



TIBETAN BULLETIN

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Can Democracy Sustain Future of the Tibetan Movement?

Tibetan exiles in twenty-six different countries went to the polls on 11 April to elect their Sikyong and the forty-five members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. This election comes at a crucial time for Tibet and the Tibetan movement due to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's advancing age, and China's growing international heft. As such, many have gone to the polls with one eye on the future of Tibet and the other on China.

Although there are no immediate concerns with His Holiness the Dalai Lama's health, His Holiness the Dalai Lama is reaching the advanced age of 86 this upcoming July. As such, the inevitable issue of succession to the next Dalai Lama remains in the back of everyone's mind, most of all, China.

Che Dalha, chairman of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), published an article in the State-run People's Daily on 25 March emphasizing sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism and revamping China's efforts to recognize the next Dalai Lama. This article, coming on the heels of China's annual gathering of its two major political bodies, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the National People's Congress (NPC) from 4 - 11 March, signal China's constant attention on the issue of Dalai Lama succession and paints a potentially gloomy picture ahead for Tibetans.

Another article that also focused on the same issue appeared in Bloomberg on 15 April by Sudhir Ranjan Sen. This article discussed how various countries are vying with each other over the next Dalai Lama. An interesting fact that the article mentioned was about India's security officials discussing how New Delhi can influence the choice of the next Dalai Lama. Irrespective of the vested interests of the various nations in the issue, India does have an important role to play over the matter. Following his escape from Chinese forces, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has spent the majority of his lifetime in India under the benevolence and hospitality of the In-

dian government and people. Moreover, India, as the birthplace of Buddhism and the source of Tibetan Buddhism's rich philosophical wealth, has an undeniable spiritual and moral role. From a security perspective as well, India is home to the Himalayan Buddhist Belt stretching from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh where the Dalai Lamas traditionally enjoy deep spiritual influence and share historical and cultural bond. This makes India an important actor in determining the next Dalai Lama, and no matter what steps China take, without India's official endorsement, China's choice is likely to be ignored globally.

Meanwhile Tibetans in exile led by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama have always anticipated significant challenges from China with regard to the succession issue. Although China doesn't have any spiritual interest in the Dalai Lamas, it is obsessed with the issue to fulfill their political goal to rule Tibet with a Chinese-controlled Dalai Lama. This is based on China's fallacious belief that the Tibet issue would eventually dissipate once the current Dalai Lama passes away. With foresight of such Chinese designs, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has already taken proactive steps to overcome these challenges to ensure the continued solidarity and unity of the Tibetan people. Aware of the importance of educating the youth, His Holiness has set up a number of separate Tibetan schools to maintain Tibetan culture and language in exile. He also reestablished most of the major Tibetan monasteries in exile to preserve Tibetan Buddhism from the onslaught of Chinese Communists inside Tibet. However, one of the most enduring political measures were the development of sustainable democratic institutions in exile such as the Central Tibetan Administration and strengthening of Tibetan political leadership. In the last sixty years, these democratic institutions have become the vanguard of the Tibetan movement. According to tibet.net, the recent Tibetan general election saw over 83000 Tibetans exercise their franchise to elect the leadership of these democratic institutions. Increasing

number of Tibetans are also voluntarily standing for elections to serve the Central Tibetan Administration. Irrespective of the diversity of opinions that is a part of any democratic polity, these facts help communicate an important message that the Tibetan movement with its democratic set up will continue to endure and prosper in the long run.

Although it is difficult to predict the future, the coming years could bring great challenges for Tibet and the Tibetan exile community, perhaps unlike anything that Tibetans have ever faced before. However, concerted efforts to internally strengthen Tibetan democracy and practices, and ensuring the continued support of the international community could help in alleviating the situation. From that perspective, the Tibetan people's deep commitment to its democratic institutions, as symbolized by their ardent participation in the Tibetan elections, is a bulwark that will thwart any possible interventions in sustaining the future Tibetan movement.

Reviving Culture and Religion

Following the 7th Tibet Work Forum last year, China has intensified its concerted efforts to homogenize the diverse ethnic and cultural nationalities into a monolithic communist nation. To achieve this, China has enacted a number of draconian laws hidden behind ambiguous terms like ethnic unity and social harmony. Although these laws seem reasonable on surface, it's all directed towards completely annihilating the Tibetan identity.

To combat these designs of the Chinese government, it is important to maintain the Tibetan freedom struggle and preserve the unique Tibetan identity through a robust democratic culture. The promotion and preservation of Tibetan cultural identity is equally important, if not more, than sustaining political strength to outlive CCP's design to completely obliterate the Tibetan nation.

Jamphel Shonu
Editor

Tibetans in Exile Hold Final Elections for President and Tibetan Parliament



A Tibetan exile casting his ballot for Sikyong and members of the 17th Tibetan Parliament at Dharamshala, 11 April 2021. Photo/Tenzin Jigme/CTA

Tibetan exiles worldwide held the final elections for Sikyong (President) of the Central Tibetan Administration and members of the 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile on Sunday, 11 April.

Around 83,000 Tibetan exiles scattered across 26 countries participated in the democratic exercise to elect their political leaders.

The two final contestants for the post of Sikyong were Penpa Tsering and Kelsang Dorjee Aukartsang. One of the two will take over the executive reins of the Central Tibetan Administration from the two-term Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay in late May.

As many as 93 candidates were also in the run for the 45-seat Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile for the three traditional provinces of Tibet, the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and Bon religion, and the Tibetan communities of North America, Europe and Australasia.

The 2021 general election is the third direct election of Tibetan leadership since the complete devolution of political authority by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 2011.

Speaking to reporters after casting his ballot, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay described Tibetan democratic elections as a proud day for Tibetans worldwide. He said: “The Tibetan democracy-in-exile reflects the true aspirations of our broth-

ers and sisters inside Tibet. By this, we are sending a message directly to Beijing that while they do not have democracy nor grant freedom to Tibetans in Tibet, however, under the great leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we, the Tibetans in exile have been given the gift of democracy.”

“A proud day for Tibetans around the world,” Dr Sangay explained.

China Jails Tibetan Nomad for Sharing Tibet-related Content on WeChat



51-year-old Tashi Gyal who faces one-year imprisonment for sharing Tibet-related information on WeChat is seen standing in a court. Photo/wgw2010.blogpost.com

A Tibetan nomad has been sentenced to one year in prison on charges of “inciting separatism” and “endangering national security” by the Golog Prefecture Intermediate Court in Tibet’s traditional Amdo province.

According to a report by a Chinese website Rights Defender, Tashi Gyal was arrested on 30 May 2020 for sharing information related to Tibet including His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Dr. Lobsang Sangay, Sikyong of Central Tibetan Administration on WeChat in 2015.

In May and October of 2014, Tashi Gyal reportedly posted four pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on WeChat and shared them with his friends. Then on 1 January 2015, he had posted and shared pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay. During Tibetan Losar, on 1 March 2015, he posted pictures of the Tibetan national flag and called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and Tibet’s independence on

social media. The post received many likes and comments. In November 2015, he took to WeChat and shared videos linked to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay.

As a result, on 16 May 2020, the local authorities detained and interrogated Tashi Gyal for 15 days, reported Rights Defenders. The Chinese authorities called his actions illegal aimed at “splitting the nation” and “endangering the national security.”

On 12 June, he was officially arrested and held in custody. On 13 October 2020, the Golog Prefecture Intermediate Court sentenced Tashi Gyal to one year in prison until 30 May 2021.

The trial was held behind closed doors, and apparently without the knowledge of his family members or friends, a common practice by the Chinese authorities against Tibetans charged for political acts. Hence, the news of the 51-year-old Tashi Gyal’s sentence got out 10 months after his arrest. At the end of the trial, the Chinese authorities also confiscated his mobile phone.

Tashi Gyal, born on 24 May 1970, is from Machen County, Golog (Ch: Guolou) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Filmmaker and Music Scholar Ngawang Choephel Appointed TIPA Director



Ngawang Choephel at the press conference on 10 April 2021.

Noted filmmaker and music scholar Ngawang Choephel is appointed as the new Director of Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), the premier institution of Tibetan cultural and performing arts based in exile. The announcement was

made by Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay at a press conference held on Saturday, 10 April, at the Lhakpa Tsering Memorial hall of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR).

Dr Lobsang Sangay who is the Chairman of the institute's governing body joined the press conference virtually. This is in accordance to the health department's Covid-19 safety measures as he has just returned to Dharamshala from a nationwide farewell tour. Tsering Choezom (Ms) and Ngawang Choephel (Mr), the incumbent and new Director of the institute respectively, joined the press conference in person.

Sikyong in his felicitation of the new Director Ngawang Choephel described him as an extremely well-qualified appointee who is a graduate of the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts in Dharamshala, with years of music teaching expertise in Tibetan schools and specialization in film studies and international music from the Middlebury College in the United States.

Sikyong Appeals for Immediate Release of Panchen Lama on his 32nd Birthday

Renewing calls for the release of Panchen Lama on his birthday that is marked, once again, in absentia, President of the Central Tibetan Administration Dr. Lobsang Sangay demanded that China immediately free him and allow him to return to his monastery, Tashi Lhunpo in Shigatse, Tibet and assume his vital role as Tibet's second-ranking religious leader.

“On behalf of Tibetans all over the world, I want to wish Panchen Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, a very very happy birthday.

Normally on anyone's birthday, your siblings join you, your friends come together, your neighbours surround you and your parents bless you but sadly for 26 long years, this basic right is denied to Panchen lama. Tibetans all over the world, particularly for six million Ti-

betans inside Tibet, Panchen Lama is a very very important religious figure but they are denied this basic right to be with you, to seek his blessings, and to receive teachings from him. Six million Tibetans would like to be with him, to feel him, and to be blessed by him.

The abduction and disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima is a denial and a violation of basic human rights. I demand and urge the United Nations, human rights rapporteurs, and journalists all over the world to write about him; go to Tibet and ask the Chinese government for his immediate release so that he could enjoy basic human rights like any other human being.

Till then, Tibetans all over the world particularly inside Tibet will be with the 11th Panchen Lama. We will work in solidarity till he is released, till he could practice his spiritual duties, till he could be the leader that he should be.

State Department's 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices' Refuses to Describe Tibet as "Inalienable Part of China"

The US State Department published its annual “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices” report on 30 March. Organized by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, this year's report includes over 50,000 words detailing the US's assessment of the deteriorating human rights in China.

This year's report marks a victory for Tibetans, for the report's Tibet section does not describe Tibet as an “inalienable part of China”—a departure from past reports. This symbolic yet important gesture has been repeatedly campaigned by the Central Tibetan Administration, and this change was welcomed by the Office of Tibet-DC.

Reminiscent of past briefings, by the CTA and others, the report details the ongoing human rights issues in Tibet,

such as torture, arbitrary detentions, corruption of the judiciary and elections, lack of freedom of association/assembly/movement/religion, censorship, forced sterilization, and violence against indigenous peoples. The forced disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima (11th Panchen Lama), Derung Tsering Dhundrup (a Tibetan scholar), and Gen Sonam (a senior manager of the Potala Palace) was highlighted. The Tibet section also mentions the Chinese Communist Party's forced labor program for approximately 500,000 rural Tibetans, which was noted last September.

In the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices's China section, the report affirms the Trump Administration's assertion that the Chinese Communist Party is conducting genocide: “Genocide and crimes against humanity occurred during the year against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. These crimes were continuing and include the arbitrary imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty of more than one million civilians; forced sterilization, coerced abortions, and more restrictive application of China's birth control policies; rape; torture of a large number of those arbitrarily detained; forced labor; and the imposition of draconian restrictions on freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression, and freedom of movement.”

The Biden Administration's report highlights the concerning mass surveillance of Tibetans, Uyghurs, dissidents, and religiously affiliated peoples by China's Ministry of Public Security. The China section details how the Chinese government installed surveillance cameras in monasteries in the Tibetan Autonomous Region and Tibetan areas, which would allow the CCP to cut communication systems during “major security incidents.” The report cites Human Right Watch's findings that the Ministry of Public Security has been partnering with technology companies to create “mass automated voice recognition and monitoring system,” systems that were created to help the Chinese government more easily understand Tibetan and Uyghur languages. Fingerprints and DNA pro-

files and other biometric data were also being stored by the Ministry of Public Security—this practice is implemented for all Uyghurs applying for passports.

The report addresses the racist discriminatory practices that deprive Tibetans, Mongolians, Uyghurs, and other ethnic minority groups of their fair right to language, education, and jobs. The report details how Han Chinese benefit from these racist policies, “Government development programs and job provisions disrupted traditional living patterns of minority groups and in some cases included the forced relocation of persons and the forced settlement of nomads. Han Chinese benefited disproportionately from government programs and economic growth in minority areas. As part of its emphasis on building a ‘harmonious society’ and maintaining social stability, the government downplayed racism and institutional discrimination against minorities and cracked down on peaceful expressions of ethnic culture and religion.” The State Department report mentions how Chinese officials restrict NGOs that provide assistance to Tibetans as well.

Eminent Tibetan Scholar and Writer Go Sherab Gyatso Held in Incommunicado Detention



Go Sherab Gyatso. Image sourced from VOA

Chinese authorities have detained an eminent Tibetan Buddhist scholar and writer Go Sherab Gyatso, also known as Gosher, a monk from Ngaba in Tibet’s traditional Amdo Province, incorporated into China’s Sichuan Province. The reason for his detention is not known at this time.

Officials from the “Tibet Autonomous Region” (TAR) had detained the 45-year-old monk from Chengdu, Sichuan Province on 26 October 2020. The news of Go Sherab Gyatso’s arbitrary detention surfaced after five months, as his near ones waited in hope for his quick release. However, there has been no progress or news about Go Sherab Gyatso’s well-being and whereabouts, raising concerns for many over his condition in detention.

According to some news reports, Go Sherab Gyatso was detained by the security personnel from TAR, although he is a resident of Ngaba Prefecture.

Sherab Gyatso was born on 9 September 1976 in Khashul (Ch: Kaxiu) village in Ngaba. He became a monk at Kirti Monastery at a young age and later continued his studies in Drepung and Sera Monasteries in Tibet’s capital, Lhasa.

According to International Campaign for Tibet, Go Sherab Gyatso has published several books on Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, tradition, and culture. These include commentaries on the autobiography of the Tibetan Buddhist master Tsongkhapa, Sakya Pandita’s book of advice, and Gedun Choephel’s “The Golden Surface.” He has also written critiques about the Tibetan monastic education system, calling for the opening up of the monastic community’s exposure.

Prior to his October 2020 detention, his advocacy work for academic freedom in the monastic education settings resulted in his multiple detention and imprisonment as well as a forced exile from his monastery. In an interview with a Tibet University student, he states that he underwent “reform through labor” sessions from 30 March 1998 to 30 November 2001. Then in 2008, he was arrested and imprisoned in Lhasa for a year around the time of the mass protests across Tibet.

In 2011, a report of his arrest surfaced after a monk of Kirti monastery staged a self-immolation protest in Ngaba.

Budapest Deputy Mayor Protests Chinese Defense Minister’s Visit by Raising Tibetan National Flag

In protest against the visit of China’s Defense Minister, the deputy mayor of Budapest’s district I Ferenc Gárcsés hoisted Tibetan National flags on the district town hall on 24 March.

During the visit of China’s Defense Minister Wei Fenghe, Tibetan National flags and a protest banner calling for justice for people suffering under the Chinese Communist regime, including people of the Uyghur Muslim community, were placed on Budapest’s I. district town hall.

Expressing disappointment over the Hungarian government move in welcoming the member of the Communist regime of China, he said there must be “red lines” for country including the members of the European Union while “befriending” with a communist country. No country can afford to overlook the violations of human rights committed by China. In order to raise awareness and in protest against the Hungarian government “befriending” China, which constantly violate human rights, Tibetan flags and banner were placed on the district town hall located in the vicinity of the Prime Minister Office of Hungary, explained Deputy mayor of Budapest. Deputy mayor Ferenc Gárcsés visited Dharamshala in 2013. Tibetan culture, history and suffering under communist China have made his solidarity and sympathy stronger, he said.

Despite indifferent attitude by Hungarian government over violations of human rights by China and restrictive measures in staging political protest against China, Namgyal, a Tibetan resident of Budapest, commemorated Tibetan National Uprising day, in front of Chinese Embassy, this year. Similarly, Shambala Tibet Center in Budapest marked the Tibetan National Uprising Day by organizing Tibet related book reading in the Center.

China Arrests Two Tibetan Students for Self-designed Football Team Flag and Logo

Chinese authorities in Tsolho (Ch: Hainan) in the traditional Amdo province of Tibet have charged two Tibetan students for “inciting separatism” for displaying a self-made flag and logo during a football match and sharing pictures on social media.

Jampa Tsering and Dugkar Tsering were accused of publicly displaying the “illegal flag and logo” of the football team at the 6th “Holy Lake Cup” football match in Chabcha (Ch: Gonghe) County, in the so-called Tsolho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, in Qinghai province. The two were also charged for sharing “illegal pictures” of the flag and logo on social media platform QQ, which the court referred to as an act of “subverting national unity”. Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy reported that “photos and videos from the event were shared on their WeChat Moments that were seen by many local Tibetan netizens”, which the authorities maintained created “a bad political impact”.

According to the source of the news, a Chinese rights group, on 3 August 2020, the Hainan Prefecture Intermediate Court sentenced Jampa Tsering to one year and six months in prison, suspended for two years under probation, and one-year deprivation of political rights, while Dugkar Tsering was exempted from criminal punishment as it was his first offence.

The details on the exact design of the flag and logo are not known but it is suspected that they could be linked to the Tibetan national flag banned in Tibet. Tibetans in the past have been criminalized and sentenced in connection to the Tibetan national flag. While China has made possessing, let alone hoisting, the Tibetan national flag illegal in Tibet, as part of the “Chinese flag flying campaign”, the Chinese authorities have regulated laws mandating every Tibetans to fly the Chinese flag on their house. Any

Tibetan opposed to flying the Chinese flag are considered as “splittist” and “threatening national unity” and are met with unlawful sentences.

Sikyong Releases Human Rights Report of Seven Neighbouring Countries of India



Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay along with legal and human rights experts at the Centre for Democracy, Pluralism and Human Rights report launch. Photo/Tenzin Wangchuk/CTA

Dr Lobsang Sangay, Sikyong of the Central Tibetan Administration, released a human rights report published by the New Delhi-based Centre for Democracy, Pluralism and Human Rights at the Constitution Club of India in Delhi on Friday, 2 April.

The Centre for Democracy, Pluralism and Human Rights consists of a robust team consisting of university academics, legal experts, community volunteers involved in promoting and advocating for human rights, basic freedom, equality, justice and dignity to all irrespective of gender, religion, class or caste.

Experts from the field of legal and human rights led by Chief Guest, Dr Lobsang Sangay, President of the Central Tibetan Administration, Guests of Honour, Justice K.G. Balakrishnan Former Chief Justice of India Former Chairperson, NHRC of India, Prof. Paramjit Singh Jaswal VC, SRM University, Sonapat Former VC, RG National University of Law, Punjab, Dr Perna Malhotra President, CDPHR, Dr Ravindra Gupta Principal, PGDAV College, Delhi University, Adv. Sandeep Mahapatra Trustee, CDPHR were present at the launch.

Speaking as the chief guest of the ceremony, Dr Sangay noted how China’s presence in most of the neighbour-

ing countries from Tibet, to Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka comes as no surprise, adding “President Xi Jinping has declared socialism with Chinese characteristics as the vision for China and the whole world and China’s dream is another of his vision based on which they want to ideologically dominate the world, specifically on human rights.”

“If you look at the 15 UN agencies, 5 are headed by Chinese officials because China happens to be the second-largest donor to the UN after America by which they can appoint their personnel. China also happens to be the largest borrower of the World Bank, at least 2 years ago. They get a loan at a low-interest rate from the World Bank, more than a billion or two and they donate 100 million dollars to the UN and they can appoint their personnel,” he said explaining how China manoeuvres its UN membership status to redefine human rights and restructure the UN body.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Receives Second Dose of Vaccination

Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama has received the second dose of Covid-19 vaccination at his residence in McLeod Ganj on Monday, 26 April. The vaccine was administered by a medical team of Tibetan Delek hospital led by Dr Tseten Dorjee, personal physician to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

According to Tseten Samdup Chhoekyapa, Secretary at the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama (OHHDL), the entire staff and security detail of His Holiness, including those living in the residence, also got vaccinated.

His Holiness had taken the first dose of the vaccination on 6 March at the local government hospital in Dharamshala in a bid to bolster public confidence in the vaccine. Taking the jab, His Holiness encouraged everyone to get the vaccine, describing it as “something helpful” for the greater good of humanity.

For detailed news visit:

www.tibet.net

16th Tibetan Parliament Approves CTA Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22

The 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile held its 10th session from 15 to 27 March.

The main agendas for the session included the discussion and approval of the Central Tibetan Administration's annual budget followed by Kashag's clarification and discussion, reviewing of the annual audit report, and discussions and deliberations on the activities of the CTA departments.

The 12-day session approved a budget of 2,698.13 million rupees for the fiscal year 2021-22, of which political campaigning received maximum allocation of 637.78 million rupees, followed by education with 602.32 million rupees.

Similarly, 590.23 million rupees was approved for administrative expenses, 506.98 million rupees for welfare services, 235.41 million rupees for health care services, 62.21 million for legislature purposes and 60.57 million rupees approved for the preservation and promotion of religion and culture.

The 10th session also saw the replacement of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission's Chief Justice Commissioner and the two other chief justices following a floor test.

The Parliament decided to hold an additional session in May before adjourning on 27 March.

Secretary Karma Singey Assumes Office as Representative of OOT Canberra



Incoming Representative Karma Singey & outgoing Representative Lhakpa Tshoko with TIO board members.

Representative Karma Singey for Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia, formally took charge from the outgoing Representative Lhakpa Tshoko in a ceremony on 14 April.

Kasur Chope Tsering bore witness to the handing-taking over of the Representatives in person. Similarly, Secretary Karma Choeying of the Department of Information and International Relations was witness to the handing taking over ceremony virtually.

The brief ceremony was attended by other Board members of the Tibet Information office as well.

Representatives and members of various Tibetan community leaders greeted the outgoing and the new Representative by offering them traditional scarves.

Representative Karma Singey was the former Secretary of the Department of Education while outgoing Representative Lhakpa Tshoko has been appointed the new Secretary of the Department of Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration.

Bring China to Account to End Repressive Policies in Tibet: UN

At the 46th session of the UN Human Rights Council, Kalden Tsomo, UN Advocacy Officer at the Tibet Bureau Geneva, expressed concerns over deteriorating human rights situations in Tibet, in particular, "a double lockdown" repressive situation since the outbreak of Wuhan originated COVID-19. She called upon the UN Human Rights Council to urge China to cease all its repressive policies against the Tibetan people. Furthermore, she urged China to give unfettered access to UN experts to assess the situation of people suppressed by the government of China.

While giving an overview of the "lockdown" situation of Tibetan people under China in the past sixty years, she said photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama are banned, Tibetan human rights defenders are criminalized and environmentalists are politicized. Furthermore,

the Tibetan language has been replaced by Mandarin and the self-reliant nomadic way of life is destroyed in the name of poverty alleviation. For these reasons, since 2009, over 155 Tibetans in Tibet have resorted to self-immolation protests, calling for freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama.

OOT Canberra Releases Book to Honour Australian Government and People



Representative Mr Lhakpa Tshoko presenting the book to Senator Kimberley Kitching from the Australian Labour Party.

The Office of Tibet Australia, released a book titled 'Growing the Tibetan Identity in Australia – Thank You Australia' to acknowledge and express gratitude to the government and people of Australia for their generous help towards Tibetan people.

The book covers all the major events related to Tibet in Australia and New Zealand that has happened in the past 60 years, starting from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visits to Australia and the formation of the Australian All-party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, to Panchen Rinpoche's historic visit to Australia in 1986.

The book was published as part of Thank You Australia campaign launched by the Tibet Information Office under the direction of the Central Tibetan Administration in 2018. It was edited by Dr Anna Alomes and Jigmey Passang.

The book was presented to various Australian Members of Parliament along with a copy of the US Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TPSA) 2020. Representative Lhakpa Tshoko and Executive Secretary Lhawang Gyalpo are accompanied by Jigmey Passang, one of the editors of the book.

Statement of the President of the Central Tibetan Administration on the 62nd Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day



Sikyong addressing the 62nd anniversary of Tibetan Uprising Day.

Sixty-two years ago, on this day, thousands of Tibetans in Lhasa rose in unison to protest against the rule of communist China. The Central Tibetan Administration remembers and honors the courage and spirit of the martyrs. We remember too, Tibetans in Tibet who remain in the clutches of tyranny. Our prayers and thoughts are with them and we continue to stand in solidarity with them.

On 10th March 1959, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was invited to a theatrical performance at the Chinese army headquarters in Lhasa. A day before the event, His Holiness was asked to attend the event unaccompanied by his guards. When this information reached the people, thousands of Tibetans formed a human chain around the Norbulingka palace to protect His Holiness. Seven days later, shells of the two mortars fired from a nearby Chinese army camp fell outside the palace's northern gate, and His Holiness was forced to leave that very night. In the early hours of the 20th March, mortars and gun fire rained down on the Tibetan people and in the following days thousands were massacred. These acts further confirmed that China, who had positioned itself as a "liberator" since invading Tibet in 1949 was, in fact, the colonizing oppressor.

Over a million Tibetans have lost their

lives in the past six decades under Chinese rule. Today, we have come together to collectively mourn this loss. But we are also here to mark the undaunted resilience of Tibetans in Tibet. Even under the threat of losing their lives, they continue to protest by protecting and preserving our language, our religion, our land, and our identity.

On 19th January this year, 19-year old Tenzin Nyima, a monk from Dza Wampo monastery in Karze prefecture died of injuries sustained in prison. He had been brutally tortured. What was his crime? He had participated in a peaceful protest. We cannot help but think about the fate of other young monks and laypeople who were at the same protest in November 2019 and who were also detained and imprisoned.

Barely a month after the death of Tenzin Nyima, another Tibetan political prisoner, Kunchok Jinpa, a 51-year-old tour guide from Chagtse township in Driru county, died of injuries inflicted while in prison. He had been serving a 21-years sentence in prison since 2013 for his alleged role in sharing the news of local environmental and other protests in his region to foreign news outlets. The tragic stories of Tenzin Nyima and Kunchok Jinpa help illustrate the gruesome reality of Tibet.

In its annual report last year, the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China (US CECC), reported worsening human rights and religious freedom in China. It expressed concern over the Chinese government's sinicizing of Tibetan identity and over the widespread arbitrary arrests of Tibetans. In fact, China's State Administration of Religious Affairs last month produced an order titled "The Administrative Measures for Religious Personnel," which aims to enforce new strictures on religious gathering, teachings, and religious activities. The new order set to be enforced from May 2021 also aims to eradicate perceived 'foreign influence.'

One crucial example of the Chinese government's blatant disregard and intrusion on the Tibetan people's religious freedom is found in the story of Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama. This May will mark the 26th year since the abduction and forced disappearance of Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, his family and Chadrel Rinpoche, the former abbot of the Tashi Lhunpo monastery.

For years, the UN Committee on the Rights of Child and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, international organizations, parliaments and governments, and Tibet supporters worldwide have passed resolutions and reports seeking information and the release of the 11th Panchen Lama. A month-long global advocacy campaign was launched by the Central Tibetan Administration through the Offices of Tibet in 2020. We remain steadfast in our advocacy for the release of the 11th Panchen Lama.

Despite these joint concerted efforts, China continues to parrot lies justifying the abduction of a six-year-old and his enforced disappearance. If there is any truth to the Chinese government's denials of abduction and harm to the Panchen Lama, it must be able to provide evidence through recent authenticable photo and video of the 11th Panchen Lama along with his family and Chadrel Rinpoche.

Censorship and surveillance in Tibet have reached unprecedented levels further escalating the violation of the Tibetan people's fundamental rights. On 24th December 2020, authorities in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) announced criminal prosecutions against individuals who use online communication tools to "split the country" and "undermine national unity", which will further aid the government in its persecution.

It is not surprising that China has been listed as the worst internet abuser in the world in Freedom House's 2020 report on Internet freedom. Similarly, China is ranked at the near bottom at 177th in the 2020 World Press Freedom Index, compiled by Reporters Without Borders (RSF). Every year the Index evaluates the situation for journalists working in 180 countries and territories.

Last December, a 30-year-old Tibetan nomad Lhundup Dorjee from Machin Golog Prefecture was sentenced to one-year imprisonment for posting a video of His Holiness' teaching on Weibo, a micro blogging site.

Heavily fortified in a digital cage, it is near impossible to get information out of Tibet. This past January, we received news of the self-immolation protest by 26-year-old Shurmo from Driru Shagchukha village, five years after the event. This sheds light on the extent of information control and surveillance being carried out in Tibet.

Shurmo is one of 155 Tibetans who have self-immolated since 2009. 133 Tibetans have died following their protests. The stranglehold of Chinese rule in Tibet has driven Tibetans inside Tibet to resort to extreme measures to voice their resentments against the policies and practices that threaten Tibetan identity, religion, and culture. Even as they were engulfed in flames, they called for the freedom for the Tibetan people and the rightful return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. The reality in Tibet is reflected in the Freedom House's annual report of 2021, which lists Tibet as the least free region in the world alongside Syria.

Today, China's tentacles have reached beyond Tibet by using its growing economic clout to jeopardize global democracy. According to Freedom House, China conducts the most sophisticated, global, and comprehensive campaign of transnational repression in the world." It highlights the CCP's efforts to control and pressure Chinese citizens, political dissidents and minority communities such as Tibetans, Uighurs and Hong Kong beyond its borders. The democracies around the globe must come together to thwart such assaults on global democracy.

On 27th December 2020, then President of the United States signed into law the Tibetan Policy and Support Act 2020 (TPSA). The TPSA significantly updates US policy and support for Tibet. It firmly asserts that the reincarnation of the Dalai

Lama and other Tibetan Buddhist leaders are religious matters and all decisions pertaining to reincarnations rest solely on the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan people and the Tibetan Buddhist community. It further warns of sanctions against any Chinese authorities who interfere in this matter. The bill formally acknowledges the Central Tibetan Administration and recognizes the significance of the Tibet's environment and its plateaus.

We thank the United States government, Congress and the Senate, and especially the bill's sponsors and co-sponsors. We also thank all the organizations and individuals who supported in the swift passage of the bill.

We are grateful to the US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken for assuring a speedy appointment of the US Special Coordinator for Tibet Issues. We also urge the Biden Administration for swift appointment of the US Special Coordinator and also for the further implementations of key legislations such as the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act 2018 and TPSA 2020.

The US CECC has recommended the US Congress and the US Administration to urge the Chinese government to "cease treating the Dalai Lama as a security threat" and resume dialogue with the envoys of His Holiness without any preconditions. My administration is committed to the Middle Way Approach in seeking genuine autonomy for all of Tibet.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Expresses Condolences Over Taiwan Train Crash

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has written to Ms. Tsai Ing-wen, President of Taiwan, to express his deep sadness on seeing reports of the tragic train crash on 2 April near Hualien.

"I would like to offer my condolences to Your Excellency," he wrote "and to those families who have lost loved ones as well as others affected by this most unfortunate accident."

"The Taiwanese people have long been close to my heart. When incidents like this occur, it is as if a calamity has befallen us all."

We stand united with our brothers and sisters in Tibet, especially with the political prisoners who remain resolute despite the inhumane treatment and torture they suffer in Chinese prisons. We welcome the recent news of the release of Tibetan language advocate Tashi Wangchuk after a five-year sentence. We call on the Chinese government to release all the political prisoners of conscience, including the 11th Panchen Lama.

As we move to the final round of elections for the Sikyong and the 17th Parliament, we urge responsible participation, especially on social media. We enjoy the benefits of the democracy bestowed upon us by our great leader, and we must exercise this right responsibly. We must remember to honor the hopes and aspirations of our people in Tibet. We can do so by strengthening our democracy in exile and our cause for freedom and justice.

We bow in obeisance to His Holiness whose tireless efforts have led to global support for the Tibet cause and the establishment of a resilient Tibetan administration and community in exile.

My Administration has worked towards furthering our cause and carrying the voices of Tibetans in Tibet to the world. At the same time, we have directed our efforts to further the welfare of the Tibetan diaspora. It has been an honor, and we thank all of you for your support.

Our continued struggle for freedom would not be possible without the support of our friends from around the globe. The Kashag, on behalf of the Tibetans in and outside Tibet, especially thanks the government of India and its people for their continued generosity and support. We thank leaders, governments, parliaments, organizations and individuals who stand for justice, equality and freedom and who continue to support the just cause of Tibet.

Lastly, we pray for the long and healthy life of His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama. We pray for the earliest arrival of the day when the ray of peace and freedom will shine upon the Land of Snows.

Bhod Gyalo!

MARCH - APRIL 2021

Statement of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on the Commemoration of the 62nd Anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day



*Speaker Pema Jungney delivers 10th March statement of Tibetan Parliament in Exile, 10 March 2021.
Photo | Tenzin Jigme | CTA*

Today, the 10th of March 2021, marks the completion of 62 years since the Tibetan people revolted against the brutal imposition of occupation power by the communist Chinese enemy. It was in order to be able to regain our freedom that the Tibetan people staged a mass uprising on that day. Therefore this is a momentous day worthy of being commemorated with the solemnity the occasion deserves. What we all need to remember and, at the same time, bear in mind, is our common knowledge that for thousands of years Tibet as a nation was a self-governing, independent entity from whatever perspective anyone may look at it. This was so in terms of the outer vessel of its geographical configurations that includes its rivers, mountains, rocks, snow mountains that encircle it and so forth. This was also true in terms of its inner contents mainly of ethnic Tibetan people with Tibetans' own language, script, costumes, traditions, religion, and so forth. This is also obvious from the point of view of the fact that for over a thousand years Tibet as a country was ruled by a succession of kings. It is also obvious from the history of the succession of the reincarnations of His Holiness the Dalai Lamas who have continued to rule Tibet later on. Apart from

that, during the rule of His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama, Tibet signed a series of treaties with several countries of the world as an equal party. What these and other evidences show is that the long history of Tibet's status as an independent country under customary and other aspects of international law can never be erased by anyone. Nor can anyone cover up the geographical reality of Tibet's historical status as an independent country. Even so, ever since they took political control of the entire territory of China, the communist Chinese entertained utterly shameless and viciously cruel plans to take territories belonging to other peoples and put them under their rule. Through the vicissitudes of its history, Tibet had a "patron and priest" relationship of diverse kinds and range of closeness with successive emperors of China. Making absolutely untrue claims about the nature of that relationship, the communist Chinese government took to keep asserting that Tibet was historically a part of China. And it has doctored a totally false historical discourse about it. It was on this basis that from the year 1949 onwards, following its proclamation of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the communist Chinese government launched a succession of territo-

rial aggressions against Tibet. Finally, in the Tibetan Iron-Tiger Year in 1950, it launched a full-scale invasion of Tibet from Chamdo in the east. And in the Tibetan Iron-Rabbit Year in 1951, the communist Chinese leaders compelled a Tibetan government delegation, whose members they had kept under a hostage-like situation, to sign a "17-Point Agreement". This was a document drawn up entirely by them and contained only what the Chinese side wanted to include in it.

Following the signing of this so-called agreement, the communist Chinese leaders sought to charm the Tibetan people by claiming in their statements that Tibetans and Chinese were members of one big family, and that the Chinese people were there only to render service to the Tibetan people. They sought to reinforce this charm offensive by being limitless in their spending of money on a number of Tibetan people. By such acts of apparent generosity and numerous other means, the communist Chinese leaders set out to win over the Tibetan people. Eventually, however, they unmasked themselves; they bared the ferocity of the dark storm of their true face of violent hatred against the Tibetan people, untampered by any pretension of friendliness. The religiously devoted monks and nuns were their principal targets of hatred. The Buddha and every individual who engage in any religious

practice were made targets of criticism and debasement. Religious places and people belonging to religious orders were subjected to destruction and plunder. Both religious and lay people who dared to speak their mind on the Chinese invasion were killed or otherwise imprisoned. The general mass of the hapless Tibetan public was put to hard labour, as if they were beasts of burden, in the name of various campaign programs. By such and numerous other means, the communist government of China subjected the Tibetan people to multitudes of inhuman and unimaginable atrocities. And this remained a continuing state of repression in Tibet. In fact, this remains the situation there even today. To sum up, throughout the Chinese occupation rule, the Tibetan people remained without even a moment of respite. On the contrary, the Tibetan people at all levels of society were forced to remain in a perpetual state of anxiety and insufferable anguish. Such was the situation in which the government of China took to showing open and outright disdain for Tibetan traditions and habits in general and, in particular, on their religious systems and practices. Besides, it continued to plot evil designs that targeted nothing less than the personal safety of His Holiness the Dalai Lama while also scheming numerous other stratagems that were utterly reprehensible in whatever way one looked at it. The Tibetan people were long aware of and resented these

developments. And their pent up feeling of anguish from the accumulated chronic affliction from these developments burst forth on the 10th March, 1959. On that day, Tibetans from all strata of society in capital Lhasa, being of one thought and feeling, rose in an unprecedented, spontaneous act of peaceful protest demonstration against the communist Chinese. It was a historic event whose effect touched the very essence of its purpose and opened a new chapter in the history of our Snowland of Tibet. It is therefore most important that this event in the history of our country be remembered for the sacrifices made by the patriotic Tibetan men and women of outstanding bravery for the sake of Tibetans' religious heritage and temporal governance.

From that time onwards, the occupying Chinese government launched a series of campaigns or movements which included those called "Quelling the Disturbance", "Democratic Reform", "Class Struggle", "People's Commune System", "Cultural Revolution", rule by "Martial Law" and so forth. More than one million Tibetan people were killed or caused to die unnaturally under the vagaries of these campaigns and movements. Many thousands of religious centres were destroyed completely. Through such and other campaigns, China subjected the outer vessel of Tibet and its inner contents of human and

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Expresses Condolences on the Passing Away of the Duke of Edinburgh

Following the announcement of the death of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has written to express his condolences to both Queen Elizabeth and Prince Charles.

To the Queen he wrote: "I am sorry to learn the sad news that your husband, H.R.H. Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh has passed away. I will pray for him and offer my condolences to Your Royal Highness and your family at this sad time.

"As we all remember him, we can rejoice that he lived a meaningful life."

In his letter to Prince Charles he declared: "I have written to your mother, Her Majesty the Queen, offering my condolences at this sad time. As someone who counts you as a dear, respected friend, I would also like to offer my condolences to Your Royal Highness and your family."

He repeated his appreciation that the Duke lived a full and meaningful life.

natural resources to horrifying degrees of smashing, looting and destruction. But more than that, it has remained unrelenting in devising ways and means for its vicious plans to annihilate the very identity of Tibet and its ethnic people by targeting the Tibetan religious heritage, culture, language and so forth. The communist Chinese government employs brutal violence to deprive the Tibetan people of even the most fundamental of their human rights and freedoms. The life of the Tibetan people under such a policy of relentless atrocity has resembled that of enduring hell on earth, and it is a situation which continues to this day. It is a situation of persecution and torture with no end in sight. This sinister move to Sinicize Tibet and its people has today reached such critical juncture as to warrant a most urgent intervention.

The policy of violent repression followed by the communist Chinese government in Tibet has long been impossible for the Tibetan people to live with. In order to make this explicit in a new phase of protests, Tibetans began to carry out self-immolations. Since the year 2009, a total of 155 patriotic Tibetan men and women have displayed great valour in sacrificing their all, including their precious lives, by carrying out protest self-immolations. Even so, many Tibetans are still being killed under China's policy of violent repression. For example, take the case of Tenzin Nyima, also known as Tamey, a monk of Dza Wonpo Monastery in Sershul County of Kardze Prefecture, who was arrested on the 19th of November in 2019. He died on the 19th of January in 2021 as a result of torture and merciless beating in prison. The same thing happened to a man named Konchok Jinpa, who was arrested on the 8th of November in 2013 from Village No. 5 of Chagtse Township of Driru County in Nagchu Prefecture. He died on the 6th of February in 2021, also a victim of torture and merciless beating in prison. Likewise, a 36-year-old woman named Lhamo-la from Driru County in Nagchu Prefecture was also subjected to indiscriminate beating during interrogations after she was arrested with false accusations. As a result, she died in August 2020.

On the 17th of September in 2015, a man named Shurmo who belonged to Shagkchukha Village in Driru County of Nagchu Prefecture carried out a protest self-immolation. Chinese police at once arrested and rushed him to the local hospital. However, he passed away the same day. And the sad information about all these tragic developments reached the outside world only towards the end of January 2021. What this reveals with unmistakable clarity is that the government of China applies such tight control on the movement and activities of the Tibetan people under its brutal policy of violent repression in Tibet that information about what is going on there rarely reach the outside world.

It is a fact all too well known to everyone that it is the desire of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the resolute position of the Central Tibetan Administration that we should strongly adhere to the Middle Way Policy and strive to revive the Sino-Tibetan dialogue. Unfortunately, while we have continued to try to reach out, the government of China has not reciprocated in a proper manner to our gestures thus far. On the contrary, it has continued to maintain its policy of inflicting an astonishing level of religious destruction, violent repression, all manners of obstructions and so forth in Tibet. Not only that, it has trampled on the Tibetan people's freedom of speech, continued to indiscriminately arrest and put them on trial, subjected them to ethnic discrimination, put a large number of them into military-style vocational trainings and re-education through labour programmes. It has also carried out numerous other forms of repression and persecution of the Tibetan people in a continuing policy of denying them their human rights or otherwise trampling on them. We therefore appeal to the duty-bound United Nations Organization and its top human rights body, the Human Rights Council, to take interest and show a much-needed concern for protecting the basic human rights of the Tibetan people. We urge them to confront or deal with the government of China in whatever way it is appropriate and necessary for this purpose. We urge that the large number of innocent Tibetan people who have been

put in jail be release as soon as possible without any precondition. We urge that the ongoing evil routine of carrying out torture, persecution and other forms of ill-treatment in the prisons in Tibet be stopped. Tibetan language activist Tashi Wangchuk-la, who was persecuted and jailed for five years, was released on the 28th of January this year after completing his sentence. However, even after he was released, it remains difficult to know what his health situation is and whether he is free to move about and act as he likes. Hence we wish to call on the government of China to allow Tashi Wangchuk-la to fully enjoy his basic human rights without any precondition. During the period he was previously under detention before trial, Tashi Wangchuk-la was subjected to beating and torture. We therefore urge that those who were responsible as leaders in those incidents be investigated without being left untouched with impunity. Likewise, we intend to strongly press the government of China through the good office of the United Nations Organization to seek information with regard to the true current situation of Tibetan political prisoners and former Tibetan political prisoners, notably including the situation of the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima.

“The foundation of the Buddha’s teachings lies in compassion, and the reason for practicing the teachings is to wipe out the persistence of ego, the number-one enemy of compassion.”

**- His Holiness the 14th
Dalai Lama**

Today is a day when we especially remember with outpouring of emotions our compatriots, the heroic men and women of Tibet, who sacrificed their all, including their precious lives, for the Tibetan religious, political, and ethnic causes. We offer our esteem and respect to them for their sense of determination and feats of accomplishment. Even to this day, there are so many Tibetan people who continue to be subjected to all manners of hardship from torture and ill-treatment inflicted under the communist Chinese government's policy of violent repression of the Tibetan people. To all of them we express our feeling of anguish as well as solidarity and empathy. And we offer solemn prayers to the almighty ocean of victorious ones of the Three Precious Jewels that Tibetans living in Tibet may see their tribulations come to an end in all speediness and realize a state of bliss in which they can amuse themselves in joyousness.

After His Holiness the Dalai Lama's escape from our homeland occupied by China, followed by some eighty thousand Tibetan subjects, He newly set up in India a Tibetan administration in exile. He also established settlements, schools, religious centres and so forth for the Tibetan people living in exile. His success in these efforts carried out with accomplished means have won Him deep admiration from all concerned persons and entities. We owe enormous debts of gratitude especially to His Holiness the Dalai Lama as well as to our elders of the different time periods in exile for our success in reaching the current stage where the voice of the Tibetan people's struggle for their just cause reverberates all across the wide world. They have worked with great diligence and made enormous personal sacrifices with immense sense of determination to make the realization of this success possible.

While continuing to carry out his traditional and routine works of enormous magnitude, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has made use of the avenue of internet to interact with prominent figures as well as large numbers of his devotees in numerous countries of the world. He has given them religious teachings and held discussions and other forms of meetings

with them, as well as delivered to them edifying talks through online meetings. Hundreds of thousands of people across the world have benefited, and continue to benefit, from these online interactions with Him. And thanks to the solidly unwavering courage and determination of the Tibetan people in Tibet as well as to the efforts of the Central Tibetan Administration and the Tibetan people living in exile, those coming forward to extend support for our just cause keeps increasing by leaps and bounds year after year. Including the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 and Tibet Policy and Support Act of 2020 passed in the United States of America, in many countries of the world, parliaments have seen discussions held, resolutions and motions passed, and feelings expressed on the issue of Tibet in greater numbers than ever before. And it remains our abiding appeal and hope that such legislations and discussions be seen implemented into action so as to exert such pressure on the government of China as to compel it to take steps to resolve the issue of Tibet.

Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic from the central Chinese city of Wuhan, the year 2020 became one of bleakness and misfortune to the entire world. The losses the pandemic inflicted on people in each country across the world in terms of their health, economic undertakings, social construction projects and so forth have been truly enormous. Tibetans in Tibet as well as Tibetans in living in exile have also suffered hardships similarly. In the case of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile too, many official works for which budgetary allocations had been sanctioned could not be carried out. We pray that the spread of this Covid-19 pandemic may subside and come to an end at the soonest possible moment; that the sun of happiness may finally emerge out of the clouds of this pandemic to shower joy and happiness over the entire world.

The preliminary poll for the Sikyong and Parliament-in-Exile elections for the year 2021 have been concluded in an atmosphere of harmony and in a dignified manner and the Tibetan Parliament in Exile wishes to express its cheers and compliments for the success. At the

same time, we wish to appeal everyone to continue taking responsibility to ensure a successful conduct of the schedules of the process for the upcoming final poll for both elections with successful conclusions.

During the period of 62 years thus far the Tibetan people have remained in exile, the people and government of India have extended such fraternal generosity of support and help as to make us feel like living in a second homeland. We owe great debts of gratitude and offer our heartfelt thanks for extending financial and other forms of support and help in the struggle for the just cause of Tibet, the education of the Tibetan people living in exile, facilitating Tibetan people's good health and numerous other purposes to the Indian government, individuals and other entities from across the world.

In conclusion, we pray that His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the protector and ultimate source of comfort for all sentient beings across the world in general, but especially to the Tibetan people in Tibet and in exile, may live for a hundred aeons, that all his wishes may be seen fulfilled with spontaneity, and the just cause of Tibet attained with utmost certainty.

The Tibetan Parliament in Exile

10 March 2021

“People were created to be loved. Things were created to be used. The reason why the world is in chaos is because things are being loved and people are being used.”

**- His Holiness the 14th
Dalai Lama**

Tibet was Historically Never a Part of China: Webinar on Tibet Brief 2020



Former President of Botswana, HE Seretse Khama Ian Khama delivers the opening address.

Contrary to the claims of the PRC government, Tibet was historically never a part of China. China does not possess sovereignty over Tibet and its occupation of Tibet is in breach of international law. World governments, therefore, have the obligation to help end the illegal occupation of Tibet. Such was the overarching conclusions of the webinar organised by the Office of Tibet, South Africa.

Premised on Dr Michael Van Walt's newly launched 'Tibet Brief 2020', the webinar rebuts China's so-called historical claims over Tibet, concocted on a self-serving historically fabricated narrative.

"It is all known that before the invasion, Tibet has always been an independent nation with its own territory, distinct culture, and a fully functional government system," Former President of Botswana, HE Seretse Khama Ian Khama said. "One way or the other, China needs to be pushed out."

"This is despicable in today's age," HE said, as he criticized China's assault on Tibetan people and exploitation of Tibet's environment and resources for "economic and industrial expansion" and in the process, polluting the erstwhile pristine environment and displacing thousands and leaving them impoverished.

"It is high time that people of Tibet are

given what is rightfully theirs." HE further described China's undemocratic behaviours on the international platform as a "spillover" of how they deal with their own people. "We see their threats against the Republic of China Taiwan, which is an independent and sovereign state that will one day take its place alongside other nations at the UN; we see cruelty and oppression of people of Hong Kong; the illegal occupation of South China Sea; the general abuse of human rights of Chinese people and people of Tibet."

While condemning China's horrendous human rights record in the recent past, the former Botswana president commended the United States, UK and others that recently announced a slew of sanctions against China over its human rights abuses, and especially the US govt. on passing the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020.

"The biggest threat to democracy and peaceful and stable world order is Communist China. As a friend of the Tibetan people, I will continue raising awareness for free and liberated Tibet. The evil of China will be conquered."

Dr Michael Van Walt, Tibet expert and renowned advisor for global peace processes, in his address spoke about the now 70 year-spanning occupation of Tibet by China emboldening it to carry on with its expansionist agendas elsewhere and called out the international silence which prioritises its economic interests

before the protection of Tibetan's basic right to self-determination.

He excoriated the false historical narrative used by China to claim sovereignty over Tibet as legally baseless, pointing out that it derives its justification from a retroactive appropriation of foreign empires and their territorial scope to misrepresent history and likened it with India claiming sovereignty over former British colonies. He further asserted that the presence of PRC in Tibet, particularly China's armed invasion of Tibet in 1950 is in violation of fundamental modern international laws citing the prohibition of the use of force against another state and UN laws on colonialism which states that "colonialism in all its forms and manifestations is a violation of international law".

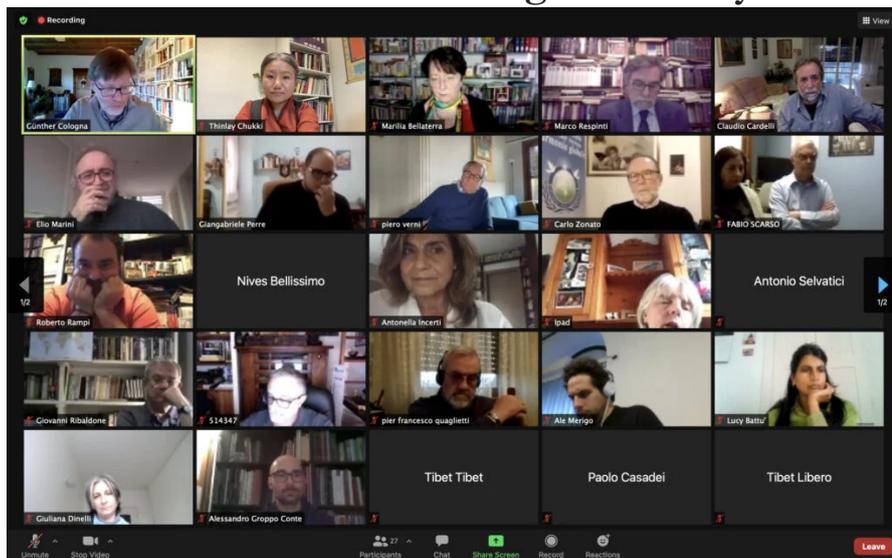
He noted the growing international pushback against China's expansionist policies citing the recent sanctions imposed by the US, Europe and the UK, however, he added that the global silence on Tibet's ongoing occupation denies Tibet its rightful status and right to self-determination.

In his conclusion, he presented two propositions: 1) treating the situation in Tibet, Sino-Tibet relations and conflict as falling within the international community and government's purview and responsibility and stressed that stating, asserting and acting upon it repeatedly is key. 2) Actively countering Beijing's narrative which is part of their annexation strategy.

Highlighting the euphemistic use of language to refer to Tibet he said the use of the phrase "Tibet issue" is meaningless and implies a lack of confidence and a non-committal attitude harming Tibet's plight and recommended his well-researched book, 'Tibet Brief 2020' to be versed on Tibet.

Representative Ngodup Dorjee in his welcome remarks thanked His Excellency Ian Khama and Dr Michael van Walt for addressing the webinar.

Italian Parliamentarians and Civil Societies Discuss Human Rights Abuse and Environmental Degradation by China in Tibet and Xinjiang



The Italia-Tibet Association in collaboration with Bitter Winter- an online magazine on religious liberty and human rights in China, the Heritage of Tibet and AREF International organized a virtual event with Italian parliamentarians to discuss the human rights abuse and environmental degradation by China in Tibet and Xinjiang on 29 March. The session was moderated by Claudio Cardelli, President of the Italia-Tibet Association.

Members of the Italian Parliament On. Luciano Nobili, who is also co-president of Intergroup of Italian Parliamentarians for Tibet, On. Roberto Rampi, On. Antonella Incerti and On. Paolo Formentini participated in the event. On behalf of the Tibet Bureau Geneva, Thinlay Chukki, Special Appointee for Human Rights participated in the event.

Marco Respinti, Director-in-Charge of Bitter Winter, discussed at length the religious persecution perpetrated by Chinese authorities against Uighur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Christians and Falun Gong practitioners. Highlighting the policy of elimination of cultural identity Uighurs and Tibetans adopted by the Chinese Communist Party, he noted that what is happening in Xinjiang is an extension of this policy and repetition of history. The Uighur genocide is an expansion of cultural genocide carried out by China against Tibetans. Therefore, he criticized the

awarding of Winter Olympics Games 2022 to Beijing and called for its boycott.

Piero Verni, founding President of the Heritage of Tibet, spoke about the One-China Policy and how it has been used to silence critics of human rights abuse against countries supporting the policy. He also touched upon the violation of the international agreement on Hong Kong by China and emphasized the importance of calling for boycott of Beijing Olympics 2022.

On. Luciano Nobili commended the team for the successful organization of the press conference in the Italian Parliament on 10 March commemorating the 62nd commemoration of the Tibetan National Uprising Day in the presence of Tibetan President Dr. Lobsang Sangay. Speaking about the US Tibet Policy and Support Act 2020, he welcomed this important US initiative and noted that it is supported by the current US administration as well. He noted that he had appealed the Olympics Committee against awarding it to Beijing.

On. Roberto Rampi noted that he has been an ardent supporter of the Tibetan movement and will continue to support it. He further noted that holding of Olympics in Beijing violates the basic values for which the games stand for. "If we do not speak against the human rights violations perpetrated against Tibetans, Uighurs, Hong Kongers then it means we are supporting the violations" he added.

On. Antonella Incerti who has previously visited Dharamshala and received an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, discussed the environmental destruction carried out by China in Tibet, the third pole. The huge and excessive dams being built on the Tibetan plateau is causing immeasurable and irreversible damage to the environment, she noted.

On. Paolo Formentini, Vice-President of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, noted that China is propagating its policy aggressively and is threatening the world. He also noted that his efforts are concentrated towards declaring the elimination policy adopted by China towards Uighur as "genocide" similar to what US and Canada have already done.

Thinlay Chukki, Special Appointee for Human Rights, highlighted the ongoing human rights violations in Tibet including the custodial torture deaths of Tibetans, systematic discrimination and Sinicization policy adopted by China against Tibetans. She also spoke on the retaliatory sanctions by China aimed at silencing the international community as well as the Belt and Road Initiative which encapsulates expansionist agenda of China. She appealed for international community's continued support and urged them to continue to speak up for human rights in Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Mainland China.

Dolkun Isa, President of the World Uyghur Congress, participated in the event via a video message and called for boycott of Beijing Olympics 2022 as a protest against the genocide being carried out against Uighurs by the Chinese authorities.

Antonio Selvatici, a journalist and author, noted that Italy's signing of the Belt and Road Initiative has resulted in China taking over the control of two important naval base of Italy. He called the Belt and Road a military strategy in the guise of infrastructural project.

CTA President Visits South India on Farewell Tour



CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay

President (Sikyong) Dr Lobsang Sangay of the Central Tibetan Administration visited the Tibetan settlements in South India from 2 - 9 April. As his second term for Sikyong concludes in May, this visit was seen as a farewell tour to meet the Tibetan public. Earlier in February, he visited Tibetan settlements in Northeast India.

Dr Sangay began his farewell tour at Dhondenling Tibetan settlement in Kollegal on 5 April. At the settlement, he took part in a public program dedicated to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and talked about the importance of Tibetan unity. He also distributed Record of Tenancy Certificates (RTC) to 122 Tibetan families in the settlement. The Kollegal Tibetan settlement since its inception in 1973 has remained a forest land and the legal transfer of land was rendered impossible for years due to lack of survey number of the area. The legal certificate issued by the Karnataka government comes after the implementation of the Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy 2014 in the Tibetan settlements of the state.

From Kollegal, Dr Sangay visited Lugsam and Dekyilarso in Bylakuppe following a brief visit to Rabgayling Settlement in Hunsur. At Bylakuppe, he addressed the Tibetan Children's Village and Sambhota Tibetan schools.

After addressing the Tibetan schools, he visited Sera monastery and addressed the monks of Sera Jey and Mey monasteries. He talked about his ten years of service as Sikyong of the Central Tibetan Administration. He also linked the importance of the Buddhist approach of

cultivating equanimity, especially from his own experience as a public servant who constantly faces public scrutiny, both positive as well as negative and how the rational approach helps him overcome the challenges and carry out his duties regardless of public opinion throughout his 10-year tenure.

He spoke about the spiritual appeal of Tibetan Buddhism which has flourished in exile through the efforts of the Tibetan monastics and lay public. This success of Tibetan Buddhist revival in exile under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan spiritual teachers have enabled the Tibetan cause to enjoy great support among the government as well as the public, evidenced by the opinion polls which indicate high favorability for the Tibetan movement regardless of triggering China's displeasure.

On 6 April, Sikyong addressed the general public of Bylakuppe. In his address to the general public, Sikyong talked about a range of issues relating to his two-term tenure as the Sikyong of the Central Tibetan Administration particularly highlighting the passage of the Tibet Policy and Support Act 2020.

He pointed out the significance of the bill in acknowledging the Central Tibetan Administration and the Sikyong as the legitimate representative of Tibetans, giving Tibet recognition at par with the rest of the countries. He called on Gaden Tripa Rinpoche, the head of Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, during the visit to Bylakuppe.

Following his visit to Sera, Sikyong visited Namdoling Nyingma Monastery where he addressed the monks and nuns of the monastery. He then visited Tso Jhe Khangsar hospital that caters to the health and medical needs of the community.

From Bylakuppe, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay left for Doeguling Tibetan settlement in Mundgod. Upon arrival at Mundgod Tibetan settlement on 7 April, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay kicked off his two-day programme in the settle-

ment with an address to the students of Sambhota Tibetan School, Mundgod.

Dr Sangay congratulated the Principal, staff and students of Sambhota Tibetan school for the overall improvement of the school's performance in academic field since handing over the school's administration to Sambhota Tibetan School under the Department of Education, Central Tibetan Administration in May 2018.

On 7 April, Sikyong addressed Gomang and Loseling monasteries of Drepung as well as Ratoe, Kagyud and Sakya monasteries. In his address, Sikyong offered his gratitude to the Sangha community for the steadfast support extended to his administration over the course of his political leadership noting the success it has attributed to his administration and aligning with the wishes and prayers of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Sangha Community.

On 8 April, Sikyong addressed the general public at the community hall of Doeguling settlement in Mundgod. During the address, he re-emphasised his wish for a united Tibet and warned against internal discord created by a few individuals with a vested interest that could prove detrimental to the cause in the long run.

As part of the ceremony, the Tibetan lay community and monastics felicitated Sikyong with appreciation awards in honour of his excellent leadership and achievements in the past ten years. A total of 26 organizations in Mungod unanimously decided to give the appreciation award to Sikyong. He also addressed the monks of Jangtse and Shartse monasteries of Gaden.

He hailed the rich history of the Gaden monastery and stated that the monastic founded by Je Tsongkhapa invariably represents an extraordinary legacy in the restoration of Tibetan Buddhism.

He returned to Dharamshala on 9 April and stayed in home quarantine as per health Department's Covid regulations.

OOT DC Hosts Online North America Sino-Tibet Dialogue: 62 years of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Exile



Online North America Sino-Tibet Dialogue: 62 years of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Exile

31 March 2021 marks the 62nd anniversary since His Holiness the Dalai Lama stepped on Indian soil in 1959. To remember this historic day, the Office of Tibet-Washington, DC organized the “Online North America Sino-Tibet Dialogue” joined by 15 prominent Chinese scholars, lawyers, and political commentators living in North America.

Representative Ngodup Tsering greeted the speakers and thanked them for attending the special event by highlighting the importance of the day which changed the political relationship between Tibet and China and also between Tibet and India.

“It opened up a new chapter in their history,” he said. “While His Holiness and [the] CTA were very sincere and genuine in their offer to address the Sino Tibet problem, Chinese authorities are taking harsh and aggressive measures to completely annihilate Tibetan people and culture.”

Tsultrim Gyatso, the OOT-DC’s Chinese Liaison Officer, welcomed the speakers and highlighted the achievements in the preservation of Tibetan language and culture under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, both in Tibet and in exile. Tsultrim explained the four principal commitments of His Holiness and

the purpose of the dialogue.

Mr. Chen Guangcheng, an eminent human right lawyer, specified the importance of the Sino-Tibet dialogue and its significance to continue. He admires the preservation of Tibetan language and culture by His Holiness and Tibetan people in exile. Mr. Chen described the CCP’s brutal destruction of Tibet, East Turkestan, and Mongolia—even Han Chinese are victims under this authoritarian regime. He agreed that the ongoing massive atrocities by the CCP are due to a lack of resistance to the regime. While sharing his optimism on the coalition of the international community, he maintained that the only solution is the end of the communist party in China.

Mr. Hu Ping, the renowned Chief editor of the Beijing Spring Magazine and one of the Chinese scholars who met His Holiness in the early 90s, applauded the development of a successful democratic system in the exile Tibetan community. He remarked, “This is a marvellous achievement.”

Paying tribute to His Holiness’s wisdom and leadership, Mr. Hu explained that the Tibetan issue has become an international issue that CCP cannot afford to ignore. He was amazed that Tibetans who are born in exile have such profound

love and devotion to His Holiness and also those who were born in Tibet after 1959.

He also mentioned that the Tibetan gatherings in North America are better organized and attended than the Chinese events, although the Chinese population in North America are much higher. In comparison to His Holiness, who regularly meets with global leaders and the international community, and has earned the love and respect of Chinese leaders, there are no such Chinese leaders who can be like him.

Mr. Chen Pokong, a famous Chinese political commentator and leader during the Tiananmen Square Massacre, explained for over half a century, the Chinese Communist Party-controlled Tibet but His Holiness and the Central Tibetan Administration has remained as the hope and legitimate representation of the Tibetan people. He shared his experience of visiting and seeing a number of Tibetan monasteries and schools in India.

“Due to His Holiness,” he said, “Tibetan Buddhism has become a global religion,” he said.

Mr. Yang Jianli, the founder of Citizen Initiative for China, established the Interethnic Interfaith Leadership Conference with guidance from His Holiness. He interprets the success of His Holiness as follows: First, His Holiness’s vision of Middle Way Policy offers a new path for conflict resolution. Second, Tibetan Buddhism became a global religion. And third, the democratization of Tibetan governance is a lasting solution for the sustainable Tibet movement.

Sheng Xue, a renowned writer, reporter and activist, shared her perspective on witnessing the most successful exile development in the history of global exile stories. She considers the importance of coalition above all. Commending the Tibetan community for excellent advocacy work, she emphasized the need to work hand in hand.

Mr. Ding Yifu, a researcher who has attended a Mind and Life Conference, an initiative of His Holiness, and his wife Li Jianglin, a renowned scholar and historian who wrote “Tibet in Agony” emphasized the importance of educating Chinese people as to what has happened to Tibetans. He added that more dialogue between His Holiness and leading scientists can potentially bring a solution to the Tibet issue. Mrs. Li urged the Tibetan youth not to forget all the sacrifices made by the elder Tibetan generation to preserve Tibetan culture and language.

Mr. Zhou Fengsuo, a student leader during the Tiananmen massacre who once sat down with premier Li Peng for a resolution, recounted his time in prison when His Holiness received the Nobel Peace Prize. He learned that the martial law imposed in Lhasa were similar to the martial law imposed upon the student movement in Beijing. He said he became very emotional to see a photo of His Holiness looking towards the mountains, which gave an impression of a profound longing for Tibet: his home. Mr. Zhou believes that many Tibetans and Chinese share a similar longing to return home. He praised the vigorous energy maintained by the Tibetan youth and promised to do his best to be a part of the movement.

Mr. Han Lianchao, the cofounder of Citizen Power Initiatives for China and policy researcher, affirmed that His Holiness defeated the CCP. Although the Chinese Communist Party tried to commit genocide in Tibet with the sinicization of Tibet’s culture, language and religion, Tibetans have preserved them in exile.

“The first victim of one country two system policy is Tibet,” Mr. Han maintained. Mr. Han explained the 17 Point Agreement in detail, and he said he strongly believes that the reincarnation issue will solely remain the rights of the Tibetan people.

Mrs. Wang Ruiqing, a former member of the People’s Congress in China and an oral historian on Tibet, shared her findings on the problems that Tibetans are facing inside Tibet. She said Tibetans in

Tibet, even those in government agencies, respect and carry their hope for His Holiness. Mrs. Wang described CCP’s genocidal policies can be traced back to Mao’s era and sinicization is continued till these dates in religious policies in monasteries and language policies in school.

Mr. Pei Yiran, former director of the department of Humanitarian studies at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, shared his respect for His Holiness and the gradual change in his understanding of Tibet from seeing the movie on serfdom in China to interacting with Tibetan history and culture. Mr. Pei believes the nonviolent path with a simple request for preservation of language and culture as mentioned in Middle Way Policy should be considered by China.

Mr. Li Hengqing, media personnel and scholar requested China to let His Holiness return back to Tibet. He believes the solution to every discriminated community in China will come when there is a change in the authoritarian government structure. Mr. Li thinks the Middle Way policy is the only method that can solve the Tibetan issue and urged for more dialogues and events to let the Chinese understand His Holiness vision of Middle Way Policy.

Mr. Zhang jie, media personnel and legal expert stated that His Holiness gained

respect from the entire global community for his great leadership in exile. He suggested recognizing the change in Chinese political plans and global stance on China, Tibetans should move forward with a strategy to resist in coalition.

Mr. Wang Juntao, Chairman of the Chinese Democratic Party, gave the story of meeting with His Holiness in 1995, a time when he had different perspectives on Tibetan modernization. “His Holiness focused more on the preservation of Tibetan language and culture than on political advocacy, which is why the exiled Tibetan community thrived successfully without losing their identity,” he said.

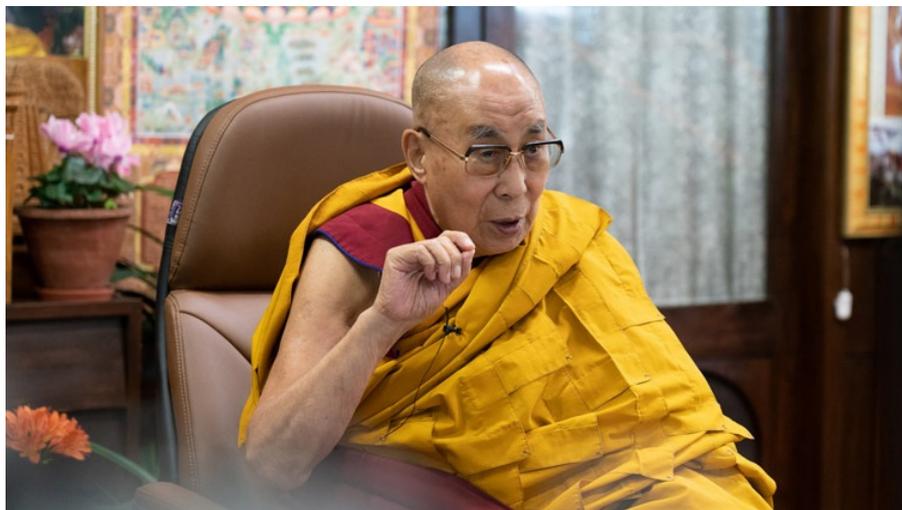
Chairman Wang thinks His Holiness’ compassionate approach on every issue is different from what most of the scholars deal with conflict. He thinks the Chinese scholars still lack the understanding of compassion and wisdom that His Holiness promotes. Mr. Wang mentioned His Holiness has some profound suggestions for society as a whole and that should be learned by the Chinese and international community.

Moderator thanked the speakers for their support and insight shared in the two and half hours of dialogue. He then concluded with the promise of more Sino-Tibet Dialogue events in the future and in-person meetings when the pandemic is over.

Heavily fortified in a digital cage, it is near impossible to get information out of Tibet. This past January, we received news of the self-immolation protest by 26-year-old Shurmo from Driru Shagchukha village, five years after the event. This sheds light on the extent of information control and surveillance being carried out in Tibet.

- CTA President (Sikyong) Dr Lobsang Sangay in his 10th March statement to commemorate the 62nd Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Teaches the Four Noble Truths and the Two Truths



His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking on the Four Noble Truths and the Two Truths during his online teaching requested by the Italian Buddhist Union from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on April 7, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave teachings on the four noble truths and the two truths to the Italian Buddhist Union 7 April. The session began immediately with a recitation of the ‘Heart Sutra’ in Italian. When that was complete, President of the Italian Buddhist Union, Filippo Scianna extended a welcome to His Holiness on behalf of the Union. that he explained includes members from a wide range of Buddhist traditions. Besides their interest in Buddhism, members provide humanitarian aid where it is needed and cultivate friendly relations with other religious traditions. He declared that His Holiness is their source of inspiration and requested him to teach.

“Today, you Italians have asked me to talk about the Four Noble Truths and the Two Truths,” His Holiness responded. “There are many different religious traditions in the world. They may differ from a philosophical point of view, but they share a common message about the importance of love and compassion. In India, the practice of ‘ahimsa’, non-violence or non-harm, and ‘karuna’, compassion, have flourished over the last 3000 years or so. What’s more, in India, all the world’s major religions live together peaceably side by side.

“Since better contact has been achieved

between East and West, more and more people have taken an interest in Buddhist teachings belonging to both the Pali and Sanskrit Traditions.

“When Shantarakshita was invited to Tibet by King Trisong Detsen, he introduced the Nalanda Tradition. He was a great master of philosophy as well as logic and epistemology, as revealed in two books he wrote: ‘A Compendium of Reality’ (Tattvasamgraha) and the ‘Ornament of the Middle Way’ (Madhyamakalalamkara).

“Since the eighth century Tibetans have followed Madhyamaka or Middle Way philosophy through logic and reason. In so doing they took inspiration from the Buddha who counselled, “As the wise test gold by burning, cutting and rubbing it, so, bhikshus, should you accept my words—only after testing them—and not merely out of respect for me.” Because our tradition is based on logic and reason, today, even interested scientists can relate to it.

“The Four Noble Truths are the foundation of the Buddha’s teaching. However, immediately after his enlightenment he is reported to have said:

“Profound and peaceful, free from com-

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 plexity, uncompounded luminosity—
 I have found a nectar-like Dharma. Yet if I were to teach it, no-one would understand, So, I shall remain silent here in the forest.

“But when he encountered his five former companions, and they requested him to teach, the Four Noble Truths are what he taught them.

“According to the Sanskrit Tradition, the Buddha turned the wheel of dharma three times—three rounds of teaching. The first concerned the Four Noble Truths, which he disclosed in terms of nature, function and result. When he explained their nature, he declared that suffering is to be known, its origin is to be eliminated, and cessation is to be actualized by cultivating the path. And the origin to be eliminated was karma and mental afflictions, which, in addition to selflessness, were explained in greater detail in the second and third rounds of teachings.

“With regard to their result, the Buddha stated that suffering must be known and yet there is nothing to be known. Karma and mental afflictions are to be overcome, but there is nothing to be overcome.

“We can understand the words, ‘profound and peaceful’ in the verse I quoted above to refer to the first round of the Buddha’s teachings and the Four Noble Truths. ‘Free from complexity’ indicates the perfection of wisdom of the second round. ‘Uncompounded luminosity’ relates to the content of the Buddha’s third round of teachings, especially Buddha nature and the ‘Tathagatagarbha-sutra’. During the second round he dealt with the object clear light, which refers to emptiness, while in the third round he alluded to the subjective clear light—the mind of clear light.

“Mental afflictions are distorted conceptions. Nagarjuna explained that the ignorance that is at their root refers to the

misconception that things have true existence. His disciple Aryadeva pointed out that ‘as the tactile sense [pervades] the body, ignorance is present in all [mental afflictions]. By overcoming ignorance, you will also overcome all mental afflictions.’ He remarked that ignorance can be eliminated by understanding dependent arising.”

His Holiness acknowledged that it is because of Shantarakshita that Tibetans follow the Buddha’s teaching in reliance on logic and reason. He noted that this makes aspects of the Buddha’s teaching, particularly in relation to the workings of the mind, accessible to scientists. This is relevant because there is a growing understanding that talk about peace in the world will only be fulfilled when individuals have cultivated peace of mind within themselves.

A proper understanding of the Four Noble Truths depends on understanding the Two Truths. In this connection His Holiness referred to verses from Chandrakirti’s ‘Entering into the Middle Way’.

And just as from an empty thing like a reflection
a perception can arise that bears its form, 6.37

likewise, although all things are empty,
they do arise from emptiness in a robust way.
Since no intrinsic nature exists in either
of the two truths,
phenomena are neither eternal nor annihilated. 6.38

Since actions do not cease in an intrinsic manner,
they remain potent even in the absence
of a foundation consciousness.
Indeed, in some cases, the acts themselves
may have long ceased,
yet their effects will come about without fail;
this you should know. 6.39

What this indicates is that although the independent existence of things cannot be found under scrutiny, they do exist by way of convention or designation. An ignorant misconception of the true or intrinsic existence of things can be eliminated by understanding emptiness.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking to the virtual audience from Italy during his teachings requested by the Italian Buddhist Union from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on April 7, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

When you understand that cessation can be achieved within yourself, you will be able to verify this truth from your own experience.

His Holiness cited verses from the end of chapter six of ‘Entering into the Middle Way’ that shed light on conventional and ultimate truth, finally likening them to the wings on which the king of swans flies to the far shore. He encouraged his listeners to listen, reflect and develop experience of these truths within themselves.

Thus, illuminated by the rays of wisdom’s light,
the bodhisattva sees as clearly as a gooseberry on his open palm
that the three realms in their entirety are unborn from their very start,
and through the force of conventional truth, he journeys to cessation. 6.224

Though his mind may rest continuously in cessation,
he also generates compassion for beings bereft of protection.
Advancing further, he will also outshine through his wisdom
all those born from the Buddha’s speech and the middle buddhas. 6.225

And like a king of swans soaring ahead
of other accomplished swans,
with white wings of conventional and ultimate truths spread wide,
propelled by the powerful winds of virtue, the bodhisattva would cruise

to the excellent far shore, the oceanic qualities of the conquerors. 6.226

His Holiness reiterated the importance of understanding the Buddha’s teaching in the light of reason and logic. He mentioned the popular saying that compares the Madhyamaka or Middle Way view and reason and logic to two lions yoked together at the neck. These two traditions were introduced by Shantarakshita and Tibetan masters like Chapa Chökyi Sengé (1109-69), the Abbot of Sangphu, later formalized the Tibetan mode of debate.

When answering questions from the virtual audience His Holiness touched on the Bön tradition that existed in Tibet prior to the arrival of the Jowo statue of Buddha Shakyamuni in Lhasa, brought by the Chinese princess who married King Songtsen Gampo. Later, Shantarakshita encouraged King Trisong Detsen to translate Indian Buddhist literature into Tibetan. Buddhism took root, but the Bön tradition survives today.

Although people in the West are showing interest in Buddhism these days, it’s important that the prevailing Judeo-Christian traditions continue to be accorded respect. His Holiness emphasized again that all religious traditions teach the importance of ethics and compassion.

His Holiness observed that the Buddha embraced the homeless life. Many of his followers did likewise. The foundation



President of the Italian Buddhist Union, Filippo Scianna extending a welcome to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on behalf of the Union at the start of the online teachings on April 7, 2021.

Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

of their practice was the Vinaya and its precepts. He noted that if you can keep the vows, well and good, but it is not necessary to do so to be a warm-hearted person.

Regarding what the future of Buddhism may be over the next fifty years, His Holiness said it was difficult to say. The era of the previous Buddha, Kashyapa, came to an end. Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings presently continue to flourish. However, the threat that global heating poses simply to water supplies means the future is not guaranteed.

Asked about the arising of destructive emotions His Holiness explained that we develop attachment and aversion to things because they appear to exist solidly from their own side. When we realize that they actually depend on other factors and conditions and are not as they appear, we react to them differently.

Quantum physics also states that things do not exist as they appear, but it also seems to challenge their external existence. This is reminiscent of the Mind Only contention that objects and the subjective perceiving mind are of the same nature. This view may loosen the grip of mental afflictions, but it's necessary to realize the Consequentialist view that things have no independent existence whatsoever—they are mere designations—to uproot ignorance. His Holiness advised that suffering can be transformed into an aspect of the path, in particular to the practice of bodhichitta by wishing that through this suf-

fering our negativities may be purified. He cited a verse from the Guru Puja:

Therefore, O venerable compassionate gurus,
Bless me that all the obstructions from misdeeds, and sufferings
Of mother beings ripen upon me right now,
And that I may give my happiness and virtues to others
In order that all sentient beings have bliss.

He stressed that another aspect of bodhichitta, humility, expressed as regarding yourself as inferior to others, is not a matter of being despondent. Since it is linked to the wish to lead beings from across the expanse of space to enlightenment it reflects great courage. As the practice of cherishing others is strengthened it gives rise to such courage, which in turn reinforces great compassion. When you have great compassion, you'll have the fortitude to help others overcome their sufferings.

Invited to compare the nirvana of an Arhat the truth body of a Buddha, His Holiness clarified that whereas for an Arhat who has overcome mental afflictions, obscurations to knowledge remain, the Buddha has eliminated them all.

Asked to recommend verses that aid the understanding of emptiness, His Holiness cited one from Nagarjuna's 'Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way',

Through the elimination of karma and

afflictive emotions there is liberation. Karma and afflictive emotions come from conceptual thoughts. These come from mental fabrication. Fabrication ceases through emptiness,

He also mentioned several verses from chapter six of Chandrakirti's 'Entering into the Middle Way',

If the intrinsic characteristics of things were to arise dependently, things would come to be destroyed by denying it; emptiness would then be a cause for the destruction of things. But this is illogical, so no real entities exist. 6/34

Thus, when such phenomena are analyzed, nothing is found as their nature apart from suchness. So, the conventional truth of the everyday world should not be subjected to thorough analysis. 6/35

In the context of suchness, certain reasoning disallows arising from self or from something other, and that same reasoning disallows them on the conventional level too. So, by what means then is your arising established? 6/36

His Holiness disclosed that he regularly repeats these verses to himself and reflects that although things cannot be found under analysis, they do exist by way of convention and designation.

In her brief words of thanks, Giovanna Giorgetti expressed the wish that His Holiness will live long and the hope that he will visit Italy again in person.

His Holiness announced his intention to lead a ceremony for cultivating the awakening mind of bodhichitta. He guided the appropriate visualization of the Buddha and so forth and invited the audience to repeat the standard three verses after him.

Finally, he released the Italian translation of the first volume in the Science and Philosophy in the Indian Buddhist Classics series —The Physical World— and expressed his gratitude to the translator.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Graces Virtual International Conference on the Three Trainings

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Ms Ng Wee Nee from the Tibetan Buddhist Centre of Singapore opening the proceedings of the International Conference on the Three Trainings in the Pali and Sanskrit Traditions of Buddhism on March 5, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

His Holiness the Dalai Lama graces the virtual international conference on the Tisikkha or Trishiksha, the three trainings in the Pali and Sanskrit traditions of Buddhism on 5 March. His Holiness the Dalai Lama was invited to give the inaugural address from his residence in Dharamsala.

Ms Ng Wee Nee opened proceedings, welcoming guests and participants and explaining that the event had been organized by the Tibetan Buddhist Centre of Singapore supported by 12 other Buddhist organizations: the Oxford Buddhist Vihara, Singapore; the Theravada Buddhist Council of Malaysia; the Vajrayana Buddhist Council of Malaysia; the Buddhadasa Indapanno Archive Foundation; the International Network of Engaged Buddhists; the Sri Lankan Tibet Buddhist Brotherhood Society; the Buddhist Society of Western Australia; the Buddhist Union of Kalmykia, Russia; the Department of Buddhist Studies, Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts, Taiwan; the Department of Religion and Culture of Hsuan Chuang University, Taiwan; the Kertarajasa Buddhist College, Indonesia and Labsum Shedrup Ling, Korea.

Ms Ng Wee Nee mentioned that there are presently at least 500 million Bud-

dhist in the world for whom dependent arising is their philosophical view and for whom non-violence and compassion are their basic conduct. She observed that the internet has provided an opportunity for a virtual gathering of Buddhist communities. During the conference, which will take place over two days, 38 speakers from 14 countries will address the role of the Three trainings in the Pali and Sanskrit traditions.

Functioning as moderator of the discussions, Ven Mahayano from Thailand introduced the first speaker, the Most Ven Bhikshu Jing Yao, Chairman of Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (Taiwan), who spoke in Chinese. He observed that the purpose of the three trainings in both the Pali and Sanskrit traditions is to help beings overcome suffering. The Buddha taught the noble eightfold path in order that sentient beings cease to develop afflictive emotions and can face death peacefully.

The Most Ven Bhikshu Jing Yao went on to say that the scope of the noble eightfold path is wide. It includes the extensive practices of the four noble truths and the three trainings. We cannot establish the reality of the four noble truths without practising the noble eightfold path. The eightfold path is inseparable

from the four noble truths and the twelve links of dependent arising. The twelve links establish the reality of suffering, while the four noble truths embody the process of pacifying these sufferings and the noble eightfold path enable us to pacify completely the causes of suffering—this is the truth of the path.

If we practise ‘sila’, ethics, ‘samadhi’, concentration and ‘panna’, wisdom, we can purify desire, hatred and ignorance. We will understand what is to be adopted and what is to be abandoned. In this way, we will become more peaceful human beings. Ven Bhikshu Jing Yao concluded, “Let us all practise the three trainings for the sake of all mother sentient beings. May all be peaceful and happy.”

Ven Mahayano next requested the Most Ven Dr Dammapiya - Secretary General of International Buddhist Confederation (India) to offer his introductory remarks. He began by reciting the refuge formula, “Buddham saranam gacchami, Dhammam saranam gacchami, Sangham saranam gacchami,” and then continued in English. He noted that Tisikkha and Trishiksha appear to be different terms, but refer to the same teaching of the Buddha. He also remarked that although Buddhist tradition has many branches, it shares a common root. He expressed gratitude for this opportunity for representatives of different Buddhist traditions to come together in discussion.

Previous deliberations have revealed that the Vinaya upheld by all Buddhist traditions is essentially the same. Now there is a chance to examine the three trainings. He pointed out that the Buddha began with objective observation. He saw a sick man, an old man and a dead man and recognised things as they are. There was no blind faith involved, but objective observation.

Understanding is deepened by vipassana, enabling the recognition of unsatisfactoriness, impermanence and selflessness.



Most Ven Dr Dammapiya - Secretary General of International Buddhist Confederation (India) offering his introductory remarks at the online International Conference on the Three Trainings in the Pali and Sanskrit Traditions of Buddhism on March 5, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

These days, Dr Dammapiya remarked, there is a growing desire for more, but in representing the middle path of moderation, the three trainings can have a positive impact on society. A compassionate heart, he declared, a clear, purified mind and a right view of the world lead to a balanced mind avoiding violence and extremes and fostering peaceful, harmonious co-existence in the world.

Technical difficulties prevented the third introductory speaker, the Most Venerable Makulewe Wimala Mahanayake Thero from joining the conversation at the appointed time, so Ven Mahayano invited His Holiness the Dalai Lama to give his inaugural address. After reciting a short verse of homage, he began.

“People from different Buddhist communities have come together on this occasion. Holders of the Vinaya, of which I am one, have been invited. I hope our exchanges will be marked by openness.

“Buddha Shakyamuni’s teaching has flourished for more than 2500 years making it one of the world’s major religious traditions. However, lately it has also attracted scientific interest. Although we have the terms Hinayana and Mahayana, I prefer to speak of the Pali and Sanskrit Traditions. Vinaya, monastic discipline and the three trainings in ethics, concentration and wisdom, the essence of the Buddha’s teaching, are upheld in both. The Buddha was a monk and the practice of Vinaya is the foundation of both

the Pali and Sanskrit Traditions.

“As a human being, I regard as one of my principal responsibilities to increase awareness of love and compassion in the world, irrespective of whether other people believe in rebirth or the law of karma or not. This is my first commitment. As a religious practitioner I appreciate that all religious traditions speak of the need to develop compassion. We may adopt different philosophical positions, but we all have a common regard for compassion.

“One category of religious tradition is theistic and emphasizes the role of God, not only as the creator, but also as the personification of compassion—the quality to aspire to. Buddhism is a non-theistic tradition. It’s foundation, preserved particularly in the Pali Tradition, is the upholding of Vinaya, monastic discipline, the focus of which is keeping vows of individual emancipation. In Tibet we followed the Mulasarvastivadin lineage, in China they have the Dharmagupta tradition and followers of the Pali uphold the Theravada tradition.

“Scholars of Nalanda University worked in Sanskrit. When King Trisong Detsen invited the erudite scholar Shantarakshita to Tibet he recommended that Tibetans translate Buddhist literature into Tibetan. The resultant collection included 100 volumes of the Buddha’s discourses and more than 200 volumes of explanatory treatises by subsequent scholars.

“The tradition Shantarakshita introduced to Tibet was a comprehensive presentation of the Buddha’s teachings. It relied on the exercise of reason and logic and encouraged analysis of what was written in the scriptures. Nagarjuna’s work depended on logic and reason. Dignaga and Dharmakirti focused on logic and epistemology, as exemplified by the ‘Compendium of Valid Cognition’.

“The Buddha advised his followers, “O monks and scholars, as gold is tested by burning, cutting and rubbing, examine my words thoroughly and accept them only then—not just out of respect for me.” I recommend followers of the Pali Tradition to adopt this logical approach and examine the Perfection of Wisdom teachings along with 21 extant Indian commentaries to them. These were further clarified by Jé Tsongkhapa in his treatise ‘The Golden Rosary’.

“Tsongkhapa emphasized study of epistemology, the Perfection of Wisdom and Madhyamaka. He didn’t write much about Vinaya or Abhidharma—Higher Knowledge. Practice of Vinaya depends on scriptural authority. Vasubandhu’s account of cosmology and the size, position and distance between the earth, sun and moon, for example, are not to be taken literally, unlike Chandrakirti’s presentation of ultimate reality.

“Study based on reason, not only reliant on scriptural authority, has equipped us to interact fruitfully with scientists. Indeed, Buddhism is now attracting interest and attention from directions not seen before.

“As Buddhists we must cultivate good relations between us. We must also uphold the Three trainings, but nowadays I believe that ethics, concentration and wisdom can be useful even for those who follow no religious tradition.”

The moderator was pleased to announce that previous technical difficulties had been overcome and introduced the Most Venerable Makulewe Wimala Mahanayake Thero, the Chief Prelate of Sri Rammanna Maha Nikaya of Sri Lanka.

He began his address with the declara-

tion that as a Buddhist monk

it is his duty to help everyone to lead a good life. To do this, the ‘Trisiksha’, namely virtue, concentration and wisdom play a very significant role. Virtue here, he clarified, is to tame the body and speech. Concentration is to focus the mind. Wisdom involves seeing the true nature of the world. Consequently, the mind that is born of wisdom will realize enlightenment. He observed that virtuous behaviour leads to concentration and strong concentration leads to the purification of the wisdom of insight meditation.

Virtue includes rules proclaimed by the Buddha, the discipline or taming of the senses, avoiding wrong livelihood and adopting right livelihood, as well as accepting instruction on the consumption of requisites. Concentration involves carefully preserving the mind from becoming scattered. Wisdom entails correct recognition of impermanence, misery, and selflessness.

The noble eightfold path encompasses three collections of virtuous behaviour (sila), concentration (samadhi), and wisdom (panna). The perfection of the noble eightfold path, the cultivation of vir-

tuous deeds, concentration, and wisdom, is the path of enlightenment spoken of by the Supreme Buddha.

The moderator thanked the Most Venerable from Sri Lanka and explained that although this virtual assembly brought together many languages and traditions, questions for His Holiness would be framed in English.

The first questioner asked about relations between the Pali and Sanskrit Traditions. His Holiness replied that they held the precepts of individual emancipation in common. During meetings like this, in the exchange of views between scholars and practitioners, it’s possible to appreciate how much we have in common. Even in the Sanskrit tradition there are four major different schools of thought and yet for all of them the Vinaya is the foundation.

A questioner from Singapore wanted to know if aspects of the three trainings could be usefully incorporated into secular education. His Holiness agreed that since the essence of the teaching is not to harm others, but to respect and help them, it could certainly be done.

Finally, from Malaysia came the simple

question, “How to be a good Buddhist?” His Holiness’s response was that just repeating the words,

Buddham saranam gacchami—I take refuge in the Buddha,
Dhammam saranam gacchami—I take refuge in the Dharma,
Sangham saranam gacchami—I take refuge in the Sangha

doesn’t make you a Buddhist. You need to understand what is the Buddha, what is the Dharma and what is the Sangha—that understanding is what makes you a Buddhist. And in order to develop such an understanding you need to study.

“As a follower of the Buddha,” His Holiness added, “I’ve studied to some extent. I really appreciate this kind of meeting and I hope it is something that can take place annually. I hope further serious discussions will take place. I’m already looking forward to our next meeting.”

The moderator, Ven Mahayano, thanked His Holiness for his inaugural address to the conference. Ms Ng Wee Nee thanked all the speakers and participants for their contribution. His Holiness recited dedication prayers and, waving to the virtual audience, announced, “See you again”.

Mayors of Five Cities in the US Declare 10 March as ‘Tibet Day’

In a gesture of solidarity and support for the Tibetan cause, mayors of five US cities issued proclamations declaring 10 March which is the Tibetan National Uprising Day as Tibet Day. The five cities are Saint Paul, Columbia Heights, City of Northampton, Minneapolis and St Louis Park.

Meanwhile, Burlington City Hall in the state of Vermont; Boston City Hall in Boston, Massachusetts; and Madison City-County Building in the state of Wisconsin hoisted the Tibetan national flag to mark the 62nd anniversary of the Tibetan national uprising day on 10 March.

China's Techno-Authoritarianism Has Gone Global

By Maya Wang, 8 April 2021
Foreign Affairs Magazine

Nearly every week, the international news media reports on the Chinese government's troubling use of technology to spy on its own citizens and those of other countries. China's tech giants, Foreign Policy reported late last year, work hand in glove with the country's spy agencies. The Guardian suggested in December that a Chinese state-owned phone operator spies on American users. Surveillance is a fact of life for Chinese citizens and, increasingly, for those who live in countries that have adopted Chinese surveillance technology, from Ecuador to Kyrgyzstan. Even more worrisome, this ecosystem of Chinese-based technologies carries with it a set of values that undergirds the Chinese state—a form of twenty-first-century authoritarianism that marries social control and efficiency.

The United States has kneecapped Chinese technology giants in the name of national security and human rights. But the United States and its tech companies also have a checkered history with the very ideals they claim to uphold. To prevent China's techno-authoritarianism from gaining traction, the United States must reverse course and start leading by example: it must reform its own surveillance practices, protect citizens' privacy and security, and work with allies to set rights-respecting global standards for tech firms to follow.

COERCION AND CONTROL

China's domestic police agencies collect an extraordinary amount of data about people in order to monitor their activities and identify troublemakers. The state's surveillance is particularly suffocating in Xinjiang, where the authorities use mobile apps, biometric collection, artificial intelligence, and big data, among other means, to control 13 million Turkic Muslims.

The mass surveillance programs in Xinjiang are China's most visible and

intrusive, but they are just one end of a spectrum. Chinese authorities use technology to control the population all over the country in subtler but still powerful ways. The central bank is adopting digital currency, which will allow Beijing to surveil—and control—people's financial transactions. China is building so-called safe cities, which integrate data from intrusive surveillance systems to predict and prevent everything from fires to natural disasters and political dissent. The government believes that these intrusions, together with administrative actions, such as denying black-listed people access to services, will nudge people toward “positive behaviors,” including greater compliance with government policies and healthy habits such as exercising.

Beijing's technological ambitions are not just directly coercive, however. The Chinese government also hopes to harness its vast surveillance power to the larger ideological project of the state, which combines authoritarianism with practical efficiency to meet the needs of the country's vast populace. Ubiquitous monitoring allows Beijing to control its enormous bureaucracy, which is rife with local corruption and abuses of power. “The mountains are high and the emperor is far away” has long been a mantra for Chinese officials and citizens dealing with central government edicts. But that relationship is changing. In 2019, the government required cadres to download the “Study Xi, Strong Nation” app, which made them study Xi Jinping Thought, answer quizzes, and compete in their understanding of official policies. President Xi's signature poverty alleviation campaign not only tasks cadres with collecting detailed personal information on poor people—including their income, disabilities, and bank account numbers, and the reasons for their poverty—but also collects cadres' GPS locations to ensure that they are diligently carrying out their responsibilities.

The Chinese government hopes that technology will help it cement its chillingly innovative form of government—one that meets the material needs of its populace and engineers a loyal, responsive bureaucracy even while bypassing such pesky intermediaries as competitive elections, a free press, and an independent judiciary.

TECHNO-AUTHORITARIANISM GAINING TRACTION

The emerging Chinese technological ecosystem is both functional and affordable. Huawei's 5G has captured many Western governments' attention, and Beijing's Baidu navigation system now prevails over the U.S. version, GPS, in more than 160 countries. China is pushing governments to adopt its National Transportation Logistics Platform, an international logistics system designed to integrate road, sea, air, freight, and postal information that is controlled by China's Ministry of Transport. Chinese applications are also spreading fast. TikTok has gone global, Alibaba is making inroads in Southeast Asia, and Tencent's WeChat is embedded in the Chinese diaspora's digital life. China's model of Internet “sovereignty,” by which the state delimits and controls the Internet within its borders, has inspired governments from Egypt to Thailand.

The Chinese state owns some of these companies. Others are private companies based in China that are highly susceptible to the Chinese government's pressure, censorship, and surveillance. Because China lacks the rule of law and a free press, there is no easy way to obtain information from these companies or hold them accountable for abuses. In other words, the values of Beijing's brand of authoritarianism permeate its technosphere. Consistent with the government's so-called win-win diplomacy, recipient countries receive systems that promise control and efficiency. In return, China gains influence and data.

LESSER OF TWO EVILS?

The United States has attempted to counterpose its own technological ecosystem to China's, portraying the competition between the two as one between good and evil. The administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump, for instance, created the so-called Clean Network program, purportedly to protect American users from the prying eyes of "malign actors" such as the Chinese state. The program seeks to identify "untrusted" apps from China and route Internet traffic and data storage away from "untrusted" Chinese carriers, cables, and clouds. U.S. companies, meanwhile, pose as defenders of online security and democratic values.

To much of the rest of the world, however, this competition is little more than evil versus evil. The U.S. government has also practiced mass surveillance; big U.S. technology companies have adopted a surveillance-based business model, exploiting people's data in the name of free service; and the Five Eyes, an intelligence coalition comprised of the United States and Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, has sought to undermine encryption by pressuring companies to give governments backdoor access to all digital communications. In this dismal global race to the digital bottom, the biggest losers are ordinary technology users all over the world.

This contest between the United States and China is not simply a competition of technological prowess, as many analysts argue, but a battle over values. A convincing democratic alternative to the Chinese government's model should require technological developments to meet human rights standards, protect privacy, and foster public interest and civic participation.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Washington can supply a genuine alternative to the encroachment of Chinese techno-authoritarianism, but only if it first gets its own house in order. The United States should reform its national security surveillance laws and regulate

how American companies can collect, analyze, and share personal data. Washington should better protect biometric data—for example, it should consider banning law enforcement from using facial recognition and strictly regulate the collection of sensitive personal information, including DNA, by the country's tech giants. It should also explore ways to allow people to shape and control the use of their data. At the same time, U.S. policymakers should consider escalating actions against companies that contribute to China's mass surveillance state. The Global Magnitsky Act sanctions, which allow U.S. policymakers to sanction companies that abuse human rights, could be useful in this regard and could help delay the realization of China's Orwellian ambitions.

To enact long-term solutions to the problem of techno-authoritarianism, Washington can't go it alone. The United States should work with like-minded governments in various technical standard-setting bodies such as the International Telecommunication Union, which sets 5G standards. These governments, along with those that join new initiatives to create democratic technology alliances, should reject attempts to regulate based on vaguely formulated notions of "ethics." For instance, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development published hazy principles to guide the use of artificial intelligence, such as "autonomy," "diversity," and "fairness."

Instead, the United States and like-minded governments should push for legally binding rules and other regulatory interventions that holds tech companies accountable to human rights standards, such as mandatory due diligence checks. Washington should work with its allies to ensure that people in China and around the world have access to an Internet that is free from censorship and surveillance—an alternative to China's Digital Silk Road initiative. A democratic substitute for Huawei's 5G should not be just any 5G company based in a democracy but one that meets human rights standards itself.

Washington and its allies should think ambitiously about how technology can reinvigorate democracies. For instance, they might invest in developing digital public squares—forums for public interaction and collaboration outside big tech's social media platforms, which sow division and enable disinformation in pursuit of profits. The United States can take a page from Taiwan and Barcelona, where technology is augmenting civic participation and democratic governance and may help craft a truly democratic techno-political system.

The U.S.-Chinese competition over technology could shape the future. If Washington is serious about protecting privacy and promoting human rights, it should seize the initiative from China by upholding these standards for everyone who uses U.S. technology, domestically and around the world.

"If you wish to experience peace, provide peace for another.

If you wish to know that you are safe, cause another to know that they are safe.

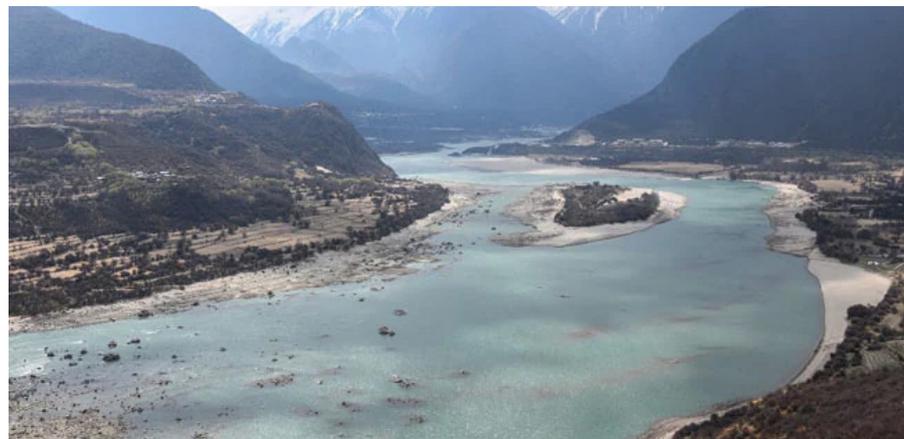
If you wish to better understand seemingly incomprehensible things, help another to better understand.

If you wish to heal your own sadness or anger, seek to heal the sadness or anger of another."

- His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

China's Plan For Mega Dam In Tibet Raises Concern In India

- AFP, 11 April 2021



The river, known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibetan, is also home to 2 other projects far upstream.

China is planning a mega dam in Tibet able to produce triple the electricity generated by the Three Gorges -- the world's largest power station -- stoking fears among environmentalists and in neighbouring India.

The structure will span the Brahmaputra River before the waterway leaves the Himalayas and flows into India, straddling the world's longest and deepest canyon at an altitude of more than 1,500 metres (4,900 feet).

The project in Tibet's Medog County is expected to dwarf the record-breaking Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River in central China, and is billed as able to produce 300 billion kilowatts of electricity each year.

It is mentioned in China's strategic 14th Five-Year Plan, unveiled in March at an annual rubber-stamp congress of the country's top lawmakers.

But the plan was short on details, a time-frame or budget.

The river, known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibetan, is also home to two other projects far upstream, while six others are in the works or under construction. The "super-dam" however is in a league of its own.

Last October, the Tibet local government signed a "strategic cooperation agreement" with PowerChina, a public

construction company specialising in hydroelectric projects.

A month later the head of PowerChina, Yan Zhiyong, partially unveiled the project to the Communist Youth League, the youth wing of China's ruling party.

Enthusiastic about "the world's richest region in terms of hydroelectric resources", Yan Zhiyong explained that the dam would draw its power from the huge drop of the river at this particular section.

"Really bad idea"

Beijing may justify the massive project as an environmentally-friendly alternative to fossil fuels, but it risks provoking strong opposition from environmentalists in the same way as the Three Gorges Dam, built between 1994 and 2012.

The Three Gorges created a reservoir and displaced 1.4 million inhabitants upstream.

"Building a dam the size of the super-dam is likely a really bad idea for many reasons," said Brian Eyster, energy, water and sustainability program director at the Stimson Center, a US think tank.

Besides being known for seismic activity, the area also contains a unique biodiversity. The dam would block the migration of fish as well as sediment flow that enriches the soil during seasonal floods

downstream, said Eyster.

There are both ecological and political risks, noted Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha, an environmental policy specialist at the Tibet Policy Institute, a think tank linked to the Tibetan government-in-exile based in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh.

"We have a very rich Tibetan cultural heritage in those areas, and any dam construction would cause ecological destruction, submergence of parts of that region," he said.

"Many local residents would be forced to leave their ancestral homes," he said, adding that the project will encourage migration of Han Chinese workers that "gradually becomes a permanent settlement".

"Water wars"

India is also worried by the project.

The Chinese Communist Party is effectively in a position to control the origins of much of South Asia's water supply, analysts say.

"Water wars are a key component of such warfare because they allow China to leverage its upstream Tibet-centred power over the most essential natural resource," wrote political scientist Brahma Chellaney last month in the Times of India.

The risks of seismic activity would also make it a "ticking water bomb" for residents downstream, he warned.

In reaction to the dam idea, the centre has floated the prospect of building another dam on the Brahmaputra to shore up its own water reserves.

"There is still much time to negotiate with China about the future of the super-dam and its impacts," said Mr Eyster. "A poor outcome would see India build a dam downstream."

Counterterrorism Police ‘Clean Up’ After Tibetan Monk’s Death

Following the January 19 death in police custody of a teenage Tibetan monk, Chinese authorities have commenced an operation to “clean up” Tibetan homes in the grassland town of Dza Wonpo, Sichuan province. Tenzin Nyima died from injuries he received while being detained after participating in a peaceful protest with three other monks. Now, it seems, officials are looking to clamp down on any further information getting out.

The Snow Wolf Commandos, a unit of the People’s Armed Police responsible for counterterrorism operations, arrived in Wonpo on March 5, ostensibly to visit a home for older people and clean up the residents’ rooms.

But video seen by Human Rights Watch also shows dozens of police and commandos parading through the town of about 3,000 residents, almost all Tibet-

ans, carrying a large red flag and shouting battle-cries.

A local source says the commandos searched houses, including the home for older people, confiscated photos of the Dalai Lama, and put up portraits of China’s leaders on the walls. Authorities detained several Tibetan residents who had posted notes on social media expressing concern about Tenzin Nyima’s death. Their identities and whereabouts are unknown. Local residents have also been required to download an app to their phones, giving officials access to the user’s data.

This “clean-up” operation took place one day after the county’s top official, Communist Party Secretary Yang Mingguang, visited Wonpo to inspect “recent key tasks” in the town. Yang had given “in-depth guidance” to monks at the local monastery and told the town’s police

- Human Rights Watch, 7 April 2021 to “strengthen key tasks to ensure social stability in the near future.”

Since then, officials have announced that anyone possessing or displaying images of the Dalai Lama would be liable to criminal prosecution and would have to repay in full any assistance or funds received from the government. At a public meeting on March 17, officials required attendees to sign a five-point document undertaking not to keep or distribute pictures of the Dalai Lama and agreeing to “follow the Party and oppose any illegal activity.”

Tibetans who distribute unofficial news about their situation risk severe punishment, especially if that information is sent outside the country. Apart from photos of police helping older citizens, future news from Wonpo is likely to be scarce.

Parliamentarians Geshe Gangri and Namgyal Qusar Sworn in

In accordance with Article 57, clause (I) (II) and Article 47 of the Charter of Tibetans-in-Exile, Deputy Speaker Acharya Yeshe Phuntsok administered the oath of office to the new Parliament members Ven. Geshe Gangri of Domey Province and Mr. Namgyal Qusar of U-Tsang province for the 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

Following the resignation of the Speaker Mr. Pema Jungney and former Parliamentarian Mr Lobsang Choejor of the 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, the replacement of the Parliamentarians was made from a reserve waiting list maintained by the Central Tibetan Election Commission for the concerned constituency on the basis of the required minimum number of votes won by the candidates who did not make it to the Parliament during the last general election and who had the highest number of votes among those in the existing reserve list.

The swearing-in ceremony for the two Members of the Parliament was held, in the presence of the standing committee members of the 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and Parliamentary staff members, at the Tibetan Parliamentary secretariat on 14 April.

Central Tibetan Administration Mourns Demise of CTA Legal Advisor Late Shri J. M Mukhi



Senior Supreme Court Advocate, former Legal Advisor to Ministry of External Affairs and CTA legal advisor, Shri J.M. Mukhi (1928-2021)

The President of Central Tibetan Administration Dr Lobsang Sangay offered his condolence on the demise of Senior Supreme Court Advocate, former Legal Advisor to Ministry of External Affairs and CTA legal advisor, Shri J.M. Mukhi, on 25 March. Shri Mukhi passed away on 22 March.

“It is with profound sadness that we mourn the passing away of Mr J.M. Mukhi, a legal luminary of global repute and a lifelong friend and supporter of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetan people,” said President Dr Lobsang Sangay.

“On behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration and the Tibetan people, I offer our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.”

For decades on, Mr Mukhi Ji assisted the Central Tibetan Administration on a range of legal matters as its legal advisor and remained one of the longest supporters of the Tibetan cause. He was also a father figure for countless Tibetan students pursuing a career in law whom he mentored and guided as his own.

“Mr Mukhi’s support to the Tibetan cause and the people has been longstanding and will always be remembered by the Tibetan people with the deepest affection and gratitude,” Dr Sangay said.

The Tibetan Parliament also expressed its sadness and condolences at the demise of Shri J M Mukhi.

In a condolence letter addressed to J M Mukhi’s wife Vijaya Mukhi on 26 March, Speaker Pema Jungney wrote:

“We are deeply saddened to learn the demise of your beloved husband Advocate of Indian Supreme Court late Shri. J.M Mukhi Ji, a Former Legal Advisor for the Tibetan Government in Exile since the 1970s.”

“He has been a prominent Lawyer in the Indian Community and also helped the Tibetans through his profession. Particularly, He assisted the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission in the early days of establishment in exile with the formation of the laws and rules.”

“Late Advocate J.M Mukhi trained many Tibetan lawyers and many Tibetan lawyers had the privilege of doing internship under his expertise. He also assisted many high-level CTA cases. We are grateful and indebted for all the support and assistance that he has rendered towards us.”

“Our Parliament delegation had the privilege to meet Advocate Shri J.M Mukhi several times in Delhi. On behalf of the 16th Tibetan Parliament in Exile, I would like to convey my deepest condolences and prayers for the departed soul. I send you and your family strength during this difficult time.”

Late Mr Mukhi was cremated this

Wednesday in Delhi. Representative Ngodup Dongchung and Secretary Dhondup Gyalpo of the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, New Delhi attended the ceremony and paid their respects. Coordinator Jigme Tsultrim and staff of ITCO attended the prayer session antim ardas today.

Mr Jai Mangharam Mukhi, born in 1928, completed his matriculation at the tender age of 13, then went on to study Law, Political Science, International Law and International Relations at the University of Bombay, the London School of Economics, and the University of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College. He was called to the English Bar at Lincoln’s Inn. Mr Mukhi was the Chair of a UN Committee that investigated the infiltration of the Viet Cong into South Vietnam. Later he was appointed Legal Counsel to assist India at the International Court of Justice after India was sued by Portugal for the passage of rights into Goa, a case that India won. Mr Mukhi was invited to write the first Constitution for Ghana after its independence in 1963, which was selected over several other options. However, one of Mr Mukhi’s deepest love and most abiding concern was for the Tibetan people, and he assisted the Bureau on a range of legal matters. In 2016, Mr Mukhi was the inspiration in setting up a Scholarship for Tibetan students to study as visiting members at the University of Oxford, UK.

Mr Mukhi passed away on Monday, 22 March and is survived by his beloved wife, three children, and four grandchildren.

“On some days I think it would be better if there were no religions. All religions and all scriptures conceal the potential for violence. That is why we need secular ethics beyond all religions. It is more important for schools to have classes on ethics than religion. Why? Because it’s more important for humanity’s survival to be aware of our commonalities than to constantly emphasize what divides us.”

- His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

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QUOTES

“At a fundamental level, we are all the same as human beings. There may be minor differences of the colour of our skin, the shape of our eyes or the size of our noses— but when it comes to our emotions and our consciousness, we are the same”

- His Holiness the Dalai Lama during a virtual conversation with guests of the French ‘Be the Love’ programme and the Canadian ‘One Better World Collective’ on April 12, 2021.

“Sometimes our sense of concern for the wider community has declined and we have focussed on a narrower group in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’. This has led us to fight and kill each other. But today there are no grounds for thoughts of ‘us’ and ‘them’. All seven billion of us not only have to live together, we have to help each other. It’s not about God or the Buddha, it means regarding all human beings as our brothers and sisters. It’s about cultivating warm-heartedness”

- His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking to the virtual audience from the Baltic States from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on April 2, 2021.

“We stand united with our brothers and sisters in Tibet, especially with the political prisoners who remain resolute despite the inhumane treatment and torture they suffer in Chinese prisons. We welcome the recent news of the release of Tibetan language advocate Tashi Wangchuk after a five-year sentence. We call on the Chinese government to release all the political prisoners of conscience, including the 11th Panchen Lama”

- CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay in the Kashag’s official statement to commemorate the 62nd Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day on 10 March 2021.