



# TIBETAN BULLETIN

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2019

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Foreign Correspondents' Club of China

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His Holiness the Dalai Lama

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# TIBETAN BULLETIN

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Editor  
Tenzin Saldon  
Email: tibetpressofficer@tibet.net

Asst. Editor  
Tenzin Phende

Layout & Design  
Tenzin Phende

Circulation Manager  
Norbu Wangdue  
Email: circulation@tibet.net  
Tibetan Bulletin is published by:  
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**JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2019**

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama wishes everyone on Losar-Year of Earth Pig 2146

Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama, on one day ahead of Losar, greeted Tibetans in Tibet and those in exile on the occasion of Losar, the Tibetan New Year. Speaking from his residence in Dharamshala where he was meeting a group of elderly Tibetans aged over 90, His Holiness the Dalai Lama offered Losar message on the occasion of Tibetan new year 2146, beginning 5 February.

“I wanted to wish Losar Tashi Delek (Tibetan greeting on New Year) mainly to Tibetans inside Tibet and then, those in exile. The six to seven million Tibetan people are considered to be the followers of Chenresig, the Avalokiteshvara and in true essence, our people have upheld the tradition and lineage of Tibet.”

“Despite facing through a challenging period, we have successfully drawn admiration and recognition for the unique culture and religion of Tibet. This is chiefly due to the valour, courage and indomitable spirit demonstrated by Tibetans inside Tibet and the unity observed by all the Tibetans worldwide.”

“Hence I wish to thank you all for preserving the unity of the three traditional provinces of Tibet.”

Assuring that the “Tibetan cause will never die”, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, “The Tibetan cause is based on truth and truth will never die, it will only become stronger and clearer in time.”



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## Travel restrictions on Tibetans persist despite International outcry against China

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama concluded teachings at Bodh Gaya, Bihar, the place where Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment. Attending the annual teachings and prayers conferred by His Holiness has almost become an intrinsic part of an individual Tibetan's annual religious sojourn. Tibetans all over the world try to attend the same.



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama conferring long-life empowerment based on White Heruka at Kalachakra ground in Bodh Gaya, Bihar on 30 December 2018. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA*

But this has become perilous to Tibetans in Tibet under Chinese occupation.

At the recently concluded teachings, barely 100 Tibetans from Tibet were able to attend as reported by mainstream Tibetan media. This is mainly due to the severe restrictions on passport imposed by the Chinese authorities. In January, 2017, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama conferred the Kalachakra teachings and many Tibetans from Tibet had travelled to Bodh Gaya to receive the initiations. However, China threatened them of dire consequences if they attended the prayers. Upon return their passports were confiscated and never returned. Similarly, in January last year, Chinese authorities issued public order banning Tibetans from Tibet from attending the teachings and ordered them to return to Tibet immediately. Upon return, their passports were confiscated and torn.

When Tibetans in Tibet apply for passports, they are subjected to discriminatory practices targeted to

discourage Tibetans from applying. China has been adopting a two-track passport policy at the detriment of Tibetans. The Human Rights Watch had exposed the existence of such discriminatory passport system way back in 2015 where Tibetans are subjected to slow-track passport system. In the guise of issuing new e-passports, the passports of Tibetans were confiscated and were then subjected to arduous application process making it almost impossible to get a new passport.

In August last year a group of UN Experts expressed "serious concern over the policies and legislation of the two-track passport system specifically targeting and discriminating against members of the Tibetan minority" and sought information from the Chinese Government on this. The UN Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its report released in the same month after reviewing China, highlighted the "almost banning of issuance of passports to Tibetans for foreign travel" and recommended China to "revise regulations revise its regulations and practices to ensure non-discriminatory determinations on passport applications and freedom of movement for Tibetans within and beyond TAR and abroad." Even during the third cycle of Universal Periodic Review of China by the Human Rights Council the Member States called on China to cease restrictions on Tibetans' freedom of movement.

"Despite the international pressure, China continues to restrict Tibetans' movement, especially of their foreign travel. The denial of issuance and reissuance of passports for Tibetans has curtailed them from undertaking pilgrimage to holy Buddhist sites and attend the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. While China continues to brazenly disregard international norms and UN recommendations, it becomes incumbent on UN member states to further engage with China and ensure that they uphold their commitments," said Thinley Chukki, of UN and Human Rights Desk of Department of information and International Relations (DIIR), of Central Tibetan Administration.

## CTA President Congratulates US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

The President of Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) Dr Lobsang Sangay congratulated Nancy Pelosi for being elected as the Speaker of the House of Representative for the second time. First elected in 2007, Nancy Pelosi remains the only woman to ever serve for this role. She is currently in her 17th term as a Member of the House of Representatives, following her first election in 1987.

In his message, Dr Sangay expressed his admiration and applauded Nancy Pelosi for being a fearless leader. "I, on behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration heartily congratulate you on being elected Speaker of the House for the second time. Your election is a reflection of your leadership, integrity and the sharp relevance of your voice as a champion of American ideals," said President Dr Sangay.

"Your political and moral leadership and commitment towards issues including human rights at home and abroad is a legacy and inspiration to all of us."

"Your victory is the victory of people in Tibet and people around the world who are denied their basic human rights."

Speaker Pelosi is a staunch supporter of the Tibet cause and a fierce advocate of peace and non-violence.

In a statement delivered on the 59th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising Day, Pelosi said, "If we do not speak out for human rights in Tibet because of economic concerns, then we lose all moral authority to talk about human rights in any other place in the world." She led a congressional delegation to Tibet in 2015 and to Dharamsala twice with the last visit in 2017.

For detailed news visit:  
[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama Congratulates US Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Re-election

His Holiness the Dalai Lama congratulated Honourable Nancy Pelosi on her re-election as the Speaker of the US Congress. His Holiness the Dalai Lama reiterated his belief that the United States is the leading nation of the free world and his confidence that in her role as the Speaker, she would help to lead during these difficult times.

His Holiness also thanked Speaker Pelosi for her personal friendship and for her loyal and unwavering support in the past decades to the just cause of the Tibetan people.



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama greeting his friend then House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi as she arrives at his residence leading a bipartisan US Congressional Delegation on a visit to the Tibetan community in Dharamsala HP, India on May 9, 2017. Photo by Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL*

“Your friendship, support and solidarity during this most difficult period in Tibet’s long history have been a source of hope, inspiration and strength in our enduring and challenging quest for justice and freedom.”

“Consequently, notwithstanding the uncertainty and upheaval we are presently witnessing in different parts of the world, including the continuing plight of my compatriots in Tibet, I remain hopeful and optimistic that ultimately truth, justice and human reasoning and decency will prevail.”

For detailed news visit:  
[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

## CTA President welcomes the enactment of Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA)



*CTA President hails the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act.*

President Dr Lobsang Sangay of Central Tibetan Administration hailed the enactment of the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA) , saying that the passage is a much-welcomed move. US President Donald Trump signed the ARIA Act into law on 31 December 2018, having passed the Senate and the House on 4 and 12 December respectively.

President Dr Sangay thanked the US Congress for passing the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, which references Tibet in terms of supporting “activities preserving cultural traditions and promoting sustainable development, education, and environmental conservation in Tibetan communities in the Tibet Autonomous Region and in other Tibetan communities in China, India, and Nepal.”

CTA President, in recent years, has made multiple visits to the United States and held high-level meetings in the Senate as well as the House of Representatives. During those meetings, he has relentlessly tabled the issue of prioritising Tibet at the core of US policy. The Office of Tibet in Washington DC has also made tremendous efforts towards this.

“ARIA ensures that the US will continue to support Tibet by authorizing funds for Tibet-related programs and by highlighting Chinese human rights

abuses against the Tibetan people,” said Senators Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) and Ed Markey (D-Mass.), the lead sponsors of the Act.

Matteo Mecacci, president of the International Campaign for Tibet said: “This Act rightly places the issue of Tibet within the parameters of US security interests. Tibet occupies an Asian fault zone of clashing cultures and big-power politics.”

The Act, known as ARIA, aims at enhancing American leadership in the Indo-Pacific region and strengthening cooperation with regional partners, including India and Taiwan. It says, “The United States has a fundamental interest in defending human rights and promoting the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region.”

**Following is the reference to Tibet in the Act.**

### **SEC. 409. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

**(a) Promotion of Democracy in the Indo-Pacific Region.—**

**(1) In general.—There is authorized to be appropriated \$210,000,000, for each of the fiscal years 2019 through 2023, to promote democracy, strengthen civil society, human rights, rule of law, transparency, and accountability in the Indo-Pacific region, including**

for universities, civil society, and multilateral institutions that are focusing on education awareness, training, and capacity building.

(2) Democracy in china.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be made available for United States Government efforts, led by the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, to promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights in the People’s Republic of China.

(3) Tibet.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be made available for nongovernmental organizations to support activities preserving cultural traditions and promoting sustainable development, education, and environmental conservation in Tibetan communities in the Tibet Autonomous Region and in other Tibetan communities in China, India, and Nepal.

The Act also recognises India as a major Defence partner, the vital role of the strategic partnership between the United States and India in promoting peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region. Section 204 of the Act calls for strengthening and broadening of diplomatic, economic, and security ties between the two countries.

The Indo-Pacific is a biogeographic region, comprising the Indian Ocean and the western and central Pacific Ocean, including the South China Sea.



For detailed news visit:  
[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

## Gangjong Finance Granted License by RBI, SARD Rolls out 12 Crore Loan for Tibetan Summer Businesses

The Social and Resource Development Fund (SARD), Department of Finance rolled out a new Summer Livelihood Support Programme for 2019, under which CTA will provide loans worth a total of Rs 12 Crores (120 Million) at a minimal 3% interest rate to support Tibetan Summer businesses across India.



President Dr Lobsang Sangay addressing the press conference on the launch of new Summer Livelihood Support Programme for the year 2019 by SARD, Department of Finance, CTA at Kashag Secretariat hall. Photo/Passang Dhondup/CTA

President Dr Lobsang Sangay unveiled the loan product at a press conference held at the Kashag Secretariat. He also formally announced that the Gangjong Development Finance Private Limited, also called Gangjong Finance, was now a legitimate Non-banking Financial Institution registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Finance Kalon Karma Yeshe, Chief Planning Officer Dr Kunchok Tsundue, CEO Ram Mohan Rao, Finance Secretary Yeshe Wangmo and Chief Resilience Officer Kaydor Aukartsang attended the press conference.

President Dr Lobsang Sangay said the Livelihood support program is primarily aimed at Tibetans based in India and envisions to strengthen the self reliance and sustainability of Tibetan community in exile by helping them thrive economically, help sustain and grow viable businesses through its low-interest loan services.

Kalon Karma Yeshe, Department of Finance remarked that the program boasted a 100 percent on-time repayment rate in the first two years of its implementation i.e. 2017 and 2018.

“In 2017, the Livelihood program benefited more than 913 Tibetan winter sweater sellers, of which 42% were owned by women. The loan amount was repaid 100% by February/March of 2018.” He acknowledged the support and cooperation of Tibetan settlement officers, local assemblies, regional sweater sellers associations in the smooth return.

Kalon hoped this year too the amounts will be repaid fully and on time. “This will not only help us expand the livelihood support program in future but will earn the trust and admiration of our funders.”

A recent survey undertaken by SARD revealed there are over 35 well-established summer retail markets all over India with 1594 shops. Based on the selection criteria, SARD selected 13 markets for the inaugural Summer Livelihood Support Programme. Approximately 600 Tibetans are going to benefit from this programme.

Dr Kunchok Tsundue, the Chief Planning Officer of the Central Tibetan Administration briefly introduced the SLSP program and the legal registration of Gangjong Finance with RBI.

This year’s Summer Livelihood Support Programme will benefit over 600 Tibetan beneficiaries operating in 13 Tibetan Summer retail markets across India. The program will be implemented from February this year, providing loan packages of Rs 2 lakhs to each beneficiary.

“The summer Livelihood Support program is to support the community members whose major business activity is in summer season. The size and number of the summer businesses are smaller than the winter sweater Sellers, but the summer business segment is more organised,” said SARD.

Speaking on the legal registration of Gangjong Finance, CEO Ram Mohan Rao said the firm has mapped an ambitious plan for the subsequent years. “Now that we have secured the license, we are a legitimate financial institution in India. This is only the first step. Slowly with building a track record for the institution and with sufficient capital, we may try for a banking license. When it becomes a bank, it will be an exclusive bank for Tibetans. That is our dream but this was our first step.”

## Rice Mill in Bhandara Tibetan Settlement launches its flagship product – Tibet Premium Rice

The Tibet Rice Mill of Bhandara Tibetan Settlement, Maharashtra launched its flagship product, the Tibet Premium Rice at a press conference.

Speaking at the press conference were Chief Planning Commissioner of Central Tibetan Administration Dr Kunchok Tsundue, Additional Secretary of Department of Home Karma Choeying, President of the Bhandara Cooperatives Society Phuntsok Tashi and Secretary Tenzin Phende.

“The Co-operative Society of Norgyaling Tibetan Settlement has set up a rice mill with funding support primarily from The Dalai Lama Trust and the Central Tibetan Relief Committee. It was inaugurated by Kalon Sonam Topgyal Khorlatsang of the Department of Home on 7 September 2018,” said CTA’s chief planning commissioner, Dr Kunchok Tsundue.

He said the Tibet Rice Mill project is aimed at generating additional income for Tibetan local farmers and establish sustainable and self-reliant Tibetan cooperatives.

As told by the members of Cooperatives, the products have been transported in bulk for promotional testing here in Dharamshala and will be showcased to the donor organisations.

## Tibetans Sentenced in Central Tibet in 2018 for “Inciting Separatism”

In 2018, China has sentenced 25 Tibetans in the central Tibet, the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) under charges of “inciting separatism” and endangering “national security,” reported the state mouthpiece Global Times. The TAR high court presented the information in its work report last weekend.



File Image/Photo credit: savetibet.org

Announcing his work report to the regional Party Congress, TAR Chairman Che Dalha (Chinese: Qi Dalha) said, “Tibet has firmly curbed and cracked down on secession, infiltration and sabotage activities by hostile forces at home and abroad,” referring to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetans and supports outside Tibet. In February 2018, the public security bureau of TAR issued a circular listing “22 illegal activities,” three of which directly mentioned the “Dalai clique” and “hostile foreign forces”.

Like these 25, Tibetans calling for freedom in Tibet and expressing reverence to His Holiness the Dalai Lama have often been punished for “inciting separatism,” a criminal charge loosely defined and more so broadly misused against Tibetan dissents.

One example is the well-known case of Tashi Wangchuk, the Tibetan language rights advocate who expressed his opinion about the Tibetan people’s right to their language, for which he was sentenced to five years on the charges of “inciting separatism” by a Qinghai court last May.

In central Tibet or the “Tibet Autonomous Region,” protests against the Communist government’s policies erupted despite rigid monitoring and constant watch by the security personnel. In April last year, the TAR authorities manhandled and detained over 30 Tibetan villagers in Driru county, Nagchu prefecture for opposing mining of the sacred mountain Sebtra Dzagen. Prior to this event, Karma, the village head of Markor was detained when he refused to give his approval to the mining project. Despite repeated attempts, due to total clampdown on phones and other communication devices, Karma and the Tibetan villagers’ well-being and current condition remain unknown till date.

The concern is that the actual number of Tibetans sentenced in the past year would definitely be higher than the Chinese authorities’ claims.

## Tibetans Forced to Prostrate to Xi Jinping Pictures: Religious Repression in Tibet Accelerates

It’s just the beginning of 2019 and the year is already bespeaking the Chinese government’s ever-intensifying grip on Tibet and its repressive policies against the Tibetan people. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising of 1959, which forced His Holiness the Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetans to escape into exile. And China seems to be accelerating the curb on religious expression and activities, as recent reports from Tibet reveal.

As confirmed by our source, Tibetans in Serta County, incorporated into China’s Sichuan province, are forced to remove portraits of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from their altars. They are compelled to display pictures of Chinese leaders, including Xi Jinping, and to prostrate and make offerings instead. Prostration in Tibetan Buddhism is a traditional practice, a religious gesture of reverence reserved to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.



Tibetans ordered to prostrate to pictures of Chinese President/Image obtained from VOA

“Tibetans prostrate only to the three Jewels of Tibetan Buddhism,” noted DIIR Secretary Sonam Norbu Dagpo, the official spokesperson of the Central Tibetan Administration. “The Communist Party of China “claims” to be an atheist government and China an atheist country. Compelling the Tibetans in Tibet to prostrate to pictures of Chinese leaders including that of Xi Jinping is not only inappropriate but such intervention going against the Tibetan culture and Buddhist tradition is unacceptable,” he said.

Earlier the week, Chinese authorities in TAR even made proposals of building statues officials deployed in Tibet, under “cultural development”.

Other reports earlier in the month likewise indicated the Chinese government’s continuation of repression and further deterioration of the situation of human rights in Tibet. Last week, UN and Human Rights desk at DIIR reported on local Chinese authorities issuing of orders banning Tibetan students and civil servants from engaging in any kind of religious activities. The orders were supplemented with threat of dire consequences if not abided by.

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## Arrested for Celebrating HH the Dalai Lama’s Birthday, Tibetan Monk Released Due to Critical Health Condition

Choekyi, a Tibetan monk from Phugu Monastery, Serta (Ch: Seda) from Sichuan Province arrested in 2015 for celebrating His Holiness Dalai Lama’s 80th birthday was released due to his critical health condition, as per our source.



Choekyi, a Tibetan monk from Phugu Monastery, Serta, Sichuan Province was released from Chinese prison due to his critical health condition. Photo/VOT

Choekyi was detained by the Chinese Security officials on June 19, 2015 as he shopped with his father wearing a t-shirt which had a message in Tibetan “kue-gya-ton-su”, roughly translated as, “Celebrating (His Holiness Dalai Lama’s) Eightieth Birthday”. He was charged with inciting “separatist activities” and was initially held in prison in Kangding County in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Prefecture before transferring him to Sichuan’s Mianyang prison to serve 4 years sentence.

Before his detention, Choekyi was suffering from kidney ailment and other health-related issues. The torture in detention and the hard labour in prison made his condition much worse. There has been wide international call for his immediate release and medical attention.

The European Parliament had adopted a resolution on 18 January 2018 inter alia calling the Chinese authorities for the immediate and unconditional release

of Choekyi and “urged the Chinese Government to allow his relatives and the lawyers of his choice to visit him and, in particular, to provide him with adequate medical care.”

As per our source, Choekyi reached his home at Shosang Village, Nyitod Township, Serta County on 18 January 2019 at around 9 pm local time. The Chinese authorities threatened his family of dire consequences if they informed anybody beyond his immediate family about his release in order to prevent any kind of public gathering. The authorities allowed only his family members to pick him up and prohibited other Tibetans from receiving him from prison.

“Since his arrival, his house is under constant surveillance. Few security officials can be seen holding cameras to take pictures of the people visiting him,” reported our source.

China has often denounced His Holiness the Dalai Lama as “separatist” and possession of His picture is considered a crime let alone celebrating His birthday. The Human Rights Watch in its recent World Report 2019 has noted that Chinese authorities encouraged the “people to denounce members of their communities on the slightest suspicion of sympathy for the exiled Dalai Lama or opposition to the government” as part of China’s nationwide anti-crime campaign.

## Japan’s National Broadcaster NHK interviews CTA President on Tibet Issue

In a rare interview with Japan’s national broadcaster NHK, CTA president Dr. Lobsang Sangay called on the Chinese government to resume dialogue with the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and listen to the cries of Tibetans inside Tibet.

The interview was broadcast that evening on NHK World news.

President Dr. Sangay is on a weeklong visit to Japan to raise awareness on Tibet issue and garner support to resolve the issue of Tibet as this year marks 60 years under China's occupation and situation remains grim in Tibet.

Dr. Sangay said the Chinese government should listen to the voices and cries of the Tibetan people. "153 Tibetans have self-immolated calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and basic freedom for Tibetan people. If the Chinese government listen to their voices, it will be good for the Chinese government and harmony in Tibet and China, which is a win-win proposition," he said.



*Video grab of the NHK interview broadcast on NHK World News in Tokyo, Japan, 25 Jan 2019.*

He reiterated that Tibetans are not seeking separation of Tibet from China, but genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people. "There is no dispute about the fact that Tibet was historically an independent country. Repression of Tibetans should end and genuine autonomy should be given to the Tibetan people as per the Chinese constitution."

President Dr. Sangay said though there is no formal dialogue between the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the representatives of the Chinese government since 2010, there are many well-intended Chinese people, including Buddhists, business people, who have been meeting informally in their private capacity with His Holiness to express their interest in Tibetan culture and Buddhism.

Speaking on the future of the Tibetan freedom movement, the CTA president said the freedom movement will become stronger because the younger generation is getting better education and exposure

around the world. "The elder generation has a very strong sense of identity and determination. So we are finding a way to maintain our identity and at the same time pursuing better education. The younger generation's sense of identity and solidarity with the Tibetan cause are very strong."

President Dr. Sangay described the recent Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act as a very significant law passed by the US Congress and signed by President Donald Trump. "It sends a clear political message to the Chinese government that people who support justice, human rights and democracy are watching and telling the Chinese government that it cannot keep on denying visas to American diplomats, students, scholars, journalists to visit Tibet. It sends a clear message to those Chinese officials who violate human rights in Tibet and torture Tibetans including political prisoners, that they cannot act with impunity and there will be consequences."

Dr. Sangay said the harsh clampdown on religious in and Tibet reflects the Chinese government's sense of insecurity due to growing number of people devotion to religion. "At present there are more religious people than communist party members. The Chinese communist party is facing an institutional threat and it feels insecurity. Hence there is clampdown on all kinds of religions and practitioners including Muslims, Uighurs, Tibetan Buddhists," he said.



*CTA President Dr. Lobsang Sangay being interviewed by NHK, Tokyo, Japan, 25 Jan 2019.*

"Since Buddhism is fundamental to Tibetans' sense of culture, identity and civilization, Tibetans should be allowed to visit monasteries to pray and picture of His Holiness the Dalai Lama," he said.

Responding to questions on Holiness the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, Dr. Sangay said: "His Holiness the Dalai Lama is very healthy and recently he agreed to live more than 100 years when we organized a long life prayer ceremony. His Holiness has said ultimately it is for the Tibetan people to decide whether the next Dalai Lama should come or not. Tibetans and Buddha of compassion cannot be separated. Similarly the Dalai Lamas and the Tibetan people cannot be separated too. Hence we appeal the Dalai Lamas to come back. The Communist Party of China and the Chinese government have no legitimacy and role whatsoever in the reincarnation process because of their track record. They have destroyed 98 percent of Tibetan monasteries and nunneries, disrobed 99.9 percent of Tibetan monks and nuns, they disallow practice of religion and possession of photograph of the Dalai Lama, and criticize him throughout his life."

He said he has telling countries around the world that what has happened to Tibet could happen to them as well. "The people in Europe, South Africa and Latin America are realizing what I have been telling them for the last 7 years with the growing influence of the Chinese government's co-opting of elite leadership and strategies like Belt and Road Initiative to expand its sphere of influence in countries around the world."

President Dr. Sangay will meet with the members of the All Party Japanese parliamentary Support Group for Tibet at the Parliament office, Tibetans and Japanese public to speak on the current situation on Tibet, the way forward to resolve the issue of Tibet, why Tibet matters for Asia and the world, and leadership.

This is President Dr. Lobsang Sangay's fifth official visit to Japan. He first visited Japan in 2012.

For detailed news visit:  
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## Countries start pushback against China threat: CTA President

Meeting with Japanese, including member of parliament, philanthropists and Tibet supporters in Tokyo, CTA President Dr. Lobsang Sangay said countries around the world are increasingly pushing back against China's influence, with leaders from Latin America to Australia are realizing what he has been saying that what has happened in Tibet could and will happen to them as well.

Braving biting cold weather in capital Tokyo, Japanese and Tibetans gather to listen to message of visiting CTA President Dr. Sangay. Dr. Sangay spoke to Tibetan community and Japanese at the Liaison office of His Holiness. Later in the evening, he attended in welcome reception organized in honour of his visit to Japan.

"I have been saying for the last 7 years that what happened to Tibet could happen to you and will happen to you. Many leaders in Europe, Latin America, South Africa and Australia, have now realized how China threatens by spreading its tentacles in their social, culture, political affairs. So the narrative on China is changing and this is an assertion on the part of different countries to speak for Tibet, human rights and democracy and



CTA President Dr. Lobsang Sangay giving a public talk to Tibetan community and Japanese public at the Liaison Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Tokyo, Japan, on 26 January 2019.

criticism of the Chinese government. Though the Czech Republic is a small country and faces very strong pressure from China's influence in its business, politics and universities, it has decided



CTA President Dr. Lobsang Sangay speaking at the welcome reception in honour of his visit to Japan organized by the Liaison Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Tokyo, Japan, on 26 January 2019. Photo/OOT Japan

to fight back and challenge China by forming the largest Tibet support group in its parliament in whole Europe with 51 members. Similarly in Australia, for the first time leaders from all the political parties and cabinet ministers from the ruling government came to attend the Thank you Australia organized by the Central Tibetan Administration. Other countries like Canada followed suit," Dr. Sangay said.

He said mentioning Tibet in the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act and Indo Pacific Reassurance Act signed US President Donald Trump is very significant because of the fact that Tibet has become official policy of the American government.

Praising Japan for forming the largest Tibet Parliamentary Support Group in the whole world, President Dr. Sangay expressed hope that Japan's voice on Tibet issue will be larger. He appealed to the Japanese government to issue a statement to support the Middle-Way Approach and encourage dialogue between the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the representatives of the Chinese government.

President Dr. Sangay urged Japanese to be more actively engaged in supporting the Tibet cause, justice, freedom, human rights and democracy and Tibetans living in Japan, urging them to reinvigorate efforts to strengthen the Tibetan freedom movement.

Responding to how Japanese public can actively support the Tibetan cause during his interaction with Japanese and Tibetans, Dr. Sangay said encouraged them to raise awareness on Tibet issue on social media, participate in events like the 60th anniversary of Tibetan national uprising day on March 10 and interact with Chinese students and scholars in universities in Japan.

He reiterated that Tibetans are seeking genuine autonomy through dialogue with the Chinese government.

He said 153 Tibetans have burned themselves in Tibet calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans. "Separation of Tibetans in Tibet and His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been too long and it is time His Holiness the Dalai Lama be allowed to return to Tibet. Resolution of Tibet issue will be success story for Tibetans and Chinese. 60 years of separation of Tibetans, suppression, violence and cruelty under Chinese rule will turn in to success of unification of same family, success of freedom and justice, victory of non-violence and compassion."

President Dr. Sangay underlined that the struggle of Tibet is much larger than the struggle of six million Tibetans, adding that the international community support for the Tibetan cause will result in the success of non-violence, justice, freedom and compassion.

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama saddened by demise of 'heroic leader and steady friend of Tibet' George Fernandes

His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed grief at the demise of former Union Defence Minister and his longtime friend, George Fernandes.

In his condolence letter to Smt Leila Kabir, His Holiness wrote, "I am saddened to learn of the passing away of my friend, Mr George Fernandes after a prolonged illness. I offer my condolences to you and your family members at this great loss."



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama saddened by the demise of 'heroic leader and steady friend of Tibet', George Fernandes. Photo/Tibet Museum/CTA*

"I had the privilege of knowing him for over five decades during which we met regularly, and as you know, I continued to visit him after he retired from active politics. I admired him greatly because he dedicated himself to what he believed in, no matter how difficult the situation was. Mr Fernandes was a great humanitarian and believer in truth. Throughout his life, he was a voice to millions of poor and needy people of the country. He had firm conviction for justice and wisdom. He was a real heroic leader."

His Holiness added, "He was a steady friend who was sympathetic to the Tibetan cause right from the beginning. He never missed an opportunity to speak up for the Tibetan people as well as for others in similar situation."

"Although George and I are from different religious traditions, as a Buddhist I am confident he would be reborn yet again to serve his country, in particular, the cause of the less privileged people."

"As I had told him during our meetings over the years, I will always remember him," His Holiness wrote, concluding his condolence remarks.

First elected to the Lok Sabha in 1967, George Fernandes was one of the top leaders of the socialist movement in the 1970s. He served several tenures as a Union Cabinet Minister, holding important portfolios such as defence, railways and communications at the centre. George Fernandes was a senior Janata Dal leader before he founded the Samata Party.

## CTA President pays homage to late George Fernandes

Dr Lobsang Sangay, Central Tibetan Administration paid homage to former Defence Minister and a staunch Tibet supporter late George Fernandes who was laid to rest with highest state honours at New Delhi.

President Sangay met with Smt. Leila Kabir (wife), Sean Fernandes (son) and other family members of late George Fernandes during the ceremony. He



*President Dr Lobsang Sangay pays his last respects to the former defence minister George Fernandes in New Delhi, 1 February 2019.*

paid his condolence and respect to them on behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration and Tibetan people all over expressing how late George saab had always supported the cause of Tibet at different platforms.

President Dr Sangay solemnly took part in the prayer service and rites of committal during which the remains were laid to rest into the grave.

Bihar Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar and a host of Indian leaders were present.

President Sangay was accompanied by Kalon Karma Yeshe, Department of Finance, Representative Ngodup Dongchung, Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, New Delhi, Members of Tibetan Parliament and Secretary Tsering Dhundup along with staff from Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The members of Tibetan community led by Samyeling Tibetan Settlement Officer also attended the ceremony.

## "Your presence reminds us of the principles, values of our Constitution": Prince Buthelezi welcomes CTA President's South Africa visit

South Africa's veteran leader and founder-president of the Inkatha Freedom Party hosted a felicitation ceremony to welcome the visit of President Dr Lobsang Sangay to South Africa. President Dr Sangay first visited the country in February last year on the invitation of the Inkatha Freedom Party led by His Excellency Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

"I am honoured to welcome Dr Lobsang Sangay, Sikyong of the Central Tibetan Administration, who joins us together with Mr Ngodup Dorjee, the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in South Africa," said MP Prince Buthelezi addressing the event held in honour of the Tibetan president.

"Your excellency represents the aspirations of some 6 million people. It is right that you visit us so that we can talk about the global struggle for democracy, freedom and peace... Your presence

here reminds us of the principles and values of our Constitution,” he said.

Prince Buthelezi asserted that people of South Africa and Tibet “share common values and cherish liberal democracy.” He said, “Wherever we can further that goal, we must do so.”

“The reality is that the international community supported South Africa’s struggle for freedom now it must support that struggle for Tibet.”



*His Excellency Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, President of Inkatha Freedom Party hosts a felicitation ceremony for President Dr Lobsang Sangay, Central Tibetan Administration, 6 February 2019.*

He urged that South Africans must know the facts and have greater access to the truth about Tibet.

“Over the past decades, the South African Government has denied the Dalai Lama entry 3 times. For which I took them to court. Our people don’t have access to the truth about Tibet.”

Highlighting the systematic repression of freedom and rights in Tibet, he said “How many know that Tibet is the least free region in the world after Syria. How many know of China’s exploitation of Tibet’s mineral resources that are polluting land, water and air? How many know of the self-immolations of desperate people dying for lack of freedom?”

He further protested China’s “bizarre” criticism of CTA President’s visit to South Africa last year. “Fortunately there does seem to be a waning appetite in the global community for China’s anti-Tibet propaganda.”

For detailed news visit:  
[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

Prince Buthelezi described that South Africa had undergone a particularly volatile political chapter which had thrown the country into “a state of uncertainty,” and with the elections at crossroads, he said, “much is at stake for South Africa”.

“The Inkatha Freedom Party is determined to be a voice of reason, to maintain hope and to create social cohesion. We are determined to save our country from a further slide into corruption and economic distress,” he said firmly. The Inkatha Party will be launching its election manifesto on the 10th March this year, coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the National Uprising Day of Tibet.

He concluded by extending greetings on Tibetan New Year and expressing his support for CTA’s Five Fifty Vision. “But whatever this year holds, we go into it together as champions of freedom.”

The meeting was facilitated by Ms Karen Fitzgerald.

## China Bans Hundreds of Tibetan Students from Tibetan Classes



*The Communist Party of China’s United Front Work Department (UFWD) issued an order dated December 25, 2018, banning Tibetan monasteries from teaching informal language classes during the school break.*

Tibetan students in Kham Nangchen, Yushul (Chinese: Yushu) prefecture, incorporated into China’s Qinghai province, are barred from joining the voluntary informal Tibetan classes conducted by monasteries this winter break for schools. Chinese authorities, mainly the Communist Party of China’s United Front Work Department (UFWD), issued an order dated December 25,

2018, banning Tibetan monasteries from teaching informal language classes during the school break.

During the two-month school break, the local Tibetan monasteries in Nangchen county conduct free, informal Tibetan classes that have grown popularity among Tibetan students studying in Chinese schools in the past few years. But this winter, Chinese authorities issued an “urgent notice” banning the local monasteries from teaching the “illegal classes” even before they could convene, confirmed our source.

In previous years, according to our source, around 1000 to 1500 Tibetan students in Nangchen county used to take these free classes run by volunteer monks from nearby monasteries and retired teachers to learn Tibetan language, poetry, etc. “These informal classes are not related to political issues at all! They are purely education for the students,” remarked the source.

Besides Nangchen, almost all other counties of the so-called Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture are also imposed with similar ban on the informal Tibetan classes. The policy dictated by the “higher-ups” not only violates the rights of the Tibetan people but also indicates China’s annihilation of Tibetan language and culture. The crackdown on these informal Tibetan classes during the winter break and Tibetan language in Yushu aggravated from around 2015 onwards when more restrictions curbed the learning of Tibetan language. On January 27, 2016, Tashi Wangchuk was detained in Kyegudo for advocating for the rights of the Tibetan people to learn their language. Two years later, on May 22, the Yushul Intermediate People’s Court sentenced Tashi Wangchuk to five years. As for the informal Tibetan classes, that has seen a total ban this year.

### The informal schools and their students

Most of the students taking the free Tibetan classes conducted by monks and other volunteer teachers are young teenagers, some belonging to the nearby

nomadic villages. Attendees also include students who were “sent to faraway Chinese places after the devastating 2010 Yushul earthquake such as Guangxi” with distance of almost 3000kms away.

“Having spent a few years in China, these Tibetan children return home during their winter school break with their Tibetan language palpably weakened,” explained the source. The students then come to these classes to learn Tibetan poetry and grammar from the learned monks and other teachers. “These classes became a success as the students enjoy the classes. Sometimes they have tea parties. But now it is impossible for even 10-20 people to have a gathering,” added our source.

Last year, notice from school forbidding Tibetan children from taking part in religious activities were also reported in “Tibet Autonomous Region”. Yet, it is significant to note that this is the first known incident where the UFDW has issued such order.

On January 18 this year, the heads of the United Front Work Department (UFDW) gathered for a meeting in Beijing. The state mouthpiece Xinhua reported that the officials were called for “enhanced efforts” and “to create a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation.” The UFDW is tasked to monitor political dissents, cultivate loyalty and suppress “separatism” with specific bureaus allocated each for Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, as well as another for “Ethnic and Religious Work”.



For detailed news visit:  
[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

## US Government approves USD 17 Million in Funding for Tibetans in Exile and Tibet-2019

The US President Donald Trump signed the ‘Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019’ on Friday, 15 February which sanctioned the fiscal year 2019 funding for several government departments through September 30, 2019. The Appropriation bill included (not less than) \$8 million for the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan communities in China; \$6 million for Tibetan community in India and Nepal; and \$3 million to strengthen the capacity of Tibetan institutions and governance in exile. In addition to the total \$17 million listed here, there are also other Tibetan programs from the US government.

Expressing his gratitude to the US government and Congress for the funding, President Dr Lobsang Sangay of the Central Tibetan Administration said: “We remain grateful to the US government and the Congress for their generous and continued financial assistance towards the Tibetan community in Tibet and exile.”

Kelsang Dorjee Aukatsang, who currently spearheads the Social and Resources Development Fund (SARD), a CTA-run organisation responsible for resource mobilisation and development efforts of Tibetans in South Asia said the passage of this legislation ensures that there will be no interruption to the important development work within the Tibetan community.

“These funds are critical in Central Tibetan Administration’s efforts to ensure the long-term resiliency of the Tibetan community, culture, key institutions, democracy, and leadership. The deployment of these funds are already beginning to produce results and we remain committed to spending the funds in an efficient, transparent and high impact manner.”

“We are deeply grateful to see all the Tibet-related funding renewed in H.J.Res. 31 — 116th Congress: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 which funds the United States



government through the rest of FY2019 ending on September 30, 2019,” he said.

The Tibet section is listed separately under ‘East Asia and the Pacific’ Sec. 7043 (G) of The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018.

**The details of the funding are:**

**(g)Tibet**

**(1)Financing of projects in Tibet**

**The Secretary of the Treasury should instruct the United States executive director of each international financial institution to use the voice and vote of the United States to support financing of projects in Tibet if such projects do not provide incentives for the migration and settlement of non-Tibetans into Tibet or facilitate the transfer of ownership of Tibetan land and natural resources to non-Tibetans, are based on a thorough needs-assessment, foster self-sufficiency of the Tibetan people and respect Tibetan culture and traditions, and are subject to effective monitoring.**

**(2)Programs for Tibetan communities**

**(A)Tibet autonomous region**

**Notwithstanding any other provision of law, of the funds appropriated by this Act under the heading “Economic Support Fund”, not less than \$8,000,000 shall be made available**

to nongovernmental organizations to support activities which preserve cultural traditions and promote sustainable development, education, and environmental conservation in Tibetan communities in the Tibet Autonomous Region and in other Tibetan communities in China.

#### (B) India and Nepal

Of the funds appropriated by this Act under the heading “Economic Support Fund”, not less than \$6,000,000 shall be made available for programs to promote and preserve Tibetan culture, development, and the resilience of Tibetan communities in India and Nepal, and to assist in the education and development of the next generation of Tibetan leaders from such communities: Provided, That such funds are in addition to amounts made available in subparagraph (A) for programs inside Tibet.

#### (C) Tibetan governance

Of the funds appropriated by this Act under the heading “Economic Support Fund”, not less than \$3,000,000 shall be made available for programs to strengthen the capacity of Tibetan institutions and governance.

## Dispensation of Relief funds to Phuntsokling Tibetan Settlement in the aftermath of cyclone Titli

The residents of Orissa Phuntsokling Tibetan Settlement who suffered severe damage to their land, property and harvest due to cyclone Titli were compensated through the relief funds appealed by the Department of Home, CTA and CTA’s reserve funds for the settlement.

In a press conference this morning, Secretary Wangdu Tsering, Home department presented a detailed statement of the dispensation of the relief funds, which amounts to a total of INR

90,16,413.86 and an exgratia amount of INR 24,28,586.14 from the reserve funds of the Department of Home.

“So far we have received a donation of INR 90,16,413.86 from our well-wishers across the world and we remain thankful to all the organizations, both domestic and international, NGOs, individuals who have expressed their solidarity with us and our people in the settlement.

“Similarly, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the state government for compensating our people to the



*Several hundreds of acres of crop destroyed as Cyclone Titli made landfall in Odisha. Photo/DOH*

tune of INR 52,23, 678.00 and the compensation money due to the farmers have rightly been paid through bank accounts of individual farmers.”

“As you can see in the statement, the Department of Home paid a sum of INR 24,28,586.14 to compensate the deficit.”

Secretary said the compensations made to the residents in the settlement were strictly according to the damage assessment report.

As soon as the devastation caused by cyclone Titli on 10 October 2018 was reported to the Department of Home by the settlement officer, the section head of Agriculture section Dhondup Tsering was deputed to the settlement to assess the extent of damage and loss suffered by the people.

The assessment found that nearly 80 percent of standing maize crop in 1700 acres were damaged beyond repair. Many of the fruit and non-fruit plantations, as well as residential houses, suffered major damage.

Due to the unprecedented scale of damage caused by the cyclone Titli, the Department of Home and the State government jointly conducted damage assessment survey and came to conclude that the settlement suffered a total loss equivalent to INR 3 crores. Considering the extent of the loss, the Department of Home, CTA initiated a campaign to collect donations from the international Tibet supporters, Tibetan communities in exile and NGOs to compensate losses suffered by Tibetans in the settlement. The urgent appeal was made on 24 October 2018.

Subsequently, Wangdu Tsering, Secretary of the Department of Home accompanied by section head Dhondup Tsering visited the settlement from 16 to 19 January this year to further assess the situation and again, on 4 February, Home Kalon Sonam Topgyal Khorlatsang personally visited the settlement. Kalon promised the residents to deliver compensation to the tune of INR 114,45,000.00 based on the assessment report.

Because of its proximity to the Bay of Bengal, the Phuntsokling Tibetan Settlement is prone to devastation caused by frequent cyclones. It was badly hit by cyclones in 1972, 1991, 1995, 2013, 2014 and 2018 causing huge damage to standing crops, plantations and houses.

Established in May 1963, the settlement is one of the 45 Tibetan settlements under the direct supervision of the Department of Home, CTA. The current population of the settlement is 2092 with 398 families. The government of India in co-ordination with the state government allotted 1859 acres of land through the Central Tibetan Relief Committee, the registered relief wing of the Department of Home, CTA, for the livelihood of the people of the settlement.

For detailed news visit:  
[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

## China Closes Central Tibet to the World Ahead of 60th Anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day

Foreign travelers are barred from visiting Central Tibet for two months as China has closed the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) to the world. This closure comes just ahead of the anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan National Uprising Day and the 2008 mass protests. The news about the closure was released by Tibet tour agents while Chinese official media channels have remained silent on this ban. According to the tour agents, the TAR has been closed to foreigners from January 30 until April 1.

This year marks the 60th year of the Tibetan National Uprising against Chinese occupation in Tibet's capital Lhasa, which led to the violent crackdown on Tibetans, killing of thousands of Tibetans in Tibet, and the occupation of Tibet which eventually forced His Holiness the Dalai Lama and many Tibetans to escape into exile.

The Central Tibetan Administration's spokesperson and Department of Information & International Relations Secretary Dagpo Sonam Norbu remarked, "The ban shows Tibet's instability under the Chinese rule and the Tibetan people's constant defiance of Chinese occupation which it claims as 'liberation of Tibet' after the Tibetan



*A security camera monitored visitors to the Potala Palace in Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region in China. Photo/Aritz Parra/Associated Press*

people's peaceful protest on March 10, 1959."

"Even though China boasts off massive economic development, rights and special provisions for Tibetans in Tibet, in reality, the Chinese authorities infringe the Tibetan people's rights and freedoms, such as of religion and expression," explained Secretary Dagpo.

He further said, "Foreign diplomats, media personnel, tourists and Tibetans in exile are restricted from visiting Tibet whereas the Chinese officials visit the US freely whenever they like to. The US Congress passed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, now the implementation remains the most crucial part of the law. We have to actively engage in

making sure that the law is implemented successfully."

The closure has become an annual practice since the 2008 mass protests in all regions of Tibet including "TAR". Last year China enforced similar closure in the region between February 10 and March 31.

China has constantly received backlashes from the international community and human rights experts regarding the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet and China.

Earlier this month, in the Freedom of the World Report 2019, Tibet is once again ranked the second least free region in the world, even worse than North Korea. Over a dozen countries raised their concerns and questioned China on Tibet's situation during China's third Universal Periodic Review at the UN last November.

The shutdown of Central Tibet till April, on top of the already obsessively clamped-down region, will be a total blackout period with all access to the region and information flow blocked completely, naturally raising serious concerns about the Tibetans.

## Department of Religion and Culture sanctions INR 2.5 Lakh towards Dhakpo Shedrupling Fire Relief



The Department of Religion and Culture of Central Tibetan Administration sanctioned Rs 2.5 Lakh to support relief and reconstruction efforts at Dhakpo

Shedrupling Monastery. The Tibetan monastery situated in Kais village of Kullu in Himachal Pradesh caught fire on Wednesday, 13 February.

No casualty has been reported.

Acting Secretary of Department of Religion and Culture, Dawa Tsultrim conducted an immediate fire-audit at the Monastery which revealed that the accident was caused by electrical short circuit. Secretary Tsultrim also held meetings with the local authorities, fire brigade and the Revenue Office to effectively file a fire-accident report.

Dhakpo Shedrupling Monastery was inaugurated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 12 May 2005.

## Media Reporting Conditions in China Worst in 2018: Foreign Correspondents' Club of China

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of China surveyed its 204 member-journalists over the extent of foreign media freedom in China, the results of which "painted the darkest picture of reporting conditions inside China in recent memory".

According to the report titled "Under Watch: Reporting in China's Surveillance State," 55 per cent of respondents believed that government interference had worsened over the course of the year – the largest proportion since 2011, and a 10 per cent increase from the year before.

Not a single journalist believed that the conditions improved in the last year.

The survey was conducted last December among 204 correspondents in Beijing, 109 of whom represented media from 31 countries and regions. In addition, bureau chiefs from nine international news-gathering organisations were interviewed extensively for the report.

"On a day-to-day basis, it's worse now than it has been in the past 20 years, with episodic exceptions like the [2011] Jasmine Revolution," a bureau chief at a U.S. news organization said. "In the past, there were crackdowns, but you knew the reasons and expected them to end. What we're dealing with now is a new normal."

The survey also revealed that reporting on "sensitive regions" like Xinjiang or Tibet were off limits. "Official Chinese regulations allow journalists to travel anywhere within the country except for the Tibet Autonomous Region". Reporting in Xinjiang is also prohibited or restricted as "sensitive areas".

Surveillance—human and digital—was also one of the major concerns as 48 per cent of the correspondents reported being followed or their hotel room being entered without permission while they were out reporting.

91 per cent were worried about the



security of their phones and 22 per cent said that they were aware of being tracked by the authorities "using public surveillance systems".

China is today the second largest jailer of journalists worldwide after Turkey. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported that at least 47 journalists were imprisoned in China at the end of 2018.

China also ranked an abysmally low at 176 among 180 countries in the latest annual World Press Freedom Index compiled by the Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

Cédric Alviani, the head of RSF's East Asia bureau said the constant harassment is all the more shocking when China takes as much advantage as possible of the press freedom in other countries in order to spread its propaganda.

### **Defacto Expulsion, Harassment against Coverage on TAR and Xinjiang**

In 2018, correspondents reported numerous incidents of harassment, violence, and interference by authorities. In February 2018, New York Times journalist Steven Lee Myers was reporting from Dzongsar Monastery in Kardze incorporated into China's

Sichuan Province, when he and a photographer were escorted to a police station and detained for nearly 17 hours and, eventually, were expelled from the region.

Myers later published an article on the whole episode titled 'A Dance for Tibetan New Year, Then 17 Hours in Custody'. He said: "China is a country that exudes confidence in its rising place on the world stage — and yet its officials belie that confidence with their hypersensitivity to what a foreign correspondent might encounter travelling untethered, and thus uncensored... Today, the Tibet Autonomous Region of China is off-limits to journalists without special permission."

In March, Le Monde bureau chief Brice Pedroletti was followed by State Security many times during a reporting trip to Tibetan Ngaba Prefecture. Local government officials followed him, proposing "help" and "assistance". Even though he clearly told them that he did not want any help, they continued to follow.

In October, Globe and Mail journalist Nathan VanderKlippe was followed and tracked for nearly 1,600 kilometres across Xinjiang in a rental car. At least nine cars and 20 people, nameless and dressed in plain clothes, kept near-constant watch. "They are not following

you,” one propaganda official assured him. “They are offering you service.” VanderKlippe was accused of fleeing the scene of an accident and, separately, of breaking highway rules before being informed he had done neither of those things.

FCCC report documented several other incidences of harassment and forced expulsion.

**Visa Harassment and Delays**

In apparent retaliation against the “negative” news coverage, Chinese authorities either denied renewal of visas or issued severely shortened visas to foreign journalists, the survey showed.

Megha Rajagopalan, former China bureau chief of BuzzFeed, was forced to leave the country last year after her application for a journalism visa was denied without explanation. Rajagopalan had covered Asia extensively since 2012, and her report on surveillance technology in Xinjiang won recognition at the 2018 Human Rights Press Awards.

At least five correspondents—from the New York Times, the BBC, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sankei Shimbun and Voice of America were issued just two and a half month visa.

“Officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were explicit in saying they were not happy with my reporting in Xinjiang and on the leadership,” said ABC correspondent Matthew Carney, who received a visa of 2.5 months.

“It’s harassment,” Bill Ide, bureau chief for VOA, told the press club. “They’re trying to send a message, but it’s unclear really what the message is, because we have asked them repeatedly to tell us specifically what led to the shortened visa and they have not given us any clarity.”

FCCC highlighted concerns that “such measures are being used to punish reporting.

**Ministry of Home Affairs Issues Financial Penalty for Late Renewal of RC/Stay Permit**

**Important Announcement**

According to a circular issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs/Foreigners Division, failure to renew the Registration Certificate/stay permit will be charged with financial penalty of USD 300 to 500 based on the visa expiration date. The Department of Security, CTA issued a public advisory in this regard.

The circular reads as follows:

**Financial penalty regarding overstay and visa violations:**

S. No.	Offense	Penalty
1.	(i) Overstay of more than 2 years; and/or	USD 500
	(ii) Visa violations including indulging in Tabligh activities, visiting a place in Protected/ Restricted Area without the Permit, indulging in activities which are not permitted under the visa granted to the foreigner etc. and/or	
	(iii) Cases involving both overstay and visa violations	
2.	(i) Overstay from 91 days to 2 years; and/or	USD 400
	(ii) any other minor offenses under the Foreigners Act, 1946, the Passport (Entry into India) Act 1920, the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 and other Indian laws	
3.	Overstay up to 90 days and/or non-registration. In case of persons belonging to minority communities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, the penalty for overstay will be as follows:	USD 300
4.	For overstay of more than 2 years	Rs. 500
	For overstay from 91 days to 2 years	Rs. 200
	For overstay up to 90 days	Rs. 100



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## His Holiness the Dalai Lama meets student delegation from the US and Israel



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking to students from the USA and Israel at his residence in Dharamshala, HP, India on January 28, 2019. Photo/OHHDL*

Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama met with a group of students from the US and Israel at his residence in Dharamshala where he gave a 40-minute audience.

In his preliminary remarks, His Holiness the Dalai Lama propounded the idea of cultivating emotional hygiene and conducting ourselves as human brothers and sisters by affirming our fundamental values of loving kindness, forgiveness and compassion for others.

His Holiness appealed for adopting a human approach towards individual, social and political, national and environmental crises.

He explained how cultivating compassion and warmheartedness inevitably leads to self-confidence and inner happiness.

“As necessary as physical hygiene is to maintaining our physical fitness,

cultivating emotional hygiene and learning to tackle our destructive emotions is essential to mental fitness,” His Holiness noted.

In better understanding our inner world and managing them on the basis of universal secular ethics, His Holiness believed, will enable peace and understanding.

He also stated his three principal commitments and his latest commitment to revive ancient Indian tradition.

“Firstly, on the level of a human being, my first commitment is the promotion of human values such as compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, contentment and self-discipline.”

He said, “Secondly, on the level of a religious practitioner, my second commitment is the promotion of religious harmony and understanding amongst different religious traditions.”

Observing India’s harmonious co-existence and religious tolerance, His Holiness suggested that Indians, particularly the Muslim communities could teach, other Muslim communities across the world, how to unite in harmonious co-existence.

And thirdly, as a Tibetan, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said he is committed to preserving Tibetan language and culture, the heritage Tibetans received from the masters of India’s Nalanda University and the protection of Tibet’s natural environment.

In addition to his three principal commitments, His Holiness emphasised his fourth commitment to reviving awareness of the value of ancient Indian knowledge among young Indians today.

For detailed news visit:  
[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

## I am a student of ancient Indian knowledge and Indian Pramana, says His Holiness the Dalai Lama

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Nobel Peace laureate and the greatest advocate of Tibetan culture, interfaith dialogue and universal ethics spoke Monday to a delegation led by Deepak Chopra, American-Indian author in Dharamshala. Watch the full conversation [here](#).

The Tibetan leader introduced himself as a student of ancient Indian knowledge and Indian Pramana (Eng: Logic). He centrally spoke about the relevance of ancient Indian tradition in tackling emotional crisis and reviving the lost tradition through education and awareness.

“Learning to achieve peace of mind is the basis for promoting peace in the world,” he said. His Holiness suggested that this profound knowledge of mind and emotions is much relevant today when tackling destructive emotions is so urgent.

“India is the one country that has the potential to combine its ancient knowledge with modern education for the wider benefit of the world at large.”

Also in the conversation, His Holiness drew attention to the elimination of nuclear weapons throughout the world.

He urged that there should be concerted and vigorous efforts in the public space to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. “We should not only rely on the United Nations, on a public level there should also be some movement calling for denuclearisation.

“India particularly should lead these efforts in this and also in promoting



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama, alongside former Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, addressing the audience at celebrations of Guru Nanak's 550th Birth Anniversary in New Delhi, India on November 10, 2018. Photo by Tenzin Choejor*

religious harmony,” His Holiness observed, adding that it should be more active in the promotion of religious harmony, ahimsa and demilitarisation.

When asked about world leaders whom he admires most, His Holiness the Dalai Lama named leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, India's first president Rajendra Prasad and former German Chancellor Willy Brandt.

His Holiness also fondly remembered his friends former US President George Bush and Barack Obama with whom, he said, he connected instantly as friends.

Recalling his last meeting with former US President Obama in Delhi, His Holiness said, “I told him ‘After me, you should carry forward the promotion of world peace and nonviolence, and he[Obama] promised.” His Holiness further added

his plans to hold a meeting with Indian Nobel peace laureate, Kailash Satyarthi in Delhi this year, which will eventually finalise a Nobel laureates meeting. “Obama will definitely come to the meeting,” he said.

Deepak Chopra, who sat beside His Holiness during the interaction asked him of his views on the effectiveness of meditation, mindfulness and feelings of warmheartedness in reducing risks of disease and terminal illness.

His Holiness said, “Scientists tell us of evidence that human nature is compassionate. They also observe that constant anger, fear and hatred undermine our immune system and so are bad for our health. This is why in addition to physical hygiene we need to cultivate emotional hygiene, a focus on achieving peace of mind.”

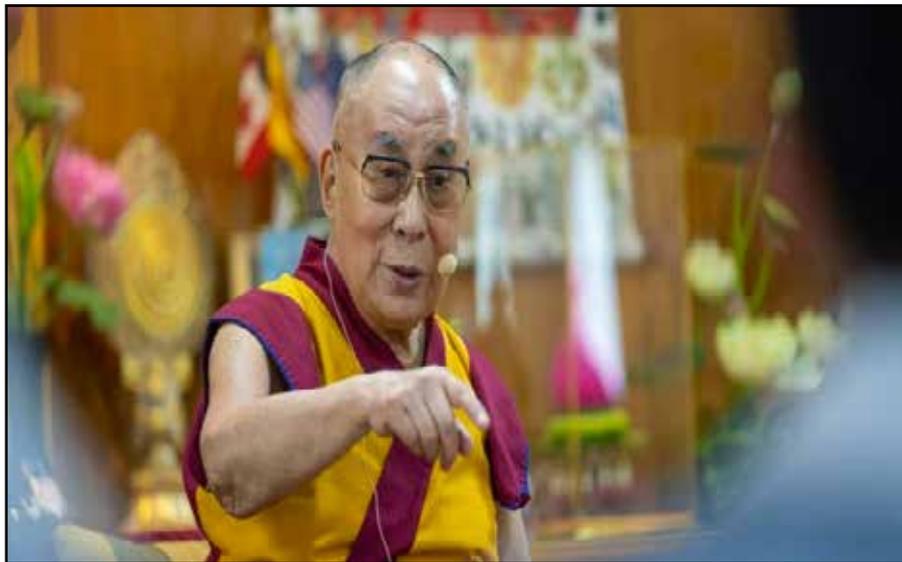


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## Women can bring compassion into positions of power says His Holiness the Dalai Lama



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama meets all women delegation from Young Ficci Ladies Organisation (YFLO), Delhi at his residence on 18 February 2019.*

Encouraging more women to assume leadership roles is not only good for the women lot but according to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, this could also benefit the entire world. Women at the helm of power could secure a more peaceful, compassionate future for the 7 billion human beings, says the Tibetan spiritual leader.

Study history, and you will see that throughout every era, men who have been responsible for carnage and destruction have been celebrated as heroes when they should have been criticized as wrongdoers. There may be some exceptions but generally speaking all trouble-makers are male, His Holiness said this morning as he was meeting an all-women delegation from the Young Ficci Ladies Organisation (YFLO).

“Now in 21st century, we should make a special effort to promote human loving-kindness. In that regard, women should take more active role particularly in the education field for the promotion of deeper human values.”

Stating that women are models of humanity, His Holiness said they are

more empathic and sensitive to the feelings of others, qualities embodied by mothers. “They have an important role in making the 21st century a century of peace.”

Women who lead in politics and social settings have the zeal to empower other individuals and uplift them from sufferings. However, His Holiness said they should be determined to unravel their potential.

Attesting his utmost support for women potential, His Holiness reiterated his position on the possibility for a future female Dalai Lama. He said Buddhist tradition offers equal rights for both genders and that there could be a female Dalai Lama in the future.

“In Tibetan history, for over 7 centuries the highest lama institution was led by female. Many Tibetan female practitioners have proved spiritually qualified and eventually becoming highly realised spiritual masters. After all, Buddha himself gave equal rights to Bhikshu and Bhikshuni.”

He cited examples of Samding Dorje

Phagmo (Tib: བསམ་སྤྱིང་རྗེ་ལག་མོ།), who is the highest female incarnation in Tibet and regarded among the highest-ranking reincarnations at the time of the 5th Dalai Lama. The seat of the Samding Dorje Phagmo is at Samding Monastery, in Tibet.

His Holiness argued that nuns have an equal right to study, which is why 40 years ago he encouraged Tibetan nuns to study Buddhist philosophy.

“In order to implement Buddha’s teaching equally on Bhikshu and Bhikshuni, I have been advocating equal rights for Tibetan nuns. We already have top scholars in Tibetan nuns. In terms of scholarship, monks and nuns are on same level.”

His Holiness suggested that more women should assume leadership in governance and politics. “We should have more female politicians like Indira Gandhi Ji. It’s good,” he exclaimed.

A representative of Young Ficci Ladies Organisation (YFLO) thanked His Holiness the Dalai Lama for the meeting and acknowledged his ardent support for women’s rights.

Launched in 2004, the YFLO promotes entrepreneurship and professional excellence in women through its educational and vocational training programmes, talks, seminars, panel discussions and workshops on a vast range of subjects especially concerning women and business.



For detailed news visit:  
[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

## Exile has been a blessing for Tibetan culture, religion and identity to thrive: His Holiness the Dalai Lama on Chotrul Duchen

Marking the festival of Chotrul Duchen, one of the four major Buddhist holidays observed by Tibetan Buddhists on the fifteenth day of the first Tibetan month, His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave teachings on the Jataka Tales, the Eight Verses of Mind Training and the Praise to the 17 Nalanda masters.

The first fifteen days of the Tibetan lunar year celebrate the fifteen days on which—in order to increase the merit and the devotion of future disciples—Buddha displayed different miracles.

Every year on the occasion of Chotrul Duchen, His Holiness the Dalai Lama gives teachings on the Jataka Tales. The tradition began with Je Tsongkhapa, who in 1409 founded the Great Prayer Festival, the Mönlam Chenmo. The festival was celebrated for 550 years in Lhasa and continues today.

Among the scores of devotees at today's discourse were the officials and staff of Central Tibetan Administration including the heads of the Autonomous bodies, Speaker of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Kalons, Members of Tibetan Parliament, Secretaries and other functionaries.

Kalon Karma Gelek Yuthok, Department of Religion and Culture made an auspicious offering of the mandala to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the occasion.

Speaking to the officials of the Central Tibetan Administration and Tibetans present, His Holiness exuded pride and conviction that the Tibetan people, despite facing adversities, have remained steadfast in their commitment to the cause and preservation of Tibetan religious and cultural heritage.

“The undaunted and unwavering spirit of Tibetans in Tibet and the committed efforts of those in exile have ensured that the Tibet issue is not forgotten,” His Holiness said.



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama giving teachings on the final day of the Great Prayer Festival at Tsuglagkhang, Dharamshala on 19 February 2019. Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL*

“Tibetans who live freely in exile are a source of hope to their brothers and sisters in Tibet. And likewise, Tibetans in Tibet have remained our inspiration.”

In retrospect, His Holiness said he saw the six decades of Tibetan exile as “a blessing in disguise”, an opportunity to re-invigorate Tibetan identity as a people of unique culture, heritage and religious tradition.

“Today our culture and religion have garnered admiration and respect from all corners of the world. And, unlike other religious traditions, Tibetan Buddhist tradition can confidently engage with modern scientists.” the Tibetan spiritual leader said on Tuesday.

“These are fruition of the farsighted and visionary leadership of the great dharma kings, erudite scholars and masters of Tibet. Today, the six million Tibetans are more united than ever.”

His Holiness implored that in harnessing the potential teachings of the culture and religion, Tibetans are in a unique position to serve the good of humanity. “We must make our efforts and time in exile meaningful and worthwhile.”

He concluded his remarks with a hopeful statement that the just cause of Tibet will soon prevail and acknowledged the contribution and dedication of all former and present leaders and members of the Central Tibetan Administration.

In his two-hour-long teaching session, His Holiness explained how Tibetan Buddhism was akin to an heir to the Nalanda Tradition with the Tibetan language offering the most accurate explanation of Buddhist canons.

“Tibetan Buddhist literature not only contains the largest number of texts, it presents the best translations and most comprehensive Buddhist canons. Tibetan translations that comprise Kagyur and Tengyur are the largest body of Indian Buddhist texts anywhere in the world.”

He said the Tibetan script was refined at the time based on an Indian model. Tibetan dharma king Trisong Detsen invited Shantarakshita from Nalanda University to establish Buddhism in Tibet. “This is how we came to adopt the Nalanda Tradition, which involves an intense study of philosophy using reason and logic.”



His Holiness the Dalai Lama after concluding his teachings on *Jataka Tales* and other texts on the festival of *Chotrul Duchen*, 19 February 2019. Photo/Tenzin Jigme/CTA

“The tradition of rigorous study, practice using logic has enabled Tibetan scholars to successfully engage in two-way dialogue with modern scientists. If we wish these traditions to survive now we have to engage them with our intellect.”

His Holiness also gave short teachings on the Eight Verses of Mind Training (Tib. ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ཞེགས་རྒྱུ་བརྒྱད་མ་) and Praise to the 17 Nalanda Masters.

His Holiness said he received the first teaching on the text from Tadrak Rinpoche and later from Kyabje Trichang Rinpoche, His Holiness’ former senior tutor.

The first seven verses of the Eight Verses for Training the Mind deal with the practices associated with cultivating the method aspect of the path such as compassion, altruism, aspiration to attain Buddhahood, the wisdom aspect of the path.

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[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

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## His Holiness the Dalai Lama begins teachings on Essence of the Middle Way, Uma Nyingpo

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has urged world leaders meeting in Poland for the COP24 Climate Conference to take a serious transformative action on tackling climate change and find “constructive solutions to global warming.”

Delegates and decision makers from almost 200 countries are currently meeting at the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Poland. The Conference aims to hammer out a roadmap for putting into practice the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has, for many decades, advocated for environmental and climate change action. He has authored many articles and opinions on protecting the world’s environment. His Holiness has also made environment conservation one of his three lifelong commitments.

Message from His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Delegates at COP24, Poland, dated 20 November 2018

“I extend my greetings and prayers to my dear brothers and sister, delegates to the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

“I would sincerely like to thank all of you who have selflessly and tirelessly put effort into creating a better environment for the world so that future generations will be able to live a healthy, happy life.

“As someone born in Tibet, the rooftop of the world, where Asia’s great rivers and on which the world’s highest peaks are to be found, I have loved nature since my childhood. I have made environmental conservation one of my life’s commitments and advocate protection of the environment wherever I go.

“In spite of the huge technological developments that have taken place in our modern world, we have created many problems, too. Experts tell us that

human beings are responsible for global warming and the change in weather conditions. Logically this means that we human beings have a responsibility to reduce problems that we have caused, and finally to eliminate them.

“Climate change is not the concern of just one or two nations. It is an issue that affects all humanity, and every living being on this earth. This beautiful planet is our only home. If, due to global warming or other environmental problems, the earth cannot sustain itself, there is no other planet to wish we can



His Holiness the Dalai Lama reads from *Bhavaviveka’s “Essence of the Middle Way”* at the Main Tibetan Temple in Dharamsala, HP, India on February 20, 2019. Photo/Tenzin Jigme/CTA

move. We have to take serious action now to protect our environment and find constructive solutions to global warming.

“When we see photographs of the earth from space, we see no boundaries between us, just this one blue planet. This is no longer a time to think only of ‘my nation’ or ‘our continent’ alone. There is a real need for a greater sense of global responsibility based on a sense of the oneness of humanity.

“I want to thank United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for consistently working to reduce the negative impact of climate change and pray that this conference will be a success.”

For detailed news visit:  
[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

## CTA's Department of Education offers long life prayers to His Holiness the Dalai Lama

The Department of Education, Central Tibetan Administration, Gyalrong community from exile and Tibet, Tibetan sweater sellers association and Tibetan medical practitioner Menpa Kelsang Dhonden offered long life prayers (Tib: Tenshug) to Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama on Wednesday.

Speaking at the Tenshug ceremony this morning, His Holiness the Dalai Lama acknowledged and thanked the organisers for their sincere prayers.

“The members of organisers and Tibetan people in general have expressed unwavering faith and prayers for my long life. This sacred prayer ceremony is rooted in the spiritual bond between the teacher and his disciples. Therefore, I am certain that your prayers will surely bear positive results.”

The 83-year-old Dalai Lama suggested that he was looking forward to taking more rest and switching to a lighter schedule.

“I am nearing the age of when the first Dalai Lama Gendun Drup passed away. In order to live long and healthy, I must now recline from public teachings and engagements and get more rest instead. Don't you agree?” His Holiness asked his devout followers.

Reading from the statements submitted by the Department of Education, His Holiness the Dalai Lama applauded their solemn pledges to impart holistic education to younger Tibetan generation based on the values of Tibetan culture and tradition and modern sciences; and to uphold and fulfill the four principal commitments of His Holiness.

President of Central Tibetan Administration, Heads of the three pillars of Tibetan democracy which includes the Kashag, Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission, heads of the Autonomous bodies and Secretaries were present at the Tenshug ceremony.

“Due to the kindness of Master Shantarakshita, Tibetan dharma kings and Panditas, we have inherited this profound Buddhist culture and tradition—the insights of which has much potential to contribute to world peace,” His Holiness the Dalai Lama said.

He claimed that the unflinching spirit and courage of the Tibetan people is rooted in its culture, religion and language.

“Politically, Tibet has remained disintegrated through many periods in history. But spiritually, the entire three provinces of Dotoe, Domey and Utsang have remained united for centuries. Our language, culture and religion have and continues to unite us.”

He remarked that it was under the Tibetan emperor Trisong Detsen and Master Shantarakshita's initiative that Tibetans translated Indian Buddhist literature into Tibetan, resulting in the more than 300 volumes of the Kangyur and Tengyur. In the process, the Tibetan language was refined based on the rich Indian literature.

The Tibetan Buddhist Canons—the Kangyur, texts ascribed to the Buddha and the Tengyur, exegetical treatises composed by Indian masters—form the primary canonical authority for Tibetan Buddhism.

“Among the Chinese and Pali canon, the Tibetan Buddhist canon is arguably the sole surviving version of Indian scriptures. In addition, the Tibetan tradition which originated at Nalanda University follows the path of reason and logic.”

His Holiness further noted that Tibetan translations comprise the largest body of Indian Buddhist texts anywhere in the world.

Drawing focus on Secular Ethics, His Holiness said the concept being derived from Tibetan Buddhist philosophy,



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressing the audience during the long life prayer offering by Department of Education, Gyalrong Tibetan community, Tibetan sweater sellers association and Menpa Kelsang Dhonden. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA*

particularly the Nalanda tradition, is part of the culture and tradition of the Tibetans.

“Although the concept is derived from religious literature, we shouldn't necessarily deal with it from the point of view of religion. We can take an academic approach.”

He argued that inner transformation is not a matter of faith or prayer, but involves reason and the use of human intelligence. “Which explains why I proposed the term ‘Buddhist philosophy teacher’ to be used in our schools instead of a spiritual teacher.”

In his address, His Holiness expressed his hope in the Tibetan monastics and those pursuing the Buddhist tradition to carry forward his commitment to revive the Nalanda tradition in modern India.

“The future of humanity depends on the adoption of a positive mental attitude by the current generation. The ancient Indian tradition offers instruments to tackle the emotional crisis and promote basic inner qualities. If such knowledge is educated to our youths and emulated in the largest populations like China and India, this could ensure a happier and more peaceful world,” His Holiness concluded.

The Tenshug ceremony was led by former Kalon Tripa Samdong Rinpoche as the Dorje Lopon.

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama begins two-day teaching for Mongolian Buddhists



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama begins teaching on Je Tsongkhapa's 'Concise Stages of the Path' and 'In Praise of Dependent of Origination' through live teleconference participated by Buddhist groups from Mongolia on Thursday, 28 February 2019.*

His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave teachings on Je Tsongkhapa's 'Concise Stages of the Path' and 'In Praise of Dependent of Origination' through a live teleconference participated by Buddhist groups from Mongolia on Thursday, 28 February.

In the two-hour teaching course, His Holiness the Dalai Lama celebrated the centuries-old friendship and spiritual bond shared by the previous Dalai Lamas and the emperors of Mongolia.

His Holiness said the title Dalai Lama by which He is referred and renowned worldwide was offered by Mongolian King Altan Khan to the Third Dalai Lama Sonam Gyatso.

"In 1578 the Mongol ruler Altan Khan gave the title 'Dalai Lama' to Sonam Gyatso, the third Dalai Lama. The title means 'Ocean of Wisdom' and He was the first Dalai Lama to be called by that title," His Holiness said. "The word 'Dalai' has otherwise no meaning in Tibetan."

The spiritual bond was further deepened when the Fourth Dalai Lama, Yonten

Gyatso, took birth in Mongolia to the Chokar tribal chieftain Tsultrim Choeje, who was the grandson of Altan Khan.

"Similarly, during the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama, Tibet was in the midst of a political turmoil. It was due to the initiative of Gushir Khan, the chief of the Qoshot Mongols that the situation was brought under control. As a result, in 1642, the Fifth Dalai Lama was enthroned as both spiritual and political leader of Tibet."

"Furthermore, In 1904, the 13th Dalai Lama, Thupten Gyatso, travelled to Mongolia to give teachings and he had a very good command over Mongolian speech."

His Holiness recounted a short anecdote from the time of the 13th Dalai Lama, which was shared by his mentor Ngodup Tsognyi who also hailed from Mongolia.

"Ngodup Tsognyi told me that during the ceremony of receiving Bhikshu ordination from the 13th Dalai Lama, he was repeatedly asked by the Dalai Lama to pull up the pleats of his robe. Ngodup Tsognyi did not understand Tibetan

at the time. The 13th Dalai Lama later explained to him in Mongolian."

He added, "As for Tibet and Mongolia, we have had close relations for well over 1000 years. Both peoples uphold the practice of Buddhist lineage as introduced by the great Nalanda masters."

In the past, His Holiness said, Mongolians studying in the monasteries in Tibet were all dedicated students of philosophy. "When I was studying in Lhasa, I had 17 debating assistants selected from the colleges of Drepung, Ganden and Sera Monasteries. Among them, the best, and personally, the most influential, was Ngodup Tsognyi who came from the Abak region of Inner Mongolia."

His Holiness named several prominent Mongolian scholars who practiced in Tibet: the Abbot of Gomang Sogpo Lekden; the Abbot of Gyumey Sesshin Ka; Vinaya Abbot Thubten Nyima; and Sogpo Yeshe, one of the companions during His Holiness' Geshe Lharampa exam.

"These were the last Mongolian scholars to have come to Tibet. Today in exile, we have several hundred Mongolian monk students studying in Tibetan monasteries," His Holiness said.

Asking his Mongolian devotees to become 21st century Buddhists, His Holiness said sound faith is based on knowledge and reason. "Follow and practice Buddhist teachings on the basis of sound understanding and through studying the classic texts composed by Nalanda masters."

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## ICT to name its Tibetan Empowerment programs to honor the contribution of Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari

The ICT board have decided to name the different Tibetan empowerment programs undertaken by our organization as the Lodi Gyari Tibetan Empowerment Program to honor his contribution and memory.

Mr. Gyari, the retired Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, senior official of the Central Tibetan Administration, and Executive Chairman of the International Campaign for Tibet, passed away on October 29, 2018 in San Francisco. Mr. Gyari had served as the Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Washington DC while simultaneously holding the position of the President of the International Campaign for Tibet. During his tenure, Mr. Gyari was able to make profound political, economic and social contributions to the Tibetan cause. Through building on the visits by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and undertaking effective follow up initiatives, Mr. Gyari was able to successfully institutionalize the Tibetan issue within the United States government.

He was an impassioned advocate for the Tibetan people and believed that they should be empowered to take the lead in the Tibetan movement. Accordingly, during his tenure, the different offices of the International Campaign for Tibet initiated several programs aimed at benefiting the Tibetan people. They include the Tibetan Youth Leadership Program; The Rowell Fund for Tibet; Tibet Lobby Day; Tibetan Parliamentarians Program in Europe; and humanitarian assistance to the Tibetans in exile.

These programs support the vision of the Dalai Lama in encouraging the Tibetan Diaspora towards democratization of their governance system and to make the Tibetan community self-reliant, empowered to make decisions affecting their life, now and in the future, and to safeguard their rights.

By dedicating these programs to the memory of Mr. Gyari, the International Campaign for Tibet is committing itself to continuing his work for the empowerment of the Tibetan people, in Tibet as well as in exile.

“Lodi Gyari has blazed the trail for Tibetans on the international scene, demonstrating a unique capacity to interact with leaders of democratic countries to embrace and support the vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for a peaceful solution to the Tibetan crisis. While leading ICT for over two decades, Lodi Gyari has made the empowerment of Tibetan communities in exile an integral and strategic part of our work that continue to this day. We are therefore very proud to rename these program after him not only to honor this extraordinary legacy, but to keep it alive for the younger generations of Tibetans,” said Matteo Mecacci, President of the International Campaign for Tibet.

The Lodi Gyari Tibetan Empowerment Programs consist of the following:

### **1. Tibetan Youth Leadership Program:**

A week-long program in Washington, D.C. that provides a select group of engaged Tibetan American youngsters with a rich environment for understanding the American political process, exchanging information and ideas, and building a network of future leaders. Some participants of this program have subsequently been working in the United States Congress and Administration.

### **2. Tibet Lobby Day:**

The annual Tibet Lobby Day is a powerful tool for empowering Tibetans living in the west. We bring together Tibetans and Tibet supporters to come and lobby members of Parliament and their staff to achieve set strategic objectives. These include urgent matters concerning political prisoners to passing of legislations affecting the Tibetan people. The Reciprocal Access to Tibet

Act of 2018 was one such initiative taken up during the Tibet Lobby Days in the past few years.

### **3. Rowell Fund for Tibet:**

The Rowell Fund for Tibet, established by friends and family of Galen and Barbara Rowell, in cooperation with the International Campaign for Tibet, has for years supported Tibetans whose work can make a significant contribution in the fields of visual arts, the environment, media and women’s rights. The fund is managed by ICT and has impacted the lives of several hundred Tibetan artists and other professionals.

### **4. Tibetan Parliamentarians Program in Europe:**

ICT Europe has a program to bring delegations of Tibetan Parliamentarians for a study tour of Europe. The delegation meets with Parliamentarians and other leaders, cultural visits and opportunity to share and discuss a wide range of issues relating Tibet.

### **5. Humanitarian Assistance to the Tibetan community:**

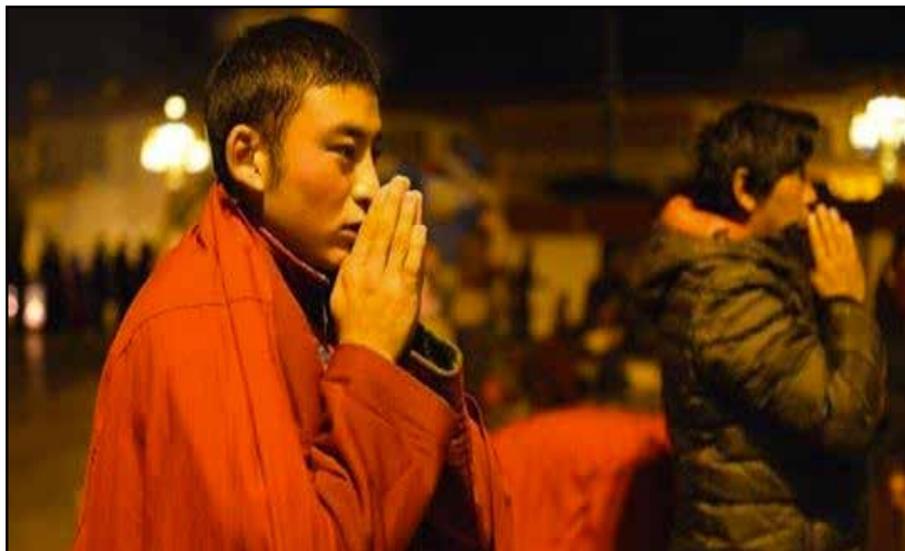
ICT Germany has been undertaking a focused humanitarian assistance initiative with the Tibetan Children’s Village in India that includes funding for health and education of the Tibetan children, in order to safeguard Tibetan children’s right to education and health.

### **6. Political Prisoners Rehabilitation Program:**

ICT has a Political Prisoners Rehabilitation Program that includes assisting former political prisoners in different ways. They include monetary support and assistance in rehabilitation. Currently, ICT Europe provides assistance to a select group of former political prisoners to empower them by facilitating them to become politically active, assist them to develop the necessary skills, in order for them to present their case to politicians, media and the public at large, and help them with publications or translations of their memoirs, experiences or visions.

## Authorities Use Welfare Payments Against Tibetan Buddhists

Reported by Li Zaili



Poor Tibetans lose their land, then lose their subsistence allowances unless they stop the practice of Buddhism. Grid Administrators monitor.

In May of 2018, authorities ordered impoverished Tibetans who live on minimum subsistence allowances from the state to stop worshipping Buddha or face the prospect of their subsistence allowances being canceled. This new order represents an escalation of the historic policy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to persecute Tibetans and to force them to abandon their religious beliefs.

Bitter Winter interviewed a number of Tibetans from Lhasa city in the Tibet Autonomous Region recently. Numerous sources confirm that the government appropriated the land of many local Tibetans several years ago, leaving many without income or food for survival. As a result, many Tibetans who were unable to earn a living had to depend on the minimum living allowances provided by the government. This latest order to deny subsistence benefits threatens not only the freedom of religion, but the very survival of many poor Buddhists.

After the ban on worship for recipients of the subsistence allowances was announced, Dolma, a woman in her

50s, was scared. She didn't dare to perform Kora or worship Buddha, as the authorities are monitoring her every move. (Kora is a religious activity, as well as the means of how the Tibetans show religious devotion. Kora is both a type of pilgrimage and a form of meditative practice in the Tibetan Buddhist or Bon traditions.)

According to sources, the local government appointed a grid administrator to keep the Tibetans under surveillance from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Dolkar is an elderly widower in his 70s and a devout Buddhist. With the authorities employing such methods to coerce him into not worshipping Buddha, the old man has suffered greatly. Every day, he says, he helplessly sits in front of his front gate, idly passing the time he has left.

"It's good to worship the Buddha. [Buddhists] don't steal or rob others – it's all about teaching the good. Why is the government so determined to restrict and suppress our religious beliefs?" one Tibetan asked.

Some analysts believe there is a hidden plot behind the appropriation of land and distribution of subsistence allowances. The CCP wants to take control of the

Tibetan people by controlling their livelihoods. When they control Tibetans fully, they will eliminate their religious beliefs. Constrained by their survival needs, the Tibetans will have no choice but to capitulate to the government.

The attempt to deny welfare to religious Tibetans is only the latest in a long line of abuses and persecutions imposed on this suffering people. Various regulations have been issued to achieve comprehensive control over Tibetan Buddhist monks, nuns, and temples, and the government has even tried to control the reincarnation system of Tibetan Buddhism. Civil servants have also been targeted. On January 9, a Voice of Tibet report quoting the Tibetans in China stated that the CCP authorities had issued a ban prohibiting officials in Lhasa city from participating in Buddhist religious activities, threatening that those who disobey will lose their welfare benefits for life.

(All names in this text are pseudonyms.)

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## Why China isn't ready to invade Taiwan – yet

By Josh K. Elliott, International Global News



*China's banner reading "One China, Two System, One Unified China is seen from a former military fort in Kinmen County, Taiwan, ahead of the 60th anniversary of the second Taiwan Strait crisis with China. August 20 2018. Reuters/Tyrone Siu*

President Xi Jinping wants to restore China to its former glory – and that means bringing Taiwan under the Communist Party's control, one way or another.

That was the gist of Xi's direction-setting New Year's speech on Jan. 2, when he addressed a packed house at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Xi's speech marked 40 years since China stopped regular artillery bombardment of Taiwan-controlled islands off the Chinese coast. While he spoke at length about peace, he also made it clear that he's running out of patience for polite politics.

"We are willing to create a vast space for peaceful unification, but we will never leave any room for any sort of Taiwan independence or separatist activities," Xi said from his seat at the front of the auditorium. He then directly addressed the scope of action China may use to enforce this: "We do not promise to renounce the use of force and reserve the option to use all necessary measures."

Xi's comments sparked a rebuke from Taiwan's president, Tsai Ing-wen. "China must face the fact of the existence of Taiwan, and not deny the system of a democratic county that has been commonly built up by the Taiwanese people," she said in a speech the next day.

Tsai's pro-independence party, the Democratic Progressive Party, replaced the China-friendly Kuomintang party in 2016, making it less likely than ever that Taipei will accept a peaceful "reunification" with the Communist-governed mainland. If anything, the back-and-forth might cement the two sides in opposition to one another.

Xi's comments are raising fears of a military conflict between the two sides, even if it's not China's preferred option. Taiwan announced a new round of military drills aimed at fending off invasion after Xi's remarks, and President Tsai has asked international leaders to pledge their help in the event of a crisis.

Despite the escalating rhetoric, experts tell Global News an imminent military conflict is unlikely.

While Ian Easton, a research fellow at the Project 2049 Institute, says "this is a very dangerous flashpoint," he points out that China would fail if it tried to invade Taiwan in 2019. However, China's chances for victory will be much greater in five-to-10 years, once it's finished building up its military.

"The farther forward you project, the more likely it becomes that there will be a military crisis in the Taiwan Strait," said Easton, author of the book *The Chinese Invasion Threat: Taiwan's Defense and American Strategy in Asia*. "They're building up all the capabilities that they would need to launch a potential invasion of Taiwan at some point in the next decade."

Here's why China is so focused on controlling Taiwan, and why it probably can't take over the island by force – at least for now.

## The enemy next door

China has long viewed Taiwan as a rogue province run by nationalists who never accepted losing the Chinese Civil War in 1949, when Mao Zedong's Communists rose to power. Taiwan views itself as a free and democratic country that stands apart from the controlling Communist Party. However, it can't officially declare its full independence from China, lest it face some form of attack.

Many western nations treated Taiwan as the "true" China until 40 years ago, when the Communist government in Beijing started reaching out to the world. That same year, in 1979, the U.S. shifted diplomatic relations to Beijing while promising to continue selling weapons to Taiwan for its defence.

President Xi's speech on Jan. 2 marked that anniversary.

Taiwan – which officially calls itself the Republic of China – occupies a large island separated from mainland China by the Taiwan Strait, a 160-kilometre-wide stretch of water off China's east coast. The self-governed island of approximately 23.6 million people has strong economy with a gross domestic product of approximately US\$572 billion. It's a booming hub for technology, shipping and banking, and it occupies a key strategic position between China and the Pacific Ocean.

"Taiwan serves as a gateway to the Western Pacific, and if that gateway is in the American sphere of influence, it can be used to blockade China," Easton said. He adds that Taiwan is an extremely valuable location for intelligence gathering, because it allows American spies to monitor China from a close vantage point.

It's also a symbolically important piece of territory for Xi's ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP), according to associate professor Josephine Chiu-Duke, who teaches Chinese intellectual history at the University of British Columbia's Centre for Asian Studies. She says letting go of Taiwan would be a "criminal" act in the eyes of the CCP.

*"No leader wants to be the one who let part of the holy motherland be ceded," she told Global News. "If they did they would become... the sinner of the nation."*

The United States and many other nations – including Canada – have tip-toed around the Taiwan issue for decades in an effort to maintain friendly relations with China. Most nations do not officially recognize Taiwan as a country, but they still maintain unofficial diplomatic and economic relationships with its government.

All but 17 of the world's nations have stopped acknowledging Taiwan as a country, in accordance with Beijing's "One China" policy.

The U.S. is perhaps Taiwan's closest unofficial ally. Washington has a deal with Taipei to sell it weapons and keep its naval fleet nearby. Experts say the U.S. would probably help the island in the event of an invasion, but there is no formal agreement that forces the Americans to do so – and no guidelines for how to deal with smaller-scale acts of Chinese aggression.

"No one can be completely sure what the United States would do in the event of a crisis," Easton said. He points out that the Trump administration has opened up more diplomatic channels with Taiwan, but the president's erratic approach to global politics makes it hard to know for sure if he would back Taipei in a crisis.

*"Because of that strategic ambiguity, (China) is always trying to test American resolve on Taiwan," Easton said.*

There is no definite naval border between Taiwan and China, because China does not recognize Taiwan as a separate country. However, Taiwan holds sway over several islands in the strait, including Kinmen, a tiny archipelago just a few kilometres from China.

China could challenge Taiwan and the U.S. at any point by seizing one of these islands, sinking a Taiwanese ship or launching a few missiles across the strait, Easton said. "That can be done

in a very shocking, sudden fashion," he said.

Easton says China might use one of these provocative actions to test Taiwan in 2019, just to see how it and the U.S. might react. However, the chances of a full-scale Chinese invasion are unlikely this year, he said. Rather, China will probably wait and see if a more Beijing-friendly government wins the next Taiwan election in 2020.

If that doesn't happen, the situation might tilt toward a larger conflict.

## Keeping the peace

China has ramped up pressure on Taiwan since the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) took power in 2016, ending a 20-year run by the more China-friendly Kuomintang (KMT) party. Taiwan had been drifting closer to China under the KMT, so when the DPP took over, Beijing decided to punish the island. It cut ties with Taipei, poached its diplomatic partners and barred Taiwanese officials from international gatherings.

The DPP lost ground to the KMT in regional elections last November, much to the delight of China.

Professor Chiu-Duke, of UBC, suspects China's latest threats are aimed at pushing Taiwan back toward a more China-friendly government in its 2020 presidential election, by raising the possibility of war if the island re-elects the DPP.

"Most of the people on the island are very realistic and pragmatic," she said. "They know Taiwan is a very small area, and nobody wants war."

She adds that Xi is also likely using Taiwan to distract the Chinese people from the slowing economy, which is suffering from the effects of a trade war with the U.S.

Despite China's threats of violence, it probably won't use force unless it loses all hope of reunification, according to Jie Daleil, an associate professor at Peking

University's School of International Studies.

"Although Xi stressed that all options are on the table, unless Taipei makes radical moves to establish Taiwan independence or Washington rattles the 'One China' policy in a major way, Beijing will probably pursue its peaceful game plan for the foreseeable future," he wrote in an analysis piece for The Washington Post.

Chiu-Duke says China could simply blockade Taiwan and wage economic war against its government in order to bring it on side. She points out that Taiwan is likely riddled with Chinese agents already, and it wouldn't be hard for China to co-opt Taiwanese officials into doing its bidding.

"They can control Taiwan without using one missile, so why should they try to start a war?" Chiu-Duke said. "So far, Xi Jinping always talks big, but if you examine what he does... he's not that aggressive."

**Taking Taiwan by force**

Experts say a Chinese invasion of Taiwan would be extremely bloody and damaging for both sides.

"Taiwan would be ruined and many provinces along the (Chinese coast) would be destroyed," said Chiu-Duke.

"It would be a tremendously bloody war," Easton said. "Both sides would take massive losses. You're talking about hundreds of thousands dead on both sides. It would be really ugly."

A Chinese invasion of Taiwan would also strain China's armed forces and invite international intervention, the U.S. Secretary of Defense's office told Congress in a report on China last year. The report described a large-scale amphibious invasion as a "significant political and military risk."

On paper, China's military looks like it should be able to crush Taiwan. The Chinese military budget was an estimated

US\$170.4 billion last year, according to a report from the U.S. government's Defense Intelligence Agency. Taiwan spent approximately \$10.7 billion on its own defence last year. China has several thousand more tanks, artillery weapons, missile launchers, attack helicopters, fighter jets and warships than Taiwan does, according to estimates on the military-tracking websites Global Fire Power and ArmedForces.EU.

However, time, weather and terrain would be on Taiwan's side in the event of an invasion, Easton says.

Taiwan's military fires an 8 inch Howitzer and 155mm canons during a live fire exercise Wednesday, Oct. 29, 2008, on the Taiwan island of Kinmen, formerly Quemoy, just 2 kilometers off of the coast of China.

Any Chinese invasion would have to happen in April or October, when conditions on the Taiwan Strait are calm enough for amphibious assault ships to cross, Easton says. These ships would make easy targets for Taiwan's submarines, aircraft and defensive missiles, meaning the Chinese would have to overwhelm Taiwan's defences and jam its communications in order to get enough ships through

Even if the Chinese managed to land on Taiwan's shoreline, they would have a very difficult time establishing a beachhead against Taiwan's ground troops, Easton says. He thinks Taiwan could hold off a Chinese invasion for several months, which would give the U.S. plenty of time to step in and help.

Taiwan would also be able to launch counterattacks against mainland China, he said, killing troops waiting to cross at the shoreline and knocking out ports and air bases.

He adds that a Chinese invasion would never come as a surprise. "It takes months to build up before an attack," he said. Taiwan would see China moving thousands of troops to the coast several months in advance, and it would be able to prepare accordingly.

*"When you're talking about an all-out, massive military operation, there are a lot of warnings and indicators that that's coming," he said.*

Brent Christensen, who serves as the unofficial U.S. ambassador in Taipei, reassured Taiwan in October that the U.S. would support it in a military conflict with China.

"Any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means represents a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and is of grave concern to the United States," Christensen said at a press conference in Taipei on Oct. 31. "We are opposed to unilateral attempts to change the status quo."

He added at the time that the U.S. remains committed to helping Taiwan defend itself, as evidenced by a \$330-million weapons deal signed in 2018.

Chiu-Duke doesn't think an invasion is imminent but she wouldn't rule it out entirely. She says President Xi is focused on his "dream" of making China a rich and powerful country. That's why China has accelerated its space program, built up its military fleet and expanded its presence in the South China Sea.

However, China will never achieve its full glory unless it can deal with the rebellious island on its doorstep, she said.

"It's not to say I'm not worried - I'm worried sick," she said. "But realistically, I just don't think Xi Jinping could be so foolish (as to attack Taiwan). But nobody knows."



## China closes Tibet to foreigners for sensitive anniversaries

By Christopher Bodeen, Washington Post

BEIJING — China is barring foreign travelers from Tibet over a period of several weeks that includes a pair of sensitive political anniversaries questioning the legitimacy of Beijing's rule over the Himalayan region.

Travel agencies contacted Wednesday said foreign tourists would not be allowed back into Tibet until April 1. It's not clear when the ban started, although some monitoring groups said it began this month.

The ban was confirmed by the online customer service portal of the Tibet Youth International Travel Service, as well as staff at the Tibet Vista and Go to Tibet travel agencies. Both are based in the southwestern city of Chengdu — the main jumping-off point for visits to Tibet.

Staff members declined to give their names or offer details.

March 10 is the 60th anniversary of an abortive 1959 uprising against Chinese rule in Tibet, while anti-government riots occurred March 14, 2008, in the regional capital Lhasa.

Although the foreigner travel ban is an annual occurrence, the occasion of the 60th anniversary is drawing added attention.

Amid heavy security on the ground, Tibet is almost entirely closed to foreign journalists and diplomats and information about actual conditions there is difficult to obtain.

The 1959 uprising resulted in the flight of Tibet's traditional Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, into exile in India and the beginning of increasingly harsh Chinese rule over the region. Nearly five decades later, anger exploded in a series of protests in an around Lhasa that culminated in attacks on Chinese individuals and businesses in which



the government says rioters killed 18 people.

An unknown number of Tibetans were killed by security forces in the aftermath.

China claims Tibet has been part of its territory for more than seven centuries and regards the Dalai Lama as a dangerous separatist.

Many Tibetans insist they were essentially independent for most of that time and have protested what they regard as China's heavy-handed rule imposed after the People's Liberation Army's battled its way into the Himalayan region in 1950.

More recently, traditionally Tibetan regions of western China have been racked by a series of self-immolations by Buddhist clergy and lay people protesting Chinese rule and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, now aged 83.

Despite the suffocating level of security, Tibet is an increasingly popular destination for tourists looking for mountain adventure and monuments to its unique Buddhist culture.

In 2017, more than 25 million trips from around the world were made to Tibet, an increase of 10.6 percent over

the year before, generating 37.9 billion yuan (\$5.6 billion) in tourist revenue, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

Numbers of visits rose again last year to more than 33 million, a rise of 31.5 percent, Xinhua said.

While Chinese may travel to Tibet at will, foreigners are required to obtain a special permit in addition to their Chinese visas.

While China has at times denied closing Tibet and never offered an explanation for any such measures, monitoring groups say it's part of a strategy of concealing the extent of repression in the region.

"This most recent development is part of the overall policy of the Chinese government to restrict access to Tibet for independent observers in order to maintain an iron grip in the region while at the same time avoiding any form of external scrutiny," Washington, D.C.-based International Campaign for Tibet said in an emailed statement.

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Country: \_\_\_\_\_

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### POSTAL ADDRESS:

Circulation Manager, DIIR,  
Central Tibetan Administration,  
Dharamshala 176 215, H.P., India

## Contacts for the Central Tibetan Administration

### INDIA

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

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

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

### NEPAL

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

### UNITED STATES

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

### BRAZIL

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

### SWITZERLAND

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

### JAPAN

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

### UNITED KINGDOM

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

### FRANCE

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

### BELGIUM

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

### AUSTRALIA

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

### RUSSIA

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

### SOUTH AFRICA

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

### TAIWAN

Tibet Religious Foundation of H.H. the Dalai Lama  
10th Fl. 4 & 5, No. 189, Sector - 2, Keelung Rd.,  
Taipei, Taiwan (ROC)  
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## QUOTES

*“I am nearing the age of when the first Dalai Lama Gendun Drup passed away. In order to live long and healthy, I must now recline from public teachings and engagements and get more rest instead. Don't you agree?” during long life prayers to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 27 February 2019*

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*“Despite facing through a challenging period, we have successfully drawn admiration and recognition for the unique culture and religion of Tibet. This is chiefly due to the valour, courage and indomitable spirit demonstrated by Tibetans inside Tibet and the unity observed by all the Tibetans worldwide”. His Holiness the Dalai Lama during meeting a group of elderly Tibetans aged over 90, on 4 February 2019*

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*“This year marks the 60 years of Tibetans taking refuge in exile in India and also the 60th anniversary of Tibet's brutal occupation by the Chinese communist forces. However, due to the visionary leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the indomitable spirit of the Tibetan brothers and sisters inside Tibet, the Tibetan freedom movement has sustained and persisted; the Tibetan diaspora continues to move forward as people at par with rest of the world” President Dr Lobsang Sangay Greetings on Tibetan New Year on 5 February 2019*

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*“Most importantly I urge everyone participating in the Tibetan movement to heed the noble advice and guidance of our spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and unite all our efforts for the peaceful resolution of Tibet issue” Speaker Pema Jugney Greeting on Tibetan New Year on 5 February 2019*

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