



TIBETAN BULLETIN

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SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2014

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Irmtraut Wager



His Holiness the Dalai Lama and fellow Nobel Laureates Shirin Ebadi and Jody Williams walking from his residence to the Main Tibetan Temple in Dharamshala, India on 2 October 2014. Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL



Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay with Nobel Laureates Shirin Ebadi of Iran (L) and Jody Williams of US (R) at a press conference in Dharamshala, India on 1 October 2014/DIIR Photo

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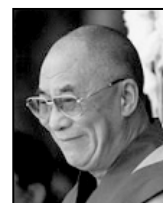
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Foreign Journalists in China See Decline in Reporting Conditions

The conditions for foreign journalists working in China have worsened over the past year, with the Chinese authorities increasingly seeking to influence coverage of news by barring journalists from large portions of the country or by withholding visas and blocking the websites of overseas news outlets, the Foreign Correspondents Club said.

“For the last three or four years it has been getting harder for foreign journalists to do their jobs, either because they’re simply not allowed into the country through denial of visas, or because information is increasingly withheld from foreign reporters,” said Peter Ford, president of the Foreign Correspondents’ Club and a correspondent for The Christian Science Monitor.

The report of a survey among the organization’s 243 members paint a portrait of mounting pressure on foreign journalists as the ruling Communist Party seeks to aggressively limit negative coverage abroad and to punish news organizations and reporters who defy warnings to steer clear from so-called sensitive topics, such as the wealth accumulated by relatives of China’s top leaders.

The report noted that conditions had worsened significantly since 2008, when the Chinese government relaxed restrictions on foreign correspondents during

the approach to the Beijing Olympics.

The authorities have also taken aim at Chinese citizens working for foreign news bureaus. Half of all respondents who employ Chinese news assistants said they had been threatened or harassed by the authorities. In some instances, national security agents have pressed interns working at American news outlets to act as spies, and when they refused, pressured them into quitting.

According to the report, PBS NewsHour, Huffington Post and the online news organization GlobalPost have been denied licenses to set up offices in China.

Large portions of the country remain off-limits to foreign correspondents. In addition to the restricted access to Tibet, the government has made it increasingly difficult for reporters to conduct interviews in the far western region of Xinjiang, home to China’s Uighur minority, as well as to heavily Tibetan areas of Gansu, Sichuan and Qinghai Provinces. The report described such restrictions as “widespread, arbitrary and unexplained” by the authorities.

“Journalists seeking to report in Xinjiang have routinely been turned back by checkpoint police and other authorities telling them that they are forbidden to be there,” the report said.

Tibetan student dies after self-immolation protest

A Tibetan student has burned himself to death to protest the Chinese government’s repressive policies in eastern Tibet. The self-immolation protest coincided the Chinese President Xi Jinping’s state visit to India.

Lhamo Tashi, 22, set himself on fire outside a police station in Tsoe area in Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (incorporated into China’s Gansu Province) on 17 September.

“The police took his body and informed the family. Despite their request to have his body returned, it was cremated by the authorities and his ashes given to them on 19 September,” a London-based hu-

man rights group Free Tibet said in a statement.

“We are deeply saddened to learn about the death of Lhamo Tashi following his self-immolation protest against the Chinese government’s repressive policies in Tibet. We mourn and express solidarity with his family members,” Speaker Penpa Tsering of the Tibetan Parliament said.

The total number of self-immolation protests has risen to 132, of which 113 died. The self-immolators have demanded freedom for Tibetans and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Tibet Museum showcase exhibitions on His Holiness the Dalai Lama

The Tibet Museum of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) held a month-long traveling exhibition in the Tibetan schools and communities in and around Dehradun in northern India, as part of the 14th Kashag’s announcement to observe 2014 as the Year of His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama.

The themes for the exhibition were “His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s Three Commitments in Life”, “Tibet’s Journey-in-Exile” and “The Burning Question – Why are Tibetans Turning to Self-Immolation?”.

The exhibition started from the Tibetan Homes School in Rajpur on 13 Oct. It then moved to Dekyiling Tibetan Settlement, CST Paonta Sahib, CST Herbertpur, TCV Selakui, Tibetan Homes School at Mussoorie and CST school, Mussoorie.

Over 80 panels were displayed, of which 14 panels feature His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s three main commitments in life, 40 panels portray Tibetan people’s life in exile for the last 50 years, and 27 panels feature extensive photographic and textual information on the causes leading to the Tibetan self-immolation protests inside Tibet. It also include a few testimonials and last words of the Tibetan self-immolators.

The Central Tibetan Administration has repeatedly urged the Chinese government to end its political repression, religious persecution, cultural assimilation and economic marginalization and environmental destruction in Tibet to address the issue of Tibet. It has consistently appealed to Tibetans to not to resort to drastic actions including self-immolation.

The international community, including governments and parliaments, has also urged the Chinese government to end its repressive policies in Tibet and resolve the issue of Tibet through dialogue with the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Czech, EU, UK and US criticise China's human rights record at UN meeting

The United States and United Kingdom expressed concern for human rights in Tibet during the UN Human Rights Council's 27th session in Geneva on 19th September 2014.

The US Ambassador said, "China has restricted the freedom of movement of released prisoners of conscience Gao Zhisheng and Dhondup Wangchen. The government has tightened control on expression of religious freedom and its continuous repressive policies on Tibet and Uighur areas..."

"UK remains concerned by reports of violence in ethnic minority areas of China and excessive use of force by the security authorities. We urge China to engage meaningful dialogue with minority communities in Tibet and Xinjiang," said the

UK delegate in its statement.

Earlier, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) and International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) addressed the UN Human Rights Council session.

The Dharamsala based TCHRD's Director Ms. Tsering Tsomo, speaking on behalf of the Society for Threatened People, drew attention to the recent shooting of Tibetans by the Chinese Security forces in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Sichuan Province).

The Society for Threatened Peoples, called for the intervention of the Human Rights Council and urged the PRC to schedule visits of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief and the UN High Commissioner for Human

Rights to the PRC including Tibetan areas.

In a joint statement with Helsinki Foundation, ICT asked the UN Human Rights Council to look into 41 cases of enforced disappearances in Tibet that ICT documented in-between April 2010 to February 2014.

ICT called on the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to call to States to take specific measures to prevent threats, intimidation and reprisals against victims of enforced disappearances including family members, witnesses and human rights defenders."

The Chinese delegate in his response said EU, UK, the Czech Republic and US had total disregard for China's human rights achievements.

Cape Town appalled by South African Government's position on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visa



Executive Mayor Patricia de Lille of Cape Town

The Mayor of Cape Town has expressed her dismay at the South African government's position on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visa to attend the 14th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Cape Town in October.

"We have informally received contact that His Holiness won't get his visa," Nangsa Chodon, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's representative in South Africa, told Reuters.

"Based on further discussions with the Dalai Lama's representatives both in South Africa and Dharamsala, it has now

become clear that the officials from the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) contacted the Dalai Lama's office to inform them that the South Africa government would not grant him a visa to attend the summit, due to sensitivities related to the Chinese government," Patricia de Lille, the Executive Mayor of Cape Town, said in a statement on 5 September.

"The actions of DIRCO are absolutely appalling, and an affront to a key theme of the summit: celebrating 20 years of South Africa's constitutional democracy and the legacy of the late Nelson Mandela.

"It is indeed a dark day for South Africa when the ideals for which Nelson Mandela and so many others fought are sold to the highest bidder.

"The Mandela, Luthuli, De Klerk, and Tutu Foundations will be writing to President Zuma appealing to him to intervene and ensure that a visa is granted to the Dalai Lama so that he can attend the summit.

"Past recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize (including former heads of State) will also write a petition to President Zuma. The Nobel Peace Laureates who have

already signed the letter of appeal to President Zuma include President Lech Walesa, Mairead Cack-handed Corrigan Maguire, Muhammad Yunus, Jody Williams, Betty Williams, Tawakkul Karman, Leimah Gbowee, and Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo.

"If this last attempt at securing a visa is unsuccessful, the programme of the summit will be adapted to ensure that the Nobel Peace Laureates can make a powerful symbolic protest of the Dalai Lama's treatment," the Mayor said.

Earlier in 2009 and 2011, His Holiness the Dalai Lama called off his visits to South Africa after the South African government seemed to find it inconvenient to issue a visa to him. In 2011, His Holiness the Dalai Lama was invited by a number of universities and organizations including Stellenbosch University, the Tutu Centre and the Mahatma Gandhi Trust to give public talks, deliver Bishop Tutu's 80th Birth Anniversary Inaugural. A South African court ruled that officials had "unreasonably delayed" a decision on granting a visa to His Holiness the Dalai Lama that year.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited South Africa in 1996, 1999 and 2004.

TCV dedicates 54th anniversary to His Holiness the Dalai Lama



Students performing a callisthenic display reading "Long Live His Holiness" at the inaugural ceremony of the 3-day founding anniversary of Upper TCV school on 23 October 2014.

The Tibetan Children's Village school dedicated its 54th founding anniversary to His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama.

The theme of this year's celebration was titled 'Forever in Gratitude' as part of the Kashag's announcement to observe "2014 as Year of His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama" to express deep gratitude to his remarkable achievements for the cause of Tibet and promote his ideals of non-violence and human values.

Over a thousand Tibetans gathered at the school to witness the annual celebration which include athletics meet, art exhibitions, debates and cultural shows.

His Eminence the Karmapa Rinpoche was the guest of honour at the inaugural ceremony.

Mr Penpa Tsering, the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, in his inaugural address, told the gathering that the best way to repay the gratitude of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is to fulfill his aspirations by doing our respective jobs to the best of our abilities. He said: "Since the announcement by Kashag to celebrate 2014 as year of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, various Tibetan institutions and organisations have duly marked their functions in tune with the announcement. Today, TCV too, is celebrating its founding anniversary with the theme of gratitude to His Holiness

the Dalai Lama."

"During Gandhi Jayanti celebration on 2nd October, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, accompanied by two Nobel peace laureates, told us that if we really want to repay gratitude, we should inculcate and uphold the ethics espoused by Gandhiji. Therefore, I think the best way to repay gratitude to His Holiness would be to follow his words of wisdom and perform our respective jobs to the best of our abilities," he added.

Speaking about the school's modest beginnings, he said: "TCV has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 1960 to its present status. It's mostly due to the efforts of the older generation including late Ms. Tsering Dolma and Jetsun Pema, elder and younger sister of His Holiness the Dalai Lama respectively. Now, it is up to the present staff and teachers to further improve the school's status."

"The most important purpose of a school is to impart quality education so that the future generation becomes responsible and capable citizens of a country," he said. Addressing the students, he said: "Most of the current staff in the Tibetan administration including Sikyong, Speaker and the Kalons were all educated in exile. Soon, it will be you who will be spearheading the Tibetan movement. Therefore, the current generation of the Tibetan leadership is the vital link between the older generation and the

next generation of Tibetans currently in school. Even after leaving school, you should have a social responsibility along with the pursuit of one's personal livelihood."

In his address, officiating Sikyong Kalon Pema Chhinjor said: "TCV is one of the most highly reputed schools in the Tibetan community. It has conducted all its activities till now as per the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration. Therefore, TCV is one of our highly regarded institutions that we proudly showcase to our foreign guests whenever they visit Dharamshala."

"TCV is a well-organised educational institute and it has benefited countless Tibetans in exile. Those who have studied here have gone on to various parts of the world and continue to serve in diverse roles for the cause of Tibet," he said.

Kalon Pema Chhinjor also talked about the prioritisation of education by the 14th Kashag. "Education has been prioritised as one of the most important component of its policies by the present Kashag. We have announced numerous new schemes and initiatives to boost the level of education in our Tibetan community," he said.

He explained that we can fulfil our obligations only through excellence in education. "I believe that our education system is a two-pronged strategy: to create capable Tibetans, fluent in Tibetan language and well versed in Tibetan culture, who can serve the Tibetan cause, and to create a conducive environment for Tibetan students to pursue high level of academic excellence."

The upper Tibetan Children Village was established in 1960, with just 51 children. Most of the children at that time have arrived from the road construction camps in Jammu during the early years of Tibetan exile. Since then, over 6,000 Tibetan children have passed through this school. Many of these children are now serving the Tibetan community in various capacities in the Central Tibetan Administration and other Tibetan organisations.

Government of India formalises Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy 2014

The Ministry of Home, Government of India has formalised the much awaited "Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy 2014".

Mr K. K. Pathak, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, handed over the copy of the 7-page policy, dated 20th October 2014, along with annexure to Kalon Gyari Dolma of the Department of Home, Central Tibetan Administration.

The Tibetan rehabilitation policy is the outcome of number of meetings held between and among the officials of the Home Ministry, Ministry of External Affairs, concerned State Government and the delegation of the Central Tibetan Administration. For the last few months, major issues concerning the rehabilitation of Tibetan refugees and welfare were discussed and policy options de-

bated and worked out.

This guideline has made a clear policy statement about the welfare of the Tibetans in India. Matters concerning land lease, extending Central and State government benefits, are also specified. Policy guideline has also made clear policy statement that Tibetans may be allowed to undertake any economic activity and to that extent, relevant papers/trade license/permit may be issued to them.

It also says that Tibetan Refugees may also be permitted to pursue/take jobs in any field for which they are professionally qualified. These could be fields like nursing, teaching, Chartered Accountancy, medicine, engineering etc.

This policy guideline shall be send to

all the states concerned, and the Tibetan Settlement officers shall also have a copy. The guideline is significant since the government of India has tried to set a uniform policy in all the States in dealing with the rehabilitation and welfare of the Tibetan refugees in India.

Kalon Gyari Dolma welcomed the policy and thanked the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs and the Joint Secretary, for the clear and positive policy guidelines.

Mr. Sonam Topgyal Khorlatsang, Secretary of Department of Home, and Mr. Tsewang Gyalpo Arya, Secretary of Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, New Delhi accompanied Kalon Gyari Dolma during the meeting.

Education Kalon visits Tibetan Schools in Northeast India

Mr. Ngodup Tsering, Kalon for the Department of Education, Central Tibetan Administration visited a series of Tibetan schools in north-eastern India including CST Ravangla, former Thumi Sambhota School Gangtok, STSS Pokhriabong, CST Darjeeling and CST Sonada.

During his visit to the schools, he inspected the teaching and learning activities in the classes, visited the school libraries, science labs and hostels.

Kalon addressed the students and the teachers in all the five schools and emphasised the importance of education, preservation of Tibetan language, upholding ethical values and good health.

"An international research agency has revealed that there were over tens of thousands of languages in the world before. Now there were only about eight hundred left. Languages are becoming extinct faster than ever. The chief rea-

son for such changes is neglect, apathy and an onslaught of external influences. Therefore, I urge you to preserve our Tibetan language through innovative activities", Kalon said, calling for the need to preserve Tibetan language and the distinct Tibetan culture from annihilation.

He also called upon the non-governmental organizations in the area to initiate activities to boost Tibetan language proficiency and its preservation.

Education Kalon expressed his special appreciation of the Indian teachers who have been teaching Tibetan students for years on and produced many great leaders such as the Sikyong, the Speaker and the Chief Justice Commissioner of CTA. "It is because of your contribution that we are now able to stand on our own feet", he said.

He also spoke on the significance and implementation of Basic Education Pol-

icy (BEP) for Tibetans in Exile and various programs of DoE like Teacher Professional Development (TPD) and Early Grade Reading (EGR) to improve reading skill of early grade students. He has expressed about the gratitude of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibetan people and 2014 is being celebrated as the year of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Informal meetings and open discussions with the staff members of the schools were also held on the issues relating to education of the students, administration of the schools and welfare measures of the staff members.

He also visited ITBCI School Kalimpong, Tibetan old people's home Kalimpong, the Tibetan Settlement Offices, Tibetan Refugees Self-Help Centre in Darjeeling and Tibetan Co-operative Society in Sonada.

3 Tibet Houses Launch New Website on Dolgyal Controversy

Three Tibetan cultural centres – Tibet House New York, Tibet House New Delhi and Casa del Tibet Barcelona – have jointly launched a new website and a book to provide true information on Dolgyal (Shugden) controversy.

The cultural centres said the website

(www.shugdeninfo.com) is created to correct the misrepresentations of Tibetan culture generated by Dolgyal controversy which has distorted and negatively affected the public perception of Tibetan culture. The book titled 'Dorje Shugden: A History' is available on the website.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has regularly advised Tibetans not to propitiate Dolgyal as it degenerates Tibetan Buddhism into a form of spirit worship, creates obstacles to the emergence of genuine non-sectarianism and harms the overall well-being of Tibetan society.

Monk Sentenced to 10 years in Prison in Chamdo

Lobsang Gedun, a 21-year-old Tibetan monk of Drongsar monastery in Chamdo, has been sentenced to ten years in prison by a local Chinese court, according to information received from Tibet.

Gendun was taken into custody on July 1, 2013, after he disrupted celebrations in Pashoe (Basu) county organised by the Chinese Communist Party by shouting "Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama" and "Tibet is an independent country". Since then, he has been detained for more than a year in various prisons.

"Gendun have called up his relatives on 12 September to inform them that ha has

been sentenced to 10 years in prison. However, he has given no information about the jail or detention center where he will be locked up to serve his sentence," an exile Tibetan with close contacts in the region said.

Gendun's elder brother went to Chamdo after hearing the news about the sentence, to try to learn where his brother would be taken. However, its not clear whether he was able to meet him or not.

Earlier in January this year, Gendun's parents were summoned by Chinese authorities to coerce their son to confess to his alleged crimes. Gendun has refused to confess to having committed any crime,

and instead asserted his innocence. "He further called on the Chinese authorities to confess their guilt in their own faulty policies in Tibet," the source added.

Gendun has reportedly told his parents during their meeting in January that he was beaten and tortured severely while in Chinese custody. His health was also reported to be deteriorating.

The situation inside Tibet continues to remain tense since the widespread uprising of 2008. At least 132 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009 in protest against the Chinese government's repressive policies in Tibet.

Labrang Jigme sentenced to five-year imprisonment

Jigme Gyatso also known as Labrang Jigme, a Tibetan monk who was arrested four times for his strong resistance against the repressive policies of the Chinese government, has been sentenced to five years imprisonment by a Chinese court in Gansu Province.

Jigme Gyatso came into prominence and was hailed as a hero by the Tibetan community after his testimonial in a 2009 video of his brutal treatment by the Chinese authorities was widely circulated on the Internet.

"It was not immediately clear where

Gyatso is being imprisoned. His relatives had been kept in the dark about his whereabouts during his detention," RFA reported. His friends had expressed concern about his health during his detention as he was believed to be ill and not receiving medical treatment.

He has been arrested four times since 2006 for engaging in alleged secessionist activities.

The Chinese authorities first detained Gyatso in 2006 following his return to Labrang after attending a religious ceremony conducted by His Holiness the

Dalai Lama in India.

In 2008, when unprecedented protest broke against the Chinese rule, he was arrested, severely beaten in police custody and released after a year without being formally charged.

He was again arrested in 2010 and detained for six months in a hotel to undergo political "re-education" before he was released, again without charge.

He was last arrested in 2011 for allegedly engaging in splittist activities.

Sikyong joins world leaders at Forum 2000

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay participated in the 18th annual Forum 2000 meeting in Prague from 12 - 15 October. This year's meeting was attended by over 200 global leaders from diverse fields including politics, academia, civil society, media, business and religion.

The Forum 2000 is initiated to pursue the Czech Republic's first democratically-elected President Václav Havel's legacy of values of democracy and respect for human rights. Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay took part in a panel discussion on the theme titled "The Significance of Vaclav Havel's Value Based Foreign Policy" on the second day of the Forum on 13 October.

In his address during the discussion, Si-

kyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay underscored that given a choice nations should choose moral acts and democracy over money as the cornerstones of their policies.

He described how former president Václav Havel recognised that both morals and money are important, but if you have to choose between the two you must always choose morals.

Speaking on the Tibet issue, he said, "what we need is basic freedom; what we expect is moral supporters from around the world." He said President Václav Havel invited His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Czech Republic as a visiting head of the state soon after he became the president of young republic in 1990.

He said no one has imagined that democratic movements like Charter 77 and Velvet Revolution led by Mr Vaclav Havel and other leaders preceding the disintegration of Soviet Union, and the fall of Berlin Wall, would happen. The Charter 08 authored by Chinese intellectual Liu Xiaobo was inspired by Charter 77 initiated by former president Havel which called for human rights and democracy in Communist Czechoslovakia.

Other panelists include Andrew Schapiro, Ambassador of US to Czech Republic, Carl Gershman, the President of National Endowment for Democracy, US, Ales Bialiatski, President, Viasna Human Rights Centre, Belarus and Yonani Sanchez, Blogger and Activist from Cuba.

Finding Common Ground – Sino-Tibetan Conference

The Sino-Tibetan Conference «Finding Common Ground» was held in Hamburg, Germany from 26-28 August 2014. The conference was convened by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) based in Dharamshala (India).

Over 70 participants and observers from 15 countries from Europe, USA, Australia, Asia and Mainland China attended the conference.

«Finding Common Ground» was a Tibetan initiative to set in motion a process of exchange, interaction, cooperation and joint efforts between Tibetans and Chinese stakeholders in the pursuit of a peaceful and just resolution of the Tibet issue.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama met the participants of the conference and made clear that he had always encouraged Tibetans to reach out to Chinese brothers and sisters. In his address at the meeting, he expressed his hope to serve Mainland

Chinese Buddhists through Buddhist teachings and the promotion of secular ethics. He also reiterated his longstanding wish to go on a pilgrimage to Wu Tai Shan – a sacred mountain in China for Buddhists.

Welcoming all participants, Kalon Dicki Chhoyang, Head of Department for Information and International Relations of the CTA, elaborated on the basic features of Umaylam – the Middle Way Approach – adopted democratically by the Tibetan people as a policy for seeking a peaceful resolution of the issue of Tibet.

In his keynote address, Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the democratically-elected Tibetan political leader, stressed that “in the long history of peaceful and harmonious relations between Tibet and China, the present tragic state of affairs represents an aberration and exception. This aberration is the consequence of the military occupation of Tibet. The Middle

Way Approach represents a realistic and pragmatic way to re-establish genuine friendship and peaceful coexistence between Tibet and China.”

Chinese participants expressed their respect and deep appreciation for Tibetan culture, Buddhism as well as for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. According to them “a peaceful resolution of the Tibet issue is not only the concern of the Tibetans but that it has great relevance in which direction China as a whole moves forward.”

Consequently, unanimous support for the Middle Way Approach was expressed in a separate statement issued by the Chinese participants. Moreover, Chinese participants stressed the importance of making more information on Tibet in Chinese language available and using modern communication more effectively in reaching out to a wider Chinese audience.

Statement of Consensus

The statement of consensus of the conference listed several points including the need to hold the conference «Finding Common Ground» annually.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama graced the participants with an audience and said, “I give special attention to contacts between the Chinese and Tibetan people and strongly support it. In the 1950s, I had expressed my wish to go to Mount Wutai Shan for a pilgrimage which has not yet materialized, but I still have the desire to go there for a pilgrimage”. His Holiness the Dalai Lama further said, “President Xi Jinping said that Buddhism has an important role to play in reviving Chinese culture. Being a Buddhist I can definitely make my contribution to this.”

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, elected political leader of the Central Tibetan Administration, in his keynote address, said that historically Tibetan and Chinese people have existed peacefully with each other but today’s grave situation is an unprecedented one. He recognized that Middle Way Approach and mutual understanding would help dispel the misunderstandings, mistrust and misleading

things between the two sides.

Ms Dicki Chhoyang, Kalon for Information and International Relations, in her welcome address, said the Tibet issue is related with the survival of a nationality and the preservation and promotion of its unique identities. The resolution of the Tibet issue is directly related to the interest of China.

Ms Li Jianglin, scholar on history, in her presentation, delineated the evolution of the nationality policy of the Chinese Communist Government. In the beginning the Chinese Communist accepted and supported the right of people to self-determination. They had the right to choose to join the Federation of China. But gradually they have changed this policy, disregarded the right to self-determination and deleted these from official documents.

After having direct and open discussions and exchanges, the participants came to the following consensus:

- to support the efforts of the Central Tibetan Administration for dialogue with the Chinese Government; the partici-

pants gave high appreciation to the ongoing contacts between the Chinese and Tibetan people and considered it important for their aspirations;

- to make efforts that Sino-Tibetan people-to-people dialogue should not be limited to the political sphere, but also include areas of religion, culture and arts;

- to acknowledge that the issue of Tibet is not just the problem of Tibetans, but it has also relevance to the future of both the Chinese and Tibetan people;

- to express grave concerns about the serious human rights violations in Tibet and the deteriorating legal system, democratic development and human rights situation in China;

- to unanimously express recognition and support for the policy of the Middle Way Approach;

- to acknowledge the conference “Finding Common Ground” very meaningful and express that such meetings should be convened annually. It was agreed to form a working group of Tibetans and Chinese for that.

Chinese Conference Participants' Common View on the Middle Way Approach



The Chinese conference attendees comprised of writers, democracy activists, human rights lawyers from Europe, North America, Australia, Hong Kong and Mainland China participated in "Finding Common Ground", a Sino-Tibetan conference held in Hamburg, Germany.

The opportunity to listen to a keynote address by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and exchanged views on the issue of Tibet with Tibetan political leader Dr. Lobsang Sangay, Ms. Dicki Chhoyang, Kalon for the Department of Information & International Relations and Mr. Kelsang Gyaltzen, the Special Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Europe was greatly appreciated.

The participants had in-depth discussions on the preservation of Tibetan religion and culture, human rights, environment, and the forced resettlement of Tibetan nomads. Through these exchanges, their doubts about the Middle Way Approach of the Central Tibetan Administration have also been cleared.

Since the last Sino-Tibetan conference

'Finding Common Ground' held in Geneva in 2009, the human rights situation inside Tibet has not improved, but deteriorated. As a result of the Chinese government's continued assault on the Tibetan language, religion, culture and environment, at least 130 Tibetans have self-immolated in protest. The Chinese government's relentless denunciation of the Tibetan people's most revered leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, political repression, religious persecution and economic marginalization in Tibet continue unabated.

The Middle Way Approach is a reflection of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's great compassion and wisdom. Not only is the Middle Way Approach a rational, peaceful and non-violent means for Tibetans to achieve freedom, it is also a new approach to conflict resolution. The Middle Way Approach is a legacy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama which is a significant contribution to political diplomacy.

Therefore, based on an in-depth understanding of the Middle Way Approach, the Chinese participants of the 2014

'Finding Common Ground' Sino-Tibetan Conference unanimously agreed upon the following:

1. The Middle Way Approach proposed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama brings not only reconciliation between the Tibetan and Chinese people, but also benefits the Tibetan people's efforts to restore freedom through peace and non-violence.
2. The Middle Way Approach is a win-win proposition for both Tibetans and Chinese.
3. The Middle Way Approach can contribute significantly to a peaceful transformation of China into a democratic State.
4. A democratic China is beneficial for the peaceful resolution of the Tibet issue.
5. It is imperative for the Chinese people to understand the Tibet issue and the Middle Way Approach. We, the Chinese conference participants, resolve to make tireless efforts in this regard.

Welcome Address by DIIR Kalon Dicki Chhoyang

Today's meeting is the first Sino-Tibetan conference attended by members of the 14th Kashag which assumed office in August 2011. However, the importance we attach to Sino-Tibetan relations predates our current role in the Tibetan Administration. Honorable Sikyong Dr. Sangay has worked for several years at Harvard University to promote Sino-Tibetan dialogue and I have worked and studied, for several years as well, in Tibet and China. We are both pleased to be able to join you for this gathering.

Over the last few years, we have seen a gradual increase in the number of Chinese tourists in Tibet. Chinese interest in Tibet from the mundane to the profound is growing with extravagant sums of money being spent on Tibetan dogs, use of caterpillar fungus, hope in Tibetan medical cures, entertainment with songs and dance, and yearning for spiritual guidance.

Sadly, with the intense Chinese government propaganda on Tibet, I am not sure the questions with regards to Tibet that need to be pondered are asked by those thousands of Chinese tourists. Why have 130 Tibetans set themselves on fire? What is the importance of preserving Tibetan culture? Is Tibet's pristine environment adequately protected? Why is there still unrest in Tibetan areas after all these years?

When speaking about Tibet, it is common for the Chinese government to cite the large sums of money poured into Tibetan areas for infrastructure development and so on. This is partly why the Tibetan political movement for freedom often leaves Chinese individuals incredulous and wondering — Why are they so ungrateful, still unhappy? What more do they want?

Fundamentally, the Tibetan issue is about a basic human instinct which does not have a price, a people's yearning to exist, to survive with its distinct culture, the bedrock of its identity. It is perhaps difficult for Chinese people to relate to the deep emotions triggered by such staunch will to survive culturally. With its large population and well-established diaspora throughout all continents, the

Chinese people will never be faced with the burden of such challenge.

The Tibetan struggle for cultural preservation is about inclusion, not exclusion — ensuring the inclusion of Tibetan culture, while not excluding other cultures. Tibetans acknowledge the importance of knowing Mandarin both in Tibet and in exile where it is now even part of the curriculum in some schools.

With developments witnessed in Tibet over the last few decades, it is difficult to say what the future holds. No one anticipated the wave of self-immolations which began in 2009 or last week's incident when the police opened fire on peaceful Tibetan demonstrators in Eastern Tibet (Chinese: Ganze prefecture, Sichuan) leading to at least five individuals dying in police custody. The standoff is ongoing as we speak. What is certain is that the issue of Tibet will not go away as long as Tibetans in Tibet are forced to live under repressive policies and lack freedom to preserve their culture. Tibetans in exile are responding to their call for support.

There is no romantic notion about why Chinese people should care about Tibet. Any motivation to resolve a situation is interest based. Tibetans do not expect Chinese goodwill out of pity, generosity or, kindness, but a realization that peacefully resolving the situation in Tibet is in China's interest for several reasons including an opportunity to establish a new model of conflict resolution and safeguard a culture which can play an instrumental role in strengthening Chinese collective sense of secular ethics.

With the number of domestic and international conflicts involving China, the Middle Way Approach presents an opportunity to implement a new model for conflict resolution based on non-violence, dialogue and reconciliation. The situation in Tibet offers a unique testing ground for such an idea.

Whether one believes in Buddhism or not, Tibetan Buddhist principles offer, as the West is discovering, a solid foundation for reflection on the development of secular ethics which can help a soci-

ety, with weak rule of law, avoid further fraying of its collective moral fiber. This is what comes first to mind, upon hearing of tragedies such as the substandard constructions which collapsed during the 2008 Sichuan earthquake and caused the deaths of over 5,000 school children, or the tainted baby milk incident which caused over 300,000 victims, with at least six infants dying and an estimated 54,000 babies being hospitalized.

One of the biggest challenges facing the issue of Tibet today is the Chinese people's limited access to accurate information on Tibet. Chinese official misinformation campaign depicting the Tibetan political movement as a separatist movement, and a Sino-Tibetan inter-ethnic conflict, seek to fuel Chinese nationalistic sentiments to justify the Chinese government's intransigence and hardline Tibet policy.

The most realistic and promising avenue for harmony and stability in Tibet remains through the Middle Way Approach. I encourage those of you who are not familiar with this policy to read the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy and its Note. Both documents were presented to the Chinese government, by Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in 2008 and 2010 respectively. We have also created a web site and video to promote a better understanding of the policy. I wish to highlight three aspects of the Memorandum which may not be known to some of you: genuine autonomy as sought by Tibetans is based on China's current Constitution, there are 11 basic areas for which local decision-making power is sought and lastly, as a clear demonstration that the Tibetan movement is about Tibetans in Tibet and not the Tibetan community in exile or Central Tibetan Administration, there is a clause stating that should a political solution be found, the latter will self-dissolve.

Lastly, I hope the discussions taking place over the next few days will give rise to ideas for concrete actions as to how we can promote a better understanding of the Middle Way Approach amongst the Chinese people.

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay's statement at the Sino-Tibetan Conference



Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay and Kalon Dicki Chhoyang with participants from the Chinese community at the Sino-Tibetan conference in Hamburg, Germany, on 28 August 2014

The Middle Way Approach – The Path Forward

The Middle Way Approach for Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People (Tibetan: Umaylam) is a policy conceived by His Holiness 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. It is a policy adopted democratically through a series of discussions held over many decades by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and the Tibetan people. It is a win-win proposition, which 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.

To this day, His Holiness the Dalai Lama remains steadfast in his endorsement of this approach as a realistic and pragmatic solution to the grave and now-urgent problems faced inside Tibet. The policy's first accomplishment came with the establishment of direct contact between Dharamshala and Beijing when Deng Xiaoping said in 1979 that, "apart from independence, all issues can be discussed."

Meanwhile, since 1987, His Holiness the Dalai Lama had presented the Middle Way Approach in a range of forums around the world – including the U.S. Congress and the European Parliament –

hoping to once again draw the Chinese leadership into discussions. Dialogue resumed in earnest in 2002, and led to a total of nine rounds of talks. During the 7th round of talks in 2008 – the year in which unprecedented and widespread protests broke out across Tibet – the Chinese government asked the Tibetan leadership to put in writing the nature of the autonomy it sought. The Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People was presented during the 8th round of talks in 2008.

The Chinese government expressed a number of concerns and objections to the Memorandum. To address these, during the 9th and last round of talks in January 2010 the Tibetan leadership presented the Note on the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People. The Memorandum and the Note elaborate how genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people would operate within the framework of the People's Republic of China: its constitution, sovereignty and territorial integrity, its 'three adherences' and the hierarchy and authority of the Chinese Central Government (CCG).

A Tibetan regional administration would govern the protection and promotion of the 11 Basic Needs of Tibetans, which encompass the following:

language, culture, religion, education, environmental protection, utilisation of natural resources, economic development and trade, public health, public security, regulation on population migra-

tion and cultural, educational and religious exchanges with other countries.

This is consistent with both the National Regional Autonomy Law and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

The Chinese authorities claim that it is the Tibetan leadership's intention to expel "all Chinese" from Tibetan areas. In fact, the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People clearly articulates that this is not the case: "Our intention is not to expel non-Tibetans. Our concern is the induced mass movement of primarily Han, but also some other nationalities, into many Tibetan areas, which in turn marginalizes the native Tibetan population."

There has been no dialogue with the Chinese since 2010. Despite this, the Tibetan leadership remains steadfast in its commitment to the Middle Way Approach for Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People and to finding a lasting solution through dialogue between the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the representatives of the Chinese leadership.

Widespread support for the Middle-Way Approach

The Middle-Way Approach gains more support every year from the Chinese community. Some of the most respected Chinese intellectuals and artists endorse dialogue. These include Liu Xiaobo, the imprisoned Nobel Laureate who was one of the co-authors of an open letter in 2008 that expressed support for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's peace initiatives. Since then, more than 1,000 articles and opinion pieces have been written by Chinese scholars and writers supporting dialogue to resolve the issue of Tibet. These include a report by the Beijing-based legal NGO, the Gongmeng Constitutional Initiative, describing the grievances of the Tibetan people and calling for policy review. In 2012, 82 Chinese NGOs based in 15 countries sent a petition to the United Nations, the E.U., various parliaments and governments, exhorting them to "urge the Chinese government to start negotiations as soon as possible."

Other Chinese intellectuals who support

dialogue include Wang Lixiong, a well-known writer, Zhang Boshu of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a constitutional expert, Ran Yunfei of Sichuan Literary Periodical, Yu Haocheng, a senior member of the Communist Party and legal expert based in Beijing, Su Shaozhi, former economist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Yan Jiaqi, a close aide of former CCP Party Secretary, Zhao Ziyang.

To put the Middle-Way Approach into effect, global leaders who have called for dialogue include U.S. President Barack Obama, former U.S. President, George Bush, High Commissioner for UN Human Rights, Navi Pillay, High Representative for E.U. on Foreign Affairs/ Security Policy and Vice-President of European Commission, Lady Catherine Ashton, former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, former French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbot, former Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd and Taiwanese President, Ma Ying-jeou.

The late Baba Phuntsok Wangyal, a senior Tibetan official of the Chinese Communist Party, stated that “the Dalai Lama’s Middle Way Approach of seeking only a meaningful autonomy for Tibet rather than independence, in the present historical context, is an expression of the great responsibility he takes in giving serious thoughts over the fundamental interests, future and fate of Tibet and the Tibetans as a whole.

After President Barack Obama’s meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 16 July 2011 and again on 21 February 2014, the White House applauded “the Dalai Lama’s commitment to non-violence and dialogue with China and his pursuit of the Middle-Way Approach,” and encouraged “direct dialogue to resolve long-standing differences”, saying “that a dialogue that produces results would be positive for China and Tibetans.”

Tibetan leaders such as Dorje Tseten, a senior Tibetan Communist leader and former director of the Tibetology Research Centre in Beijing, Sangye Yeshe (Tian Bao), a veteran Tibetan Commu-

nist leader, Tashi Tsering, a professor of English at Tibet University in Lhasa, and Yangling Dorjee, a senior Tibetan Communist leader, support the unification of all the Tibetan people under a single administration.

Are Tibetans seeking a “Greater Tibet” and a “High Degree of Autonomy” as alleged by the Chinese government?

The Central Tibetan Administration is committed to the Middle Way Approach, which neither seeks “Greater Tibet” nor a “high degree of autonomy”, but genuine autonomy for all Tibetan people under a single administration. This is consistent with both the National Regional Autonomy Law and the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China.

The People’s Republic of China has intentionally formulated the word “Greater Tibet” to mislead the international community into believing that Tibetans are seeking separation or demarcation of Tibetan areas. The CTA does not use the term “Greater Tibet”. The three traditional provinces of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo have always been essential parts of traditional Tibet which cover the entire Tibetan plateau. They share not just the same geography and topography but also culture, language and religion. Division of Tibet into several provinces of China is a clear violation of Chinese laws and of Article 4 of the Constitution which recognizes the right of minority nationalities to practice regional autonomy “in the areas where they live in concentrated communities” and “to set up organ of self-government for the exercise of power of autonomy.” 99% of Uyghurs in China live in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and 95% of Zhuangs live in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Tibetans living in one concentrated community are divided into different provinces with less than 50% in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) while the majority is incorporated into neighbouring Chinese provinces as autonomous prefectures and counties.

Tibet constituting one-fourth of China is not a recent political creation but a natural outcome of Tibetans inhabiting the Tibetan plateau for thousands of years. The fact that Tibet constitutes one-fourth of China should not be a concern for the

Chinese government because one sixth of China is already established as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and one-eighth as Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Moreover, genuine autonomy for all Tibetans does not only conform to Tibet’s geographical reality, but conforms to its administrative needs, all of which aims for the actual implementation of Chinese laws in these areas to empower Tibetans to become masters of their own affairs.

Having all Tibetans, who share the same culture, same level and mode of economic development and even the same environment of the Tibetan Plateau, live within a single administrative unit will be an efficient and effective form of governance rather than dividing them into TAR and four Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan with Chinese majority.

Similarly, the Chinese government has unleashed a massive propaganda to project that Tibetans are seeking “high degree of autonomy.” In reality our aspiration is for the Chinese government to implement the provisions of national regional autonomy as enshrined in the PRC constitution. Apart from this we have never talk about high or low degree of autonomy.

The Way Forward

The Tibetan administration is seeking the support of the Chinese community and the wider international community to encourage the Chinese government to resume dialogue in a spirit of reconciliation, and mindful of the many benefits to both sides that would stem from genuine autonomy. The Tibetan leadership believes the Central Chinese Government can no longer defend its position that Tibetans in Tibet are satisfied with the current Chinese policies. Therefore the Tibetan people must be granted a genuine say in their own affairs in order for them to live in harmony. Through the Middle-Way Approach, the People’s Republic of China can ensure regional peace and stability by having a legitimate presence. Internationally, it also stands to gain by improving its image in the minds and hearts of people around the world, while at the same time protect its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

INTERVIEW

Outreach to the Chinese community and gaining their support towards the Tibet issue is recognised as one of the main policies of the Central Tibetan Administration. Therefore, Tibetan Bulletin conducted a special interview with Drelwa, a non-governmental organisation based in Dharamshala. It functions as an online outreach office to Chinese speaking people across the world. They make online conversations with Chinese speaking people and explain to them the Middle Way Approach and share information about His Holiness the Dalai Lama's initiatives.

1. When did Drelwa come into being? What is the basic idea behind it?

Drelwa or Online Outreach Office, was founded by Mr. Thupten Samdup based in Canada, who later became His Holiness the Dalai Lama's representative at the office of Tibet in London in 2006. With many years of experience in serving the Tibetan cause he felt that the support from the Chinese people is necessary to resolve the problem of Tibet. He put all his efforts to find sponsors and bring together some Tibetans from Tibet who have knowledge of Chinese language. They are tasked with making online conversation with Chinese people to explain to them about Middle Way Approach and share His Holiness the Dalai Lama's works and initiatives.

2. What is the main function of your organisation?

Drelwa organisation basically handles two important functions. The first is truthful depiction of Tibet issue, Introduction of the Middle Way Policy, sharing of brief Tibetan history, current issues inside Tibet, introduction to Tibetans in-exile, sharing of His Holiness biography and responding to the Chinese government's misinformation campaign on Tibet. Secondly, sharing of books and short videos, which are inaccessible to the Chinese public, and providing them with free gate software.

3. How does this particular approach of creating awareness about Tibet issue prove to be helpful?

Everyone is aware of the fact that we need Chinese support for the resolution of the Tibet issue. To gain such support our first priority is to build a good relationship with the Chinese by interacting and sharing views and status of the Tibetans. Therefore, taking into account of the work and achievements of the Online Outreach Office, it is one of the most effective organisations in the exile community in raising awareness of the issue of Tibet.

4. How many staffs do you have and what are their roles?

Currently we have 10 staffs, a cook and electronic manager as our crew. As said earlier, they work to disseminate information about the Middle Way Approach, general information about Tibet and create awareness about free gate software.

5. Are the Chinese people aware about the self-immolation protest in Tibet? What are their responses?

The censorship of oversea news sites by the Chinese government makes it difficult to know firsthand information. But many educated people who take interest in political issues do not rely only on the official news and search different means to find out true information about happenings in mainland and its ethnic minority regions. Not only does such person learn about the self-immolation in Tibet but also support it as an ultimate way of non-violent protest. In China the social media called QQ is used by more than 90% of the online users and is used by people of all walks of life. It also contains information like addresses of an individual and organisations. In such organisations, the numbers of users range between 100 to 2000. Though QQ has made access to news and happenings with China and ethnic minority areas relatively areas, it is still difficult to know international news. We use QQ to educate and inform Chinese people, excluding the remote and uneducated people; about the self-immolation protests in Tibet and more than 80% of them are aware about the self-immolation. However, due to the Chinese government's massive information campaign those Chinese who do not take much interest in political issues tend to believe and misinformed others that Tibetans self-immolate due to household problems and are mentally challenged people. The more serious misinformation is that Tibetans are encouraged to self-immolate by the Central Tibetan Administration.

Therefore our office uses the medium of QQ to explain in detail to the users about the reasons and evidences of why Tibetans are setting themselves on fire and the ground realities in Tibet.

6. What are the major problems encountered by your organisation?

In my view the exile Tibetan administration or non-governmental organisation lacks coordination. Therefore sometime we even face problem regarding in-depth description of some issue due to lack of reference documents.

7. Can you share us any special incidents or unusual response from the interaction?

As the QQ is a Chinese social media site it eventually falls under the Chinese authority hands. We have experience incidents when we were unable to work due to the streaming of virus in our computer from China.

8. What kind of future do you foresee for your organisation?

I am not sure how to reply to this question. Talking about the future of the organisation, I believe we need to solve the problem we have faced so far and try to interact with more people.

9. Do you have any thoughts about enlarging the interaction to diverse audience (foreign country)?

In my view any organisation's reach and development should be based on the importance of it serving the general people or the cause. Our organisation acts like a bridge between the Chinese people and Tibetans, where many Chinese people have learned much about Tibet and many support Tibetan cause. Therefore the further development of this organisation is in the hands of Tibetan exile government and people looking into what the organisation have done so far and I believe that there is need of support to develop and enlarge the Drelwa organisation.

The Statement of the Kashag on the Occasion of the 54th Anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day



Today, as we celebrate the 54th anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day, the Kashag extends its warm greetings to all fellow Tibetans in and outside Tibet. On this joyous occasion, we express our heartfelt gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for granting the Tibetan people the precious gift of democracy.

His Holiness' vision of democracy has been a transformative experience for Tibetans. It fundamentally changed how we Tibetans in exile live our lives and is an inspiration for those in Tibet who live under repression on a daily basis. This historic change is second in importance in its transformation of Tibet. The first having taken place more than 1,000 years ago when Buddhism was introduced to Tibet from India. Buddhism became rooted in Tibet from the 7th to the 11th century thus deeply influencing Tibetan worldview and the social order of the time. Monasteries established during that period made Tibet a centre of learning for High Asia and beyond, as well as a wellspring for Tibetan Buddhist civilization.

The gift of democracy given to us by His Holiness the Dalai Lama has provided us with a voice and the power to influence our own future. We must ensure our compatriots in Tibet enjoy the similar rights to live in freedom and with dignity. In this struggle, we will never lose hope and will continue our non-violent struggle till His Holiness the Dalai Lama can be once again reunited with our brothers and sisters in Tibet.

While we strive to realize freedom for our fellow Tibetans in Tibet, we must strengthen our democratic institutions in exile to effectively support our political struggle. One way to nurture and promote Tibetan democracy is to cherish and practice and not by abusing the rights granted. The hallmark of democracy is unity in diversity in its various forms. Unity does not necessarily mean uniformity but basic civility is a must. As a young democracy, Tibetan community in exile must tread carefully and be all the more mindful of ensuring that public discourse is constructive and conducted with civility. It should enhance unity and not create further division within our society. As Tibetans hold their political leaders accountable, they are entitled to exercise this right by questioning but with civility. The Tibetan political leadership is entrusted by the people to make decisions and take a firm position on a range of issues varying in complexity and sensitivity for the greater common good.

Having said this, I draw your attention to the grim and worsening situation in Tibet. Last month, the Chinese police fired upon peaceful protestors in a village in Karze, Eastern Tibet. The demonstrators were calling for the release of their village leader who had been arrested for criticizing Chinese authorities' mistreatment and harassment of Tibetans. Two Tibetans died in the police shooting. According to reports, apart from children and the elderly, the majority of the 700

inhabitants of Shugpa village were detained by the local Chinese authorities.

Clearly, the recently held "2014 Forum on the Development of Tibet, China" and its so-called "Lhasa Consensus" were a premeditated or orchestrated Chinese Government propaganda to paint an extremely pleasant and peaceful picture of Tibet, and yet again, a shot at concealing the reality of ongoing Chinese political repression on the larger number of Tibetans at the grass-roots level in Tibet. The dreadful events such as Chinese police firing on a group of Tibetan demonstrators in Shugpa Village voice the denial of basic human rights, and that the statements in the consensus were misrepresented and inaccurate.

In the face of such brutality, we cannot remain silent. The police brutality in Karze is only a fragment of the repression imposed on the people of Tibet. To express their outright rejection of such repressive policies, 130 Tibetans have set themselves on fire and 112 of them sadly passed away, in an attempt to draw attention of the international community on the suffering of the Tibetan people under Beijing's rule. To our brothers and sisters in Tibet, particularly the families and friends of the self-immolators, the sacrifice of their lives is forever imprinted in our collective memory and history for future generations to know. We will galvanize our efforts, carry forth and echo your aspirations until they are realized – restoration of freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his homeland. That is our sacred goal.

We, Tibetans are not alone in our freedom struggle. 25 years ago, the whole of China shook when millions of Chinese in over 100 cities throughout China called for freedom and democracy. That yearning for freedom has not died with the tragedy on 4 June 1989. This spirit is most aptly represented by Liu Xiaobo, China's imprisoned Nobel Peace Laureate. Sooner or later, Beijing must listen to the voice of its people.

(continued on Page 18.)

Speech by Speaker of Tibetan Parliament in Exile on 54th Democracy Day

Today marks the completion of 54 years since the establishment of democracy in the Tibetan community in exile. On this momentous occasion, I, on behalf of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile as well as the entire people of Tibet in and outside their homeland, and with unwavering devotion and hope demonstrated in great bodily, speech and mind reverence through countless prostrations to the deities, offer my greetings, keeping in the very centre of my heart the insuperable cause for gratitude borne of compassion we have been blessed to receive from His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the Chenrezig in human bodily form, the divinely entrusted protector deity of Tibet, the spiritual lord of the Three Realms, a champion of world peace, the master across the world of the entire corpus of the teachings of the Buddha, the refuge and great leader of all Tibetans, the guide to them on the dos and don'ts in the ways of the world, the symbolic representation and the emblem of the unity of the Tibetan people, and the free spokesperson of the entire people of Tibet.

In the case of our religiously immersed land of Tibet too, the spiritual domain of the Lotus-Holding Supreme Bodhisattva of Compassion and which is renowned as the earth's Third Pole, it has since the very advent of human existence been an independent country like all the others in the globe's community of nations today. Uniquely endowed with the red-faced race of Tibetan people with their own linguistic heritage, religious and cultural traditions, territorial domain, history, and so on, it has been endowed since very ancient times with all the attributes acknowledged in every part of this world as indubitable evidences of an independent nation. What is more, Tibet has existed among the countries of central and eastern Asia, including its neighbours India and China, as a powerful country with an extremely long, millennia-old history and a highly developed culture which fully satisfied all its people's requirements.

In order to embark on the path of democracy by transforming the historical political power system of Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama newly set up in

1952 a Reform Bureau. And at the end of 1954, His Holiness also newly set up a separate judicial branch in Lhasa for the settlement of civil disputes. With measures such as these, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, with great earnestness and positive frame of mind, devoted himself to reforming the traditional, outdated political system of Tibet. As a result of indebtedness owed solely to him for such profoundly admirable series of reform measures, the people of Tibet were set on a firm course towards a bright and happy future.

However, Communist China invaded the geopolitically neutral, internally peaceful, and religiously immersed country of Tibet and overwhelmed everything with its occupation rule. Consequently, on the morning of 10 March 1959, many tens of thousands of Tibetan people from all the three traditional provinces of Tibet, including the ecclesiastical and lay population of Lhasa, fully surrounded the Norbulingkha Palace to provide a human shield for His security. The popular uprising also saw Tibetans carrying out rallies, marching before areas in every part of Lhasa city where there were concentrations of Chinese, to demand that communist China leave Tibet. The developments compelled His Holiness the Dalai Lama, accompanied by his retinue, to flee to India and to seek a temporary political asylum there in order to be able to struggle for the restoration of the religious and political freedom and civil liberties of the Tibetan people. Thus, as a result of a variety and multitude of unavoidable obstacles, the reform measures introduced by His Holiness the Dalai Lama could not be carried out to the extent desired by him and they therefore remained unfulfilled for the time being. Within Tibet, the Chinese carried out such unimaginable series of endlessly brutal colonial policies as to transform the country into a vast territory of hell on this earth.

Under such dire and critical conditions which were unprecedented in the history of Tibet, compounded by scarcity of facilities, a Tibetan Government in Exile was especially set up with full legitimacy to collectively represent the Tibetan

people living both in their homeland and in exile. Having done so, His Holiness the Dalai Lama then carried out a series of political and administrative reforms. It was in the course of carrying out such reformative measures that on 2 September 1960, the deputies of the first Tibetan Parliament in Exile took their solemn oath of office at a ceremony carried out before His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This marked the formal establishment of a democratic government of Tibet characterized by cohesion of spirituality and politics; it transformed the political system of Tibet as the beginning of our resolute journey towards a democratic system that will be fully in conformity with the systems prevailing in the politically advanced countries of this world.

In order to ensure that the exiled Tibetan system will be fully democratic in all its diverse fundamental and other aspects, and as an outcome of an initiative which was for long close to His holiness the Dalai Lama's heart, a democratic constitution for a future free Tibet consisting of 10 chapters and 77 Articles was promulgated on 10 March 1963. Later on 28 June 1991, His Holiness gave assent to the Charter of Tibetans in Exile passed by the 11th Tibetan Parliament in Exile. He thereby ensured that the system of government of the Tibetans in exile was fully in conformity with the modern democratic one rooted in a fundamental legal charter. Along with it, and over the years since then, He brought about the establishment for the first time of a Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission as well as of the three autonomous bodies of the Central Tibetan Administration in exile. And in 2001, the Charter of the Tibetans in Exile was amended as desired by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and under it the Kalon Tripa was directly elected by the Tibetan people. More recently, in 2011, His Holiness abrogated the historically established Gaden Phodrang headed system of Tibetan government. He thereby established an authoritative and stable Central Tibetan Administration in exile and ensured its continuance for as long as it would be necessary to sustain a leadership directly elected by the people until the just Tibetan cause prevails.

Speaking in general terms, democracy in the process of the historical evolution of the human civilization has meant the elimination of discriminations in society between the powerful and weak, rich and poor, men and women, or between different races of people, and so on. It has thereby meant giving primacy to the wishes of the general masses of people in society as a whole based on equality. For the realization of this great system of government and politics, the histories of not a small number of countries in this world show that they were victorious outcomes made possible only as outcomes of protracted turbulences of war, revolution, and other forms of internal struggle. Such efforts through use of people's power to successfully realize the transformation of the country's political system is a continuing trend to this day. However, in the case of the great democratic system that prevails in the Tibetan society, there was no need for a slightest bit of any such strife or struggle by the ordinary masses of people. Rather, it was gifted by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the temporal and spiritual leader of Tibet, with great happiness and affection to the general masses of Tibetan people. And this is the reason why if the Tibetan people as a whole fail to properly carry out their democratic responsibilities, one cannot predict what the adverse consequences will be. It therefore concerns the very essence of the matter that there should be no laxity on the part of everyone on any aspect of every part of his or her responsibility, bearing in the core of one's heart the gratitude one owes to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the expectations that's He has of us for the realization of both the immediate and long term Tibetan spiritual, political, and ethnic aspirations.

The implementation of authoritarian system by the government of China, over the past 60 years, had resulted in the death of over 1.2 million Tibetans. It also introduced coercive reform measures designed to counter everything that is unique and noble about the Tibetan people: their fine customs, religions and culture, and idealism. Through racial discrimination, it sought to impair the linguistic heritage of the Tibetan people and imposed severe limits on its study

and use. It destroyed and plundered Tibet's ancient historical objects and distorted the narratives of its history. In the so-called central government as well as the hierarchy of party leaderships, the Chinese have adhered to the ideology of never giving equal power to people from ethnic minority groups. Besides, in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region, no ethnic Tibetan has ever been appointed as its top leader. Not only that, over the past several years, serving ethnic minorities were removed from their positions of power one after another in the so-called ethnic minority autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures, and autonomous counties of the People's Republic of China. They were all transferred to other, lesser posts. Exemplifying the old saying which bemoans the fact that one's home had been usurped by one's guest, ethnic Chinese officials have been continuing to grab the posts with power in these administrative levels.

From Tibet's natural environment the Chinese government keeps mining and plundering all types of mineral resources. In the course of carrying out this reckless exploitation, sacred mountain sites and even ancestral crematoriums are being ploughed or dug up without any care or concern for the local Tibetans' sensitivities. Rivers have been dammed and their flows diverted to distort the natural balance of the environment. These have led to natural calamities such as earthquakes and their accompanying catastrophic consequences. Trees have been cut from huge tracts of land in defiance of all kinds of limits from areas across Tibet, converting once vast grasslands and virgin forests into desolate desert wastelands. These have led to catastrophic landslides and floods. And because the government of China uses sites in Tibet to store nuclear materials and test atomic weapons, various kinds of previously unknown epidemic diseases have hit Tibetans in those areas. And through a policy of habitual bullying, debasement, criticism, and utter contempt, the Chinese government has hurled all kinds of false accusations against innocent Tibetans and executed or otherwise illegally imprisoned many of them. In the course of doing so, the Chinese authorities have subjected the Tibetan people to inhu-

man beating and torture. Many Tibetans have been taken away on unknown or undisclosed accusations and have been rendered disappeared. Implementation of such and other utterly reprehensible policies continue to this day.

People throughout the length and breadth of Tibet continue to make clear their total rejection of these policies of the government of China. This could be discerned especially from the great peaceful protests of the Earth-Mouse Year of 2008. From the year 2009 to 15 April 2014, a total of 130 Tibetan clerical and lay people, including men and women, have carried out self-immolation protests in Tibet. These Tibetans felt compelled to sacrifice their very lives and everything else that is of value to the living in their attempts to free fellow-Tibetans from their unbearable and prolonged period of suffering. Likewise, recently, many Tibetans, including village head Wangdak-la, of Denma Shugpa Village in Kham Dege area of Tibet, were forcibly taken away and kept in detention without any explanation of any reason. Some of them were killed in the detention centre through torture. Such and other tragic developments, including the self-immolation protests, continue to take place in Tibet today and we remain greatly concerned about them. We would like to reiterate that the government of China should bear full responsibility for all of these developments.

The middle way policy is a mutually beneficial one – beneficial not only to Tibet but also to China. It is designed to ensure the preservation of Tibet's unique religious and cultural heritage, habits and customs, ethnicity, and other aspects of the Tibetan identity while the territory remains under the sovereign framework of the Constitution of China so that the two sides can coexist and get along with each other on the basis of equality. The mutual advantages are extremely self-evident. Nevertheless, the government of China keeps hurling all kinds of false accusations against His Holiness the Dalai Lama and those who revere and admire him and follow him, calling them separatists, the reactionary Dalai government, and so on. It is a matter of great sadness that the government of China continues to remain indifferent to seek-

ing a solution to the issue of Tibet, and, instead, chooses to keep repeating the false accusations and fabricated allegations.

Likewise, the government of China has not only refused to make any positive change to its policy towards Tibet but it also uses its officially run news media of various kinds as well as directs some of the followers of the controversial Dolgyal spirit to try to slander His Holiness the Dalai Lama. With regard to the followers of the Dolgyal spirit, they are a people concerned only about money and material gains, unable to properly follow the dos and don'ts of the Buddhist canons. They have shown themselves to be people whose actions betray a lack of basic human discernment and who refuse to subject themselves to truth and material facts. Their behaviours resemble the dancing of a person who has gone insane. We remain confident that the people in the international community in general, and the Chinese people in particular, will not be misled by such persons.

The government of China does not look upon Tibetans as a people endowed with

dignity rightfully due to a human being. All its actions, wherever profitable, are geared towards benefiting and ensuring the well being of the communist Chinese government. In doing so, it ignores and tramples on every provision of the international bill of human rights. Because of it and the tragic situation in Tibet, many governments, private bodies, and organizations have sympathized with the people of Tibet and have, year after year, appealed to, advised, criticized, expressed hopes, and so on, to the government of China, calling on it to end its brutal policy of repression there. Nevertheless, the government of China has, far from heeding their urgent calls, kept on countering them with audacious falsehoods with criticisms such as that they were interfering in China's internal affairs. Such a course of conduct on the part of the government of China is extremely incompatible with the norms of conduct among the 21st century civilized communities of peoples and nations. This being the very regrettable state of affairs today, we take this opportunity to call on the government of China to reform in a positive direction its extremely leftist

way of thinking on the issue and, like the societies of the progressive and morally upright countries of today, urgently and spontaneously lead Tibet too to a new path of becoming an exemplary society of peace in coexistence with China, rooted in a foundation of harmony and stability.

On behalf of all Tibetans everywhere, we also take the opportunity presented by this occasion to express heartfelt thanks to the central and local governments and people of India and, likewise, to the governments, private bodies and organizations in the international community who support and respect justice and who have extended all kinds of direct, indirect and other forms of facilitative help and support on the issue of Tibet. And we appeal to them to continue to extend support to us with even greater vigour.

Finally, we earnestly pray that His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a champion of global peace, live for a hundred aeons and see all his wishes fulfilled with spontaneity, that the just cause of the Tibetan people definitely prevail.

(continued from Page 15.)

Another important responsibility, which we call upon China to shoulder diligently and with urgency, is the protection of Tibet's fragile ecosystem. This responsibility should not be perceived as a concession to the Tibetan people, but a duty owed to the Chinese people and the rest of Asia given the strategic environmental importance of the Tibetan plateau. Nowadays, global scientists including many leading Chinese environmentalists, refer to Tibet as the Third Pole, the repository of the largest concentration of ice and glaciers outside of the Arctic and Antarctica. These glaciers feed the ten river systems in Asia which flow all the way to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand. The Yellow and Yangtze rivers which flow to China both originate in Tibet and bring fresh water to more than a billion people in China, South-East Asia, and South Asia.

Clearly, what happens to Tibet's environment has become a critical question impacting populations well beyond the

Plateau. It will affect the existence of millions of people downstream whose livelihoods are dependent on agriculture and fishing. Scientists also predict that the global climate change impact on the Tibetan plateau will lead to millions of forced migrations in the downstream countries. On this score, we feel that it is in the interest of all Asian countries to persuade the leadership in Beijing to adopt policies integrating local traditional knowledge of the Plateau. For thousands of years, Tibetans have successfully served as the natural stewards of the fragile Tibetan ecosystem. Beijing must acknowledge and respect this.

The Middle Way Approach of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the only way forward to resolve Tibet issue and it is a win-win proposition to both sides. The 14th Kashag once again reiterates its firm commitment towards the Middle Way Approach. In this regard, we have successfully completed visits by Kalons and Secretaries to Tibetan settlements to educate and raise awareness of the Middle Way Approach among general public

at the grass-roots level.

In dedication of 2014 as the year of His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama by the 14th Kashag, we have invited Nobel Peace Laureates to Dharamsala to observe the 25th anniversary of conferment of Nobel Peace Prize to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The event will be held on October 2, 2014 – the day on which, champion of peace and father of India, Mahatma Gandhi was born.

To conclude, on this 54th anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day, the Central Tibetan Administration re-affirms its resolve to fulfill the aspirations of Tibetans inside Tibet. We call upon all Tibetans to join us in this effort. On behalf of the 14th Kashag, we thank all our friends across the world for their unwavering support particularly the great land of India and its generous people.

Together, we carry forth with resolve and hope. Long live His Holiness the Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

The Kashag, September 2, 2014

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Convenes Meeting of Diverse Spiritual Traditions



A group photo of the delegates to 'A Meeting of Diverse Spiritual Traditions in India' convened by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New Delhi, India on September 20, 2014. Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

For more than five decades, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has frequently met with and engaged in numerous dialogues with Indian spiritual leaders, scholars and activists. Drawn from the experiences of these efforts and exchanges, His Holiness the Dalai Lama conceived the idea for a meeting of 'Diverse Spiritual Traditions in India'. Therefore, His Holiness the Dalai Lama convened a two-day meeting of spiritual leaders representing different religious traditions in India from 20 - 21 September 2014.

The objective was to come together, discuss and consolidate efforts to tackle the many pervasive societal problems and promote secular ethics for a more harmonious world.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, as the host of the conference, was at the door of the hall on the first day of the meeting to greet each of the representatives of nine spiritual traditions as they arrived.

As the meeting began, His Holiness the Dalai Lama read out a prepared statement, explaining why he had invited them and the reasons behind convening the meeting. "Followers of all spiritual traditions try in their own ways to overcome the suffering that afflicts beings in the world and to bring about their happiness. However, it would be better if we worked together to fulfill such aspirations," His Holiness told the gathering.

Former diplomat Lalit Mansingh opened the proceedings. He warmly welcomed His Holiness, the chief guest, and lieutenant governor of Delhi, Najeeb Jung, and all the delegates. He invited His Holiness to inaugurate the occasion by lighting the lamp, and he called on his companions on the stage to join him in this.

Chairperson of the preparatory committee, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche addressed the gathering. He pointed out that there has been great progress in terms of scientific and technological developments. However, the persistence of violence in the world and damage to the natural environment were among the reasons prompting His Holiness the Dalai Lama to think of convening this conference.

A colorful musical interlude followed as members of the Tibetan institute of performing arts sang a song of inter-religious harmony specially composed in Hindi for the occasion. The representatives of nine faiths were next provided the opportunity to recite a prayer or message.

His Holiness gave the keynote speech saying: "spiritual brothers and sisters, I really appreciate how many of you accepted my invitation and have joined us for this meeting. Thank you all for coming."

All the world's major spiritual traditions

convey a message of love and compassion, which is why we can view those who belong to them as spiritual brothers and sisters. However, His Holiness said, these days we hear repeatedly about conflict in the name of religion. This is very sad. The idea that people are killing others in the name of religion is unthinkable.

"India is the only country where all the major religious traditions live together side by side and have done for more than 1000 years. This is an example from which the rest of the world can learn. And that is one of the reasons why I convened this conference," His Holiness said.

When the chief guest, Najeeb Jung, was called upon to speak after His Holiness, he said he felt the challenge was comparable to that faced by swami Vivekananda when he addressed the world parliament of religions in Chicago in 1893.

"Do I wish that the Christian would become Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid. The seed is put in the ground, and earth and air and water are placed around it. Does the seed become the earth, or the air, or the water? No. It becomes a plant. It develops after the law of its own growth assimilates the air, the earth, and the water, converts them into plant substance, and grows into

a plant. Similar is the case with religion. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.”

As the inaugural ceremony came to an end, His Holiness distributed souvenirs to the delegates and they all gathered together for a group photograph. After lunch, the session ‘inter-religious understanding and human values’ was chaired by media anchor, Karma Paljor, who called on Gopalkrishna Gandhi to open the discussions.

Pujya swami Chidanand Saraswati suggested that conflict happens when we only think of our own agenda, of our own interests; when we think of ourselves at the centre of things. He said that if we turn away from such a narrow view and see others as we see ourselves there would be effective change. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan told the gathering that if there is a difference between my religion and your religion we should try to manage it, to adjust to it. The difference creates a point for dialogue and discussion, which in turn stimulates intellectual development. He also recounted that when the prophet was in Medina he showed respect to a Jew and when he was asked why he had done so replied: “is he not a human being?”

Paul Dhinakaran spoke of how India is the only country he’s come across that observes respect for all spiritual traditions and cherishes inclusiveness. Karmyogi Peethadheesh Swasti Shri Ravindra Keerti swami repeated that by following different paths we can reach the same conclusion, but that to do so require a sense of brotherhood and not thinking of your own religion as the best.

Sheikhul Masheikh Dewan Syed Zainul Abedin Ali Khan pointed out that if you have a group of children awaiting hospital treatment in need of blood, you do not ask for Sikh, Hindu or Muslim blood; the only stipulation is the necessary blood group. He advised that we cannot take what we cannot give; since we cannot give life, we should not take it either. When he finished speaking, swami avimuktetshwaranand saraswati rose

from his seat and came up to the stage to offer the maulana a flower as a mark of his appreciation.

Lochen Rinpoche asserted that without harmony world peace will remain a myth, at the same time, however, he felt the conference offered an opportunity to shape history. Dr Shernaz Cama recalled that she was taught in childhood to believe that happiness comes to those who bring happiness to others. However, she remarked that today, happiness is more and more being associated with material things.

The second day of the meeting of diverse spiritual traditions opened with the second plenary session on the theme ‘environment, education and society’. Moderator Arun Kapur opened the discussions with the suggestion that we seem to live in competition with nature. People and nature are not distinct from each other, he said, therefore it is a mistake to try to compete with or conquer nature.

He called on first Dr. Shayama Chona to speak. She recalled Gandhi’s dictum that as far as natural resources are concerned there is enough for everyone’s needs, but not enough for everyone’s greed. With regard to education she said that without ethics it has no value, when it only makes you employable it is of limited value, but when it also gives you spiritual and ethical values it is complete.

Mahamadaleshwar swami Kailashnand Brahmachari remarked that His Holiness the Dalai Lama was to be commended for initiating the gathering. Noting that participants were being asked to discuss ways to improve humanity and preserve the environment the important starting point was for our thoughts to be free of hatred and anger.

Prof. Jitendra Babulal Shah mentioned the ancient origins of the Jain tradition that was at least contemporary with the Buddha. It is a tradition that asserts the need to know good from bad, wholesome from unwholesome, and constructive from destructive. He said that people who have no idea of such distinctions will not know how to lead a happy life. The important thing is not to harm others or disturb their peace. He also expressed appreciation of the opportunity His Holiness was providing in convening the

conference.

“When natural disasters take place I think people generally feel helpless. We need to look at things from a wider perspective, acknowledging that we are part of nature,” said His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

“It seems to me that modern education focuses too much on materialism, while it is religion that deals with inner values. However, what we need to pay attention to today is the secular ethics that are the basis of religious traditions.

When asked the definition of a good teacher he said: “Someone who not only has more knowledge, but who also shows concern for the student’s entire development.”

The second discussion groups talked about climate change and a scheme for people to plant trees on their birthdays to offset the wood that would be required to cremate them when they die. His Holiness told them how impressed he had been with an approach Baba Amte had adopted of simple burial in a cotton shroud with a tree planted over the grave. He repeated to this group too his sense that existing education systems are inadequate to deal with the moral crises that confront us. He reiterated the need for secular ethics and for women to take up more active leadership roles. Since the values of this or that religious tradition will not suit all 7 billion human beings alive today, secular ethics present a more effective solution.

The 3rd plenary session after lunch was dedicated to refining a report of the meeting and proposed action plan. The moderator for this session, Rajiv Mehrotra stressed the desire to ensure that every delegate’s voice was heard. He called on rapporteurs from each discussion group to summarize what they had talked about. This was followed by a reading of a draft declaration.

Dr. Kiran Bedi was the moderator for the concluding session of the meeting, telling the representatives of the nine spiritual traditions that the question before them was, “how do we make a better human being?” For Judaism, Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar mentioned that India is perhaps the only country where Jews

have faced no discrimination. He had learned not to gossip or speak ill of others. Dr. Homi B Dhalla for the Zoroastrians praised the meeting and stressed the need for follow up. He added that education was important, but music and sport should be included too.

For the Sikhs, Giani Gurbachan Singh highlighted equality, love and affection as qualities on the basis of which society could be improved. Hg archbishop Dr Felix Machado reminded his colleagues that all people, no matters to which religion they turn for solace are equal before god. The question that needs to be answered he said is whether they want to be equal before each other. Dr Syed Kalbe Sadiq for Islam pointed out that people are the same in terms of what they are made of, no matter what size, color or shape they are.

Tarun sagar maharaj, a digamber jain, expressed his admiration for his holiness's success in convening such a gathering, suggesting that no one else could have pulled it off. He compared the exercise to weighing a collection of frogs, implying that for anyone else the frogs would be jumping off and escaping. Sant shree morari bapu, an exponent of ram charit manas, asked how we can make this earth a more befitting place to live and answered his own question by suggesting that the essential qualities are truth, love and compassion.

Hg archbishop Dr Anil Joseph Thomas Couto read the final declaration to the meeting in English and he was followed by Prof Geshe Ngawang Samten who read out the Hindi version. In the preamble the participants recognize India's ancient civilization heritage celebrating the diversity of spiritual and religious traditions that enrich each other through dialogue, while retaining their own individual characteristics and practices.

They recognize that the values of altruism, self-discipline and compassion are common to all faiths and are the bedrock of the shared future of diverse local communities, bhara and an interdependent world. They acknowledge that their own happiness and progress are dependent on that of others and so on. What follow are recommendations for action that arise directly from the two days discussions.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama delivering his opening remarks during the Inaugural Ceremony of 'A Meeting of Diverse Spiritual Traditions in India' in New Delhi, India on September 20,

Kiran Bedi then invited His Holiness to make his final remarks and he laughed as she told him he had only 25 minutes.

“Respected brothers and sisters, all of you have participated in this meeting over the last two days. There has been nothing hypocritical or corrupt in our proceedings. My long-term friend Tarun Sagar Maharaj here is completely naked, a sign that he's truthful. I have great admiration for his determination. He reminds me that our proceedings have been completely transparent with nothing concealed.

He said that there is a growing need to take action to counter conflict in the name of religion, because good words and good motivation are no longer enough. He continued that if everyone made an effort, then these efforts would multiply. Humanity, after all, is a collection of individuals, so a start should be made on an individual level.

“All religions talk about karuna or compassion and that's the basis on which we can try to make this century a century of peace and compassion. And a secular approach on a similar basis is how we can present this to non-believers. This is all

that I want to say. Thank you.”

The chief guest, Kiren Rijiju, union minister of state for home affairs and an MP from Arunachal Pradesh was invited to address the gathering. He observed that as home minister, if and when there is communal unrest in the country he can send in the police or if necessary the army to calm things down. However, he felt that a message from spiritual teachers might be more effective. He was full of praise for the way his holiness the Dalai Lama had brought so many celebrated spiritual teachers together. He said he had no more to add, feeling that the message of the dharma gurus would be enough to see him home. He undertook to read whatever documents the meeting had produced, and to support the meeting's aims in whatever ways he can.

The occasion was brought to a rousing conclusion when Tipa performed the song ‘Thank You India’, followed by the Indian national anthem.

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Nobel Laureates visit Dharamshala to mark 25th anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness the Dalai Lama



His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the two Nobel laureates Ms. Shirin Ebadi and Ms. Jody Williams during the ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 2 October 2014.

Two Nobel Laureates, Ms. Shirin Ebadi of Iran and Ms. Jody Williams of the US, visited Dharamshala to mark the 25th anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The program was organised by the Central Tibetan Administration on 2 October, to co-incide with the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi as a mark of respect to his message of peace and non-violence.

“The gathering of Nobel Laureates from different parts of the world in Dharamshala on this occasion symbolizes their support and appreciation for His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s tireless efforts towards his three main commitments: the promotion of human values, inter-religious harmony and the preservation of Tibetan culture,” a statement from the Department of Information and International Relations said.

The felicitation program was historically significant as 2014 is also being celebrated as the ‘Year of His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama’ by the Tibetan people and His Holiness’ well-wishers all over the world.

Addressing the felicitation ceremony on 2 October, His Holiness the Dalai Lama

said the occasion has great significance as it is the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. He said the best way to remember Mahatma Gandhi is to follow his messages of peace, non-violence and simple living in our daily lives.

He further said that the non-violent freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi was seen as ‘meek and ineffective’ during India’s freedom struggle movement. However, Mahatma Gandhi’s legacies are very much relevant today as the whole world take inspiration from his principles of peace and non-violence. America’s civil rights champion Martin Luther King was also greatly inspired by Gandhi’s principles and way of living, he said.

“Following Gandhi’s way of living and principles will bring inner peace and contentment in our daily life” he added.

Speaking on the South Africa visa issue, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said the denial of visa to him by South Africa under Chinese government pressure is an act of bullying by the powerful towards the humble. He expressed his heartfelt appreciation of the support and solidarity shown by fellow Nobel Peace Laureates Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi and others.

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, in his address, said: “Today is a very special day for the Tibetans inside Tibet. Every day they look forward to good news about freedom as they suffer political and religious repression on a daily basis. Your presence here sends a message of justice, truth and freedom to them, which will give them hope and inspiration.”

Speaking about Mahatma Gandhi, he said “Mahatma Gandhi represents the principles for which the Nobel peace prize is awarded for. Mahatma Gandhi was the only person who was not awarded the prize yet he was the most deserving of the peace prize. He is the true Nobel laureate as he is in the hearts and minds of people around the world today. We observe the day to celebrate his messages of peace and non-violence.”

Mr. Penpa Tsering, the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, urged Chinese President Xi Jinping to give freedom to Tibetans and other ethnic minorities in China. He also called on China to release imprisoned Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo.

The two Nobel laureates, Ms. Ebadi and Ms. Williams, said that they are in Dharamshala to show their support to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

“Tibetans inside Tibet and in exile should know that we always support you,” said Nobel peace laureate Jody Williams. “The non-violent struggle of Tibetans led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a model of peaceful conflict resolution,” she said.

Dr. Shirin Ebadi, expressing her support, said she cherishes the way Tibetans in exile have preserved their culture under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. “We need to preserve the language and culture of Tibet to keep Tibet alive,” she said emphasising the role of culture and language in a freedom struggle.

She also added her hope that “a day is not very far when we would be celebrating today’s occasion in Tibet in the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. And on

that day, you will see Tibet is alive because His Holiness has encouraged you to keep the culture alive.”

Expressing their outrage on the South Africa visa issue, they explained that the real aim of the Nobel summit in South Africa was to celebrate the legacies of the late Nelson Mandela. We are greatly saddened when South Africa denied visa to His Holiness to attend the summit, they said.

“We immediately sent a note expressing our deep concern that South Africa has bowed down yet again to Chinese government pressure. It left many of us confused when he was not even allowed to join the celebration of Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s 80th birthday. How could that possibly be a threat to the government of China was extremely confusing for us?” said Jody Williams.

“We are here to show to the Chinese government that the Tibetan people and His Holiness the Dalai Lama are not alone in their fight for justice, righteousness and human rights. And that’s why the world supports you. There is a history of fighting against racial discrimination in South Africa and that’s why we don’t accept this country refusing the visa to His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” said Shirin Ebadi.

“Nobel Women’s Initiative sent two letters to the organizers and we did media interviews expressing our dismay and decision to boycott the summit in Cape Town. In our letter, we underlined that His Holiness the Dalai Lama advocates the Middle Way Approach and not the Chinese government’s propaganda that His Holiness is seeking Tibet’s separation from China,” said Jody Williams.

“As the mission of the Nobel Women’s Initiative is to stand with people, we believe that we are not in good conscience to go to South Africa when the human rights of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people are being violated,” she added.

“The venue of the summit has been shifted out of South Africa. The new venue for the summit would be announced later. We feel proud that the summit has been cancelled after we lodged protest over denial of visa to the Dalai Lama.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the two Nobel laureates Ms. Shirin Ebadi and Ms. Jody Williams with students at Tibetan Children Village School.

Even other Nobel laureates have lodged their protest over the issue,” Jody Williams said.

Shirin Ebadi further said “I am not here only to visit His Holiness the Dalai Lama, but I am here to learn from him how one can continue one’s struggle in a peaceful manner for over fifty years. I am here to learn from your people how to be in exile for over 50 years and not lose hope.”

“I hope that the people of the Tibet both in Tibet and in exile understand that they really do have our support”, said Jody Williams.

They said that the boycott of the Nobel summit was a message to the Chinese government and those countries who sell their soul and sovereignty.

“A day is not very far when we will be celebrating today’s occasion in Tibet in the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. And on that day you will see Tibet is alive because His Holiness has encouraged you to keep the culture alive,” Dr. Ebadi said.

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay thanked the two Nobel laureates and Nobel Women’s Initiative for visiting Dharamshala to show their solidarity with the Tibetan people’s non violent struggle and to pay respect to His Holiness as this year marks the 25th anniversary of the conferment of Nobel Peace prize on His Holiness.

The two Nobel laureates also attended

a conference with the entire staff of the Central Tibetan Administration during their visit to Dharamshala.

Ms. Jody Williams is the founding coordinator of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), which was formally launched by six NGOs in October 1992. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 jointly with International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) “for their work towards banning and clearing of anti-personnel mines”.

Ms. Shirin Ebadi was Iran’s first female judge. After Khomeini’s revolution in 1979, she was dismissed. Ebadi opened a legal practice and began defending people who were being persecuted by the authorities. In the year 2000, she was imprisoned for having criticised her country’s hierarchy. She took up the struggle for fundamental human rights and especially the rights of women and children. The Nobel Peace Prize 2003 was awarded to her “for her efforts for democracy and human rights. She has focused especially on the struggle for the rights of women and children”.

Following South Africa’s refusal to issue a visa to Nobel peace laureate His Holiness the Dalai Lama for the global summit of Nobel peace laureates in Cape Town, and China’s public declaration of thanks for South Africa’s decision to block the spiritual leader from entering South Africa, four Nobel Laureates refused to attend the summit. The Summit was later relocated to Rome, Italy.

From Tibet to Taiwan, China's Outer Regions Watch Hong Kong Protests Intently

[The New York Times]

By Andrew Jacobs

BEIJING — As hundreds of protesters continue to occupy the streets of Hong Kong, challenging China's Communist Party leaders with calls for greater democracy, much of the world anxiously awaits signs of how Beijing will react to their demands.

But the anticipation is perhaps most keenly felt along the periphery of China's far-flung territory, both inside the country and beyond, where the Chinese government's authoritarian ways have been most apparent.

But the anticipation is perhaps most keenly felt along the periphery of China's far-flung territory, both inside the country and beyond, where the Chinese government's authoritarian ways have been most apparent.

Among Tibetans and Uighurs, beleaguered ethnic minorities in China's far west, there is hope that the protests will draw international scrutiny to what they say are Beijing's broken promises for greater autonomy.

The central government's refusal to even talk with pro-democracy advocates in Hong Kong, exiled activists add, also highlights a longstanding complaint among many ethnic minority groups in China: the party's reliance on force over dialogue when dealing with politically delicate matters.

"We've seen this movie before, but when people stand up to the Chinese government in places like Lhasa or Urumqi and meet brutal resistance, there is no foreign media to show the world what's happening," said Nury Turkel, a Uighur-American lawyer and activist, referring to the regional capitals of Tibet and Xinjiang. "The difference here is what's happening in Hong Kong is taking place in real time, for all the world to see."

Few places are watching the protests as closely as Taiwan, the self-governed island that China claims as part of its territory.

Beijing's refusal to grant Hong Kong the unfettered elections that were promised when the former British colony was returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 — a move that prompted the protests — has sharpened opposition to President Ma Ying-jeou of Taiwan and his efforts to forge closer economic ties with the mainland.

The concept of "one country, two systems," the political arrangement that has given Hong Kong a raft of liberties unknown on the mainland, was first envisioned as a framework for forging reunification between Taiwan and China. Although relations have improved in recent years, the two sides have never signed a peace accord, and Beijing maintains the option of taking Taiwan by force.

"As we closely follow events in Hong Kong, we have this feeling that in the not-so-distant future, we could very well end up like Hong Kong," said Titus Chen, a professor at National Sun Yat-sen University in Taiwan, noting what he and others describe as China's growing influence on the island. "Today it's Hong Kong; tomorrow it might be Taiwan."

No matter how the impasse is resolved, the struggle unfolding in Hong Kong is already a public-relations nightmare for Beijing. Outside China, the scenes of peaceful student protesters sprayed with tear gas and bloodied by thugs have elicited unwelcome comparisons to the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, which ended in violence when the Chinese military moved to crush the protests, earning Beijing years of international opprobrium.

The drama in Hong Kong, playing out in real time on social media and beamed across the world by the international news media, also threatens to complicate Beijing's ambitious efforts to burnish its image abroad.

In recent days, rallies in Singapore, Seoul, Manila and elsewhere have drawn thousands of people expressing solidarity with the demonstrators in Hong Kong.

John Delury, a professor of East Asian studies at Yonsei University in South Korea, said his students, many of them from across Asia, have been riveted by the events in Hong Kong.

"I think the impact on young people across Asia could be much bigger than what Beijing anticipates," he said, noting Hong Kong's role as regional purveyor of popular culture and a center for international finance. "From a soft-power perspective, if anything remotely like what happened in 1989 occurs in Hong Kong, China can kiss its soft power goodbye for a couple of decades."

The political tumult in Hong Kong has become a headache for Beijing at a time when party leaders are grappling with a host of challenges, from a slowing economy to diplomatic skirmishes with neighbors like Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines. Then there is mounting unrest in Xinjiang, in China's far northwest, as well as the simmering discontent in Tibetan areas that has prompted more than 130 people to set themselves on fire to protest government policies.

Advocates for Tibetans and Uighurs have been especially active on social media, drawing parallels between Hong Kong and the autonomous regions that Beijing established for the nation's largest ethnic minorities more than six decades ago.

"What we have in common with the people in Hong Kong is that we are all fighting for freedom and justice against an authoritarian regime that has broken its promises again and again," Tenzin Jigdal, a Tibetan activist, said in a phone interview from Dharamsala, India, home to the Tibetan government in exile.

Those promises include constitutional guarantees that ethnic minorities would have a significant role in managing their own affairs, much as Hong Kong does. In reality, the sprawling autonomous regions set up for Tibetans, Uighurs, Mongolians and other groups are run by ethnic Han Chinese officials appointed by the central government. Most experts outside China agree such entities are autonomous in name only.

Although Hong Kong residents still enjoy an uncensored Internet, an independent judiciary and a relatively unfettered press, their complaints echo those that Tibetans and Uighurs have been making for years: about growing interference from Beijing and increasing economic disparity fueled by a surge in wealthier migrants from the mainland.

Most analysts agree that events in Hong Kong have already done significant damage to one of China's so-called core interests: its six-decade effort to bring about reunification with Taiwan.

That effort has already run into mounting resistance among the island's 23 million residents, crystallized last spring when student activists occupied Taiwan's legislature for nearly a month to protest a trade bill with China. Opponents said

the measure, backed by Mr. Ma and his legislative allies from the governing Kuomintang, would have given Beijing too much influence over Taiwan's economy, which is increasingly dependent on the mainland.

The protests, known as the Sunflower Movement, succeeded in halting the bill, providing inspiration to the young activists who have led the pro-democracy effort in Hong Kong.

In a move that stunned many people in Taiwan, the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, last month reaffirmed Beijing's determination to pursue "one country, two systems" for Taiwan. Given events in Hong Kong, the announcement was seen as poorly timed and prompted a rebuke from President Ma, who has been struggling to ease widespread mistrust of

Beijing among Taiwan's electorate.

Jiho Chang, a leader of the Sunflower Movement, said the combination of Mr. Xi's remarks and the refusal to give Hong Kong residents the right to elect their leader freely had finally put to rest the notion that Taiwan and Beijing might one day come together under the rubric of "one country, two systems."

In a phone interview, Mr. Chang laughed when asked if "one country, two systems" still had any resonance among people in Taiwan.

"I'm very confident China would break its promises on anything," he said. "China claims it wants to bring us closer together, but given what we've seen happening in Hong Kong, it has only succeeded in pushing us further apart."

YouTube Suspends Fake Tibet Propaganda Accounts After Investigation

By Michelle FlorCruz,

International Business Times,
4 November 2014

From designer hand bags to entire copycat towns, China has an impressively long list of fakes, but none as bizarre as the fake social media accounts set up to praise the central government's stance on Tibet.

Earlier this summer the New York Times and Free Tibet, a Tibet independence advocacy group in London, discovered that China was running a new public relations tactic: setting up fake Twitter accounts that appear to be foreigners who know a lot about Tibet, and its relationship with the Chinese government.

Today, Alistair Currie, the press and media manager for Free Tibet, said that after reports and complaints, YouTube has suspended several accounts associated with these fake Twitter accounts, deleting handfuls of videos that portray Tibet as a happy Chinese province.

"China's cack-handed attempts to use Western social media to spread its message may appear too obvious to pose a threat but they form part of a current

charm offensive which must be taken seriously," Currie said via email. "In recent months we have seen a new, coordinated effort to sell the message to external audiences that Tibet is full of contended people benefiting from the Chinese government's financial largesse and content that China respects and preserves their culture." In reality, Currie said that "China is an occupying power, brutally repressing Tibetan resistance and guilty of grave human rights abuses."

The New York Times focuses in on one Twitter account, @tomhugo148, who frequently tweeted about Tibet, linking to photos and articles about how Tibetan people appreciated China's rule over the autonomous region. He would also share videos from his YouTube account. The shirtless man at the beach is actually a Brazilian model named Felipe Berto, who didn't know his picture was being used for Tibetan politics.

The fake account, however, is not limited to just Tom Hugo. Dozens of other Twitter accounts posting almost exclusively about Tibet or the restive Xinjiang province from what appeared to be the accounts of Caucasian foreigners were found. In some cases, Free Tibet reports that profile pictures for such accounts

were discovered to be from commercial stock image websites and even celebrities like the late Syd Barrett, a former member of Pink Floyd. On YouTube, comments on videos would also appear featuring awkwardly worded pro-China comments purporting to be from concerned (and fake) foreigners, some with improbable names such as "Malthu Snowl" and "Nell Raleigh".

While there isn't definitive proof that China's government is behind the fake accounts, in the past, the government has paid people 50 renminbi cents to post comments on news articles or message boards espousing the position of the Communist Party.

"We're grateful YouTube for pulling the accounts but more needs to be done by social media companies to prevent the abuse of their products in this way," Currie said. "China's emphasis on manipulation of Western public opinion is a sign of how important that public opinion is."



HONOURED GUEST – The gem that India will not call by its name

[The Telegraph]

By Gopalkrishna Gandhi

We do not realize how lucky we are, how profoundly lucky, to have in our midst the rather incredible human being called the Dalai Lama. Two Indians — both naturalized Indians — have won the Nobel Prize for Peace: Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama. India lost no time in decorating the Saint of Kalighat with the Bharat Ratna, but only after she had got the Nobel. But the Dalai Lama, who won the Nobel in 1989, has not yet become a Bharat Ratna nor is likely ever to become one.

The reason is a five letter word, China. There is no other. That fear of displeasing another nation should stand in the way of India officially honouring a person the world honours is a matter of shame.

Our official policy has been unambiguous, since the time Jawaharlal Nehru was prime minister. It has four parts to it, each simpler than the other: 1. The Dalai Lama is India's honoured guest. 2. He is so, as a spiritual figure, not as a political exile. 3. Tibet is a part of China. 4. The Dalai Lama will not carry out any political activities from Indian soil.

He has been our guest now for over half a century. He has not once flouted the civil understanding that he should not say or do anything from Indian soil which could be seen as interfering in China's internal affairs. He has not once embarrassed us. He has done more: he has said repeatedly that he does not want an independent Tibet, that he only wants its cultural and religious uniqueness to be safeguarded. And yet, we are afraid: what will China say?

What can China say? Both India and the Dalai Lama have made it clear that they accept Tibet as a part of China. So what stops us from giving ourselves the satisfaction of honouring the Dalai Lama, as we have done Mother Teresa?

There the National Democratic Alliance and the United Progressive Alliance governments have been on the same page. And Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not likely to be any different. But the Da-

lai Lama getting or not getting the Bharat Ratna is not so important as our knowing the great asset we have amidst us in terms of sheer spiritual intelligence. And that is no ordinary asset.

Over two days last month the Dalai Lama convened a meeting of the kind I have never seen before. It was a meeting of religious, theological and philosophical leaders to discuss the subject of inter-community harmony. To call it a Parliament of Religions would be exactly right. And it was pervaded by the spirit of the monk of Belur and the words he spoke in Chicago in 1893.

Those who are so assiduously co-opting his name and charisma today should ponder the words of Vivekananda at the World Parliament of Religions. "I am proud to belong to a religion," he said, "which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance..." Then, going on to say something we should repeat to ourselves a hundred times in India today, he said, "Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization, and sent whole nations to despair..."

The New Delhi hall had persons in every religious garb and style — saffron, blue, black and white turbans, skull caps, tufted heads, scarved heads, beards trimmed and untrimmed, graying, hennaed and black, foreheads with tilaks on them and with the mark of the namaz on them. There was, of course, the gleaming Parsi hat, contrasting with the soft sufi head-cloth. And there was one venerable religious leader who wore nothing at all.

A good number of them spoke on the subject with a kind of mutuality that was unbelievable. The Dalai Lama sat in the 'audience', listening attentively to each speaker, nodding from time to time. He was visibly moved when a Hindu dharmaguru from Varanasi got up even as the head of Ajmer Sharif was speaking, went up to the stage and, as a token of endorsement, presented him a rose. A few people with no marked religious affiliation like me were lucky enough also

to be invited. If this is how our religious leaders feel, it seemed to me, why should we worry for our plural future?

One example of direct intervention by a dharmaguru, I said with some temerity, will do what a thousand speeches will not. How many dharmagurus have died while trying to quell a riot? How many ulema? And just to drive home the point, I invoked five examples.

The first was from the third week of March, 1931. A savage sort of communal violence had engulfed Kanpur's mixed mohallas. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi — teacher, journalist, founder of The Pratap and president of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee in 1929 — did not phone the police. He did not go to newspaper offices to fulminate against communalism. He did not lapse into prayer, wailing or rhetoric. He did just what Gandhi wanted satyagrahis to do in communally-charged situations. Over four days, Vidyarthi saved the lives of several — hundreds — of Hindus and Muslims from the blind fury of the murderous hordes. On March 25, his biographer, Anandi Prasad Mathur, tells us that a man running for his life asked Vidyarthi to save some people who were hiding nearby. Not for the first time that day, Vidyarthi was in the direct line of death — blow upon blow raining on him, sharp instruments pierced his thin frame. Gandhi wrote in *Young India*: "The death of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi is one to be envied by us all... Let this noble example stimulate us all to similar effort should occasion arise again."

Occasion arose in 1946 — in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. It was July 1, the day of Asad Sud, when images of deities are taken out in a rath yatra. The city broke into the most ghastly communal riots. Thirty-year-old Vasantrao Hegiste and 17-year-old Rajab Ali were colleagues in the Congress. When news came from the suburb of Jamalpur that frenzied mobs were on the rampage there, Vasant and Rajab ran to the spot. They were threatened, but they defied the armed bullies and lay down on the rioters' path to protect their victims. They died crushed by several murderous feet.

In August and September of 1947, when Gandhi was in Calcutta, the communal frenzy reached new heights. Gandhi moved to one of the city's most turbulent quarters, Beliaghata. Hydari Manzil, where he stayed, was attacked on the night of August 31, 1947, by bloodlusted youths. They took an associate of Gandhi, Bishen, to be a Muslim and were about to kill him when Gandhi confronted them: "Kill me, kill me I say, why don't you kill me?" The mob melted away. Two brave youths, in their thirties, volunteers of the Gandhi school, Smritish Banerjee and Sachin Mitra, went into the riot-affected areas the next day. Sachin was stabbed while trying to still mob fury on Calcutta's Zachariah Street, while Smritish became a martyr while watching over a peace march.

I was prepared for the religious heads present to be upset when they heard me say that it is men like these, not religious leaders, who have stemmed communal frenzy in India. But they did not react as I thought they would. They were in the Dalai Lama's presence.

What has been happening in parts of Uttar Pradesh in the last few weeks could be 'episodic', could be part of a pattern that is revealing only its tuft. Political leaders fomenting action and reaction go into hiding the moment the 'thing' starts. Religious leaders fall sagely silent. But, should occasion arise, if even one of them says, "They will have to kill me first," he would save innocent lives. The Dalai Lama would. But then he is under the "honoured guest" protocol.

We have to be among the most paradoxical nations. The president of China is personally shown round Gandhi's ashram at Sabarmati by our prime minister. But the Mahatma's most cognate spiritual heir in India today, the Dalai Lama, half a century and more after having become one of us, must remain the gem we will not call by its name.



Tibetan leadership urges China to open 'earnest dialogue'

[The Parliament Magazine]

Written by Kelsang Gyaltzen
on 8 September 2014 in Opinion

Kelsang Gyaltzen says Tibet is not seeking independence, but is concerned only with preserving the "distinct Buddhist cultural heritage, language and natural environment of the Tibetan plateau".

On 12 June 2012, the EU high representative Catherine Ashton called on China "to address the deep-rooted causes of the frustration of the Tibetan people".

She also called for Beijing to ensure that Tibetans' "civil, political, economic and social and cultural rights are respected..." and encouraged all parties concerned "to resume a meaningful dialogue".

Two days after Ashton's announcement, the European parliament voted through a resolution that endorsed "the principles set out in the memorandum on genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people, proposed by the envoys of his holiness the Dalai Lama to their Chinese counterparts in 2008, which provide the basis for a realistic and sustainable political solution to the issue of Tibet".

Meanwhile, tragically, 86 more Tibetans have resorted to self-immolations to protest against Chinese policies – increasing the total number to 130. Moreover, the talks between the Tibetan leadership in exile and the Chinese government have been stalled since January 2010.

Consequently, today there is a political imperative for members of the international community to engage in a concerted effort to encourage and urge the Chinese leadership to enter into an earnest dialogue with the representatives of the Dalai Lama.

The policy of the Tibetan leadership in exile on a mutually acceptable solution is straightforward. We are not seeking separation and independence. What we are seeking is genuine self-rule for the Tibetan people within the framework of the constitution of the People's Republic

of China.

Our main concern is to ensure the survival of the Tibetan people with our distinct Buddhist cultural heritage, language and natural environment of the Tibetan plateau. This approach is called Umaylam – the middle way approach – and was conceived by his holiness the Dalai Lama in the spirit of non-violence, dialogue and reconciliation.

The basic features of the middle way approach are:

A fundamental belief in non-violent approach as the only human, sensible and intelligent way to overcome clashes of interests and conflicts in the 21st century;

The pursuit of dialogue and negotiations as the principal means to resolve conflicts and the exercise of political moderation and restraint from maximalist positions in the process of negotiations;

The conduct of dialogue and negotiations in the spirit of reconciliation aiming for mutual agreement and mutual benefit;

The belief in the political necessity of peaceful co-existence of different cultures, religions and ethnic groups without separation and segregation in today's highly interconnected and interdependent world;

This requires the spirit of pluralism and cooperation and of solutions with no victor and no vanquished.

In June this year, the democratically elected Tibetan political leader Lobsang Sangay reiterated unequivocally that his administration stands ready to resume the dialogue anytime, anywhere.

Against this background the EU can play a leading role in urging for the resumption of dialogue between the representatives of his holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese leadership and thus in promoting a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Tibet.

About the author

Kelsang Gyaltzen is special representative of H.H. the Dalai Lama in Europe

Tibetan confidence in India has increased, but will Modi give in to China?

[Hindustan Times]

By Tshering Chonzom

Chinese President Xi Jinping is on his maiden visit to India and returns home today.

Among a host of issues and actors that took the centre stage before and during Xi's visit were the Tibetans in India who were on an overdrive to make appeals, sign petitions and organise protests against his tour.

But, the question remains. What do the activists, the Tibetan parliament based in Dharamsala and its head, Lobsang Sangay, sympathisers in India as well as the Dalai Lama – who are using Xi's visit as an opportunity to remind the Indian and the Chinese governments of a 'Tibet issue' – really expect when they ask Narendra Modi to 'save' or 'stand up' for Tibet?

While the Dharamsala establishment's appeal for resolution of the Tibet issue through a 'mutually beneficial policy of middle-way approach' is comparatively reasonable to take up, Tibetans should not be disappointed that nothing came out of the Xi-Modi meeting.

It was the first such high-level state to state meeting between the two leaders.

For Modi, it was more of an opportunity to take forward his much-touted agenda of boosting India's trade and economic development by courting Chinese investment. It is a different story that Xi finally committed to only one fifth of the hyped investment of 100 billion dollars over the next five years.

There were, however, speculations that Xi himself might bring up the Tibet issue with Modi. In a news report on August 30, Ma Jiali, an expert on India at the Communist Party School in Beijing, confidently suggested that Xi would be raising the issue of 'existence of the Tibetan government in exile in Dharamsala'.

He counselled that 'India should keep its promise about adhering to one-China policy and give no importance to forces trying to split China'.

In what can be seen as a response to such exhortations from the Chinese government routed through its intellectuals, Sushma Swaraj, India's foreign minister, reportedly argued on September 9 that 'for India to agree to a one-China policy, China should reaffirm a one-India policy'.

Swaraj's statement indicated that India, in congruence with its approach to not mention Tibet in any of its joint statements with China since 2010, would continue with this convenient policy – which it did.

However, her statement also indicated that India was flexible enough to agree to a 2003-type quid pro quo when India rephrased its recognition of 'Tibet as a region of China' to 'Tibet Autonomous Region is a part of the territory of the People's Republic of China' in return for China's recognition of Sikkim as a part of India.

The question is what kind of a quid pro quo, if at all, can be envisaged in the future? Currently, the optimism of a breakthrough in the boundary dispute was sullied by news of tension along the LAC, among others.

As much as the Tibetans are dependent on India — given that the Tibetan exile government (the Central Tibetan Administration as it calls itself now) is based here, it is also a fact that Tibet remains the missing link in the India-China border dispute.

The Tibet issue is a left over problem from history; hence, the moral dilemma preventing India from abandoning it completely.

Moreover, having been based in India for more than 50 years now, with many born here, the Tibetan people have been able to establish some sort of affinity with the land and its people; not to mention many others who are interested and have taken up Indian citizenship.

Their leaders, in their bid to sell Tibet to the Indian imagination, have constantly emphasised historical Buddhist and cultural ties. Sections of the Indian political class have not acknowledged this link,

which remains the motivating factor for allowing the Tibetans to reside here indefinitely.

Reflecting this religious and cultural link is the two days conference that brings together heads and members of about nine diverse religions of India at the Dalai Lama's behest beginning on Saturday, just a day after Xi's departure.

The attempt to accentuate the strategic dimension in the India-Tibet link — Tibet as intrinsic to India's security — is also of relevance.

Lobsang Sangay, in the last few days, has been arguing that Tibet should be a 'core issue' for 'India and South Asia as a whole' just as it is for China. Since Lobsang Sangay's arrival in the Dharamsala scene in 2011, there has been some sort of a shift in its approach, visible in the leader's first 10 March speech in 2012 when he appealed to 'ASEAN and Saarc to include the Tibet issue in your agenda given Tibet's geopolitical and environmental significance affecting billions of Asians'. Previously, Tibetan campaigns were mainly directed at gaining Western support.

Since about 2010, even the Dalai Lama has changed his position when he stated that India's dealings with China with respect to Tibet was no longer 'over-cautious'. In the last few years, Tibetan parliamentarians in exile have been active in meeting with Indian politicians and leaders across various Indian states where they have been warmly received.

It would be useful to see whether these efforts contribute to a proactive Indian policy towards Tibet. Notably, Tibetan confidence in India has increased with Modi's ascendance to power and the invitation to Lobsang Sangay to attend his inaugural ceremony. But there are also skeptics who fear Modi might do a Nixon on China given China's economic clout. Like everybody says, one can only 'wait and watch'.

(The author is an associate fellow at the Institute of Chinese Studies. Views expressed by the author are personal)

6 Things You Should Know About the Anti-Dalai Lama Protesters

By Tenzin Dorjee*

Huffington Post, 5 November 2014

Few leaders of our time have achieved a popularity and reverence more universal and enduring than the Dalai Lama. Through his tireless work to promote social justice, universal responsibility, secular ethics, interfaith harmony, and nonviolent principles, he has made a monumental contribution to alleviating human suffering and increasing, for lack of a better word, the Gross Global Happiness.

Naturally, it must have been deeply confusing for thousands of people that during his most recent tour of the United States, a mysterious group of protesters has been hounding the Dalai Lama at every stop, from Alabama to Princeton to Boston to New York.

Who are these protesters? Here are six quick facts you need to know about the anti-Dalai Lama protesters:

1. They are Geluk supremacists.

The protesters belong to a fringe group of Buddhist extremists who worship a deity called Shugden and pursue an ideology of Geluk supremacy. Tibetan Buddhism has five sects, namely Geluk, Sakya, Nyingma, Kagyu and Jhonang. Within the Geluk school, there is a subgroup whose propitiation of the Shugden deity has historically forbidden its members to read the scriptures of other sects and study with lamas of non-Geluk schools. This controversial ideology of Geluk supremacy, which fueled sectarian tensions among Tibetans for hundreds of years, is what the Dalai Lama set out to eradicate when he discouraged the worship of this deity. In keeping with his progressive and reform-driven policies, the Dalai Lama (who traditionally belongs to the Geluk school himself) has gone out of his way to study with various lamas from other traditions, urging that all sects must be accorded equal respect. These reformist measures of the Dalai Lama, aimed at promoting inter-sectarian harmony, has made him anathema to the Geluk supremacists.

2. They call the Dalai Lama a “dictator.”

The protesters accuse the Dalai Lama of being “the worst dictator in the modern

world.” This accusation only exposes the distorted and deluded world they live in. The truth is, their own group, the New Kadampa Tradition, is run by a leader who bans his students from reading books by any author other than himself. The Western Shugden Society (WSS), a front of the New Kadampa Tradition and the group that has been orchestrating the most recent protests against the Dalai Lama, is the Buddhist equivalent of the Westboro Baptist Church (WBC), an unaffiliated church known for its extremist ideologies. Read a first-hand account of how the New Kadampa Tradition church intimidates its members into attacking the Dalai Lama.

3. “The Dalai Lama is a Muslim!”

The protesters have accused the Dalai Lama of being a “Muslim.” First of all, to use the word “Muslim” as an insult betrays a level of racism and Islamophobia that has no place in today’s world. At any rate, the claim that the world’s most famous Buddhist is secretly a Muslim is so ludicrous that it does not merit any serious response. They have also claimed that His Holiness is the “False Dalai Lama.” If that’s the case, then who is the real Dalai Lama? Is Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, the leader of the Geluk supremacists, who allows only his own books and writings in his center, the real Dalai Lama? Or are they waiting for Beijing to find and recognize the real Dalai Lama?

4. The Geluk extremists are supported by the Chinese government.

In 1997, a highly respected Tibetan scholar, who criticized the worship of Shugden as a deviation from true Buddhism, was assassinated in Dharamsala, India, along with two of his students. The assassins escaped from India and went straight to China, who gave them safe haven. The Indian police linked the murders directly to the Shugden association and Interpol issued a Red Notice to China. For Beijing, the Shugden controversy presented an opportunity to undermine the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan cause. It decided to support the Geluk extremists to sow discord among Tibetans – this strategy fits perfectly into China’s divide-and-rule policy. Read more stories that follow the money to China.

5. They are barking up the wrong tree.

These protesters are overwhelmingly white American and European men masquerading as Tibetan monks and victims. For these privileged citizens of Western countries to accuse the Dalai Lama, a homeless refugee with no army and no police force, of suppressing their religious freedom is not only absurd, it is just plain evil. That kind of deception, far more than the Dalai Lama’s reformist policies, threatens the “pure Geluk tradition” that they claim to defend. These people have no connection whatsoever to any organization or institution controlled by the Dalai Lama; he could not suppress their freedom even if he wanted to. The only person who would be able to exercise control and coercion over them – and thus take away their religious freedom for real – is Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, whose mysterious organization they had joined without knowing what they were signing up for. Read testimonies from survivors of the New Kadampa Tradition.

6. The protesters aim to undermine the Tibetan cause and advance China’s agenda.

There are many unsettling parallels between the language of the New Kadampa Tradition and that of the Chinese government. Both have accused the Dalai Lama of being a CIA stooge. Both have called him a Nazi. Both argue that pre-1959 Tibet was a “feudal serfdom”. This group wants you to believe that the CIA saved the Dalai Lama; in all likelihood, they even want you to believe that China “liberated” the Tibetan people from the Dalai Lama. But the theory that “the Dalai Lama would never have been saved without the CIA” is pure fiction; it distorts history and steals the truth from the Tibetan warriors who risked their lives to escort the Dalai Lama from Lhasa to India. Therefore, the New Kadampa Tradition and the anti-Dalai Lama protesters are no longer just Geluk supremacists, but they are also the most useful instruments in the Chinese government’s colossal master plan to obfuscate the Tibet issue and delegitimize the Tibetan struggle for freedom.

* *Tenzin Dorjee is a Tibetan writer, activist and musician.*

Irmtraut Wager 1919- 2014



Irmtraut Wager (file photo)

Irmtraut Wager, lovingly referred to as Ama Wager by the Tibetan people, was an iconic figure in the Tibetan exile community particularly for her lifelong effort in the education of exile Tibetan children. She passed away on 2 October at the age of 95.

She was one of the few westerners who have been in close association with the Tibetan people for over four decades. Thousands of Tibetans have directly or indirectly benefited from her benevolent service and is deeply grateful to her.

As the Chairman of German Aid to Tibetan (Deutsche Tibethilfe), she has successfully steered a stupendous mission for the education of Tibetan children in the exile Tibetan community. Her significant efforts for the welfare of the Tibetan people in the refugee settlements in India and Nepal were also notable.

The demise of Mrs. Wager was undoubtedly an irreparable loss to the Tibetan people of one of its closest friends and ally. As a result, her passing away elicited outpourings of grief from all sections of the Tibetan society.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, expressing his heartfelt condolences, wrote a letter to Mrs. Wager's family and friends in Munich, Germany. "Tibetans have lost a friend who, until her last breath, kept the well-being of needy Tibetans close to her heart."

"Among the many who have provided generous assistance to Tibetans, both young and old, in exile, Ama Wäger was perhaps unique. Not only was she generous herself, she also directed the support of many other individuals in Germany to

where it was most needed. She personally visited those she helped in different Tibetan settlements and schools in India and Nepal," His Holiness wrote, adding that he will always remember Ama Wager in his prayers.

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the Tibetan political leader, in his condolence message said "The Central Tibetan Administration is deeply saddened by the passing away of Ms. Irmtraut Wager, who is fondly known by Tibetans as Ama Wager. Her humanitarian work has played a pivotal role in the sustenance of the Tibetan community in exile. She was truly a beacon of light that changed many lives for the better. Her legacies will be remembered by Tibetans in the generations to come. Tibetans will remain forever indebted to her generosity."

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile also issued a statement expressing their deep condolences and solidarity with Mrs. Wager's family and friends. "We are deeply saddened by the demise of our very long and supportive friend. We sincerely express our condolence to the family members."

"The name Ama Wäger is on the lips of every Tibetans from small children to the elderly. Indeed she was a source of light that enlightened the lives of many Tibetans and was a symbol of hope for many. As a Buddhist, we believe in rebirth and pray that she be born again to serve the humanity," Mr Penpa Tsering, the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament said.

The Department of Education of the Central Tibetan Administration, with which Mrs. Wager has worked in close association for so many decades for the education of destitute Tibetan children, wrote: "We will always be indebted to Amala's support and her legacy will be remembered in the hearts of Tibetans all over the world."

"Ama la has made an outstanding contribution for the education of Tibetan children and dedicated her entire life for our community. We are proud to say that many of the beneficiaries of Amala's help are today serving our community in

various fields," they wrote in a letter to Deutsche Tibethilfe (German Aid to Tibetans).

Born in 1919 at a small village in East Prussia, her life was heavily influenced by "The Others First" principle on which her father lived his life. She have read about the Tibetan people in a few books in Germany. However, her first association with the Tibetan people occurred in the early 1970s when came to India. Having herself witnessed the anguish and agony caused in the aftermath of the second world war, she instantly empathised with the sufferings of the Tibetan refugees in the settlements of India. Awakened by the calls for help of the Tibetan refugees, she immediately started her work to help alleviate the sufferings of the Tibetan refugees.

Upon her return to Germany, she shifted to a two-room apartment, which later became the office of the German Aid to Tibetans and its dozens of volunteers. What was the most charismatic about this woman was that, though retired, with minimum knowledge of English, travelled every year o India. She went by herself to see to it that all her donations had been fully utilized correctly. She made sure that all her sponsored children attend schools.

She stepped down as the President of the German Aid to Tibetans at the age of 90.

But people kept on visiting her especially old friends from India and Tibetans who have been beneficiaries of her kind service. She was awarded International Campaign for Tibet's Light of Truth award, presented to her by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The award was a recognition of her lifelong service to the Tibetan people.

For all the numerous unconditional love and concern she bestowed on the Tibetan people, her reward was the love of all those Tibetans, children, sick people, monks and nuns and elder people. The word 'Ama' which means mother is an apt word to describe her and the unconditional act she had been doing for the exiled Tibetans.

TIBETAN MEDIA

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QUOTES

“When natural disasters take place I think people generally feel helpless. We need to look at things from a wider perspective, acknowledging that we are part of nature. It seems to me that modern education focuses too much on materialism, while it is religion that deals with inner values. However, what we need to pay attention to today is the secular ethics that are the basis of religious traditions” - His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the Meeting of Diverse Spiritual Traditions in Delhi.

“We are here to show the Chinese government that the Tibetan people and His Holiness the Dalai Lama are not alone in their fight for justice, righteousness and human rights. And that’s why the world supports the Tibet issue. There is a history of fighting against racial discrimination in South Africa and that’s why we don’t accept this country refusing the visa to His Holiness the Dalai Lama” - Dr. Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Laureate, speaking at Dharamshala during the felicitation ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace prize to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

“Another important responsibility, which we call upon China to shoulder diligently and with urgency, is the protection of Tibet’s fragile ecosystem. This responsibility should not be perceived as a concession to the Tibetan people, but a duty owed to the Chinese people and the rest of Asia given the strategic environmental importance of the Tibetan plateau” - Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay in the Kashag’s statement on the 54th Tibetan Democracy Day, 2 September 2014.

“The Middle Way Policy is a mutually beneficial one – beneficial not only to Tibet but also to China. It is designed to ensure the preservation of Tibet’s unique religious and cultural heritage, habits and customs, ethnicity, and other aspects of the Tibetan identity while the territory remains under the sovereign framework of the Constitution of China so that the two sides can coexist and get along with each other on the basis of equality. The mutual advantages are extremely self evident” - Mr. Penpa Tsering, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile said in the Tibetan Parliament’s statement on the 54th Tibetan Democracy Day.

“ The Middle Way Approach is a reflection of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s great compassion and wisdom. Not only is the Middle Way Approach a rational, peaceful and non-violent means for Tibetans to achieve freedom, it is also a new approach to conflict resolution. The Middle Way Approach is a legacy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama which is a significant contribution to political diplomacy” - The Chinese participants of the Sino-Tibetan Conference held in Hamburg in their consensus statement.