



# TIBETAN BULLETIN

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION

VOLUME 24 - ISSUE 1

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2020

## Focus

**The Tibetan Policy and Support Act (HR 4331) passed in the  
US House with supermajority vote**

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## Feature

**India is highly capable of contributing to global peace:  
His Holiness the Dalai Lama**

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## World Press

**Larung Gar abbot's international centers closed under  
suspected pressure from China**

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## Tibetan New Year (Losar 2147) Greetings from Heads of Central Tibetan Administration

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay extends Losar greetings to Tibetans inside and outside Tibet on the occasion of traditional Tibetan New Year- Losar 2147- the year of the Iron-Rat. The Tibetan New Year begins from 24-26 February 2020.

### **Sikyong's Message:**

“On this joyous occasion of Tibetan new year, Losar 2147, the year of Iron-Rat, I on behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration, extend heartfelt greetings and Tashi Delek to all the Tibetan brothers and sisters in Tibet and throughout the world celebrating Tibetan new year. I hope that this new year brings us all around positivity, good karma and fulfilment of our aspirations. This year marks the 85th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the completion of His Holiness' obstacle year. Therefore, in view of the huge significance of the year, the Kashag has declared 2020 as 'The Year of Gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama'. At this important milestone, I hope that all Tibetans endeavour to learn about the four principal commitments of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and according to His wishes, it is very important that the Tibetan community should live in harmony and unity.

“While this year, we might not be able to celebrate it with great merriment and aplomb due to the spread of Coronavirus epidemic in Tibet, we are deeply concerned for the wellbeing of our brothers and sisters in Tibet and pray that the epidemic is contained soon. I wish you all to develop inner happiness and may our brothers and sisters inside Tibet and outside reunite very soon.

“Once again, I extend my heartfelt greetings and Tashi Delek to every Tibetan around the world from Washington, DC.”

The Chief Justice Commissioner of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission, Mr Sonam Norbu Dagpo, extends Losar greetings to Tibetans inside and outside Tibet on the occasion of traditional Tibetan New year- Losar 2147- the year of the Iron-Rat. The Tibetan New year begins from 24-26 February 2020.

### **Chief Justice Commissioner's message:**

“On this joyous occasion of new year, Losar 2147- the year of the Iron-Rat, I extend my heartfelt greetings and Tashi Delek to the Tibetan brothers and sisters inside Tibet and throughout the world celebrating Tibetan new year. I wish for all that we may realise our aspirations and may our endeavours bear fruit this new year. I offer my earnest prayers for a healthy and long life of our most esteemed leader, His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama. May all his noble wishes be fulfilled. May the just cause of Tibet be resolved and may the Tibetans brothers and sisters in Tibet and exile reunite.”

Speaker Mr Pema Jungney of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile extends Losar greetings to Tibetans inside and outside Tibet on the occasion of traditional Tibetan New Year – Losar 2147 – the year of the Iron-Rat. The Tibetan new year begins from 24 – 26 February 2020.

### **Speaker of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile's Message:**

“On this joyous occasion of new year, Losar 2147 - the year of Iron-Rat, I on behalf of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, extend heartfelt greetings and Tashi Delek to Tibetans inside Tibet and around the world celebrating Tibetan new year.

“Let us join in welcoming the new year with a spirit of service and collectively strive towards contributing to the common interest of the community and lead a meaningful life. Meanwhile, I hope and believe that the Tibetans living in exile will continue to carry forward the Tibetan freedom movement and exert individual efforts towards the resolution of the Tibet issue based on truth, justice and nonviolence.”

## Over 30 Tibetans detained in crackdown in Dza Wonpo, Eastern Tibet



*Armed forces exercising military drills in the streets to intimidate the local residents in Dza Wonpo town, following the protests in November 2019.*

Chinese authorities have detained over 30 Tibetan monks and laypersons for a fortnight in Dza Wonpo town, Kham Sershul (Ch: Shiqu) county in Karze (Ch: Ganzi) Prefecture. In the crackdown following the November protests of last year wherein local Tibetans called for Tibet's independence, human rights and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama that led to the subsequent arrests of eight Tibetans (one was released after 11 days), a massive convoy of the army arrived in Dza Wonpo town. The armed security forces swarmed the streets, patrolling and keeping high surveillance of all activities of the local Tibetans since.

These more than 30 Tibetans from Dza Wonpo were detained under harsh conditions from around 21 November to 12 December 2019 for two weeks, according to our source in exile with contacts in the region. "They were given only Tsampa (roasted barley flour) to eat during this whole detention period and nothing else," added our source. Those detained were local Tibetan monks and laypeople identified by the authorities as "suspicious", have accessed the internet, have contacts with Tibetans outside Tibet, have displayed pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at homes, or are linked to small, general or nonpolitical issues.

Homes and cellphones of Dza Wonpo residents, as well as Tibetans from other towns, were searched. Tibetans were also summoned to the police station for interrogations while some Tibetans were also forced to sign a document - details of which are not known at the time. As for the monks, including those at the Dza Wonpo monastery, Chinese authorities required them to undergo "political re-education sessions" for ideological changes every day for more than two weeks.

The authorities warned the Tibetans in the area against participating in any political activities in the future. Additionally, Chinese troops in full riot gear would exercise military drills loudly in the streets to intimidate the public in the Dzachuka area, Sershul county.

Seven Tibetans continue to be incarcerated by Chinese authorities since November 2019: Nyimey, Kunsal, Tamey, Soetra, Tsultrim, Choegyal, and Yonten. It was last known that they were held in Sershul county. However, it remains unknown whether their family members were allowed to see them while in custody, as well as their current wellbeing.

### Bihar CM Nitish Kumar meets His Holiness the Dalai Lama and CTA President in Bodh Gaya



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay with Bihar Chief Minister Hon Nitish Kumar in Bodhgaya on 8 January 2020. Photo/Ven Tenzin Damchoe/OHHDL*

Honorable Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar of Bihar called on His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the latter's residence

in Bodh Gaya. Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, the democratically elected leader of the Tibetan people, was present too at the meeting.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama who has been at Bodh Gaya since 24 December, received the Chief Minister at Gaden Phelgelying and presented him with a traditional Tibetan scarf as a token of blessing.

His Holiness greeted the Bihar Chief Minister warmly, calling him "an old friend and someone who has shown interest in the Nalanda tradition."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama further said, "In few centuries, Nalanda has become a top learning centre. It can be proved that many masters/scholars who have come from Nalanda institute are not just religious persons but in academic fields like psychology."

The duo last met in December 2018 during His Holiness' engagements in Bodhgaya.

### Italian MP Matteo Bianchi questions the Government on Repression in Tibet

Honourable Matteo Lungi Bianchi, member of Italian Parliament voiced concern over Chinese repression and continued crackdown on the fundamental rights of Tibetans and Hongkongers in his speech during the Italian Parliamentary session.

Elucidating the case of Tibet, Mr Matteo Lungi highlighted that "the one-party communist People's Republic of China is not new to repressing freedom towards peoples." He further narrated the destruction brought on to Tibet with a road to Lhasa, "in 1950, they promised a link road to Lhasa, which was supposed to bring peace and prosperity to the Tibetans. In fact, the road was built, but with it came tanks, rifles and soldiers that occupied the entire territory".



Hon Matteo Luigi Bianchi, member of the Italian Parliament voiced concern over Chinese repression and continued crackdown on the fundamental rights of Tibetans and Hongkongers in his speech at the Parliamentary session currently underway.

The brutal crackdown on Tibetan uprising in March 1959 has forced the XIV Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetans to flee into exile in India, where the Dalai Lama continues to reside, explained On Matteo Lungo Bianchi in the parliament.

While questioning the Italian government's attention and position concerning the dismal human rights situation in Tibet and Hong Kong, Mr Matteo Lungi questioned the government asking "Are these situations tolerable" [...] "Can we pretend not to see what is happening in Tibet, Hong Kong and other contexts where Beijing repression over people's fundamental rights are not acceptable"?

Mr Matteo Lungi called upon the Italian government to take "clear position" especially in engaging with "strategic" and "commercial partner" like China, providing the significant role of G7 countries like Italy. "We believe agreements of any kind are important, but we cannot tolerate violent repressions by our partner", added On Matteo. He further called upon the member of the Italian government to "take clear position" in asserting "national interest".



## Tenzin Lungtok sworn in as new Justice Commissioner

Tenzin Lungtok was sworn in as Justice Commissioner of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission at a swearing-in ceremony held at Sikyong auditorium.

Mr. Lungtok succeeds Mr. Ngawang Rabgyal Norpa who is retiring from his long and dedicated service. Chief Justice Commissioner Mr. Sonam Norbu Dagpo administered the oath of office to the new Justice Commissioner.

Speaker of Tibetan parliament-



The oath-taking ceremony of new Justice Commissioner Tenzin Lungtok.

in-Exile, Deputy Speaker, Justice Commissioners, Kalons, heads of the Autonomous bodies and members, Secretaries of CTA functionaries greeted the new Justice Commissioner in a ceremonial setting.

New Justice Commissioner and former Secretary of the Department of Religion and Culture, Mr. Lungtok was elected the Justice Commissioner of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission during the eighth session of the 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile held in September 2019.

Tenzin Lungtok has been serving the Central Tibetan Administration for over 24 years. He began his service on 11 September 1995 as Under Secretary at Department of Security, CTA. A year later, on 10 October 1996, he was transferred to the Department of Education. On 9 February 1999, Mr. Lungtok was promoted to Deputy Secretary at the Department of Education. On 12 July 2004, he was

appointed as Deputy Secretary of the Public Service Commission. On 28 February 2005, he was promoted to Joint Secretary at the Department of Finance. As a Joint Secretary, he served in the Department of Home and the Election Commission from August 2006 – May 2012. On 15 May 2012, he was promoted to Additional Secretary. On 8 August 2016, he assumed the role of the Acting Secretary of the Department of Religion and Culture. On 22 May 2017, Mr. Lungtok was promoted to Secretary of the Department of Religion and Culture, CTA.

On 23 September 2019, after 24 years of service in various roles and positions within the exile Tibetan community, he was elected the Justice Commissioner of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission during the eighth session of the 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

## Tibetans will not accept China-appointed Dalai Lama: His Holiness the Dalai Lama

"Tibetans will not accept Dalai Lama selected by China," asserted His Holiness the Dalai Lama during an exclusive interview with Stratnews Global yesterday at his residence in Bodhgaya.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Image: StratNews Global

His Holiness has made clear assertions in the past that no Chinese appointed Dalai Lama will be the legitimate leader of Tibetan Buddhism. In November 2019, His Holiness had presided over a congregation of the senior religious heads of Tibetan Buddhism that endorsed the Dalai Lama's sole authority to

choose his successor and established an undisputed legitimacy for the Tibetans over the question of selection of their supreme spiritual leader.

The reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama is at the heart of Beijing's politics as this would mean unprecedented control over Tibetan Buddhism and therefore, further control over Tibet. Commenting on this issue, His Holiness said, "Physically, the Chinese have occupied Tibet but at the mental level, they can never control us. They use weapons to control and we influence their minds. Our method is much stronger than their weapons".

"I'm a Buddhist monk and I practise Buddhism. I never contended that I'm the Dalai Lama... I am 100 per cent sure that in my next life I will be able to be useful to the community. That's my wish."

Meanwhile, His Holiness spoke on the evolution of democracy in Tibetan exile since his retirement from the political role in 2011. He noted that democracy is the need for a modern-day government system.

"As for democratic practices are concerned, we a handful of Tibetans are more advanced as we have a freely elected political leadership. China has a totalitarian system."

His Holiness added, "Tibetan determination is very firm. The new generation's determination is as strong as that of the previous generation."

With regard to possible meeting with the representatives of the Chinese government, His Holiness remarked that there's a certain realisation within the leaders of PRC that their policy on Tibet over the last nearly seven decades is "unrealistic".

He established that Tibetans no longer seek complete freedom rather seeks coexistence based on mutual respect and cooperation-the Middle Way Approach. He asserted that Tibetans inside Tibet must and should have the right to preserve their language and culture.

As for his plan to return to Tibet, His Holiness fervently affirmed that it was too early to make a decision and more so even, asserted that he enjoys India's freedom and have been the longest guest of India.

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama: Intelligence combined with compassion is basis of global responsibility

His Holiness the Dalai Lama today addressed the gathering of Tibetan and Chinese students in New York via videocall from Bodhgaya, Bihar. Speaking on 'secular ethics and global responsibility', His Holiness said that the modern world lay great emphasis on materialistic development while excluding inner peace.



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressing the Chinese and Tibetan students on 'Secular Ethics and Global Responsibility' from Bodhgaya on 11 January 2020. Photo: Screengrab*

His Holiness asserted that major problems in the world are essentially created by man, and so by default man has the ability to solve them by utilising his intelligence combined with compassion. He also observed the need for including inner values as an academic subject in the educational sphere. He asked the students to practise altruism in everyday life to attain peace of mind.

He then talked about the necessity to have global responsibility by overcoming narrow-minded and selfish attitude and meanwhile forging for the sense of oneness. He cited example of Tibet-China relationship and stated that economically, China can help Tibetans and in return, China can reap the

benefits of Tibetan Buddhism. However, he underlined that the hardline policy of China on the Tibetan language and culture is 'unrealistic'.

His Holiness has always urged his devotees to be the 21st century Buddhists who prioritise reasoning and logic over blind faith.

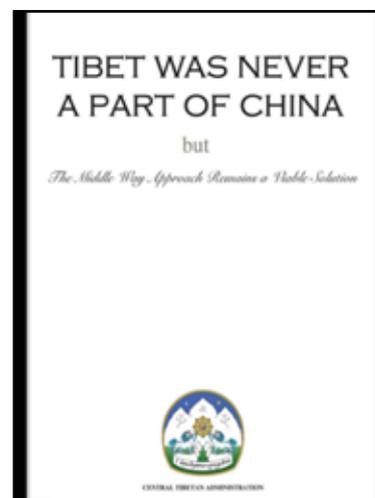
During the Q&A session, a Chinese student put forward a question on the matter of reincarnation and asked how they could help the Tibetan issue. His Holiness responded, "the institution of the Dalai Lama does not matter, one-day it has to come to an end just as it began and developed over the years. It was the Tibetan people's decision ultimately".

He expressed his desire to engage in discussions with Professors at Chinese universities like he had had with scholars and Professors in America, Europe and elsewhere.

When asked about the possibility of religious harmony, His Holiness cited India as an example and stated that major religious traditions coexist in India amicably.

His Holiness concluded his interaction with the students on an important note about tackling the imminent threat of global warming.

'Tackling the challenges of global warming calls for global responsibility' he added.



## Tibet at the United Nations in 2019: A Year in Review

The year 2019 marked the 60th anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day, a day when hundreds and thousands of Tibetan men and women, young and old stood up against the illegal occupation of Tibet by the People's Republic of China. The People's Liberation Army of China brutally crushed the peaceful uprising but failed to conquer the spirit of Tibetans.

Tibetans have survived and prospered in the most trying circumstances. They continue to advocate for the just cause of Tibet and raise voice against the human rights violations in Tibet. This quest for justice, peace and freedom by Tibetans has received international support and many countries continue to raise their concerns on the violations against Tibetans in Tibet by China.



The Tibet Bureau Geneva releases 'Tibet at the United Nations in 2019: A Year in Review'.

The Tibet Bureau Geneva has released a brief report on all the activities that were initiated and coordinated by the Tibet Bureau Geneva in 2019 towards advocacy for Tibet at the UN.

Despite China's growing influence in the UN, many countries continued to question China on its deplorable human rights track record at the UN. Many countries expressed grave concerns about the human rights violations in

Tibet and other territories under the Chinese rule like East Turkestan (Ch: Xinjiang) and Souther Mongolia (Ch: Inner Mongolia). They called for protection of human rights defenders including Tashi Wangchuk.

The year also saw joint communications from UN Special Procedures calling on China to respect the human rights and cultural rights of Tibetans in Tibet. The experts also questioned China on the "misuse of Chinese criminal law on "incitement to separatism" with an objective to suppress freedom of expression, religion, assembly and association and the cultural rights of the Tibetan minority as well as to quash any human rights advocacy with regard to the protection and promotion of these rights."

As noted by Representative Chhimey Rigzen in the foreword of the report, "the report highlights the common message of 'hope and never give up' adopted by Tibetans in the struggle for freedom." Appealing for support he further stated, "we have come a long way and there is much more ground left to cover. We convey our sincere gratitude to all our supporters for their consistent support in our struggle and appeal them to continue to do so until we reach our goal."

### China's 'ethnic unity' bill aimed at complete sinicization of the Tibetan plateau through ethnic cleansing: CTA Information Secretary

Following a series of arbitrary detention and unrest in parts of Tibet including the arrest of 30 Tibetans in Tibet's Kham province, the Tibet Autonomous Region's People's Congress passed the first of kind legislation on "strengthening ethnic unity" in the TAR region, effective May 1. The regulation, observers argue, mirrors the crackdown policy introduced in East Turkestan (Ch: Xinjiang) four years ago.



Tibet's legislature has passed a series of rules to promote "ethnic unity". Photo: AFP

China has waged unceasing campaigns at both central and local government level to aggressively consolidate its military occupation of Tibet in the last more than six decades. But this new state-sponsored regulation is seen as a desperately contemplated measure to curb the undiminishing defiance of the Tibetan people and their call for the protection of their identity, for freedom, human rights and for the honourable return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Central Tibetan Administration's Information Secretary Mr T.G. Arya condemned the new ethnic identity law, calling it a measure of ethnic cleansing aimed at complete sinicization of the Tibetan plateau. The Secretary also criticised the legislation as a gross violation of the international law and the Chinese constitution.

"What China could not achieve through the sixty years of occupation and repression, now they are trying to achieve it through repressive law. The law aims to achieve complete sinicization of the Tibetan plateau through ethnic cleansing. China finds Tibetan language, religion and culture as the main barrier to achieving complete control over the land," Secretary TG Arya told the Tibet News Bureau.

"Through this legislation, China wants to gain legitimacy to diminish the Tibetan ethnicity through systematic state-sponsored migration of Han Chinese into Tibet. It is a gross violation of international law and the Chinese constitution to deny the Tibetans of their proper identity."

The Secretary warned that the new ethnic identity law in Tibet forebodes difficult and harsh time for the Tibetans in Tibet.

The regulation not yet released in its full text is said to contain “dos and don’ts” for the local governments and society to promote ethnic unity.

The law calls upon Tibet’s population to strengthen “ethnic unity” and take a stand against separatism, the state-backed *Global Times* reported on Monday. According to the state media, the regulation requires all levels of government, companies, community organisations, villages, schools, military groups and religious activity centres be responsible for work on ethnic unity.

Government leaders and prominent human rights organisations have also criticised the new legislation as an attempt to wipe out the Tibetan identity and cultural heritage.

On Tuesday, US Senator Marco Rubio told CNA that it was “no surprise that Tibet’s ‘autonomous’ legislature has passed rules to promote ‘ethnic unity’.”

“As the Chinese Communist Party continues its attempts to wipe out Tibetan culture, the U.S. and freedom loving nations should condemn the blatant violations of human rights,” the senator said.

Senior journalist and prominent China-observer Vijay Kranti said that the new ethnic identity law in Tibet is reflective of Beijing’s current insecurities in the region whose population they have so far failed to integrate into the mainstream Chinese identity.

“This announcement is an indirect admission by the Communist Party of China (CPC) that they have failed in integrating hearts of the people of Tibet into the overall Han identity of China,” he told *India TV News*. “Given the feverish preoccupation of the China’s government these days to occupy the religious system and hierarchy of Tibet by imposing the next Dalai Lama of their choice after the present Dalai Lama

passes away, this declaration is yet another attempt of Chinese government to make the world believe that the Tibetan people are happy under the Chinese rule.”

“The passage of this new law is a unique and first-time event in the seven decades-long history of PRC. It will not be a surprise that all other Autonomous region legislatures are also forced to pass similar laws,” he said.

Tibet is among the so-called five autonomous provinces in China, the others being East Turkestan (Ch: Xinjiang), South Mongolia (ch: Inner Mongolia), Guangxi and Ningxia. Similar policy on ethnic issues was also legislated at the Xinjiang Regional People’s Congress, imposing tight controls on freedom of expression with implications in areas such as academic freedom, educational curricula, and commercial decisions.

## **China forcing senior religious figures in Tibet to endorse State policies on selection of the next Dalai Lama: Human Rights Watch Report 2020**

The Human Rights Watch released its World Report 2020 with a sharp rebuke on China calling it a “global threat to human rights.” The report paints a grim picture of the territories under Chinese rule including Tibet, East Turkestan (Ch: Xinjiang) and Hong Kong with rampant mass arbitrary detentions, surveillance, indoctrination and destruction of the cultural and religious heritage.

Under the country list of China and Tibet, the report enlists the grim human rights situation in Tibet in 2019. The report highlights the continued “severe restrictions on religious freedom, speech, movement, and assembly” of Tibetans by the Chinese authorities. The report elucidates the abuse of laws by Chinese authorities to wrongfully arrest

and torture Tibetans who are lawfully asking for their economic and cultural rights. It cites the example of the two cases of land grabs in Qinghai where nine Tibetans were sentenced for raising their voices against the forceful land grabs by the Chinese authorities.

The report also notes the forceful evictions of Buddhist monks and nuns from Yachen Gar monastery as part of the massive demolition campaign. The expelled monks and nuns are now detained in re-education camps.

The report records the intensification of “sinicization policies” by the Chinese authorities in “Tibet Autonomous Region” under which monastic populations are being subjected to “legal” exams to test their competence in political re-education. The so-called political re-education requires the “senior religious figures to endorse state policies on the selection of the next Dalai Lama.” These restrictions and violations of basic rights of Tibetans have forced 154 Tibetans to self-immolate in Tibet since 2009.

Referring to the report, Representative Chhimey Rigzen, Tibet Bureau Geneva noted that “atheist China has no right to speak on the reincarnation of lamas. The question about the next Dalai Lama will be solely decided by His Holiness the Dalai Lama Himself and by the Tibetan people including Tibetan religious heads from the free world. The use of force by China on religious figures to endorse its policies only goes to prove that China realises it has no say whatsoever on this issue.”

Agreeing to China being a global threat to human rights, Special Appointee for Human Rights based in Tibet Bureau Geneva Thinlay Chukki noted “China has been trying to change the world order including the basic framework of international human rights system. China wants everything with “Chinese characteristics” including human rights. It is time we rise up against China and challenge its intention to dismantle the human rights system shaped after decades of hard-work by people of conscience.”

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama to establish an Institute of Ancient Nalanda Studies near Bodhgaya



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama presenting Bihar Chief Minister Hon Nitish Kumar with a Dharma wheel at the conclusion of their meeting at the Chief Minister's residence in Patna, Bihar, 17 January 2020. Photo/Lobsang Tsering/OHHDL*

Among His Holiness the Dalai Lama's key commitments, the most recent concerns a revival of the value of ancient Indian knowledge among young Indians and the world at large. His Holiness has been a firm advocate of the rich ancient Indian understanding of the workings of the mind and emotions, which provides the techniques of mental training, such as meditation, developed by Indian traditions which are of great relevance.

While this long-cherished commitment of His Holiness is reflected in his countless engagements and dialogue within the academic circles, the scientists and scholars, His Holiness very recently announced his latest endeavour towards the revival of the ancient Indian tradition—the establishment of an institute of Nalanda ancient studies.

During his address to the devotees in Bodhgaya on 16 January, His Holiness spoke about his plan to establish a Nalanda institute in Bodh Gaya, emphasising that the learning of Ancient Nalanda studies would be an “academic subject and not a religious one”.

He shared with the audience about the new developments in this project and his discussions with the Chief Minister of Bihar on the matter who had expressed

keen interest to follow up with it.

His Holiness also appreciated the efforts of the CTA President Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay towards this initiative.

His Holiness asserted that India's ancient knowledge which is based on logic and reasoning, seen from a secular and academic perspective, can be combined with modern education. He believes in India's potentiality to create a more integrated and ethically grounded way of being in the world.

His Holiness has always expressed his regard for India as the “spiritual home of the renowned Nalanda Buddhist tradition” and his initiative is based on his keen desire “to have a second one near Bodhgaya”.

His Holiness' proposal for inclusion of ‘secular ethics’ in the academic curriculum, has been adopted by the Delhi government into its ‘Happiness Curriculum’ in 2018, which turned into a great success, receiving widespread interest and acclaim nationally as well as globally.

## US Congress sanctions \$9 million fund for strengthening CTA and Tibetan community in exile

“The Central Tibetan Administration would like to express its deep gratitude and thank the US government and Congress once again for their generous assistance towards the Tibetan community,” said Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, commenting on the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 through which the U.S Congress sanctioned approx. \$9 million in funds for the Tibetan community in India and Nepal.

Kaydor Aukatsang, CTA's Chief Resilience Officer described the bill as an important source of funding for the Tibetan community. He added, “we are most grateful to the U.S. government

and Congress for renewing support for Tibet in the FY20 budget. The USD\$ 9 million to support the development work within the Tibetan exile community and for strengthening the CTA represents an important source of funding for the Tibetan community. While the FY20 funding level is the same as the previous year, the funding recognizes the growth of the Tibetan community in exile to also include the Tibetan diaspora community and the critical role of the CTA. Strengthening the CTA, which is the legitimate representative of the Tibetan people around the world, will strengthen Tibetan governance and ensure the long-term resilience of the Tibetan community and culture”.



*File photo/ICT*

The bill supporting the Tibet funding programs was passed in the House of Representatives on October 28 and by the Senate on November 12, 2019. President Trump approved and signed the bill on December 20, 2019.

The provisions of the bill include not less than \$8 million grant to nongovernmental organisations to support activities that 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. it also states that from the fund, not less than \$6 million is lined up for Funding for programs to promote and preserve Tibetan culture and language in the refugee and diaspora Tibetan communities, development, and the resilience of Tibetan communities and the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in India and Nepal, and to assist in the education and development of the next generation of Tibetan leaders from such communities

It is also provided that not less than \$3 million is granted for programs to strengthen the capacity of the CTA provided, that such funds shall be administered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Funding at the same level as last year is also lined up for Humanitarian assistance for Tibetan refugees in Nepal and India, Cultural Tibetan exchanges and fellowships, Funding for the office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues at the State Department (\$1 million), Funding for broadcasting into Tibet by Radio Free Asia and Voice of America, and to support the democratic aspirations of people all over the world, including the Tibetan people.

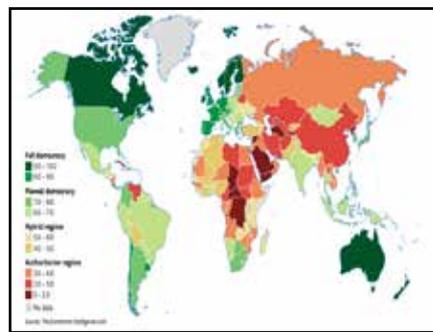
Since 1988, Congress has initiated and funded US government programs that benefit Tibetans in exile and inside Tibet through humanitarian assistance, economic development, educational assistance and other efforts. These programs are annually a part of the State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, which has been incorporated into the larger omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act.

## China at the bottom of global rankings in Democracy Index 2019

China which is categorised as the authoritarian regime under the Democracy Index has seen the greatest decline in its global rankings. It is now ranked close to the bottom of the global rankings at the 153rd rank out of the 165 independent states surveyed.

China saw a fall of 23 places down the global rankings mainly due to its intensified discrimination against “minorities” in the past year. The authoritarian regime of China has been constantly infringing on the civil liberties of its population, in particular, the “minorities” and has been subjecting them to continued digital surveillance. Tibetans who are considered “minorities” by the authoritarian regime of China are being subjected to “patriotic

re-education camps”. The Larung Gar and Yachen Gar Buddhist centres were demolished and the resident monks and nuns were forcefully evicted and many disrobed. There are no civil liberties whatsoever in China occupied Tibet. So far 154 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibet since 2009 as a mark of peaceful protest against the authoritarian Chinese regime. The system of mass incarceration being carried out in East Turkestan (CHN: Xinjiang) was first introduced and experimented in Tibet. In fact the Communist Party Secretary of “Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region”, Chen Quanguo was the Communist Party Secretary of the “Tibet Autonomous



Democracy Index 2019

Region” from 2011 to 2016 and was later promoted to “Xinjiang” in 2016.

The Democracy Index is published by the Economist Intelligence Unit since 2006. As noted in the report, “the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index provides a snapshot of the state of democracy worldwide in 165 independent states and two territories. The Democracy Index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; the functioning of government; political participation; political culture; and civil liberties. China the greatest decline.”



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

## Five Pressing Human Rights Violation In Tibet: A Year in Review 2019

The UN, EU & Human Rights Desk of Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) released a 6-minutes video titled “Five Pressing Human Rights Violation in Tibet, A Year in Review: 2019”.

The short video reviews the most pressing human rights violations in Tibet in the year 2019. It highlights self-immolations in Tibet, arbitrary arrest, detention, torture and sentenced, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion and belief and discriminatory practices against Tibetans.

By the end of 2019, at least 154 Tibetans in Tibet have ablaze their bodies since 2009 as a sign of peaceful protest against the Chinese authoritarian regime. The Chinese authorities continue to arbitrarily arrest, detain, torture and unjustly sentence Tibetans under the opaque Chinese legal system. In the year 2019 at least 16 Tibetans including activists, community leaders, students have been falsely sentenced to varying prison terms.

Freedom of speech and expression is “systematically violated” in Tibet. With the presence of the most intrusive system of surveillance in Tibet, the Tibetan people’s right to freedom of speech was continuously undermined in 2019. Civic groups were shut down and online conversation was strongly curtailed. Many Tibetans were arrested for posting online comments and for acts as small as sharing pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Tibetans in Tibet continue to face severe religious repression under the Chinese policies. The Chinese government has taken immense control over administrative functions of Tibetan Buddhist centres. The Chinese authorities target not only religious institutions but even the lay Tibetan

community cannot escape from state suppression of religion. From May to June 2019 around 3,600 residents were forcefully evicted from Yachen Gar. Many were enrolled in detention centres for “political re-education” where they suffered from mental and physical hardship.

Even to this day, institutional discriminations continue to exist in China’s occupied Tibet. Lack of access to the Tibetan language in schools, limited access to judicial remedies and unequal job opportunities for Tibetans in Tibet evidently persist. Despite repeated calls from the international community, China continues to violate human rights in Tibet.

“The human rights violations in Tibet continues to worsen with each passing year. The Chinese authorities keep on using methods and excuses to suppress Tibetan people with the ultimate aim of obliterating the cultural and ethnic identity of the Tibetan people into oblivion. It is high time that the International community muster enough courage and commitment to substantively register their protest against high handed Chinese atrocities against the Tibetans and other oppressed people under the Chinese rule such as Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians and Hongkongers,” said International Relations Secretary Karma Choeying, DIIR, CTA.

“China sees human rights as an existential threat to the very survival of its power. China depends on repression to further strengthen its power. Now is the time that government should band together and stand up to challenge against China’s repression and assaults on the international human rights system,” said Ms Tenzin Dhadon of Human Rights Desk, DIIR.

This video presents a comprehensive review of the prevailing dire human rights situation in Tibet in the year 2019.

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

## Belgium says Tibetan religious community has freedom to name Dalai Lama’s successor without interference from Temporal authorities



Belgian MP Samuel Cogolati with Representative Tashi Phuntsok and others at a recent event of OOT Brussels/File photo

Belgian Member of Parliament, Samuel Cogolati, Ecolo-Groen party, asked a number of questions to the Belgian government on “The situation of human rights in Tibet”.

In his questions raised in the Parliament on 21 January 2020, Mr Cogolati, Vice-President, Committee on External Relations, asked about Chinese involvement and clear intention of interference in the succession of Dalai Lama and therefore asked whether Belgium would present a bill like the United States or whether it would make a similar communication to Parliament as done by the Dutch government on 11 November 2019.

Under these circumstances, he asked what was the position of the Belgian government on Chinese repression and surveillance campaigns to destroy Tibetan culture, language and demolition of monasteries. Or what was the position of the Belgian government on the succession of Dalai Lama or whether Belgian would work for a debate on these at the European level.

Answering to the above questions, Mr Philippe Goffin, Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that the Belgian

government shared the concern of the MP on the situation of human rights in Tibet.

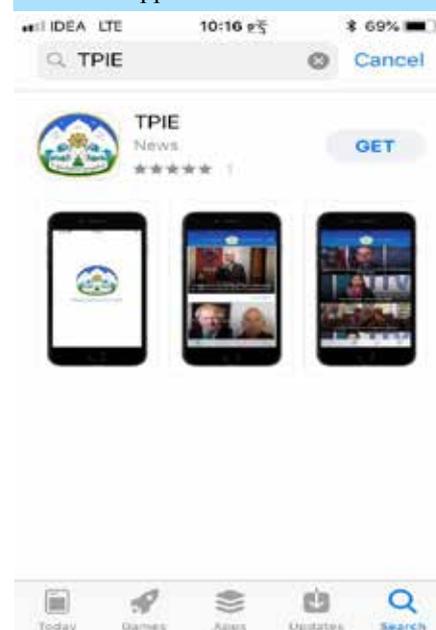
He listed various ways and means in which the Belgian government addresses its concern both in bilateral relations with China or at the European level or at the multilateral forum in the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The Minister, for example, said that the Tibetan issue was raised with delegation of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) led by TAR Vice-Chairman during a meeting, which took place on 13 December 2019 in Brussels.

The Minister also elaborated on Belgian intervention in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on China in November 2018. He also enumerated a number of ways in which it has worked with the European Union on the above matters.

Most importantly on the issue of succession of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he said, “Concerning the Dalai Lama’s reincarnation as a religious leader and based on the principle of freedom of religion, it logically belongs to the Tibetan religious community to name his successor without interference from temporal authorities”.

Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile App TPIE is now available free on Google Play Store and App Store.



## Exclusive Interview: Democracy and Freedom in Hong Kong, Tibet and Taiwan



The Tibet News Bureau of Central Tibetan Administration interviewed Mr Ford Fu-Te Liao (廖福特), President of Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (台灣民主基金會) and Research Professor at the Institute of Law, Academia Sinica Taiwan. Mr Liao has served as Secretary-General of the Taiwan Society of International Law, Deputy convener of the Presidential Office Human Rights Consultative Committee and Vice President of the Taiwan Association for Human Rights.

Following is the translation of the original interview in Chinese.

TNB: Today we would like to discuss with Mr Ford about recent protests in Hong Kong, democratic developments in Taiwan and their understanding of the Central Tibetan Administration's Middle Way Policy. Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank Mr Ford on behalf of the Tibetan people for attending the 8th international conference of Tibet support groups and for his valuable interview.

Mr Ford, welcome to the Tibet News Bureau. My first question, how much do you know about Tibet and Tibet issue?

Mr Ford: I personally never got the chance to visit Tibet. Everything I know

about Tibet I have learnt it through books, pictures, and videos. We came to know about Tibetan politics, religion and culture through Chinese media propaganda and such a situation is very much similar in Taiwan as well. After learning more about Tibet and Tibetan history we realized that Tibet is never a part of China.

TNB: What motivated you to participate in the 8th International Conference of Tibet support groups? And what do you expect from this conference?

Mr Ford: There are two main reasons. The first is that I am doing research on human rights law and we all know human rights violation in Tibet is quite serious. In the past, we have been vocal about freedom of Tibetan language, religion and culture. But now we must focus equally on the environmental issues of Tibetan plateau as the climate change on the Tibetan plateau is a serious issue that needs attention and appropriate actions.

The second reason is that I am the President of the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy. And our foundation prioritizes human rights and democracy. Under such circumstances which explains why I am motivated to pay more attention to human rights issues in

Tibet and Tibetan democracy.

This conference will help all the Tibetan supporters to get united and exchange their views. So I have seen this is a very good opportunity. I hope this conference will help to bring Tibetan supporters spirit united for the Tibetan struggle.

TNB: What do you think about Hong Kong's "extradition bill" and the mass protests that have been among the largest and longest in Hong Kong's history? Given the current situation in Hong Kong, what do you think about minorities under the rule of the Communist Party of China? Do you think it will impact Chinese citizens?

Mr Ford: Here we are dealing with three different situations. Uygur, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and some other places that are directly under the control of the Chinese regime.

Hong Kong and Macau abide by the so-called "one country, two systems" policy. And Taiwan never comes under the control of the Chinese regime but China always insists that Taiwan is a part of China.

Because of "one country, two systems", Hong Kong people feel that china's oppression is getting more severe as the freedom they enjoyed under the British colony is stripped off by the Chinese regime.

The democracy which Hong Kong people are seeking has not been achieved and there is no more democracy in Hong Kong because freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of association are wiped out under the existing regime.

I think it has two aspects; the first one is that Chinese oppression over Uyghur, Tibet and Inner Mongolia (southern Mongolia) still exist. The situation in Hong Kong has only emerged recently.

The second point, despite the so-called

“one country, two systems” being implemented in Hong Kong, China has failed to achieve the desired effect. And Taiwan is a completely independent and sovereign state so I think the Chinese government has benefited from “extradition bill”.

TNB: What do you think about the “Middle Way Policy” which is proposed by the His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and Central Tibetan Administration? How aware are Taiwanese politicians and people’s regarding MWP and do they support the “middle way policy” and peaceful negotiation between China and the Central Tibetan Administration?

Mr Ford: Speaking from my personal point of view, whichever way it is, be it “Middle Way Policy”, autonomy or peace talks between the Chinese government and the Central Tibetan Administration. The fact is Tibet’s territory is completely occupied by the Chinese government. Under such circumstances, I think, Tibetans must need adjustment in their strategy or policy, only then the Middle

Way Policy and Tibet-China peace talk can be possible.

This Middle Way Policy is a viable political strategy for the Tibetans which I can understand. And I must respect the decision of Tibetans regardless of their method. But I cannot compare the situation of Tibet to that of Taiwan. As I mentioned before Taiwan is not under the control of CCP so Taiwan and Tibet have its own political strategy.

TNB: This morning, the participants of the conference got the opportunity to meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Can you share your feeling or experience on meeting with His Holiness? What did you learn from His Holiness?

Mr Ford: Today I feel blissful to have received an audience with His Holiness. For me, he is a very wise elder brother. I am very happy to know that His Holiness is in good health. He is an intellectual philosopher. I did not meet His Holiness from a religious point of view. His wisdom and philosophy are what I am

inspired with. He also has a great sense of humour and speaks so generously to everyone.

TNB: Lastly do you have any message to your Chinese and Tibetan audience?

Mr Ford: Han people don’t know much about Tibet, its culture, religion, language and other fields. I think we Taiwanese know more about Tibet. So I would like to tell my Tibetan friends that there are many people around the world who are supporting the Tibetan issues. There were many supporters for Taiwan during the time Taiwan was under the authoritarian regime, likewise, there are many Tibet supporters around the world so I would like to request Tibetan friends not to feel alone.

You must hold on to your hope for the best and prepare for the worst. There is no doubt that in the near future Tibet will get its freedom back. Thank you.

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

## DoE announces new ‘Sikyong Excellence Award for Class X students’ from 2020

The Department of Education, CTA is pleased to announce a new academic award scheme ‘Sikyong Excellence Award’ for class X students beginning this year (2020). The Sikyong Excellence Award will be awarded to 10 Tibetan students securing 95% and above in Class X board exams with a minimum of 75% in Tibetan. Students recognised with the award will receive a prize money of INR 25,000 and a Certificate of Appreciation.

The ‘Sikyong Excellence Award’ is presented to motivate and reinforce students to do their best. It is also a recognition of their efforts and accomplishments. The Award hopes to inspire them to perform better and excel in their studies so that they can confidently pursue their goals to become contributing members of our community. All eligible candidates must submit the

following documents to the Department of Education by June 10, 2020:

Attested Copy of first and last page of applicant’s Green Book.

Attested Copy of Class X mark sheet.

The Sikyong Excellence Award will be presented during the birthday celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, July 06, 2020, at Tsuglagkhang, Dharamshala. The following allowances will be made by DOE to the student with an escort for which the original bills must be produced:

Travel by AC II Tier Train or AC Bus  
Dearness Allowance of Rs.300/- per day  
Room Rent allowance of Rs. 500/- per day.

For any queries, contact:

Sonam Sangmo email: [doe.lobyon@tibet.net](mailto:doe.lobyon@tibet.net)

Lodoe Rapsel email: [scholarship@tibet.net](mailto:scholarship@tibet.net)

Kindly submit applications to:

Secretary

Department of Education

Central Tibetan Administration

Gangchen Kyishong

Dharamshala – 176215

Distt. Kangra

Himachal Pradesh

India Ph: 01892 – 222572, 222721, 226695

E-mail: [doe.lobyon@tibet.net](mailto:doe.lobyon@tibet.net) or [scholarship@tibet.net](mailto:scholarship@tibet.net) [www.sherig.org/](http://www.sherig.org/) [www.lamton.org](http://www.lamton.org)

## The Tibetan Policy and Support Act (HR 4331) passed in the US House with supermajority vote

In yet another landmark victory for Tibetans and Tibet supporters around the world, the US House of Representatives today overwhelmingly passed the Tibetan Policy and Support Act (HR 4331), the most comprehensive policy bill on Tibet since the Tibet Policy Act-2002.

The supermajority vote on the legislation is a landmark show of support by the US for the Central Tibetan Administration, the Middle Way Policy and genuine autonomy for Tibetans, religious freedom, environmental protection of Tibetan plateau and restoration of freedom in Tibet.

“On behalf of six million Tibetans I extend profound gratitude to the Chairs of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and to all the co-sponsors for supporting the Tibetan Policy and Support Act,” CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay said.

The President especially thanked Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Congressman Jim McGovern(D-Mass.), Congressman Chris Smith(R-NJ) and a longtime Tibet supporting Republican Congressman Ted Yoho who spoke strongly in support of the bill in the House as well as others.

President Dr Sangay was in Washington DC in September and November last year drumming up support for the bill and met with 21 Senators and Congresspersons including Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Congressman Jim McGovern, Congressman Ted Yoho, Congressman Andy Levin, Congressman Vern Buchanan, Congressman David Price, Congresswoman Judy Chu, Congresswoman Terri Sewell, Congressman Gerry Connolly, Congressman Ron Wright and Congressman Tim Burchett, Senator Mitt Romney, Senator James Risch, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Marco Rubio, Senator Tom Cotton, Senator Josh Hawley, Senator Steve Daines, Senator Thom Tillis and Senator



*The US House of Representatives passed the Tibetan Policy and Support Act with a supermajority of 392 votes in support.*

Pat Toomey.

“Thanks to everyone who have worked towards this important landmark.” The President had written to all 535 members of Congress and senators through the Office of Tibet, Washington DC to urge their support.

Speaking on the House floor earlier today, the Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, Congressman Jim McGovern, who introduced the bill in House, stated, “The Central Tibetan Administration represents the legitimate aspirations of the Tibetan people” and recounted how China is the most prominent human rights abuser. “It should be clear that we support a positive and productive US-China relationship but it is essential that human rights of all the people of China are respected by their government.”

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton said: “The US will not cease to help Tibetan people until they get freedom”.

Congressman Ted Yoho reaffirmed that the Tibetan issue has and will continue to attract bi-partisan support, and he

promoted his place to invite His Holiness the Dalai Lama to address members of Congress through a video conference.

Congressman Tom Suozzi mentioned his involvement with China Commission Town Hall meeting with the Tibetan community in New York last year and stated, “Attacks on religious freedom anywhere is an attack everywhere”.

Finally, Speaker Pelosi graciously came to support the bill.

“As Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, the president of the Central Tibetan Administration has said, the very survival of Tibetan culture and identity is in peril. If we don’t speak out for human rights in China because of commercial interest, then we lose all moral authority to speak out for human rights anyplace in the world,” quoted Speaker Pelosi.

“We are supporting the Tibetan people’s right to religious freedom and genuine autonomy by formally establishing a US policy that the Tibetan Buddhist community has the exclusive right to choose its religious leaders, including the future 15th Dalai Lama,” she said.

The bill was passed with a supermajority of 392 votes.

Built on the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, the bill was introduced in the US House on 13 September 2019 by Rep. James McGovern (D-Mass.), chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, and introduced in the Senate on 24 September by the commission's Co-Chair Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Senator Ben Cardin. The bill has 35 bipartisan co-sponsors.

“This is an extremely significant and empowering day for Tibetans all over the world. We are grateful for the House of Representatives for standing up for the human rights of Tibetan people, as this is strong and clear support of truth, justice, and human rights. It also sends a strong message to the Chinese Government about the US government's sentiments for Tibet, Tibetans, and human rights. We are confident that the bill will pass through the Senate and move to become a historic Act on Tibet”, stated Representative Ngodup Tsering.

Earlier that morning, Representative Tsering and Kelsang met with Congressman McGovern and discussed the bill. The four staff members of the Office of Tibet, including the Representative, attended the entire proceedings of the House.

The next step is to go through the Senate where there is a significant show of support for the smooth passage. After the Senate, it will be sent to President Trump to be signed and become law. Read the text of the bill.

### **Statement of Policy on Reincarnation of Dalai Lama**

The bill makes it official US policy that the decisions regarding the selection, education, and veneration of Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders are exclusively spiritual matters that should be made by the appropriate religious authorities within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and in the context of the will of practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism; the wishes of the 14th Dalai Lama, including any written instructions, should play

a determinative role in the selection, education, and veneration of a future 15th Dalai Lama.

With this bill, the US sends a clear message that senior officials of the Government of the People's Republic of China who are responsible for, complicit in, or have directly or indirectly engaged in the identification or installation of a candidate chosen by China as the future 15th Dalai Lama of Tibetan Buddhism will be considered to have committed —

(1) a gross violation of internationally recognized human rights for purposes of imposing sanctions with respect to such officials under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (22 U.S.C. 2656 note); and

(2) a particularly severe violation of religious freedom for purposes of applying section 212(a)(2)(G) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(2)(G)) with respect to such officials.

The policy also denotes that interference by the Government of the People's Republic of China or any other government in the process of recognizing a successor or reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama and any future Dalai Lamas would represent a clear violation of the fundamental religious freedoms of Tibetan Buddhists and the Tibetan people.

Moreover, the policy states that the funds available to the Department of State for international religious freedom programs, the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom should support efforts to protect and promote international religious freedom in China and for programs to protect Tibetan Buddhism in China and elsewhere.

### **Recognition of Central Tibetan Administration and Celebration of Tibetan Democracy-in-Exile**

This bill commends the Tibetan exile communities around the world for the adoption of a system of self-governance with democratic institutions to choose their leaders; and His Holiness the 14th

Dalai Lama for his decision to devolve political authority to elected leaders in accordance with democratic principles.

The bill emphasises His Holiness the Dalai Lama's advocacy for the Middle Way Approach, ‘which seeks genuine autonomy for the six million Tibetans in Tibet’ and how His Holiness has overseen a process of democratization within the Tibetan polity, beginning in Tibet in the 1950s and continuing in exile from the 1960s to the present and to address the needs of the Tibetan people until such time as genuine autonomy in Tibet is realized, the 14th Dalai Lama devolved his political responsibilities to the elected representatives of the Tibetan people in exile in 2011.

The bill also affirmed upon the ‘free and fair’ assessment of the International Observers during the monitoring of the 2011 and 2016 elections of political leaders to serve the CTA's parliament and as chief executive.

The bill concludes with the following suggestion: ‘as consistent with section 621(d)(3) of the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (22 U.S.C. 6901 note), the United States Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues should continue to maintain close contact with the religious, cultural, and political leaders of the Tibetan people.’

### **Preservation of Tibetan Plateau: Environment and Water resources**

The bill recognizes the key role of Tibetan plateau as it contains glaciers, rivers, grasslands, and other geographical and ecological features that are crucial for supporting vegetation growth and biodiversity, regulating water flow and supply for an estimated 1.8 billion people. The bill states that Global warming threatens the glaciers in Tibet that feed the major rivers of South and East Asia, which supply freshwater to an estimated 1.8 billion people.

The bill also found that the construction in Tibet of large hydroelectric power dams intended to be used in part to transmit power to Chinese provinces outside of Tibet, as well as other infrastructure projects, including the

Sichuan-Tibet railroad, may also lead to the resettlement of thousands of Tibetans and transform the environment. And that the People's Republic of China has already completed water transfer programs diverting billions of cubic meters of water yearly and has plans to divert more waters from the Tibetan plateau in China.

The legislation, therefore, calls the Secretary of State, in coordination with relevant agencies of the United States Government, to— pursue collaborative efforts with Chinese and international scientific institutions, as appropriate, to monitor the environment on the Tibetan Plateau, including glacial retreat, temperature rise, and carbon levels, in order to promote a greater understanding of the effects on permafrost, river flows, grasslands and desertification, and the monsoon cycle; Engage with the Government of the People's Republic of China, the Tibetan people, and nongovernmental organizations to encourage the participation of Tibetan nomads and other Tibetan stakeholders in the development and implementation of

grassland management policies, in order to utilize their indigenous experience in mitigation and stewardship of the land and to assess policies on the forced resettlement of nomads; and Encourage a regional framework on water security, or use existing frameworks, such as the Lower Mekong Initiative, to facilitate cooperative agreements among all riparian nations that would promote transparency, sharing of information, pollution regulation, and arrangements on impounding and diversion of waters that originate on the Tibetan Plateau.

#### Diplomatic Channels

To promote access to Tibet as enumerated in the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, 2019, the bill mandates for the establishment of US Consulate in Lhasa, Tibet. As a matter of policy, the bill calls upon the Secretary to not authorize the establishment in the United States of any additional consulate of the People's Republic of China until such time as a United States consulate in Lhasa, Tibet, is established.

The bill further enshrines the objectives of the Special Coordinator as to— promote substantive dialogue without preconditions between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives or democratically-elected leaders of the Tibetan community leading to a negotiated agreement on Tibet and coordinate with other governments in multilateral efforts toward this goal; Encourage the Government of the People's Republic of China to address the aspirations of the Tibetan people with regard to their distinct historical, cultural, religious, and linguistic identity; Promote the human rights of the Tibetan people; Promote activities to preserve environment and water resources of the Tibetan plateau; Encourage sustainable development in accordance with section 616(d), cultural and historical preservation, health care, education, and environmental sustainability projects for Tibetan communities in Tibet; and Promote access to Tibet in accordance with the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–330).”;

## Public Notice: Extension of Tibetan RC, Exit Permit and Return Visa



According to a circular issued by the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama based in New Delhi with regard to the directives of the Ministry of Home Affairs, GOI dated 27 January 2020, F.IV-25022/05/2009, the Settlement Officers of the Central Tibetan Administration are hereby instructed, regarding the extension of RC, Exit Permit and Return Visa to India, to follow up on whether the applicant is a current resident of the settlement before issuing a supporting letter. If the concerned individual has shifted his/her residence elsewhere, they are to be instructed to apply for RC Transfer and a supporting letter from the relevant settlement office under the Tibetan Administration.

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama begins teachings in Bodh Gaya

After several days of cold and foggy weather across North India, the prospects this morning seemed brighter as His Holiness the Dalai Lama walked from the Tibetan Monastery, Ganden Phelgyeling, to the Kalachakra Ground. The Abbots of Ganden Shartsé and Jangtsé Monasteries and the Disciplinarian of Namgyal Monastery led the way wearing their yellow crested hats and carrying incense. His Holiness greeted people lined up on either side as he crossed the road.

An estimated 35,000 people, Tibetan monks, nuns and laypeople, people from the Himalayan regions and 2500 from 67 other countries were gathered on the Ground. His Holiness smiled, waved and reached out to as many as he could as he walked to the stage. From there he waved to those who were further away.

Among the Lamas seated around the throne he greeted Sakya Trizin, the Ganden Throne-holder and his predecessor Rinzong Rinpoché and the new Khambo Lama of Tuva.

As soon as His Holiness had sat down on the throne, eight monks, Indians and Sri Lankans, from the Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee, began a recitation in Pali of the section of the 'Mangala Sutta' that concerns loving kindness. They were followed by a group of eleven students from the local Maitreya School associated with Root Institute, who chanted the 'Heart Sutra' in mellifluous Sanskrit.

Lastly, a group of Chinese, including monks, a nun and laypeople recited the 'Heart Sutra' once more in Mandarin.

Before addressing the public, His Holiness repeated several verses including the closing homage to Nagarjuna's 'Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way',

I prostrate to Gautama  
Who, through compassion,  
Taught the exalted Dharma,



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama during his teaching on Gyelsay Thogmé Sangpo's 'Thirty-seven Practices of Bodhisattvas' at the Kalachakra Ground in Bodhgaya, Bihar, India on January 2, 2020. Photo/Pasang Dhondup/CTA*

Which leads to the relinquishing of all views.

And a 'Praise of the Perfection Wisdom',

Homage to the Perfection Wisdom,  
The Mother of all Buddhas of the three times,  
Which is beyond words, inconceivable,  
Inexpressible,  
Unproduced and unobstructed, in the nature of space,  
The objective domain of self-aware wisdom.

Tatyatha - gaté, gaté, paragaté,  
parasamgaté, bodhi svaha

"After attaining enlightenment," His Holiness began, "the Buddha gave a first turning of the wheel of dharma in Sarnath. He taught the Four Noble Truths and the Vinaya, which laid the foundation of his doctrine. The 'Individual Liberation Sutra' may differ slightly from place to place. However, the Mulasarvastavadin tradition followed in Tibet, coming down from Nagarjuna, closely resembles the Theravada transmission upheld in countries following the Pali Tradition.

"Later, on Vulture's Peak, the Buddha gave an explanation of the perfection of

wisdom for those with sharp faculties. In due course, what the Buddha taught spread from India across Asia. Today, scientists and educated people in the West are paying it interested attention, especially as it relates to the workings of the mind and emotions. Regardless of questions of liberation or past and future lives, the Buddha's teachings can be verified through logic and reason.

"We Asians are traditional followers of the Buddha, but it is important that our faith in him is founded on understanding. Haribadra's treatise 'Clear Meaning' distinguishes between those of sharp faculties who analyse and understand, and those who rely only on faith. Employing reason and logic we can see that everything lacks any essence in and of itself.

"In explaining the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha pointed out the shortcoming of the cycle of existence and the advantages of liberation. He indicated that it is possible to overcome destructive emotions because they have no sound basis. We can begin to do this by understanding the two truths, that there is what appears and there is a deeper truth.



Members of the crowd estimated at 35,000 including those from 67 countries, listening to His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Kalachakra Ground in Bodhgaya, Bihar, India on January 2, 2020. Photo/Pasang Dhondup/CTA

“Profound and peaceful, free from elaboration, uncompounded clear light, I have found a nectar-like Dharma. Yet if I were to teach it, there is no-one who would understand what I said; therefore, I shall remain silent here in the forest.’ This was how the Buddha reflected soon after his enlightenment.

“The words ‘profound and peaceful’ can be taken to refer to his first round of teachings; ‘free from elaboration’ refers to the second round—the perfection of wisdom and object clear light. ‘Uncompounded clear light’ can be understood to refer to the subtle mind of clear light, the subjective clear light, that is clarified in highest yoga tantra. This is the Buddha nature that goes on to enlightenment.

“The Buddha also made clear that the Sages do not wash unwholesome deeds away with water, nor do they remove the sufferings of beings with their hands, nor yet do they transplant their own realization into others. It is by teaching the truth of suchness that they liberate beings.

“We have a tendency to think of the Buddha as someone from whom we can get blessings to overcome our defilements. That’s not how it works. No sentient being wants suffering; they all want happiness. But most do not have the opportunity we have as a result of our human intelligence. Infinite beings seek satisfaction on the basis of sensory experience. We human beings can also transform our minds.

“All religious traditions have practices

corresponding to taking refuge; the followers of some pray to God that they’ll be happy. All these traditions teach about the importance of love and compassion. Among the non-theistic Indian traditions that include a branch of the Samkhya’s, the Jains and the Buddhists, the Buddha said, ‘You are your own master’. Happiness comes about as a result of transforming the mind. Animals avoid immediate physical pain, but we human beings can think ahead and make long term plans for what we want to do.

“Suffering arises from an unruly mind. The prayer the Chinese add at the end of the ‘Heart Sutra’ expresses a wish that three poisons (attachment, anger and ignorance) be eliminated.

May the three poisons be eliminated,  
May the light of wisdom shine forth,  
May we face no inner or outer obstacles  
And may we train in the bodhisattva path.

“Those who aspire for liberation for themselves alone develop the wisdom of seeing how things are, but when this is combined with compassion and bodhichitta it leads to the bodhisattva path which aims for Buddhahood. So, the gist of this verse is, may we overcome obstacles and engage in the bodhisattva path.

“You can’t calm an unruly mind by taking drugs. They may help a little, but when the mind is disturbed by anger, for example, much more effective antidotes are the ancient Indian practices of non-violence and compassion. There are, in addition, practices for developing single-pointed concentration and insight into reality.

“When the mind is afflicted by destructive emotions, we need to recognise that this is so. We need to train the mind, because as long as it remains undisciplined, suffering will ensue. Underlying destructive emotions is the misconception that things have their own solid, independent existence. This is how things appear to us, and as long as we cling to this view, destructive emotions will arise.

“Nagarjuna wrote, “Through the elimination of karma and afflictive emotions there is liberation. Karma and mental afflictions come from conceptual constructs, which in turn come about from mental fabrication. Fabrication ceases through realizing emptiness.” What he’s saying here is that attachment, anger and delusion come about because we exaggerate. On the basis of how things appear, we think they have some kind of intrinsic existence. This is why the Buddha taught emptiness.”

His Holiness discussed how the statement ‘Form is emptiness’ tells us that form exists, but it does not exist as it appears. It has no intrinsic existence. The mind consists of a series of moments, so it can’t be pinned down as having intrinsic existence either. Because of our misconception of reality, afflictive emotions arise. When the ‘Heart Sutra’ says ‘Form is empty; emptiness is form’ it is saying that form and emptiness are of the same essence, although they are conceptually distinct.

Form does not exist in and of itself. It has no intrinsic existence—emptiness is form. His Holiness mentioned that Buddhapalita asked if things had any intrinsic existence, what need would there be for dependent arising? The ‘Heart Sutra’ goes on to state that emptiness is not other than form, and form is not other than emptiness.

His Holiness explained the path leading to Buddhahood in terms of the mantra accompanying the ‘Heart Sutra’. He remarked that Buddhahood is possible because the nature of the mind is luminous clear light and defilements are not of the nature of the mind.

Gaté gaté—proceed, proceed—indicates the path of accumulation, which we reach with our initial experience of bodhichitta, and the path of preparation that is associated with the initial understanding of emptiness. Paragaté—proceed beyond—represents the path of seeing, the first insight into emptiness and achievement of the first bodhisattva ground. Parasamgaté—thoroughly proceed beyond—denotes the path of

meditation and the achievement of the subsequent bodhisattva grounds. Bodhi svaha—be founded in enlightenment—reveals laying the foundation of complete enlightenment.

His Holiness observed that we human beings tend to make problems for ourselves despite our deep wish for happiness. He quoted Shantideva, who writes in his ‘Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life’,

Whatever joy there is in this world  
All comes from desiring others to be happy,  
And whatever suffering there is in this world  
All comes from desiring myself to be happy.

If I do not actually exchange my happiness  
For the sufferings of others,  
I shall not attain the state of Buddhahood  
And even in cyclic existence shall have no joy.



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressing the crowd at the Kalachakra Ground in Bodhgaya, Bihar, India on January 2, 2020. Photo/Pasang Dhondup/CTA*

He remarked that as a system of government, democracy is good, but if the participants are selfish, it will not bring about peace or happiness. In such situations, intelligence tends to be misused instead of contributing to the common good. As sociable beings we rely on others, so scientists have observed that it is human nature to be compassionate.

His Holiness commended study, reflection and meditation as the way to generate wisdom. He recalled that in the early days of Samyé Monastery, more than a thousand years ago, Chinese meditators in the Department of Unwavering Concentration taught

that non-conceptual meditation was a sufficient path to Buddhahood. Shantarakshita’s disciple Kamalashila came from India to challenge them and they were dumbfounded. Consequently, they were invited to leave Tibet.

“Shantarakshita and Kamalashila established what became Tibetan Buddhism,” His Holiness declared, “and for more than a thousand years we have kept it alive through study and practice. We memorize significant texts like ‘Ornament for Clear Realization’ and then rely on Indian commentaries like Haribadra’s ‘Clear Meaning’, as well as Tibetan commentaries. We then discuss what we’ve understood in debate—as monks were doing before I arrived this morning. Key to this tradition is the study of logic.

“Jé Tsongkhapa emphasized the need to study thoroughly. He stressed study, reflection and meditation and recommended developing an understanding of the general structure of the teaching before entering in the specialized teachings of tantra.”

Turning to the ‘Thirty-seven Practices of Bodhisattvas’ His Holiness explained that the author, Thogmé Sangpo is referred to as Gyelsay—son of the conquerors—because he is generally accepted to have been a bodhisattva. The author begins by paying homage to Lokeshvara, who makes effort for the good of living beings, while seeing that all phenomena lack coming and going. His Holiness compared this to Nagarjuna’s homage to the Buddha, at the start of ‘Fundamental Wisdom’, for having taught dependent arising free from the eight extremes.

The text highlights the fact that in the end we have to leave even our body behind. It recommends we give up bad friends. Instead we should cherish our spiritual teacher. His Holiness extolled Tsongkhapa’s observation that one who wishes to tame others—as a teacher—must first tame themselves. The way to do this is to adopt the three trainings in ethics, concentration and wisdom.

Where the text asks, in the context of

taking refuge in the Three Jewels, ‘What worldly god can give you protection?’, His Holiness conceded that sometimes worldly spirits are propitiated. He reminded the gathering of the case that purported to involve protecting Jé Tsongkhapa’s tradition. However, the Fifth Dalai Lama described the spirit involved as malevolent, born from wrong prayers, ill-natured and bringing harm to the Dharma and beings. “Some lamas called this spirit a guardian of Jé Tsongkhapa’s tradition, which was just not right.”

The eighth verse relates to beings of initial capacity, who seek to overcome evident suffering. The ninth concerns those of medium scope who work to understand that what ordinary people regard as pleasurable is an example of changeable suffering.

Cutting the root of cyclic existence requires overcoming ignorance which can only be done by developing insight into reality. His Holiness recalled that the Buddha is said to have commissioned a drawing of the wheel of existence, which illustrates the twelve links of dependent arising. These begin with ignorance, go on through formative karma and end with aging and death. They can be reversed by overcoming ignorance—by disrupting our misconception of reality.

The tenth verse refers to beings of great capacity. On the basis of refuge in the Three Jewels, such beings generate bodhichitta, which His Holiness remarked he does every day, as soon as he gets up.

“If you exchange your interests for those of others and hold them dear, everything appears in a positive light. You’ll have good health, live long and gather friends around you.

“Prompted by the mention of theft in the next verse, Khunu Lama Rinpoché told me of when robbers once ambushed Thogmé Sangpo and took all he had. He warned them not to go in the direction they were headed, because they would likely encounter the people who had given him what they had just stolen and so run into trouble.”

The text counsels us to take others' misdeeds upon ourselves, to see our enemy as our most valuable teacher of patience and to be respectful. It advises that conceit is an obstacle, that we should subdue our own minds and should meditate on emptiness. In this connection, His Holiness cited a verse from Nagarjuna's 'Fundamental Wisdom'.

Neither the aggregates, nor different from the aggregates, The aggregates are not in him, nor is he in the aggregates. The Tathagata does not possess the aggregates. What else is the Tathagata?

He pointed out its versatility, that the same conclusions can be applied to oneself. He also reported that in his practice of deity yoga he applies it to the 15 directional guardians and so incorporates them into his meditation on emptiness.

Verses 25-29 deal with five of the six perfections, generosity, ethics, patience, effort and a calmly abiding mind. The next two verses explain that these practices are perfections when they are qualified by wisdom.

Finally, readers are advised to crush destructive emotions as they arise, to ask themselves, 'What is the state of my mind?' and to dedicate merit earned to the attainment of enlightenment. The concluding verses express the author's humility and dedicate the work to 'all living beings gaining the ultimate and conventional altruistic intention'.

Before returning to Ganden Phelgyeling, His Holiness announced that tomorrow he will lead the rite for generating the awakening mind of bodhichitta as part of the Empowerment of Avalokiteshvara, the Great Compassionate One.

## India is highly capable of contributing to global peace: His Holiness the Dalai Lama



His Holiness the Dalai Lama greeting the gathering at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM BG) in Bodhgaya, Bihar. Photo/Pasang Dhondup/CTA

During a talk at the University of Indian Institute of Management (IIM BG) in Bodhgaya, His Holiness the Dalai Lama drew attention to the relevance of India's ancient knowledge and tradition in today's world.

Addressing the gathering, His Holiness re-affirmed his stance on happiness being the ultimate goal of all sentient beings. The lasting happiness, he said, can only be achieved through compassion.

"More often than not, humans are blinded by their own selfishness and short-sighted thinking which are the essential cause of many problems," said His Holiness.

"Our innate nature is compassionate so we must nourish that, and besides, all 7 billion human beings on this planet are one big family".

Recounting the repercussions of the wars in the 20th-century, His Holiness observed that the time has come to make the 21st century a century of peace and compassion by not repeating the errors of the last century.

He asked to put into practise the ancient Indian knowledge of non-violence and compassion if genuine peace and harmony of humanity are needed and wanted.

"Simply shouting slogans for peace is futile. For peace to prevail, an earnest effort has to be made to reduce violence

and use of lethal weapons", he added.

He further noted that there could be no long-term solution than the power of dialogue in times of hostility and insecurity.

Underlining the importance of 'Ahimsa' and 'Karuna' as relevant tools in today's world, His Holiness stressed that India should make an effort to revive its ancient tradition and thought.

"I always emphasise that India is the only nation that can combine modern education with its ancient knowledge about developing peace of mind."

Explaining further, His Holiness mentioned that India's tradition of single-pointed concentration and analytical meditation are also constructive in combating destructive emotions fatal to the peace of mind.



Faculty and students of Indian Institute of Management (IIM BG) in Bodhgaya, Bihar. Photo/Pasang Dhondup/CTA

He emphasised that the school curriculum must include reviving India's ancient knowledge and tradition as an academic subject. In doing so, His Holiness noted that India has the potential to create many more great thinkers.



## His Holiness the Dalai Lama addresses judges at Bihar Judicial Academy

Arriving in Patna on a short flight from Bodh Gaya, His Holiness the Dalai Lama drove directly to meet Bihar Chief Minister Honourable Nitish Kumar at his residence. The two had met a few days ago in Bodh Gaya when the Chief Minister and other state authorities called upon the Tibetan spiritual leader at his residence in Bodh Gaya.

The Chief Minister requested His Holiness to bless a bodhi tree in the garden of his residence, before inviting him to join him for lunch. In the afternoon, His Holiness took a short drive to the state guesthouse, where he retired for the day.

On the next morning, His Holiness addressed the Bihar Judicial Academy on how to embrace ‘Love and Compassion as a Way of Life’. He was welcomed by the Chief Justice and Judges of the Patna High Court and planted a sapling in the garden before entering the building.

In his introduction, Chief Justice Sanjay Karol declared, “There are those who are close to our hearts and minds, who do not need any introduction. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is such a man, universally recognized as a man of peace, who describes himself as a simple Buddhist monk.”

“Respected brothers and sisters,” His Holiness began, “we are all the same. All 7 billion human beings are brothers and sisters. Unfortunately, today, there is too much emphasis on seeing others in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’ – highlighting differences of religion and nationality, and within one country the differences between the rich and poor. Making too much of such differences creates problems for us. The remedy is to recognize the oneness of all 7 billion human beings.

“When they’re young, children don’t care what religious faith or nationality their companions belong to, so long as they are affectionate, smile, and play easily together. It’s only as they grow older that they pay attention to these



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama exchanges greetings with Chief Minister Hon Nitish Kumar as His Holiness arrives at the Chief Minister’s residence in Patna on 17 January 2020. Photo/Lobsang Tsering/OHHDL*

secondary differences. In fact, from a broader perspective, we are mentally, physically, emotionally the same. We all want to live a happy life, but many of the problems we face are of our own making.”

Among solutions to some of these problems, His Holiness brought up India’s long-standing traditions of ‘ahimsa’—non-violence and ‘karuna’—compassion. He pointed out that being non-violent in our behaviour and compassionate in our motivation are the basis on which our families, communities and nations can live happily together. He observed that the changes that will bring this about will be achieved not through prayer but education.

“If you think about it, it’s clear that violence just leads to mutual destruction. Killing your foe out of anger will only create more enemies. On the other hand, if you think of your fellow human beings as brothers and sisters, you’ll find it easy to reach out to them.

“The proper human approach to settling conflict is to engage in dialogue,” His Holiness continued. “Relying on weapons and the use of force is not appropriate—it perpetuates discord. This is not the way. In order to avoid violence, we must learn to treat each

other with greater respect.

“India is a democratic country functioning on the basis of the rule of law. The result is there for all to see. India, the world’s second most populated nation, is peaceful. Indians are free and a major factor underlying this is the existence of the rule of law. Judges and lawyers have an essential role in maintaining a just and happy society. If judges and lawyers only think of “lining their pockets”, it will lead to big problems.”

Turning to historical relations between Tibet and India, His Holiness observed that in the 7th century the Tibetan Emperor chose to develop a Tibetan written script modelled on the ancient Indian Devanagari alphabet. Later, in the 8th century, another Emperor chose, despite close relations with China, to introduce Buddhism to Tibet directly from India.

“This Nalanda Tradition, with its emphasis on the use of logic and reason, gave us self-confidence and determination. For that we will always be grateful to India. From a personal point of view, I became a refugee in 1959. On the one hand, I have become the longest-staying guest of the Indian Government, on the other, I describe



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with Chief Justice of Bihar Sanjay Karol and companion judges of the Patna High Court at the Bihar Judicial Academy in Patna on 18 January 2020. Photo/Pasang Dhondup/CTA

myself as a messenger of ancient Indian thought—particularly of ‘ahimsa’ and ‘karuna’. Wherever I go, I carry this message.

“India is also a living example to the rest of the world that all our religious traditions can live together. In terms of the wider community we have several religious traditions teaching several aspects of the truth. I consider the religious harmony we find in India as something wonderful.”

Finally, His Holiness explained his latest commitment to reviving ancient Indian knowledge. “It is important,” he stressed, “to combine modern education, with its goals of material development, with the ancient Indian understanding of the workings of the mind and emotions, allowing us to tackle our destructive

emotions and achieve peace of mind. Once these two aspects of education have been successfully combined, we can share what we’ve learned with the world at large.”

When asked about being a monk in a materialistic world, His Holiness joked, “To be a monk means to be celibate. It has happened that when I met someone for the first time they were happily married. Then, next time we met, they had another husband or wife. Meeting on a third occasion, they were married again. In such a context I feel it’s good to be a monk—much less trouble.”

A member of the audience stood up to tell His Holiness that he didn’t think of him as a guest of India. “You live in our hearts. You’re an Indian. All Tibetans living in India are our brothers and sisters.”

A question was asked about the coming Buddha, Maitreya, to which His Holiness responded, “Of course, I’m a Buddhist. But there are some things in the scriptures that I do not accept literally. For example, the texts say that Mt. Meru stands at the centre of the universe, but I don’t believe that. It contradicts observable reality.

“Similarly, when we talk about Maitreya Buddha, we have to keep in mind that

according to many scientists, the world may disappear in the next few centuries. Global warming is becoming very serious and this planet may become just a desert. We human beings will not be able to survive. In such a context it makes no sense to talk about Maitreya Buddha appearing in the future.

“At this time, it’s more important for us to pay attention to what Buddha Shakyamuni taught. This is the teaching we can actually study and practise here and now. We can think about it the way we think about food. If you have food on your plate today, why would you wait until tomorrow to eat it? It makes no sense. The Buddha’s teachings have been kept alive until now—these are what we should study and practice here and now.”

Leaving the Bihar Judicial Academy, His Holiness drove directly to Patna Airport. He was received there by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who had come to see him off. They spent more than 30 minutes in conversation before His Holiness took off for Delhi.

His Holiness will undergo a routine medical examination in Delhi tomorrow. He will then return to Dharamshala on 21st January, completing a 44-day tour that has taken him to Delhi, Goa, Mundgod, Bodhgaya and Patna.

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

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama addresses a group of Southeast Asian devotees in Bodh Gaya



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressing the audience from Southeast Asian countries. Photo: Screengrab*

A group of Southeast Asian devotees received an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his residence at the Ganden Phelgyeling Monastery in Bodhgaya, Bihar.

Speaking to the gathering, His Holiness emphasised that the idea of accepting religious teaching and sermon based on mere faith in religion is not enough. One must employ observation, investigation, and reasoning to test the viability of the teachings, in this case, His Holiness was referring to the teachings of Buddha Dharma.

“Buddha himself encouraged his disciples to question and introspect his teachings based on reasoning and analysis,” affirmed His Holiness.

Meanwhile, His Holiness lamented at the widespread of human violence in the world today, a consequence, he said, due to lack of a sense of global responsibility.

“This lack of sense of global responsibility have divided human beings into thinking that one’s interest is more important than the interests

of others when in reality our interests and others’ interests are very much interconnected as we are part of the 7 billion human beings. Our happiness is very dependent on the happiness of others and vice versa,” said His Holiness.

“Relying on Buddha to wash away our sins is futile. Similarly, Buddha cannot uproot our negative emotions and suffering. Only through practise of altruism can we achieve peace and happiness in the true sense”.

Placing mere faith in God, noted His Holiness, is obsolete and outdated. He asserted that the followers and practitioners of Buddhism must now become the 21st century Buddhist compatible with modern science.

In addition, His Holiness affirmed that having fuller knowledge of modern science vis-a-vis conviction in Buddhist teaching is beneficial for the long-run survival of Buddha Dharma.

## India is highly capable of contributing to global peace: His Holiness the Dalai Lama

In a letter to the Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed his sympathy and deep sadness about the bush fires that have recently caused such devastating damage.

“It is simply heart-wrenching to see reports of these ferocious infernos,” His Holiness wrote, “while the personal bravery of so many volunteers who have come together as firefighters is an inspiration.

“I offer my condolences to the families of those who have died and to the many people who have lost their homes in these fires.

“It is also becoming increasingly clear that a great number of birds and animals have died in the fires—this is also very distressing.

“I would like to commend your government and the respective state governments for the measures they have taken to provide victims with necessary support and assistance.

“I am heartened by the generous solidarity being shown by the global community for those who have been affected. Disasters like this remind us that humanity is one community. Even on an individual level, each and every one of us must take steps to counter global warming.

“As you may know,” His Holiness concluded, “I have been able to visit Australia quite regularly over the years and have been deeply touched by the friendship and affection Australians have shown me, as well as the interest they have taken in my efforts to promote human values and peace of mind.”

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

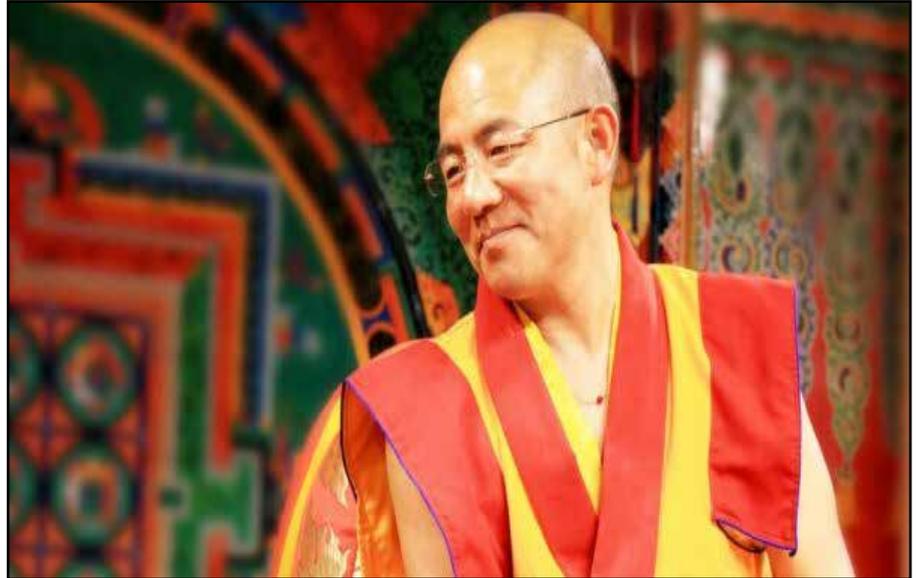


## Larung Gar abbot's international centers closed under suspected pressure from China

International Campaign for Tibet

One of the leading Tibetan Buddhist voices within the People's Republic of China has made a surprising announcement about the closure of his Bodhi Institute of Compassion and Wisdom, which has locations throughout the world. The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) has learned that some of Khenpo Sodargye's followers suspect there is more to the closure than the reason he cited in his announcement on Dec. 30, 2019. The announcement, which was written in Chinese and posted on Larung Gar's website on Dec. 30, 2019, states that some people have "undertaken different activities in the name of the Institute," adding that Sodargye finds it disheartening that some of them are engaged in "illegal activities." A Chinese disciple of Sodargye residing in the West told ICT's source that while the announcement of the closure is true, the reasons provided were "clearly" written by Sodargye under the direction of Chinese authorities.

The disciple said he received information from inside China stating that Sodargye and the other abbot of Larung Gar, Khenpo Tsultrim Lodro, were separately interrogated by Chinese authorities in November 2019, and that the closure is related to these interrogations. The word "Khenpo" is a Tibetan term that refers to monastery abbots and other senior monks. Both abbots were the primary disciples of Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, the founder of Larung Gar Tibetan Buddhist Academy in eastern Tibet, formally known as the Serthar Larung Five Sciences Buddhist Institute. Jigme Phuntsok passed away in 2004, and since then, the institute has been looked after by a team of abbots, including Sodargye and Tsultrim Lodro. Larung Gar has become one of the largest and most influential centers for the study of Tibetan Buddhism in China, attracting both Tibetan and Chinese students. Over the last five years, Chinese authorities have repeatedly targeted it



*Khenpo Sodargye. Photo by Tashitso.*

for demolitions, forcing monks and nuns to leave and destroying vast swaths of living quarters in an effort to severely reduce the size of the center. Larung Gar also survived previous attempts by Chinese authorities to demolish sections of it in 2001. Both Sodargye and Tsultrim Lodro have been making international travels in recent years giving talks on Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy. The closure of Sodargye's international centers may represent an effort to restrict his religious and moral influence, which has grown in recent years. As recently as 2014, Sodargye was featured on the cover of Chinese magazine *Renwu Zhoukan* (People Weekly). This was likely the first time a Buddhist monk or a Tibetan had been featured on the magazine cover.

Sodargye's statement said he is taking the following actions:

1. I disband the Bodhi Institute of Compassion and Wisdom and all its offices. As a result, regional dharma centers, committees and institutions related to and established in the name of [the] Bodhi Institute will be disbanded. I would like to reiterate that all activities

undertaken by these institutions will be suspended, and websites related to them will also be disbanded.

2. Henceforth, if you come across any kind of announcement made in the name of Bodhi Institute, they are fake. Any type of donation sought in the name of Bodhi Institute has nothing to do with me, and one shouldn't fall prey to it. If in case such act happens, I will take legal action to identify the culprit whosoever is responsible.

3. I will continue to love the nation as well as the religion and be in the service of faithful public. I hope faithful public will remain honest and be law abiding.



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

## CECC urges action on Tibet, says House may vote on Tibet bill next week

Congress and the Trump Administration should urge China to stay out of the Dalai Lama's succession plans, allow unrestricted access to Tibet and recognize the role Chinese policies play in Tibetan self-immolations.

Those are just some of the recommendations in the Tibet section of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China's (CECC's) new annual report, released today.

In a statement at the beginning of the report—which covers the time period of August 2018 to August 2019—CECC Chair Rep. James McGovern (D-Mass.) and Co-Chair Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) say human rights and the rule of law in China “continued to worsen” over the past year.

Speaking at a press conference today to release the report, McGovern talked about China's persecution of Tibetan Buddhists and mentioned that the new Tibetan Policy and Support Act could be taken up by the full House of Representatives next week. The House Foreign Affairs Committee passed it on Dec. 18, 2019, and a Senate version of the legislation has also been introduced by Rubio and Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.).

The report has many important findings, including that the Chinese government cracked down on previously allowed religious practices in Tibet during the reporting year while expanding mass surveillance there and damaging Tibet's environment, which plays a crucial role in the global ecosystem.

Tibet, a historically independent country in the Himalayan region of Asia, was annexed by China in 1959 and remains illegally occupied to this day.

### Dalai Lama's succession

The report says that during the reporting year, the Chinese government continued its efforts to “Sinicize” Tibetan Buddhism, meaning to forcefully bring it

under control of the Chinese Communist Party.

According to the report, these efforts included subjecting monks and nuns to “political education”; banning religious classes; and ordering Tibetans to replace photos of the Dalai Lama with images of Mao Zedong and current Chinese Chairman Xi Jinping. Tibetans were even required to prostrate and make offerings before the portraits of the Chinese dictators.

One of China's most shocking attempts to dominate Tibetan Buddhism came in its repeated insistence that the eventual reincarnation or succession of the Dalai Lama—who has been forced to live in exile from Tibet for more than six decades—must comply with Chinese laws.

“The [Chinese] government's position violates international standards of religious freedom, which guarantee the right of religious communities ‘to train, appoint, elect or designate by succession appropriate leaders,’” the report says, quoting a UN declaration on eliminating religious discrimination and intolerance.

The bipartisan Tibetan Policy and Support Act, which McGovern and Rubio introduced in Congress in the fall of 2019, will make it official US policy that only the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Buddhist community can decide on his succession—and will sanction any Chinese officials who attempt to appoint their own Dalai Lama in the future.

The bill will also update the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002; prevent China from opening a new consulate in the US until a US consulate is allowed in Tibet's capital of Lhasa; address water security and climate change in Tibet; formalize humanitarian assistance to Tibetans; and push China to negotiate with the Dalai Lama and Tibetan leaders without preconditions.

### International Campaign for Tibet

Tell Congress to pass the Tibetan Policy and Support Act.

### Freeing Tibetan political prisoners

A preview of what China might attempt to do once the Dalai Lama, now 84, eventually passes away can be seen in its kidnapping of the Panchen Lama, one of the most important figures in Tibetan Buddhism.

Immediately after the Dalai Lama recognized a six-year-old boy as the reincarnated Panchen Lama in 1995, the child and his parents were abducted. None of them have been seen in public since.

In place of the real Panchen Lama, China appointed its own fake Panchen Lama, who serves as a mouthpiece for the government in Beijing.

Noting that the real Panchen Lama—whose whereabouts and wellbeing are unknown—would have turned 30 last year, the report says the US government should “[c]ontinue to request that the Chinese government invite an independent representative of an international organization to meet with” him.

The US should also urge China to release Tibetans who are “currently detained or imprisoned for the peaceful exercise of their human rights,” the report says.

That would include Tashi Wangchuk, a Tibetan businessman who was sentenced to five years in prison in 2018 after he appeared in a New York Times video talking about the importance of preserving the Tibetan language.

### Freedom and reciprocity

The report notes that China continued to restrict Tibetan language instruction during the reporting year.

China also further repressed Tibetans' freedom of speech and assembly, as well as their freedom of movement. The

report says Chinese officials imposed onerous requirements on Tibetans who sought to travel to India for teachings by the Dalai Lama and allegedly destroyed the passports of Tibetans who returned from the teachings in 2018.

Even Tibetans who tried to travel within Tibet faced security checkpoints, close searches, frisking and other burdens.

At the same time, China continued to deny foreigners access to Tibet. This denial, the report says, helps China “to conceal human rights abuses and environmentally damaging large-scale projects, such as river damming and mining, and to promote the claim that Tibetans benefit from and support the [Communist] Party and its actions.”

In December 2018, Congress unanimously passed—and President Trump signed into law—the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, which denies entry to the US for the Chinese officials responsible for keeping Americans out of Tibet.

In March, the State Department released a report saying China “systematically impeded” travel to Tibet by US diplomats, journalists and ordinary citizens.

### **Criminalizing ordinary behavior**

During the reporting year, China also used an “anti-crime and vice” campaign to criminalize ordinary social activities in Tibet, the report says.

For example, a group of Tibetan villagers were reportedly accused of starting an “evil organization” and sentenced to prison for three to seven years for writing a petition to reclaim village property that had been expropriated by government officials.

Officials also reportedly posted notices asking Tibetans to inform on others involved in “splittism” (meaning efforts to free Tibet from China), “connections with the Dalai clique,” advocacy for “freedom to use one’s language” and “espousing causes like economic freedom, right to livelihood, environmental protection, [and] cultural

freedom,” along with other dubious offenses.

Chinese officials used pervasive surveillance to spy on and intimidate Tibetans, the report says. Their methods included artificial intelligence, a “grid management” system, big data centers and security cameras. They even allegedly secretly installed surveillance apps on Tibetans’ phones.

### **Self-immolations continue**

Given this atmosphere of immense repression, it’s not surprising—but nonetheless tragic—that two Tibetans committed self-immolation during the reporting year, lighting their own bodies on fire in a desperate attempt to bring attention to their people’s suffering.

The two Tibetans who self-immolated were Dorbe, a 23-year-old who died on Nov. 4, 2018 while saying “May the Dalai Lama live long! May we soon behold his golden countenance!”; and Drugkho, a young man who set fire to himself on Dec. 8, 2018.

Since the end of the reporting year, a former monk named Yonten, 24, self-immolated on Nov. 26, 2019, becoming the 156th Tibetan to self-immolate in Tibet and China since 2009.

The report recommends that the US government urge China to “recognize the role of restrictive [Communist] Party policies and government measures, and the increasing securitization of Tibetan autonomous areas of China, in Tibetan self-immolations and protests.”

### **Exacerbating climate change**

Tibet’s environment also suffered under Chinese rule during the reporting year. According to the report, “[s]cientists and Tibetan groups note that many government actions on the Tibetan plateau exacerbate climate change, resulting in glacial melting, permafrost degradation, and desertification of grasslands.”

A big part of the problem was China forcing Tibetan nomads to leave their ancestral grazing lands and live

on settlements, despite the fact that scientists around the world—including in China—have reached a consensus that indigenous stewardship is vital to the health of ecosystems.

Many resettled nomads were forced to pay for their new homes and faced financial hardship because they lost their means of supporting themselves.

As the report notes, Tibet is the source of many of Asia’s major rivers. More than 1 billion people downstream receive water from Tibet, making China’s authoritarian rule there a threat to stability in the region.

### **Quotes**

At the press conference today for the report’s release, commissioners of the CECC addressed China’s oppression in Tibet and shared their support for the Tibetan people.

CECC Chair Rep. James McGovern (D-Mass.):

“The notion that a government can come in and appoint a religious leader and that it would have any credibility at all is ridiculous. It is ridiculous. We find all of this very offensive as people who believe in religious freedom. But here’s the deal: What’s changing now is that China needs to know there’ll be a consequence. It will be more than just a press release saying that we object to this. It will be a consequence, and it will be people who will be sanctioned, and that there will be other consequences as well. We want a good relationship with China, we want a productive relationship with China. We have no quarrel with the Chinese people. It is with Chinese leaders who are trying to suppress individuals’ right to freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom to be able to be who they want to be. So this legislation, my hope is that it will be considered next week, and Marco Rubio has the identical bill in the Senate, and I expect it will pass in the Senate as well.”

CECC Co-Chair Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.):

“Throughout last year, Chinese authorities subjected Tibetans to a continuing campaign of Sinicization to

make Tibetan Buddhism supportive of the Communist Party of China. Religious leaders were forced into political education classes, monks were evicted from their monasteries, and portraits of the Dalai Lama were replaced by those of Mao and Xi Jinping.”

International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) President Matteo Mecacci:

“The Chinese government continues to oppress the Tibetan people and to crush their vibrant culture; it does this through a centralized and authoritarian form of government that clearly

represents a tangible security threat, not only to the Tibetans, the Uyghurs, the people of Hong Kong and the Chinese people themselves, but to the world. Beijing’s plan to totally control Tibetan Buddhism by selecting the successor of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not—unfortunately—a bad joke, but the exemplification of how far it can go to maintain power by crushing people’s values and belief systems. The pillaging of Tibet’s unique environment, resulting from the lack of any meaningful involvement of the Tibetan people in managing their ancestral lands and

natural resources, threatens the entire planet’s ecosystem, and should not be ignored.

The new report from the CECC provides a number of urgent recommendations that the US government should follow to support the just aspirations of the Tibetan people. I thank Rep. James McGovern and Sen. Marco Rubio, as well as the other members of the CECC and their staffs, for creating this unique report, and look forward to working with them to try to put their recommendations into action.”

## Rules of Return

By Namrata Biji Ahuja, The Week

As China moves ahead with its plans to name the next Dalai Lama, there is concern among Tibetan Buddhists and also in India, which is home to tens of thousands of Tibetan refugees, including the 14th Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama is missing from its list of lamas, but the Chinese government says it will select his successor. It is unacceptable because his holiness will live for at least 20 more years. - Lobsang Sangay, president, Central Tibetan Administration

Flanked by a hostile Pakistan and an aggressive China, India has so far been reticent in playing the Dalai Lama reincarnation card. The United States has recently taken up the challenge to target China over the issue. After the Donald Trump administration stepped up pressure, China permitted US ambassador Terry Branstad to visit Tibet last May. It was followed by the visit of Samuel D. Brownback, US ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, to Dharamshala to meet the Dalai Lama.

“The role of picking the Dalai Lama’s successor belongs to the Tibetan Buddhist system, the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan Buddhist leaders,” said Brownback. “It does not belong to anybody else, not any government or any entity.” His comments drew sharp

response from Beijing. The Chinese foreign ministry said the reincarnation of the living Buddhas, including the Dalai Lama, should comply with Chinese laws and regulations.

While the US and China were involved in a spat, New Delhi remained a silent spectator. Although it allowed Brownback to visit Dharamshala,



*High spirits: Devotees outside the venue of the Tibetan Buddhist religious conference | Aayush Goel*

India remained tightlipped about the reincarnation issue. No Indian official has visited the Dalai Lama recently. Although Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Dharamshala on November 7 for a global investors’ meet, he did not visit the Dalai Lama.

New Delhi has been remarkably patient on the Tibetan issue, focusing more on its soft power. Addressing the United Nations General Assembly last September, Modi said India’s gift to the world was Buddha’s wisdom. By

preserving the Buddhist culture and its scriptures from which the reincarnation theory of the Dalai Lama also emanates, India stands to gain as a global spiritual power. It also gives India a strategic advantage over China.

“We must keep in mind that for China, there is no short-term strategy,” said Amitabh Mathur, who was adviser on Tibetan affairs to the Union home ministry till September 2018. “Even its shortest-term strategy looks 30 to 60 years ahead. What we may be preparing for today, China must have prepared for long ago.”

The seeds of an inevitable conflict between New Delhi and Beijing on the issue was sown 60 years ago. Disguised as a soldier, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, fled the Potala Norbulingka palace in Lhasa on March 17, 1959, fearing arrest by an increasingly aggressive Mao Zedong regime. After a fortnight-long trek, the 23-year-old Dalai Lama entered India via Tawang. Prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru granted him political asylum and a Tibetan government-in-exile was established in Dharamshala. The Dalai Lama was the temporal and spiritual head of the Tibetan government till 2011 when he gave up much of his political authority to make way for a democratically elected Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).

Six decades after the Dalai Lama slipped out of its dragnet, China is gearing up to unsettle the status quo. The process started in 2007 when it issued a set of guidelines on the Dalai Lama's reincarnation. Speaking exclusively to THE WEEK, CTA president Lobsang Sangay said it was ridiculous that the Communist Party of China, which taught that religion was poison, had started certifying lamas. "The communist party continues its assault on Tibetan religion, culture and the way of life," said Ngodup Dongchung, representative of the Dalai Lama in New Delhi. "Ideological education and fealty to the party are now mandatory for monks and nuns who only want to engage in spiritual practice."

There are nearly 1,300 lamas who are registered with the Chinese government. They have to attend annual workshops, should be loyal to the communist party, should not disagree with the government and should not have any contact with international organisations or with the Dalai Lama. "The Dalai Lama is missing from this list of lamas, but the Chinese government says it will select his successor. It is unacceptable because his holiness will live for at least 20 more years. Before he passes away, he will give written guidelines to choose his reincarnation. The communist party has no locus standi on the issue," said Sangay.

The 17th Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, is the only high lama recognised by the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama. Karmapas are heads of the Karma Kagyu, one of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Dorje, however, was not present at a conference held last November in Dharamshala to discuss the reincarnation issue.

"It was a very important conference," said Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche, an important lineage holder in the Karma Kagyu school. He said the Karmapa was away on a retreat, which could go on for up to three years. The Karmapa sent a letter through his emissary, supporting the Dharamshala declaration, which said the decision on the reincarnation rested solely with the 14th Dalai Lama. The Karmapa, however, warned of "devious

people both inside and outside Tibet who have been arbitrarily recognising reincarnation of lamas without any regard for the traditional Tibetan system".

The Karmapa had escaped from Tibet and reached India when he was 14. He arrived in Dharamshala on January 5, 2000, and stayed on till May 2017. The Karmapa, however, had a strained relationship with a section of the Indian security establishment which suspects that he may be a Chinese spy. He was watched closely by intelligence officials and had to face stringent security restrictions. He also found it difficult to travel abroad without a regular passport. After a trip to the US in 2017, the Karmapa did not come back. He obtained a passport from the Commonwealth of Dominica, apparently without informing the Indian government. Intelligence officials said if the Karmapa applied for an Indian passport, they might consider his case positively.

Mathur said it was important for India to keep the Karmapa's trust. "The Karmapa can play a major role in calming Tibetan tempers in the post Dalai Lama scenario."

Sangay said abandoning Tibet for India was a big leap of faith for the Karmapa. "He went into exile because all his main teachers were in exile. In Tibetan Buddhism, the teachings are passed on from teachers. To continue as the Karmapa, he needed those teachings which he could pass on to the next generation. From the material point of view, he was better off in Tibet. But as far as freedom was concerned, he was better off here," said Sangay. "I believe that he will eventually return to India. India needs to resolve the Karmapa issue to keep China at bay. If New Delhi plays its spiritual diplomacy cards well, the Dalai Lama's reincarnation issue could be the glue that binds all Tibetan spiritual leaders, including the Karmapa."

Describing the credible ways of recognising the next Dalai Lama, Karmapa said in his letter, "The ultimate measure is the reincarnation reliably recounting his previous life and speaking

about it as well as the predecessor's predictive letter and other instructions. If his holiness' reincarnation is recognised based on his own predictions, it would be accepted by all and would obviate other means like the dough-ball and golden urn methods." Other methods include asking reliable spiritual masters for their divination, seeking predictions of mundane oracles and observing visions that manifest in the sacred lakes of protectors.

The Tibetan Buddhists are clear about the need to ensure that the Dalai Lama's succession will be undisputed and credible, given the past experience of the Chinese Panchen Lama, the second highest figure in Tibetan Buddhism. "The Chinese Panchen Lama is a puppet. Though it was a recognised institution, the Panchen Lama picked by China stays in Beijing and goes to Tibet when Beijing asks him to," said Sangay.

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, besides reincarnation, there could also be emanation, which means the Dalai Lama can choose his successor during his lifetime. And, this could be a matter of worry for China. Notably, two Dalai Lamas were born outside Tibet—the fourth Dalai Lama was born in 1589 in Mongolia and the sixth Dalai Lama was born in 1682 in present day Arunachal Pradesh. It raises hope that the next Dalai Lama will be born in the trans-Himalayan region.

Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, a member of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile, said the Dalai Lama could recognise his own successor by a process called madhey tulku. "Ordinary sentient beings generally cannot manifest an emanation before death, but superior Bodhisattvas, who can manifest themselves in hundreds or thousands of bodies simultaneously, can manifest as an emanation before death," said Tenphel.

Samdhong Rinpoche, the first directly-elected president of the CTA, warned the Tibetans against playing into China's hands. "Talking of reincarnation is not only unnecessary, but is also a reaction to China. For instance, China chose its own Panchen Lama, but it proved to be

useless,” he said. “It is certain that when his holiness passes away, the Chinese administration will choose its own Dalai Lama, but he will never be acceptable to the Tibetans. The 15th Dalai Lama will be recognised in exile.”

The Tibetan people want India to openly support the Dalai Lama and the succession plan laid down by him. “The Dalai Lama is the most important Tibetan that China wants to control,” said Lobsang Wangyal, writer and activist who runs the popular website Tibet Sun. “We are grateful to India because it is our host. But India’s geopolitical strategy has not been strong enough.”

China is flexing its muscle in the Indian subcontinent. Pakistan is its all-weather friend and now Nepal is growing increasingly dependent on China.

Wangyal said Nepal had stopped issuing state permits to Tibetans, curtailing their basic rights, including access to education, health care, jobs and rations. “They cannot commemorate the Tibetan day on March 10, the Dalai Lama’s birthday on July 6 or the Tibetan democracy day on September 2,” he said.

Even more alarming is the fact that Tibetans crossing over to India from Nepal are being sent back to China where they are allegedly imprisoned for years. A Chinese official in New Delhi, however, dismissed the allegations.

Maintaining status quo on the Tibetan issue and using Tibetans as a shield against the Chinese march in the Himalayan region may not work as a long-term strategy. But the Dalai Lama

seems to be thinking ahead. He asked the Chinese leadership to first find the reincarnations of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping if they indeed believed in reincarnation.

The Dalai Lama is quite clear about his succession. “At the time of my death, I will write the will of my rebirth. So when Chinese hardliners express their desire for the 15th Dalai Lama, I want to tell them that they will have to wait for another 30-40 years.” On last Christmas day, he reiterated the message. After arriving at Bodh Gaya for his annual visit, the 84-year-old spiritual leader said the Tibetans were backed by the power of truth. “The Chinese have the power of gun. In the long run, the power of truth is much stronger than the power of gun.”

## Chinese Officials Can’t Help Lying About the Wuhan Virus

By James Palmer, Foreignpolicy.com

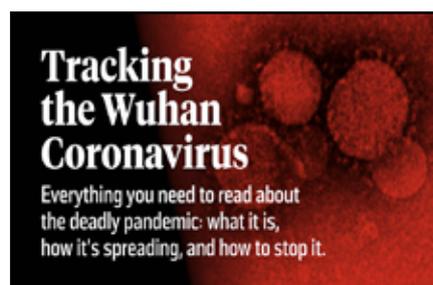
Medical workers hold a strike near Queen Mary Hospital to demand the government shut the city’s border with China to reduce the spread of the coronavirus in Hong Kong on Feb. 3.

As fear of the Wuhan coronavirus seizes China, the outlines of the local government mistakes that gave the disease a critical monthlong head start are becoming apparent. Reporting in both foreign and domestic media paints a picture of a city government in Wuhan more concerned with political meetings than epidemic control—and where attempts by insiders, including eight separate doctors, to speak out were stamped on by police.

The central government is now promising to perform where Wuhan officials failed. Officials in Beijing have pledged greater transparency to both the public and outside groups like the World Health Organization—even introducing a whistleblower hotline within the massively popular WeChat messaging app.

Such measures are about as convincing

as an organized crime boss who launches a “Start Snitching” campaign. The hostility to transparency and fear of speaking out baked into the fabric of Xi Jinping’s China can’t be thrown away for one crisis. Transparency is not a window that can be opened and shut



at the state’s will when it finds it useful. Brave calls for transparency by Chinese media aside, the Chinese government’s habits of opaqueness, concealment, and distrust of the public will impede attempts to control the outbreak.

The central government authorities may truly want transparency—if only so that they themselves know what’s going on. But they don’t want it across the board: only on this one specific issue. And the repression of speech and distortion

of data in China aren’t a matter of a singular central will. It’s mostly carried out by local officials, who have the most to lose if people can complain freely about mistakes or cover-ups. In a public health crisis, that could have fatal consequences. For instance, it’s unclear whether it’s deliberate policy or simply an overwhelmed system, but numerous reports testify to bodies being cremated in Wuhan without the death being recorded as a coronavirus fatality, which has made it highly difficult to tell just how lethal the virus is.

To be sure, the men responsible for covering up the initial outbreak—the online monitors who stifled the doctors’ comments (originally posted to a relatively private group chat); the police who threatened them; and the local government officials who signed off on their harassment or detention—will be punished at the central government’s insistence, if only to appease public anger. But there’s a perverse injustice, given that they were following the expected standards of the party-state.

Under ordinary circumstances, in fact,

their behavior would have, from the party's perspective, been laudable. Hundreds of similar incidents play out every day across China as part of a program of "stability maintenance" that officially costs the country around \$200 billion a year, more than double the figure of a decade ago. (That figure includes some policing activities that would be normal in any country, but it also excludes much of the apparatus of control, such as the domestic United Front programs that look to co-opt non-party groups into serving the party's purposes.)

The kind of repression that occurred in Wuhan didn't even need any special conspiracy behind it to specifically cover up the coronavirus.

Rumormongering—a euphemism for drawing attention to potential sources of social or political scandal—has been a priority of the authorities since 2013, especially online. Most of the time, of course, it's over far smaller matters than an epidemic: a police killing, a polluting factory, a hospital turning away a dying child. The monitoring of messages for destabilizing information intensified in 2017, when the administrators of chat groups began to be held accountable for content posted by any user, allowing the authorities to leverage the power of self-censorship. For Wuhan's police, threatening people for posting information that might cause trouble, true or false, was as routine and automatic an action as a traffic arrest. The local government authorities tipping the national media off about the story showed their bosses they had the situation under control. The public is well aware of what the score is. For years, the government has signaled that the fate of whistleblowers isn't a happy one. This is not a new habit; take Shuping Wang and Gao Yaojie, the heroic doctors who exposed the illicit blood sales and subsequent AIDS crisis in Henan in the 1990s. Both of them faced years of persecution as a result, even after the state admitted they were right; both were forced to take refuge in the United States. Activists like Tan Zuoren, who attempted to document the corruption that led to the collapse of

supposedly reinforced school buildings during the Sichuan earthquake of 2008, were put in prison.

Despite all this, between around 2000 and 2012, the Chinese internet developed its own watchdog culture, particularly over local corruption. Journalists often shared information from scandals, backed by a public keen to haul greedy officials over the coals. Crackdowns were relatively rare, and there were those within the party itself who saw this kind of monitoring as a useful tool to engage the public in the work of maintaining some accountability. All that ended in 2012-2013, as a concerted campaign against some of the most prominent watchdogs, combined with sweeping new online restrictions, signaled the end of any tolerance for outside monitoring. By the end of 2013, Weibo, the most popular social media site for such stories, had seen its traffic drop by 70 percent. In the next few years, that campaign broadened to a mass crackdown on human rights activists, lawyers, and anyone else who dared to monitor officials' business, even as it was joined by a sweeping purge within the party of supposedly corrupt figures, who also happened to be Xi's political foes. Humiliating TV confessions became a normal part of evening broadcasts.

Even now, arrests and threats continue throughout China for spreading so-called rumors about the virus. Some of that is directed against genuine misinformation, but some of it is simply the state's usual crushing of any perceived dissent. Any potential whistleblowers eyeing up that WeChat hotline, for instance, have to be very aware that the app requires them to sign up with their real government ID numbers.

To speak up, citizens need to believe not only that they won't be punished now but that local authorities won't remember them and take vengeance later. Given the record, that's unlikely. Take the village of Wukan, once heralded for resisting corrupt local officials in 2011. By 2016, the villagers involved in the protests had been picked off one by one, and the local government was more repressive than

ever. The state has a long memory and keeps records.

It's true that Chinese reporting has enjoyed a rare spring and that media has been doing brilliant and honest work from inside Wuhan itself and elsewhere. (See this compiled list in Chinese, put together by the reporter Shen Lu.) But such flourishing has happened after disasters in the past, such as the Tianjin explosions of 2015 and the high-speed rail crash in Wenzhou in 2011, and it has always been short-lived.

There's no real new transparency. Instead, the old red lines have been temporarily erased in the wake of disaster, and the many talented and frustrated journalists in China are able to quickly occupy the new space created—until the authorities decide what can and cannot be said and the lines are drawn again. In the case of the coronavirus, the disruption may be such that the freedom lasts longer than usual—but it's still ultimately temporary. Officials, on the other hand, persist unless unlucky enough to be scapegoated; as some sardonically noted this week, the man in charge of the port area of Tianjin that exploded is now a prominent member of the Hubei government.

Actual, lasting openness would need watchdogs outside the party-state itself. It would need a media environment where the censor's pen doesn't hover over every piece of copy filed. It would need protections for whistleblowers and an independent judiciary able to enforce those protections. It would need a willingness to let control slip out of the party's hands and to bear the consequences. None of this is remotely likely in the foreseeable future. That means the Chinese people will be left in darkness about what their institutions are doing—until something else slithers out of the shadows that endangers them all.

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## Health Department Starts Tibetan Medicare System Enrollment and Awareness

Department of Health, Central Tibetan Administration, invites general public to enroll themselves in Tibetan Medicare System (TMS), which starts from **1st January and ends on 31st March 2020.**

### Status of Tibetan Medicare System for year 2019-20

- Total number of enrolled member: **27496**
- Total number of beneficiaries from 1st Apr 2019 to 4th Jan 2020 is: **1837**
- Total amount of reimbursement made Rs: **17346642**
- Tibetan living in 36 Settlements and other areas in India are eligible to be covered under TMS.

Coverage period for this year starts from **1st-April 2020 and ends on 31st-March 2021.**

**For registration:** Contact your Settlement office or local Tibetan Health Centre.

Please visit [www.tibetanhealth.org](http://www.tibetanhealth.org) for detail information.

*Department of Health, Central Tibetan Administration*

