

TIBET

70 Years of Occupation and Oppression



Department of Information and International Relations

Central Tibetan Administration

2021

Published by
Department of Information and International Relations
Central Tibetan Administration
Dharamshala – 176215
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Email: diir@tibet.net
www.tibet.net

First Edition: 2021

Printed by Narthang Printing Press (DIIR)

Contents

Executive Summary	1
The Historical Status of Tibet	5
Invasion Disguised as “Peaceful Liberation”	19
17-Point Agreement: Extracting Agreement through the threat of Force and Duress	26
Engineering Domination and Dependence through Development	29
China’s Intensive Surveillance Strategies in Tibet.....	39
China’s Education Policy and Marginalization of Tibetan Language	43
China’s Relentless Attempt at Appropriating Tibetan Religious Tradition.....	46
Human Rights Violations in Tibet.....	50
China’s 70 Years of Environmental Destruction in Tibet	60
Enduring Non-violent Struggle of the Tibetan People	69
The Way Forward.....	73
Notes	77

Executive Summary

This study conducted by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) is in response to the white paper issued by the State Council of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in May 2021 entitled "Tibet Since 1951: Liberation, Development and Prosperity."

Ever since the invasion and occupation of Tibet by the PRC (also simply referred to as 'China' in this study), the government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) which controls it, have maintained Chinese rule in Tibet by an oppressive regime that uses force and the instillation of fear among the people. Today, the subjugation of Tibetans is pursued by means of increased securitization, intensified surveillance and a narrative on development, all of which are used as a political tool to integrate Tibet with China. Development in Tibet is driven by Beijing's assimilationist objectives and its own strategic interests. In essence, Chinese rule in Tibet is colonial as it bears all the fundamental characteristics of colonialism. It is alien, oppressive, exploitative, and colonializing. It relies, as other colonial regimes have, on the narratives of superiority and virtue of Chinese culture and ideology and the 'backwardness' of the Tibetan 'Other'. It also relies on myths invented to make Tibetans feel or forced to feel the generosity being bestowed on them by Beijing, especially in the form of development and prosperity.

The Party's rule in Tibet is imposed on the Tibetan people and the voices of dissent are crushed by brute force. The gross human rights violations in Tibet and elsewhere documented by independent rights groups speak volumes about the nature of the regime, as well as Chinese government's and the Party's insecurity and lack of legitimacy in Tibet. Despite Beijing's lack of legitimacy to rule over Tibet, PRC is implementing laws and regulations to assert the Communist Party's primacy in Tibetan Buddhist institutions, society and culture.

Contrary to China's claim, Tibet was not historically a part of China, but was seized by force as the People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet from 1949 to 1951. The claim that Tibet was "liberated" is part of a narrative aimed at legitimizing what was and continues to be an illegal occupation of Tibet.

The so-called 17-Point Agreement, since it was imposed on Tibet in 1951 by force and the threat of more force, lacks any validity under international law. Moreover, authoritative testimonials attest to Chinese coercion and duplicitous forging of the Tibetan seal used to authenticate the Tibetan delegation's disputed authority to conclude the treaty on behalf of the Tibetan government.

The report by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law* in 1960, concluded that China's occupation of Tibet "was sufficient proof of the destruction of Tibetans as a race, nation or ethnic group as such by methods that can be regarded as genocide in international law." It further declared that "Tibet was at the very least a de facto independent State when the Agreement of Peaceful Measures in Tibet was signed in 1951["17-Point Agreement"], and the repudiation of this agreement by the Tibetan Government in 1959 was found to be fully justified."

This violent occupation of Tibet was carried through subterfuge. At the time of Tibet's invasion, there were only six Europeans in Tibet. This flies in the face of PRC's claim that it intended to "liberate" Tibet from "foreign imperialist forces." In fact, the invasion of Tibet was driven by Beijing's strategic interest and its expansionist objectives.

China's claim of development in Tibet is characterized by top-down imposition of Beijing's will on Tibetan people. These development policies have tied Tibet to the wheelchair of Chinese subsidies. The rhetoric of development and poverty-alleviation in Tibet is instead used to fuel and amplify Chinese hegemony. Many programs associated with the so-called poverty-alleviation are instead employed as tools for political control, for instance, the mass-relocation of Tibetan nomads. The supposed development is carried out on the back of huge scale unaccounted resource extraction across Tibet. In this process, the PRC carries out unimpeded assault on Tibet's pristine ecology.

Beijing's education policy in Tibet is leading to further marginalization of Tibetans, their language, culture and identity. The implementation of the bi-lingual education policy has led to renewed

emphasis on Chinese language. China's rule over Tibet has created a structure that incentivizes competency in Chinese language, thereby reducing Tibetans to become a second-rate citizen in their own land. In recent years, Tibet has witnessed the criminalization of grassroots movements to teach Tibetan language and culture.

PRC's rule over Tibet is marked by egregious violation of fundamental human rights. In many cases, China is found not only in violation of treaties the PRC signed and ratified at the UN, but also in violation of rights guaranteed in PRC's own constitution. These violations of rights of the Tibetan people are a pattern that has remained unchanged since the invasion of Tibet.

The rights of the Tibetan people are suppressed through the imposition of Orwellian surveillance system in Tibet. As a result, Tibet remains one of the most highly securitized regions in the world. New forms of surveillance technologies are tested and perfected in Tibet.

Even under such repressive rule, the enduring non-violent struggle of the Tibetan people continues to this day. Since China's invasion of Tibet, Tibetan people have raised their voice calling for freedom. The 2008, pan-Tibet uprising has confounded Beijing's assumption that with development, Tibetans will cease to protest. The 2008 uprising was violently clamped down and the PRC has turned Tibet into a giant open prison.

Under such a repressive structure, Tibetan protesters have turned to taking to streets to stage solo protests. Since 2009, there have been 155 known cases of protest by self-immolation in Tibet.

In this study, the Central Tibetan Administration has revisited and re-examined Tibet's relations with China. Areas re-examined include Tibet's history, China's invasion of Tibet, the so-called 17-Point Agreement imposed on Tibet, social engineering carried out in Tibet to transform the Tibetan Plateau into a giant Chinatown and the marginalization of Tibetan language and culture. The study also examines the brutal surveillance state China has created in Tibet, the shocking state of deprivation of human rights of the Tibetan people, the Party's attempt to establish its sovereignty over the spiritual

space of the Tibetan people, the environmental and ecological mess China has created on the world's roof through its rampant resource extraction.

This study concludes by offering a way forward. It calls on the Chinese government and its leadership to engage in a dialogue to resolve the long-standing Sino-Tibet conflict.

The Historical Status of Tibet

When the troops of the People's Liberation Army of China invaded in 1949 to 1951, Tibet was an independent state. The Chinese military takeover of Tibet constituted an aggression against a sovereign state. The continued occupation of Tibet by China, with the help of several hundred thousand troops, violates international law and the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people.

China's alleged claim to Tibet is based on historical relationships, primarily of the Mongol and Manchu rulers of China with the Dalai Lamas of Tibet and other Tibetan lamas. The primary events the Chinese Communist government rely on occurred centuries ago during the height of Mongol imperial expansion in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The Mongol emperors ruled over most of Eurasia, including China. The PRC also focuses on the eighteenth century, when the Manchu rulers, whose empire also included China.

One of the major claims by the PRC is that, "Tibet has been part of China since antiquity." This has been one of the many invented narratives since the invasion of Tibet, when the PRC declared that, "the Tibetan people shall return to the big family of Motherland—the People's Republic of China."¹ Scholars who have analyzed authoritative dynastic geographies, in particular those of the Yuan, Ming and Qing, as Prof. Hon-Shiang Lau has recently done,² have come to the conclusion that Tibet was not historically part of China, and that it was not regarded as such by the rulers of those times.³

Michael Van Walt Van Praag, an authority on international law and also the author of a seminal book, *The Status of Tibet*, who also comes to the conclusion that Tibet was historically never a part of China, he explains:

The PRC's narrative used to prove historical Chinese 'ownership of or sovereignty over Tibet has a number of fundamental flaws. Firstly, it conflates 'China' with the dominant empires of Asia and invokes and interprets the relationship that those empires developed with Tibet as evidence of Chinese or China's historical sovereignty over Tibet. The PRC does this by deploying the traditional Chinese narrative of the

seamless succession of dynasties, all labelled as “Chinese,” thereby obscuring the nature of the Mongol and Manchu empires, both of which were not Chinese. By concealing that China was absorbed, by conquest, into these Inner Asian empires and suggesting instead that those empires’ foreign rulers were absorbed into China, the PRC appropriates those empires to claim for itself rights to territories outside China.⁴

These scholars’ findings are not new. Already in 1960, the International Commission of Jurists’ Legal Enquiry Committee on Tibet reported in its study on Tibet’s legal status:

Tibet demonstrated from 1913 to 1950 the conditions of statehood as generally accepted under international law. In 1950 there was a people and a territory, and a government which functioned in that territory, conducting its own domestic affairs free from any outside authority. From 1913-1950 foreign relations of Tibet were conducted exclusively by the Government of Tibet, and countries with whom Tibet had foreign relations are shown by official documents to have treated Tibet in practice as an independent State.⁵

Early History

According to Tibetan historical sources, the first king of Tibet ruled from 127 BC, but it was only in the seventh century that Tibet emerged as a unified state under Emperor Songtsen Gampo (r. 617-649). During his rule, Tibet witnessed an era of political and military supremacy that lasted for three centuries. The King of Nepal and the Emperor of China offered their daughters in marriage to the Tibetan Emperor and these marriages were of particular significance because they played vital roles in the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. The PRC’s propaganda always refers to the political implications of Songtsen Gampo’s union with the Tang imperial princess Wen Cheng. However, this alliance was a result of Tibet’s supremacy in Inner Asia at the time.

Tibetan Emperor Trisong Detsen (r. 755-797) expanded the Tibetan empire by conquering parts of China. In 763, Tibet invaded and occupied Tang China’s capital, Chang’an (modern day Xian), and

the Tang Empire had to pay an annual tribute to Tibet. In 783, a treaty was concluded that laid down the borders between Tibet and China; a pillar inscription at the foot of the Potala Palace in Lhasa bears witness to some of these conquests.

In 823, a new peace treaty was concluded between Tibet and Tang China, demarcating the borders between the two countries, as inscribed on a pillar at the Jokhang in Lhasa. This important treaty illustrates the nature of relations between these two great powers of Asia at the time. The text was inscribed in both Tibetan and Chinese on three stone pillars: one erected in Gungu Meru to demarcate the borders between the two countries, the second at the Jokhang in Lhasa where it still stands, and the third in the Tang imperial capital of Chang'an. The treaty reads:

Tibet and China shall abide by the frontiers of which they are now in occupation. All to the east is the country of great China; and all to the west is, without question, the country of great Tibet. Henceforth, neither side shall there be waging of war for seizing of territory.⁶

The PRC interprets these events to show that “the Tibetans and Chinese had, through marriage between royal families and meetings leading to alliances, cemented political and kinship ties of unity and political friendship, and formed closer economic and cultural relations, laying a solid foundation for the ultimate founding of a unified nation.”⁷ In fact, both the Chinese and Tibetan historical records contradict such an interpretation and refer instead to separate powerful empires. The late Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, who headed the Tibetan delegation to Beijing in 1951 to negotiate the terms of the 17-Point Agreement, and held senior positions in the PRC ever since, stated in a speech to the so-called TAR’s Congress, where he said:

Some historians claim that Tibet had been a part of China from antiquity, some others claim since the time of Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo through his marriage to the Chinese princess. I do not agree with both these views. When you talk about antiquity, there is no time line or if it is from the time of Songtsen Gampo’s marriage, we all know that the first queen of Songtsen Gampo was Nepal’s princess in which case Tibet should be part of Nepal. How can we explain this?⁸

In the mid-ninth century, the Tibetan Empire fragmented. Tibet focused attention on India and Nepal, and these regions' strong religious and cultural influences brought about a major spiritual and intellectual renaissance in Tibet.

Relations with the Mongol Empire (1240-1350)

The Mongol ruler Genghis Khan and his successors conquered vast territories in Asia and Europe, creating the largest land empire the world had ever known which stretched from the Pacific to eastern Europe and the Middle East. In 1207, the Tangut Empire fell to the advancing Mongols and in 1271, the Mongols established the Mongol Yuan Dynasty to rule the Chinese part of the empire. By 1279, the Chinese Sung Dynasty in southern China fell before the advancing Mongol armies and the Mongols completed their conquest of China. Today, the PRC claims the Mongol Dynasty to be its own dynasty, and by doing so, claims Mongol conquests in East Asia and beyond.

Prince Goden, grandson of Genghis Khan, dispatched an expedition to Tibet in 1240 and invited one of Tibet's leading religious hierarchs, Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen (1182-1251) to his court, thus establishing an enduring Tibet-Mongol relationship. Here began the unique priest-patron relationship (*chos-yon*). Kublai Khan, who inherited Goden Khan's authority, embraced Tibetan Buddhism and Drogon Choegyal Phagpa, a nephew of Sakya Pandita became his spiritual mentor. When Kublai Khan became the Great Khan of the Mongol Empire in 1260, Phagpa became the empire's highest spiritual authority and the Sakya hierarchs ruled Tibet under his overlordship.

These early cho-yon relationships were followed by many similar relationships between Mongol princes and Tibetan noble families and Tibetan lamas. It also formed the basis for later relations between Manchu emperors and successive Dalai Lamas. The *cho-yon* relationship itself was a personal one arising from the religious devotion of the patron for the priest and continued to exist even when the political status of the patron changed. An essential element of the *cho-yon* relationship was the protection that the patron provided his lama in return for his religious teachings, blessings and guidance.

At the time when Buddhism became the state religion in the eastern part of the Mongol Empire and the Sakya Lama (Phagpa) as its highest spiritual authority, the Tibet-Mongol relationship can be best described in terms of mutual interdependence. This concept defined the dual political and religious supremacy of the worldly emperor and the spiritual leader on the basis of equality and interdependence. While the spiritual leader depended on the emperor for protection and support in ruling Tibet, the emperor depended on the lama to provide the legitimacy for his rule of the Mongol Empire.

It is undeniable that Mongol Great Khans had overlordship over Tibet but none of them administered Tibet directly nor did they impose taxes on Tibetans. The official Mongol dynastic history, Yuan Shi, which was compiled during the Ming Dynasty, confirms this.

Tibet freed itself of nominal Mongol domination in 1350 when the Tibetan ruler, Changchub Gyaltsen (r. 1350-1364) replaced the Sakya lamas as the most powerful ruler of Tibet. Changchub Gyaltsen did away with Mongol influence in the Tibetan administrative system and introduced a new and distinctly Tibetan one. He also enacted a 15-Article Code (*Trimyig Shelchey Chonga*) for the administration of justice in the kingdom. The Chinese regained their independence from Mongol rule and established the Ming Dynasty while the Mongol empire continued to rule much of Central Asia for some three hundred years.

The relationship between Mongol Khans and Tibetan lamas predated the Mongol conquest of China. Similarly, Tibet broke away from the Mongol emperors before China regained its independence from them. The Chinese Ming emperors inherited no authority over or relationship with Tibetans from the Mongols.

Relations with the Ming Emperors (1368-1644)

Contacts between Tibet and Ming China were sporadic and largely limited to visits to China by individual lamas of various monasteries and the granting of honorific imperial titles or gifts to them by the Chinese Emperor. These visits are recorded in Tibetan histories

from the fifteenth to seventeenth century but there is no evidence whatsoever of political subordination of Tibet during this period. As the late Elliot Sperling, a noted Tibetologist and a leading authority on this period of Tibetan history writes:

An examination of the events surrounding the presentation of these titles shows clearly that the recipients held power and/or influence in Tibet prior to their being granted. As such, the titles did not bestow power, but rather acknowledge it, and their granting must be seen as something akin to the not uncommon presentation of honors, titles, or awards by one country to nationals of another.⁹

From 1350 onwards, Tibet was ruled by the princes of Phagmodru and then, from about 1481, by the Rinpungpas. In 1406, the ruling Phagmodru prince, Dakpa Gyaltsen turned down an imperial invitation to visit Ming China, an indication of the independent authority of Tibetan rulers at the time. From about 1565 until the rise to power of the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1642, the kings of Tsang ruled Tibet. There are indications of sporadic diplomatic relations between some of these rulers and the Ming emperors, but the latter exercised neither authority nor influence over them.

In 1644, Ming China was conquered by the expanding Manchu Empire. The Manchu Empire was an Inner Asian empire that at its peak ruled over large parts of Inner Asia as well as the former Ming realm. Its second emperor, Hong Taiji named it the Qing Great State.

Relations with the Manchus (1639-1911)

In 1642, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama became the supreme political and religious ruler of unified Tibet. From then on, Tibetans regarded him as their Gongsas Chenpo, the Supreme Sovereign and his prestige was recognized far beyond Tibet's borders. The Fifth Dalai Lama not only maintained a close relationship with the Mongols but also developed important ties with the Manchu rulers.

In 1639, even before the Dalai Lama had acquired supreme political power and also before the Manchu conquest of China, Manchu Emperor Hong Taiji invited the Dalai Lama to his capital, Mukden (present-day Shenyang). Unable to accept the invitation personally,

the Dalai Lama sent his envoy who was treated with great respect by the emperor. It was then that a *cho-yon* relationship between the Dalai Lamas and Manchu emperors was strengthened.

As was true of the Tibetan relationship with the Mongol emperors, the links developed between Tibetans and the Manchu emperors did not involve China. As Owen Lattimore points out in reference to the Qing Dynasty, “what existed in fact was a Manchu Empire, of which China formed only one part.”¹⁰ Tibet’s relations, throughout this period, were with the Manchu imperial court and not with China.

Having conquered China and annexed it to the Manchu Empire, the third emperor, Shunzi, invited the Fifth Dalai Lama for a state visit to the imperial capital in 1653. In an unprecedented sign of respect, the Manchu emperor intended to make a four-day journey outside his capital (present day Beijing) to receive the Tibetan sovereign and the foremost Buddhist leader of Inner Asia but his Chinese advisors persuaded him otherwise. Commenting on the Dalai Lama’s visit, W.W. Rockhill, an American scholar and diplomat in Beijing later, wrote:

[The Dalai Lama] had been treated with all the ceremony which could have been accorded to any independent sovereign, and nothing can be found in Chinese works to indicate that he was looked upon in any other light; at this period of China’s relations with Tibet, the temporal power of the Lama, backed by the arms of Gusri Khan and the devotion of all Mongolia, was not a thing for the Emperor of China to question.¹¹

On this occasion, the Fifth Dalai Lama and the Manchu emperor bestowed unprecedented complimentary titles upon each other, and the *cho-yon* relationship was reaffirmed. Throughout the Qing imperial era, relations between Tibet and the Manchu Emperors remained formally and firmly grounded in the *cho-yon* relationship. The Manchu Emperor readily responded to appeals for help to drive out invading Dzungar Mongols and escorted the newly discovered 7th Dalai Lama to the Tibetan capital in 1720.

Manchu forces entered Tibet on three more occasions in the eighteenth century: twice to restore order after unrests (1728 and 1751), and once to protect Tibet against invading Gorkha forces in 1792. Each time the Manchus came at the request of the Tibetan rulers, and each time the *cho-yon* relationship was invoked. Though the Manchus did succeed in establishing a degree of influence in Tibet during those periods of crisis, their influence declined rapidly afterwards, rendering them unable to play any role when Tibet fought against Dogra invaders of Jammu and Kashmir from 1841-1842, Gorkhas of Nepal from 1855-1856, and British India in 1903-1904. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Manchu emperor's role and that of his Amban was only nominal.

Concerning the role of ambans, the CCP claims that the appointment of ambans to Tibet demonstrates Qing sovereignty over it. The ambans were imperial representatives, not viceroys or administrators, appointed to look after Manchu interests and to protect the Dalai Lama on behalf of the emperor. At times their role resembled that of an ambassador. The amban's role was best described by Amban Yu Tai, who reportedly explained it thus, to Mortimer Durand, the Foreign Secretary of the British Raj in 1903:

He was only a guest in Lhasa-not a master-and he could not put aside the real masters, and as such he had no force to speak of.¹²

The Lazarist missionaries Huc and Gabet, who were in Lhasa in the mid-nineteenth century, similarly described the position of the ambans as follows:

The Government of Tibet resembles that of the Pope and the position occupied by the Chinese Ambassadors was the same as that of the Austrian Ambassador at Rome.¹³

The ninth Panchen Lama, Thubten Choekyi Nyima, explained to Captain O'Connor of the British Raj:

Where Chinese [sic] policy was in accordance with their own views, the Tibetans were ready to accept the amban's advice; but...if this advice ran counter in any respect to their national prejudices, the Chinese [sic] Emperor himself would be powerless to influence them.¹⁴

The references to “Chinese Emperor” or “Chinese Ambassadors,” especially prevalent among Europeans and Americans, is a misnomer since neither the emperors nor the ambans were Chinese. The Manchu Emperors might have been emperors of China but their relations with Tibet were distinct, they were constructed outside the Sino-centric system and were governed instead by the Priest-Patron relationship a construct of the Tibetan Buddhist legal order. Consequently, the Manchu emperors were careful to not appoint Chinese to the post of ambans in Tibet, but instead senior Manchu or Mongol officials, a fact which stressed that such appointments were an extension of the protector’s role in the *cho-yon* relationship, a relationship from which the Chinese were excluded.

The unprecedented invasion of Tibet by Manchu imperial troops in 1908 was a turning point in relations between Tibet and the Manchu Empire. Previous Manchu military interventions had been undertaken to assist the Dalai Lamas and the Tibetan government at their request. But this time, anxiety over British influence in Tibet led the Manchu ruler to attempt to establish his authority in Tibet by force. As a result, the Dalai Lama severed relations with the Manchu court in 1909, and fled to neighboring India. When the Manchu ruler tried to “depose” the Dalai Lama, the latter declared the termination of the *cho-yon* relationship.

However, the occupation of Tibet by the Manchus was short-lived. Chinese revolution of 1911 overthrew the Manchu empire and imperial troops and officials were expelled from Tibet and sent to China. The 13th Dalai Lama returned to Tibet and issued a proclamation reaffirming the independence of Tibet on February 13, 1913.

Relations with Republic of China (1911-1949)

The Republic of China’s position on Tibet was contradictory. On one hand, the Nationalist Government unilaterally announced in its provisional constitution and in communications to other countries that Tibet was a province of the Republic of China (one of the “five races” of the Republic, ROC). On the other hand, in its official communications with the Dalai Lama and the Government of Tibet,

it was clearly understood that Tibet was not a part of the Republic of China. In fact, China's President repeatedly sent letters and envoys to the Dalai Lama and to the Tibetan Government asking that Tibet "join" the Republic of China. Similar messages were sent by China to Mongolia and Nepal. Tibet consistently refused to join the new Chinese republic.

In response to the first letter of Chinese President Yuan Shikai, the 13th Dalai Lama rejected his invitation to join the Republic, explaining courteously but firmly that Tibetans did "not approve" of the Chinese Government due to past injustices. The 13th Dalai Lama stated:

The Republic has only just been proclaimed and the national foundations are far from strong. It behooves the President to exert his energies towards the maintenance of order. As for Tibet, the Tibetans are quite capable of preserving their existence intact and there is no occasion for the President to worry himself at this distance or to be discomposed.¹⁵

Tibet, for its part, wanted the return of some border territories from China that had been taken just before the collapse of the Manchu empire. The Dalai Lama later explained:

Under the priest-patron relationship that prevailed so far, Tibet has enjoyed wide independence. We wish to preserve this. We feel that there will be long-term stability if the territories we have lost to outsiders are returned to us.¹⁶

When Chinese envoys, such as General Huang Musung (1934) and Wu Zhongxin (1940), were sent to Tibet in efforts to persuade the Tibetans to join the ROC, they were told in no uncertain terms by the Tibetan Government that Tibet was and wished to remain independent. Huang Musung was the first Chinese official to be permitted to enter Tibet in an official capacity because he purportedly came to offer religious tribute and condolences for the deceased Dalai Lama who passed away in 1933, an act for which Tibetans could hardly refuse permission to anyone. It should be noted that, contrary to the PRC's claims, neither the Chinese Government nor

its “special envoy” (Huang Musung) had any role in the appointment of the regent, Reting Rinpoche, following the death of the 13th Dalai Lama. In fact, Huang Musung arrived in Lhasa in July 1934, more than five months after Reting Rinpoche had been appointed the regent of Tibet in January 10, 1934.

The PRC claims that Tibetan government officials were sent to participate in China’s National Assembly sessions in 1931 and 1946 in Nanjing. This is false. In 1931, Khenpo Kunchok Jungne was appointed by the 13th Dalai Lama to set up a temporary liaison office in Nanjing in order to maintain contact with the ROC government and not to participate in the Assembly. Likewise, in 1946, the Tibetan mission that was sent to congratulate Britain, the United States and China on the Allied victory in the Second World War, had no instruction or authority to attend the Chinese National Assembly. Responding to the International Commission of Jurists’ Legal Inquiry Committee on August 29, 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama said:

They [Tibetan delegates in Nanjing] had no official part in the Assembly. When the propaganda came to the knowledge of our government, they were instructed by telegram not to attend.

In 1940, the ROC government was allowed to open a mission in Lhasa, which operated on a similar footing to the British Mission. ROC’s last head of mission in Lhasa, Shen Tsung-Lien, was clear on the status of Tibet. He wrote:

Since 1911 Lhasa [i.e. the Tibetan Government in Lhasa] has to all practical purposes enjoyed full independence.¹⁷

Relations with British India (1857-1947)

By the end of the nineteenth century, the British Raj developed a keen interest in establishing trade with Tibet. All the Himalayan regions were closely linked to Lhasa and since they had all gradually been tied to British Raj by means of treaties and other agreements, Tibet feared it would also lose its independence if it did not resist British efforts to gain access to Tibet.

In the mid-19th century, colonial India had a close and profitable tie with the Manchu Empire. During the negotiation, the Chinese representative persuaded the British to insert provisions that assert Qing's "suzerainty" over Tibet. The resulting Sino-British Chefoo Convention of 1876 granted Britain the "right" to send a mission of exploration into Tibet.¹⁸ This mission failed to materialize as Tibetans within their rights refused to allow them. This clearly shows that Qing had no influence whatsoever in dealing with Tibet. The Tibetan government refused to have anything to do with the British and outrightly rejected provisions related to Tibet in Britain's treaties with Qing, including the Peking Convention of 24 July 1886, and the Calcutta Convention of 17 March 1890.

The 13th Dalai Lama steered Tibet on an independent course. This policy frustrated the British Raj which feared, more than anything, that Russian infiltration into Tibet would tip the balance of power in Central Asia. Unable to communicate effectively with Tibet, British Raj approached the Manchu court for assistance in forcing Tibet to cooperate. Without Tibet's participation or knowledge, this led to the conclusion of two treaties in 1890 and 1893 between British India and the Manchu Empire that included provisions regarding Tibet. The Tibetan government rejected these treaties as *ultra vires* and prevented their implementation. This precipitated the British invasion of Tibet in 1903. The Manchu emperor did not come to the assistance of Tibet. Within a year, British troops left Tibet after concluding the Lhasa Convention, a bilateral treaty with the Tibetan government.

The provisions of the Lhasa Convention necessarily pre-supposed the full sovereignty of Tibet and its capacity to conclude treaties. The Lhasa Convention did not acknowledge the existence of any special relationship between the Manchu empire and Tibet. The very act of concluding this Convention constituted Britain's recognition of Tibet as a state competent to conclude treaties on its own behalf without needing to consult any external power.

This worried the Manchu court, which feared future British incursions through Tibet. Britain convinced Manchu leaders to sign the Adhesion Agreement in 1906, once again, without the participation or knowledge of Tibetan authorities. This agreement,

without either the knowledge or participation of Tibet recognized the existence of British sphere of influence in Tibet and introduced a concept of Manchu “suzerainty” over Tibet.

Referring to the British concept of Qing suzerainty over Tibet, Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of British India, explained:

[it was] a constitutional fiction—a political affectation which has only been maintained because of its convenience to both parties...As a matter of fact, the two Chinese [i.e. Manchu] Ambans at Lhasa are there not as Viceroys, but as Ambassadors.¹⁹

Tibet asserted its sovereignty by signing a series of treaties in the early 20th century. These are undisputed evidences for Tibet as an independent and sovereign nation. One such treaty was with the newly independent Mongolia. Tibet concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with Mongolia in January 1913. In this treaty, the two states recognized each other’s sovereignty and independence of each other’s government.²⁰

Another significant treaty was signed in 1914 in the aftermath of Shimla Conference. This treaty was signed between Tibet, British India and the Republic of China. A British delegate pointed out to the Chinese plenipotentiary ahead of the conference that “the status of Tibet was that of an independent nation recognizing no allegiance to China.”²¹ Tibet as a state conducted treaty agreement with other nations, these are indisputable evidences for Tibet as an independent country. Also, the Shimla Agreement superseded all previous treaties signed between Britain and Qing concerning Tibet. Which in essence, rejects the supposed Qing’s “suzerainty” over Tibet.

Indian recognition

When India became independent in 1947, it inherited Britain’s treaty relations with Tibet and took over the British diplomatic mission in Lhasa. Its recognition of Tibet was clear from the official communication the Indian Government sent to the Tibetan Foreign Office soon after independence:

The Government of India would be glad to have an assurance that it is the intention of the Tibetan Government to continue relations on the existing basis until new arrangements are reached on matters that either party may wish to take up. This is the procedure adopted by all other countries with which India has inherited treaty relations from His Majesty's Government.²²

Tibet was invited along with other Asian countries for the first Inter-Asian Relations conference held on March 23, 1947 in India. At the conference, Tibet was represented as an independent nation. Tibetan national flag was hoisted and a flag emblem was put up formally attached before the Tibetan delegate on the dias. Member of the Tibetan delegation, Sampo Theiji, spoke at the conference on March 24, 1947. His speech at the conference makes it clear that he was attending as a member of a delegation representing a free nation in Asia. At the conference, he said:

Our Tibetan Government received an invitation to join in the Asian Relations Conference. We are a country which administers its subjects on the basis of religious aspirations and India being the motherland of Buddhism, we Buddhist and specially Tibet had friendly relations with India from ancient times. Therefore, our Government have sent us here to attend this great Conference to maintain our peaceful relations based on religion.

In a similar way we are very glad to meet representatives from all the Asian countries in this Conference and we wish to express our sincere gratitude to the great Indian leaders, Mahatma [sic] Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, and to all the distinguished representatives who have gathered in this Conference. As for the future, all the Asian countries will feel as brothers towards each other, a feeling based on spiritual relationship, so that in this way we might hope that there will be everlasting peace and unity in Asia.²³

Invasion Disguised as “Peaceful Liberation”

The PRC seized Tibet by the force of arms by defeating the Tibetan army, after which the Chinese government imposed its terms on Tibet for what it euphemistically called the “Peaceful Liberation of Tibet.” China’s seizure of Tibet was not peaceful, nor was Tibet liberated. The reality was that the PRC committed aggression against its independent neighbour, violating the most fundamental norm of international law—the prohibition of the use of force against another state.

When Tibetans resisted the occupation of their country and communist policies forced on them. In what became the national uprising culminated in His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s flight to India in 1959. The Chinese brutally crushed the movement, and admitted to killing over 90,000 Tibetans in the Lhasa region alone. The full impact of China’s occupation of Tibet is hard to fathom: the death toll is well above a million Tibetans, the destruction of religious and cultural institutions and centres of learning is irreparable. The suffering inflicted on the whole Tibetan population was immeasurable.

The Real Objective of the Invasion

The Chinese government conceals its real objectives through use of euphemisms such as “Peaceful Liberation” to describe the invasion of Tibet in its propaganda. Tibet was viewed by China as a strategic backdoor,¹ which had to be invaded and secured at any cost. The British military incursion into Tibet of 1903 had first alerted Beijing of this potential danger. In fact, it was a strategic decision taken by Mao Zedong in December 1949.² Because the month of December 1949 and the following years had been strategically significant for Communist China in many ways.

Before Mao’s departure to the Soviet Union in 1949, People’s Liberation Army(PLA) gained major military victories against the Nationalist forces in the Bobai and Guangxi campaigns. These two victories accelerated the communists’ control over the whole of China. By the end of 1949, virtually all of China came under Communist Party’s control.³ The PRC was starting to obtain international recognition. Mao was also gaining the confidence of

Stalin. Under these favourable conditions Mao sent a telegram on January 10, 1950, in which he expressed his full agreement with Liu Bocheng and Deng Xiaoping's plan to dispatch troops into Tibet. "Britain, India, and Pakistan have all recognized us, which is favourable to [our] dispatching troops into Xizang[Tibet]," he wrote. He then added: According to Comrade Peng Dehuai, the four months needed for dispatching troops to Xizang[Tibet] will start in mid-May.⁴

His telegram clearly depicted that the Communist China was waiting for the right time to strike and invade Tibet. Even despite making the announcement from the radio broadcasts, it took them almost a year after the first announcement of "liberation" to dispatch their troops to Tibet. Hence, it is no surprise that on October 7, 1950, while the world's attention was focused on the Korean War, 40,000 PLA troops invaded Tibet.⁵

Forging False Narrative for PRC's Invasion

The principle argument presented by the PRC for the need to liberate Tibet was the presence of imperialist forces in Tibet. But in reality, there were no foreign forces at all in Tibet. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama wrote, "Far from receiving military aid, we had only six Europeans in Tibet, so far as I am aware. Three of them, one missionary and two radio operators, were British. The other three were two Austrians and one White Russian, all of whom had been refugees from British internment camps in India during the war. None of them had anything to do with military matters."⁶

China needed around 300,000 forces⁷ consisting of PLA combat troops, logistical units, militia and civilian laborers and including over 30 Russian-made transport planes⁸ for "liberating Tibet" from a handful of foreigners in Tibet. The absurdity of this claim is evident from this fact.

PRC's Invasion of Tibet and the Violation of International Law

China's invasion of Tibet is in violation of international law reflected in article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, which expressly forbids, "the threat or use of force against territorial integrity or political independence of any state."⁹

The international law in force at the time of Tibet's invasion prohibited the acquisition of territory by means of force and the threat of force against a state, and excludes the possibility that the PRC acquired sovereignty over Tibet as a result of its defeat of the Tibetan army, capture of Chamdo, occupation of Lhasa and eventually other strategic areas. Whatever control the PRC achieved over Tibet at the time was the result of force and the threat to use further armed force.¹⁰ There is no legal justification for China's breach of Tibet's territorial integrity. Rather, China is guilty of invasion and colonization of Tibet which is in violation of international law.¹¹ In short, the Chinese invasion of Tibet violates international law and amounts to the crime of aggression and crimes against humanity.¹²

Invasion of Tibet to Further China's Strategic Plan

For China, Tibet was the strategic back-door, and in the words of Tibetologist, Professor Dawa Norbu, "China began to perceive Tibet as 'the back-door' to China, as 'the lips of the mouth.'" If the backdoor was opened and occupied by a foreign power, China could not feel safe and secure.¹³ China's intention was clear from the beginning as revealed by its action by invading Tibet soon after CCP came to power in China. Almost immediately after imposing its so-called 17-Point Agreement on Tibet in 1951, China began constructing road networks that would link Tibet with China for the first time in history. The construction of East Turkistan (Ch: Xinjiang)-Tibet highway which was completed in 1957 passes through Aksai Chin. This highway later became an important highway for military supply which gave the PLA a greater tactical advantage over Southasian countries beyond the Himalayas.¹⁴

Norbu was to the point when he said, "In fact, one of the main reasons for the Communist takeover of Tibet is strategic, rather than historical claims or ideological motives."¹⁵ With the invasion, Tibet became a prized geopolitical trophy thereby securing China's perceived vulnerable back-door. At the same time, China's hunger for economic growth coincided with Beijing's discovery of Tibet as a vast and till now untapped source of minerals, water and energy. In addition to this, Chinese geologists have identified more than 130

minerals in Tibet with significant reserves of the world's deposits of uranium, chromite, boron, lithium, borax, and other minerals.¹⁶ With Tibet under its occupation, China started to implement its true strategic plans.

As early as 1964, the strategic importance of Tibet was recognised and is aptly paraphrased by George Ginsburgs and Michael Mathos in their book *Communist China and Tibet: The First Dozen Years*:

He who holds Tibet dominates the Himalayan piedmont; he who dominates the Himalayan piedmont threatens the Indian subcontinent; and he who threatens the Indian subcontinent may well have all of South Asia within his reach and, with it, all of Asia.¹⁷

In short, invading Tibet was never about socialist liberation or for any other ideological reasons, nor was it undertaken to expel a handful of foreigners from the Tibetan soil. Rather it was purely strategic in nature and is driven by China's expansionist ambition.¹⁸

Why is “Peaceful Liberation” not Peaceful at all?

China's White Paper itself declared that, “The victory in the Chamdo Battle created the conditions for the peaceful liberation of Tibet.” And the White Paper also proudly proclaims that, “Guided by the central authorities' strategy of outflanking the enemy from various directions, the PLA, with the 18th army as the major force, advanced into Tibet from four directions and won the Battle of Chamdo in October, 1950.”

These statements are contradictory in nature, because no battle or war fought could be peaceful in nature or called a peaceful battle. Also in one of the above statements, it says, “...outflanking the ‘enemy’ [emphasis added] from various directions, the PLA, with the 18th army as the major force, advanced into Tibet...” In its state-sponsored narrative and propaganda, China claims it came into Tibet for the liberation of Tibetans and Tibet from the imperialist forces. While on the other hand, China also claims that Tibet has been part of the “big family of motherland China.” Hence, this too is contradictory in nature.

In October of 1949, radio broadcasts were made from Beijing and Xiling in Amdo in north-eastern Tibet that “Tibet was a part of China” and that China’s People’s Liberation Army was thus being sent into Tibet to “liberate it from the foreign imperialists.” Zhang Guohua, the Commander of the 18th Field Army in his speech to senior party members declared that, “...We must help our Tibetan brothers liberate themselves from the enslavement of imperialism, and return to the bosom of motherland...” How then could the Tibetans themselves considered ‘the enemy,’ as the white paper does? Hence it proves that the reasons claimed by the Chinese government to “liberate Tibet” was invented and was solely to fulfil China’s political and strategic ambitions.

The battle of Chamdo itself was not peaceful at all. It was asymmetric in nature. It was the battle between 40,000 battle-seasoned PLA troops versus 7,000 or 8,000¹⁹ ill-equipped Tibetan troops.²⁰ It was carefully planned. Communist China employed the strategies of Sun Tzu, who, in *the Art of War*, suggested that: “Unless you are kept informed of the enemy’s condition, and are ready to strike at the right moment, a war may drag on for years. The only way to get this information is to employ spies.”²¹ In his autobiography, *My Land and My People*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has captured this machination. He writes: “In 1948, while I was still a student, the government heard there were Chinese Communist spies in the country. They had come to find out how strong our army was, and whether we were receiving military aid from any foreign power.”²²

Wei Ke, a former propagandist, photographer and Deputy Director of the Department of Youth of the PLA Tibetan Region and the first Party Secretary of Datse County of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region has clearly recorded the conditions of the Tibetan army in his diaries. He writes: “According to investigation, the Tibetan army is numbered between 6000 and 8000. Plus, deployable militia the total does not exceed 30,000. They have 20 outdated artillery pieces and 50 machine guns. They would be easily crushed.”

Hence it is no doubt that the Tibetan soldiers’ valour and old weapons were no match for China’s 18th Field Army comprising of different divisions such as the 52nd, 53rd, and 54th. Bapa Phuntso

Wangye,²³ too acknowledged the bravery of the Tibetan soldiers and its asymmetrical nature of numbers and weapons with that of Communist China's soldiers. He expresses that, "The Tibetan soldiers fought bravely, but they were no match for the superior numbers and better training of the battle-hardened PLA. The Tibetans could not stop the forward thrust of the Chinese forces, and within two weeks the entire Tibetan army in Chamdo had been captured, along with Ngabo, the new governor-general [and a council minister] who had just replaced Lhalu."²⁴

According to Jianglin Li, who is an independent Chinese scholar and writer specialising in post-1950 Tibetan history, the Tibetan diaspora and the author of the book *Tibet in Agony: Lhasa 1959*, she writes, "Number of battles was calculated in different ways. The Sichuan Military Gazetteer counts each military engagement and gives the total number as "over 10,000 big and small battles." She further added that, "...The incomplete statistics shows that during the 6.5-year war, no less than 15,000 battles were fought..."

Matthew Akester, who has translated a summary of the book, *When the Iron Bird Flies: The 1956-1962 Secret War on Tibetan Plateau*, shared his thoughts on the dilemma of getting an accurate information on the history of Tibet from 1956-1962 and he remarks, "Satisfactory confirmation of detail for this period of Tibet's history and China's history is notoriously difficult, due to official secrecy and the virtual non-existence of reliable non-official documentation. The figure assessed here, though incomplete, thus provides crucial indicators of the scale of the PLA's engagement in Tibet at that time, quite sufficient to justify the author's characterization of it as war on a largely unarmed population."²⁵

In his biography, Bapa Phuntso Wangye narrates, "Much had happened that I wished would happen, but the fact that many Tibetans had been killed or wounded in the Chamdo campaign saddened me."²⁶ With historical facts and figures mentioned above, it is questionable to call the military invasion as "peaceful liberation" by the Communist China.

In short, the euphemism ‘peaceful liberation’ is similar to the image propagandised and popularized by China today, where the phrase “Peaceful Rise” of China is sold in the market. In reality, the rise of China is not peaceful at all, rather it has been violent, with increasing repression in Tibet, East Turkestan, Southern Mongolia and now Hong Kong.

17-Point Agreement: Extracting Agreement through the threat of Force and Duress

The so-called 17-Point Agreement imposed by the PRC on Tibet in 1951 at the point of a gun, never had any validity, since it was obtained by the use of armed force and the threat of further force. The PRC is keen to ‘celebrate’ the signing of this document, because it provides a semblance of legitimacy to Chinese rule in Tibet today.

In April 1951, the Tibetan government was threatened by China into sending representatives to Beijing for negotiation. Tsepon Wangchuk Deden Shakabpa, who was sent by the Tibetan government to meet with the Chinese Ambassador, General Yuan Zhongxian, in India, reported that he and his colleagues were openly threatened by the ambassador with the further use of force unless they agreed to negotiate in Beijing. Shakabpa, in his authoritative book on Tibet’s history, records Yuan Zhongxian stating: “He said that whatever people thought in the rest of the world, the Chinese government had already decided to “liberate” Formosa (Taiwan) and Tibet. At this point, Tibet must accept that it is part of China, and if the representatives went to Beijing, no further harm would result.”

His Holiness the Dalai Lama too, highlights the terms imposed by the Chinese ambassador in India. He writes: “We had understood that the negotiations would be held either in Lhasa or in Chamdo, where the Chinese armies were stationed, but the Chinese ambassador in India proposed that our delegation should go to Peking..”¹

Communist China threatened and coerced the Tibetan government not only into sending the delegation to Beijing, but also into signing the agreement that PRC drew up unilaterally. China orchestrated and has represented these events to appear like a mutual agreement between the two governments. In fact, the so-called 17-Point Agreement was presented as an ultimatum by the Chinese government, and was signed without the willing consent of the Tibetan government or approval of the Tibetan people.²

His Holiness the Dalai Lama writes in his autobiography:

Ultimately, the Chinese drafted a revised agreement, with seventeen articles. This was presented as an ultimatum. Our delegates were not allowed to make any alterations or suggestions. They were insulted and abused and threatened with personal violence, and with further military action against the people of Tibet, and they were not allowed to refer to me or my government for further instructions. This draft agreement was based on the assumption that Tibet was part of China. This was simply untrue, and it could not possibly have been accepted by our delegation without reference to me and my government, except under duress. But Ngabo had been a prisoner of the Chinese for a long time and the other delegates were also virtual prisoners. At last, isolated from any advice, they yielded to compulsion and signed the document. They still refused to affix the seals which were needed to validate it. But the Chinese forged the duplicate Tibetan seals in Peking, and forced our delegation to seal the document with them. Neither I nor my government were told that an agreement had been signed. We first came to know of it from a broadcast which Ngabo made on Peking Radio.”³

After reaching Lhuntse Dzong in south Tibet near the Indian border on March 26, 1959, His Holiness formally repudiated the 17-Point Agreement and declared the re-establishment of the Tibetan Government.⁴ In India, His Holiness the Dalai Lama once again repudiated the 17-Point Agreement on April 18, and June 20, 1959, on the grounds that the treaty was “violated by one of the parties to it, it can legally be repudiated by the other party, and then it is no longer in force.” In his autobiography, His Holiness the Dalai Lama writes:

The Chinese had certainly violated the Seventeen-Point Agreement, and we were willing to prove it. Now I had repudiated the agreement, it had ceased to bind us, and our claim to sovereignty was the same as it had been before the agreement was signed.⁵

In reality, since the invasion of Tibet, Communist China’s socio-economic and religious policies in Tibet have aimed to erase the identity of Tibetans and to completely integrate Tibet with China,

in flagrant violation of the agreement China itself imposed on Tibet, which guaranteed full autonomy. In 1959, after an extensive field study, examination of documents and other materials on Tibet, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), published a report, *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law*, which concluded that evidence pointed to: “(a) a prima facie case of acts contrary to Article 2 (a) and (e) of the Genocide Convention of 1948; (b) a prima facie case of systematic intention by such acts and other acts to destroy in whole or in part the Tibetans as a separate nation and the Buddhist religion in Tibet.”⁶ The report also unequivocally concluded by stating “the repudiation of this agreement by the Tibetan Government in 1959 was found to be fully justified.” Since then, Tibet’s autonomy has been fully extinguished, and China has relentlessly forced its colonial rule and assimilation policies on Tibetans.

Engineering Domination and Dependence through Development

When it comes to Tibet, China likes to deploy two key terms – ‘peaceful liberation’ and ‘modernisation’ to justify its rule. The former is used as a euphemism for the military occupation of Tibet and the latter for China’s consolidation of political, economic and social domination over Tibet. However, in reality, both the occupation and the much-touted modernization are not just events but structures –characterised by different forms of domination and violence, encroachment and displacement. In the absence of independent press and freedom of expression, China can cook any story or produce any statistics to augment its propaganda on Tibet but they do not represent the actual reality in Tibet. Projecting Tibet’s economic development with sophisticated figures by the Chinese government is nothing more than a deceptive strategy to whitewash its gross human rights violations including crime against humanity in Tibet.

The Myth of Chinese “Liberation” and “Development”

As far as development and modernization are concerned, it is one thing to modernize but it is quite another thing as to who gets to decide what to modernize and how to modernize. This question is particularly relevant in the context of Tibet where there is an acute asymmetry of power between the Chinese authorities who decide and implement the policies and the Tibetans on whom such policies are imposed regardless of their agreement and needs. Right from the beginning, Chinese developmental policies in Tibet have been driven by the political and strategic logics of bringing a newly-seized territory under its tight control and to exploit its rich and untapped natural resources, rather than catering to the real needs and aspirations of the Tibetan people.

Like its previous white papers on Tibet, this time again, China repeats the same mantra of rapid development in Tibet in the last seven decades of its rule. With impressive numbers and long list of roads, railways, and airports, China brags about rapid economic growth as well as huge infrastructure development in Tibet. But

when it comes to Chinese statistics, a great degree of caution is advised as they are not known to be reliable, even those dealing with simple economic data.¹ Apart from that, it is also imperative to look at the trajectory of China's development in Tibet, the military and strategic calculations of China largely take precedence over the needs of Tibetan people.

Soon after China invaded Tibet, it began building roads as the main priority in order to ensure mass and rapid movement of troops and weapons to consolidate its domination, especially in the first two decades focusing primarily on military-oriented infrastructure development like roads and bridges.² Besides connecting Tibet with China through roads, China also undertook strategic development at Tibet's borders with Nepal, India and Bhutan. Most of the airfields in Tibet are either near Chinese military and administrative quarters or close to the Indo-Tibet border.³ Similarly, the railways are not different.

Strategic and Assimilationist Logics of Infrastructure Development in Tibet

China's strategic goals continue to be a crucial factor in other developmental activities in Tibet including the railway lines which are powerful instruments for political control and integration, cultural assimilation and resource extraction. It has been one of the favourite projects of colonial powers in their colonies as the railway lines provide them massive capacities for the mass movement of both people and goods. Similarly, in Tibet's context, the railways are meant to solidify China's political domination, intensify integration of Tibet to China and boost its resource exploitation capabilities. It is no wonder that, China brings new railway lines to Lhoka, Shigatse and Nyingtri where there are huge mining opportunities. Some of the mines such as Gyama and Shetongmon (copper and gold) were operational since 1970s and others such as Norbusa (chromium and iron) and Drag-ye Tsaka (lithium) mines are set to expand their operation with connection to highways and new railway lines.⁴

However, despite the fact that the Chinese development policies and practices are driven by its strategic imperatives, it presents in its

propaganda as gifts to Tibet. For which, Tibetans are expected to be grateful. Nevertheless, as a top-down and state-centric integrationist rationale driving the policies, these strategic developments have overwhelmingly consolidated China's domination over Tibet and thereby making it politically integrated and economically dependent on China.

Tying Tibet's Economy to the Wheelchair of Chinese Subsidies

All the money sent for these mega projects are presented as generous subsidies for Tibet and Tibetan people. Indeed, the subsidies are huge, but when it comes to how the money is spent, the largest chunks are earmarked for Chinese strategic infrastructures, constructed by Chinese workers and with materials imported from China. This means that, in the final calculation, the subsidies supposed to be for Tibetans, end up circulating within Chinese hands and flow back to China. Though there are some trickle-down effects, its positive impacts are questionable and minimal as compared to the negative consequences stemming from it. As a result, despite some material improvement in their lives, the assimilationist and strategic developments in Tibet has only intensified the dynamics of subordination and marginalization faced by the Tibetans from all walks of life.⁵

Since the subsidies largely return to their senders while debilitating locally-oriented forms of wealth creation and accumulation in most sectors of the economy,⁶ it ties Tibet's economy to the wheelchair of Chinese subsidies—making it confined and crippled. This economic policy is determined by Chinese politics in Tibet where making the Tibetan economy dependent on Chinese subsidies as a form and as well as a way of securing total and lasting political domination. The establishment and operation of an alien political economy in Tibet has further deepened the overdependence and extreme disempowerment in terms of not having a form of government run by and for the Tibetan people to promote and protect their interests.⁷

As the extensive subsidies have been channelled toward integrating Tibet with China and consolidation of the very visible hand of the Chinese government in the structuring of most aspects of the

economy toward its strategic goals. This largely have reduced the local Tibetan development dynamics including Tibetans as captives to the discretion of the Chinese political interests in Tibet.⁸ Fundamentally, the developmental activities are designed to bring Tibet closer under China's imperialist ambit and continue to be coercive and extractive in nature.

Tibet's experience clearly shows that the subsidy-induced development does not create necessary economic conditions for sustainable growth as it produces a distorted and dependent economic structure which further pushes all sectors of economy from mining to tourism under the control of the Chinese government or its affiliates.⁹ As a result, this creates a political economic "situation of extraordinary inefficiency and extreme dependence, as well as strong cultural, linguistic, and political biases stemming from characteristics of the dominant cultural and political group controlling the subsidies, such as Chinese language fluency, Chinese work cultures, and connections to government or business networks in China."¹⁰ Despite the economic growth fuelled and sustained by subsidies, by and large, Tibetans have been marginalized and pushed to the periphery as the development in Tibet is dominated by China and Chinese interests.

China's Discourse on Development

China's narrative of development as gifts to Tibet essentially has been the reassertion of its domination through which it attempts to instil a sense of social, economic and political infirmity within the Tibetan psyche that they cannot achieve anything meaningful without the help of a supposedly benevolent Chinese government. By ingraining a dependence mentality, China also imposes on Tibetans an obligation of loyalty and gratitude to the Chinese overlord whereby they are expected to reciprocate through their submission to the Chinese government as a subordinate 'minority.' Any perceived failure by the Tibetans to show subordination is seen not only as a sign of ingratitude but also a political crime which needs to be corrected with coercion and re-education.

The development process centred on Chinese political and strategic interests in Tibet establishes different forms of Chinese domination and through that domination, it creates a relationship of dependence and subordination between the Chinese government and Tibetan people where the former exploits this unequal relationship to impose obligations against the latter such as political loyalty, ideological submission and acceptance of Chinese cultural hegemony.

Politics of Poverty Alleviation in Tibet

For the one party-state, the rhetoric of poverty alleviation, whether in China or Tibet, it has more to do with politics than a genuine concern for people's welfare as it seeks regime legitimacy from a combination of Chinese nationalism and economic performance. The idea that the party is still concerned about poverty is another way of saying that it still deserves to rule. In its white paper, it has claimed that absolute poverty has been eliminated in Tibet for the first time in history but what it failed to admit is that it was China's so-called "democratic reforms" of 1950s and early 60s that caused mass starvation unprecedented in Tibetan history.¹¹ But hypocrisy and selective amnesia are part and parcel of China's rule in Tibet.

It is a common practice in the parlance of colonial powers to demonize and denigrate the social and economic situations in their colonies as 'backward' in order to justify both the occupation and colonial rule. Often than not, China has overly been condescending toward Tibetan people to the point of assuming a racist attitude as if Tibetans are innately incapable of self-agency, self-growth and self-governance without a 'fatherly' Chinese intervention.

However, given that Tibet is sparsely populated spread across huge territory and endowed with rich natural resources, modernization carried out by Tibetans could have easily achieved such goals. Chinese occupation has long denied the Tibetan people the right and freedom to develop their country according to their vision and needs. Since occupation, China has been on a looting spree in Tibet; logging Tibetan timbers, mining Tibetan mineral resources, damming and diverting Tibetan rivers, and poaching of Tibetan wild animals. On the path of Tibetan people's empowerment and progression, there

is no obstacle as big and destructive as Chinese occupation which continues to drain Tibet's resources and derail its true potential for growth and development as a distinct civilization and country.

Though there have been some material developments in the form of physical infrastructures like roads and railways, however, as far as Tibet is concerned, the developmental dividends have been far less than the price paid for them. This has compelled the 10th Panchen Lama to say that "since liberation, there has been development, but the price paid for this development has been greater than the gains."¹²

This is because in Beijing's development policy and implementation, Tibet or Tibetans do not figure as the main priority, rather they are seen as means to augment China's political and strategic goals in Tibet. Moreover, the Chinese government did not have a course correction on its misguided policy toward Tibet. Even today, despite its vast natural resources and thin population, Tibet with a per-capita income of about \$ 1,000 is the lowest among all areas as it is administered in PRC. This is on the backdrop of an inconvenient fact that annually, China pumps out different mineral resources from Tibet worth more than \$128 billion.¹³

However, without any hint of irony, China praises itself by claiming that it has been eradicating poverty and creating prosperity in Tibet. Nevertheless, China's claim of a major achievement in poverty alleviation is not different from what it claims over other developments in Tibet. Chinese authorities devised several policies and strategies, some of which have nothing to do with poverty alleviation like ideological re-education and military-style labor training.¹⁴ While others can be unsustainable in the long term such as organization of Tibetan nomads and farmers into cooperatives controlled by the party and displacement of Tibetan nomads and farmers from their ancestral lands in the name of poverty alleviation. The problem with the China-led "anti-poverty campaign" in Tibet is that the measures for social and political engineering override the measures for social and economic upliftment. In other words, the supposedly anti-poverty policies and strategies have overwhelming political and security contours like political indoctrination which include China's religious policies, patriotic re-education, and enforced learning of

Xi Jinping's thoughts and penetration of Tibetan society with CCP organs and agents to dismantle its cohesion.

Even though China has claimed that it has uplifted many people out of poverty based on their disposable income but it is using the official poverty lines (\$ 2.25 per day in 2011) of the poorest countries in the world as its benchmark despite it is about to become a high income economy.¹⁵ There is no guarantee that they will not slip back into poverty again,¹⁶ as the policies for poverty elimination are highly top-down without taking into account the views and agency of the Tibetans and are also deeply security oriented.¹⁷ Tibetan nomads and farmers may have less disposable income than those living in urban centers but this does not mean that their quality of life is poorer. Moreover, the Chinese claim of having absolute poverty eradicated in Tibet needs to be taken with more than a pinch of salt as these lofty sounding statements and statistics are larger parts of propaganda on the occasion when China observes 100 years since the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the 70th anniversary of the so-called peaceful liberation of Tibet.

Poverty Alleviation as a Tool for Political Control

At a time, when there are acute income disparities in society which can threaten regime stability,¹⁸ campaigns like poverty alleviation has huge political meaning for the one-party dictatorship to show that it cares about those poor and powerless. It is even more so with Tibet as China justifies its continued occupation of Tibet on the ground that it has brought development and modernization in Tibet. However, like China's military-oriented developments in Tibet, the process of poverty alleviation brings Tibetan nomads and farmers closer to the Chinese control and surveillance and also making them more dependent on Chinese subsidies. This in turn, makes them more vulnerable to different forms of structural violence.

In the name of fighting poverty, Chinese authorities have relocated Tibetan nomads and farmers from their ancestral lands to settle in relocation camps built supposedly by the state to provide better housings.¹⁹ However, those Tibetan nomads or farmers who have been included into this program have to leave behind not only their

lands but also their livelihood and a way of life to start a new but uncertain life. China claims that it has removed 266,000 Tibetan nomads from ‘inhospitable lands’ into one of 964 relocation camps constructed since 2016.²⁰ If the lands of Tibetan nomads are as barren and inhospitable as claimed by the Chinese authorities, in the first place, how could they have survived and thrived for thousands of years. Such arguments sound like a desperate attempt to justify a politically-motivated and its fundamentally flawed policies. If the Chinese government really cares about improving housing for rural Tibetans, it could build houses for them where they live instead of rounding them up into different relocation camps as the process of resettling is highly disruptive with long-term consequences. Though China claims that it is a voluntary choice for Tibetan herders and villagers to resettle or not, but in practice, the reality is completely different. As experienced by Tibetans, they know that resisting official policies run the risk of losing public welfare subsidies as well as being seen a political suspect that would affect not only the individual but also their entire family and relatives. There have been cases of Tibetans sentenced to four years for refusing China’s resettlement policies.²¹

Intrinsically, the process of state housing projects is inseparable from the overall Chinese politics and occupation in Tibet where the process of housing is also a process of reterritorializing Tibetan spaces and governing Tibetans for more political control and surveillance. This is clearly evident in Xi Jinping’s statement at 7th Tibet Work Forum in 2020, where he made it clear that China’s policy and governance in Tibet will continue to be based primarily on maintaining security and political stability, ramping up of ideological re-education and sinicization efforts. Such repressive policies are oppressive in nature and only reinforce Chinese domination over Tibetan social and political spaces where Tibetans are systematically pushed to the periphery of development process thereby marginalizing them in their own land. Without a meaningful say in the policy-making process that can affect the Tibetans in many consequential ways, the current system of Chinese-dominated decision making and policy implementation will not serve the genuine interests of the Tibetan people. It is high time for China to recognize the fact that in the

long term, the resolution of Sino-Tibet conflict does not lie in more repressions but through reconciliation and dialogue.

However, by and large, the policies like housing and relocation are more of political strategies to control and govern Tibetans with ‘an ironclad shield’. The relocation camps are more than just concrete structures to put the displaced farmers and nomads but also sites for surveillance, political re-education and social engineering. As a result, these relocation camps are more controlled than comfortable; they are more surveilled than autonomous. Instead of China’s stated objectives to solve the problem of poverty, these are aimed to strengthen its political control over Tibetans. As a consequence, in the long term, the process of sedentarization like relocation can render Tibetans more vulnerable to different contingencies, including different forms of exploitation and discrimination, cultural assimilation and social degeneration in the form of alcoholism, prostitution and depression.

Dismal Healthcare System in Tibet

In another area where China made claims larger than it can hold is public health in Tibet such as increased life expectancy. But such claim is inconsistent as increasing life expectancy has been a universal phenomenon as even in poverty-ridden and war-torn regions like Sub-Saharan Africa has recorded steady rise in life expectancy.²² Tibet with its own rich tradition of medical system, Sowa Rigpa (the science of wellbeing) and improvement in Western medicine can easily achieve similar feat if not better. Moreover, this claim is belied by the consistent rise in life expectancy in societies similar to that of Tibet. Examples are that of Nepal and Bhutan.²³

Beijing also claimed that it has improved healthcare system in Tibet leading to the prevention of many diseases like Keshin-Beck but again it failed to mention many other wide-range of diseases and other health consequences due to massive environmental degradation and widespread food safety hazards. Even in China, the issue of food adulteration is so serious that it compelled the Chinese authorities including Xi Jinping to warn about its threat to the party’s rule.²⁴ Whether it is milk adulterated with melamine, meat soaked in

bleach, cadmium-laced rice or fake eggs, the list goes on when it comes to food safety scandals in China.²⁵

Besides fake foods, beverages and also drugs, the dangerous presence of illegal food additives, heavy metals, pesticides and veterinary drug residues in everyday essential items like cooking oil, meat, dairy product, vegetable and fruit pose a real threat to public health and life.²⁶ The situation is even more severe in the so-called minority regions like Tibet where the safety regulations are lax while spaces for expressing public grievances are denied. Even if China has increased the number of health clinics in Tibet, it makes little difference and not much sense, if the sorry state of food safety remains unchanged. One of the primary steps to improve public health is to address the root causes as preventive measures, rather than just treating the surface symptoms.

However, the future of food safety in China and by extension in Tibet does not look healthy, not on the account of lack of regulatory measures but accountability and transparency within its political system. As for better medical care, Tibetans have to visit Chinese cities like Chengdu, Kunming and Lanzhou to treat major health issues since hospitals in Tibet are not equipped with necessary facilities.²⁷ Owing to various factors such as long distance, language barrier and high cost for most Tibetans, access to better health care still remains a huge challenge, while poor food safety brings different diseases right to their dining table.

China's Intensive Surveillance Strategies in Tibet

China claims that “with a modern communication network mainly consisting of optical cables and satellites, Tibet is part of the information expressway.” This development has led to a more complicated and dynamic threat to the digital landscape. With the advent of optical cables and satellites networks, it poses a new form of security threat and at the same time infringes on individual privacy of Tibetans using internet.

China's repressive state control apparatus and violation of human rights is now carried through its surveillance networks such as the Great Firewall, surveillance grids and other new technologies for social control. This is aided by artificial intelligence,¹ biometric and big data to monitor and shape the minds and behaviours of its citizens. These are threats to fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and movement.²

A report by the Foreign Correspondents Club of China titled, *Under Watch: Reporting in China's Surveillance State*, notes the complete shutdown and utter inaccessibility to Tibet and concluded by saying that “it has become worse than North Korea.”³ Tibetans who speak to foreign reporters and share information regarding protests through mobile phones or e-mail are charged with “leaking state secrets” and given lengthy prison sentences.⁴ It is no surprise that Tibet has been ranked as the least free region in the world according to the rankings by the Freedom House in 2021.⁵ This reflects the deplorable condition of human rights violations inside Tibet despite China's claims of “development.”

The bamboo curtain around Tibet has been shut for a long time and Tibet is off-limits for free and independent visits for international media, journalists, advocates, researchers, government and civil society representatives. The highly repressive situation inside Tibet makes it difficult to understand the scale and intensity of digital surveillance.

Over the years, China's surveillance system in Tibet has been growing and evolving at an unprecedented scale. The abundance

of manned and unmanned checkpoints, Artificial Intelligence (AI), CCTV camera networks and re-education centres under the garb of national security have added another layer of suppression to an already extremely oppressive environment in Tibet.⁶

Furthermore, China is constantly upgrading its ‘Great Firewall of China’⁷ to monitor and limit online traffic by creating its own internet ecosystem thereby limiting access to the traditional web. Chinese authorities in Tibet are offering large cash rewards to informants in a bid to stamp out in its cyberspace what it sees as ‘subversive’ activities and curb free flow and dissemination of information. According to a notice issued on Feb 28, 2019, by three government departments of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region, “information leading to the arrests of social media users deemed disloyal to China can fetch up to 300,000 yuan (\$42,582).”⁸ People found sharing political content or commentary deemed sensitive are liable to face arrest and heavy criminal penalties.

Tibetans under Orwellian China

China is aggressively finding ways to filter and control access to information for citizens within its assumed borders. China filters a significant portion of content pertaining to its own dismal human rights record. The consistent and stringent regulation of the internet by the government results in lack of transparency within the system and trust deficiency from the part of its netizens.

Surveillance in Tibet is widely characterized as Orwellian. In addition to the traditional security surveillance apparatus including military, police, and neighbourhood spies, modern surveillance technologies have been specifically developed and tested in Tibet. The extensive security measures currently being practised against Uyghur people were previously practised and perfected in Tibet by Chen Quanguo, who earlier was the Party Secretary of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Following his highly repressive policies in Tibet, Chen was appointed the Party Secretary in Xinjiang and continues to be the chief architect of the massive surveillance and mass detention system in East Turkistan.⁹

In January 2012, China introduced a new surveillance system called the “grid system of social management.”¹⁰ In preparation for implementing the new system, cadres in plainclothes were deployed in every Tibetan village and monastery. The campaign ironically called “benefit the masses” involved sending over 21,000 communist party cadres from townships and urban areas to live in teams of four or more in each of the 5,000 villages in “TAR.” Authorities expanded their network of small police posts known as “convenience” stations to every 200-300 meters in urban areas, to quickly respond to any “threat.” In 2016, a total of 696 police check posts were newly set up in Lhasa with high-tech equipment to monitor daily lives.¹¹

New digital surveillance efforts include mandatory collection of DNA samples,¹² wifi network monitoring and widespread implementation of facial and voice recognition in an all-connected and integrated data analysis platform. According to a report based on the analysis of police department documents from China, the Chinese authorities plan to double their current DNA database to 100 million records by 2020.¹³ DNA data collection in Tibet is widespread under the guise of mandatory medical check-ups to create a large genetic database of Tibetans.

Also, China’s security spending has increased exponentially since 2008. It has reported that in the so-called TAR, “it had the highest per capita domestic security expenditure of all provinces and regions.” And likewise, “In 2016, the per capita domestic security expenses in Sichuan province’s Tibetan regions were nearly three times higher than Sichuan province as a whole.”¹⁴

Companies facilitating digital surveillance in Tibet include Alibaba, search engine Baidu, chat app operator Tencent holdings, voice recognition company iFlyTek and facial recognition system Sense Time. State subsidies and freehand to use Tibet as an open laboratory make Tibet an enticing proposition for these businesses to invest and perfect their latest technologies. Companies operating in Tibet enjoy a highly reduced tax rate of 9% compared to the standard corporate tax rate of 25% for the rest of China.¹⁵

In Tibet, over the last decade, surveillance technologies referred to as the “nets in the sky and traps on the ground” has further suppressed the fundamental freedoms of expression, movement and assembly. New and highly advanced technologies have given unrestricted and illicit power to the state security apparatus to intensify and escalate mass surveillance. Checkpoints with smart surveillance and facial recognition are present in cities and at crossings between neighbouring districts and provinces. Tibetans inside their homes are tracked through their phones and once they step outside, surveillance and facial recognition technologies follow them wherever they go.¹⁶ The full extent and the scale of China’s oppressive surveillance system in Tibet--which could very well be more draconian than what has been documented so far--is yet to be ascertained due to lack of access to Tibet.

China's Education Policy and Marginalization of Tibetan Language

China's education policy in Tibet is intended for the gradual sinicization of Tibetans. For instance, since 1985, China enrolled the brightest Tibetan students to be sent to different cities in China in the name of giving them better education. Until the completion of their schooling in China, these Tibetan children are not allowed to visit their families even during holidays. As a result, this assimilationist policy has many negative consequences. In 1987, the late Panchen Lama expressed Tibetan disappointment with this system.

“Since most of these students are from primary schools, they are separated from their own culture and home at a very early age. Gradually, they will be alienated from their own parents, people and country. What's more, the kind of education they receive in China is not at all appropriate to their needs.”¹

The protection of Tibetan language and its culture is not only about Tibetans in Tibet. Proper access to the rich and profound Buddhist philosophy and traditional Tibetan knowledge system is possible only through Tibetan language. If Beijing continues to adopt the same policy towards Tibetan culture and language, it will only intensify Tibetan resentment and resistance against the Chinese government and its leadership.

In Tibet today, Tibetan parents face the difficult dilemma of choosing between the Chinese language and the Tibetan language, while the former provides better job opportunities, the latter concerns the survival of Tibetan identity and its rich linguistic and cultural heritage. Chinese education system gives less incentive for Tibetans to learn their language as access to premier institutions and better job opportunities are largely available with better proficiency in Chinese language.

Since 1959, the Chinese authorities imposed an education system that was said to “liberate the Tibetans” and free them from “backwardness.” Right from the beginning, China's education policy in Tibet mainly focused on the indoctrination of Tibetan children with communist ideology and thoughts of Chinese leaders.

These days Tibetans continue to express their dissatisfaction with the education system that discriminates against Tibetan language in favour of Chinese. As a result, on account of the language barrier and other discriminations, it is far more challenging for Tibetan students to get admission to top universities in China or to clear the civil service examination as compared to Chinese students. In Tibet, most of the government job opportunities require proficiency in Chinese and recruitment tests to apply for them are to be written in Chinese.²

The Chinese government introduced the bilingual education policy in 2010. This education policy in theory promotes both Chinese and other ‘minority languages’. But in practice, the bilingual education policy further encourages the study and use of Chinese at the expense of other languages like Tibetan. A 2017 report on bilingual education in Tibet by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy states: “The current policy of promoting ... Chinese as the common national language is driven by China’s assimilationist language policy. Part of China’s state-building project, this policy aims to integrate ‘minority cultures and identities’ with the dominant Chinese culture by promising progress and opportunity in return for safeguarding ‘national unity’ and “development of a harmonious society.”³

A March 2020 report by Human Rights Watch on China’s bilingual education in Tibet says: “So this is bilingual education: In theory, it means you can do both [languages]. It sounds beautiful. But in practice, the working language [in schools and offices] even at the township [rural] level is becoming Chinese.”⁴ If this kind of education policy is carried out for many more years in Tibet, the Tibetan language will face further marginalization and disuse.

It is evident that among the most sought-after subjects of study in the 21st century is what is referred to as STEM subjects comprising of science, technology, engineering and maths. Textbooks for these subjects are not readily available in Tibetan. Moreover study and training in these subjects are exclusively carried out in Chinese. Consequently, Tibetan students lack resources on many subjects and access to information.

Tibetan students are banned from attending informal classes run by monasteries during the winter holidays.⁵ In schools in Tibet, the Chinese language is given more importance and Tibetan students are denied opportunities to learn Tibetan as the medium of instructions. Those who protests this language discrimination are imprisoned with lengthy prison sentences. For example, in his interview to The New York Times in 2015, Tashi Wangchuk spoke about the poor environment for learning the Tibetan language in Tibet. For his open concern for the state of Tibetan language, he was imprisoned for five years.⁶ Similarly, thousands of Tibetan students came out on the street to protest against China's language policy in 2010.⁷

Before it is too late, the Chinese government should think about protecting the Tibetan language, one of the oldest languages of the world and which holds the wisdom of ancient India that is of benefit for millions of people, including Chinese who are increasingly attracted to Tibetan buddhism. In short, the Chinese government at the least needs to implement education and language policies that are guaranteed in its constitution.

China's Relentless Attempt at Appropriating Tibetan Religious Tradition

The Chinese government claims that religion in Tibet is managed in accordance with laws and regulations. In reality, the Chinese government uses these laws and regulations as a political tool to control and manipulate religion that is perceived as a potential threat to the state security and party control over Tibet.

A case in point is the order no. 5 also known as the “Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism” issued by the State Administration for Religious Affairs on July 18, 2007. This order mandates the monastic institutions and search parties to seek approval for choosing tulkus and lamas from the Chinese government.¹ This regulation also asserts party's control of the searches, testing, recognition, education, and training of religious figures. This deprives the Tibetans of their rights to carry out their traditional Buddhist practices and to choose their own religious leaders as the Chinese government imposes its will on the selection process. By imposing such regulation on the Tibetan Buddhist tradition of reincarnation, the Chinese government deliberately targets the core belief system in Tibetan Buddhism and undermines the authority of the legitimate Tibetan religious leaders, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is important to note that the tradition of reincarnation was developed in Tibet in the 13th century and the Tibetans continue this tradition for centuries based on the Buddhist belief in rebirth, not by any administrative diktats.

The utmost importance of religious authority of Tibetan lamas and their legitimacy in Tibetan tradition was publicly acknowledged by the Chinese government in the early 1990s. In 1992, the Chinese government “approved” the elevation of Ogyen Trinley Dorje, a boy recognized by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the Seventeenth Karmapa, the head of the Karma Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism. The urgency became discernable when the Chinese government installed its own Eleventh Panchen Lama in 1995, after the passing away of the Tenth Panchen Lama under mysterious circumstances on January 28, 1989 at his monastery in Shigatse.

On the contrary, Gendun Chokyi Nyima, the boy recognized by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the authentic reincarnation of the Tenth Panchen Lama in accordance with the traditional Tibetan religious practices was abducted along with his family by the Chinese authorities in 1995. The boy was six years old then. This year will mark 26 years since their enforced disappearance. In an act of utmost disregard to the Tibetan religious sentiments, the Chinese authorities not only installed its own Panchen Lama but did so by rigging the entire process to ensure that a party members' son from Nagchu was appointed as the eleventh Panchen Lama. This underhand operation was exposed by Arjia Rinpoche, a revered religious leader of Tibet who was a member of the selection committee for the Eleventh Panchen Lama. In his book *Surviving the Dragon: A Tibetan Lama's Account of 40 Years under Chinese Rule*, Arjia Rinpoche writes that Ye Xiaowen, the then director of State Administration for Religious Affairs, unwittingly revealed a shocking secret. He writes, "When we made our selection we left nothing to chance. In the silk pouches of the ivory pieces we put a bit of cotton at the bottom of one of them, so it would be little higher than the other and the right candidate would be chosen."²

Ironically, the Chinese Communist Party which doesn't believe in religion, let alone in the concept of rebirth, is attempting to meddle in the reincarnation of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. It is important to point out that the Chinese government considers His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama a "separatist," but the party is determined to find the reincarnation of a "separatist."

China's Meddling in Tibet's Spiritual Tradition

The Chinese government overlooked a very important aspect of historical relationship between Tibet and the Manchu empire. This relationship was known as the priest-patron (*cho-yon*) relationship where the priest providing spiritual service to the Manchu emperors and the patron protecting the realm of the priest. This whole system has existed fully within the Tibetan Buddhist order since it was first established when Kublai Khan invited Drogon Choegyal Phagpa, the foremost Buddhist spiritual leader at the time, to his court to provide spiritual service to the ruling elites.

This relationship was further strengthened during the time of the Third and the Fifth Dalai Lamas. This relationship was certainly not one of subordination, as the Chinese government falsely claim. When the Fifth Dalai Lama was invited by the Manchu emperor to his court, the two rulers displayed mutual respect for each other. This unique relationship came to an end after the Chinese nationalist overthrew the Manchu dynasty in 1911.³

The Mongol and Manchu rulers of China were Buddhists. They regarded successive Tibetan lamas and subsequently the Dalai Lamas of Tibet as their ultimate spiritual guide. The CCP believes that religion is poison and they want to appoint reincarnation of what they consider as poison.

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama has made the institution of the Dalai Lama into a global moral pillar. The CCP, morally bankrupt and corrupted is attempting to grab the goodwill Tibet enjoys throughout the world. The unfailing faith of Tibetans in Tibet in His Holiness the Dalai Lama is viewed by the party as an existential threat to party's rule in Tibet.

Regarding his reincarnation, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in September 2011 stated:

When I am about ninety I will consult the high Lamas of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Tibetan public, and other concerned people who follow Tibetan Buddhism, and re-evaluate whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not. On that basis we will take a decision. If it is decided that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama should continue and there is a need for the Fifteenth Dalai Lama to be recognized, responsibility for doing so will primarily rest on the concerned officers of the Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Trust. They should consult the various heads of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions and the reliable oath-bound Dharma Protectors who are linked inseparably to the lineage of the Dalai Lamas. They should seek advice and direction from these concerned beings and carry out the procedures of search and recognition in accordance with past tradition. I shall leave clear written instructions about this. Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognized through such

legitimate methods, no recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People's Republic of China.⁴

Another claim that overtly contradicts its promise of freedom of religious belief is the case where the Chinese government carried out a large-scale destruction and forced eviction of over 5,000 residents of Larung Gar Buddhist academy in Kham in eastern Tibet.⁵ This was followed by a complete change in the management committee of the academy. The change saw a direct party control of the academy in which six party cadres were appointed in the academy's key management positions, including the director, a position previously held by Ani Mumtso, niece of Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, the founder of the academy.⁶ The academy was recently closed down to new entrants by order of the Chinese authorities.⁷

In the name of "patriotic re-education," Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns are forced to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama and those who do not abide by this are expelled from monasteries and are subjected to arbitrary detention and torture. The repression went as far as prohibiting Tibetans from keeping the portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.⁸ Tibetans are instead forced to display the portraits of Chinese party leaders at their private homes and monasteries.⁹ By doing this the Chinese government not only fails to live up to the rights it promised in the constitution in which freedom of religious belief is guaranteed, it also disregards the fundamental human rights enshrined in the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights.

Besides this, the Chinese government offers a number of statistics to bolster its claim that Tibetan people are enjoying freedom of religious belief granted by the constitution. However, there has always been an insurmountable gap between the legal promises and the actual implementations on the ground. This is evident in a series of protests by the Tibetans against the Chinese government in the past many decades, including 155 known self-immolation protests since 2009.

Human Rights Violations in Tibet

In January 2021, news reached the exiled Tibetan community of a self-immolation protest by a 26-year-old Tibetan named Shurmo.¹ Shurmo had self-immolated on September 17, 2015 at around 1pm local time in Shagchukha village in Driru, Nagchu. It took over five years for the world to learn of Shurmo's self-immolation protest as the information remained unreported until this year. Driru has been placed under increasing restriction since June 2014 when the local Chinese authorities in Driru issued a comprehensive set of regulations to further curtail freedom of speech, practice of religion and movement.

Shurmo's self-immolation has brought the known number of self-immolations in Tibet to 155.² These Tibetans felt that they had no other way to tell the world about the sufferings of Tibetans in Tibet under Chinese rule. The spate of self-immolations began in 2009 following the Chinese government's massive crackdown on Tibetans after the Tibet-wide 2008 uprising. At least 133 of the self-immolators are known to have died following their protests. The current condition and whereabouts of those who are believed to have survived could not be ascertained. Tibetans, young and old, men and women and from different walks of life have resorted to self-immolation as a protest against the Chinese government's repressive policies and rule over Tibet.

The age of the self-immolators ranges from 15 to 64 years. The oldest of the self-immolators, Tamding Thar, was a 64-year-old from Chentsa in north-eastern Tibet while the youngest, Dorjee, was a 15-year-old from Amdo in north-eastern Tibet. Both Tamding Thar and Dorjee died following their protests on June 15 and November 7, 2012, respectively. The self-immolators have called for freedom in Tibet and for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. However, the Chinese authorities have responded to the self-immolation protests by criminalizing them, arresting, and sentencing their friends, families and even the communities of the self-immolators.

Ever since China's occupation of Tibet, Tibetans have been calling for the Chinese government to respect their basic human rights and freedoms in terms of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. These are the very rights that are provided, at least on paper, in the PRC's constitution, the protection and promotion of which are "embedded in governance" as the Chinese government claims.³

The CCP celebrated with much fanfare the so-called 70 years of "liberation" of Tibet, which in fact is 70 years of CCP's occupation and egregious atrocities China perpetrated in Tibet. For the Tibetans, there was nothing to celebrate the occasion which was a painful reminder of the years leading to the CCP's gruesome invasion of Tibet. In a video footage that emerged from Lhasa during the CCP's centenary celebration, a huge CCP's projection onto the Potala Palace, the seat of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is seen. The projection in Chinese reads, "Celebrate the CCP's 100th founding anniversary," and a Tibetan woman is heard crying, "The nerve, how did they even think of this?,"⁴ depicting the pain of the Tibetans.

The 17-point "Agreement" serves as an important historical document. In the agreement, China promised to "not alter the existing political system in Tibet... the authorities also will not alter the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama."⁵

Yet the reality in Tibet is a stark contrast to China's claims. China's rule over Tibet has seen further securitization and oppression of Tibetan people. China has failed to comply with international standards in fulfilling its international obligations. The Chinese government must respect, protect and promote human rights in Tibet as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. China cannot redefine human rights to fit its agenda. Changing the definition of human rights by adding "Chinese characteristics" to them and prioritizing "right to development" over most basic fundamental rights are China's attempt to evade its obligations under UN conventions.

Tibetans have been demanding their rights to religious freedom, language and culture preservation, environment protection and freedom of speech. These demands appeared in various forms and

nature. Some in the form of mass protests, and others as solo protests – very often raising slogans in the streets or raising a portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. A commonality seen in these protests is that they were peaceful in nature. Instead of addressing the underlying issues, the Chinese authorities immediately responded by beating and rounding up protesters. Tibetan protesters are then met with severe consequences for raising their concerns. Tibetan writers, intellectuals and artists are jailed for any expression of opinions contrary to the CCP's ideology, anything from expressing reverence to His Holiness the Dalai Lama to expressing concern over mining and environmental degradation in one's own village.

Many Tibetan writers, singers and artists promoting Tibetan culture and language are held in arbitrary detention and are convicted on fictitious grounds of state security offences like “inciting separatism,” and they have to endure long prison sentences.

For instance, Go Sherab Gyatso, an eminent Tibetan scholar and a writer, was detained by the officials of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region on 26 October 2020. Although details on the arrest are not disclosed by the Chinese officials, Go Sherab Gyatso in an essay titled, *I have to Speak Out* condemned a new regulation in 2013 that required all writings and publications to be approved by the “education management department” before publication. He has published several books on Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, tradition, and culture.⁶

In June 2019, Lobsang Lhundup, also known as Dhi Lhaden, was arrested by the Chinese authorities. The Chengdu security officials have arrested Lobsang Lhundup, a former monk at Larung Gar likely on the account of using banned teaching materials at a private education center where he was working as a teacher. To this day, he continues to remain untraceable at a secret location in Chengdu city.⁷

A Tibetan writer, Gendun Lhundrup, a 46-year-old monk and a popular poet, was arrested on 2 December 2020 in Rebkong in Amdo in norther-eastern Tibet. His current whereabouts is unknown. He is known to be passionate about preserving Tibetan culture and language and in October 2020, despite limited freedom, he released an anthology of poems titled *Khorwa, Samsara, the cycle*

of existence. He also contributed his writings to a website called Waseng-drak, which promotes freedom of expression.⁸

Similarly in June 2020, Lhundrub Drakpa aged 36, was sentenced to six years in prison for singing the song “Black Hat”, which denounced years of repressive policies and practices resulting in a series of human rights violations and acts of crimes against humanity. He was held in arbitrary detention for more than a year during which he was subjected to beatings and harsh interrogations.⁹

Two Tibetans were sentenced in early July 2020 on the charges of “inciting state subversion” and “sharing state secrets” in Tsekhog in Amdo in norther-eastern Tibet. Khando Tseten and Tsego were sentenced in connection with a song praising His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Khando Tseten was imprisoned for seven years: five years for “inciting state subversion” and two years for “sharing state secrets.” Tsego was given a three-year prison term.¹⁰

Deaths Due to Torture in Tibet

In 1988, China ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). According to the Convention, states which are parties to this Convention are required to submit “reports every four years on any new measures taken” to implement the convention “and such other reports as the Committee may request.” The last time China underwent a review by the UN Committee Against Torture was in 2015, during its fifth review cycle but has failed to adopt recommendations from independent experts to eradicate torture and ill-treatment in detention. In its concluding observations, the Committee detailed in length issues that China had failed to address to eradicate torture.

Extremely concerning reports of deaths due to torture continues to emerge from Tibet. These Tibetan political prisoners died either as the direct result of brutal torture causing death while in Chinese police custody, or soon after their release. There have been cases where the Chinese authorities released Tibetan political prisoners before the completion of their sentences in near-death condition to evade the

responsibility of death in prison. Many Tibetan torture victims suffer from prolonged illnesses due to ill-treatment in prison, often confined to bed for the rest of their lives.

In 2021, so far three known deaths caused by torture have been reported. On 19 January 2021, a teenage monk Tenzin Nyima, also called Tamey, from Dza Wonpo Monastery in eastern Tibet died after being severely beaten and tortured by the Chinese authorities for peaceful protests calling for independence in November 2019.¹¹

On 6 February, 2021 Kunchok Jinpa, 51, passed away in a hospital in Lhasa after being transferred there from prison without his family's knowledge. He suffered a brain haemorrhage and was paralyzed due to torture injuries sustained in prison. He was a Tibetan tour guide who was serving a 21-year sentence for sharing information on the situation inside Tibet to the outside world.¹²

Norsang, aged around 36, was detained in 2019 for refusing to take part in coercive political “re-education campaigns” in Tachen in Nagchu. He died in the same year due to beatings and torture he was subjected to while in police custody. This is another case where the news remained unknown to the world until now because of China's high restriction on online communications.¹³ In 2020, six known deaths of Tibetans due to torture were reported.

Lhamo, 36, a Tibetan woman and a mother of three died of police torture in August 2020. She was reportedly detained in June by the Chinese authorities for “sending money to family members or other Tibetans in India,” which is a common practice among Tibetans in Tibet.¹⁴

Samdup, a political prisoner and a former monk died on 17 February 2020 at the age of 50. He was sentenced to three years for staging a peaceful protest with 15 other monks on 12 May 1992 in Lhasa but was imprisoned again for another four years for unknown reasons.¹⁵

Choekyi, a monk and a former Tibetan political prisoner released in January 2019 after serving his four-year sentence in prison, died on 7 May, 2020 at his home in Shosang village in eastern Tibet, due to torture in prison.¹⁶

Tsering Bhakdro, 51, died on 26 April in Lhasa after a prolonged illness due to torture during his long prison sentence. He suffered years of poor health following his release in 2000.¹⁷

Gedhun Sherab, a former Tibetan political prisoner, passed away on 18 April, 2020 due to torture injuries sustained in custody. He was arrested in 2017 in Lhasa for sharing a message from His Holiness the Dalai Lama regarding the reincarnation of Choedon Rinpoche from Sera Je, Lhopa Khangtsen.¹⁸

Tashi Phuntsok, an aide to the late Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, passed away on 16 March, 2020 after prolonged illness and imprisonment. His health had been poor ever since his release from prison in July 2003. He was sentenced by the Chinese authorities, alongside Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, in 2002 and was released early in July 2003 due to his deteriorating health.¹⁹

The Continued Enforced Disappearance of the Eleventh Panchen Lama

When Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was recognised as the Eleventh Panchen Lama at the age of six by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he and his entire family were abducted by the Chinese authorities on 17 May 1995. Chadrel Rinpoche, the head of the search party appointed by the Chinese authorities to discover the reincarnation of the Tenth Panchen Lama was also detained, and his fate remains unknown to this day. This year marks the 26th year of enforced disappearances of Eleventh Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, his family members and Chadrel Rinpoche. The United Nations' human rights experts and government officials have repeatedly called on China over the years to reveal the whereabouts of Panchen Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, but have only received non-committal responses.

On several occasions, including at the United Nations, China has made tacit admissions. For instance, in a statement given by Baima Wangdui, representative of “TAR” delegation at a hearing held on 8 May, 2018 at the Canadian Parliament's Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, said that the Panchen Lama “and his family members do not want to be interrupted by

an external environment.” For more than 25 years, Tibetans, their supporters, and international human rights groups, including the UN Committee Against Torture, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Working Group on Enforced Disappearance, have called for information on the Panchen Lama’s wellbeing and his whereabouts but no verifiable response has been provided. The Panchen Lama remains one of the world’s longest-serving political prisoners.

More recently, five UN independent experts issued a joint letter in June 2020, expressing concern over “the continued enforced disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, and the regulation of reincarnation of Tibetan living Buddha against the religious traditions and practices of the Tibetan Buddhist.” The UN experts demanded China to “provide prompt and detailed information” on the Panchen Lama, while endorsing “to allow an independent monitor to visit him to confirm his whereabouts and the extent to which he is able to enjoy and exercise his rights.”

Restriction on Movement

The freedom of movement is systematically violated with the imposition of explicit restrictions including local directives prohibiting overseas travel, passport confiscations, and issuing of threats and intimidations to Tibetans in Tibet against traveling. Tibetans have to seek permission to go on pilgrimage within Tibet. During the week of the 60th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising in 2019, the authorities placed travel restrictions on Tibetans. Not only were Tibetans prevented from travelling out of the county but they were also barred from moving between villages and towns within Tibet.²⁰

Tibetans face heightened restrictions on movement when they visit religious sites and monasteries during the Tibetan New Year and other major religious festivals. For instance, according to local Tibetans the monasteries are not even allowed to independently arrange and manage the great prayer festival(Monlam Chenmo).²¹ Chinese authorities had ordered monasteries in Kham and Amdo regions not to host any visitors during the 85th birthday of His Holiness the

Dalai Lama.²² After the easing of Covid-19 preventative restrictions, Chinese tourists are freely allowed to visit the Tsuklakhang, the site of Lhasa's famous Jokhang Temple, while Tibetan visitors are thoroughly screened and government workers, retirees, and school students are completely banned from entering.²³ Chinese authorities in Tibet's capital Lhasa have increased police presence by opening several so-called "security centers" aimed at further controlling the freedom of mobility and human rights of Tibetans inside Tibet.²⁴

Travelling outside the country is further restricted as Tibetans are discriminated against in the process of passport issuance. Those who managed to get passports and travel to attend the Kalachakra teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, were compelled to return to Tibet amidst threats of serious repercussions. Upon their return, their passports were confiscated and they were subjected to arbitrary detentions, interrogations, torture etc.²⁵ The plethora of new and existing restrictions on passport procurement, travel and on movement within Tibet has turned Tibet into "a giant open prison."

Criminalizing Communications with Family and Friends in Exile

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has not only made social distancing an obligation but virtual connection a necessity. Yet, communication in Tibet is highly surveilled and severely restricted by the Chinese authorities. China has always controlled what users can access, watch and share. According to Reporters Without Borders, at least 50 Tibetans were convicted for sending information abroad after the 2008 uprising in Tibet.²⁶ More recently, criminalization has reached a new height for Tibetans communicating with their family members and friends in exile.

The Chinese authorities for years have incarcerated Tibetans for any dissenting acts. In the years Tibet witnessed waves of protests across the nation. The 2008 pan-Tibet protests recorded the total Tibetans arrested from March-December 2008 at over 6,810. In the last decade, there were at least 583 known cases of Tibetans who were arrested. In fact, China's recent crackdown and persecution of Tibetans for contacting their family and other Tibetans in exile is a sign of a

high-handed approach to intimidate Tibetans inside Tibet. A case in point is the sentencing of four monks from Tengdro Monastery in Dingri in September 2019, who were given disproportionately harsh sentences – up to 20 years prison term – for contacting Tibetans living abroad or having contributed to the 2015 Nepal earthquake relief.²⁷

Intensification of Restriction on Religious Practices

The state interference in religious affairs has reduced the space for practice of Tibetan Buddhism. Monasteries are barred from giving traditional monastic education and are instead replaced with ‘patriotic education’ imposed on monks and nuns. In mid July 2018, Chinese authorities in eastern Tibet forced more than 200 Tibetan novice monks below the age of 18 out of their monasteries to join Chinese government schools.²⁸ In the same month, 20 novice monks below 15 years of age were removed from Jowo Ganden Shedrub Palgyeling monastery in eastern Tibet. In June 2016, Chinese authorities ordered Larung Gar to slice its monastic population. This led to the forced removal of at least 4,800 residents and dismantling of homes.²⁹ In protest against the eviction, three Tibetan nuns committed suicide in 2016. Similarly, in May 2019 Yarchen Gar in eastern Tibet was forced to expel over 3,600 nuns, monks and lay practitioners.³⁰ Those who were evicted were forced to undergo “patriotic education” sessions. In 2020, a nun from Yarchen Gar committed suicide in protest against the “patriotic education” program.³¹

Prior to that, over 100 nuns were expelled from Jada Gaden Khachoeling nunnery. In 2014, government officials ordered and barred monks under 13 years of age from joining monastic communities in Driru. In 2011, under the pretext of “patriotic education”, around 300 monks were abducted from Kirti Monastery. On July 3, 2021, Chinese authorities in north-eastern Tibet forcefully closed down Kharmar monastery and ordered the monks and nuns to return to secular life.³²

When Tibetans raise their opposition to “patriotic re-education” campaigns and other repressive and discriminative policies, Chinese

authorities are quick to subject them to arbitrary detention, arrest and ill-treatment. As per our data, between the years 2008 and 2009 alone, the Chinese government has brutally suppressed and arrested over 4,657 peaceful demonstrators, sentenced 371, and 990 cases of enforced disappearances.³³ Since the 2008 uprising, over 297 Tibetans have been killed either as a direct result of shooting aimed at protestors or torture while in detention.

China's 70 Years of Environmental Destruction in Tibet

The Tibetan Plateau, which stands at an average elevation of more than 4000 meters above sea level, spans an area of 2.5 million square kilometers. This massive landmass, considered the highest and largest plateau on earth,¹ is rightly referred to as “the Roof of the World.” The high elevation also makes the Tibetan plateau home to the largest concentration of glaciers after the two poles. Hence, it is popularly known as “the Third Pole.” The vast presence of glaciers makes it the head source of Asia's 10 largest and most important rivers, directly feeding 1.8 billion people in south and south-east Asia. A UN report issued in 2011 clearly states that Tibetan rivers support and influence the social and economic development of a fifth of the world's population.²

Francis Kingdon-Ward, a British botanist and an explorer, who conducted several surveys in Tibet prior to the Chinese occupation, described the plateau as ‘one great zoological garden.’

For Tibetans, their homeland is the “Snow-land Paradise,” a place from where the highest peaks rise and longest rivers originate, a place where ancient forests in southern Tibet were protected, and hunting was prohibited, and a place where people revered mountains, lakes, rivers, forests and lived in harmony with nature. In view of their traditional respect for nature, the Tibetans successfully protected the plateau for thousands of years. Consequently, the Tibetan people sustained a stable flow of Asia's most important rivers, such as the Driчу (Yangtze), Machu (Yellow), Zachu (Mekong), Gyalmo Ngulchu (Salween), Senge Khabab (Indus), Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra), Langchen Khabab (Sutlej), Macha Khabab (Karnali), Bhumchu (Arun) and Lhodrak Sharchu (Manas).

However, since the Chinese invasion, Tibet began to witness unprecedented environmental destruction. Large and small mines quickly became widespread, wild animals were killed and hunted *en-masse*, numerous valleys of ancient forests were cut down, and almost all major rivers in Tibet are being dammed. The Chinese invasion brought with it, a sudden disruption to the age-old Tibetan

tradition of causing minimum harm to the natural environment and its wildlife.

China Curbing Local Environmental Activists

Despite current Chinese President Xi Jinping's regular calls for environmental protection across China, Tibetan environmental groups continue to face restrictions. Following are a few known cases of Tibetans facing legal actions for their environmental advocacy and activism:

In March 1992, Phuntsok Chosang and Gyatso were arrested from their houses and taken away by Public Security Bureau officials of what is now administered as Gyama Township in the so-called TAR.³ Phunstok Chosang and Gyatso protested against the mining activities in Gyama area near Lhasa in 1990.

On June 25, 2010, Karma Samdrup, a businessman and also the founder of the Three Rivers Environmental Protection group who campaigned for the conservation of the source region for the Drichu (Yangtze), Machu (Yellow), and Zachu (Mekong) rivers was jailed for 15 years.⁴

On September 4, 2018, a Tibetan nomad and environmental activist A-Nya Sengdra was arrested and a year later on December 6, 2019, was sentenced to seven years in prison.⁵ A-Nya Sengdra gained respect for his campaign against illegal mining activities, government corruption and the illegal hunting and poaching of endangered animals in Golog in northeastern Tibet.

On February 6, 2021, Kunchok Jinpa died due to injuries sustained in prison as he was serving a 21 years of prison term. He was imprisoned in 2013 because he protested against a mining project at Naghla Dzambha Mountain in Driru in Nagchu.⁶

On April 2, 2021, writer and environmental activist, Sey Nam was taken into custody along with a former political prisoner Tsering Dolma, writer Gangkye Drubpa Kyab, and activist Gangbu Yudrum in Kardze in eastern Tibet.⁷

The Public Security Department of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region issued a notice with the list of 22 illegal activities described as ‘Black and Evil Forces’ on 11 January, 2018, in which environmental protection activities in Tibet was also labeled as an illegal act.⁸ Chinese authorities in Tibet continue to issue license for the construction of ever-bigger dams, and rampant mining on sacred mountains.

Sudden Decrease in Tibet’s Wildlife

Tibet has seen a sudden and sharp drop in its wildlife. This is due to decades of unhindered hunting carried out or encouraged across Tibet by the Chinese government.

Many elderly Tibetans had seen herds of wild animals being slaughtered instantly with machine guns by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) during their march into Tibet. According to an eyewitness account, despite strong objections from local Tibetan communities, some Chinese officials used dynamites in rivers and lakes to instantaneously kill hundreds of fish in the 1990s. Such practices deeply hurt the sentiments of the Tibetans and drastically continue to pollute the local drinking water. The cultural way of life in Tibet, which was greatly influenced by both Bon and Buddhist traditions, strictly forbade the general public from commercial hunting. Successive rulers in Tibet issued strict edicts to ban hunting at several ecological sites.

Captain C. Rawling in his book *The Great Plateau* published in 1905 says, “Almost from my feet away to the north and east, as far as the eye could reach, were thousands, upon thousands of doe antelope [Tibetan antelope] with their young...There could not have been less than 15,000-20,000 visible at one time.”

In 2006 and 2011, the Chinese authorities in Tibet issued licenses for the commercial hunting of rare animals⁹ and many officials engaged in hunting for leisure. Such government attitude encouraged large-scale poaching across Tibet in the 1980s and early 1990s. Some emboldened poachers even killed Sonam Dhargye in 1994, a prominent wildlife conservationist, seeding fear and anger among the local community.¹⁰

In a brazen case of hypocrisy, the Chinese government opposed a popular public movement to stop wearing clothes trimmed with animal skins and fur in Tibet.¹¹ This movement was a reaction to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's call in 2006 for Tibetans in Tibet to abandon the use of animal skins in traditional dress. The popular movement was probably one of the greatest contributions to wildlife protection in Tibet since it was invaded by China. Deliberately the Chinese government encouraged¹² and enforced government officials¹³ and the local community to continue with the practice of wearing animal fur-decorated dresses, especially at public functions and government meetings. Those who refused to follow the order are punished.

China's Excessive Deforestation in Tibet

Until 1949, Tibet's forest cover predominantly found in eastern Amdo, south-eastern Kham and Kongpo region of southern Tibet, was one of the oldest reserves in all of Inner Asia. Some scientists have compared Tibetan Plateau's known biodiversity to that of the Amazon Rainforest.¹⁴

Chinese invasion of Tibet opened up the region to ambitious Chinese state-logging enterprises. China has been one of the largest consumers of timber in the world and it inflicted an unprecedented scale of deforestation across Tibet. Tibet's forest cover was reduced to 13.57 million hectares from 25.2 million hectares; about a 46% reduction between 1950 to 1985.¹⁵ The alarming scale of logging in many parts of the south-eastern and north-eastern part of Tibet was one of the factors that led to the 1998 Yangtze flood and the 2010 Drukchu flood.¹⁶

A post-disaster study by Chinese scientists and United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team on the Yangtze flood in 1998 has put excessive logging in the Yangtze valley, particularly in the Tibetan areas as one of the primary causes of the massive flood.¹⁷ Some 70 state-logging enterprises have cut a total of 120 million cubic metres of wood from the forest of eastern Kham, generated over 2 billion yuan (the US \$241 million) in taxes and profits between 1949 to 1998.¹⁸ As for the Drukchu flood on August 8, 2010, the local residents have blamed the flood to a government initiative to clear

the forest to build 156 hydropower stations as a part of a new policy issued in 2005 to exploit the Drukchu River.¹⁹ A similar conclusion was also echoed in the *Journal of Geophysical Research*, which stated that the massive Drukchu landslide of August 2010 was caused by extreme precipitation, magnified by the Wenchuan earthquake of May 2008 and the severe loss of vegetation cover in the Drukchu region.²⁰ The scale of logging in Tibet was also highlighted in *The Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment* report published in 2019. The report stated that the warm-temperate coniferous forest has nearly disappeared from the south-east Tibetan Plateau, mostly due to commercial logging before the end of the 1990s.²¹

Mega Dams on Tibetan Rivers and Increasing Risks

The claims made by China that “currently all the major rivers and lakes in Tibet remain in their natural state” and “the water quality of major rivers and lakes is generally good.” This stands in stark contrast to the ground reality. Rivers are not in their natural state on all the major rivers in Tibet. The Chinese government has either constructed, or is actively constructing, or has proposed plans to construct cascades of dams.²² Mega dams are being built in Tibetan areas to power Chinese cities and accelerate large-scale resource extraction across Tibet.

To achieve its obligations made at the global climate summit to reduce its carbon emission by 2030, China has accelerated its efforts in hydropower projects in Tibet. China’s claims that the hydropower projects are clean and sustainable are questionable due to its immeasurable long-term ecological and social disruption.

There have been cases of reservoir-induced seismic (RIS) activities caused by dams in China. According to a Probe International Report authored by Fan Xiao, a Chinese geologist, the 2008 Wenchun earthquake and the 2014 Ludian earthquake were induced by two nearby dams, the Zipinpu Dam and Xiluadu Dam.²³ He states that the weight of the reservoir could have induced the earthquake or caused a smaller earthquake. Unfortunately, dams being constructed in Tibet are located in moderate to very high seismic hazard zones as the Tibetan Plateau is highly prone to seismic activities.²⁴

Despite making amendments to strengthen China's Environmental Impact Assessment Law in 2003,²⁵ dams are being built rapidly without proper environmental impact assessment (EIA) and consultation with the local community. For instance, the construction of the Lianghekou dam, on the Nyakchu River in southeastern Tibet will lead to the displacement of about 6,000 Tibetans in the area. According to reports, the massive project said to become the third tallest dam in the world once completed in 2023, will submerge ancestral homes, Buddhist monasteries, fertile crops and sacred mountains as far as 100 kilometers upstream from the dam site.²⁶

River Water Pollution from Toxic Mine Waste

Chinese civilization flourished on the banks of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers, which originate from the melting of glaciers and permafrost of the Tibetan Plateau and feed millions in China as these two rivers flow parallel to each other across almost all of China. It's clear that the ecological health of the Tibetan Plateau is vital for a stable social, economic, and environmental well-being of China. According to a Chinese official report, over 40 percent of China's rivers are seriously polluted and about 20 percent of rivers are excessively polluted that their water quality has been rated too toxic even to come into contact.²⁷ Water from three-quarters of China's lakes and reservoirs are unsuitable for human consumption and fishing.²⁸

Unfortunately, such a dire situation of river water pollution is quickly developing in Tibet as well, primarily due to mining and rapid urbanization. Two such cases of river water pollution occurred in Minyak Lhagang near Dartsedo in eastern Tibet and Dokar Village near Lhasa in Central Tibet.

A Lithium mining company called Ronda Lithium Co. Ltd released toxic mine waste into a local river called Lichu in Minyak Lhagang in eastern Tibet,²⁹ causing serious water pollution and mass death of fish. This brought hundreds of local Tibetans out on the street on May 4, 2016, to protest against the mining company.³⁰ The local government informed the protestors that it had temporarily halted the mining activities, but local Tibetans soon realized that the

government had deceived them as the operation continued at the mining site. This was not the first or an isolated case of river water pollution. In 2013, the same river had been polluted with lithium mine waste, causing death of aquatic animals and threatening local drinking water.³¹

In a similar case on September 23, 2014 in Dokar and Zibuk villages of Lhundrup near Lhasa, more than 1,000 local Tibetans protested against the poisoning of their river by the Gyama Copper Poly-metallic Mine.³² This mine is located close to a tributary of Yarlung Tsangpo river which becomes Brahmaputra in India. This tributary is used by Tibetans for drinking water, irrigation and feeding animals. Predictably, local officials declared that the water pollution in the river was caused by natural factors and not by the mining company. But according to an article published in 2010 by Xiang, a Chinese scientist firmly stated that many mining and processing sites in the valley posed a great environmental concern as the deposits contain a large amount of heavy metals such as lead, copper, zinc and manganese etc. The article further stated that the deposits are prone to leak its contaminants through seepage water and erosion of particulates, posing future risk to the environment and to the downstream water quality.³³

A local resident from the village told Radio Free Asia in September 2014 that “in the past, our rivers were crisp and clean, the mountains and valleys were known for their natural beauty. But now the rivers are polluted with poisonous waste from the mines.”³⁴

China Mines Tibet

The Chinese Geological Survey in 2007 estimated that the Tibetan Plateau holds about 30-40 million tons of copper reserves, 40 million tons of zinc, and several billion tons of iron.³⁵ The proven reserve of more than 7.8 million tons of copper at the Yulong Copper Mine makes it the largest in China and the second largest in Asia.

Tibet has seen an unprecedented number of floods, landslides, and forest fires since 2015. The impact of climate change has been severe in Tibet and the situation is further exacerbated by excessive

mining, damming, rapid urbanization and mass influx of Chinese migrant settlers. Following are highlights of four very different forms of natural disaster in Tibet in the last five years.

First, we cite a two very different forms of extreme natural disasters. A twin glacial avalanche (17 July, 2016 & 21 September, 2016) in Ruthok in Ngari killed nine people,³⁶ followed by an extreme blizzard in February 2019 affected 120,000 people and 1 million livestock in Yushu and Golog in northeastern Tibet.³⁷

Second, two flood disasters in Tibet; first roads and homes were destroyed in an unprecedented flood in the Jomda town on July 8, 2017 in southeast Tibet, while an unusual flood inundated a summer pasture in Chungchu, an area in Ngawa in Tibet in July 2018.

Third, two horrifying sights of collapsing hills; a whole face of a mountain in Machen collapsed in Golog in northeastern Tibet, killing nine people in their sleep on 30 August 2017. The following year in July 2018, a terrifying scene of lava-like muds flowed down a hill in Zatoe in southeastern Tibet.

Fourth, landslides in Tibet blocked Asia's biggest rivers; a twin landslide (11 October 2018 & 3 November 2018) in Bolu in Southeastern Tibet blocked Driчу (Yangtse), the longest river in Asia for 11 days. Around the same time, a landslide in Gyalha in Kongpo in south Tibet blocked the Yarlung Tsangpo for one whole day. Both could have caused serious repercussions in the downstream countries. Local Tibetans are worried about the new trend of frequent natural disasters. It is a trend that scientists, researchers and the general public in Tibet fear might become the "New Normal in Tibet."³⁸

Unfortunately, the Chinese government has done very little to combat natural disasters despite been warned of increasing natural disasters including landslides, floods caused by torrential rainfall, snow disasters and forest fires in a 2015 report by the Chinese Academy of Sciences.³⁹ The lack of directives and awareness programs for both the public and government officials on how to mitigate and adapt to the new climatic conditions despite the Tibetan Plateau facing the severest impact from climate change is alarming.

China's Lack of Ecological Concern

The Chinese government has also neglected one of the most basic measures and mechanisms needed to cope with radical development activities in Tibet, waste-management and waste treatment facilities. The lack of institutional measures and proper governance in waste management has encouraged rampant littering on the mountains and waste dumping in the rivers. Much of the government investment in waste management is concentrated in a few select tourist centers and urban areas that house government officials. As soon as one travels outside of these towns and cities, littering is rampant and waste management is almost non-existent.

In a serious case of violation of socio-environmental rights of Tibetan nomads, more than 2 million people,⁴⁰ mostly nomads, were forcibly removed from their traditional grassland habitat. The lack of jobs and educational opportunities in the resettled areas led to further marginalization of this nomadic population.⁴¹ The situation is exacerbated by the rapid phase at which China is declaring more areas in Tibet as national parks in recent years.⁴² Such parks which China claims are environmental conservation efforts are in reality meant for leisure spots for Chinese tourists. This is carried out by driving out the remaining nomads from their livelihood and grasslands.

Tibetans in Tibet and in the diaspora are seriously concerned about the Chinese development practices and their impact on the local environment. The lack of any sincere and transparent environmental conservation efforts in Tibet from the Chinese government has left local Tibetans in a state of dilemma.

The situation is precisely echoed by Lobsang, who said: "The government is very big, and the valley is very small. So much is lost, but we cannot resist or fight. When you say something and try to protect your place, the government gives you another name: separatist."⁴³

Enduring Non-violent Struggle of the Tibetan People

Contrary to what PRC presents in their propaganda, Tibetans have since the invasion of their land have continued their struggle for greater freedom. This movement emerged shortly after the founding of the People's Republic of China which was followed by marching of the People's Liberation Army into Tibet.

The early years of PRC's occupation of Tibet was marked by radical transformation of Tibet through the so-called "democratic reform." Imposition of this reform in 1956 in Kham and Amdo saw violent campaign against Tibetan spiritual figures, monastic institutions, cultural practices and places of worship. This has resulted in mass arrests, execution and mass starvation in eastern parts of Tibet. The uprising in these parts of Tibet culminated in the Tibetan National Uprising on March 10, 1959.

After Tibetans became aware that His Holiness the Dalai Lama had been invited to the Chinese military camp in early March, Tibetans from all over Lhasa surrounded the Norbulingka Palace to protect their spiritual and temporal leader. On the following day on March 11, 1959, thousands of Tibetans gathered in *Shol*, situated at the foot of the Potala Palace, to collectively protest against China's meddling in Tibetan government's affairs. A meeting of 50 government officials declared the formation of *Mimang Tsongdu*, People's Assembly, who called for the repudiation of the "17-Point Agreement" and continued protest against PRC's rule over Tibet.

The news of Tibetan uprising started to spread and similar protests also erupted in other regions in Tibet. Instead of heeding the Tibetan voices, PRC initiated a military offensive against Tibetan masses. Although China claims that 87,000 Tibetans were killed to suppress the uprising, but in reality, the figure is far higher. PRC suppressed Tibetans by using brute force.

Since 1987, a wave of non-violent protests continued even after it was violently suppressed when PRC declared martial law in 1989. This is the first time in PRC's history where it resorted to this draconian measure. Following His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit

to Washington DC, where he spoke before the congressional caucus on human rights, PRC's leaders condemned His Holiness the Dalai Lama on state television. To show their support and express their faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 21 monks from Drepung Monastery staged a demonstration on September 27. After circumambulating the Jokhang, they were spontaneously joined by other Tibetans. During the demonstration they chanted "independence for Tibet" and "May the Dalai Lama live for thousands of years." This demonstration was violently broken down and protestors were immediately arrested.

The heavy-handed crackdown on Tibetans sparked a series of protests. Most notably, just few days ahead of its planned "celebration" of the founding of PRC in 1987, a group of monks from Sera Monastery staged a demonstration to express their support to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and demanded the release of Drepung monks who were arrested earlier. Tibetans from all walks of life joined the monks to show solidarity. The monks were immediately arrested and the police resorted to indiscriminate shooting which killed between six to 20 Tibetans. The news of this violent crackdown reached the outside world when foreigners who were witness to this atrocity, smuggled and disseminated photos to the international media.

Even with the threat of violent crackdown, Tibetans continued to protest. It is reported that from September to December 1987, eight mass protests were held in Lhasa. Similarly, in 1988, it is documented that there were over 17 demonstrations. This includes a mass demonstration participated by over 2000 Tibetans on March 5. In 1989, 34 protests were reported and this was clamped down by the declaration of martial law. Even after the implementation of this repressive law, Tibetans continued to protest.

In March 2008, Tibet witnessed the largest uprising since 1959. Monks from Sera and Drepung monasteries staged protest calling for freedom for Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Immediate arrest of monks sparked more protests. Outraged Tibetans who witnessed this violent clampdown by the authorities led to more protests. It is estimated that over 220 Tibetans were

killed, 5,600 were arrested or detained. In the ensuing crackdown, authorities sentenced 290 Tibetans and over 1,000 cases of enforced disappearance were reported.

This uprising of 2008 saw unprecedented protests across Tibet. This pan-Tibet movement spanned all three traditional provinces of Tibet. Tibetans from all sections of society were involved in staging protests. It includes monastics, teachers, students, nomads, traders and farmers.

Instead of addressing Tibetan people's call for freedom and return of their revered leader, PRC's response to this widespread uprising was to enforce further securitization in Tibet. Since 2008, the PRC initiated further investment in surveillance technology and infrastructure. PRC's annual spending on domestic security has more than tripled since 2007, to reach 1.24 trillion yuan (\$193 billion) in 2017. On per capita basis, it is estimated that China spent 3,137 yuan on security in 2016 in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region. This staggering resource is spent to securitize Tibet against the national average of 763 yuan. The extraordinary economic cost at which PRC maintains stability in Tibet indicates an inherent insecurity and lack of legitimacy to rule over Tibet.

With intensified securitization since 2008, China has closed down on collective protests. Under such oppressive environment, a new and creative forms of protests have emerged in Tibet since 2008. Lhakar or White Wednesday movement is one such example. For Tibetans, Wednesday is the *soul day* of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a virtuous day to conduct special rituals dedicated to the health and longevity of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Since 2008, on every Wednesday, Tibetans have taken to wearing traditional clothes, eating Tibetan food, shopping from Tibetan businesses, and speaking exclusively in Tibetan language. This is one such example of everyday resistance of the Tibetan people.

As a result of intensified surveillance and repressive measures adopted after 2008, Tibetans were left with no alternatives but to stage solo protests and resorting to drastic protests through self-immolations.

Since 2009, there were 155 known cases of self-immolations in Tibet. Testimonies left by many of these self-immolators have called for freedom in Tibet and return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

The Way Forward

China needs to bring in Tibetans and their voices within the decision-making circles of the government. Consequently, China cannot ignore the enduring influence and faith that the Tibetan people in and outside Tibet place on His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama notes in his letter to Deng Xiaoping in 1981 that, “in early 1979, at your invitation, Gyalo Thondup visited China. Through him you had sent a message saying that we should keep in contact with each other. You had also invited us to send fact-finding delegations to Tibet. Thereafter, three fact-finding delegations were able to find out both the positive and negative aspects of the situation in Tibet. If the Tibetan people’s identity is preserved and if they are genuinely happy, there is no reason to complain. However, in reality, over 90 percent of the Tibetans are suffering both mentally and physically, and are living in deep sorrow. These sad conditions have not been brought about by natural disasters, but by human actions. Therefore, genuine efforts must be made to resolve the problems in accordance with the existing realities in a reasonable way.”

Today, the situation in Tibet remains grim and it is high time to address the needs of the Tibetan people. Hence, it is vital that both parties come to the table and the future of Tibet be resolved through the Middle Way Approach as proposed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This approach reflects the aspiration of Tibetans inside and outside Tibet and was approved unanimously by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. This has garnered support from Tibetans as well as the international community at large. Any resolution needs to be formulated through a win – win policy, which the Middle-Way Approach proposes. Continued bulldozing over Tibetan aspirations will not work.

The Middle Way Approach (MWA), is a policy that seeks real and meaningful autonomy for the Tibetan people through engagement with the Chinese leadership for the benefit of both the parties within the framework of the constitution of the People’s Republic of China. The Middle Way Approach offers for Tibetans the protection and

preservation of their cultural and religious identity and for China, the legitimacy for its rule in Tibet it seeks.

Since the widespread Tibetan uprising in 2008, there are growing concerns among Chinese citizens who are calling for PRC's policy correction in dealing with Tibet. These concerns are articulated by leading Chinese intellectuals such as Liu Xiaobo, Wang Lixiong, Zhang Boshu, Ran Yunfei, Yan Jiaqi, Su Shaozhi and many others. They all recommend that Beijing resolve the longstanding Sino-Tibet conflict through dialogue.

One such voice is the critically acclaimed and one of China's most respected artists, Ai WeiWei. When asked to reflect on the peaceful and sustained pan-Tibet protests in 2008, Ai WeiWei said, "Most important is to truly respect ethnic minorities, and to admit all of the mistakes perpetrated against them in the past. In all events, this latest unrest [in Tibet] at the very least speaks to the failure of ethnic minority policies. We have never fully understood their religion and their lifestyle. Historically, we destroyed their monasteries and statues – that's a simple fact." With regards to finding a resolution to the Sino-Tibet conflict, he said, "A dialogue must be sought. To simply accuse them of the crime of splittism is not feasible. We need to establish a society in which different ethnic groups, people with different languages, different religions, lifestyles and different ways of thinking can coexist. And this requires respect, tolerance, consultation and dialogue."

Chinese writer, Wang Lixiong, had devoted a few decades on researching and reflecting on Tibet's place since its occupation in PRC's political system. In one of his petitions, he called for an open investigation into the violent suppression of the widespread Tibetan protests in 2008 and he further stressed on peaceful negotiations to resolve the ongoing Sino-Tibet conflict. He also emphasized that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the key to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict.

Another important Chinese voice is the celebrated Chinese intellectual and a Nobel Peace laureate, Liu Xiaobo. He along with 29 other signatories in 2008 issued an open letter, "Twelve

suggestions for Dealing with the Tibetan Situation.” This letter was issued in the aftermath of widespread protests across Tibet in 2008 and the signatories urged the Chinese government to “stop the violent suppression.” Their letter concluded by appealing to the PRC’s leadership “to hold direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama” with the “hope that the Chinese and Tibetan people will do away with the misunderstandings between them, develop their interactions with each other, and achieve unity.”

The Central Tibetan Administration recommends that the Chinese leadership will seriously reflect on the thoughts of these outstanding leading Chinese intellectuals and carry out their thoughts in Party policy in Tibet.

The past example of Party policy correction in Tibet was made by Hu Yaobang, who stressed the importance of Tibetan people exercising full regional autonomy. During Hu Yaobang’s visit to Lhasa in 1980, he admitted that the “Party has let the Tibetan people down.” He further reflected on China’s 30 years of rule in Tibet and remarked that the Party has “worked for nearly thirty years, but the life of the Tibetan people has not been notably improved.” And questioned, “Are we not to blame?”

On May 29, 1980, Hu Yaobang gave a speech at a gathering of 5,000 cadres in Lhasa. In his speech, he outlined six policy corrections for Tibet. Among these policy corrections, he emphasized the rights of the Tibetan people within the framework of the constitution of the People’s Republic of China. He said that the Party must allow the Tibetan people “To exercise nationality autonomy in the region fully - that is to say, to let Tibetans really be the masters of their own lives.”

At that time, the Chinese leadership engaged the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for formulating a new status for Tibet within the scope of the constitution of the People’s Republic of China.

The Central Tibetan Administration recommends the present Chinese leadership to revisit this period of attempting to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict. This is the desire of the Tibetan people and the

recommendation of a vast number of concerned Chinese thinkers both within and outside China. For the benefit of the Tibetan people and in the interest of China, the Chinese leadership can do this by resuming in earnest the stalled Sino-Tibet dialogue with the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The Central Tibetan Administration sincerely urges the Chinese leadership to recognise and treat Tibetan language and culture as world treasures that have much to contribute to world peace which comes from inner peace and individual happiness.

A report by a group of Chinese scholars in Beijing revealed the breakdown in China's Tibet policy in the light of the mass uprising of 2008. After investigation by a Beijing-based lawyers' group, the thinktank Gongmeng in their report challenged Beijing's official position that the "Dalai Lama incited the protests" and outlined key failings in China's Tibet policy. Their research finding concluded by stating that China's strategies to ensure "stability" in Tibet have failed and its propaganda offensive has "deepened divisions and further exacerbated tensions."

The Chinese leadership cannot ignore the longstanding Sino-Tibet conflict. They should also recognize that China's hard-line policies and approach towards Tibet has failed.

Until there is a lasting resolution to the Sino-Tibet conflict, the Central Tibetan Administration is committed in its resolve to carry forward the Tibetan movement. In order to achieve this, The Central Tibetan Administration will continue to represent the voices of Tibetans inside Tibet.

In exile, the Central Tibetan Administration will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to pool the resource of every single Tibetan to amplify our global advocacy efforts. CTA will closely monitor and conduct thorough studies on issues concerning Tibetan people's rights, culture, identity and ecology inside Tibet. The CTA will not dither from pointing out China's gross mistakes in their policies and programs in Tibet. For these wrong policies, we will seek immediate redressal, withdrawal or amendment.

NOTES

The Historical Status of Tibet

1. The first article in the 17-Point Agreement.
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China's 70 Years of Environmental Destruction in Tibet

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