



# TIBETAN BULLETIN

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SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2021

## Focus

Ancient Links and Political Treaties: Tibet's History as a Sovereign Nation

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## Feature

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Speaks on Our Happiness,  
Our Health, Our Future

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## World Press

India Should Share its Ancient Knowledge with the World: The Dalai Lama

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## TIBETAN BULLETIN

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



*Sikyong Penpa Tsering during the virtual audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1 September 2021. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA*

Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration received a virtual audience with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

During the online audience, Sikyong apprised His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his first official visit as Sikyong to Leh and Jhangthang regions of Ladakh in August. He also updated His Holiness on the activities that he has undertaken since assuming the responsibility of Sikyong in May this year.

## Former Tibetan Political Prisoner Dhondup Dorjee Passes Away in Tibet

The Central Tibetan Administration has learnt about the demise of a former political prisoner in Lhasa in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region. According to our source, Dhondup Dorjee, who spent years behind bars after campaigning for human rights of the Tibetan people, passed away on 25 August 2021. While the cause of his demise is not known, it was reported that he had problems with his legs. He was 74 years old.

Dhondup Dorjee, a graduate of Beijing Nationalities University, was appointed as the Section Head of the Lhasa Meteorological Bureau in 1989. Two years later, he was promoted to the Chief of the Nagchu (Ch: Naqu)

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Meteorological Bureau. While in Nagchu, even as a member of the Chinese Communist Party, he strongly advocated for the basic human rights of the Tibetan people.

On 14 May 1992, he was arrested in Nagchu by the officials of the Lhasa Intelligence Bureau for his outspoken demands for the rights of fellow Tibetans. Chinese officials raided his house in Lhasa, seized and destroyed most of his personal belongings including property documents. He was sentenced and spent 2 years and 8 months in Seitru and Gutsa prison. He was released in January 1995.

After his release, Dhondup Dorjee was removed from his former post as the Chief of the Nagchu Meteorological



*Former Political Prisoner Dhondup Dorjee*

Bureau. On May 18, 1995, Dhondup Dorjee went to reclaim his job but was only given a temporary position as a gardener. He was paid only 300 yuan per month whereas before his arrest he was earning a monthly salary of 1700 yuan. Then in the beginning of 1996, the Nagchu Meteorological Bureau was ordered by the Chinese authorities to remove Dorjee from his job given his past political records. He was also stripped of his party membership and all other rights and benefits were cut off too. The authorities had said that "he will be given a job by the Dalai Lama and the United Nations because he is very devoted to the Dalai Lama". Thereafter, he started working as a construction laborer with a meagre wage.

Dhondup Dorjee hailed from the part of Lhasa known to Tibetans as Lhalu. He is survived by his wife and younger daughter Penpa Dolma in Tibet. Around the time of her father's arrest, Penpa Dolma was denied admission at university for coming from a family of

"political activists". The elder daughter, Tsering Dekyi, lived in Dharamshala after fleeing to India before moving to Australia where she currently resides.

## Crackdown on Dza Wonpo Continues, 113 Tibetans Detained in Total

In a continuing state crackdown by the Chinese authorities, 53 more Tibetans have been detained in addition to the 60 arrested Tibetans last week. These arrests were made in Dza Wonpo township in Kham Kardze's (Ch: Ganzi) Sersbul (Ch: Shiqu) county on charges of keeping pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or contacting Tibetans living in exile. This brings the total number of Tibetans arrested and detained in Dza Wonpo to 113.

From 25 to 29 August 2021, police carried out various raids raiding houses of local Tibetans. According to our source, four Tibetans, including a monk, one woman, and two men are said to have been released on 31 August but locals believe that the remaining 50 will be detained for at least a month as the Chinese police fabricates charges against them.



*Screen grab*

Chinese police also made fresh regulations effective 31 August where they conducted daily interrogation sessions with 20 Dza Wonpo monks during which they were coerced into proving themselves loyal to the Chinese Communist Party. During the interrogation, the monks had to prove their innocence in activities deemed illegal by the Chinese government.

They had to assure the police that they have never taken part in any political activities, nor made contacts with Tibetans living in exile, and will not do so in the future. Chinese authorities have appointed two people from the Dza Wonpo Monastery's Monastic Management Committee to administer the regulation, monitoring movement and activities of the monks.

Monitoring and surveillance of the residents remains high in Dza Wonpo where police are conducting house-to-house inspections regularly.

## China Detains Eight More Tibetans in Dza Wonpo

Chinese officials have arrested eight more Tibetans including six monks from Dza Wonpo Gaden Shedrup Monastery and two women from Dza Wonpo township, Sershul (Ch: Shiqu) county in Kham Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) on 3 September. The arrests last Friday follow two recent instances where police and military officials arrested and detained 113 for either keeping pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or communicating with Tibetans in exile.

Within two weeks, Chinese authorities in Dza Wonpo township have detained 121 Tibetans including both monks and laypeople. Only four (a monk, a woman, and two men) are known to have been released so far. However, the rest continue to be detained in Sershul county.

The names and details of the eight arrested last Friday are not disclosed yet. According to sources, each one of the monks was led by a group of police and military officials from Dza Mey (lower Dzachukha). The authorities performed thorough searches of their houses before taking them to Sershul county. The two women were also taken to Sershul county.

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

## Sikyong Penpa Tsering Pays Courtesy Call on Law Minister Kiren Rijju

Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration paid a visit to honourable Law Minister Shri Kiren Rijju. Sikyong was accompanied by Representative Ngodup Dongchung from the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama based in New Delhi.

Sikyong met with the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Smt. Lamchonghoi Sweetey Changsan and concerned officials of CTSA to discuss key procedures for the transfer of six Central Tibetan School Administration (CTSA) that are yet to be transferred to the Education Department's Sambhota Tibetan School Society (STSS) schools.



*Sikyong Penpa Tsering and Representative Ngodup Dhongchung (left) visits Shri Kiren Rijju, Minister of Law*

Before his scheduled visit to Delhi, Sikyong along with Education Secretary Jigme Namgyal and Director Tsering Dhondup of Sambhota Tibetan School Society (STSS) were engaged in a week-long assessment visit to the six remaining CTSA schools across India viz. CST Mussoorie, CST Shimla, CST Dalhousie, CST Kalimpong, CST Darjeeling and CST Herbertpur. He reviewed the current situation of these schools and also interacted with the concerned staff of these schools to understand their perspectives and suggestions which he discussed during his meeting in Delhi.

## Critically ill Dza Wonpo Tibetan Woman in Detention Denied Medical Care

A Tibetan woman, one among the 121 detained from Dza Wonpo recently, is reported to be in critical condition. Police officials of Sershul (Ch: Shiqu) county, where the Tibetans are detained have denied permission for Kalsang Dolma (also known as Kadol), aged around 50, to seek medical admission to the hospital.

According to our source, Kadol was taken to Sershul County Hospital after she fell critically ill while in detention. The county hospital however declined to give assurance of the treatment. Further, when a request to visit a different hospital for treatment was made, both the county hospital authorities and the police authorities, believed to be working together, denied the permission.

Those detained at Sershul along with Kadol are subjected to ill-treatment where they are given very little to eat and insufficient clothing to wear. They are also repeatedly investigated while in detention.

Kadol continues to be in custody instead of receiving the necessary medical care at a standard hospital.

### Further restrictions on Social Media

The authorities further asked the Tibetans to refrain from creating or joining any groups and organizations on social media. Officials have warned residents against engaging in WeChat groups created for the preservation of the Tibetan language and religious groups promoting religious activities such as chanting of Mani mantras and other prayers.

From 22 August to 14 September, the Chinese authorities carried out various house searches and arrested over 121 Tibetans for keeping pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or contacting

Tibetans in exile. While only four Tibetans have been released so far the rest remain detained in Sershul County.

The Dza Wonpo town in Karze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, continues to remain under high-security surveillance where the residents are subjected to draconian rules and unlawful inspections.

## UN Experts Question China about the Fate of Tibetan Buddhist Scholar Go Sherab Gyatso and Rinchen Tsultrim

A group of UN experts have jointly questioned China about the cases of disappeared Tibetan Buddhist Scholar Go Sherab Gyatso and arbitrarily detained Rinchen Tsultrim, both Tibetan monks from Ngaba in Amdo, Eastern Tibet.



*Tibetan monks Go Sherab Gyatso and Rinchen Tsultrim.*

While expressing serious concern over the enforced disappearance of Go Sherab Gyatso and arbitrary detention of Rinchen Tsultrim, the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Special Rapporteur on minority issues; and Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, have jointly called China to provide information about the whereabouts of Go Sherab Gyatso "urgently", and asked legal grounds for the arrest, detention, and sentencing of Rinchen Tsultrim, in the communication transmitted to China.

The UN experts have further raised that "these detentions are not isolated events", but reflect a systemic pattern of arbitrary and incommunicado detentions, closed trials, and unknown charges and verdicts against Tibetans by the Chinese authorities. The experts also expressed concern that individuals have been targeted based on religion and ethnicity by China.

A Tibetan Buddhist Scholar Go Sherab Gyatso was arrested at Chengdu in Sichuan Province on 26 October 2020, since then his well-being and whereabouts remain unknown. Go Sherab Gyatso has published several books on Tibetan philosophy and culture and the monastic education system. Go Sherab Gyatso had previously been detained by the Chinese authorities in 1998 and in 2008.

Rinchen Tsultrim, a monk from Nangshing monastery in Ngaba, was held in incommunicado detention since he was arbitrarily arrested by Chinese officials of Ngaba Public Security Bureau on 27 July 2019. It was only on 23 March 2021 information surfaced that he was sentenced to four and a half years in prison. The information about the charges against him, the trial date, and the court where the trial took place continued to remain unknown.

## European Parliament Report Expresses Grave Concern About Coercive Labor Programs in Tibet

The European Parliament in Strasbourg on Thursday, 16 September 2021, adopted a report on the EU-China strategy. The report adopted by 570 votes in favor, 61 against and 40 abstentions, expresses grave concern about reports of labor programs in Tibet, calls for free access to Tibetan areas for diplomats and journalists.

More importantly, the report criticizes and calls on the Commission to express its concern over China's Order No. 15 (Measures for the Administration of

Religious clergies), which requires that clergies including Buddhist leaders and Catholic leaders to support CCP leadership. Under this regulation, the Chinese government requires state approval of reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhist Lamas.

China plans to use this authority to control the succession of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and intend to select an imposter who will be loyal to the Chinese Communist Party.

The report outlines six pillars on which the EU should build a new strategy to engage with China: cooperation on global challenges, engagement on international norms and human rights, identifying risks and vulnerabilities, building partnerships with like-minded partners, fostering strategic autonomy and defending European interests and values.

Condemning systemic human rights violations in China, MEPs call for regular EU-China dialogue on human rights and for benchmarks measuring progress to be introduced. Discussions should include human rights violations in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Tibet and Hong Kong.

This report, among other things, also calls on leaders of the EU and its Member States to decline invitations to the Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022 unless the human rights situation in China and Hong Kong does not improve and no high-level EU-China Human Rights Summit/Dialogue with a tangible outcome takes place prior to the event.

"We must not be naive when dealing with China. Whilst China is an important trading partner, it is also a systemic rival that poses a challenge to our way of life and the liberal world order. Economic gains should not make us blind to the Chinese Communist Party's ambitious political agenda, its increasingly assertive foreign policy and its repressions in Xinjiang and Hong Kong" said the rapporteur MEP Hilde Vautmans.

## UN Member States Call on China to Respect Human Rights in Tibet at the 48th UNHRC session

At the ongoing 48th UN Human Rights Council session, a group of UN member states called on China to respect human rights in Tibet.



UN Human Rights Council

Delegates from Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United States and European Union, on behalf of 26 member states, have expressed concerns and called on China to respect human rights in Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong.

Delivering a statement on the human rights situation which requires UN Human Rights Council's attention, the United States strongly condemned human rights abuses including economic exploitation, systemic racism and destruction of cultural heritage by China. The US continued to remain concerned over China's severe restrictions on religious, linguistic and cultural traditions in Tibet.

France, on behalf of the 26 member states, delivered the statement of the European Union. The European Union reiterated calls on China to comply with its obligations under national and international law to respect and protect human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, especially in Tibet, Xinjiang and in Inner Mongolia.

Denmark expressed their "deeply concerned" about reports of human

rights violations in Tibet. The delegate reiterated the call on China for granting meaningful access for the High Commissioner and other independent observers. Echoing the same concerns, the German delegate said Germany is "gravely concerned" about the systematic human rights violations by China, including in Tibet.

The Kingdom of Netherlands noted serious concerns about the violations of human rights by China, including restrictions on press freedom and freedom of religion or belief in Tibet. Switzerland condemned China's continued arbitrary detention of minorities and called on China to respect the rights of Tibetan people. Similarly, the delegate of Sweden expressed concerns over human rights violations by China targeting persons belonging to minorities, human rights defenders and media workers, including in Tibet.

The delegates from the United Kingdom, Finland and Norway have also expressed concerns over systematic violations of human rights by China.

## Sikyong Launches TPI's Latest Publication on Tibet's Environment Ahead of COP26



(From L-R) Tempa Zamlha (Head of EDD), Dawa Tsering (Director of TPI), Sikyong Penpa Tsering, Secretary Karma Choeying, Tenzin Desal (Senior Researcher at TPI). Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA

Over recent years, the ecology of the Tibetan Plateau has been extensively discussed and debated among a number of environmental experts, strategists, and researchers highlighting its significance and impact on global climate change which has led to the Tibetan Plateau

gaining massive interest and support from the governments including world leaders and various organisations.

In an effort to strengthen support and awareness on the issue of Tibet's environment, the Environment & Development Desk (EDD) of CTA's Tibet Policy Institute (TPI) has released its latest publication titled 'Tibetan Perspectives on Tibet's Environment' during a press conference this morning. At the same time, TPI also launched its annual report titled 'Tibet 2020: A Year in Review' highlighting pressing issues and events that had taken place in Tibet throughout 2020.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering officiated the launch of the book along with the TPI's Director Dawa Tsering, Head of EDD Tempa Gyaltsen Zamlha, Senior Researcher Tenzin Desal, and Secretary Karma Choeying of Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR).

Tempa Zamlha, Executive Head of EDD explaining the background context of the book and describing its objective said that the book was a compilation of reports, papers and articles prepared by EDD from 2010-2020, a part of the Climate Action for Tibet' initiative by EDD. He said that the book was also the first comprehensive book on Tibet's environment solely written by Tibetan environment researchers with a strong Tibetan perspective while further noting that the book draws its inspiration from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's long-standing concern for environmental conservation works as well as the deteriorating environmental situation in Tibet.

The sole objective of the book explained by Tempa Zamlha was to present the perspective of Tibetans towards Tibet's environmental crisis and vividly informing the actual situations of Tibet's environment while ensuring it's protection from further destructions. He urged the researchers and environmentalists to refer to this book for their research on Tibet's environment.

EDD's Head also explained that the book aims to signal the official commencement of the 'COP26-Climate Action for Tibet' campaign by the Central Tibetan Administration ahead of the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference, to be held in the UK in November 2021.

Senior Researcher at TPI, Tenzin Desal introduced the events that led to the development of the book followed by Sikyong's keynote address.

Addressing the launch ceremony, Sikyong Penpa Tsering remarked that the book was a much-needed repository of information and facts valuable for the world to understand the environmental issues of Tibet over the last 10 years and its relevance to global climate change. He added that having such comprehensive book written solely by Tibetan researchers some of whom have lived the experiences of the changing ecology of Tibet offers an important aspect to the issue that is necessary and something that he noted is rarely found in books written by non-Tibetan researchers while also adding that the book was an added value and important source of reference to the experts and researchers on Tibet's ecology.

In retrospect, Sikyong reiterated that the book was equally a call out to the Tibetans in exile to understand the significance of preserving Tibet's environment as well as to act responsibly. He said, "It is imperative that more Tibetan researchers including writers and experts contribute to disseminating factual information about Tibet and it's environmental issues".

Sikyong further said that the book also serves as a potential mechanism for the governments and world leaders in framing policies and making Tibet's environmental issue a substantial case. He noted that the book will be a contributing factor to those attending the forthcoming COP26 UN conference on climate change to be held in Scotland.

In conclusion, Sikyong reiterated the commitment of the 16th Kashag to prioritise Tibet's environmental issue at the forefront of its advocacy.

## CTA issues Response to China's White Paper on "Tibet Since 1951: Liberation, Development and Prosperity", 2021

"Having considered the varying degree of repression inside Tibet which is always followed by a series of claims and counter-claims made by the Chinese counterpart and us, the only way forward now is to have the Chinese government come on board to accept the mutually beneficial Middle Way Approach proposed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and approved by the Tibetan people as the only viable solution for a long-lasting resolution of Sino-Tibetan conflict," said Sikyong Penpa Tsering at a press conference.

Presided over by Sikyong Penpa Tsering, Secretary Karma Choeying of DIIR, CTA's official Spokesperson Tenzin Lekshay, TPI's Director Dawa Tsering and Senior Researcher Dr Tenzin Desal, the CTA unveiled the official document titled "Tibet: 70 Years of Occupation and Oppression". Released a day ahead of the 72nd founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China, this document contains CTA's official response to China's White Paper titled "Tibet Since 1951: Liberation, Development and Prosperity" published in May 2021. Through issuing its official response, CTA vehemently declares 'nothing to celebrate about the day'.

In his address, Sikyong said that the 96 page-long official response released by the CTA today comprehensively highlight the factual chronological events countering China's narrative on Tibet regarding the historical status of Tibet while also opposing China legitimising the occupation of Tibet.

"It is absolutely not 70 years of liberation, but in fact, 70 years of suppression and oppression," Sikyong Penpa Tsering attested.

He added that the so-called 'peaceful liberation of Tibet' claimed by China is just a disguise to cloak the truth and misinform both the Chinese people and the global community to advance the



CTA released '70 years of Occupation and Oppression' as an official response to China's White Paper issued in May titled "Tibet Since 1951: Liberation, Development and Prosperity". Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA

Chinese Communist Party's ideology.

The official response details the facts of the landmark 17-point agreement and its successive violations by the Chinese counterpart. In addition, it extensively explains the various aspects of the Party's domination over Tibetan people to enforce their dependency on the Party. It focuses on the violations of the rights of Tibetan people perpetrated through intensive measures such as mass surveillance system in the name of national security, and marginalisation of the Tibetan language at schools as an attempt to destroy the core identity of Tibetan people.

"The Education policy implemented by China in the last 70 years is only aimed at the destruction of Tibetan language and hence, Tibetan identity," Sikyong said.

Similarly, another infamous attempt by the Chinese government to destroy the Tibetan identity is to interfere and control the religious traditions of Tibetan Buddhism including the traditions of reincarnation in addition to diminishing the number of monks and nuns at the monasteries.

The official response also offers constructive criticism on the destruction of the Tibetan environment in the name of development and prosperity.

## Chinese authorities Hold Three Dza Wonpo Tibetans, Releases Rest with Strict Orders

Chinese authorities have released all but three Tibetan monks in Dza Wonpo between 23 to 27 September, after strictly ordering them to disengage in “illegal” activities, including holding informal language classes and language preservation groups on social media, according to our source. The three monks were amongst the eight Tibetans arrested on 3 September.

About 121 Tibetans from Dza Wonpo were detained by Chinese officials for almost a month. During the time, the Tibetans were forced to undergo “political re-education” in detention. Further, they were subjected to were tortured, and denied proper food, clothing and medical care, leaving many in poor health.

Strict implementation of military training programs inside the detention centers, where Tibetans were forced to engage in heavy physical exercises has also been reported. “Those who fail to perform the military drills were punished”, said the source.

Chinese authorities ordered the local Tibetans to strictly follow the Chinese Communist Party’s principles, refrain from keeping pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and contacting exiled Tibetan communities, and also abstain from posting and sharing political contents, such as religious books and patriotic songs. Further orders include the prohibition against creating groups promoting Tibetan language, culture, religion, and environment on social media, and closure of organizations and groups that “challenge the Party’s regulations”. They were told that severe punishments will be enforced on those found violating any of the above orders.

The crackdown on Dza Wonpo is a calculated attack on the Tibetan language as many of the Tibetans arrested are

members of a local group promoting the use of the Tibetan language. Recently, many local Tibetan schools were either closed down or were ordered to replace their medium of classroom instruction from Tibetan with Chinese. Restriction on the Tibetan language in schools meant that students had to resort to private classes, often conducted by organizations and monasteries, during breaks and holidays that teach the Tibetan language.

In Dza Wonpo, such language groups and organizations have become an important space for practicing and preserving the Tibetan language, culture, and environment. They initiate and conduct various language and cultural classes as well as workshops for students and awareness campaigns on the Tibetan environment. “The government’s ban on such organizations will deal a serious blow to the survival of the Tibetan language”, said the source.

Where families want to enrol their children as monks in the Tibetans monasteries, the Chinese authorities firmly practice the decree restricting Tibetan parents from admitting at monastery before the age of 18.

The series of arrests started last month when Chinese authorities commenced various unwarranted house searches, looking for pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and mobile phone inspections for signs of communication between the locals and Tibetans in exile and political activities. This resulted in the arrests of at least 121 Tibetans from 22 August to 3 September.

The inspections remain at large in the region, “a group of around 7 Chinese police was reportedly seen, on 26 September morning, searching the house of one of the detained monks”, confirmed the source.



## 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Elects New Speaker and Deputy Speaker

In the afternoon of 8th October, the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile elected its Speaker and Deputy Speaker under the supervision of Tibetan Election Commission. Prior to the actual voting, the Chief Election Commissioner Pesur Wangdu Tsering explained the rules and regulations of the voting.



Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel (left) and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, 8 October 2021. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA

Forty-five parliamentarians of the 17th Tibetan Parliament voted to elect its new Speaker with two names – Khenpo Sonam Tenphel and Dolma Tsering-popping up from the rest. Khenpo Sonam Tenphel won the internal election for Speaker with 23 votes while Dolma Tsering received 22 votes.

Following the victory of Khenpo Sonam Tenphel as a new Speaker, the parliamentarians elected their new Deputy Speaker. Three female names surfaced as candidates for the post of Deputy Speaker namely Dolma Tsering, Lhagyari Namgyal Dolkar, and Youdon Aukartsang. Dolma Tsering is declared the new Deputy Speaker of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile after she secured 23 votes while Lhagyari Namgyal Dolkar received 18 votes and Youdon received 2 votes.

Brief Biography of Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel

Ven Khenpo Sonam Tenphel was born at Rekhe in Kham in 1974. At the age

of 13, he joined Nari Tashi Choeling monastery and received education in preliminary Buddhist teachings, meditation and rituals. He came to exile in 1993 and received an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Later he joined Namdroling monastery in South India and received monastic education in both Buddhist sutra and tantra teachings and earned a Lopon degree. He also served as an assistant teacher and later, as a teacher at Namdroling monastery. As appointed by Kyabje Drubwang Penor Rinpoche, he also served as a disciplinarian at the monastery for three years. In 2011, he received Doctorate in Buddhist Philosophy from Karma Kuchen Rinpoche. He was earlier elected to the 14th Tibetan Parliament as a representative from the Nyingma school of Buddhism. In 2011, he was elected as the Deputy Speaker of the 15th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Khenpo Sonam Tenphel was also elected as the Speaker of the 16th Tibetan parliament with Mr Pema Jungney on time-sharing basis. Khenpo Sonam Tenphel was elected as the Speaker of 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile.

Brief Biography of Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering

Dolma Tsering was born on 1st July 1956 at Dagne, Tibet. She completed her school education, followed by her bachelor’s degree and teacher training course with the kind help and blessing of His Holiness the great 14th Dalai Lama, and the Central Tibetan Administration. For 26 years, she has worked as a teacher in various Tibetan schools for which she was facilitated by the Department of Education of the Central Tibetan Administration. She has served as the President of the 9th and 10th Utsang Central Executive Committee and is currently an advisor to the committee. She is also a recipient of the Fulbright Scholarship, the USA of 2001, where she studied Special Education and seized the opportunity of spreading awareness on Tibet’s issue to the American and international students studying there. Ms. Tsering was previously elected to the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and has been a member of the Standing Committee and

many other parliamentary committees numerous times. As a Parliament Member, she has always been very vocal in apprising the general public’s aspiration in the house and has taken active participation in the official visitation, and Tibet outreach programs in India and abroad. She is currently a member of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile from Utsang province.

## 17th Tibetan Parliament Convenes its First Session with a Firm Resolution to Resolve Tibetan Issue

The first session of the newly constituted 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile convened pledging to firmly resolve the political issue of Tibet peacefully, resolve human rights and environmental crisis in Tibet, and oversee the welfare of Tibetans in exile.



1st Session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile convenes. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA

Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament, Khenpo Sonam Tenphel presided over the session attended by Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering, Sikyong Penpa Tsering of 16th Kashag and members of the 17th Parliament.

In his opening remarks, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel greeted the parliamentarians and reaffirmed the Tibetan Parliament’s resolve to fulfil the aspirations of the Tibetans inside Tibet. Addressing the new composition of house comprised of old and new members, Speaker said that it was a karmic connection of each member to have been elected to serve for the Tibetan cause and urged the members to

devote themselves completely to resolve the Tibetan issue urgently through a concerted effort as they open a new chapter of Tibetan democracy.

“With the rapidly evolving global politics, China is impacted to gradually shift its policy toward the changing spectrum of global governance. This shift in China’s global policy is evidently impacting its hardline policy toward Tibet,” remarked Speaker and urged the members of the parliament to lay their opinions and contribute constructive suggestions in a healthy manner abiding by the parliamentary procedures.

Speaker reported the unanimously proposed eight official resolutions of mourning to condole the demise of two former parliamentarians and some prominent Tibet supporters.

The inaugural session also unanimously proposed an important resolution to specifically thank His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his timely intervention and his invaluable advice that has swiftly ended months of parliament deadlock. The two-day session will also take up the discussion to approve the Kalons of the 16th Kashag nominated by Sikyong and Speaker requested wholehearted cooperation of the members.

In conclusion, Speaker said he was hopeful of the new parliament to live up to the hope and confidence vested in them by the Tibetan people. He urged the members to respect each other’s opinions while maintaining morality and unity throughout the two-day session. He advised the members against making any divisive remarks for the harmony of the Tibetan community.



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

## China Detains 34-year-old Kirti Monastery Monk Lobsang Choephel

Chinese authorities have detained Lobsang Choephel, a 34-year-old monk of Kirti monastery in Ngaba county (incorporated into China's Sichuan Province) earlier this month. His whereabouts and status of physical condition following the arrest is currently unknown.



Kirti Monastery monk Lobsang Choephel

Lobsang Choephel has also been arrested twice by Chinese authorities earlier. He was first arrested in Lhasa in 2008 and again in 2011 at Ngaba. He was detained for over four months at that time.

Lobsang Choephel hails from Ngasib Kanyag Ruwatsang. He is one of four children of late Rikho and Tsering Kyi. He joined Kirti monastery in Ngaba from an early age. At the monastery, he works as a staff of the monastery's computer section and also serves as the monastery's official photographer. He also likes to take photographs of natural sceneries and has won several awards in various photography contests. His photographs are circulated online under the professional name Rewai Dawoe.

In addition to Lobsang Chpephel, unverified reports also suggest that several other monks of Kirti monastery are also detained by Chinese authorities earlier this month. The names and details of the arrests are currently unavailable.

Based on information provided by Lobsang Yeshe and Kanyag Tsering, monks of Kirti monastery based in Dharamshala

## Sikyong Meets President Arno Kompatscher of South Tyrol, and Roberto Stanchina, Vice Mayor of Trentino

Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration met with Dr Arno Kompatscher, President of South Tyrol, on Thursday, 28 October at Bolzano. Sikyong was accompanied by DIIR Secretary Karma Choeying and Representative Chhimey Rigzin of OOT Geneva, during the meeting.

In his interaction with Dr Arno Kompatscher, Sikyong spoke about the evolution of exile Tibetan democracy. He said that beginning from the 1960s since the early days of Tibetan exile, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has initiated steps to democratise the Tibetan polity culminating in the complete devolution of his full political authority to an elected leadership in 2011. Describing Tibetan democracy as both unique and peculiar, Sikyong said Tibetan democracy is the only 'party-less democracy' in the world in addition to the absence of territory to govern. He also briefly apprised the president about recent developments in the Tibetan community such as the now-resolved parliamentary stalemate and the tussle between the Tibetan parliament and the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission.



Sikyong Penpa Tsering accompanied by DIIR Secretary Karma Choeying and OOT Representative Chhimey Rigzin with Dr Arno Kompatscher, 28 October 2021.

Sikyong also explained the objectives of the Central Tibetan Administration, the functions of the three pillars of Tibetan democracy and the autonomous bodies of the administration such as the Office of the Auditor General, Public Service Commission, and the Election Commission.

Responding to questions about the situation inside Tibet, Sikyong said the situation inside Tibet continue to remain grim with over 155 self immolation protests, although he admitted that the situation in East Turkestan and Hong Kong seem to have taken precedence over Tibet lately. He also talked briefly



Sikyong Penpa Tsering with Dr Arno Kompatscher, President of South Tyrol, 28 October 2021.

about the policies practiced by the Chinese government to annihilate Tibetan culture and language, and the developments within China such as the internal power struggles between Chinese leaders.

Dr Arno Kompatscher spoke about the unique autonomous status of South Tyrol as a distinct German-speaking region within Italy. He underlined the similarities between the status of South Tyrol and the genuine autonomy sought by the Central Tibetan Administration for the Tibetan people.

At Trentino city, Sikyong was welcomed by Robert Pinter, former councillor of Trentino, and members of Tibet support group and the Tibetan community. It was followed by a meeting with Robert Stanchina, Vice Mayor of Trentino.

In his interaction with Roberto Stanchina, Vice Mayor of Trentino, Sikyong spoke about the oneness of humanity and the need for humans to come together. He said that all human beings are the same despite differences of colour, height, and shape, and there is no conflict that cannot be resolved peacefully through

dialogue.

Sikyong explained that China despite being a large country, it still occupied Tibet, Mongolia and East Turkestan. China still wants more, that's why, it is trying to occupy more territories in the South China Sea and is also challenging India at the borders, he added.

Sikyong further noted that China talks about a harmonious society but there is a disconnect between what China says and what it practices. He says China should acknowledge that its current powerful status is a result of global cooperation and support. "China couldn't have achieved its current status without international support. However, China is still antagonising its allies and partners," he said.

Speaking about a just government, Sikyong explained that a government is supposed to look after the welfare of the people that it governs. He highlighted the contrast in governance between China and South Tyrol, and said: "Suppressing the masses by a few in power is not right. This taints the image of the entire country. South Tyrol is a perfect example of a harmonious society where there is mutual appreciation between the people and the government."

Sikyong underlined China's deep distrust of its own citizens and the lack of freedom inside Tibet as a result of China's brutal and unjust policies. "China spends more on domestic security than on external security. It shows that the Chinese government doesn't trust its own citizens. Humans, unlike animals, are born with a certain set of rights and liberties. However, in Tibet, there is no freedom of religion, no right to one's own language and culture, etc.," he told the mayor.



## Despite Being Politically, Militarily, and Economically Empowered, China Lacks Moral Power: Sikyong at IPAC Conference in Rome

A body of some 200 global parliamentarians, diplomats and experts gathered at the conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC) held on Friday, 29 October in Rome to stage a counter-meeting ahead of the G20 Leaders Summit to demand a tougher stance towards the Chinese government.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) was among those leaders who accused China of its hypocrisy and firmly called out China's unlawful actions against the Tibetans, Uyghurs, Taiwanese, and Hong Kongers. He expressed his gratitude for a platform like IPAC that besides candidly representing the predicament of those unjustly ruled by the authoritarianism of the Chinese government, advances their fight against China. Defending the unquestionable right of the Tibetans and others, Sikyong stressed that there was absolutely 'no room for authoritarianism'.

"For the G20 members of the democratic countries, it is not enough to have freedom in your own countries since the entire world is an interdependent community of human beings. It is paramount that you ensure the values you cherish in your countries be available to those ruled by authoritarian ones like the Chinese government," Sikyong asserted.

Since G20 also focuses on key issues like climate change, Sikyong of CTA appealed to the members to invariably highlight and discuss the climatic issue facing the Tibetan Plateau which is widely known as the third pole. He emphasised Tibet's contribution to the major rivers in Asia since Tibetan Plateau is the largest reservoir of permafrost and given how there is very little transparency in how China handles environmental issues and climate change, Sikyong said China must be strictly called out for its attitude against climate change.



Sikyong Penpa Tsering addressing the IPAC Conference. Photo: IPAC

Despite China always talking about a harmonious society, Sikyong classified that China, in reality, is the principal stakeholder in the global disharmony while highlighting China's belligerence against India through its invasive attempts of the Indian border much like its attempt to control the South China Sea to Taiwan which he noted was unreservedly objectionable.

"Despite being politically, militarily, and economically empowered, China lacks the moral power," noted Sikyong Penpa Tsering and demanded China to stop its unlawful actions if the global leader is indeed what they aspire to be. Sikyong concluded his address by urging China to change its ways starting with building trust with the international community.

At the same conference, global parliamentarians from democratic countries like the U.S, Europe, Canada, Japan, and India etc. unanimously called out China to take accountability for human rights abuses and to stop being a global bully.



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## Statement of the Kashag on the 61st Anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day 2021

Today, we are gathered here to commemorate the sixty-first founding anniversary of the Tibetan Parliament in 1960 following the arrival of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and 80,000 Tibetans in exile.

On 3 February 1960, barely ten months after arriving in exile, the representatives of Tibetans in exile gathered for the first time in India's sacred land of Bodhgaya and took Na-gyen Chenmo (great oath) pledging utmost dedication and sacrifice to forge unity and cooperation under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. His Holiness said, "Unlike the past system in Tibet, it is extremely important to establish a democratic form of governance based on harmonious blend of spiritual and political values. Hence, a popularly elected body of people's representatives is needed. After you return to your respective places, select from the general public nominees who are educated, capable, patriotic and trustworthy. For the time being, elect one representative from the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and three representatives from the three traditional provinces." Accordingly, elections were duly held and 13 representatives were elected and thus began the first Commission of the Tibetan People's Deputies. They took their oath on 2 September 1960. In 1975, the Kashag declared to commemorate 2 September as the founding day of Tibetan democracy.

In the challenging environment faced on arrival in exile, His Holiness took the bold step of instituting the election of people's representatives and making structural reforms in the exile Tibetan polity to encourage and steer it towards genuine democracy and rule of law. Because of far-reaching vision of His Holiness, today the Tibetan administration in exile represents all the Tibetan religious faiths, and has jurisdiction not only over areas administered by the Gaden Phodrang government but also the whole of Tibet's three traditional provinces of U-tsang,



*Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration delivering the statement of Kashag on Tibetan Democracy Day. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA*

Kham and Amdo. The unprecedented consciousness among the Tibetans in exile of belonging to a single Tibetan nationality could also be considered as a fruit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's democratisation efforts.

Furthermore, on 10 October 1961, a draft Constitution for Future Tibet was announced followed by the promulgation of the Constitution on 10 March 1963. It paved way for the formation of three pillars of democracy, and creation of fundamental rights and responsibilities of the people. Moreover, to have genuine democracy His Holiness even provided a clause in the constitution allowing for his own impeachment. Similarly, the use of hereditary titles and prerogatives in Tibet were withdrawn.

As the Tibetan Parliament had no secretariat till 3 May 1966, the deputies were attached to various departments of the Central Tibetan Administration. However, it was the Tibetan Parliament which proposed to His Holiness the nominees for the civil servants during the reorganization of the five main departments and four branch offices in 1960.

During that time, the Chinese government pursued its policy of brutal

suppression of Tibetan people's peaceful protests and thrust upon them its so-called democratic reform. How China's policies brought tragedy in Tibet as it literally experienced hell on earth is evident in the 10th Panchen Lama Choekyi Gyaltsen's 70,000-character petition to the Chinese government. As a result, the Panchen Lama was sentenced to 14 years in prison and he had to suffer far more cruel treatment during the Cultural Revolution.

Along with establishment of the Tibetan Parliament, the system of six monthly work meeting of the Kashag, Parliament, civil servants and heads of the institutions were started, and till 1969, 17 such meetings were organised. In 1969 it was decided to call an Annual General Meeting. Till 1989, 16 annual general meetings were held with the participation of almost entire section of the local communities. These meetings made significant contribution during the course of the Tibetan democracy. As per His Holiness's advice, the election of Garthue (local deputies) began from 1964. In 1965, His Holiness also advised that the Tibetan people should elect their settlement officers. In 1972, Tibetans from Varanasi spearheaded an initiative to seek public support for the administration and consequently Tibetan

Freedom Movement Subcommittee was set up in Tibetan settlements.

It is not that the process of democratization in exile was carried out unimpeded. It is needless to say that the establishment of democratic governance had negatively affected the interest of those in power to cling to the old system. And those who lack understanding of democracy created various obstacles to the progress of democracy. However, because of his unwavering commitment to follow the democratic system, His Holiness succeeded in smoothly carrying out the reforms in accordance with the changing times.

Since 1974, the Tibetan Youth Congress proposed that the deputies to the Assembly be elected by the combined electorate of the people of all the three provinces. The high-level Standing Committee of the Assembly accepted the proposal and amended the rules. However, during the election of 8th ATPD in 1982, the deputies from Dotoe province and Nyingma school resigned during the primary round and entrusted His Holiness to appoint all the deputies. His Holiness was entrusted to appoint the deputies of the 9th Assembly due to the refusal of Dotoe province to take part in the election. Due to lack of required nominee from Dotoe and Nyingma in the primary election of the 10th Assembly, the high-level Standing Committee was compelled to pass a resolution, calling for the previous Assembly members to continue as the new members.

Similarly, since early 1977, His Holiness advised the Kashag and Standing Committee to make necessary improvements in the appointment of head of the Kashag, election of Kalons and the setting of their term limits. During the 16th National General Assembly held in 1989, His Holiness emphasised the need for more democratic reforms including election of a head of the CTA. However, the Tibetan leaders and people could not come up with a common action plan to act as per His Holiness's advice.

His Holiness dissolved the Kashag and Parliament in 1990, and in May convened a special conference with

369 participants from members of the Parliament, CTA, former Kalons, representatives of NGOs and institutes, and religious schools and recently arrived Tibetans from Tibet. During the conference His Holiness appointed the Constitution Review Committee. On 14 June 1991, the 11th Tibetan Parliament adopted the Charter bearing the hallmark of democracy, i.e., the three pillars of democracy and autonomous bodies. In order to further the process of democratization, the system of direct election of Kalon Tripa was started in 2001 and His Holiness took semi-retired position. The most significant democratic development took place in 2011 with the devolution of His Holiness's political authority to the democratically-elected leader of the Central Tibetan Administration through the 25th amendment of the charter.

The essence of democracy is encapsulated by former US president Abraham Lincoln who said democracy is of the people, by the people and for the people. It should be guaranteed by the rule of law and the constitution on which all the laws are based to ensure that the workings of the government should be within the ambit of the laws and that fundamental rights of the people are not affected. The constitution reflects the aspirations of the people, and those in authority are forbidden to act in contravention of it and manipulate the constitution. For this reason the new Kashag declared that the rule of law is the essence of its commitment to equality and justice.

Democracy is the most important resource to keep alive our freedom struggle and combine our capabilities. When Tibet regains its freedom, democracy is indispensable for its political, economic and cultural development.

Today, as we commemorate the 61st democracy day, we extend our heartfelt greetings to our compatriots in Tibet. No matter how much China's propaganda machinery make false claims of development during the 70 years of so-called peaceful liberation of Tibet in its recent White Papers, Tibetans inside Tibet have maintained indomitable

courage and determination in the face of China's continued policy to exterminate the Tibetan identity, and they have been making all round efforts to protect Tibet's religion, culture, language and tradition, for which we remain deeply grateful. It is this strength that unites the Tibetans in exile and keeps alive the freedom struggle. It is the common wish in our heart to reunite in Tibet and we would like to appeal to our brethren in Tibet not to lose their determination.

The present Kashag has been carrying out its administrative works without any negligence. However, the inability of the parliament to convene its session has been preventing it from carrying out its legislative functions. The parliament is also not able to make use of the opportunities to plan activities and campaigns in accordance with the changing situation in China and the international community. The Kashag has been informed of several instances of the Chinese government exploiting this issue to spread falsehood inside Tibet, create division in the exile Tibetan community and misuse it at the international platforms. It has created great concern and apprehension among the governments, parliaments and Tibet supporters who genuinely support us. Tibetans inside Tibet said they would stop their activities for the Tibetan cause if the problem is not resolved immediately. As all of us know that there are people in our small community who are just venting emotions without careful thinking.

The present Kashag will extend its cooperation and support to any means that are within the Charter. We would like to stress that it is high time that the concerned people should seriously weigh the advantages and disadvantages if the situation lingers on, and make no mistake in their consideration by taking responsibility in the highest interest of our cause. If the impasse drags on due to their intransigence, it will only lead to the collapse of Tibetan administration. Neither will any Tibetan like to see such a result, nor will it benefit any Tibetan. The Kashag is ready and firmly committed to work with the parliament as mandated by the Charter and make

concerted efforts in working towards the greater cause of Tibet and welfare of the Tibetan people.

In conclusion, the Kashag extends its warm greetings to India, the United

States and all the countries and Tibet Support Groups around the world for supporting the just cause of Tibet. We pray for the flourishing of the meritorious works of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the spontaneous fulfillment of all

his wishes. May Tibetan democracy continue to flourish.

The Kashag

2 September 2021

## 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Approves Three Women as Kalons of 16th Kashag



*Kalons approved by the 17th Tibetan Parliament: Ms Dolma Gyari, Ms Tharlam Dolma, and Ms Norzin Dolma.*

The first session of the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile approved three women nominated by Sikyong Penpa Tsering as Kalons of the 16th Kashag. The three women namely Kasur Dolma Gyari, Chisur Tharlam Dolma, and Norzin Dolma were approved as Kalons following a majority vote based on 50% or more approval on the floor of the Tibetan Parliament on Monday, 11 October.

Kasur Dolma Gyari received a total of 30 votes while Tharlam Dolma and Norzin Dolma received 27 votes each from the 45-seat Tibetan Parliament.

Find below brief biographies of the three Kalons approved by the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

### Brief Biography of Dolma Gyari

Kasur Gyari Dolma completed her school from CST Darjeeling in 1981. She received her BA degree from Panjab University in Chandigarh in

1985. She pursued B.A LL.B from Delhi University's prestigious Faculty of Law from 1985 – 1988.

At school, she was a recipient of the Best Girl award conferred by the Department of Education. She also founded a student organisation for social service and served as its founding president. This was the first Tibetan student-led organisation dedicated towards student welfare and co-operation. In college, she served as the president of Foreign Students Association of Government College for Girls, Panjab University. She was also a board member of the regional Tibetan Youth Congress at the time. During her student days in Delhi, she established contacts with the youth leagues of various Indian political parties and began the celebration of Tibet Day in Indian colleges.

From 1986 – 1991, she served as member of the central executive committee of the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC). She also served as an advisor to the Regional

Tibetan Women's Association (RTWA) of Delhi and the central Tibetan Women's Association in Dharamshala, along with many other non-governmental responsibilities.

In 1991, following the democratisation of the Tibetan Parliament by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, she was elected to the 11th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (then known as Association of Tibetan People's Deputies). At the age of 26, she was the youngest person to be elected to the Tibetan Parliament. Since then, she has been elected to the 12th, 13th and 14th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile as one of the representatives from Dotoe province. She is also the first female Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in-Exile and served in that role for two consecutive terms in the 13th and 14th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

From 2011 – 2016, she served as Kalon for the Department of Home in the 14th Kashag. She was also one of the

candidates for the Kalon Tripa elections in 2011 and the Sikyong elections in 2021.

### Brief Biography of Tharlam Dolma Changra

Former Parliamentarian Changra Tharlam Dolma completed her schooling from Gangtok, Bylakuppe, and Nirmala Convent school in Mysore. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Teresian College, and Master of Arts (Economics) from Mysore University in 1975. She completed her B.Ed degree from St. Joseph's in Mysore.

#### Professional Experience:

Tharlma Dolma has served for over 37 years in Tibetan schools including 14 years as teacher in both primary and senior secondary schools. From 1991 – 94, she served as the principal of CST Dalhousie, and from 1994 – 2003, and again from 2005 – 2009, she served as the Principal of CST Bylakuppe. From 2009 – 2010, she served as the Principal of CVP school in Dekyi Larso, Bylakuppe. From 2003 – 2005, and again from 2010 – 2013, she served as the principal of CST Mundgod. She retired from active service in 2013.

Tharlam Dolma also served as the Core committee member of the regional

Tibetan Women's Association of Bylakuppe, and as board member of Dalhousie Public School and Dalhousie Hill Top School. In 2013, she received the prestigious National Award for Teachers from President Abdul Kalam.

From 2011, she is a member of the Department of Education's Education Council and Advisory Committee, and is also a governing council member of Dalai Lama institute based in Bengaluru.

### Brief Biography of Norzin Dolma:

Born in Kollegal on 28 November 1975 and currently based in New York, Norzin Dolma began her education at CST Kollegal and CST Shimla. She holds a BA in English, History, and Sociology from Teresian College and an MA in English Literature from Mysore University, India. Under the Tibetan Scholarship Program, she earned an MA in Law and Diplomacy (MALD), focusing on international organization and international negotiation & conflict resolution from Fletcher School, Tufts University, USA, with cross-registration from Harvard University's GSAS and KSG. Later, she also obtained a BA in Library and Information Science from Mysore University.

She has consistently received prizes and awards for academic excellence,

including All-Mysore Iyengar Memorial Award, Mother Euphrasia Award, and Tauro Memorial Award.

Norzin previously worked as a research officer, senior program officer, acting executive director, and board of director at Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD). After her US education, she returned to India and served as the head of UN, EU & Human Rights Desk at CTA's Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR). She later worked as a development officer at The Tibet Fund (TTF), New York.

She has advocated Tibet issues at international conferences, including the 59th and 61st sessions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Geneva; World Social Forum, Mumbai; UN-Civil Society Relations, Bangkok; and World Summit on Sustainable Development conferences, Bali and Johannesburg. Norzin has authored and edited books and reports, including 2008 Uprising in Tibet: Chronology and Analysis (DIIR 2009), Unjust Sentencing of Tulku Tenzin Delek (TCHRD 2004), Destruction of Serthar Institute (TCHRD 2002), 35 Years: Special Report (TTF 2015), and Nepal Earthquake: Rebuilding Efforts in Tibetan Community (TTF 2016).

## Sikyong Launches 16th Kashag's Flagship Initiative Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group (V-TAG)

Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration launched the 16 Kashag's new flagship initiative Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group (V-TAG) from Zurich on 6 November. The launch took place at a public meeting between the Sikyong and the Tibetan community of Switzerland and Lichtenstein.

Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group or V-Tag is initiated by the 16th Kashag with the primary objective of reinforcing the existing advocacy campaigns across the world by providing a platform to every Tibetan to contribute in their own ways for the larger cause of Tibet.



To register, visit Tibet.Net web page link: <https://tibet.net/tibet-advocacy-group/>



## Ancient Links and Political Treaties: Tibet's History as a Sovereign Nation

### Introduction

From the premodern period consisting of the Shangshung, Yarlung, and Chosgyal empires up until the annexation of Tibet by Communist China in 1951, Tibet carved for itself a unique history and identity by developing a rich, distinct culture and tradition. During the evolution of this unique history and identity, Tibet was influenced by and in turn influenced many other traditions of the world over the course of its long history. However, India's influence on Tibet has been the most significant and impactful. This influence is the result of the deep-rooted bond that Tibet shared with India as the birthplace of Buddhism that Tibet was to develop for itself. Although Buddhism was the most significant aspect of Tibet's bond with India, and the catalyst for its rapid growth and enhancement, Tibet's relations with India predate the advent of Buddhism in Tibet. According to Tibetan legend, the first Tibetan king Nyatri Tsenpo (127 BCE), the progenitor of the Yarlung and Chosgyal empires, was an Indian prince who, upon losing a battle in the Mahabharata, strayed into Tibet where the locals mistook him to have come from 'heaven' and anointed him king. This king is credited with uniting several small kingdoms in the region and founding the Yarlung empire which later evolved into what is considered as contemporary Bod, the Tibetan name for Tibet derived from Bon, the animistic religion which preceded the advent of Buddhism in Tibet. Going back even further into pre-modern Tibet and its origin myths, legendary sources claim that the monkey king believed to be the progenitor of the Tibetan race was the legendary Hanuman of Hindu mythology. As the cultural bond between the two countries grew, the relationship spanned multiple avenues including trade, language, politics, and security as is evident from multiple treaties and agreements that Tibet signed with India and other neighboring countries and kingdoms. These treaties now stand testament to the fact that Tibet was

an independent and sovereign nation capable of conducting its affairs on its own with its neighbors.

### Tibet's Tilt Towards India

Tibetan sources claim the first contact of Tibetans with Buddhism occurred during the reign of Lha Thothori gNyan Tsan, the 28th king of Tibet (c. 5 CE). The king is believed to have received a Buddhist missionary who offered him a few relics which included several Buddhist scriptures, a Mani stone and a Buddhist begging bowl. Although treated with great reverence, they were unable to decipher the purpose of these relics, and these were collectively considered, Nyenpo Sangwa (The Beautiful Secret). However, it was only during the reign of the 33rd King Songtsen Gampo that Buddhism made its official foray into Tibet through the King's two queens: Bhrikuti Devi (Bal Sa Khri Tsun) from Nepal and Wencheng (Gya Sa Kongjo) from China. Through the patronage of the king, Buddhism started to flourish in Tibet. According to Tibetan sources, there were a number of Buddhist figures competing for influence in Tibet at the time, and these included Chinese teachers. The most famous of these was Hwashang Mahayana (Ch. Heshang Moheyan 和尚摩訶衍), a Chan teacher who travelled to Tibet and apparently attracted a fairly substantial following. Traditional histories report that matters came to a head in the 9th century between followers of Hwashang Mahayana and the disciples of the Indian master Kamalashila. King Tri Songdetsen (r. 754–c. 799) then sponsored a debate between the two factions at Samye Monastery known as the Council of Lhasa. The conclusion of the debate was that the Chinese side was declared heretical and the Indian side, orthodox based on the pure teachings of the Buddha. The Indian side championed traditional Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, a gradualist path to Buddhahood focusing on the six perfections, training toward Buddhahood as a bodhisattva over the course of many lifetimes.

Since the conclusion of this debate, Tibet has historically looked towards India in its south as the source of high culture. Tibetan culture also underwent broad changes, and a particular brand of Mahayana Buddhism based on the Nālandā Tradition began to infuse every aspect of Tibetan culture and identity.

However, it wasn't just the monasteries that were the sources of Buddhism for Tibet. Another important source of what Tibetan Buddhism became were the siddha lineages of northern India that were mostly centred in Bihar and Bengal. These were largely tantric-oriented coterie of students and charismatic teachers. Their teachings were transmitted orally from master to student. These were transmitted to Tibet by individuals rather than institutions, unlike when people would travel to Nālandā University, and Nālandā teachers would travel to Tibet. Both these sources are collectively instrumental in shaping what Tibetan Buddhism became.

Between the two lineages: the scholastic and tantric, the more scholastic orders, particularly the Gelukpa school of Tibetan Buddhism, have a strong connection to scholastic traditions of the northern Indian monasteries like Nālandā. The Kagyu schools trace their histories more closely to the siddha lineages. The Sakya order is more a mixture of both. Some of the siddhas like Virūpa (fl. 9th century), for instance, are important in the Sakya order, as are some of the scholastic teachers associated with the Nālandā and Vikramaśīla traditions. The Nyingma order traces its origins back to the period before Nālandā became the main source of importation of Buddhism in Tibet, and is thus considered the oldest 'school' in Tibetan Buddhism.

The Tibetan Buddhist schools, especially the Gelukpa school (of which the Dalai Lama is a leading figure) largely derive their philosophical traditions from the 17 pundits of Nālandā which include

the likes of Nāgārjuna, Dignaga, Dharmakīrti, Chandrakīrti, Śāntideva, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Shantarakshita, and so forth. All these scholars are associated with the Nālandā University. In that sense, there is a very strong connection between the traditions that became orthodox and played leading roles in Tibetan Buddhism and the type of Buddhism that Tibet developed. Tibetans also had a deep rooted tradition of going to India, particularly Nālandā University to study and translate Indian texts into Tibetan. Thonmi Sambhota, who invented the Tibetan script, is said to have visited Nālandā to study Buddhism and language. From Thonmi Sambhota's first visit to Nālandā in the 7th century till the 13th Century, sixteen Tibetan scholars and translators such as Ba Salnang, Baro-tsana, Namkha Nyingpo, Kawa Peltzik, Chokro Luyi Gyaltsen, etc, are recorded in Tibetan history to have travelled to Nālandā to study. In reality, it is more than plausible that there were perhaps even more visiting Tibetan scholars than what the historical record tells us.

### Political treaties with Indian Kingdoms

While Buddhism remained the crux of the relationship between India and Tibet. As neighbours with a long common border, Tibet and India also share a rich history of trade and peace treaties.

### Tibet-Bushahr Treaty (1679 – 1684)

In its history of relationships with neighbouring countries and kingdoms, the erstwhile kingdom of Bushahr was perhaps one with which Tibet shared cultural and friendly ties. The princely state of Bushahr in present day Himachal Pradesh in northern India was a small kingdom contiguous with the Ngari region of western Tibet. In the 17th century, Raja Kehri Singh of Bushahr signed a treaty of friendship with the Gaden Phodrang government of Tibet. The treaty was a result of a military cooperation between Raja Kehri Singh of Bushahr and Tibeto-Mongol military commander Gaden Tsewang (dGa' ldan tshedbang) during the Tibet-Ladakh-Mughal war of 1679-1684. This military



British, Tibetan and Chinese officials at the Shimla Convention of 1913-14

co-operation resulted in a sworn treaty of friendship between the two states which stipulated that no taxes would be levied on the merchants of Tibetan and Bushahri origin whilst trading in each other's territories in perpetuity. It was also agreed that a trade delegation from Bushahr should be sent tri-annually to the Tibetan towns of Purang, Ruthog, Dawa, Tsaparang and Gartok. This treaty brought tremendous economic benefits to the merchants of the small Bushahr kingdom (Halkias, 2009). Although official documents relevant to the treaty are not in existence today, the treaty was said to have been preserved in a set of murals adorning the walls of Shish Mahal palace in Rampur, Bushahr. Unfortunately, the murals are also lost to the tide of time. The only vestiges of the treaty are now preserved in the local lore of the Kinnauri people, who say: The treaty of friendship will remain until

“Sutlej goes dry, crows become white, horses get horns, and stones stated to be at the borders of both the states and on which the treaty was written produce hair or wool.”

The annual Lavi mela held in Bushahr's Rampur is yet another surviving vestige of the treaty. The Lavi mela was historically an important commercial fair that lies on the trade routes of Ladakh, Kinnaur, Tibet, and Afghanistan. The origins of the annual Lavi mela are also attributed to the treaty between Tibet and Bushahr in the 1961 report of the

Census of India. It says the following:

“About three hundred years ago during the regime of Raja Kehri Singh of Bushahr, a trade treaty was signed between the Bushahr state and Tibet. Horses from Tibet and swords from Bushahr were exchanged as a token of this friendship. It was written in the treaty that their friendly relations would continue till this time... Since then it is presumed that trade relations increased and eventually the Lavi fair was held.”

- Census of India, 1961

### Treaty of Tingmosgang between Ladakh and Tibet – 1684

Another notable consequence of the Tibet-Ladakh-Mughal war of 1679-1684 was the treaty of Tingmosgang signed between the kingdom of Ladakh and the Tibetan government under the regency of Desi Sangye Gyatso. The Tibetan government with the assistance of the Mongol Khanates fought the kingdom of Ladakh, which was supported by the Mughal empire.

Gyalwang Mipham Wangpo, the head of the Drukchen lineage of Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism, who was historically the patron spiritual teacher of the successive Ladakhi kings was deputed by the Regent Desi Sangye Gaytso of the Gaden Phodrang government of Tibet to sign the treaty of Tingmosgang which ended the Tibet-Ladakh-Mughal

war. The treaty of Tingmosgang is also called the Treaty of Temisgam, which demarcated the boundaries between Tibet and Ladakh. The treaty also outlined Ladakh's exclusive right to trade Pashmina wool in exchange for brick-tea. Ladakh was also required to send a Lo-chak (tribute) every three years with presents of gold dust, saffron, and Yarkhand cotton cloth for the Dalai Lama and other lamas of Tibet (The Sino-Indian Boundary, 1962).

Despite far reaching political changes on both sides, the Lo-chak ("Lopchak" in Ladakhi) tribute survived nearly uninterrupted from 1684 to 1946. Ladakh went from being an independent kingdom in 1684, to being integrated into the Princely State of Jammu & Kashmir within the orbit of the British empire, before acceding to the Indian Union in 1947 (Bray, 1990). What was once a key stipulation in a peace treaty, became an Indo-Tibetan tradition considered highly unique for its longevity.

#### **Treaty of Chushul (Agreement with Ladakh in 1842)**

Another treaty that Tibet forged with Ladakh was the treaty of Chushul following the Dogra-Tibetan war of 1841 - 42. Raja Gulab Singh of the Sikh Empire sent his general Zorawar Singh to conquer Ladakh. After capturing Ladakh, he tried to capture Tibet's western Ngari region to control the trade routes into Ladakh (Fisher et al., 1963). Zorawar Singh was killed by the Tibetans in Minsar, and the Tibetan troops advanced into Ladakh where they were defeated by the troops of Jawahar Singh, cousin of Raja Gulab Singh.

Unwilling to prolong hostilities, both the Tibetans and the troops of Raja Gulab Singh agreed to sign a treaty of friendship. The Tibetans have already suffered defeat at the hands of the Sikh empire and the Sikh empire was embroiled in hostilities with the British in India. So, this treaty was signed to foster friendship between the two sides and to maintain the status quo. The status quo here was the aforementioned agreement (Tingmosgang) between Tibet and Ladakh signed in 1684.

The Chushul treaty was signed by Kalon Surkhang and Dapon Peshi of the Gaden Phodrang government of Tibet with the Dewan Hari Chand, Wazir Ratun Sahib, representing Raja Shri Gulab Singh. The treaty agreed to recognise the ancient boundaries of Tibet and Ladakh without resorting to warfare. The treaty also agreed that the annual Lo-Chak (Tribute) system that Ladakh presents to the Gaden Phodrang Government will not be stopped by Maharaja Gulab Singh (Shakabpa, 1973).

#### **Agreement of 1852 between Ladakh and Tibet**

The agreement of 1852 between Ladakh and Tibet was signed by the Garpons (provisional governors) of the Gaden Phodrang Government of Tibet with Thanadar Sahib Bastiram representing the Maharaja of Kashmir and Kalon Rinzin of Ladakh. The agreement was signed to settle a dispute over Ladakhis refusing to supply the Tibetan traders with transport animals citing a decrease in the sale of Ladakhi brick tea in Tibet.

This agreement stated that Ladakh will continue to supply the Tibetan traders with transport animals and other assistance according to the custom established in the Treaty of Tingmosgang. The agreement also stipulated grazing rights for animals of Tibetan government traders and restricted animals of others from grazing on the reserved pastures. The agreement maintained the status quo with regard to borders established since ancient times (The Sino-Indian Boundary, 1962).

#### **Treaties with British India**

In the two hundred years that the British controlled India, the Tibetan Government also signed several agreements with the British Raj on trade and border disputes. The first agreement was signed in 1904 following Lt. Col. Francis Younghusband's military invasion of Tibet. Known as the Anglo-Tibetan Convention of Lhasa, this agreement compelled Tibet to cede the Chumbi valley to the British, and allowed the British to trade in Yatung,

Gyantse and Gartok. Tibet was also made to pay an indemnity of 7,500,000 rupees (later reduced by two-thirds of the amount) to the British (Powers, 2004). This treaty was signed between the sovereign nations of Tibet and British India without the involvement of China (Fleming, 1986).

Another important, and perhaps the most significant agreement with regard to the current Sino-Indian border dispute was the Anglo-Tibetan declaration of 1914, also known as the Simla Convention between Tibet and China. This agreement was supposed to be a tripartite convention between the plenipotentiaries of Tibet, British India, and China. Following the Chinese representative's refusal to sign the agreement, the British plenipotentiary Sir Henry McMahon signed the declaration with the Tibetan plenipotentiary Lonchen Shatra representing the Gaden Phodrang government of Tibet. This declaration outlined Tibet into inner and outer Tibet. China was denied interference in Inner Tibet (Meaning central Tibet, consisting of the provinces of U-tsang and western Kham), including its administration and the selection of the Dalai Lamas. This agreement also designated the McMahon line as the demarcated border between India and Tibet (Atlas of Northern Frontier of India, 1960).

#### **Treaties with Nepal, Mongolia and China**

Other than India, Tibet also shared a rich history with her other neighbours such as Nepal, Mongolia and China. The treaty of Thapathali (also known as the treaty of Chaitra Sudi) was signed in 1856 as a security pact between the sovereign nations of Nepal and Tibet following the third Tibet-Nepal war. The treaty was signed between the Bhardars of Nepal and the government of Tibet which agreed that Tibet would pay an annual tribute of 10,000 rupees to Nepal for which Nepal would assist Tibet in case of an attack by a foreign power (Uprety, 1998).

With Mongolia, Tibet has a deep historical relationship from the time of the Khanates. Just as India was the

land of the Aryas for Tibet, Tibetan lamas served an analogous role for the Mongols. The priest-patron relationship which was the cornerstone of Tibet's relations with the Yuan and the Qing dynasties (Mongol and Manchu respectively), began with the Mongols. Following the Xinhai revolution (1911) which saw the fall of the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1911) in China, the 13th Dalai Lama signed a treaty of friendship between Tibet and Mongolia in 1912. The treaty declared that Tibet and Mongolia have freed themselves from the shackles of the Manchus, and have formed their own independent states recognising each other's independence. It affirmed a commitment to strengthen the historic relations between the two nations, and assist each other against external threats (DIIR, 1990).

Following the treaty with Mongolia in 1912, the 13th Dalai Lama issued a declaration of Independence in 1913 from Lhasa. In the declaration, the 13th Dalai Lama stated that the successive Dalai Lamas are the true leaders of Tibet and that Tibet shared only a Priest-Patron relationship with China from the times of the Yuan and the Qings. An arrangement which was arguably pre-Westphalian in nature, and is nevertheless cited by modern day Communist China in an attempt to gain historical legitimacy for its projected sovereignty over Tibet. The 13th Dalai Lama also rejected China's attempts to colonise Tibet, and stated that Tibetan troops under the command of the Gaden Phodrang government will be solely responsible for securing Tibet's frontiers (Shakabpa, 1973).

With China, Tibet shares a long and tumultuous history. However, two treaties signed between the two countries stand out for their significance. The first was signed in 821-22 CE between Tibetan emperor Ralpachan and the Tang emperor Muzong (Heller, 1999). This treaty demarcated the borders between the two countries and demonstrated Tibet's military strength and independence. The other was signed by Tibetan delegates under duress with Chinese Communist representatives on 23 May 1951 (DIIR, 2018). This treaty signified Tibet's loss of independence,

and for the first time in its history, Tibet was forced to accept China's sovereignty over it. These two treaties illustrate two distinctly different eras and outcomes for Tibet: one of independence and the other of invasion. China now claims that Tibet has been a part of China since antiquity and that the seventeen point agreement signified Tibet's return to the motherland. However, the fact remains that Tibet had effectively been an independent state for the entirety of its long and glorious history. Tibet has a millennia-old culture and language, with a historical legacy of administering far-flung territories. It also had a functioning administrative system that meets the needs of the state such as an army, a national flag, a national anthem, passports, and a national currency. These are all the conventional criteria for assessing a state's claim to an independent statehood which Tibet possessed up until the 1951 annexation of Tibet.

#### **Conclusion**

It has now been 70 years since Tibet's annexation by Communist China in 1951. Despite seven decades of Chinese rule, Tibet still remains a hotbed of active resistance against Chinese rule. China's repeated proclamation that 'Tibet has been a part of China since antiquity' is challenged by the historic and cultural links that Tibet shares with India, and the political treaties that it signed with its neighbours as an independent and sovereign nation. These treaties document Tibet's historical independence and the fact that Tibet was never a part of China in its history, despite the brief periods of occupation by its neighbours. The only treaty that signified Tibet's loss of independence was the Seventeen Point Agreement of 1951. However, the circumstances under which the agreement was signed revealed more about Tibet's historic independence than China's proclamation of Tibet being a part of China historically. Not only did China allow Tibet to maintain its pre-existing political and social system in the agreement (de jure), but China also didn't see the need to sign any such agreement with the other ethnic regions that it claimed as integral parts of China.

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



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

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

Department of Education,  
Central Tibetan Administration

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama Speaks on Our Happiness, Our Health, Our Future

Dr Patrick Leahy, President of Monmouth University, New Jersey this morning welcomed His Holiness the Dalai Lama to a conversation about the interconnectedness of happiness, health, well-being, and the future of earth. He told him that students and teachers at Monmouth were inspired to lead happier, healthier, and more compassionate and harmonious lives – for the benefit of generations to come on earth.

His Holiness responded with thanks for the opportunity to talk about peace and happiness.

“Obviously, we all want to live in peace, animals included. If there’s a fire, even insects seek to escape from it. However, what makes human beings different is that we have this marvellous brain. We are able to think about how to avoid and overcome problems. We are able to think ahead.

“And yet human beings can also be trouble makers. For thousands of years we have fashioned different kinds of weapons. We sometimes refer to weapons as tools for peace, but in fact the only purpose of a weapon is to hurt and kill. A world without weapons would be much more peaceful.

“We invest energy and effort in building ever more complex systems of weapons. Then we talk about peace, disregarding the fact that weapons contribute nothing to the achievement of real peace.

“Our world today is heavily interdependent. In the past, we tended to be concerned only with people in our own locality. Nowadays, new challenges like the climate crisis and global heating that affect us all, as well as the operation of the global economy, mean that we must take the whole of humanity into account.

“As far as the manufacture and sale of weapons is concerned, we should simply say, “Enough.” We should aim to achieve genuine peace in a demilitarized world.



*Dr Patrick Leahy, President of Monmouth University, New Jersey welcoming His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the start of their online conversation on about the interconnectedness of happiness, health, well-being, and the future of earth on September 22, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel*

As human beings on this planet, we have to consider the oneness of humanity. We all need to live together in peace and harmony. The production and sale of weapons contributes nothing to this.

“Real world peace is rooted in finding peace of mind. Anger, jealousy and frustration easily become a source of violence, therefore we need to strengthen the sense of compassion that is our basic human nature. As I said before, in the past we really only paid attention to our local community, whereas now we have to take the whole of humanity into account.

“We must focus on finding peace of mind, remembering that compassion is the foundation of genuine peace. As human beings, we have the same kind of face and the same kind of mind. Because we have so much in common, we have to find a way to live together side by side in a peaceful, happy world.

“I recognise that when I lived in Tibet, Tibetans were my foremost concern. However, since coming into exile I have become aware of the wider world. Human beings everywhere are like brothers and sisters. When I meet other people, wherever I am, I smile, and mostly they

smile back. That’s what human brothers and sisters do. Other people are just human beings like me. Differences of nationality, race and religious faith are of secondary importance by comparison.

“This morning my Tibetan and allopathic physicians gave me a brief medical check-up. They told me that I’m in good health, but one of the major reasons for this is that my mind is at peace. Constant anger and fear disrupt our health, whereas peace of mind is of immense help in fostering general well-being.

“Sometimes people in search of calm take tranquilisers. I’ve never taken them. I work to cultivate peace of mind and see that I get nine hours sleep. In my experience, cultivating compassion ensures I sleep soundly, have a good appetite and a good digestion.

“Brothers and sisters that is what I want to share with you today.”

His Holiness fielded a range of questions from students and staff of Monmouth University. He acknowledged that we are facing climate change on a global level. As our defences against the heat of the sun are weakened, the world

is becoming hotter and the climate is changing. Consequently, even the glaciers at the North and South Poles are melting. Stabilising climatic conditions depends on changing our way of life.

His Holiness cited the example of Tibet as illustrating the dangers of climate change. The Tibetan plateau, he pointed out, is the source of Asia’s major rivers and consequently the water supply of millions of people. No one knows what will happen if we are unable to protect these rivers.

His Holiness noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused distress in many parts of the world and that we have to take precautions on a physical and mental level to protect ourselves. He cited Shantideva’s wise advice to examine whether problems we face can be overcome. If they can, we need to exert ourselves to take those steps. If they are beyond our control, we simply need to accept that; worrying about it will not help. He added that it’s important to follow medical advice.

His Holiness clarified that Buddhism emphasizes the importance of peace of mind. Individuals train to become stabler, happier people who are then able to share what they’ve learned with others. The Buddha, he observed, first became enlightened then taught others on the basis of his experience. If, as individuals, we are able to improve ourselves, to become more disciplined and happier, we’ll be able to be of benefit to others.

People born in the East or the West are the same in being human. They are born the same way and grow up the same way under their mothers’ care. Cultural heritage and ways of life may be different, but fundamentally, as human beings, we are all the same.

His Holiness went on to say that in the past America was segregated on the basis of colour. Now we shouldn’t think that colour, whether we come from the north, south, east or west, or what faith we follow are grounds for setting us apart. We need instead to dwell on what makes us the same.

“I have good friends from Africa,” His Holiness remarked. “Bishop Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela and I may be a different colour, but when we smile, we reveal a common human joy.”

He stated that the most important thing to teach a child is to be warm-hearted. Not enough time is given to this in schools and yet it’s obvious that students are attracted to the teachers who smile and respond to them warmly. His Holiness mentioned that in his own childhood he felt happier when his teachers were cheerful and open rather than stern.

Asked how to overcome suffering and achieve inner peace, His Holiness replied that suffering is a part of life. Therefore, he advised, it is necessary to train yourself to find ways to reduce anxiety when faced with trouble. Since young people tend to be more impatient, their seniors can counsel them to be more enduring. His Holiness observed that learning to cope with negative experiences is helpful and leads to the development of inner strength.

“Since I became a refugee,” he said, “I’ve been able to share with many more people how to transform unfortunate circumstances into opportunities for developing peace of mind.”

Death too is a part of life. Sooner or later, we all have to die and when that time comes it’s important to have peace of mind. His Holiness spoke of how the subtlest mind is beginningless. He declared that conception of a child depends not only on the presence of the physical elements, the sperm and the ovum. Conception only takes place when these are joined with consciousness.

His Holiness touched on how the continuity of mental consciousness underlies the idea of a succession of lives. He cited the evidence of children who remember their previous lives. He also alluded to the phenomenon of ‘thukdam’ which occurs when some people die but their bodies remain fresh for some time afterwards because their subtlest mind is still present.

One questioner wanted to know how

to deal with feelings of despondency and His Holiness suggested that if someone in such a condition were only interested in material things, they might lose hope. However, if they have some understanding of the mind and work to cultivate inner peace, they will find a solution.

Observing that the emergence of social media is a reflection of how things change, His Holiness noted that in the past we weren’t able to maintain such a wide perspective on the world. Now, when we need to be concerned about the whole of humanity, we have facilities to help us. We have opportunities to encourage young people in new ways of thinking such as the redundancy of the use of force and the importance of achieving a demilitarized world.

Young people today should not necessarily seek to repeat what went before. They would be better to develop new ways of thinking appropriate to changed circumstances. One way to fulfil this is to recognise a general responsibility to build a more compassionate society.

Answering a final question about the Buddha’s teachings, His Holiness stated that the Four Noble Truths are the very basis of the Buddha’s doctrine. He suggested that the truth of the path, referring to the Noble Eightfold Path, is the most important of the four truths. The truth of suffering and its cause are clear, while the third truth, the Truth of Cessation offers hope that suffering and its causes can be overcome. This in turn lends enthusiasm to the practice of the path.

Lu-Ann Russell, Director, Conference Services, brought the session to a close with thanks to members of His Holiness’s team who had facilitated the occasion. She thanked His Holiness for his warm and compassionate guidance, telling him that his words had touched each one of his listeners personally. “We thank you,” she told him, “for the impact you have made on us all. May our collaboration and continued efforts continue to grow together in the days ahead.”

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama Speaks on Compassion and Dignity in School

As soon as His Holiness the Dalai Lama took his seat this morning, Philip P. DiStefano, Chancellor of the University of Colorado, Boulder, welcomed him to a conversation about compassion and dignity in schools. He noted how important these qualities are, observing that the future depends on them. When His Holiness was last in Boulder, in 2016, the seeds of the Crown Institute were being planted. Today, this interdisciplinary institute is focused on wellness, connection and the community. The Chancellor concluded: “Whether you are a teacher, parent or individual observer, I hope you will be inspired by the wisdom shared here tonight.”

Sona Dimidjian, Institute Director, Renée Crown Wellness Institute and Professor, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience University of Colorado Boulder spoke next. She declared that His Holiness’s teachings have inspired people around the world to be curious about the benefits of compassion in education. Meanwhile, his conversations with scientists have inspired new research that has demonstrated the positive impacts of compassion training.

She stated that she and her colleagues had wanted to create a program that would deepen their practices of compassion as a foundation for all their teaching and for creating safe, inclusive, and just schools. They worked in partnership with educators and experts in compassion practice to design a year-long program called “Cultivating Compassion & Dignity in Ourselves and Our Schools,” in an effort to bring compassion into the mainstream of education. She invited His Holiness to speak about the importance of compassion in education,

“Thank you,” he began, “you do me a great honour in giving me this opportunity to talk about inner values. It’s quite simple; I think that all sentient beings, indeed all living things on our planet, including flowers and trees that



*Sona Dimidjian, Institute Director, Renée Crown Wellness Institute and Professor, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience University of Colorado Boulder speaking at the start of the program with His Holiness the Dalai Lama online from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on October 26, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel*

to our perception have no consciousness, appreciate being at peace. It was perhaps a Russian who told me that if you scold one plant every day and speak soothingly to another similar one, they develop differently. Simply put, if we take care of plants, they grow well. If we neglect them, they die.

“All mammals on our planet want to survive and being at peace is crucial to survival. The reality is that as soon as we are born, our mothers take care of us and treat us with compassion. If it were otherwise, we’d die. Gradually, as we grow up, we develop compassionate relations with members of our family, which in due course are extended to other members of the community.

“In the past, a great deal of violence and killing has taken place out of anger and hatred. Some people may think that anger brings energy to a situation, but it is only effective in the short term. These days human beings want peace because peace is the basis of life. To develop a more peaceful world we must also look within. When our minds are at peace, in a crisis, even if there is a weapon to hand, we’ll not be inclined to use it.

“Ultimately the foundation of peace

of mind is loving kindness. Every day, as soon as I wake up, I meditate on compassion, and it brings me peace and tranquility. It’s not just a matter of being free from disturbance, but of being moved by love and compassion. Peace of mind isn’t just a religious topic; it underpins the survival of humanity. Even those who trouble us are human beings and deserve our compassion.

“Although it may seem that anger brings energy, if we look at it more closely, we’ll see that it’s inner peace that brings us inner strength. The energy that anger brings is not only short-lived, but it can also become self-destructive.

“In my experience, the practice of compassion is very helpful. Everyone wants to live a peaceful life and compassion is a key factor in fulfilling that wish. Whether you are concerned with promoting your own well-being or the well-being of others, at root it involves having an altruistic intention. Similarly, whether you are concerned with your immediate or long-term welfare, if you’re able to cultivate a genuinely altruistic mind—a kind heart—in the short term you’ll feel a sense of peace within you. The long-term benefit manifests in physical well-

being and robust good health.

“Whether in relation to individual well-being or the well-being of society, we recognize that when someone actively cultivates a kind heart, it changes the atmosphere around them. This is why we can say that an altruistic intention—a kind heart—is a source of general well-being.

“In my own life, quite often in the early morning, I imagine the Buddha in the form of the statue before me saying the following words to me:

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

“For those who fail to exchange their own happiness for the suffering of others, Buddhism is certainly impossible - how could there even be happiness in cyclic existence? 8/131

Proceeding in this way from happiness to happiness, what thinking person would despair, after mounting the horse, the awakening mind, which carries away all weariness and effort? 7/30

“If you cultivate a kind heart, in the short term it brings peace of mind and a more resilient immune system. On the other hand, if your mind is agitated and disturbed, you won’t even be able to enjoy your food. And if you’re really angry, you might even smash the plate it’s served to you on.

“The verses above come from a book by the Indian master Shantideva. I recite them every day, including the following:

“Why say more? Observe this distinction: between the fool who longs for his own advantage and the sage who acts for the advantage of others. 8/130”

His Holiness remarked that even animals appreciate kindness. If you are kind to a dog, it wags its tail. If you scold it, its tail droops. He suggested that when we are young loving-kindness is crucial, but as we grow up, we pay it less attention.

This is a mistake. After all, the purpose of education should be to contribute to our peace of mind. Therefore, we should pay more attention to warm-heartedness. We are social animals who have to live together. That’s the reality. All we seven billion human beings must live as brothers and sisters. If we only think about politics, money and weapons, we’ll never be able to solve any of our problems.

“Therefore,” His Holiness concluded, “I’m dedicated to promoting warm-heartedness in our day-to-day life. This is what we have to pay attention to.”

Sona Dimidjian introduced a number of teachers and educators who had questions to ask. To start with His Holiness acknowledged the need to keep good intentions at the forefront of the mind. He pointed out that patience and forbearance, for example, derive from compassion, but are only relevant and effective when we are faced with difficulties. We don’t need to be patient when things are going well. This is similar to only taking medicine when we are ill.



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking on the topic Compassion and Dignity online from his residence in Dharamsala, HP, India on October 26, 2021. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel*

He noted that it’s recognizing the suffering of others that prompts us to be compassionate. Suffering can’t be overcome using force and deploying weapons. We have to cultivate a compassionate mind, and this, the source of inner peace, is what will lead to a more peaceful world.

Besides being eager to learn their lessons, His Holiness observed that students, simply as human beings, appreciate compassion. When their teacher reveals a compassionate attitude,

combined with a sense of responsibility and concern for their student’s broader prospects, they’ll respond positively. If, however, they sense that the teacher has no such concern and is only concerned with earning their pay, students won’t be able to leave the class quickly enough.

“During my own lessons as a boy with my tutor,” His Holiness divulged, “he showed me great kindness. And as a result, I wanted to spend more time with him. Such warm-heartedness plays a key role in making us feel happy and secure.

“If I may say so, the Dalai Lama is popular, not because I want to be, but because people always see a smile on my face. And that’s because I cultivate warm-heartedness.”

His Holiness reiterated that if teachers not only teach according to the curriculum, but are also genuinely concerned about their students’ welfare, close relations will flourish between them. And when a teacher is genuinely dedicated to the betterment of humanity, he or she will naturally treat their students with dignity.

With regard to justice and compassion, in the past there was less talk about inner values. Instead, people relied on suspicion and the use of force. But the world has changed and now there is a much greater role for warm-heartedness. Attitudes are more realistic and more mature. There is a clearer understanding of the importance of achieving peace of mind. There is also greater awareness that it’s basic human nature to be compassionate. Nurturing a more compassionate motivation leads to greater truth and honesty.

Addressing concerns to make an entire school more compassionate, His Holiness repeated that since education tends to have materialistic goals, it needs to value and include warm-heartedness too. Compassion yields peace of mind and such inner peace fosters health and well-being among teachers and students. He declared his firm belief that it’s possible to take a new approach to education that is rooted in warm-heartedness.

He added that compassion is the basis of courage and determination. These qualities are required because suffering cannot be overcome immediately. We have to be realistic. We must seek out its causes and uproot them. This is something we human beings can do because we have intelligence and self-confidence.

His Holiness restated that the most important thing to teach children about compassion is the need to combine human intelligence with warm-heartedness.

Sona Dimidjian thanked His Holiness for his contribution to the conversation that had taken place and asked Stephen Butler, the Executive Director of the Compassion Institute, to offer some closing reflections. He also thanked His Holiness for the insight that the fundamental human quality of compassion has the power to transform our lives and the world. He expressed the wish that His Holiness has a long and stable life and that we may all work to our utmost to establish compassion as the seed, the nourishment and the fruit of a kinder and more caring humanity.

In conclusion His Holiness responded that if human beings are to be happier, education must be combined with warm-heartedness. The aim is for people to cultivate healthier, more peaceful minds. Fear gives rise to anger and anger destroys peace of mind. The more compassionate we are, the less fearful we will be, and the greater will be our inner strength and self-confidence. The point is to be a happy person, self-assured and courageous.

“If those of you who have taken part in today’s discussion or have simply listened to it,” His Holiness remarked, “feel that anything we’ve said was reasonable, please, think about it, make yourselves familiar with it and share it with your family and friends.



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## His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s Message to COP26

I am pleased to know that the United Nations Climate Change Conference - COP26 - to address the climate emergency we are facing today will be taking place in Glasgow, Scotland.

Global warming is an urgent reality. None of us is able to change the past. But we are all in a position to contribute to a better future. Indeed, we have a responsibility to ourselves and to the more than seven billion human beings alive today to ensure that all of us can continue to live in peace and safety. With hope and determination, we must take care of both our own lives and those of all our neighbours.

Our ancestors viewed the earth as rich and bountiful, which it is, but what’s more it is our only home. We must protect it not only for ourselves, but also for future generations, and for the countless species with which we share the planet.

The Tibetan plateau, the largest reservoir of snow and ice outside the North and the South Poles, has often been called “the Third Pole.” Tibet is the source of some of the world’s major rivers, among them the Brahmaputra, the Ganges, the Indus, the Mekong, the Salween, the Yellow River and the Yangtze. These rivers are the source of life because they provide drinking water, irrigation for agriculture, and hydropower, for nearly two billion people across Asia. The melting of Tibet’s numerous glaciers, the damming and diversion of rivers, and widespread deforestation, exemplify how ecological neglect in one area can have consequences almost everywhere.

Today, we need to address the future not with prayers prompted by fear, but by taking realistic action founded on scientific understanding. The inhabitants of our planet are interdependent as never before. Everything we do affects our human companions, as well as innumerable animal and plant species.

We human beings are the only creatures with the power to destroy the earth, but we are also the species with the greatest capacity to protect it. We must confront issues of climate change on a cooperative global level for everyone’s benefit. But we must also do what we can on a personal level. Even small daily actions, such as how we use water and how we dispose of what we don’t need, have consequences. We must make taking care of our natural environment a part of our daily life, and learn what science has to teach us.

I am encouraged to see that our younger generations are demanding concrete action on climate change. This gives some hope for the future. The efforts of young activists such as Greta Thunberg to raise awareness of the need to listen to the science and act accordingly is crucial. Since their stance is realistic, we must encourage them.

I regularly emphasise the importance of maintaining a sense of the oneness of humanity, the idea that every human being is a part of us. The threat of global warming and climate change is not limited by national boundaries; it affects us all.

As we face this crisis together, it is imperative that we act in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation in order to limit its consequences. I hope and pray that our leaders will gather the strength to take collective action to address this emergency, and set a timetable for change. We have to act to make this a safer, greener, happier world.

With my prayers and good wishes,

Dalai Lama

31 October 2021

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## India Should Share its Ancient Knowledge with the World: The Dalai Lama

By His Holiness the Dalai lama, The Week

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

Although our world has changed a great deal since the time of the Buddha, the essence of his teaching remains as relevant today as it was 2,500 years ago. Both the Pali and Sanskrit traditions possess methods for attaining liberation from ignorance and suffering. The Buddha’s advice, stated simply, is to avoid harming others and to help them whenever you can, in whatever way possible.

We can begin to do this by recognising that everyone is just like us in that they want happiness and wish to avoid suffering. Seeking joy and freedom from suffering is the birthright of all beings. Our personal happiness very much depends on how we treat others. By developing a sense of respect for one another and a concern for each other’s welfare, we can reduce our own self-centredness, which is the source of many of our problems, and enhance our feelings of kindness, which are a natural source of joy.

The Buddha declared: “The Enlightened Ones do not wash unwholesome deeds away with water, neither do they remove the sufferings of beings with their hands, nor do they transplant their own realisation into others. It is by what they teach, revealing the truth of suchness, that they liberate beings.”



Buddhism is just one among the many religions in the world. What is unique about it is that the Buddha counselled his followers not to accept what he said at face value, but to examine his words as a goldsmith analyses the quality of gold. All religious traditions teach the importance of love for our fellow beings, but the Buddha also encouraged his followers to scrutinise what he taught and to take it to heart only when they understood it to be reasonable and beneficial.

The Buddha gave us a rational method to counter those factors which, rooted in our self-centred attitudes, disturb our peace of mind. The ancient Indian practices of compassion and doing no

harm—karuna and ahimsa—are not limited to physical conduct, they have to do with our mind. We harm others in various ways because our minds are undisciplined. In Buddhism we say, a disciplined mind is happiness while unhappiness is an unruly mind.

Buddha Shakyamuni lived in India and what he taught was subsequently preserved in great centres of learning like Takshashila, Vikramashila and Nalanda. In the seventh century, the Tibetan emperor chose to design a Tibetan form of writing modelled on the Indian Devanagari alphabet. A century later, the then Tibetan ruler invited a great philosopher and logician, Shantarakshita, from India to introduce

Buddhism to Tibet. He promoted the translation of Buddhist literature—the Buddha’s actual teachings as well as the treatises of Indian masters who came after him—into Tibetan. This is the basis of the tradition that we continue to keep alive today.

Shantarakshita introduced a comprehensive presentation of the Buddha’s teachings, one that relied on the exercise of reason and logic and encouraged analysis of what was written in the scriptures. It is an approach that is now preserved only in the Tibetan tradition. Rigorous study is a process that I, as a monk, have followed from an early age. I began by memorising texts which I studied, reflected on and then worked at gaining experience in meditation.

Tibetans have been custodians of this tradition for more than 1,000 years. We can say that historically Indians were our teachers, but since then, we the disciples have kept the tradition alive. So, it stirs special feelings in me today to be able to discuss with my Indian brothers and sisters what the Buddha taught.

Something that distinguishes the Indian spiritual traditions from others is that they include a thorough understanding of the workings of the mind and emotions. After the Buddha embarked on the homeless life, he trained in the prevailing contemplative practices of shamatha and vipashyana—concentration and insight. On the basis of this, he engaged in six years of austerities, during which he fasted and engaged in deep meditation. As a result, he attained enlightenment.

Soon afterwards, he is said to have expressed these thoughts: ‘I have discovered a nectar-like truth that is profound and peaceful, free from elaboration, uncompounded clear light. Yet if I were to teach it, no one would understand; therefore, I shall remain silent here in the forest.’

When, shortly afterwards, he did begin to teach, he explained the Four Noble Truths. Later, at Rajgir, in his second round of teachings, he taught the Perfection of Wisdom. In explaining shoonyata (emptiness), the Buddha demonstrated that, despite appearances to the contrary, nothing exists independently from its own side. Despite appearing to do so, things have no objective existence. The Perfection of Wisdom was not taught publicly, but to a select group of disciples.

Subsequently, Nagarjuna, founder of the Madhyamaka school of thought, and followers such as Aryadeva and Chandrakirti wrote extensively on what the Buddha had to say about ‘emptiness and dependent arising’. One consequence is that, many years ago, the great Indian physicist Raja Ramanna told me that when he read one of Nagarjuna’s works, he was struck by how much of what he had written corresponded with the modern view of quantum physics. He told me that as an Indian he felt proud that Nagarjuna had anticipated such modern developments with no instruments but his mind to help him.

At the time of the Buddha, people lived in small, relatively isolated communities. They had no sense of relations with the

wider world. Now, we live in a global economy and technology has reduced the distances between us. This reality is teaching us that we must all work together.

In the past, Indians were our gurus, now the time has come for India to share its ancient knowledge with the rest of the world. It will be necessary to present ancient Indian knowledge in a secular, academic way. Adopting a secular approach, treating all spiritual traditions with respect, has been an exemplary Indian tradition.

Individuals cultivating peace of mind create a more peaceful society, which, in turn, contributes to a more peaceful world. We all want to find joy. We depend on hope, which is the pursuit of something good. But to succeed we need to use our intelligence properly. Real happiness depends, not on sensory awareness, but on the mind itself—the key is to establish peace of mind, and for that we must understand the system of mind and emotions. I believe that if we make an effort, cultivating a proper appreciation of the oneness of humanity, we can create a happier, more peaceful world.

When I first came to India, I reflected on the close links between this country and my homeland, Tibet. As the honourable prime minister has said, India is the land of the Buddha. The ultimate purpose of Buddhism is to serve and benefit humanity. I believe that, whether we consider ourselves Buddhists or not, we can all benefit from adopting the tried and tested principles of karuna and ahimsa as the basis for creating a happier, more peaceful world.



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## Xi Jinping and Pomegranate Seeds

By Claude Arpi, rediff.com

### Why is China’s supreme leader promoting Han Chauvinism so aggressively, asks Claude Arpi.

On June 8, China’s Core Leader Xi Jinping visited the Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province.

Meeting a group of Tibetan villagers relocated in one of the Xiaogang villages (‘moderately well-off’ villages, looking more like ghettos), the general secretary of the Chinese Communist party told the Tibetan villagers: ‘The Chinese nation was closely united like the seeds of a pomegranate. We are all members of the community of the Chinese nation.’

We shall never know if the Tibetans agreed ...but they had to clap, wave red flags and smile.

This was not the first time that Xi used this expression to talk about ‘ethnic unity’ in China, a country which is supposed to have 56 different minorities.

Already after the second Xinjiang Work Forum in Beijing on May 28 and 29, 2014, which was attended by the entire CCP politburo and over three hundred top CCP officials, Xinhua asserted: ‘The Party’s strategy on Xinjiang has been proven correct and must be continued in the long run.’

A commentator in the Jamestown Foundation’s The China Brief noted: ‘Yet, beneath the boilerplate, the language and policy direction outlined in the Forum statement marks a significant departure. Since the 18th Party Congress [in November 2012], Party officials have stressed that ‘new conditions’ in Xinjiang create ‘new requirements’.

We know what happened to Xinjiang during the following years (and what still happens today).

During the Xinjiang Work Forum, Xi Jinping declared: ‘Xinjiang’s most sustained problem is the problem of



ethnic unity,’ adding, ‘All ethnic groups should show mutual understanding, respect, tolerance and appreciation, and to learn and help each other, so they are tightly bound together like the seeds of a pomegranate.’

In May 2016, Xi visited a Hezhe ethnic village in northeastern Heilongjiang Province.

The Hezhe are one of the smallest ethnic minority groups in China; in 1990 their population was 4,300; they are nomads who live mainly from hunting and fishing in the plain formed by the Heilong, Songhua and Wusuli rivers. Their language is said to belong to the Manchu-Tungusic group.

Xi again told them that ‘All ethnic groups shall remain closely united like the pomegranate seeds on the way toward national rejuvenation.’

What does it mean ‘ethnic unity’ for large (like Tibetans or Uyghur) or smaller minority groups?

In most cases, it means assimilation under a Han majority.

Since 1949, Han Chauvinism has heralded doom for the Chinese

minorities.

Again, in January 2017, in a letter to an Uyghur family, Xi again asked ‘All ethnic groups to unite like the pomegranate seeds under the CPC leadership to build a bright future for Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.’

Xi also used this expression during an inspection of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in 2019.

But let us take a very concrete example of the delegates from Tibet to the 13th National People’s Congress to find out if ethnic equality really exists in China today.

Out of 20 members, the ‘Tibet’ delegation has 6 Chinese Hans: Three big shots nominated by Beijing -- Zhao Kezhi, minister of public security, member of the political and legal commission, China’s Cop no 1; Jing Hanchao, member of the Supreme People’s Procuratorate, equivalent to a supreme court judge and Guo Qingping, chairman, People’s Bank of China.

Among ‘local’ Hans (also nominated by Beijing) are Wu Yingjie, party secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region and Major General Liu Guorong, TAR

commander of the People's Armed Police (PAP).

Is it what China meant by 'unity', considering that the Tibetan delegates are mostly nameless individuals, selected (by Beijing) for their love for the Party only?

It is doubtful if the senior Chinese 'Tibet' representatives really 'mingle' like pomegranate seeds with their Tibetan colleagues.

Let us look at the ethnic minorities in the delegation of the People's Liberation Army and PAP to the 19th Congress held in October 2017.

Out of 2,280 delegates, only 11.5% (262) were from ethnic minorities.

The PLA/PAP has 303 delegates, the Manchus and Tibetans have three delegates each, while the Uyghur, Hui and Tujia have two representatives, while the Zhuang, Xibe, Korean, Qiang, Bai and Naxi ethnicities have one.

Two of the three Tibetan delegates are two young lady officers (Kalsang and Sonam Dolma); their qualification/rank is unknown, but obviously low.

Further, there is no 'minority' member in the CCP politburo and out of 204 members of the central committee, the PLA has 41 members, all Hans while among the civilians, a few minorities are represented: Hui (2), Kazakh (1), Manchu (3), Miao (1), Mongol (3), Tibetan (2), Uyghur (2), Xibe (1) and Zhuang (2).

What does 'ethnic unity' mean in these conditions?

The China Brief noted: 'Since coming to power, Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed the importance of forging a shared national identity. The 'China dream', he contends, is foremost about the great revival of the 'Chinese nation' or 'Chinese race', a term first coined by Liang Qichao in 1902 and employed by Chinese leaders from Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong to Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin in order to stress the

conjoined history, fate and consanguinity of the Chinese people.'

This does not convince the Tibetans.

Chen Quanguo, a former party secretary in Tibet, who in 2016 was sent to Xinjiang to 'pacify the province' (he was promoted to the CCP politburo in the process) started promoting inter-marriage between Tibetans and Hans before his transfer.

Later the same policy of 'mingling' and fusing through 'increased contact, cooperation and intermarriage', was encouraged in Xinjiang.

Till recently it remained minimal in Tibet; analysts believed that it was doubtful if the new policy of 'mingling' or 'fusing' could work on the Roof of the World, with too many decades of suspicion, not to say hatred, between the 'ethnic' populations and the 'occupiers'.

But things are quickly changing, especially after the Seventh Tibet Work Forum held in August 2020 in Beijing.

Already on January 11, 2020, during the third session of the TAR Eleventh People's Congress, some Regulations on the Establishment of a Model Area for the Progress of Ethnic Unity and Progress in the TAR, were adopted.

The first article promotes 'the cause of national unity and progress in an all-round way, to consolidate and develop the socialist ethnic relations of equality, solidarity, mutual assistance and harmony'; it says: 'In keeping with the awareness of the Chinese Nation Community, Tibet will be established as a model area for the national unity and progress of the nation.'

These regulations are said to have been formulated in accordance to the Chinese constitution, the Law of the People's Republic of China on regional autonomy and taking into account the realities of the autonomous region. But there is huge gap between the theory and reality.

This probably explains the present intensive propaganda campaign

launched by Xi Jinping in recent weeks.

Article 2 of the Regulations deals with the establishment of 'a model area of ethnic unity and progress within the administrative region of the Autonomous Region', while Article 3 speaks of Tibet as 'an inalienable part of the great motherland since ancient times, and all ethnic groups are important members of the Chinese family.'

'National unity is the lifeline of the people of all ethnic groups. It is the common responsibility and obligation of the people of all ethnic groups to maintain the motherland's unity and strengthen national unity.'

And it goes on...

More recently, The China Daily highlighted the cases of four Han-Tibetan intermarriages being 'a great demonstration of ethnic unity in this new era of development.'

A few months ago, Xinhua had already touched upon the issue: 'According to statistics, there are more than 560 multiethnic families in Metok [near the Upper Siang of Arunachal Pradesh]. People of different ethnic groups help each other in farming and animal husbandry, and children of different ethnic groups study in the same classroom. People here celebrate the New Year's Day, the Lunar New Year, the Tibetan New Year or folk culture festivals of Monpa ethnic group.'

The news agency highlighted the case of Zhang Chunhuan and his family celebrating together the Chinese Lunar New Year. This could be the beginning of a real 'mingling' and the disappearance of the Tibetan nation.

The simple fact that tens of articles on the subject have been published in the last few days, shows the Communist party is facing a serious problem which will not be solved by propaganda alone.

The real question is: Can Han Chauvinism disappear from the Middle Kingdom? It is doubtful.

## The Tibetan Plateau: A Solution to the Global Climate Crisis

By Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha, Global Order

As world leaders prepare to gather in Glasgow for the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), arguably the biggest annual summit on climate change, Tibetans are once again warning the the United Nations, that there can never be a comprehensive discussion on global climate change without understanding what is happening on the Tibetan plateau and its 46000 glaciers.

Like a hat on one's head on a sunny day, the Tibetan plateau with its massive snow cover at an average elevation of more than 4000 meters above sea level, serves as a 'cooling roof' for a rapidly warming world. Numerous scientific studies published in recent decades have firmly noted that the Tibetan plateau regulates both the timing and intensity of the Indian monsoon as well as the Southeast Asian monsoon. Some studies have even linked the increasing number of heatwaves across Europe in recent years to the loss of glaciers on the Tibetan Plateau.

Any drastic change to its landscape due to climate change or human destruction could quickly result in serious repercussions across Asia and beyond. Some of the most populous regions in the world like India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and China are greatly dependent on rivers originating from the Tibetan plateau. Tibet's rivers like the Driчу/Yangtze and the Machu/Yellow feed millions in China, the Gyalmo Ngulchu/Salween and the Zachu/Mekong feed millions in Southeast Asian countries, the Senge Tsangpo/ Indus and the Yarlung Tsangpo/Brahmaputra feed millions more in the Indian subcontinent. As per a United States policy report, 1.8 billion people in Asia are dependent on rivers originating from the melting glaciers and the thawing permafrost of the Tibetan plateau.

Unfortunately, due to the plateau's vast surface area at an extremely high elevation and also the rampant environmental destruction in Tibet under Chinese occupation, the temperature rise on the Tibetan plateau is twice the global average. This has led to rapid glacial retreat, permafrost degradation and an unprecedented number of natural disasters in the region. Scientists have warned that if the current rate of destruction continues, then 2/3 of all glaciers on the plateau will be gone by 2050.

The fast thawing of permafrost on the plateau could also result in an enormous loss of frozen carbon into the atmosphere, which would further exacerbate the rising global temperature and cause extreme climatic conditions across the world. The rapid melting of glaciers will cause a sudden surge in river flows in the next few years, causing floods and landslides in turn. The river volume could reach peak by 2030 and then start to decline, causing unimaginable difficulties across Asia. A recent US intelligence report has warned that changes in river flow due to climate change and melting glaciers could cause regional conflicts and social unrest, particularly in the Indian Subcontinent.

The construction of mega dams on the Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) by the Chinese government could further complicate water security in the region. China has long planned 11 hydel dams on the Yarlung Tsangpo river, of which six dams (Zangmu, Gyatsa, Dagu, Jeixu, Lengda and Metok) are either completed, under construction or approved for construction. Large dams inevitably inundate a vast area of land around them for water storage, leading to massive loss of vegetation and wildlife habitat. India and other riparian countries would inevitably face water shortages in the winter as the dams could swallow much of the flow during the dry season, and flash floods in the summer, as excess

water from the dams would be released to ease pressure on the dam during the rainy season.

The impact of climate change in Tibet has been apparent with an unprecedented number of floods, landslides and forest fires since 2016. A massive landslide in Tibet blocked the Driчу, the longest river in Asia for 11 days in 2018, and also submerged many villages and monasteries in the region.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama has repeatedly said on numerous occasions, the environment and climate change are issues that transcend national boundaries and political divisions. The Tibetan people, the Chinese government and the international community can and should work together for the protection of the Tibetan plateau, for the welfare of millions of people across Asia is at stake.

The protection of the Tibetan plateau is of paramount importance to combatting global climate change. According to V Ramanathan, an atmospheric scientist, 'our understanding of global climate change would be incomplete without taking what's happening to the Tibetan plateau into consideration.'

Hence, the Tibetan plateau must be central to any global climate discussion and needs to be on the global agenda at COP26.

*{Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha is the Head of the Environment & Development Desk at the Tibet Policy Institute. He is also the Deputy Director of the Tibet Policy Institute, Central Tibetan Administration.}*



## His Holiness the Dalai Lama Condoles Demise of Dr Alfredo Moreno



His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed his profound condolences at the demise of Dr Alfredo Martinez Moreno, a longtime supporter of the Tibet cause and a personal friend of His Holiness.

In the condolence letter dated 4 October addressed to Dr Alicia Martinez, wife of Dr Moreno, His Holiness wrote:

“I was very sorry to learn of the passing of my friend Dr Alfredo Moreno at the age of 98. I offer my condolences to you and your family.”

“As you know your husband was a member of your nation’s delegation to

the United Nations in November 1950. It was El Salvador that first raised the issue of Tibet at the UN, for which we remain very grateful.”

“Over the years, I met your husband on several occasions and was always deeply appreciative of his interest in and support for the freedom and dignity of the Tibetan people.”

“Although he is no longer with us, we can take comfort in the fact that he lived a meaningful life of service of others,” His Holiness said.

## Sikyong Condoles Demise of Dr Alfredo Martinez Moreno, Long-time Friend of Tibet

Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration offered his condolences on the demise of Dr Alfredo Martinez Moreno, a longtime friend of Tibet who passed away on Saturday, 2 October at the age of 98. Dr Alfredo Moreno was the deputy head of the El Salvador UN delegation that took a stand to support Tibet’s pleas at the UN by submitting a draft resolution to the UN entitled ‘Invasion of Tibet by Foreign Forces’ in 1950.

In his letter addressed to the wife of the deceased, Sikyong wrote, “It is with deep sadness that I learnt of the passing away of your husband and a longtime friend of Tibet, Dr Alfredo Martinez Moreno. On behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration and the Tibetan people, I offer our deepest condolences and prayers to you and your family.”

“The Tibetan people recall in profound gratitude the compassionate stand that the delegation of El Salvador, of which Dr Alfredo was the deputy-head, took in support of Tibet at the United Nations on



7 November 1950. El Salvador was the first nation to raise the issue of Tibet at the UN, and we will always remember Dr Alfredo as a torchbearer of the Tibetan movement,” writes Sikyong adding “Dr Alfredo remained a stalwart supporter of the Tibetan cause throughout his life, and a dear friend to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.”

Sikyong said he was honoured to have had a chance to meet him in person in

Scotland in 2006. As a diplomat and lawyer, “he spent his life advocating for peace and human dignity and was a true humanitarian who embodied the spirit of the UN, like few others.”

“His legacy will remain an inspiration for all of us in our pursuit for freedom and dignity. Once again, I offer our sincere condolences and offer our prayers for his swift rebirth,” Sikyong concluded.

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## QUOTES

*“We must focus on finding peace of mind, remembering that compassion is the foundation of genuine peace. As human beings, we have the same kind of face and the same kind of mind. Because we have so much in common, we have to find a way to live together side by side in a peaceful, happy world.” His Holiness the Dalai Lama during Talk conversation about the interconnectedness of happiness, health, well-being, and the future of earth on 22 September 2021.*

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*“As we face this crisis together, it is imperative that we act in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation in order to limit its consequences. I hope and pray that our leaders will gather the strength to take collective action to address this emergency, and set a timetable for change. We have to act to make this a safer, greener, happier world.” His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s Message to COP26 on 31 October 2021.*

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*“No matter how much China’s propaganda machinery make false claims of development during the 70 years of so-called peaceful liberation of Tibet in its recent White Papers, Tibetans inside Tibet have maintained indomitable courage and determination in the face of China’s continued policy to exterminate the Tibetan identity, and they have been making all round efforts to protect Tibet’s religion, culture, language and tradition, for which we remain deeply grateful. It is this strength that unites the Tibetans in exile and keeps alive the freedom struggle. It is the common wish in our heart to reunite in Tibet and we would like to appeal to our brethren in Tibet not to lose their determination.” Sikyong Penpa Tsering Statement of the Kashag on the 61st Anniversary of the Tibetan Democracy Day on 2 September 2021*

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*“Speaking on the importance of unity, he called for consolidation of the diverse efforts of the Kashag, Tibetan Parliament and the Tibet support groups across the world for better outcome and impact of the Tibetan freedom struggle. He also assured the Kashag led by Sikyong Penpa Tsering the full support and co-operation from the Tibetan Parliament in all its future activities, and also advised members of the Tibetan Parliament to offer their wholehearted support to the Kashag, as stated in the official resolution of the Tibetan parliament.” Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel’s conclusion remarks at First Session of 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on 12 October 2021*

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