



# TIBETAN BULLETIN

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION

VOLUME 25- ISSUE 3

MAY - JUNE 2021

## Focus

The Question of Tibet-Xinjiang Equivalence:  
China's Recent Policies in Its Far West

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## Feature

Creating Hope—His Holiness the Dalai Lama's conversation with Pico Iyer

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## World Press

Do Nothing: Civil Disobedience In China

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Tibetan Bulletin is an official bi-monthly journal of the Central Tibetan Administration.



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Tibetan Bulletin is distributed free of charge. To subscribe please email the circulation manager or see back cover.

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Tel: +91-1892-222510 / 222457

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China is on the Lookout for Storytellers and Spin Doctors

Why do humans, and not apes or any other species, run the world? Historian and philosopher Yuval Noah Harari explains it is because humans have the unique ability to create and believe en masse in fictional realities. In other words, he says humans are a storytelling species and it is how humans achieve cooperation and control of each other. This statement rings true when you think about how dictators and autocrats throughout history have successfully relied on stories and storytellers to connect with the public and extend control. Mao Zedong, for instance, had one such storyteller in Edgar Snow, author of the book 'Red Star Over China'. He famously helped portray the Chinese Communists as simple 'agrarian reformers', and Mao Zedong as a brilliant visionary. Through his writings, Snow also helped shape positive perceptions of the Chinese communists in the western world as opposed to the image presented by Chiang Kei Shek and the Nationalists.

Perhaps taking a cue from Mao and touching base with our natural human condition, Xi Jinping emphasized stories as a crucial means to connect with the public. Within the first year of taking charge as China's president, he introduced the phrase 'telling China's story well', a euphemism for Chinese propaganda at a conference in August 2013. "We must meticulously and properly conduct external propaganda, innovating external propaganda methods, working hard to create new concepts, new categories and new expressions that integrate the Chinese and the foreign, telling China's story well, communicating China's voice well," he said. However, it was easier said than done.

Almost nine years have gone since Xi took power and made that announcement. China's global image has only gotten bad to worse since

then. According to the Pew Research Center, views of China have grown more negative in recent years across many advanced economies. In countries like the US, UK, India, and Germany, unfavourable views of China have reached the highest level in decades. The immediate cause of the surge in negative attitude was China's botched handling of the pandemic and its deliberate attempts in the initial stages to mislead the world on the origins of the virus and extent of the spread. At the same time, China's rising aggressive diplomacy - nicknamed wolf warrior - has invited the derision of the international community. In India, China's belligerent postures at the border and fatal clashes resulted in record levels of negative attitude towards China unheard of since the Sino-Indian war of 1962. In addition to these, the ongoing repression and violent abuse of human rights in Tibet, Hong Kong, and East Turkestan by Chinese authorities painted a cold and nasty image of the country. It is obvious from these developments that China, in its attempt to tell stories, seems to have lost the plot.

In response to these negative portrayals, China has recently reinvigorated its storytelling campaign. In June this year during a meeting with senior officials, Xi once again emphasised the importance of presenting a 'credible, lovable, and respectable China'. In the same month, China Daily, an official mouthpiece of the Chinese government, launched the Edgar Snow Newsroom to 'better tell the China story and the story of the Chinese communist party'. Zhou Shuchun, editor of the China Daily, explained that "the newsroom will give more platforms and opportunities to our international friends" "for recording the wonderful China story and revealing a rich, varied, and multidimensional image of China." In other words, China is inviting modern versions of Edgar Snow to tell its story. China also seems to have co-

opted a barrage of social media stars – influencers as they are called – to shape public opinion. It has started cultivating people with the talent, influence and the right ideological alignment to paint a softer image of China's regime today, as Edgar Snow did to Mao's regime.

However, as always, there is a strange and terrible paradox at the heart of China's call for storytellers i.e. not every story teller is welcomed. In the past 18 months alone, China has expelled at least a dozen foreign journalists from the country. Numerous other journalists have also reported harassment from authorities for 'rumour mongering', another euphemism for factually reporting the situation under CPC rule. In truth, China wasn't looking for storytellers with a penchant for telling the truth. It is only looking for those who would amplify its propaganda, and flip, revise and even gleefully dismiss the real situation inside China particularly in places like Tibet and East Turkestan.

To present a softer and respectable image, China should understand that its own action is the key. By focusing on its actions and reforming its harsh policies, China can change the narrative. Doing otherwise, like co-opting biased storytellers without taking a look at its harsh actions and rhetoric, is akin to putting the cart before the horse and will only backfire. The selective inattention paid to the genuine grievances of the people especially Tibetans and Uyghurs will only enflame the already fertile tensions in these places. Focusing on storytellers is not only superficial, but also counterproductive. To tell the China story, the story should be accurate, fair, and just. Only then, will China succeed in its attempts of an image makeover.

Jamphel Shonu  
Editor

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## China Arrests Tibetans in Driru for Contacting Tibetans in Exile

Several Tibetans in Driru county, Nagchu, in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) have been arrested in April by Chinese authorities. While one Tibetan, Gyajin, has been identified, the names of others are not known at the time.

The Chinese authorities arrested Gyajin, a 44-year-old and a father of four, on account of speaking to Tibetans living in exile. Gyajin hails from Meri (མེ་རི་)



Security forces riot shields driru tibet

) village, Tsala (ཙ་ལ་) township, Driru county, Nagchu prefecture. According to the source, Gyajin would often encourage other Tibetans to study and preserve the Tibetan language and to maintain unity amongst each other. He also promoted the protection of the fragile Tibetan environment.

In the last decade, widespread protests against the Chinese authorities have swept through Driru County making it one of the regions that has seen frequent protests against the Chinese rule. Hence, security is specially tight and information on the situation inside the area is hard to come by. Due to massive surveillance in the area, it is extremely difficult to get immediate news from Driru to outside Tibet.

The latest news reported on Driru was the death of Kunchok Jinpa, who passed away due to tortures injuries sustained in the Chinese prison. In August 2020, Lhamo, a 36-year-old mother of three from Driru county, also died due to torture in Chinese custody.

## OOT London Hosts First in-person Conference: 'Tibetan Plateau Addressing Third Pole Climate Crisis'

As part of its campaign in the run-up to UN COP26 in Glasgow, the Office of Tibet, London organised a two-day Environment conference on "The Tibetan Plateau, Addressing the Third Pole Climate Crisis" on 25 – 26 June.

The "The Tibetan Plateau, Addressing the Third Pole Climate Crisis" hosted at the Royal Geographical Society, London, is the first in-person event since the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world in January last year, disrupting all major political calendars and activities worldwide. The conference was hosted in compliance with the COVID-regulations in the UK.

The conference aims to raise awareness of the climate crisis on the Tibetan plateau and urge world leaders to prioritise the crisis on the Tibetan plateau



in the international discourse and tackle climate change at COP26. The Tibetan Plateau is often referred to as the Planet's Third Pole, with the largest reservoir of frozen freshwater outside the Arctic and Antarctic. However, the range of the glaciers on this fragile mountain is rapidly melting.

In his opening remarks, Representative Mr Sonam Tsering Frasi hoped that the conference would help shine the global spotlight on the consequences of rapid glacier melting of the Tibetan plateau and the likely shortage of freshwater and irrigation water supply in Asia.

## Representative Arya meets Japan's Former PM Abe and Parliamentarians to Convey New Sikyong's Greetings



Representative Arya delivers a letter from Sikyong Penpa Tsering during a meeting with former Japanese prime minister Mr. Abe Shinzo.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Representative Dr. Arya Tsewang Gyalpo met former Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Abe Shinzo and parliamentarians at their offices to convey greetings from Sikyong Mr Penpa Tsering on 25 June.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering in his letter thanked Mr Abe for his constant efforts during his leadership to raise the issue of Tibet and hold China accountable for its gross human rights violations in Tibet.

"Your efforts have also inspired many other Japanese parliamentarians and politicians to support the Tibetan cause which was instrumental in establishing the All Party Japanese Parliamentary Support Group of Tibet, the world's largest Parliamentary Support Group with 100 parliamentarians," Sikyong said.

Sikyong further said Mr. Abe's efforts to raise the issue of Tibet in Japan have also heralded a new era of Japan-Tibet relations marked by growing interest in Tibetan Buddhism and culture, and increasing support for Tibet among the Japanese public.

Mr. Abe said he always raised the issue of Tibet during his meeting with world leaders when he was the prime minister, adding, Tibetans should direct their

effort to strengthen advocacy in the European Union.

He inquired about the current situation in Tibet and expressed concern over the issue of Tibet not getting highlighted much at the international level such as during the recently concluded G7 meeting. Representative told Mr. Abe that the situation in Tibet has become more repressive and there is no freedom of movement and information as the Chinese government has turned Tibet into a police state.

Later, Representative Arya met Mr. Shimomura Hakubun, Chairman of the All Party Japanese Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet and delivered him the letter from Sikyong Penpa Tsering.

In his letter, Sikyong wrote: "Your support for the Tibetan cause reinforces and mirrors his commitment to truth, justice and freedom. We will seek your support and participation for a more collaborative global network of parliamentarians in moving the cause of Tibet."

Representative Arya also met Mr. Nagao Takashi, member of parliament and general secretary of the All Party Japanese Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet, and handed over to him the letter from Sikyong.

In his letter to Mr. Nagao, Sikyong said "You have been very active about supporting the Tibetan cause and bringing the Tibet issue in the parliament and we sincerely thank you."



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

## Tibetan Writer Continues to Remain in Chinese Prison for Two Years without Trial

A Tibetan writer who was arrested by the Chinese authorities two years ago continues to remain untraceable at a secret location in Chengdu city, Sichuan Province. Lobsang Lhundup, known popularly by his pen name Dhi Lhaden, was taken into custody in June 2019, Tibetan sources say.



Dhi Lhaden in updated photo. Photo Credit: Tibet Watch

The Chengdu security officials have likely arrested Lobsang Lhundup, a former monk at Larung Gar on the account of using banned teaching materials at a private education center, where he was working as a teacher, according to Radio Free Asia (RFA), quoting an anonymous source.

According to the report, the relatives and friends of Lobsang Lhundup encouraged locals to withhold information about his detention, hoping the authorities would release him sooner. "Lhundup is a friendly person and known to many people, and his friends have avoided talking about him till now in the hope that he might be released," the source told RFA. However, two years on, his lengthy incommunicado detention continues raising concerns for the writer's fate. When news of Tibetans' arbitrary detention or arrest are reported from exile Tibetan community, the Chinese authorities tend to subject the Tibetans in their custody to even harsher ill treatment and prison terms, leading families, friends and communities withhold such news fearing for the life of the person in detention.

On 4 December, 2020, the Chinese authorities summoned Lobsang Lhundup's family through an official notice to discuss the case. When they attended, they were not allowed to meet him and no decision was made leaving the case pending indefinitely.

Lobsang Lhundup aka Dhi Lhaden is a former monk, intellectual, and writer born in 1971 at Dida Village in Pema (Ch: Baima) County, Golog (Ch: Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, in the Tibetan province of Amdo. At the age of 13, he became a monk at a local monastery and after two years, he joined the Larung Gar Buddhist Institute in Serta (Ch: Seda) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. At 27, he travelled to Lhasa to pursue further studies in Drepung and Sera monasteries. Since 2008, after the 2008 pan-Tibet protests against the Chinese government, he travelled widely to various places in Tibet to record the observations of fellow Tibetans about the protests. Lhundup has written and published a number of books and articles. He has a wife and a daughter.

## Election Commission Appeals Elected MPs to take Oath of Office in Abidance to the Charter

Election Commissioner Wangdu Tsering Pesur issued a five-point clarification in a press conference on Friday 18 June, addressing the Parliamentary stalemate in the election of Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

Quoting Article 53 of the Tibetan Electoral Rules and Regulations, he said the electoral process had effectively ended when the final election results were declared. Furthermore, the Election Commission had fulfilled the responsibility of overseeing the arrangements for the election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker in accordance with Article 55 to 60.

However, he said, the ongoing stalemate necessitated a clarification as it concerns the implementation of Article 45 of the Tibetan Charter.



Chief Election Commission issues 5-point clarification on Parliamentary stalemate. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA

“The current stalemate in the election process of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile has mainly arisen due to the two-way swearing-in proposed by the Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat, a practice that remains inconsistent with the Tibetan Charter,” said the EC. Even though a written communication was issued expressing these concerns, the Election Commissioner lamented the “disregard for the Tibetan Charter and its regulations and the lack of accountability” reflected in the response. Quoting Article 47 on ‘Oath taking by members of Tibetan Parliament’, he said the Election Commission is more than ready to conduct the elections of the speaker and deputy speaker as and when the 22 elected MPs take the oath of office from the Interim Speaker as mandated by the Tibetan Charter.

Article 47 states that “the Standing Committee of the Tibetan Parliament shall appoint the elected member with the longest record of membership of parliament as the Interim Speaker. In case, there are two or more members with equal length of longest parliamentary membership record, the oldest-aged among them shall be appointed as the Interim Speaker. After the Interim Speaker had taken his oath of office before the Chief Justice of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission, each Member of Parliament shall, before assuming office, take his or her oath or affirmation of office before him in accordance with the format set out for

the purpose by law. After the election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, the oath shall be taken before the Speaker. In case the Speaker happens to be absent, the oath shall be taken before the Deputy Speaker.”

Finally, Election Commissioner Mr Tsering urged the elected MPs who are entrusted with public mandate and bears the responsibility to serve the collective aspirations, to take the oath of office in abidance to the Charter.

“Continued delay would disrupt the commitments of the Central Tibetan Administration, therefore it is imperative that the stalemate is resolved swiftly.”

## Swiss Parliamentary Group for Tibet Meets to Discuss Action Plans

The Swiss Parliamentary Group for Tibet met to discuss action plans for Tibet on the sidelines of the ongoing Summer Session of the Swiss Parliament. The summer session of the Parliament began on 31 May and will continue until 18 June 2021.



Swiss Parliamentary Group for Tibet meets to discuss action plans.

From the Swiss Parliamentary Group for Tibet, the Co-Presidents of the Group Fabian Molina, Nicholas Walder and Nik Gugger; and members of the group Christine Badertscher, Prisca Birrer-Heimo, Martina Munz and Marianne Streiff-Feller attended the meeting.

Representative Chhimey Rigzen and Thinlay Chukki from Tibet Bureau Geneva, President of the Swiss-Tibetan Friendship Association Thomas Büchli and President of the Tibetan Youth Association for Europe Tashi Shitsetsang

participated in the meeting. The meeting was held in strict adherence to the Covid-rules and regulations.

Wide-range of issues were discussed at the meeting including the situation of rejected Tibetan asylum seekers and the overall situation in Tibet. The parliamentarians assured continued support to Tibetans and Tibet.

After the meeting, the parliamentarians signed the petition for a diplomatic boycott of the Winter Olympics 2022 to be held in Beijing.

The petition campaign is initiated by the Swiss-Tibetan Friendship Association and the Tibetan Youth Association for Europe in collaboration with the Tibetan Community of Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Tibetan Women's Association for Switzerland, World Uyghur Congress and Society for Threatened Peoples.

The petition calls on the Swiss Government for diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing.

## Sikyong Meets Tibetan Media and TYC Executives

In attempt to bolster the shared responsibility and function of all branches of the democratic polity, Sikyong Penpa Tsering held a series of meetings with heads of various other authorities of the exile administration as well as media and major NGOs.

Earlier on Friday, Sikyong Penpa Tsering met with representatives of Tibetan Youth Congress led by President Gonpo Dhondup and Tibetan media from Tibet Times, Voice of America Tibetan Service, Tibet Post International, Voice of Tibet, Radio Free Asia-Tibetan Service, Phayul, Tibet Express and Tibet Sun, at the Kashag Secretariat.

In the close to two-hour-long interaction with the media, Sikyong reiterated the key priorities of his administration which includes resumption of dialogue with representatives of the Chinese

government to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict, strengthening the democratic polity and other endeavours such as strengthening the role of media as the fourth pillar of democracy.

The series of meeting over the course of a week came in the backdrop of Sikyong's manifesto, declaring his resolute commitment to forging unity within the exile Tibetan community through a trickle-down change from top to bottom.

## Sikyong Receives Virtual Audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Sikyong Penpa Tsering received a virtual audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 2 June as he marked his first week in office.

In an hour-long meeting, His Holiness the Dalai Lama spoke at length, emphasising the vital need of preserving and strengthening the democratic values that are deeply embedded in the Tibetan system of governance while noting that he has entirely and solely relinquished that responsibility and authority on the democratically elected leader of the Tibetan people.

He remarked that it is the responsibility of the elected leadership to steer the Tibetan cause and lead the Tibetan people through imminent challenges and must do so in total compliance with the democratic principles and practices.

Offering his gratitude for granting the special audience, Sikyong Penpa Tsering apprised His Holiness with the detailed account of immediate steps he's undertaken in the last seven days in addressing the more urgent issues, including the COVID-19 crisis.

He mentioned the new guidelines and policy issued on tackling the COVID-19 in the Tibetan communities. In addition, Sikyong apprised His Holiness of his efforts and commitment to finding a lasting solution for the Sino-Tibet conflict through a non-violent approach

espoused by His Holiness. Similarly, Sikyong spoke on the grassroots initiatives to advancing the global advocacy efforts for Tibet, strengthening democratic polity, empowering the youth and, meanwhile, strengthening Tibetan unity and solidarity.

After thoroughly noting the leadership commitments of Sikyong, His Holiness expressed appreciation to Sikyong's pursuits and offered him good wishes and blessing as he charges ahead with the responsibility as the Sikyong of the 16th Kashag.

## President of Inkatha Freedom Party Congratulates Sikyong Penpa Tsering



Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Parliamentary leader of Inkatha Freedom Party and Founder of IFP and President Emeritus wrote to the newly sworn-in Sikyong Penpa Tsering congratulating him on being elected as the Sikyong.

He wrote, “It is a pleasure for me to see a friend achieve such high office. When we met in Rome in 2009, you were serving as Speaker of the 14th Parliament in Exile. Your friendship was immediate, and I felt great strides were made for the cause of freedom under your leadership”.

He further conveyed, “I can never forget great kindness towards my Advisor, Dr Mario-Ambrossini, in sending him medicine and giving him support during his illness. Your condolence to me and to his family on his passing were a great comfort”.

Prince Buthelezi concluded by requesting the newly sworn Sikyong

to be the guest at the next opening of Parliament in case Sikyong Tsering pays a visit to South Africa. He extended strength and courage to Sikyong Penpa Tsering.

## Czech Republic, Belgium and France Congratulate President-elect Penpa Tsering

In the wake of the successful democratic election of Tibetan leadership in exile, the third such exercise since the complete devolution of political role by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, leaders from across the world have congratulated the new President-elect of the Central Tibetan Administration, Mr Penpa Tsering.

From the US to Taiwan, France, Belgium and the Czech Republic, ministries and parliamentarians wrote to congratulate President-elect Penpa Tsering, expressing “intensive cooperation” with the CTA and support for its long sustained, nonviolent and pragmatic pursuit of genuine autonomy through the Middle Way Policy.



Czech, Belgium and France congratulate President-elect Penpa Tsering. Photo/The Week

1st Vice-President of the Czech Republic Senate Jiri Ruzicka and Přemysl Rabas, Chairman of the Senate Group of Friends of Tibet, wrote: “Please accept our warm congratulations on your success in the Sikyong election. We believe that the coming years will be a successful and promising period for you personally, Tibetans as well as for the supporters of Tibet.”

The duo assured that “it is not only the Senate Group of Friends of Tibet” that support Tibetans but there are “many other politicians and hundreds

of thousands of people in the Czech Republic who fly Tibetan flags every year to support the idea of real autonomy of Tibet”.

“We are brought together by the historical experience of the totalitarian regime, but also by the legacy of the deep friendship between his Holiness the Dalai Lama and President Václav Havel.”

Affirming to build on the “successful cooperation with your predecessor, Mr. Lobsang Sangay”, the senate leaders extended an invitation to the President-elect to visit the seat of the Czech Senate in Prague.

“We will therefore be very pleased if one of your first trips abroad will lead to Prague and the seat of the Czech Senate. You and your colleagues are always welcome here.”

Members of the Belgian parliament, Samuel Cogolati who is also the Vice-President of the Foreign Affairs Committee and Georges Dallemagne, Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee offered congratulations to the “Sikyong of Central Tibetan Administration” and the “new elected members of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile”.

“We applaud and welcome the efforts undertaken by the Dalai Lama to set-up democratic institutions in exile, and command the Tibetan exile community for once again completing this democratic process.”

They offered him to visit Brussels to discuss matters concerning “the situation in Tibet and ways in which the Belgian Parliament could contribute to improve the human rights situation of the Tibetan people.”

“We look forward to working with you to support a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Tibet through a direct negotiation process between the CTA and the Chinese government in line with the Middle Way Approach.”

French Senator Jacqueline Eustache-Brinio, President of the French Senate Tibet Group, officially known as the International Group for Information on Tibet, said the group has closely followed the Tibetan elections which she hailed was “the result of the work and efforts undertaken by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Community in exile.”

Acknowledging the Tibetan leader’s commitment to launch efforts towards reinvigorating dialogue with the Chinese government, the Senator extended “full support” in that effort and invited Penpa Tsering to France to discuss joint initiatives in safeguarding and promoting the Tibetan cultural identity. Meanwhile, Member of French Parliament Madam Elisabeth Toutut-Picard wrote saying: “It is with great pleasure that I extend to you, on behalf of the Tibet Study Group at the French National Assembly and on my own behalf, my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the Central Tibetan Administration.”

The inauguration of Mr Penpa Tsering as the new President of the Central Tibetan Administration will take place on 26 May.

## US and Taiwan Congratulate President-elect Penpa Tsering

The US State department and Taiwan Foreign Ministry have congratulated CTA President-elect Penpa Tsering who was recently elected as the political head or Sikyong of the Tibetan people.

State Department Spokesperson’s congratulatory message posted on Twitter a day after the CTA Election Commission announced the results, said: “The United States congratulates Penpa Tsering on his election as the Central Tibetan Administration’s (CTA) next Sikyong. We look forward to working with him and the CTA to support the global Tibetan diaspora.”

With the enactment of the Tibetan Policy and Support Act 2020 in December last year, the United States government became the first government try to formally acknowledge the Central Tibetan Administration as the legitimate institution reflecting the aspirations of the Tibetan diaspora around the world and the Sikyong as the President of the CTA.

In another remarkable development, Taiwan’s foreign ministry also congratulated President-elect Penpa Tsering.

The island’s foreign minister, Mr Joseph Wu, in a letter dated 17 May offered his heartfelt congratulations on “your success in the recent Sikyong election. The result once again has shown the world the Tibetans unwavering commitment to building a free and democratic Tibet.”

Commending the compassion and resilience of the Tibetan people to strive for self-determination, he offered



US and Taiwan congratulate President-elect Penpa Tsering

Taiwan and Tibet as “reliable partners who can work together to safeguard shared values of democracy, freedom and human rights.”

Reaffirming the enduring friendship shared by the people of Taiwan and Tibet, Minister Wu said “our friendship and partnership is built on mutual respect and equality. Under your leadership, I look forward to working with you and your administration to advance the close and friendly ties between Tibet and Taiwan.”

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

## Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay’s Farewell Address

Dear fellow Tibetans and friends of Tibet,

In the past few weeks, so many people and organizations from different countries, including the US, Canada, UK, Italy, Japan, South Africa, and India, have graciously held farewell events to thank me for my ten years of service. Now, it is my turn to say thank you.

I thank my fellow Tibetans, both inside and outside Tibet, for your unwavering support and prayers. Serving you as the Sikyong has been the greatest honour of my life. You gave me the opportunity to fulfill my late father’s last words, which were to be of service to our root guru, His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, and to work for the cause of our occupied nation.

I also thank old and new friends of Tibet for standing with us in our struggle.

When I reflect on my life, I am overwhelmed with a profound sense of gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. No part of the journey that took a child from a tiny refugee community in Darjeeling and led him eventually to assume the title of the first-ever Sikyong would have been remotely possible without the efforts, wisdom, and great vision of His Holiness.

Over the last decade or so, we have witnessed China’s increasing power, and an escalating belligerence in refusing to engage in any discussion about human rights and democracy. From my official visits as the Sikyong, I have experienced firsthand the effects of the Chinese government’s pressure on governments across the world to distance themselves from the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), which China accuses as being a “splittist organization.” The enormous pressure exerted by the Chinese government resulted in last minute cancellations of my meetings or downgrading the contact with lower ranking officials.



Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay delivers his farewell address on 26 May 2021 joined by (from left) Health Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk, Chorig Kalon Ven Karma Gelek Yuthok, Finance Kalon Karma Yeshe, Sherig Kalon Dr Pema Yangchen, Home Kalon Sonam Topgyal Khorlatsang and Desung Kalon Phagpa Tsering. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA

To fulfill my mandate as Sikyong, I formulated new strategies to elevate CTA’s profile and to express our willingness to restore dialogues with China to obtain genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people based on the Middle Way Approach. I met with various foreign government officials in small coffee shops, private offices, and other public locations. I gave priority to substance and relationship-building while making concerted efforts to upgrade protocol and level of meetings whenever I could. Finally, during the last months of my term, I was able to visit the US State Department and the White House as the Sikyong of the CTA, and as the legitimate representative of the Tibetan people. These developments, along with the passage of the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020 by the US Congress, mark a new turn in the relationship between the US and the CTA. I hope our relations with other countries take a similar turn.

I’m committed to ensuring the smooth transition of power to President-elect Penpa Tsering. It is the responsibility of every Tibetan to support him in his global advocacy efforts for Tibet and the Tibetan people. I wish the incoming Sikyong and his Kashag all the best.

I would like to thank my colleagues in both the 14th and 15th Kashag, senior advisors, and the dedicated and hardworking staff of the CTA. We worked together through the historic devolution of political and administrative power from His Holiness the Dalai Lama to an elected Tibetan leadership. Together, we strengthened support for Tibet from various governments and legislatures across the globe. Together, we invested in education, ensured the financial resiliency of the CTA, and the Tibetan refugee community.

I am overwhelmed by a sense of pride to see the growing political engagement whether it be in the general elections or in the public discourse. As the Sikyong, I faced my share of criticism, but I have often mentioned that I am grateful to my critics because their practice of free speech strengthens our young democracy. Nevertheless, each one of us should ensure that our actions are directed towards the greater good and the cause of Tibet. The sacrifices made by our elders and our brothers and sisters in occupied Tibet should guide our efforts, strengthen, and reinvigorate our cause. We must never forget the struggles of Tibetans inside Tibet. We must never forget the 155 Tibetans, of which 133, died from self-immolation.

Many elders have asked me for my opinion on our younger generation. Our youth and the clarity of their vision as Tibetans – even though Tibet is an imagined homeland for many of them – has inspired me deeply. I am a witness to their determination, potential, and their focus on Tibetans inside Tibet who are systemically denied the most basic human rights and dignity. We must support their vision and augment their efforts amongst youth across the Tibetan diaspora for we are only strong if we are united and work as one community.

The cause of Tibet is a litmus test for the world. In a statement released on March 10 this year, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi expressed her support for Tibet

and stated that if “we do not stand up for human rights in China due to commercial interests, then we lose all moral authority to talk about human rights in any other place in the world.” I want to express my gratitude and applaud courageous and principled individuals, elected officials, organizations, and the Tibet Supports Groups who continue to advocate for the legitimate cause of Tibet.

The story of the Tibetan freedom struggle is incomplete without acknowledging India, our closest friend. I express my deepest gratitude to this great country and its people for their generosity and continued support for the Tibetan people. India and many other parts of the world are facing an unprecedented global pandemic. On behalf of the Tibetan

people, I express our solidarity with the people of India and others around the globe as we battle this pandemic.

As my role as the Sikyong comes to an end, many people have asked me what I look forward to the most. I look forward to spending more time with my family, especially with my daughter and learning how to beat her at our new favourite online game.

My role as the Sikyong ends today, but my resolve to fight for the Tibetan cause will continue and will remain strong forever. I was born a freedom fighter and I will die a freedom fighter.

Bhod Gyalo!  
26 May 2021

## Sikyong Penpa Tsering's Inaugural Address

We are very fortunate to be blessed by the virtual presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the inaugural function this morning. It is of utmost importance that all of us Tibetans abide by the guidance of His Holiness and the Executive will make every effort to make sure that we follow and act in accordance with the path shown by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. To begin with, I pay my respect and obeisance to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the protector and Symbol of the people of Tibet and all other eminent holders of the Dharma. At the same time, I extend my good wishes to all my Tibetan brothers and sisters inside and outside Tibet, and all freedom and truth loving Tibet supporters. I also take this opportunity to thank Hon. Speaker Nancy Pelosi of the US Congress, the State Department, Taiwan Foreign Minister, Parliamentary Friends of Tibet, Tibet Support Groups, organizations and individuals for the numerous heartwarming congratulatory letters we received from around the world.

•At this point of time following the successful conduct of the 5th direct election of Kalon Tripa/Sikyong by the people to the 16th Kashag and election of the 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile, it needs no mention that the successes of the exile democratic polity is due only to the benevolence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

•During this election, participation by 77% of the registered voters and peaceful conduct of the overall election process can be hailed as a victorious step forward in the democratic polity and this victory is due to the combined effort of the Administration and the general public.

•In response to the trust and expectations of the majority of the general public in this election, I reiterate my commitment to direct all my energies in carrying out the responsibility of finding a lasting solution for the Sino-Tibet conflict and looking after the welfare of the Tibetan people. The visions that I espoused during my virtual presentations



Sikyong Penpa Tsering of Central Tibetan Administration delivers his inaugural address. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA

and enshrined in my manifesto are outcome of the experiences gained during many years of public service, and careful study and scrutiny of the changing dynamics of situation in Tibet, China and globally. I have attempted to wholeheartedly present those policies and programs that need to be done, that should be done and that can be done. As per the written directive of the Office of the Supreme Justice Commission, the oath that I took from the Supreme Justice Commissioner today morning, I shall be bound by the faith and trust on the Charter and shall fulfill all my responsibilities in compliance by the provisions therein transcending selfish bias, fear and prejudice, and guided by justness and well intentioned, beyond pretense.

### Resolving the Sino-Tibet Conflict

1. The main responsibility of the Kashag is to seek relief from the critical challenges being faced by endangered Tibet and suffering of the Tibetan people. We shall resolutely tread the path of Middle Way espoused by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, that commands high degree of support by general population in and outside Tibet and unanimously approved by the Tibetan Parliament in Exile. Based on which, we will reach out to the Chinese government to

find a mutually beneficial, negotiated, non-violent solution to the Sino-Tibet conflict. We hope that this in turn shall set a good example in resolving conflicts around the world.

2. Till such a lasting solution is found, we shall represent the voices of Tibetans inside Tibet and by pooling the resource of every single Tibetan, optimize our global advocacy efforts. We shall monitor and conduct thorough study of the basic issues concerning environmental destruction and protection of the Tibetan national identity inside Tibet. We shall not dither from pointing out the gross mistakes of the Chinese government's policies and programs and seek to redress, withdraw or amend the wrong policies. Likewise, we will put in every effort to seek increased interaction between Tibetans in Tibet and those in exile and work towards realizing the wish of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit China.

3. In future, if and when we need to bring novelty in our approach in tune with the changing situation, we will consult the relevant bodies and decide in accordance with the democratic norms.

4. The Executive shall resort to due consideration, diligence and

## MISSION: JOY - FINDING HAPPINESS IN TROUBLED TIMES



Academy Award®-winning director Louie Psihoyos returns to Tribeca with his latest film, a profound and jubilant exploration of the remarkable friendship between Archbishop Desmond Tutu and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Inspired by the international bestseller *The Book of Joy*, the documentary welcomes viewers into intimate conversations between two

men whose resistance against adversity has marked our modern history. Through rare archival footage and affecting animation, the documentary reflects upon their personal hardships as well as the burden both men carry as world leaders dedicated to bringing justice to and fighting authoritarianism in their communities.

Their greatest defiance of all however, appears to be their ability to maintain a mischievous and playful spirit in the face of their circumstances. *MISSION: JOY - Finding Happiness in Troubled Times* gives a window into the inner lives of these influential figures as they spend a week together laughing, sharing wisdom, and delighting in the rarity of spending time with a good friend. — Michelle Hamada

Directed by Louie Psihoyos and Peggy Callahan

The world-changing work of Academy Award®-winning director Louie Psihoyos, and acclaimed co-director and producer, Peggy Callahan, has spanned the planet. Their enthralling storytelling enabled the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu to give their final joint gift to the world in *Mission: Joy—Finding Happiness in Troubled Times*.

steadiness in maintaining our relations with India, US and the international community.

5.The Chinese government has on the 21st of this month issued a white paper titled 'Tibet Since 1951, Liberation, Development and Prosperity'. All I can say today is that we are open to sending a people to verify all the claims made in the white paper.

#### Strengthening Democratic Polity

1.The preamble of the Charter of the Tibetans in Exile states the realization of the long-cherished vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in leading the Tibetans towards a democratic system of governance since coming into exile and the sequence of developments that followed. Division of power that enables meaningful check and balance between the three organs, forms the basis of a strong and vibrant democracy. Therefore, in accordance with the essence of the Charter, the Kashag shall:

a.Accord proper respect and dignity to the office of the Supreme Justice Commission and extend every possible assistance for the effective functioning of the Judiciary.

b.Be responsible to the Tibetan Parliament in Exile and support all programs of the Legislative.

c.Provide necessary assistance to the three autonomous bodies for their progressive functioning while retaining their independent status.

d.Facilitate the media to become a meaningful fourth pillar by upholding their freedom and dignity.

e.Work out with the Non-governmental organizations in consolidating our effort irrespective of their region, religious tradition or political positions.

f.Maintain transparency with all the grassroots organizations on all public undertakings and be responsible, answerable and accountable to the general public.

#### Functions of the Executive

1.The first job of the Executive is to make clear to all the ministers and officials that we are here to serve the people and they will be directed not to deviate from this primary objective.

2.To implement the policies and programs, the Kashag will give due importance to the experience of the civil servants in our joint effort for desired results.

3.The Executive shall extend all possible support to all monastic institutions irrespective of their affiliation in the preservation and promotion of Tibetan religion and culture as per the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the heads of the ecclesiastical order.

4.With the objective of providing meaningful education, interest of the students will be the key factor in determining integration of schools and providing proper amenities for their study.

5.For the development and proper functioning of Tibetan communities, special care would be given to the poor and needy. Depending on the nature of the program, either Top-down or Bottom-up approach would be adopted for effective implementation of programs.

6.While upholding the importance of both the physical and mental wellbeing of the people, emphasis will be laid on preventive healthcare and providing proper medical facilities to the sick and the aged.

7.To meet the objective of financial sustainability of the Administration and the general public, well planned programs to facilitate enterprise, promote skills and start-ups in addition to larger cooperation between the present and former settlement members will be encouraged.

8.Many programs will be devised to harness the capacity and capability of Tibetan intellectuals

and youth for the larger interest of the community.

9.The Sikyong will be mainly working on resolving the Sino-Tibet conflict, reaching out to governments and building closer relations between the Administration and the public.

10.The ministers shall accomplish their job as per their portfolio and as stated, shall not cause any reason for concern to His Holiness the Dalai Lama while carrying out their responsibilities.

11.To develop well-defined programs and for effective implementation, a complete understanding of the community is inevitable. Therefore, demographic census would be launched as soon as possible.

#### Appeal and prayers

1.It is but natural to have differences of opinion in highly contested democratic elections. However, personal prejudices should not be made public issues and likewise, differences in public affairs should not assume personal grudges. We should realize and recognize our true opponent. We lost our country and are political refugees. We all share the common goal of resolving the Sino-Tibet conflict. To resolve issues and disputes within the community, all of us have the right and the means to resolve such issues as per norms, rules and regulations. The executive shall not only respect the right to freedom of expression and listen to reasonable opinions and but also respond appropriately. I earnestly request the general public for better cooperation and responsibility.

2.As I have stated before, if we reach a stage where the elements of Equitable Justice while upholding the rule of law, Cooperative Effort of each one of us and Moving Forward with the objective of progressive future were to be met, we can be assured of moving in the right direction of fulfilling our responsibility for resolving the Sino-Tibet-conflict and taking care of the

welfare of our community. With this in view, from today onwards, we will take a new step in opening a new chapter in the course of struggle.

3.On the 23rd of this month, a severe earthquake shook Golog region in Tibet. We express our solidarity with all the Tibetans who have been injured or lost their property due to the natural disaster.

4.One of the first task of the Administration would be to look into what more can be done to contain the

spread of Covid-19 within the Tibetan Communities in India and Nepal. We will review the structure of the Covid Task Force both at the Central and local level and take all possible remedial measures. I will be issuing a statement on remedial measures and guidelines by the Administration in a day or two.

5.To conclude, I take this opportunity to thank all freedom loving governments, parliaments and Tibet supporters around the world and in particular, India and the United States for their love and support for Tibet and

the Tibetan people till now. Your support is a source of inspiration for all of us in Tibet and in exile. Therefore, I appeal to you to continue to support us till a lasting solution is found.

6.Finally, May His Holiness live very long and may all his wishes be fulfilled effortlessly. May a day arise when the Tibetans in Tibet and in exile rejoice in reunion.

Penpa Tsering  
Sikyong  
27th May 2021

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Message for Buddha Purnima / Vesak

On this auspicious occasion, when we commemorate the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and entering into Mahaparinirvana, I offer my greetings to fellow Buddhists all over the world.

Buddha Shakyamuni took birth as a prince of the Shakya clan in ancient India about 2600 years ago. The Pali and Sanskrit Traditions declare that the Buddha attained enlightenment at dawn of the full moon day that we call Buddha Purnima. Both the traditions agree that he was not enlightened from the beginning but became the Buddha through meeting the right conditions and striving to accumulate the two stores of merit and wisdom. According to the Sanskrit Tradition, he had to do that for many aeons and entailed his manifesting the four bodies of a Buddha—the Natural Truth Body, the Wisdom Truth Body, the Complete Enjoyment Body and the Emanation Body.

A Buddha's complete absorption in meditation on emptiness is the Wisdom Truth Body, from which he manifests in different forms. The Complete Enjoyment Body appears to Arya Bodhisattvas, while the Emanation Body is visible to all. Buddha Shakyamuni

was a Supreme Emanation Body, the source of a continuous flow of activities to benefit sentient beings.

The Buddha's teaching is essentially practical. It is not just for one group of people or one country, but for all sentient beings. People can follow this path according to their ability and inclination. I, for instance, started my Buddhist education as a child and although I am now nearly 86 years old, I am still learning. Therefore, whenever I can, I encourage Buddhists I meet to be 21st century Buddhists, to discover what the teaching really means and to put it into effect. This entails listening and reading, thinking about what you have heard and read and making yourself deeply familiar with it.

Although our world has changed substantially since the time of the Buddha, the essence of his teaching remains as relevant today as it was 2600 years ago. Both the Pali Tradition and Sanskrit Tradition possess methods for attaining liberation from ignorance and suffering. The Buddha's advice, stated simply, was to avoid harming others and to help them whenever we can and in whatever way possible.

We can begin to do this by recognising that everyone else is just like us in that they want happiness and dislike suffering. Seeking joy and freedom from suffering is the birth-right of all beings. But personal happiness very much depends on how we relate to others. By developing a sense of respect for others and a concern for their welfare, we can reduce our own self centredness, which is the source of many of our own problems, and enhance our feelings of kindness, which are a natural source of joy.

On this auspicious day, Buddhists will be holding prayer services in holy places such as Bodhgaya, Lumbini and Kandy, as well as in other Buddhist lands. Let us all join together in doing whatever we can to overcome the global threats we face, including the Covid-19 pandemic that has brought such pain and hardship across the world.

With my prayers and good wishes,

Dalai Lama  
26 May 2021

## Kashag's Statement on the 26th Anniversary of the Enforced Disappearance of His Eminence the 11th Panchen Lama

On 24th April 2021, Tibetans, Buddhists and Tibet supporters around the world marked the 32nd birthday of His Eminence the 11th Panchen Lama, Jetsun Tenzin Gedhun Yeshe Thrinley Phunstok Palsangpo, the Manifestation of the Compassionate Bodhisattva Amitabha. However, today, with profound sorrow, we mark the 26th anniversary of his abduction by the Chinese government. This solemn occasion is a grim reminder of the gross injustice inflicted on him as an individual, and to us as a nation.

For 26 years, he has been placed under detention and isolated from the rest of the world. Any viable information on his whereabouts has been protected as a State secret by the Chinese government, which has continued the unabated detention of the Panchen Lama and his family. Hence, it is imperative that we, as a community, remember and strive against this gross crime perpetuated by an unapologetic State, and to share the story of his disappearance that has continued to be enforced since 1995. Therefore, today, the Central Tibetan Administration is launching a book titled "Tibet's Stolen Child: Remembering the Story of the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima", in the hope the Panchen Lama and his family are freed and our homage and prayers, as an Institution and community, for their wellbeing, are answered.

On 14th May in 1995, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama recognized the six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the legitimate reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama. It was a joyous occasion that had been fervently awaited by the people of the Land of Snow and Buddhists around the world. However, just three days after the announcement, the 11th Panchen Lama, his family and Chadrel Rinpoche, the former abbot of the Tashi Lhunpo monastery and the head of the search committee of the 10th Panchen Lama's reincarnation, was forcibly abducted by the Chinese



government. This inhumane action of the Chinese authorities made the six-year-old Panchen Lama the youngest prisoner of the world. Since that day, Tibetans and Buddhists around the world have been living in hope to catch a glimpse of His Eminence the 11th Panchen Lama, one that regrettably remains unfulfilled so far.

The Chinese government, a self-declared atheist government, not only disrespected His Holiness the Dalai Lama's recognition of the reincarnation but in an act of supreme fraudulence, went on to recognize another young boy, Gyaltsen Norbu, as their own Panchen Lama for their own political machinations. Furthermore, the passing and the implementation of "Order number 5" in 2007 by the Chinese authorities represents a blatant move to interfere in the centuries-old religious traditions of Tibetan people and violates international laws as well as the Chinese National constitution.

For decades, since the abduction in 1995, the UN Human Rights Council and various treaty bodies, including the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID), Committee on the Rights of the Child

(UNCRC), and the Committee Against Torture (CAT), have repeatedly called for the release of the 11th Panchen Lama. The UN bodies have questioned the Chinese government on the whereabouts and wellbeing of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima but they have never received any meaningful and verifiable information. More recently, in June 2020, five UN Human Rights experts issued a joint-communication to the Chinese government asking the Chinese government to "provide prompt and detailed information of the fate and whereabouts of Mr. Gedhun Choekyi Nyima." Furthermore, they sought explanation on, "how the regulation of reincarnation of living Buddhas is compatible with the protection of freedom of religion or belief" under international human rights law.

The European Parliament, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and other governments, international organizations and Tibet support groups have time and again raised the issue of his enforced disappearance and called for his immediate release. Yet, repeated calls, statements and communications to China and requests to allow an independent body to visit and verify the well-being of the 11th Panchen Lama, have passed by unheeded.

Despite these concerted efforts, the Chinese government continues to parrot lies. The enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama is a gross violation and assault on the religious freedom and fundamental human rights of not just the Panchen Lama but also of all the Tibetan people. Furthermore, it highlights the grim situation in Tibet. The US Committee on the International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) in its annual report released on 21st of April 2021 attested to this deteriorating state of religious freedom in Tibet.

China, despite being a permanent member of the United Nation's Security Council and ironically, the most recent member of the United Nation's Human Rights Council, continue to infringe the laws and the very purpose and founding values of the United Nations. If there is an ounce of truth in the hollow claims of the Chinese government, then it must present verifiable proof of the wellbeing of the Panchen Lama, his family and Chadrel Rinpoche through its official media outlets. It must allow an independent body to visit and ascertain the condition of the legitimate 11th Panchen Lama.

On our path to seek justice for the 11th Panchen Lama, it is crucial that we understand and remember the legacy of the 10th Panchen Lama. In 1962, the 10th Panchen Lama presented to the then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, the 70,000 Character Petition – a detailed

report on the extremely dire situation in Tibet due to the utter failure of the Chinese reform policies. Initially, the 10th Panchen Lama saw some hope as the Communist leaders agreed to reform its work in Tibet but this quickly took a turn for the worse, with the barrage of criticism on his petition followed by his eventual imprisonment and house arrest from 1964 to 1978.

After his release, seeing the destruction of religion and culture, the 10th Panchen Lama devoted the rest of his life to rebuilding the remnants of the Tibetan way of life. He succeeded in bringing a law which made Tibetan the official language of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region as well as the introduction of Tibetan-medium education. However, on 28th January 1989, the 10th Panchen Lama died under mysterious circumstances.

His death was followed by the recognition of his reincarnation and the subsequent abduction of the young Panchen Gedhun Choekyi Nyima by the Chinese government. It has been 26 long years since his enforced disappearance. The Central Tibetan Administration strongly urges the Chinese government to immediately and unconditionally release the 11th Panchen Lama, his parents and Chadrel Rinpoche. We also urge China to respect his religious freedom and allow him to carry forward the 10th Panchen Lama's legacy. Recently, the US State Department spokesperson has

also called on the PRC government to "immediately make public the Tibetan-venerated Panchen Lama's whereabouts and to give us this opportunity to meet with the Panchen Lama in person."

Taking this opportunity, we express our gratitude to all the governments and their parliaments, international organizations, Tibet support groups, NGOs and everyone else for their continued support and efforts to seek justice for and the release of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. We appeal for your renewed support and efforts in seeking the release of the 11th Panchen Lama, his family, Chadrel Rinpoche and other political prisoners of Tibet and to resolve the critical human rights situation in Tibet.

Finally, we pray that His Eminence the 11th Panchen Lama will soon be able to return to his rightful place at the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery to carry forward the great legacy left behind by the previous Panchen Lamas in preserving the Tibetan religion, culture and language. We pray and hope to see him free very soon.

The Kashag

17th May 2021

*Note: This is a translation of the Tibetan statement. Should any discrepancies arise, please treat the Tibetan version as final and authoritative.*



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## The Question of Tibet-Xinjiang Equivalence: China's Recent Policies in Its Far West

Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) – 3 June 2021

*Tenzin Dorjee is a Senior Researcher and Strategist at the Tibet Action Institute and a PhD candidate at Columbia University.*

In a post published on the Council on Foreign Relations' Asia Unbound blog on March 29, Tibetologist Robert Barnett admonishes what he sees as the blurring of lines between advocacy and scholarship in the discourse on Tibet. The article, whose stated goal is to dispel the notion of a "Xinjiang-Tibet equivalence," begins with legitimate arguments for distinguishing knowledge from speculation, urging the media and the academic community to refrain from overstating China's repression in Tibet.

However, in cautioning against overstatement, Dr. Barnett goes much too far in the opposite direction, downplaying the severity of China's repression and painting a picture of Tibet that deviates sharply from the lived reality of Tibetans. The version of Tibet that he depicts has little in common with the experience of ordinary Tibetans, who are routinely deprived of their freedom of expression, movement, religion and assembly. His description also sits uneasily with the fact that Freedom House has ranked Tibet as one of the least free places in its 2021 "Freedom in the World" report, assigning it a combined score of 1 out of a possible 100 for civil liberties and human rights — by comparison, Syria scored 1/100 and North Korea scored 3/100.

The titular argument of Dr. Barnett's article is that the level of repression in Tibet cannot be equated with that in Xinjiang. There is nothing novel or controversial about his thesis that the internment camps of Xinjiang do not exist in Tibet. So why bother to state the obvious? Because, according to Dr. Barnett, "a number of commentators, journalists, and politicians" have equated Tibet with Xinjiang "in terms of



*Paramilitary police officers swap positions during a change of guard in front of Potala Palace in Lhasa on October 15, 2020. Thomas Peter/Reuters*

mass abuses." Among those guilty of this transgression, he first names Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the outgoing head of the Tibetan government in exile. To be sure, Dr. Sangay drew comparisons between Xinjiang and Tibet. But he was quick to point out where the comparison ended. In a BBC interview in July 2019, Dr. Sangay said there were "detention camps" in Tibet but "not as large" as in Xinjiang. If analyzed in its proper context, it is clear he was referring not to Nazi-style death camps but to the garden-variety re-education centers that have been a feature of China's indoctrination programs in Tibet.

Dr. Sangay's main message was that Chen Quanguo, the architect of the Uyghur internment camps, was deploying against the Uyghurs the tools of tyranny he had sharpened in Tibet. This was hardly an overstatement: before Chen took the reins in Xinjiang, he had indeed been the Party Secretary of Tibet Autonomous Region from 2011 to 2016. Xinjiang specialists like James Leibold as well as rights monitoring groups like Human Rights Watch have also made the observation that Tibet served as a laboratory of repression for

Chen's dystopian vision. Dr. Sangay was simply trying to connect the dots between Tibet and Xinjiang, which is not the same as equating them. In accusing him of equating the two regions, Dr. Barnett basically erects a straw man that he then proceeds to demolish.

Another individual who comes under censure is Adrian Zenz, the author of a report that points to the existence of a mass program of labor training in Tibet. Dr. Zenz, it is worth noting, is the German scholar whose research on Xinjiang was pivotal in alerting the world to the Uyghur genocide. In critiquing Dr. Zenz's report on Tibet, Dr. Barnett contributes some interesting details that enrich and complicate our understanding of the labor training program. Yet the essence of his critique suffers from several flaws, two of which merit special attention.

Dr. Barnett's first error is a conceptual one. Dr. Zenz, in discussing the nature of China's labor training programs in Tibet, has highlighted the "systemic presence of numerous coercive elements." While noting that there were "clear elements of coercion during recruitment, training and job matching," he explicitly acknowledges in the report that there

was "so far no evidence" of force being used. However, Dr. Barnett misses that conceptual distinction between force and coercion, using the terms interchangeably and thus misinterpreting one of Dr. Zenz's key arguments.

In the voluminous literature on the strategy of conflict, coercion is said to operate when the threat of retaliation plays a role in getting someone to do something against their will. The direct use of brute force is not necessary for coercion to obtain; the threat of punishment often lurks in the shadows without ever appearing onstage. Dr. Barnett contends that there is no evidence of force having been used to recruit people into the labor training program and rushes to argue that coercion is therefore absent, basically conflating the two terms. This is akin to saying, "Since there is no evidence for the presence of A, we can conclude B is absent." Besides, in the highly repressive climate of Tibet, the line between choice and coercion is extremely blurry, and yet Dr. Barnett fails to consider the range of direct or indirect negative repercussions Tibetans may face if they do not participate.

Second, one of the reasons he cites for questioning the validity of Dr. Zenz's report is that its release was "coordinated with a prominent media campaign," which included the publication of op-ed pieces in leading newspapers and a report by a political advocacy group. In Dr. Barnett's view, Dr. Zenz's report is tarnished by his ties to the media and the advocacy community. But this notion that engagement with the non-academic community disqualifies a research enterprise belongs to an elitist, and highly exclusivist, model of scholarship. True, in a bygone era, academics were expected to keep the subjects of their research at a distance — though such an approach usually led to less knowledge, not more. In today's more inclusive and decolonized models of scholarship, which put a premium on real-world impact, dialogue between academia and advocacy is considered not only ethically desirable but also epistemically beneficial.

Finally, Dr. Barnett rebukes the

Australia-based hosts of the Little Red Podcast for equating Tibet with Xinjiang in a recent episode on which I was one of the guests. "Tibet is not Xinjiang," he repeats. I find it strange that he ignores the entire first segment of the show where we discuss the historical and political reasons why Beijing's repression in Tibet is different from that in Xinjiang. Starting at 11:45 minutes, I go to great lengths to suggest that the current repression gap between the two regions may be largely attributed to two factors: (1) the Dalai Lama effect, which includes a highly dedicated and fairly influential global network of advocacy groups using political leverage to constrain Beijing's behavior in Tibet, and (2) the United States' global "war on terror" that put the Uyghurs, who are Muslims, in an exceptionally vulnerable position vis a vis China. While noting that the tactics of repression are more sophisticated and therefore less brutal in Tibet — largely out of necessity because of the transnational network of activists monitoring China's behavior — none of the guests on the show equate the two regions in terms of mass abuses.

Even so, the biggest problem with Dr. Barnett's article is not how it misrepresents the Little Red Podcast, or Dr. Sangay or Dr. Zenz, but how it normalizes repression by minimizing the scope and scale of China's totalitarian rule in Tibet. In his rosy view, Tibetan language, culture, and religion are neither under threat nor being targeted for eradication. He insists Xi Jinping's China is merely trying to "adapt popular understandings of Tibetan Buddhism," not seeking to destroy it. He points out that "publications of traditional religious texts run into the thousands." The quantity of scriptural publications, however, is a misleading metric of religious life, which is more meaningfully measured by variables such as monastic enrollment and graduation rates, the breadth and depth of the curriculum, and the doctrinal and liturgical knowledge of the Sangha, etc.

In reality, Chinese authorities strictly control and suppress monastic enrollment in Tibet, forbidding anyone below eighteen to join the cloister.

Tibetan children in Lhasa, for instance, are banned from visiting the Jhokhang temple or the Potala Palace — such bans on religious activity often do not exist on paper and are easily missed by scholars relying purely on documentary evidence. Photos of the Dalai Lama have long been banned in monasteries and homes, but now Chinese authorities are seeking to expunge him altogether from Tibetan Buddhism, which goes far beyond merely "insulting the Dalai Lama." (To understand what Tibetan Buddhism without the Dalai Lama might actually mean, imagine the Catholic Church without the Pope.) Whereas once the monastery used to be a liminal space relatively impervious to the state, now it is a panopticon filled with surveillance cameras watching the monastics at all times. Instead of spending their day studying the scriptures, monks and nuns are forced to attend political indoctrination programs and immerse themselves in Xi Jinping thought, which can hardly be called a "popular adaptation" of what the Buddha taught.

Even more pernicious than Beijing's attack on Buddhism is its assault on the Tibetan language, a campaign that bears all the hallmarks of a multigenerational project to render a language dead and thus eliminate a people's identity. In a report published by Human Rights Watch, Tibetan sources on the ground describe how China's new education policy, deceptively labeled "bilingual education," has been replacing Tibetan with Mandarin Chinese as the medium of instruction not only in primary schools but in kindergartens across the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). What Beijing calls "bilingual education" is more accurately described by the International Tibet Network as a "cradle to grave" education system, where "new methods of 'controlling minds' have been imposed from an early age, with Tibetan toddlers increasingly being subjected to ideological education in hundreds of new and expanded kindergartens across Tibet."

In Lhasa, for instance, parents are required to place children as young as three in these kindergartens, where the children's mother tongue is first

downgraded, then marginalized, and finally banished into irrelevance. By some estimates, around 81,000 Tibetan children above the age of 3 were “in pre-schools and kindergartens” in the TAR by 2017. According to Xinhua, this number has now grown to 150,000, and the number of kindergartens in the region has increased tenfold over the last decade to roughly 2,200. Even the pro-Beijing Global Times has reported that recent policies have “left the Tibetan language in a precarious situation,” as parents complain that “there is nowhere to study Tibetan language.”

One story that was relayed to me by a Lhasa native illuminates the micro-level mechanism by which a language, and the culture it carries, can undergo annihilation. A Tibetan toddler, after attending the “bilingual kindergarten” for a couple of months, came home one day speaking only in Chinese. Her parents were horrified when they realized that their daughter could no longer communicate with her grandparents, who spoke only Tibetan. In Tibet, as in many traditional societies, grandparents play a foundational role in shaping children’s cultural development and orienting their worldview — if children inherit genes from their parents, they inherit culture from their grandparents. Seen in this light, the vast and growing network of state-led “bilingual kindergartens,” which permanently damage the children’s relationship with their grandparents, are clearly designed to stem the intergenerational transmission of culture and fundamentally reconfigure Tibetan identity.

Much of this is underreported in the media, for the simple reason that Tibet remains an information black hole. Even North Korea, the hermetically sealed nation, has allowed the Associated Press and the Agence France-Press to establish bureaus on the ground, but there is not a single foreign reporter in Tibet. Beijing uses big-data technology of surveillance and state-of-the-art infrastructure of repression — including the “convenience police stations” and the “double-linked households system,” innovated by Chen Quanguo during

his tenure in Tibet — to keep Tibetans, much like Uyghurs, in a general state of fear. But China’s ambition goes beyond mere physical control of its restless peripheries. Calling its ethnic unity education “an engineering project of the soul,” Xi Jinping’s China aims for nothing less than to “transform ethnic cultures and identities” as a permanent solution to what it views as the two biggest challenges to its cultural unity and political stability: Tibet and Xinjiang.

To conclude, imagine a detective who, after failing to find a gun or a knife in the house of an abusive husband, decides that his battered wife calling for help has no reason to fear for her life. When, in fact, any number of items in the house can be retooled into a deadly weapon. Dr. Barnett looks for a single fatal wound on Tibetan culture, and failing to find it, is quick to exonerate the Chinese government. Meanwhile, as China wages its multifaceted campaign to displace Tibetan language, erase Tibetan Buddhism, and relocate the nomads from the grasslands into the ghettos, Tibetans get the unmistakable feeling that their culture is undergoing death by a thousand cuts. There is no single policy that destroys a people, no single bullet that kills a culture. It is the totality of state policies and strategies whose interaction creates a complex process that ultimately chokes a culture and lowers it into its coffin, not overnight but over time.

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**Important Notice Regarding Eligibility for Tibetan Scholarship Program (TSP)**



The Department of Education, with utmost importance, would like to once again, bring the attention of all future prospective candidates for the Tibetan Scholarship Program to a new TSP eligibility criteria as required by the US State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Beginning from the TSP 2023 batch, all TSP prospective candidates must have an IC valid for a minimum of three years from the commencement of the program. This is a mandatory requirement and we urge all the applicants to prepare well in advance to avoid disqualification.

Department of Education,  
Central Tibetan Administration

**His Holiness the Dalai Lama Chairs Scientific Investigation of Meditation by Russian Neuroscientists**



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama responding to a question from Prof Svyatoslav Medvedev of the Russian Academy of Sciences and founder of the Institute of the Human Brain online from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on May 5, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel*

Mrs Natalia Inozemtseva, Deputy Director of Save Tibet Foundation, Russia, introduced this morning’s dialogue between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and a group of Russian neuroscientists. She recalled that the first in this series of meetings took place in Delhi in 2017 under the banner ‘Fundamental Knowledge’. A subsequent meeting was held in Dharamsala in 2018. Consequently, Russian scientists launched a project of research into ‘thukdam’, the phenomenon that sometimes occurs when an accomplished meditator dies and their subtle consciousness remains in the body, even after clinical death.

Prof Svyatoslav Medvedev of the Russian Academy of Sciences and founder of the Institute of the Human Brain, St Petersburg summarized what his team have done so far. They have established research laboratories in the Tibetan settlements in Bylakuppe and Mundgod. They have examined 104 monks in meditation and were recently able to observe a monk who was in ‘thukdam’ for 37 days at Gyutö Monastery. They invited a forensic physician to examine the physical body

at various stages after death. They have demonstrated that the body of a person in ‘thukdam’ is in a quite different state from the body of someone undergoing the ordinary process of death. This is their first scientific evidence.

Prof Medvedev invited His Holiness to clarify what value the study of ‘thukdam’ could have for humanity in general. He replied that Tibetan Buddhists believe that people go through a process of dissolution in the course of death. Once some accomplished meditators cease breathing, the process of dissolution they go through includes three visions—whitish appearance, reddish increase and black near attainment. In the course of these three stages 80 different conceptions dissolve—33 during the vision of whitish appearance, 40 during reddish increase and finally seven during the stage of black near attainment.

“We need to undertake more research,” His Holiness said, “and investigate more cases of ‘thukdam’ to establish whether the visions are associated with dissolution of the coarser elements. Since it is observed that the body of a person going through this process can remain

warm, it may be that the dissolution of the earth, water and fire elements do not coincide with the three visions.

“When an ordinary person dies, there is a dissolution of the elements. Buddhists believe that beings go through past and future lives, so there is some bearing on this too. My own Senior Tutor, Ling Rinpoché remained in ‘thukdam’ for 13 days. Recently, a monk at Gyutö Monastery remained in this state for 37 days. This is an observable reality, which we need to be able to explain.

“There is evidence to see and measure. We can also find a detailed explanation of the inner subjective experience of the process of death in the Guhyasamaja Tantra texts. I hope scientists can take all this into account and come up with an explanation.”

Prof Alexander Kaplan, Head of the Laboratory for Neurophysiology and Neuro-Computer Interfaces, Moscow State University (MSU), asked what Buddhist ideas could help Western scientists to understand the workings of the brain? His Holiness told him that in the past, modern science as it had developed in the West had tended to focus on external phenomena—things that can be seen and measured.

“Gradually people have begun to recognize that peace of mind has an important role to play in our day to day lives. Consequently, scientists have also begun to show an interest in how to develop peace of mind. Mental afflictions like anger, fear and frustration detract from our good health, so, never mind about our next life or our reaching enlightenment, all seven billion human beings alive today need peace of mind here and now.

“In order to achieve and maintain peace of mind, we need to understand the workings of the mind and the whole system of emotions. Buddhism outlines

51 mental factors in six categories: five ever-functioning mental factors; five ascertaining ones; eleven constructive emotions; six root disturbing emotions and attitudes; twenty auxiliary disturbing emotions and four changeable mental factors. On the basis of understanding these we can learn to tackle destructive emotions as they arise, even under difficult circumstances. Peace of mind is within our reach.”

Konstantin Anokhin, Director of the Institute for Advanced Brain Studies, MSU, wanted to know about evidence for the existence of past lives. His Holiness told him that he has heard of cases of children who belong to communities that give past and future lives no credence, who apparently describe memories of past lives. Among Indians and Tibetans, people who accept the idea of past and future lives, children with such recollections are not unusual.



Lobsang Phuntsok, a monk-researcher from Sera Jé Monastery in India listening as His Holiness the Dalai Lama answers his question during their online dialogue on May 5, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

“There was a boy born in Tibet, who, once he could talk, insisted to his parents ‘This isn’t where I belong, I want to go to India’. They brought him to India and came to Dharamsala. But even here he said, ‘This isn’t my place’. So, they took him to Mundgod Tibetan Settlement in South India. When they reached Gaden Monastery, the boy told them, ‘This is where I belong’ and led them to one of the houses. They went inside and pointing to a drawer, he said, ‘My glasses are in there’. They looked and they were.

“In my own case, as a small boy, I recognized monks in the party searching for the Dalai Lama’s reincarnation. I was

able to remember their names. One of the principal procedures employed when seeking to recognize the reincarnation of a Lama is to show the candidate a number of possessions. If a child is able to recognize and select those items that had ‘belonged to them before’, it is taken as a positive indication. However, these memories fade as the children grow up.

“Something else that could be regarded as significant is that some children are able to study and learn much more readily than others. This is taken to imply that they are already familiar with the material from their studies in their previous lives. In my case I learned easily, which could be a sign of revising what I had learned before.”

Yulia Boitsova, Researcher at the Laboratory of Neurovisualization, Institute of Human Brain, St. Petersburg, asked if there are external signs that reveal that a practitioner has entered into deep concentrative meditation. His Holiness first noted that two different modes of meditation can distinguished. Single-pointed concentration strengthens mental ability and focusses the usually scattered mind. This is a common practice. In addition, there is analytical meditation that seeks deep understanding.

Single-pointed meditation is also known as calm abiding. The mind becomes restful and consequently the heartbeat is reduced. The meditator is physically relaxed, which contributes to his or her good health.

Geshé Ngawang Norbu of Sera Jé Monastery, where he is Supervisor of the Russian Science Center, asked His Holiness if there is a specific meditational practice that generates similar results regardless of the individual’s own spiritual realization. His Holiness replied that in general investigations of single-pointed and analytical meditation external observations would not differ very much. However, the subtlety of the object of meditation, emptiness, for example, is likely to be different.

Lev Yakovlev, an undergraduate



His Holiness the Dalai Lama answering questions from Russian scientists during their dialogue online from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on May 5, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

student of Prof Alexander Kaplan, enquired if anything like clear light can be experienced in ordinary life. His Holiness first clarified that attaching electrodes to the subject’s head and body to measure subtle changes in the brain or physiognomy should create no problems.

He went on to explain that some scholars say that the dissolution of the 80 conceptions is followed by the three visions of whitish appearance, reddish increase and black near attainment. Others state that their dissolution occurs simultaneously.

“One way to identify different levels of consciousness,” His Holiness remarked, “is to pay special attention to your sleep as a result of which you may recognise the clear light of sleep, which is coarser level of the mind of clear light.

“There are people who, as they fall asleep, can separate their dream body from their physical body. There’s a story from Tibet of an elderly mother telling her son that she was going to sleep for several days. She asked him not to disturb her during that time. Her dream body left her physical form and travelled here and there. This is in an ability that some people have due to experiences in their previous lives. When she awoke, she was able to describe people and events she’d seen on her travels that she couldn’t otherwise have known about.

Lobsang Phuntsok, a monk-researcher from Sera Jé Monastery, sought His Holiness’s comments about the difference between people who genuinely enter ‘thukdam’ and others whose consciousness remains due to

attachment. His Holiness agreed that it was possible that some people’s consciousness fails to depart when they die due to their attachment to something in this life. However, a genuine practitioner is able to enter ‘thukdam’ as a result of daily visualizing the dissolution process as part of their tantric practice. This would be consistent with the kind of life they have led.

Nikolai Syrov, another undergraduate student of Prof Alexander Kaplan wondered whether the different pace of life these days, as compared to ancient times, might affect our ability to meditate. His Holiness felt that it depends more on the practitioner than the circumstances. Jetsun Mila lived like a poor mendicant in empty caves and this strengthened his practice. His teacher, Marpa Lotsawa, on the other hand, lived as a householder, but was still able to cultivate a sound practice of meditation.

Monks should be able to emulate Jé Tsongkhapa’s example of studying the classic texts, reflecting on what they learn and then gaining experience of it in meditation. His Holiness cited the example of Tongpön Rinpoché at Drepung, who was the teacher of Tehor Kyorpön Rinpoché, who in turn taught Gyen Nyima and Khensur Pema Gyaltzen. Because of his strong determination and inner strength, he was able to keep up deep meditation even while living in a noisy, bustling monastery.



Lev Yakovlev, a student at Moscow University, asking His Holiness the Dalai Lama a question during their dialogue on May 5, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

Prof Kaplan asked His Holiness’s advice about using animals for scientific experiments. His Holiness conceded that it may be possible to learn about

the relationship between the mind, the brain and the body using animals. The key point he stressed was that the animals should not come to harm and should be treated with compassion. Such experiments should be part of a broad vision to benefit all living beings.

Konstantin Anokhin raised another question about rebirth. His Holiness observed that for those of us who have no memories of them, past lives are a hidden phenomenon justified only by reason. For those who have memories, they are an experience.

“Rebirth involves consciousness,” His Holiness explained. “Consciousness consists of a continuity of moments of consciousness. Its nature is clarity and awareness. The minds of all conscious creatures are like this. If we try to find a beginning to consciousness, we come up against the need for it to arise from a compatible cause—that is a previous consciousness. Therefore, we conclude that consciousness has no beginning because its source has to be a previous moment of consciousness.

“Although animals may have more acute sensory perceptions, human beings have sharper intelligence. However, it is mental consciousness that is crucial to both. We talk about past lives on the basis of the continuity of consciousness. Our subtlest consciousness has no beginning and no end. So, the mind goes on life after life until the attainment of Buddhahood.”

His Holiness told Lobsang Phuntsok that the factor underlying the potential to combine Buddhist science with modern science is that both systems rely on reason and logic. Science has been introduced in the monasteries. Drepung Loseling has a science and research laboratory. Meanwhile, the study of science has been incorporated into the Geshé curriculum. At the same time, Buddhist monks and nuns are helping modern scientists better understand the workings of the mind.

Geshé Lodoe Sangpo asked whether there are noticeable physical signs



Konstantin Anokhin, Director of the Institute for Advanced Brain Studies, MSU, one of the scientists asking His Holiness the Dalai Lama a question during their online dialogue on May 5, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

that ‘thukdam’ has taken place. His Holiness reported that his Tutor, Kyabjé Ling Rinpoché had told him of cases where a person appeared to be in a state of ‘thukdam’, but in fact had been possessed by a spirit. Such people were easily pushed over.

His Holiness clarified that generally someone who is thought to have entered ‘thukdam’ should be known to have undertaken a good spiritual practice founded on the three principals of the path—the determination to be free, the awakening mind and an understanding of emptiness of intrinsic existence. They should have cultivated a sound tantric practice involving consistent familiarity with the three visions and taking the three bodies into the path.

Project coordinator Telo Tulku Rinpoché spoke on behalf of the whole group of Russian neuroscientists and monk-researchers from Sera Jé, Mé, Gaden Jangtsé, Shartsé, Drepung Gomang, Loseling, Tashi Lhunpo, Gyumé and Gyutö Monasteries, when he expressed deepest gratitude to His Holiness for his advice and support. Rinpoché declared he would be honoured to continue to serve His Holiness as his Representative to Russia, Mongolia, and CIS countries.

He prayed for His Holiness’s good health and long life.



## Creating Hope—His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s conversation with Pico Iyer

His Holiness the Dalai Lama had smiled, waved and taken his seat in front of the cameras, Celesta Billeci, Executive Director of Arts & Lectures, University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), introduced the occasion. “We’re living in a moment that calls for optimism, resilience, courage and vision,” she said. “Who better to spark these qualities in us than the Dalai Lama?” Henry Yang,

Chancellor of the University welcomed everyone and addressing His Holiness declared, “It’s an extraordinary honour to welcome you today.”

“I am delighted to share this message of hope from His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” he continued. “This is the fifth time we’ve had the privilege of welcoming him here. And it is now twenty years since we established the 14th Dalai Lama Chair of Tibetan Studies. The Dalai Lama is an incomparable Buddhist teacher and a champion of reconciliation. He radiates compassion and peace.”

With that, he called on Pico Iyer to open a conversation with His Holiness.

*Pico Iyer: Welcome Your Holiness, it’s nice to see you again. We are turning our focus to hope. What does hope mean for Buddhists?*



*GV Prasad, Co-Chairman and Managing Director of Dr Reddy’s Laboratories Ltd opening the program with His Holiness the Dalai Lama online from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on July 7, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel*

“To put it simply, our life is based on hope, a desire for things to turn out well. Even in the womb, their mother’s peace of mind affects the unborn child. Hope is concerned with the future. Although



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama listening to a question asked by Pico Iyer during their online conversation from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on May 19, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel*

nothing about the future can be guaranteed, we remain hopeful, which is much better than being pessimistic. On a global level too, we have grounds for hope.

“We all come from our mother. We grow under her care. Appreciating her kindness, without which we would not have survived, is a basis on which to cultivate compassion. Experiencing our mother’s kindness gives us hope.

“If we investigate cases of children whose mothers pass away when they are young, I think we’ll find some emotional scars.

“Our lives depend on hope. If you have hope, you’ll be able to overcome problems you face. But if you’re without hope, your difficulties will increase. Hope is linked to compassion and loving kindness. In my own experience, I’ve faced all sorts of difficulties in my life, but I never gave up hope. Also, being truthful and honest is a basis for hope and self-confidence. Being truthful and honest is a counter to false hope. Hope founded on truth and honesty is strong and powerful.”

*Pico Iyer: Can we train ourselves to be more realistic in our hopes?*

“Our human brain, our intelligence, enables us to take a long view, not thinking only of our immediate needs. We can adopt a broader perspective and consider what is in our long-term interest. In terms of Buddhist practice, for example, we talk about aeons and aeons and serving all sentient beings, which strengthens our self-confidence.

*Pico Iyer: Is hope not connected with religion?*

“Generally, religion is a question of faith, but when we bask in our mother’s affection, there’s no faith involved. Faith is something human beings have created. All the major religious traditions teach the importance of kindness and love. Some say there’s a God, others deny it. Some say we go on for life after life, others assert that we live only one life. These traditions propound different philosophical points of view, but they share the message of loving kindness.

“Theistic traditions like Christianity teach that we are all created by God, who, like a father, embodies infinite love. It’s a powerful idea that can help us recognise the importance of being kind.

“We are social creatures, dependent on our community. And as members of a community, even people with no faith or

belief can keep their peace of mind by being considerate, truthful and honest. Being honest and compassionate are not necessarily religious qualities, but they contribute to our being able to lead a happy life. Being concerned about our own community lends to our own survival. The key factor is compassion. Anger is its opposite. Anger destroys happiness and harmony.

“We need a sense of the oneness of humanity. It’s because I cultivate this that wherever I go and whoever I meet I regard as just another human being; a brother or sister. We seven billion human beings are essentially the same. We do have differences of nationality, colour, faith and social status, but to focus only on them is to create problems for ourselves.



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama answering questions posed by Pico Iyer during their conversation online from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on May 19, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel*

“Imagine you’ve escaped from some catastrophe and find yourself all alone. If you see someone in the distance coming towards, you won’t care about their nationality, race or faith, you’ll just be glad to meet another human being. Desperate situations encourage us to recognise the oneness of humanity.

“There’s been enough war and violence in the past. Nowadays, when we face serious problems as a result of the climate crisis, we have to help each other. We have to make an effort to live together happily while we can.”

*Pico Iyer: You mention global warming. How can we remain hopeful in the face of such a challenge?*

“Global warming is a good reason not to squabble with each other. We must learn to live together. We are all human beings and we are all living on this one

planet. We can’t adopt an out-of-date stance thinking only of ‘my nation’, ‘my community’, we have to take account of the whole of humanity.”

*Pico Iyer: Have you ever worried about losing hope?*

“Only on 17th March 1959 as I was leaving Lhasa. I really wondered if I would live to see the following day. Then, the next morning, the sun rose and I thought, ‘I’ve survived’. One of the Chinese generals had asked to be informed where the Dalai Lama stayed in the Norbulingka so he could avoid shelling it. Whether he really wanted to protect me or target me, I don’t know. On that occasion I felt some anxiety.

“Next day, when we reached the Che-la pass, the man who was leading my horse told me that it was the last place from which we could see the Potala Palace and the city of Lhasa. He turned my horse so I was able to take a last look.

“Eventually we reached India, the source of all our knowledge and the Nalanda approach to learning. Since childhood I’d been steeped in this tradition of investigation with its application of reason and logic. Faith rooted in logic is sound. Otherwise, it’s fragile.

“Today, scientists are intrigued by our analytical approach, which provides a basis for our discussions. In addition, we cultivate ‘shamatha’ to achieve a calm and focussed mind as well as ‘vipashyana’ insight as a result of analysis. And besides these qualities we cultivate ‘ahimsa’ and ‘karuna’ — non-violence and compassion — on the basis of reason.”

*Pico Iyer: So many have been affected by the Covid pandemic. How can we deal with death and loss?*

“I really appreciate the efforts of all the doctors and nurses who have given and are giving help those who are sick.

“As a Buddhist, I see this body as something that predisposes us to falling ill. But maintaining peace of mind

makes a difference. Anxiety just makes things worse. If you have a calm mind and you can accept that we fall ill as a result of our karma, it can help.”

*Pico Iyer: Your Holiness you have great faith in young people. Are they the basis of your hope?*

“Older people tend to look to the past, to the way things have been done before. Young people tend to be more open, to have more interest in the mind. Modern education has its origins in the West, but ancient India cultivated an extensive understanding of the workings of the mind and emotions. Ancient India outlined more than fifty types of emotion. I believe that India today can combine the materialistic thinking of modern education with an understanding of how to tackle destructive emotions.”

*Pico Iyer: How can an ordinary person find peace of mind?*

“Modern education in India was introduced by the British, but as I’ve already mentioned, I believe it can be usefully combined with the ancient Indian understanding of the workings of the mind and secular ways to achieve mental comfort. In addition, it can be combined with methods for tackling destructive emotions. When the pandemic is over, I’m looking forward to holding discussions with Indian educators about how this could be done.”

*Pico Iyer: Is the world a better place than it was when you were born almost 86 years ago?*

“People no longer take things for granted as they once did. Events like this pandemic and global warming present challenges that compel us to examine how we can deal with them. Difficulties can make us open our minds and employ our intelligence. The Indian Buddhist master Shantideva advised us to examine the problems before us to see if they can be solved. If they can, then that’s what we have to do. Worrying won’t help. Challenges can wake us up. “The younger generation tend to be more open-minded, while older people stick

to established patterns. It's the younger people who will adopt a fresh approach to overcoming problems."

*Pico Iyer: Some people worry that there is increasing anger and violence in the world today. Do you agree or do you remain hopeful?*

"Last century there was so much bloodshed. But after the second world



Michael Drake, President of the University of California thanking His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the conclusion of the online conversation with Pico Iyer from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on May 19, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

war, former foes, Adenauer and de Gaulle founded the EU. Since then, there's been no fighting amongst its member states. The entire world should adopt such an attitude of concern for the greater good of the whole of humanity. Conflicts and difficult situations tend to prompt us to turn to out of date ways of thinking — a resort to the use of force, for example — when we should adopt a fresh and more humane approach.

"I think that if I had remained in Lhasa, I'd think more narrowly than I do. Coming to India as a refugee has opened and broadened my mind and induced me to use my intelligence."

*Pico Iyer: How can we help Tibet and ensure the survival of Tibetan culture?*

"Since 2001, I've retired from political involvement, but I still feel a responsibility to preserve Tibetan culture. In the eighth century, the Tibetan Emperor invited Shantarakshita, a great philosopher and correspondingly great logician to Tibet. He introduced the Nalanda Tradition, which has much in common with scientific thinking. It's founded on taking a logical, investigative approach.

"At that time, there were Chinese Buddhist teachers in Tibet who asserted that the practice of meditation was more important than study. Shantarakshita's disciple Kamalashila debated the merits of the Chinese and the Indian approaches before the Emperor. The Indian tradition prevailed and the Chinese meditators were invited to return to China. Since then, we have embraced logic. The key Indian treatises on reason, logic and epistemology were translated into Tibetan. This, the foundation of the Nalanda Tradition, is what we have kept alive.

"Nowadays, in remote parts of Tibet, despite the efforts of Chinese communist hardliners to oppose it, study of these traditions goes on. In India we have re-established our major centres of learning and more than 10,000 monastics are engaged in rigorous study."

*Pico Iyer: Can you explain emotional hygiene?*

"It involves recognizing, for example, that the most effective destroyer of peace of mind is anger, but that anger can be countered by developing altruism and compassion for others. Ignorance, another mental affliction, also brings us problems, and it can be undermined by study. A great Tibetan scholar once remarked that even if I'm to die tomorrow, it's still worth studying today."

*Pico Iyer: Is interest in Tibetan Buddhism growing in China?*

"Yes, even among university teachers. We have published several volumes in a series entitled 'Science and Philosophy in the Indian Buddhist Classics' and Chinese translations have reached them. As a result, they have developed a greater appreciation of our tradition. Perhaps they see that Buddhist education is so much deeper than Marxist totalitarianism."

*Pico Iyer: Do you have any words of advice for the students of the University of California, Santa Barbara?*

"This university is important. Our future must be founded on education. We need new knowledge. It's important that professors can conduct research and pass on what they learn to their students. This university can make a significant contribution to our ability to create a better world. Thank you."

Michael Drake, who is President of the University of California thanked His Holiness for sharing his time. He observed that His Holiness has been associated with UCSB for forty years and that twenty years ago saw the founding of the 14th Dalai Lama Chair of Tibetan Studies. He thanked Pico Iyer for leading the conversation. He noted that compassion is important in the lives of all seven billion human beings alive today and ended with thanks to Chancellor Yang and Celesta Billeci for organizing the event.

His Holiness responded with his own thanks and the suggestion that from time to time it will be possible to hold further conversations like today's over the internet. "Any contribution I can make to the betterment of the world, it's my duty to do. I may be getting older, but my brain is still ok. The purpose of our lives is to serve humanity."

Celesta Billeci ended the session, thanking His Holiness, Pico Iyer and President Drake once more and expressing her optimism that the University's initiative 'Creating Hope' will have benefited others. She concluded by quoting His Holiness:

"Be kind whenever possible; it is always possible."



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## Dialogue for a Better World - Remembering Francisco Varela

When His Holiness the Dalai Lama entered the room in his residence from where he takes part in online virtual meetings, he brought with him, and held up for all to see, the photograph of Francisco Varela that he keeps at home. Gábor Karsai, Managing Director, Mind & Life Europe welcomed him to a 'Dialogue for a Better World - Remembering Francisco Varela', the first event in a series called 'Francisco & Friends: an Embodiment of Relationship'. The series commemorates Varela, one of the key founders of Mind & Life, who passed away just over twenty years ago. Karsai invited everyone to view a number of photographs from early Mind & Life meetings featuring Varela.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama holding a photograph of Francisco Varela that he keeps at home at the start of the 'Dialogue for a Better World - Remembering Francisco Varela' on June 9, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

Dr Pier Luigi Luisi, Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry at ETH, Zurich, opened the conversation. He recalled being present at an event in Alpbach, Austria, in 1983, when His Holiness and Francisco Varela first met. It was an occasion that took place in an atmosphere of love and friendship. Luisi asked what made friendship with Varela special for His Holiness.

"Since I was very young," His Holiness replied, "I've had an interest in mechanical things. I had a movie projector that had belonged to the 13th Dalai Lama and my curiosity about how the small battery produced the power to drive and illuminate the projector stimulated an interest in electricity. At the same time, from my childhood I was engaged in studying Buddhist philosophy.

"When I met Varela, I met someone who was a scientist, but who was also deeply interested in Buddhism. When he spoke from a Buddhist point of view he would say, 'I'm saying this wearing my Buddhist hat' and later when he was offering a scientific opinion, 'Now I'm wearing my scientist's hat.' I realized that I needed someone like him who understood Buddhism but who was also professionally a scientist. He impressed

me and I will always remember him. Even today I keep his picture in my room.

"Later, I was able to meet many more scientists. Science seems most recently to have developed in the West where Christianity, Judaism and to some extent Islam are followed. But there wasn't much talk about the mind and emotions among scientists or religious people. And yet the mind is sophisticated. It enables us to think, to meditate and to change.

"To tackle our emotions, we need a better understanding of the way the system of mind and emotions works. Francisco Varela showed by example that science and Buddhism can work together side by side.

"He and I believe we live life after life and I'm quite sure that Varela will have found his next life among my close friends. Whether we recognise each other or not, we will have strong feelings for each other as a result of our experience in his former life. When I was very young some people who had been close to the 13th Dalai Lama came to my house and I recognized who they were.

"Varela and I developed a strong connection and I'm sure that if I live another 10-20 years, I'll meet a child who has something special to say about him. Now I'm happy and proud to talk about my old friend and I'm glad to see his wife is with us too.

"This topic, 'Dialogue for a Better World' is important. In today's world with its extensive material development, that includes the manufacture of weapons, there is too much emphasis on my nation, my people. Leaders have only a narrow focus. When another group of people adopt a different point of view, we too easily regard them as hostile and refer to them as our enemies. However, by and large scientists are more concerned with the whole of humanity rather than with this or that group.

"Today, there is too strong a sense of 'us' and 'them'. There's too much sense of 'my friends' or 'my enemy'. But we can change that. I'm committed to the idea of the oneness of humanity. As human beings we are all the same. What's more we all have to live together on this planet. We have a global economy. We depend on each other. Therefore, we must think of the welfare of all seven billion human beings now alive.

“The past was spoiled by too much violence. But look at what the European Union (EU) has achieved. Longstanding enemies France and Germany were able to overcome their historical hostility and build the EU. Since then, no fighting or killing has taken place among the member states. Why can’t the whole world adopt such a point of view? Instead of only thinking of my nation, think of the whole world in terms of us. This is something I’m committed to encouraging.”



His Holiness the Dalai Lama responding to a question from Dr Pier Luigi Luisi, Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry at ETH, Zurich, during the ‘Dialogue for a Better World - Remembering Francisco Varela’ online from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on June 9, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

“However, I’m just a refugee living in India, a country with which we have long connections. India is our neighbour, but it is also the source of all our knowledge. It’s like our ancient home.”

“Cultivating an appreciation of the oneness of humanity makes me feel comfortable because it helps me feel that wherever I go, whoever I meet is another human being like me. As human beings we are all brothers and sisters. Thinking of the oneness of all the human beings on this planet brings peace of mind because there is no place for fear or mistrust.”

“I’m committed to sharing this idea of the oneness of humanity and a recognition of the value of all religious traditions, because all teach the importance of loving kindness. I’m also committed to ecology. Older generations in Tibet told me that there used to be more snow than there is now. This is crucial because Tibet is the source of the major rivers that supply water to large parts of Asia. Consequently, we have to protect the environment.”

Amy Cohen Varela, Chair, Mind & Life Europe, asked His Holiness why he has given so much time to engaging in dialogue with scientists. He answered in Tibetan, which was translated into English by Thupten Jinpa, that as a Buddhist he asks himself daily what he can do to help all sentient beings. He reflects on a key verse from Shantideva’s ‘Entering into the Way of Bodhisattva’:

*As long as space endures,  
And as long as sentient beings remain,  
Until then, may I too remain  
To help dispel the misery of the world.* 10/55

He also ponders a stanza from Nagarjuna’s ‘Precious Garland’:

*May I always be an object of enjoyment  
For all sentient beings according to their wish  
And without interference, as are the earth,  
Water, fire, wind, herbs, and wild forests.* 483

“Whatever help I can bring to this world,” he added, “I devote my life to that.”

“In my own daily practice I emphasize cultivating the vast practice of the awakening mind, as well as the profound view of emptiness propounded by Nagarjuna. As far as the awakening mind is concerned, I put into effect a practice called equalizing and exchanging self and others. Shantideva had this to say by way of encouragement.

For one who fails to exchange his own happiness for the suffering of others, Buddhahood is certainly impossible—how could there even be happiness in cyclic existence? 8/131

All those who suffer in the world do so because of their desire for their own happiness. All those happy in the world are so because of their desire for the happiness of others. 8/129

“The problems we face are rooted in the idea we have of ‘I’ and ‘me’, ‘us’ and ‘them’. Let’s set aside the thought of all sentient beings and think of at least

trying to help all human beings. On the basis of such an affinity we’ll be able to change the way we think and behave so that we avoid doing others harm.”

Elena Antonova, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Brunel University, London, asked His Holiness what effect conversations with scientists had had on his own thinking. He repeated that he’d been interested in science since he was a child, but once he reached India, he’d been able to meet practising scientists and learned that their understanding of the mind and emotions was inadequate. Where Buddhism describes 51 mental factors and subgroups among them, the English language has only one word—emotion.

This, he said, is significant because some of our emotions create problems for us. We need to learn techniques to tackle them. We need to discover the antidotes and ways to cultivate them if we are to deal with our most troublesome emotions. We’ll make progress as our understanding grows. From this point of view the Buddhist approach is similar to that of science.

“Science provides us with knowledge of the human body and the physical world in which we live. But we all want to find peace and joy and that means we have to take care of our minds. Emotions present a problem, but again the solution lies in the mind. Although anger is very disturbing, we can’t just wish it away. We can only deal with it by coming to recognise what triggers it, what consequences it can bring and how loving-kindness is an antidote to it. We need to take a first-person approach and learn to understand our own minds. Varela recognized the need to combine scientific and spiritual approaches and I thought, ‘It’s true’.

“I’m not that interested in promoting spiritual teachings as such, but I do believe we can employ knowledge spiritual teachings contain in a secular context. Children can train their brains to remember information, but in the ancient Indian traditions there was an emphasis on training the mind. This included developing different kinds

of intelligence, swift, penetrating and vast intelligence which enable a much more comprehensive understanding. This can involve a universal approach to education while having nothing to do with religion.

“We have natural skills and capacities that can be enhanced with training. One thing I am looking forward to when the restrictions associated with the pandemic are lifted is spending time in Delhi tapping into ancient Indian knowledge of the mind and learning to apply the mental training it describes.”

His Holiness told Luisi that modern science is still heavily orientated towards a materialistic vision of the world. Even human experience is viewed in terms of the brain rather than in relation to consciousness. If the brain is the sole focus of attention and the subjectivity of consciousness is not taken into account it won’t provide a full picture of human experience. It will leave out the unique characteristic of consciousness or mind which is the felt, subjective dimension.

He observed that we all want to feel joy, but it comes down to our state of mind and whether we’ve found peace within. His Holiness expressed a hope that science will be able to demonstrate and explain to schoolchildren as part of their education how to cultivate peace of mind, kindness and compassion, qualities that are so important for human life.

“Scientists are also human beings like the rest of us,” His Holiness noted. “They also face emotional problems and seek peace of mind. But learning to cultivate peace of mind requires a sound understanding of how the mind works. Following an analytical and contemplative approach can help to bring this about. Over the years, as our dialogues have gone on, more and more scientists have been paying attention to their own mental well-being.”

“They’ve analysed how anger disturbs their peace of mind. They’ve examined what triggers it and how it arises. Shantideva uses a shift of perspective. He points out that from the point of

view of someone cultivating patience, a hostile, irritating person becomes the best teacher. This kind of approach opens up a different way of seeing things such that real change can take place.

“Another aspect of this kind of enquiry related to emptiness involves being prepared to question who or what is this ‘I’ or ‘me’? What does it refer to? Anger and attachment are premised on basis that there is a real ‘me’ involved. There is a verse in Nagarjuna’s ‘Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way’ that examines the identity of the Tathagata or Buddha. We can reframe it in reference to ourselves and the relationship we have with our constituent parts.

“Reflecting on this verse we can recognise that ‘I’ am neither one with the mind-body constituents, nor different



Elena Antonova, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Brunel University, London, asking His Holiness the Dalai Lama a question during the ‘Dialogue for a Better World - Remembering Francisco Varela’ online from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on June 9, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel

from them. The mind-body constituents are not (dependent) on ‘me’, nor am ‘I’ (dependent) on them. ‘I’ don’t possess the mind-body constituents. Who, then, am ‘I’? We find there is no real, solid self that we can point out.

“We need to take a two-pronged approach, examining the emotions and antidotes to them, but also questioning whether a real, solid ‘I’ or ‘me’ exists objectively as it appears. This will have some impact.

“Imagine,” His Holiness suggested, “that your strong emotions are personified as your opponents in debate. Challenge anger and attachment to say where is this ‘self’ they defend. Eventually they will concede there is no such self. We

can really call into question many of the assumptions that lie behind our misconceptions. It’s not that we don’t exist, but we exist as a function of dependent arising. Objective reality is a false projection that has a powerful effect on our emotions.”

His Holiness alluded to verses in Chandrakirti’s ‘Entering into the Middle Way’ that refer to soaring to enlightenment and liberation on the two wings of conventional and ultimate truth.

With regard to promoting a sense of our common humanity, His Holiness observed that he sees this in practical terms. We share this one planet and our world really is interdependent. When there is too much division in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’, it’s mutually destructive. Nobody wins. If, on the other hand, we strengthen our sense of the oneness of humanity and embrace those who are different from us, we can all learn to live more peacefully and more happily together. He said, this is a simple matter of survival.

His Holiness remarked that followers of theistic religious traditions have faith in a creator God, who they view as God the father. And as children of one God, they say we are all brothers and sisters. If we fight and kill each other, how will it make God the father feel? This, he declared, is a reason why we have to learn to live happily and harmoniously together.

Gábor Karsai noted that the meeting could not have ended on a better note. He thanked His Holiness for his wisdom and friendship, which, he said, has given rise to a whole new field of study — contemplative science.



## Tibet Can't be Used as Leverage by India with China, Needs Resolution: President-elect Tsering

New Delhi: India is now realising that the Tibet issue cannot be just used as diplomatic or political leverage against China, but needs resolution. This will be beneficial for the entire region, according to Penpa Tsering, President-elect of the Tibetan government-in-exile.



The position of 'Sikyong' of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) was created by the Tibetan Parliament in 2011, and Tsering takes over the position from current President Lobsang Sangay, whose two-year term ends this month.

In an exclusive interview to ThePrint, Tsering said the border stand-off between India and China that began in April 2020 has made New Delhi rethink its approach towards the Tibet issue.

"The Indian government and Indian people have been very, very generous in terms of extending humanitarian support for the Tibetans, but not so much in the political sense. Now, I sense this renewed urgency within the Indian leadership and also in the intelligentsia or the academicians that the policy they have adopted towards Tibet or towards China has not been adequate; there needs to be a proper review... Also because of what happened in Doklam, in Galwan," Tsering said.

"Of course (border) incursions have been going on for many years, but what has been going on now is more like a war-like situation that is being imposed by the Chinese government on the Indian military. So that, I think, kind of puts a reset button on how India should approach the Tibetan issue," the 53-year-old leader said.

"So far, the Tibet issue was more for leveraging diplomatic ties or political ties with the Chinese government, but now, I think there is a realisation that the Tibet issue cannot just be used as leverage, but needs to be resolved. That

will be beneficial not only for China, but also for Tibetan people and also for the whole geopolitical region," he added.

According to Tsering, China never made an attempt to resolve the border dispute with India, unlike with Russia and Mongolia, because it has "never treated India as an equal".

He highlighted that the border between India and China, which is basically the border between India and Tibet, is about 1,600 km long, and largely uninhabited. Hence, he said, Beijing has "nothing to gain in terms of land".

"This is not good for neighbourly relationships, this is not good for the region, this is not good for the world. So they will have to re-think their strategies. It will take a long time even in India to have a positive view of China; the hurtful sentiments (created by China within India) will take a long time to heal," Tsering said.

### 'Sinification' of Tibet

Tsering, who has served as general secretary of the Tibetan Freedom Movement, also said China is increasingly carrying out a "cultural genocide" in Tibet where a certain kind of "Sinification" is going on by way of "demographic aggression".

"We feel that the Chinese government failed to understand the real aspirations of the Tibetan people. The Chinese government believes that every problem can be resolved by development, development and development... So, what China is doing right now inside

By Nayanima Basu, The Print

Tibet is the 'Sinification' of Tibet through demographic aggression," he said.

He stressed that through its policies and programmes, China is trying to diminish the importance of the Tibetan language and its Buddhist monastic institutions by way of greater "surveillance".

"This is gross interference in the Tibetan way of life, and also amounts to a certain level of cultural genocide. This is something we have to deal with the Chinese government, so that is our first priority and of course, our second priority is to look after the welfare of our people," Tsering said.

According to Tsering, China is becoming increasingly "belligerent", because it is "fearful" of the fact that people within China might revolt due to the ongoing pandemic.

### Xi Jinping's consolidation of power

This is the 100th year of the founding of the Communist Party of China, and it has ruled the country for 70 years. Tsering believes that President Xi Jinping is now aiming at a massive consolidation of power.

"In one way, that may be good for China, in the sense that one person controls the whole system. But on the other hand, the person also has to be responsible for many failures. So, you have both good side and bad side to that with the political clout they have, the military power that they have. But the only thing they lack is the moral power, and the only way they can gain moral power and trust of other governments and other people around the world is by being responsible," he said.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, "there may be social unrest within China and there may be a breakdown of the Communist Party and because of that

they want to instil nationalism within the Chinese public", he claimed.

### 'Nobody will accept China's succession plan for Dalai Lama'

Tsering, who was born in the Bylakuppe Refugee Camp in Karnataka, said nobody in Tibet or in the world will accept or "respect" China's succession plan for the next Dalai Lama.

Last week, Beijing issued an official white paper in which it said any successor to the present Dalai Lama will have to be first approved by China and that Tibet is an inseparable part of the country.

"They've always believed that they have a plan (on succession of the Dalai Lama), even with the Panchen Lama... They know that whatever they do will not be respected... Everyone knows that China is a Communist country, it is an atheist country, it doesn't believe in religion. But the irony of the whole thing is that they want to be responsible for the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama. While they don't respect the existing 14th Dalai Lama, they want to come up with the 15th Dalai Lama," Tsering said. He added that the main reason why China wants to play a role in the Dalai Lama's succession is for "political reasons".

"Everybody knows that, but this is not going to happen. It would be in the best interest of China to resolve the Tibet issue when His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is alive, because he will be the only person who can convince Tibetans inside Tibet that the middle-way approach is the best approach," he said.



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## Penpa Tsering Sworn-In As President Of Tibetan Government-In-Exile

Press Trust of India

Penpa Tsering was sworn-in as president of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the Dharamshala-based Tibetan government-in-exile on Thursday. Penpa Tsering said he will reach out to the Chinese government to find a "mutually beneficial" and non-violent solution to the Sino-Tibet conflict. Chief Justice Commissioner Sonam Norbu Dagpo administered the oath to Penpa Tsering, the second democratically-elected Sikyong (president) of the 17th Parliament-in-Exile of the Central Tibetan Administration, at a small ceremony held in Dharamshala, amid the restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Penpa Tsering succeeded Lobsang Sangay.

He said his government will tread the path of "middle way" espoused by the Tibetan spiritual leader The Dalai Lama. "Based on it, we will reach out to the Chinese government to find a mutually beneficial, negotiated, non-violent solution to the Sino-Tibet conflict. We hope that this in turn shall set a good example in resolving conflicts around the world," Penpa Tsering said.

He said the main responsibility of his Kashag or Cabinet will be to address the critical challenges faced by "endangered Tibet" and sufferings of the Tibetan people. Penpa Tsering added it is of "utmost importance" to all Tibetans to abide by the guidance of The Dalai Lama.

"We are very fortunate to be blessed by the virtual presence of His Holiness The Dalai Lama at the inaugural function. The executive will make every effort to make sure that we follow and act in accordance with the path shown by His Holiness," Penpa Tsering said.

The Dalai Lama attended the swearing-in ceremony virtually and extended his greetings to the new president of the Tibetan government-in-exile. Penpa Tsering, 53, was the Speaker of Parliament of the CTA for two terms



Penpa Tsering was sworn as the president of the Tibetan-government-in-exile

between 2008 and 2016. He was the runner-up in the Sikyong election in 2016. He had announced his candidacy for the 2021 election on September 3 last year.

During the 2021 CTA general election, he secured 34,324 votes, 5,417 more than Kaydor Aukatsang (Kelsang Dorjee Aukatsang) who had secured the second highest number of votes. Earlier, Penpa Tsering spoke about "resolving" the Tibetan issue, taking care of the welfare of "Tibetans in exile" and pursuing "all possible ways to communicate with China."

He has also said that he wants to "facilitate a visit of the Dalai Lama to China" and push for the release of "Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and all other political prisoners". "I extend my good wishes to all my Tibetan brothers and sisters inside and outside Tibet, and all freedom and truth loving Tibet supporters. I also take this opportunity to thank Hounorable Speaker Nancy Pelosi of the US Congress, the State Department, Taiwan foreign minister, parliamentary friends of Tibet, Tibet support groups, organisations and individuals for their support," Penpa Tsering added after the oath-taking ceremony.

"To conclude, I take this opportunity to thank all freedom-loving governments, parliaments and Tibet supporters around the world and in particular India and the United States for their love and support for Tibet and the Tibetan people," he added.

## Do Nothing: Civil Disobedience In China

By Thubten Samphel – East Asia Gazette

### Something is happening in China.

It is not a revolution, nor a movement. It is a new attitude to life. This new attitude is coalescing into revulsion at crony capitalism and the hectic pace of life in China where money is king and the rest counts for nothing.

This new attitude which is spreading among Chinese in their twenties and thirties is termed “lie flatism” or “do nothing.”

The theology of do-nothing-ism is “don’t work, don’t buy real estate, don’t shop, don’t marry and don’t have children.” We don’t know how many young people in China embrace this individual or collective turn towards asceticism or austerity but the New Tang Dynasty TV (NTDTV), which broke the story on 4th June this year, the 31st anniversary of the pro-democracy movement, says the “trend is growing.”

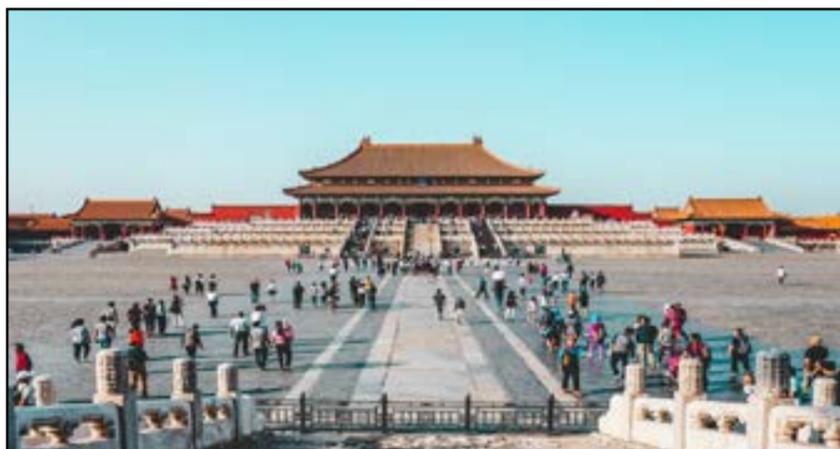
As reported by NTDTV, a Chinese netizen says, “No matter how hard you work, you cannot get rich. You are merely a tool that other people use, and discard when it’s worn out. Think it over; indeed, we don’t need to be so tired.”

Another netizen adds, “The greatest devaluation in our society is not the devaluation of our currency, but the devaluation of our efforts. This is the most desperate.”

NTDTV quotes another person saying, “To lie flat reflects a person’s extreme disappointment in the future and extreme despair in (a lack of) social justice!”

According to the NTDTV report, another comment on Chinese social media adds, “The gap between rich and poor is getting wider and wider.

There are 600 million Chinese with a monthly income of under 150 dollars



(1000 Chinese yuan), so they have to control their temptations and lie-flat.”

What is the reaction of Beijing to these comments that reflect the sheer exhaustion of China’s young in this awesome rat-race and their refusal to be slaves to money?

The official reaction when Beijing noticed the trend has been one of growing nervousness.

NTDTV quotes state media as saying “If this lie-flatism becomes popular among the young people, it will turn into a force of resistance and challenge the existing social structure.”

Another state media, quoted by NTDTV, commands the young of China to accept their fate. They are to get up and get to work. They are not allowed to lie flat.

What is happening to the young of China these days? Once they made the Chinese communist revolution and nearly brought it down in 1989.

On May 4, 1919, Chinese students rose up in massive crowds to protest the Treaty of Versailles that was blatantly unfavourable to China.

During the Cultural Revolution the Red Guards at Mao’s command nearly brought about a civil war. Whether

rightly or wrongly, visionary or destructive, the youth of China were full of energy then.

So why the present listlessness, lethargy and loss of goals?

Growing inequality is one reason. China’s super-rich, 1% of the population, own the lion’s share of the communist country’s wealth. And young Chinese men don’t want to marry because there are not enough women to go around thanks to the strict imposition and enforcement of the one-child policy for decades.

More importantly, the Chinese Communist Party has robbed the most productive section of the Chinese working population of their hopes, aspirations and dreams.

President Xi Jinping’s China dream has turned into the young people’s nightmare.

That’s why this growing social boycott in China today, which if it gathers steam, will have wrenching social, economic and political consequences for the whole country.

By – Thubten Samphel, former director of the Tibet Policy Institute, Central Tibetan Administration.

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## QUOTES

*“Gradually people have begun to recognize that peace of mind has an important role to play in our day to day lives. Consequently, scientists have also begun to show an interest in how to develop peace of mind. Mental afflictions like anger, fear and frustration detract from our good health, so, never mind about our next life or our reaching enlightenment, all seven billion human beings alive today need peace of mind here and now.” His Holiness the Dalai Lama during A Scientific Investigation of Meditation by Russian Neuroscientists on 5 May 2021.*

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*“Cultivating an appreciation of the oneness of humanity makes me feel comfortable because it helps me feel that wherever I go, whoever I meet is another human being like me. As human beings we are all brothers and sisters. Thinking of the oneness of all the human beings on this planet brings peace of mind because there is no place for fear or mistrust,” His Holiness the Dalai Lama during Dialogue for a Better World - Remembering Francisco Varela on 9 June 2021.*

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*“I’m committed to ensuring the smooth transition of power to President-elect Penpa Tsering. It is the responsibility of every Tibetan to support him in his global advocacy efforts for Tibet and the Tibetan people. I wish the incoming Sikyong and his Kashag all the best.” Former Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay during fairwell speech on 26 May 2021*

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*“As I have stated before, if we reach a stage where the elements of Equitable Justice while upholding the rule of law, Cooperative Effort of each one of us and Moving Forward with the objective of progressive future were to be met, we can be assured of moving in the right direction of fulfilling our responsibility for resolving the Sino-Tibet-conflict and taking care of the welfare of our community. With this in view, from today onwards, we will take a new step in opening a new chapter in the course of struggle.” Sikyong Penpa Tsering during Inaugural Address on 27 May 2021*

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