic with little attention paid to inner values. When we want to think of inner values or moral principles we turn to religion. But that won't satisfy everyone. 1 billion people today claim not to have any religious faith and even among those who say they do are many whose faith is corrupt or not really serious. Therefore, I suggest we need a secular approach to promoting basic human values. I use the word secular in the sense it is used in India to mean unbiased respect for all religions and faiths and even for those who have none.

"Because, as I said, values are related to our emotions, just as we practise physical hygiene to preserve our physical health, we need to observe emotional hygiene to preserve a healthy mind and attitudes. There is evidence meanwhile that anger and fear damage our immune

system. Fear is the source of many of our problems and the counter to that is trust, the basis of friendship. As social animals we need to depend on others, so we need to train our mind and emotions."

His Holiness drew attention to a distinction between the 20th century generations, whose century is gone, and the 21st century generation, who are young today. He said we can't change the past, but we can shape the future. So the 21st century generation have the opportunity and responsibility to build a better world. He said that if they start now, maybe in the later years of this century the world will be a more peaceful place. Again, he counselled taking a secular approach based on common sense, common experience and scientific evidence. He said we can change ourselves, our way of thinking and our engagement with the world through consistent education. He concluded with a request not to dismiss his words as mere idealism, but to take them seriously as having practical potential, saying that there isn't another way.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's third day in Rome began with a cordial meeting with a group of Italian parliamentarians, including the Chair of the Human Rights

Committee and a Vice President of the Senate. He thanked them for coming to see him and informed them of what he sees as positive signs in relations with China. He mentioned that recently President Xi Jinping has expressed opposition not only to nationalism, but also to Han chauvinism as Chairman Mao used to do. He also reported to them Xi Jinping's remarks in Paris and Delhi affirming the important role that Buddhism plays in Chinese culture. Seeing how the Chinese President's attitude accords with the realistic approach of Hu Yaobang, who adopted a positive stance on Tibet, His Holiness expressed optimism.

His Holiness joined Session 5 on the second day of the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, whose theme was 'Living Peace, Preventing Wars'. As he entered the hall, moderator Emilio Carelli was saying that we are facing more conflict, greater trade in weapons and asked what should the international community do. His Holiness responded:

"When I hear about these terrible things that are taking place, I sometimes wish I had some miraculous power to take all these trouble-makers and transport them to some distant part of the universe, but I don't. We have to ask, 'Who creates this violence?' we do and we have to act to stop it. We have to find ways to change our minds, to pacify anger. There are other experts among the Nobel Peace

Laureates here and I'd like to hear from them."

In his closing remarks on the second day of the summit, His Holiness said that while there are many things to worry about there is also a strong basis for hope. In the afternoon, he took part in a workshop for young leaders in which he told them of humanity's need for inner values and the need to take a secular approach to inculcating them. He also met with Tibetans who live in Europe and Tibet supporters. He told them how important it is to keep the Tibetan spirit alive. He also attended a closed door meeting of Nobel Peace Laureates before retiring at the end of a long day.

For the final session of the Nobel Peace Laureates Summit, the Nobel laureates gathered at Giulio Cesar Hall on Rome's Capitol Hill.

Proceedings opened with Ekaterina Zagladina, President of Permanent Secretariat of the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, delivering a message from President Mikhail Gorbachev. He was one of the instigators of the first summits. He expressed concern about ongoing conflicts in the world and the neglect of climate change. Amongst his hopes was an appeal for the Ukraine crisis to be settled.

The assembly was called to observe one

minute's silence to remember the victims of ebola in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Then, the moderator turned to the panel consisting of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Shirin Ebadi, Leymah Gbowee, Betty Williams, Mairead Maguire and Rajendra Pachauri to address the Peace Crisis, particularly in connection with warfare in Africa, but also related to lasting conflicts throughout the world.

His Holiness began:

"When it comes to Africa, I think you, Mrs Gbowee, know much more about it than me. I have been to South Africa, Nigeria and Gabon and my main impression is of the gap between rich and poor. I saw almost naked people carrying birds they had just killed for food and was struck by the contrast between them and the smart people I'd met not far away in the city. This gap between rich and poor is not only morally wrong, even from a practical point of view it's a source of problem. We find it in India, but we also find it in the USA, the most developed country in the world. The poor need to work hard with self-confidence to improve their lot, while the better off need to offer support and provide facilities.

"The world's problems cannot be solved by the actions of a few individuals, even if they are Nobel Peace Laureates. The 7 billion people in the world must all work to create a happier, more equal world. Each of us on an individual level has a responsibility to work for a better world wherever we are."

Speaking in her native Farsi, Shirin Ebadi drew attention to problems in the Islamic world today. Syria has been occupied by extremists who kill people. ISIS is not just a terrorist group, but an incorrect ideology. She said we have to address the root of fundamentalism, which is ignorance. The behaviour of ISIS is not acceptable to Islam. However, it is a problem that none of the governments of the Middle East is democratic. When people live for years under these circumstances they become tired of dictatorship. They rise up and they are suppressed. She appealed to European countries no longer to help the dictators. She clarified that they deposit their



Yalda Hakim of BBC World interviewing His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Rome, Italy on December 13, 2014. Photo/Jeremy Russell/OHHDL

ill-gotten wealth in European banks. Too often, when they are removed, the money doesn't find its way back to the country it belongs to. She ended by repeating her appeal:

“Please don't support the dictators.”

Discussions over, Tawakkol Karman stepped forward to present the 2014 World Peace Summit Award. She announced that this year it had been awarded to veteran Italian film director Bernardo Bertolucci, recalling the highlight of a long career in filmmaking when ‘The Last Emperor’ won all 9 Oscars it had been nominated for. Bertolucci entered the hall in his wheelchair and His Holiness the Dalai Lama came down to greet him, presenting him with a white scarf. While His Holiness held the microphone he read his acceptance speech in which he spoke of trying to increase awareness of the need to help those who like him are wheelchair bound.

As part of the closing ceremonies, the summit host, the Mayor of Rome, Ignazio Marino said Rome was proud to have been able to host the meeting that had sent out messages of hope to places still wracked by war. He thanked the Peace Laureates for coming and repeated the

summit's commitment to education that remains the most powerful tool with which to change the world. As a token of this commitment, special efforts had been made to include young people in the proceedings.

The Mayor of Atlanta, a guest throughout this summit, invited delegates to the next summit to be held next year in his city. He mentioned that the state of Georgia claimed two Nobel Peace Laureates, Martin Luther King Jr and Jimmy Carter. He said:

“I look forward to more fruitful conversation in 2015. I won't forget my time in Rome. I'm grateful to you all.”

The final event was the convening of a Press Conference, which was opened by the Mayor. He repeated how proud Rome and he were to have hosted the summit. He mentioned that when he heard of the difficulties concerning His Holiness's visa for South Africa, he had offered Rome as an alternative venue. Now it was concluded he wished everyone a safe journey home.

The first question from South African News was addressed to His Holiness. Noting that the Mayor of Cape Town

has extended another invitation to him, he was asked: “Will you come?” He replied:

“On my part there is no problem, but on the part of your government there may be, so I can't say.”

A second question was also directed to His Holiness about support for the student pro-democracy protestors in Hong Kong.

He answered:

“Basically these young students want a full democratic system. Everybody, including intellectuals in mainland China supports this. But no matter how good your motivation or how high your hopes, you have to adopt a realistic approach if you are to succeed. The government of the People's Republic of China is powerful and change does not come easily.”

Following the summit, His Holiness the Dalai Lama embarked on his journey back to New Delhi, where he will lead a public prayer offering on the occasion of Je Tsongkhapa's death anniversary (gaden ngamchoe) at Buddha Jayanti Park.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Teaching Schedule

Talk in Kolkata, West Bengal, India on January 13: His Holiness will give a talk on Secular Ethics in the morning at Presidency University.

Teaching in Sankisa, Uttar Pradesh, India on February 1 & 2: His Holiness will give a two-day Buddhist teaching based on the Dhammapada organized by the Youth Buddhist Society (YBS) of India.

Teaching in Basel, Switzerland on February 7 & 8: His Holiness will give a Buddhist teaching based on Nagarjuna's Commentary on Bodhicitta (*jangchub semdrel*), Geshe Langri Thangpa's Eight Verses of Training the Mind (*lojong tsikgyema*) and confer the Avalokiteshvara Empowerment (*chenresig jigten wangchuk*) organized by the Tibetan Community in Switzerland and Liechtenstein at St. Jakobshalle.

Public Talk in Basel, Switzerland on February 8: His Holiness will give a public talk on Secular Ethics for Today's World in the afternoon organized by the Tibetan Community in Switzerland and Liechtenstein at St. Jakobshalle.

Public Talk in Copenhagen, Denmark on February 11: His Holiness will give a public talk on Strength Through Compassion and Connection in the afternoon at the Bella Center.

Teaching in Copenhagen, Denmark on February 12: His Holiness will give a one-day Buddhist Teaching based on Geshe Langri Thangpa's Eight Verses of Training the Mind (*lojong tsikgyema*) at the Bella Center.

Advancing Disability Rights by Expanding our Understanding: A Conversation with His Eminence the 7th Ling Choktul Rinpoche

Ling Choktul Rinpoche, one of the most revered and learned Tibetan Buddhist masters, spoke candidly about his car accident that rendered him partially disabled, challenges he faced during recovery due to poor accessibility, and the importance of advancing the rights of disadvantaged people everywhere.

Born in Dharamsala in 1985, his Eminence Ling Rinpoche was recognized by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the reincarnation of the 6th Yongzin Ling Rinpoche (1903-1983) in 1987. His predecessor was the senior tutor of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the 97th Gaden Throne Holder, the supreme head of the Gelugpa tradition. On November 28, 2012, Ling Rinpoche sustained serious injuries from a car accident on his way to Goa Airport to receive His Holiness the Dalai Lama. After two years of multiple surgeries, countless number of physical therapy sessions, and a great deal of patience and fortitude toward making full recovery, Rinpoche has regained his full mobility. This interview is my hope through the message of one of our greatest teachers amongst us today to help raise awareness on the challenges faced by disabled people in our community, many of whom, for far too long, have been denied the dignity and respect that they deserve. Rinpoche's accident reminds us all that circumstances can change in an instant and any one of us at any point in our life can become part of the disability community. Whether it may be by birth, an accident, or aging, disability is unavoidable and chances are that we all love somebody or have someone in our community with a certain disability. According to World Health Organization, more than 1 billion people (15% of world's population) have some form of a disability, which means that every country or community has at least 15% of its population with disability. So, when the whole world observes the 22nd International Day of Disability on December 3rd, 2014, let this day be a poignant reminder for all of us to honor our obligation toward ensuring that the 15% of our community members who live with some kind of disability, visible and invisible, have the same chance to pursue dreams and be accorded the same rights and freedom as everybody else.



Picture taken after the interview, San Francisco, June 2014 (Photo/Ngawang Tsephel)

Ling Rinpoche, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on a topic very dear to my heart. Two years ago I began working at the US State Department under someone who is an internationally recognized leader in the disability rights movement and a lifelong civil rights advocate and this job profoundly altered my path. Advancing disability rights has become part of my life now. After all, there are many striking parallels between the disability movement and our movement. But often when I look at the lives of disabled people in our community and the poor accessibility standards that unintentionally leave disabled people out or behind, I feel we have a long way to go. Considering that I have yet to see a single wheelchair accessible (for the general audience at least) monastery in the exile community, what challenges did you face after your accident in general and with regards to access?

The accident took place the day before His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Jangchup Lamrim teachings. That same evening I went through surgery. Although mentally I was alert and capable to attend and receive His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings, because my accident left me physically disabled, I couldn't attend the teachings. This was the most difficult thing for me.

And of course, the lack of accessibility all around was very challenging. Doctor advised me not to walk for 2 months after my surgery. Following my discharge from the hospital, I rented a place on the ground floor of a house in Goa. However, even the ground floor had a flight of stairs to go outside and even as I began gaining some strength and wanted to go out for a fresh air, I wasn't able to go out. Though my physical disability kept me confined indoors for two months, easier access all around would have eased (my and others in similar situation) our recovery period.

After three months in Goa, I left for Delhi. From the moment I left Goa until I reached Delhi, I encountered difficulties with access throughout the entire trip. Whether it was boarding onto a plane and deplaning or going in and out of house, it was very difficult. I assume the lack of sidewalks, missing curb cuts, and potholes must be very difficult for others with physical disability.

I then stayed in Delhi for a year. There were many times when I wished to attend His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings in Dharamshala, but my disability and lack of access made it difficult and impractical for to me go. Basically, after my accident, there was not a single thing for

which I could say, "It was not difficult". Even for a task as simple as getting up from a chair.

Some people feel disability is a misfortune. It really is unfortunate in places where there is no legal recourse, where community's expectation of disabled people is not held at the same standards, and where they are treated as charity case; and worst, they are inevitably more likely to become victims of violence. Some say their disability created new and different opportunities for them. What changes occurred to your mindset after the accident?

It was quite unfortunate that my accident happened but I don't dwell on it because thinking about it will not help me walk normally. What everyone wants is a happy life and a successful life. In order for that to materialize, if you keep thinking about the unfortunate situations, it will only discourage you. There are types of disabilities that we cannot change, the form or the shape of that disability. But whatever technological advances and resources are available, we must be open to the advantages that science and medicine offer us. In my case, two days after the surgery, I immediately began physiotherapy. In spite of the pain and difficulty involved, I was determined to make complete recovery and worked hard to regain my mobility.

Basically, when it comes to disability or accident, it is important to have a winner's attitude that you can overcome it. My first surgery was not successful. I was told I needed to have a revised surgery six months later. I immediately agreed to it despite knowing it was not going to be a simple surgery. In the end, I ended up with 12 screws in my knees. Many of us give up after one attempt. We all deserve to live a happy life. One must never give up the chance to acquire one's ability if there is a way. I was open to all suggestions because I know I am healthy and one can guess I am going to live till at least 70 or 80, and I wanted to make sure I become physically able again.

The US is a world's pioneer on disability rights and is proud to claim having

gold standard on disability rights, but stigma and discrimination against disabled people still exist here. Typically, most governments, even in the developed world, do not have good enforcement mechanisms in place in protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. So I think what we need in place is high moral standards where we develop much kindness towards others and a high tolerant society for all people. However, in my work-related trips to Asia, I noticed that in Asian culture in particular, stigmas against disabled people are very strong and prevalent. What can be done to remove stigmas against persons with disabilities in our community?

For those individuals who acquire disability later in life, a circumstance led them to their present disability. In my case, my temporary physical disability is from my accident. Circumstances can also change disability. Whatever the case, what we as a community, particularly the non-disabled need to do is become a receptive audience to the cause of disability rights and help disabled people become fully integrated into our society and ensure that they receive the same opportunities to help them realize their full potentials. This will help them live independently in the long run as well as help contribute to the society. Such things are in our collective interest because I have heard about certain disabled individuals having heightened sense of sensory and perception, and their unique talents can be very valuable.

Sometimes I see that our Buddhist way is to accept our disability as fate and be complacent as opposed to fight against stigmas, discrimination, and mistreatment. Should one accept it as fate and can we really prove that a person's disability is the result of his/her past karma?

We cannot prove that their disabilities are result of negative karma but at the same time we also cannot confirm it is not a result of negative karma from their past life or a bad deed. For instance, I was in a car accident and acquired a disability. However, how can we prove or confirm that my accident is a result of my bad karma.

I think it is very important that monasteries become accessible for the disabled and elderly and our schools move in the direction of inclusion, which means disabled students can access every school buildings. Accordingly, I think some efforts are underway although it is costly to do so. However, the World Bank estimates that if you build the construction right from the beginning, it only cost 1% additional as opposed to retrofitting, which is more expensive. As you are aware, all public entities in the US are required by law to be accessible and this has allowed disabled children to receive the same level of education and the disabled and the elderly equal access to all public places. In the Tibetan community, majority of the monasteries, schools, and public areas are not disabled accessible. Since schools and monasteries are two most important places for us, what can be done to improve access standard overall in making our Tibetan community more disabled friendly?

During my visit here in the US, I noticed all the Metro stations have elevators and special seating designated for disabled and elderly, as well as in the buses and trains. I recently visited the Japanese Tea Garden in San Francisco and because I was using a cane, I didn't have to pay. These are some great practices I have seen here in the US. As for making monasteries accessible in India, we should go through the Central Tibetan Administration's Department of Religious and Cultural Affairs. Religious and Cultural Affairs have symbolic authority over the monasteries in exile and I am sure the monastic institutions will heed to such advisory from the administration.

Lastly, with regards to disability rights or any rights in general, we can no longer afford to be silent. Whether it is for racial equality in the US, religion or sectarianism, we must always fight for equality. I believe that one must fight for one's own rights. In the case of disability rights, non-disabled should play a role, but the disabled people first and foremost must fight for it themselves. There is nothing that we cannot solve in this world. I believe every problem has a solution.

The Dalai Lama has a moral authority the leaders in Beijing can only dream of



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay at Vienna, Austria in 2012.

By Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay*

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On International Human Rights Day, 25 years after he was awarded the Nobel peace prize, the Tibetan leader's message has never mattered more

Twenty-five years ago this week in Oslo, a man who describes himself as a simple Buddhist monk was awarded the Nobel peace prize. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and the inspiration of my life's work, remains a towering figure on the world stage. His message of peace, and emphasis on values of compassion and tolerance, have never mattered more in a world in which moral leadership is in scarce supply.

This week, the Dalai Lama marks the anniversary of the peace prize, a turning point in global acknowledgement of the Tibetan people's peaceful struggle for freedom, at the 14th world summit of Nobel peace laureates in Rome. In a remarkable turn of events, Nobel laureates refused to attend the original summit, scheduled for September in South Africa, when the Dalai Lama was denied a visa owing to Chinese pressure on President Zuma's government.

Their actions were a deep demonstration of solidarity, and sent a clear message to the Chinese leadership. Ultimately, in

a world in which China has increasing diplomatic heft, too much accommodation of an authoritarian power that seeks to impose its own political and commercial agenda ultimately undermines democratic values and interests.

As the leader of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in the Tibetans' second home, in Dharamsala in India, I wish to see positive relationships between China and the rest of the world. But not on terms dictated by a leadership that seeks to undermine and overturn democratic values. Instead of willingly cooperating in the submission of these values – notably freedom of speech – the democracies should take the position of actively seeking to defend them, and influence China's rise for the better.

It has been profoundly moving for me and fellow Tibetans in exile to watch the "umbrella revolution" in Hong Kong. To witness these courageous young students, 25 years on from Tiananmen Square, determined to hold their ground peacefully and with such internal discipline despite the historic resonances, is an indication that democracy is touching the shores of China.

Tibetans in Tibet have endured many decades of occupation, repression and loss, as the Chinese party-state has adopted a harsh and systematic approach to silencing Tibetans and suppressing dissent, with leaders calling for support of the Dalai Lama to be "crushed".

Internationally, the Beijing leadership has launched a virulent propaganda offensive against this revered exiled monk, and sought to disrupt and politicise international forums, such as the UN, which have challenged China's human rights record in Tibet. And yet this concerted effort has had little effect: the Dalai Lama's influence inside Tibet remains undimmed, with Tibetans risking their lives to express their loyalty to him. Globally, he retains a moral authority the leaders in Beijing can only dream of.

In a world riven by conflict and violence, the peaceful nature of the Tibetan struggle, because of the Dalai Lama's influence, is an inspiration to a new generation inside Tibet that leads the struggle to protect their national identity, dignity and culture. Schoolchildren link hands and march to government education offices to protest when textbooks use Chinese and not the Tibetan language. Young monks study the precepts of their religion in monasteries run by Chinese cadres, even though they know that if they fail to denounce the Dalai Lama they could be dragged away in the middle of the night to face torture and imprisonment.

Tibetans living in exile seek to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Tibet. We have put forward the Middle Way Approach for Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People to resolve the Tibet issue. It is a policy conceived by the Dalai Lama in 1974 in an effort to engage the Chinese government in dialogue and find a peaceful way to protect the unique Tibetan culture and identity. This policy has been democratically adopted through a series of discussions held over many decades by the Central Tibetan Administration and the Tibetan people. It is a win-win proposition that straddles the middle path between the status quo and independence – one that categorically rejects the present repressive policies of the Chinese government towards the Tibetan people while not seeking separation from the People's Republic of China.

A fundamental change from 1989 is that His Holiness the Dalai Lama retired “happily, willingly and with pride” from his role as the political head of the Tibetan people in 2011. In the past few decades, he has gradually nudged the Tibetan exile polity towards democracy, sometimes in the face of resistance from Tibetans themselves.

His Holiness’s vision of democracy has been a transformative experience for Tibetans, and is an inspiration for those in Tibet who live under repression on a daily basis. My election as Sikyong, or the political leader of the Tibetan people, in 2011 by the Tibetan diaspora in more than 40 countries around the world is the first since the Dalai Lama’s retirement from political leadership.

In Rome this week, we are proud that His Holiness the Dalai Lama will stand shoulder to shoulder with other Nobel peace laureates including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Shirin Ebadi, Mairead Maguire, Lech Walesa and Betty Williams, who also seek to stand up to oppression and insist upon resolving conflict through peaceful dialogue. Many of us will also reflect on the poignant absence from the summit of the Chinese Nobel peace laureate Liu Xiaobo, serving 11 years in prison as a result of his long, nonviolent work for human rights in China.

The Nobel committee draws attention to the close connection between human rights and peace as a prerequisite for the “fraternity between nations” that Alfred Nobel hoped the prize would help to achieve.

As we mark both International Human Rights Day and the 25th anniversary of the award of the Nobel peace prize to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the threats to this vision are many, and the stakes are high. Moral leadership is in short supply. Let us celebrate that which we have.

**Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay is the democratically-elected political leader of the Tibetan people.*

Not a degree of freedom for Tibetans within China: US Diplomat



Ms. Sarah Sewall, US Special Co-ordinator for Tibetan Issues

By Lalit K. Jha

Press Trust of India

Tibetans within China do not enjoy freedom within the Communist nation, a top US diplomat has said after meeting Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal.

The US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, Sarah Sewall, who is also Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights talked of her assessment of human rights conditions in Tibet during an interaction with reporters here on Monday.

There are 30 Tibetan Associations across US and Canada representing near about 15,000-17,000 Tibetans.

During her trip to the two countries, she met Tibetan refugees in both the countries and gained first-hand information about the situation in Tibet from them. She also met the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala.

“I spent much of my time talking to refugees and talking to the organisations that welcome and work with refugees

about the situation in China, because they tend to have more recent stories,” Sewall said.

“I met with several people who had left China recently, and I spoke to many people who have family in China,” she added.

“Their assessment of the situation tracks very much with the State Department’s assessment of the situation, as recorded in our human rights reporting – that there is not a degree of freedom for Tibetans within China that we think is consistent with international human rights standards,” the top American diplomat said.

Sewall said she also had a wide range of discussions with the Dalai Lama.

“We spoke about non-violent approaches to conflict resolution, to include the questions of preserving Tibetan culture, religion, and education in every place that Tibetans currently reside,” she said.

“That’s a very wide-ranging discussion that, of course, also includes concerns about the refugee community with whom he works closely,” she added.

Sewall said the US Government has spent an enormous amount of its resources and its energy seeking to support Tibetan in particular refugees, but also Bhutanese refugees in the two countries.

She announced a new USD 3.2 million USAID grant to help modernise the health system for Tibetan refugees during her visit to Nepal.

Brand Tibet: China's and Tibetan Exiles' Contrasting Narratives on Tibet

By Thubten Samphel*

(Originally published on The Huffington Post, 8 December 2014)

No struggle in the world is as unequal as the one between Tibet and China. Beijing's position in Tibet is unassailable, reinforced by a network of all-weather roads, airports and an expanding railway line that are integrating the world's highest, largest and remotest plateau more closely to the mainland.

Abroad China uses its economic weight to its advantage. It punishes countries whose leaders meet the Dalai Lama by withdrawing commercial deals or sometimes cutting off trade ties. Caught between the importance of improving commercial relations with China and protecting human rights, China's trading partners invariably succumb to Chinese pressure by not meeting the Tibetan leader. Scholars consider this as the Dalai Lama effect on international trade.

Viewed from this perspective, commentators believe the Tibetan people's struggle for greater freedom in Tibet as punching above their weight. Chinese officials put it more succinctly. They call the Tibetan exiles' international efforts as "a fly flapping its wings against the king of mountains." Given the skyrocketing asymmetry between Tibetans and China in terms of power, political military and economic, it comes as no surprise that these observers view Tibet as a lost cause.

But in one area Tibetans have scored a significant victory over China. In the war of words between Dharamsala and Beijing that has simmered and flared for more than six decades Tibetans have won the argument, if not the war, of what is the issue of Tibet. The argument is about both the nature of the old Tibetan society and the Chinese rule in Tibet. Official China's argument is that old Tibet was a feudal serfdom, a minority of serf-owners oppressing the majority serfs. China's invasion of Tibet was

a 'liberation', bringing freedom, happiness and development to the backward Tibetans steeped in feudal superstition. China says its economic miracle has enabled the authorities to build Tibet's infrastructure, improve its economy and promote tourism in the region, making Tibet enjoy the highest GDP growth in the country and the Tibetans masters of their own affairs.

The Tibetan argument is that Tibet was an independent nation before the Chinese invasion of the country in 1950. Tibetans view Chinese rule in Tibet as an occupation and its policies directed towards economic marginalization, cultural assimilation, social exclusion and ethnic swamping of the country by the majority Han population. Tibetans decry China's destruction of Tibet's Buddhist civilization that flourished on the plateau for more than a thousand years and that served as a cultural and spiritual well-spring of millions of non-Tibetans who embraced Tibet's Buddhist culture.

How a handful of Tibetan refugees won their argument in the court of international public opinion is a story of tenacity and an inexhaustible supply of optimism. The beginning of this story was less than hopeful and mired in mistaken identity. Though the Dalai Lama's dramatic escape across the Himalayas in 1959 was termed as the story of the year, the international media which rushed to Tezpur in north-eastern India to cover the story did not know who the 14th Dalai Lama was. A Reuters' photographer snapped a picture of a gorgeously attired lama and sent it to London as the first photo of the Dalai Lama since his safe arrival on Indian soil. The Reuters' head office in London shot back, "Your Dalai Lama has a beard. The real one doesn't!," or words to this effect.

If the 14th Dalai Lama's escape from the People's Liberation Army threw the international media into confusion over his identity, the 13th Dalai Lama's escape nearly 50 year earlier to India from

the Manchu forces hot on his heels met with total ignorance from the English officers who were serving the British Raj in the realm of the Dalai Lama. The 13th Dalai Lama escaped Lhasa in 1910 from the clutches of Zhou Er-Feng, the conquering Manchu general. When the fleeing 13th Dalai Lama and his harried party knocked at the door of the British Trade Agent in Dromo in southern Tibet, across the border from Sikkim, the British officer who opened the door demanded, "Now which of you chaps is the Dalai Lama?"

No struggle could say it set off on an auspicious start when the leader of that struggle who was the pontiff of the Buddhist world was barely recognized by the international media. This lack of recognition was confounded by the challenge of surviving in the modern world where for the Tibetan refugees everything was strange and new, except the sky and earth.

Given China's enormous media reach and now with consequential economic clout, how a group of non-entities from remote and inconsequential land, albeit exotic, managed to grab the attention of the world and hold it for so long is the story of Tibet in exile. In telling its story to the world, Tibet in exile weaved all the elements of its Buddhist civilization into a compelling narrative that has spawned a global industry in Tibetan Buddhism, culture and history. Brand Tibet is a global brand, comparable in its appeal if not in its influence with China's economic juggernaut rolling across the planet. Contrary to the forces that have sparked China's economic miracle based on interests and profit, Brand Tibet's appeal is the message of ancient Tibet based on the values of non-violence and compassion and, in a world increasingly facing dwindling resources, the message of living within one's means.

** Thubten Samphel is the Director of Tibet Policy Institute, a think tank of the Central Tibetan Administration.*

China Gets Even Colder for Reporters

By Andrew Jacobs,

The New York Times, 17 December

For foreign journalists in the Chinese capital, the end of the year brings the usual swirl of holiday parties, talk of escaping the bracing cold for the warmer climes of Southeast Asia and one inevitable question: Did you get your new visa yet?

The good news is that unlike last year — when the Chinese government delayed the issuance of some journalist visas, prompting the intervention of Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. during a state visit — the authorities appear to be renewing hundreds of annual resident journalist visas without a hitch. That includes reporters from The New York Times and Bloomberg News, two media outlets that last year were targeted for their investigative coverage of the wealth of the families of China's top leaders.

But the progress on visa renewals obscures what many correspondents say is a mounting hostility toward Western media outlets operating in China. The government continues to block the websites of The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg and The Times, and a number of Times reporters have been forced to leave mainland China after the government declined to process their visa applications.

Many foreign correspondents say it is increasingly difficult to carry out their work here. Tibet remains off limits, and the volatile western region of Xinjiang has effectively become a no-go zone, with police harassment making it nearly impossible to investigate the bloody clashes between ethnic Uighurs and Chinese security forces that claimed hundreds of lives in 2014.

Earlier this week, the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China published a harrowing catalog of recent incidents that suggest a creeping intolerance for photographers, reporters and video



A police officer gestured as she asked reporters to leave the vicinity of the courthouse in Beijing where the journalist Gao Yu was put on trial on Nov. 21. Many foreign correspondents say it is increasingly difficult to carry out their work in China. Credit Kim Kyung-Hoon/Reuters

crews working in places that are officially open to foreign journalists.

In recent months, more than a dozen correspondents have been roughed up, detained or shadowed by plainclothes police officers as they tried to work in far-flung provinces as well as the heart of the nation's capital.

In October, one wire service reporter said he was manhandled, chained to a metal chair and held for more than 14 hours after he attempted to conduct interviews at the main petition office in Beijing. The reporter refused to strip down for a physical exam but was forced to submit to a drug test and then falsely accused of injuring one of his interrogators. As retribution, the Foreign Ministry issued him a six-month press card, not the one-year card that is usually pro forma.

Many of those who reported harassment to the Foreign Correspondents' Club requested that their names, and in some cases the names of their employers, be withheld for fear of angering the authorities.

In interviews, several of those who have experienced harassment said it was disproportionate to the sensitivities of the

subject at hand. In August, an Associated Press camera crew covering the opening — and subsequent closing — of an underground film festival in Beijing was attacked by a crowd of thugs who damaged their equipment, splashed them with water and snatched one of the correspondents' phones. "We were completely shocked because you don't expect that kind of reaction covering a small film festival," said one reporter, adding that the police just stood by as the violence unfolded.

In many ways, the growing intolerance of foreign journalists mirrors the hostility experienced by civil society groups, liberal academics and rights defenders under the two-year-old administration of President Xi Jinping. In internal speeches and editorials published in the state-owned news media, the Communist Party has characterized Western reporters as "hostile foreign forces" seeking to subvert single-party rule.

"Western anti-China forces led by the United States have joined in one after the other, and colluded with dissidents within the country to make slanderous attacks on us in the name of so-called press freedom and constitutional democracy," one propaganda official in

Jiangsu Province wrote last year in a party-run journal.

Peter Ford, president of the Foreign Correspondents' Club, said that many reporters increasingly find themselves stonewalled by local officials, some of whom acknowledge that they have been instructed not to speak to the foreign media. "It does seem to reflect a general sense of official mistrust of outsiders," said Mr. Ford, who is the Beijing bureau chief for The Christian Science Monitor. The Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a faxed request for comment on Wednesday.

After more than four decades in China, Jaime FlorCruz, the Beijing bureau chief for CNN, takes a long view about the ups and downs of working as a foreign journalist in China. Mr. FlorCruz, who has reported for Time and Newsweek over the years, recalls the days when the foreign press corps needed government permission to leave the capital and official minders made it difficult to interact with ordinary Chinese. "Figuring out how to shrug off your handlers and get several minutes to do what you wanted became an art," he said in an interview.

As part of its bid for the 2008 Olympics, Beijing relaxed those travel restrictions, leading to a boom of media coverage from the nation's hinterland — including stories about pollution, corruption and everyday injustice that the government undoubtedly wishes had remained obscured to foreign audiences.

But Mr. FlorCruz, like other veteran reporters in China, has seen a noticeable decline in official openness, which he said reflected insecurity and unseen turmoil within the nation's leadership.

As he contemplates retirement in the coming year, Mr. FlorCruz, 63, reflected on what he described as the Chinese government's struggle to navigate its newfound status as an economic and diplomatic power. "The government should realize that being big also means you are in the spotlight, which includes figuring out how to take constructive criticism," he said, adding, "China needs thicker skin."

China builds hydroelectric dam on Brahmaputra in Tibet, India fears flash floods

By Saibal Dasgupta,
The Economic Times

empower the development of the electricity-strapped region".



China has routinely responded saying its plans were restricted to run-off-the-river dams focussed on generating electricity, which posed little danger.

China has announced that it has completed a major hydropower dam on the Brahmaputra, called Yarlung Zangbo, in Tibet. The dam is bound to enhance fears in India and Bangladesh about flash floods and related risks like landslides involving lives of millions of people downstream.

India has repeatedly expressed concern about the dangers of damming the Brahmaputra, one of the strongest Himalayan rivers, in upstream areas in Tibet. China has routinely responded saying its plans were restricted to run-off-the-river dams focussed on generating electricity, which posed little danger.

Indian officials have so far been satisfied by Beijing's explanations, not realizing China was actually building a massive project that would affect the river's flow into Arunachal Pradesh and other parts of the northeastern region of India, sources said.

Announcing that Tibet's largest hydropower station had become partly operational on Sunday, Beijing said it would be useful in "harnessing the rich water resources of the Yarlung Zangbo river to

The first section of the \$1.5 billion Zangmu Hydropower Station, which is over 3,300m above sea level on the "roof of the world", went into operation Sunday afternoon. Five other sections are due for completion no later than next year, it said.

The Chinese government on

Sunday described it as a "huge project, which straddles the middle reaches of the roaring Yarlung Zangbo river, (which) will have power capacity of 510,000kW after its four-year construction." The official media said the project is designed to generate 2.5 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually.

Official statistics showed that Tibet's per capita electricity consumption in 2013 was slightly over 1,000 kilowatt-hours, less than one third of the average in China, Xinhua news agency said.

Zangmu is one of the five projects planned on the Brahmaputra to generate a total of 2,000MW of hydro power. Environmentalists opposed to the project have asked why China wants to unsettle fragile ecology in the Tibetan region which is little need for additional electricity because of low industrialization.

India recently said it will commission extensive studies to study the impact of dam building and behavioral changes in the Brahmaputra. But experts ask if such delayed studies would be useful in the face of Chinese plans to build four more dams on the river.

Tibetan government-in-exile has unique economic model

By Peter Hadekel,

Montreal Gazette

Most political leaders would say that running the economy ranks as one of their biggest tasks.

But what if the people they govern are displaced in another country? How do you have an economy at all?

That's the challenge facing Lobsang Sangay, the 46-year-old political leader of the Central Tibetan Administration.

The CTA is the government-in-exile representing 150,000 Tibetans who live in settlements in India set up after they or their families escaped from Chinese-controlled Tibet.

Sangay, a Harvard-trained lawyer, was on a brief tour of Canada this week and gave a public talk in Montreal. In an interview, he described the unique challenge facing Tibetan authorities as they try to provide a future for tens of thousands of people cut off from their homeland.

Why they leave Tibet is clear. Under Chinese rule, 6 million Tibetans are victims of linguistic, cultural and religious repression along with social and economic marginalization.

Chanting a pro-Tibet slogan or holding up a photograph of the revered spiritual leader the Dalai Lama can be grounds for years of imprisonment and torture.

But looking for a better life in India hasn't been an easy task for those who make the perilous escape across Himalayan mountain passes.

And while a big part of Sangay's job has been to lobby governments around the world on behalf of Tibetan autonomy, he devotes most of his time to economic issues in the exile communities in India.

"We have to take care of all the schools, hospitals and settlements, all the (Bud-



Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, Tibetan Political Leader

dhist) monasteries and nunneries. Education is our No. 1 priority," he said.

"We run about 70 schools from primary to middle to high school. There are 260 monasteries and nunneries in the 40-some Tibetan settlements."

The CTA, based in the Indian Himalayan town of Dharamsala, has a unique economic model. Its main sources of revenue are donations from individuals and philanthropic organizations around the globe while Tibetans outside China also contribute through a "voluntary freedom tax."

Some governments provide humanitarian assistance out of their foreign aid budgets but Sangay has to run a pretty tight ship. The annual operating budget is around \$30 million — "less than the annual budgets of some embassies in Delhi," he said.

That amount looks after all the settlements and a dozen political offices around the world. Most of those in India still live in the settlements but many are moving into the cities to look for jobs and economic opportunities as unemployment often exceeds 20 per cent.

"We are trying to teach entrepreneurship and college-level business (skills)," he says. The government provides scholarships to college and offers vocational training, computer instruction, communication and leadership training, advice

on how to face interviews and career counselling.

The survival of the language and culture is tied to their economic future. Smaller settlements are already closing down. If young people continue to leave, that poses a real threat, Sangay concedes.

It's a double-edged threat because across the border in China, the economic marginalization of Tibetans is getting worse.

New research by economist Andrew Fischer at the International Institute of Social Studies at The Hague shows that despite massive state subsidies poured by China into the development of the Tibet region, Tibetans themselves have not benefited.

There is no preferential hiring and little possibility that even the best educated can work in the public sector where the quality jobs are found.

Sangay said 70 to 80 per cent of shops, restaurants and enterprises around the Tibet capital of Lhasa are owned or operated by Chinese.

Even when jobs are advertised, they come with strings attached. If they're hired, Tibetans get paid less than ethnic Chinese. "Forty per cent of Tibetans who are high school or college graduates are unemployed."

Sangay is raising these issues with national governments including Canada's, even as China's appalling human rights record takes a back seat to trade and investment opportunities.

Canadian companies doing business in Tibet need to be sensitive to human rights and environmental protection, he argued. "Stand up for the values you believe in."

Like the Dalai Lama, he espouses a middle way: no separation from China but genuine autonomy that will protect linguistic and religious freedoms in Tibet.

It takes a clinical eye to go into the skin of an underprivileged

By Tenzin Yangchen*

A special feature on Tonglen Charitable Trust. Tonglen was founded in 2002 by a group of Tibetan refugees resident in the Kangra Valley, in the north-west of Himachal State. Seeing the poverty and deprivation amongst the Indian people who for years have supported them since they fled their occupied homeland, they took to organising a number of aid projects within a displaced community near to their home-in-exile.

Eighteen-year-old Sunny Shinde looks back and sighs over his yesteryears and remains silent for a while. Finally, his voice breaks the silence and he begins to share his journey with me, "I cannot thank my Guru enough and one day I am coming back."

Moving from one compartment to another, using his wits to attract customers to sell tea, eyeing on every bits of left-over food, and sometimes...Sunny bows his head and says, "stealing would be the only option left." Hailing from Nagpur, Maharashtra with his three infant brothers and his elderly grandmother, Sunny did not even have the faintest memory of his parents. Sunny's grandmother told him that he was born on their journey from Nagpur to Charan Khad, Dharamshala.

Today, Sunny smiles and looks unexpectedly content with the life he was born into. He points his finger at his hostel building and a sense of belongingness glitters into his eyes. When asked about his new life, he adjusts his voice and his smile widens. He says in his search of garbage, he found a blessing. Sunny then narrates the story of how he met his Guru, a Buddhist monk named Lobsang Jamyang at his monastery at



Children eating lunch provided by the Child Nutrition Project of Tonglen Charitable Trust near Dharamshala. Photo/ Anna Owen

McLeod Ganj when he and two of his friends went there to collect garbage.

We all look similar, yet there are vast differences amongst us. People say that meeting the right people at the right time can change someone's life.

This was precisely the case for Sunny and his friends as well. Twelve years ago, Sunny met Lobsang Jamyang, a Tibetan Buddhist monk and his life took a different turn.

Lobsang Jamyang saw the misery and suffering of the slum children and recollects the memory of his perilous journey from Tibet to India. The deprivation in their eyes resonated with the pain and torture the Tibetans endured since the brutal Chinese invasion of Tibet that the Chinese government committed in the name of "peaceful liberation."

Hundreds of thousands of Tibetans were forced to leave their country under pressure from Chinese oppression. Fortunately, the Indian government left no stone unturned in their efforts to resettle

the large influx of refugees. Recalling the generosity of the Indian Government and its people during the Tibetans' time of need, Jamyang immediately moved forward to reciprocate the compassion.

After years of research, Jamyang, along with his friends, finally came up with Tong-Len, which literally translates as "giving and taking" in Tibetan. Tong-Len is a partnership between two registered charities: the Tong-Len Charitable Trust, which was started in 2002 and registered in India on December 2004, and Tong-Len UK, which is located in Edinburgh and was founded in 2005 to supply funds for the work in India.

At its inception in 2002, Tong-len provided free education facilities to three slum children. In 2004, ten students were enrolled in school through Tong-Len. With the help of his friends and some volunteers, Jamyang built tent schools to assist the children with their school assignments and homework, rented a house to use as a hostel, and built a tent to use as a health clinic in the morning and as a nursery in the afternoon. With such a humble beginning, Tong-len successfully laid the foundations of trust and began to build a relationship with the slum community, which led to further positive changes. Now, on its 10th anniversary, Tong-len provides free education facilities for around 100 kids and health care for 3,800 people from slum

For latest news on Tibet & CTA

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His Holiness the Dalai Lama with the children during the inauguration of a new hostel building on 19 November 2011.

areas in and around Dharamshala and Kangra.

Jamyang's prime objective in establishing the Tong-Len charitable trust was to break the cycle of poverty and help needy children and families through education, improved health care access and general empowerment to achieve their full potential and maintain a sustainable life. It also aims to give back to the Indian community after all the gracious support they have provided for the Tibetan community.

While many turn their backs on the less fortunate, Lobsang Jamyang, did not stick to this status quo. These slum dwellers live in places that are not fit for a dignified human habitation; they reside in dilapidated mud houses that provide minimum shelter, their children play in mud, eat from garbage, drink from open drains, dress in shabby clothes and reside in unsanitary living conditions. Their stories have inspired the monk to do something to change the horrific conditions.

"How can I close my eyes, how can I stay and do nothing? As a monk and as a follower of His Holiness who encourages loving kindness and compassion, my responsibility is to do whatever I can for these people," Jamyang reiterates.

The displaced families from some of the most underprivileged communities in Northern India come to Kangra valley in

Himachal Pradesh in order to make their ends meet.

When asked about the discrepancies between underprivileged Tibetans and slum dwelling Indians, Jamyang shared that he feels the Indian poor people are much more demoralized and they often consider their situation as being their fate.

For instance, Karan, a 17 year old boy who lived in a slum, used to collect garbage and beg for food in Mcloed Ganj. He was only seven when he moved from his slum to the Tong-Len hostel. He says, "I have been a child of Tong-Len for the past ten years. This year I will finish class XII and hope for a future in the Indian Navy. Before Tong-len, no-one in my family went to school now my brother and three sisters all go to school."

"It is amazing to have a wonderful opportunity to be in the Tong-len family. I am very proud and always feel lucky to

be a Tong-len child. Without God's gift of Tong-len, I have no chance to have a wonderful potential in life. The human life is much more than what I thought when I was a child. As I am growing up I realise that I have potential and can be a good person and spend my life in meaningful ways in society," Nisha Kumari, 17 years old, who was once a babysitter says. Nisha aims to become a Journalist so that she can raise awareness around the agony of the slum people and advocate on their behalf.

Tong-len now has more than 100 kids aged four to nineteen years under its care. Jamyang says, "The hostel staff provide balanced nutritious meals, help the children with their homework, and organise recreational activities in which the children's families are also invited to participate. The family atmosphere of the hostels is important to all. For most of the children it is their first experience of a secure family life."

Jamyang adds that the institution not only focuses on the children's education, but rather on their holistic growth into physically and mentally healthy human beings. He says that in the next ten years, he hopes to expand the support Tong-Len provides to millions of destitute kids. He inserts on that he is immensely grateful to all the sponsors and supporters who have provided their assistance in making Tong-Len happened and he especially wanted to thank His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Dalai Lama Trust for contributing so generously towards the cause.

** Tenzin Yangchen is a Tibet Corps volunteer at Tibet.net*

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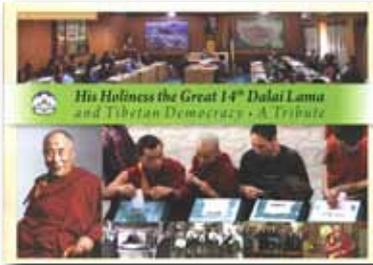
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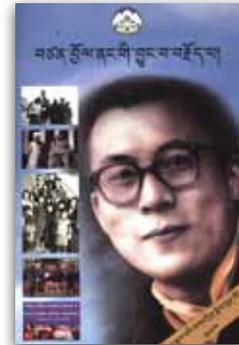
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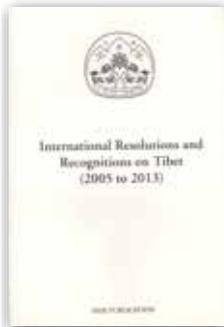
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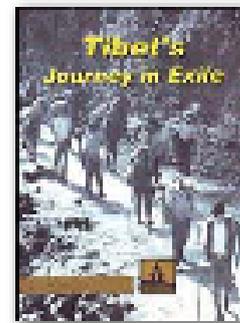
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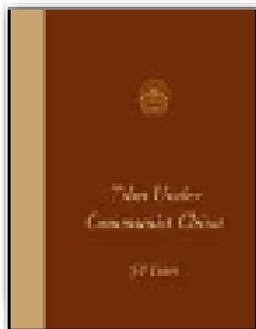
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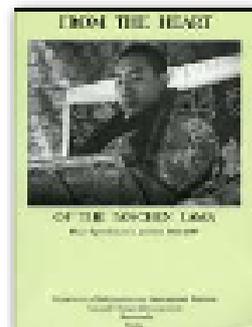
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