



TIBETAN BULLETIN

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Tibetans in Dharamshala Celebrate 88th Birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama



His Holiness the Dalai Lama cutting a birthday cake presented to him during a celebration marking his 88th birthday at the courtyard of Thekchen Choeling Tsuglakhang in Dharamshala on 6 July 2023.

On the occasion of the 88th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 6 July 2023, Tibetans led by the Central Tibetan Administration gathered at the Tsuglakhang courtyard to commemorate the biggest celebration of the Tibetan community.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama graced the occasion along with Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu of Himachal Pradesh, special guest Vice-Chair of Taiwanese Parliamentary Group for Tibet Hung Sun Han, heads of the three democratic pillars of Central Tibetan Administration, Kalons, Tibetan Parliamentarians, heads of the CTA's autonomous bodies and others.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressed the gathering, sharing his life-long commitment to helping others, he said that he was born as the Dalai Lama through the force of karma and stressed the need for helping others. Additionally, he spoke about his respect for all religions which essentially teaches values like helping others, particularly he expressed his appreciation for Buddhism which he called scientific and logical in nature. He added that he was physically healthy and assured he would live a few more decades. Sharing his optimism for the

near future, he said that in the coming years, the world would become a more peaceful place, leaving weaponry aside humans would coexist as brothers.

Chief guest Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, CM of Himachal Pradesh greeted His Holiness on the latter's 88th birthday. He paid tribute to His Holiness calling him an icon of peace and compassion and messenger of love and brotherhood and said that His Holiness' life stands as an inspiration to all. Of His Holiness' peaceful struggle for Tibet, the CM said that His Holiness had since many years fought for the struggle of Tibet and Tibetans but through peaceful means and compassion earning him a Nobel Peace Prize. He also applauded the Tibetan spiritual leader's initiatives to enlighten the youth about ancient Indian culture and life values and appealed to everyone to live by His Holiness' teachings and thoughts. He concluded by giving reassurance to all the Tibetan residents that Himachal is their home and Himachal government has their welfare at heart.

Special guest Vice-Chair of Taiwanese Parliamentary Group for Tibet Hung Sun Han acknowledged His Holiness' role in advocating for the democracy and

freedom of Tibet and joy of humanity. He expressed his gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for advancing the cause of democracy and noted that Tibetans inside Tibet and in diaspora are committed to non-violence even in the face of oppression from China. "Tibetans strive to guard a way of life and system of democracy, freedom and human rights earning respect from international community," he said. He further added, "Tibetans and Taiwanese can sincerely support each other on the way toward democracy and freedom because we see ourselves in each other's stories."

Sikyong Penpa Tsering and Speaker Sonam Tenphel delivered the statements of the Kashag and Tibetan Parliament respectively.

The event saw lively cultural performances from Tibetan schools, regional Tibetan associations in Dharamshala and the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA). It also saw the launch of two books, one is published by the Department of Information and International Relations while the other is on Tibetan culture and arts.

Similarly, the day was also commemorated with great festivities by every Tibetan communities in abroad. In India and Nepal, Tibetan Settlement Offices organised functions with inviting local dignitaries while in the other countries, sporadic Tibetans congregated to mark the day under the coordination of Offices of Tibet and Tibetan Associations.



Visit: <https://tibet.net/tibet-advocacy-group/>

In a New Video Message, Gonpo Kyi Keeps Up Struggle for Dorjee Tashi's Urgent Release



A screen grab of Gonpo Kyi's video message

Gonpo Kyi, the sister of Dorjee Tashi, a renowned Tibetan entrepreneur imprisoned for life on trumped-up charges of “loan fraud”, was seen expressing deep concern about his well-being and asking for permission to visit him in a video that was widely circulated on Thursday, 13 July 2023. Dorjee Tashi was initially arrested on 10 July 2008 on suspicion of making donations to Tibetan exiles in Tibet and providing covert funding to Tibetan protestors.

In the video, Gonpo Kyi says, “I cannot speak about my predicament and the truth. When I approach the prison or public security bureau, I am threatened with imprisonment and beatings instead of expressing my concern. Using this video is the only way I am able to clarify my concerns and plea.” For the past three years, the Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers in Lhasa denied Gonpo Kyi from visiting her brother in prison. After repeated appeals from Kyi, in 2021, she was allowed only once to talk to Dorjee Tashi through a video call. In the years that follow, she was blocked from making any contact with Dorjee Tashi in prison.

In the video, Gonpo was heard saying, “It is 2023 and I am still prohibited from writing a letter to my brother.” In July, they told me I would be able to visit him

in prison, but the visit was cancelled abruptly and I am uncertain when I will be able to do so. After rushing to the police station in Lhasa on Wednesday, 5 July, Gonpo pleaded with the authorities to allow her visitation the next day, but prison officials warned her not to come and asked her to wait for their phone call instead. They threatened to cut off her communication access or imprison her if she persisted.

“They threatened us and we didn’t cooperate. They confiscated our mobile phones and everything we could possibly use as evidence to expose them,” said Kyi while raising concerns over the lack of freedom and rights.

Kyi further spoke about the repeated mistreatment she had to deal with whenever she visited the police station yet none of them could be recorded as she said the phones were confiscated. She further went on to reveal the beatings and mishandling she dealt with and how everyone from public security personnel to local police officers have all conspired against her. “The authority would recite a number of charges against me”, she said.

She also said “The Constitution recognised all citizens as equal whether they are leaders or masses. We could not

film how we were being treated since our phones were confiscated. They would beat us and four or five policemen would be dispatched to handle one person alone”, Kyi added while demonstrating resoluteness to speak out the truth and expose the injustice of the Chinese authority.

“The law regards everyone as equal, Tibetans and Chinese. However, are they doing us any justice at all? Then I said to them that I would voluntarily accept whatever charges they press upon me if my request does not comply with Chinese law and constitution,” she said. When she urged the authority to proceed with her request in accordance with the constitution, Kyi attested she would be harassed and receive beatings.

“Both the public security bureau and the police station would beat us up. If they could do something like that then I can speak out on that. We have no access to record the situation. We have no choice but to comply with the beatings at the police station. However, there is no way we can record those since our phones are taken away. I speak the truth”, Kyi said.

Gonpo Kyi's Previous Protests

In a video posted on 3 May, Gonpo Kyi condemned the unjust verdict against her brother Dorje Tashi. In her petition, she demanded that its judges be held accountable and punished for not following the law; however, the court did not respond. According to exile Tibetan sources, Gonpo Kyi and her spouse were apprehended by officers with the Public Security Bureau (PSB) in Lhasa on 26 April and released the following night on 27 April. It is reported that they were subjected to physical abuse, rigorous interrogation, and warnings about such behaviour in the future, while they were detained. In response, Gonpo Kyi said, “I will protest until they kill me.”

On 20 March, Kyi wore a white shirt with the words “The allegations

against Dorje Tashi made by the Tibet Autonomous Region Higher People's Court are untrue!" and stood in front of the court. Additionally, she obtained a copy of the judgment rendered against Dorje Tashi. Officers from the Lhasa PSB arbitrarily held her overnight following her arrest and beat her. On 21 March, a day later, a video recording of Gonpo Kyi being beaten up by officers in front of the police station appeared on social media.

On 31 March, the Lhasa PSB office summoned Dorje Tseten, Dorje Tashi's brother, and told him that there was no chance of getting the decision against Dorjee Tashi overturned. Dorje Tseten

was also warned that if he or anyone else continued to contest the ruling, they would face severe punishment.

According to the testimony of Dorjee Tashi, he was subjected to severe torture, beaten with electric batons, poured hot chilli fluid through his nostrils, denied proper food, and handcuffed and hung in the air. Later the Chinese court deferred his appeal process for six years and denied multiple meetings with his lawyer.

Gonpo Kyi continues to appeal for immediate release as well as a fair trial process for Dorjee Tashi.

Chinese Police Assault Gonpo Kyi Again After She Demanded to Meet Her Imprisoned Brother

In the latest video clips from Tibet, Gonpo Kyi reveals how she was physically assaulted by a group of Chinese police near Drapchi prison. In the video, Gonpo Kyi says, "On 1 August, I approached the police station near Drapchi prison and requested the authorities' permission to meet with my brother under the provisions of the country's constitution and law. Since I had no other choice, I prostrated before the authorities and requested that the process be carried out as per the Chinese Constitution. The authorities violently dragged me to the ground and charged me with violating the law for prostrating." As she shows the bruises on her arms and elbows, she says,

"These are the proof of the beatings and draggings I suffered at the hands of the prison police. Around four or five police dragged me around like an animal since I requested to meet with my imprisoned brother as I had no other choice."

A month earlier, on 13 July, Gonpo Kyi raised her deep concern over her brother Dorjee Tashi's wellbeing in a video statement and demanded permission to visit him as required by Chinese law and the constitution.

For over 15 years, Dorje Tashi has been jailed in a Chinese prison. Over the years, Dorjee Tashi's family members have been showing growing concerns over his health conditions due to series of torture and beatings he has been subjected. Despite numerous requests for a fair trial and a revision of the case, he continues to remain behind bars. His family has been denied visiting him in prison, and appeals to higher authorities proved fruitless. Dorjee Tashi was initially arrested on 10 July 2008 on suspicion of making donations to Tibetan exiles and providing funding to Tibetan protestors in Tibet. He was sentenced to life imprisonment on 17 May 2010.

Former Tibetan Political Prisoner Sonam Gyalpo Who Served 17 Years in Chinese Prison Passed Away

Former Tibetan Political Prisoner Sonam Gyalpo, who has served an aggregate of 17 years in Chinese prisons, sadly passed away on 16 August 2023.

Late Sonam Gyalpo was first sentenced to three years in Drapchi Prison on 27 September 1989 for his involvement in peaceful demonstrations of 1987 in Lhasa. In July 1993, he was rearrested on the pretext of causing political offence where he was confined in Nyara Prison in Shigatse and Sangyip Prison in Lhasa for a year. His third detention took place on 28 August 2005 by a group of Chinese State Security Bureau officers who confiscated pictures, videotapes and books containing His Holiness the Dalai Lama during a random search in his house before the run-up of the 40th founding anniversary celebration of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region. Alleging him of "endangering state security", he was jailed for 12 years in Drapchi Prison and was later shifted to Chushur Prison on 3 November 2006. In total, he has served 16 years in Chinese prison.

He was born on 14 June 1955 in Gongkar county of Lhoka and was a permanent resident of Lhasa.



Collage image of the Former Tibetan Political Prisoner Sonam Gyalpo

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Department of Finance, CTA

U.S. Announces its Intention of Imposing Visa Restrictions on PRC Officials Involved in Forced Assimilation of Tibetan Children in Govt-run Boarding Schools

Secretary of State Antony Blinken on 22 August 2023 announced that U.S. State Department is taking steps to impose visa restrictions on officials of the People's Republic of China (PRC) "for their involvement in the forcible assimilation of more than one million Tibetan children in government-run boarding schools" in a press statement published on its official website.

Secretary of State raised the U.S. State Department's concern over the consequences of the PRC's assimilation policies. The press statement read, "These coercive policies seek to eliminate Tibet's distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious traditions among younger generations of Tibetans."

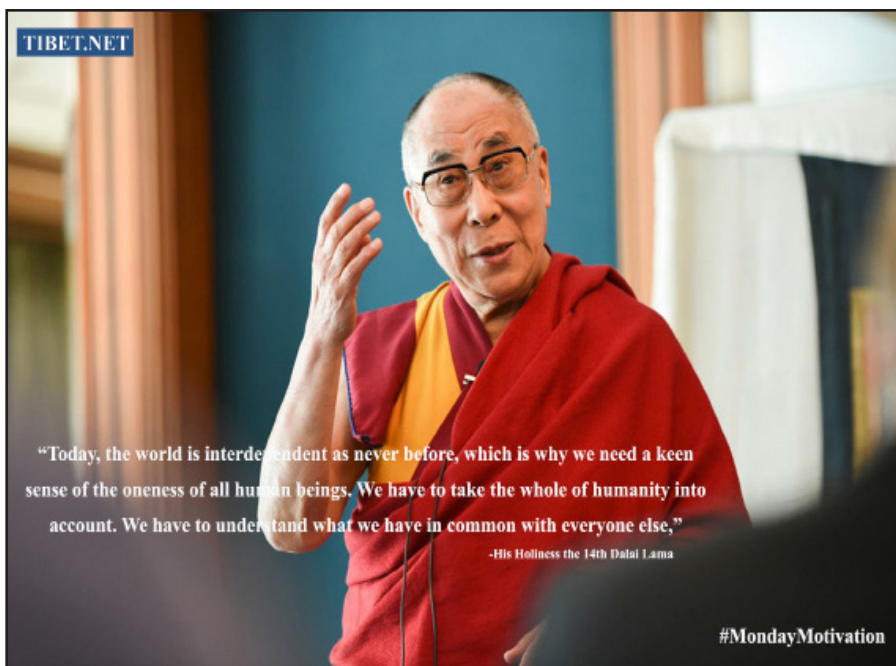
The statement urged "PRC authorities to end the coercion of Tibetan children into government-run boarding schools and to cease repressive assimilation policies, both in Tibet and throughout other parts of the PRC."

The U.S. officials, including Matthew Miller, the Spokesperson for the U.S. Department of State, and Under Secretary Uzra Zeya, the U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, also echoed similar concern and condemned the PRC's forcible assimilation of Tibetan children in government-run boarding schools.

The names of the Chinese officials are not yet disclosed publicly by the U.S. Department of State.

Similar concerns over the alarming issue that disconnects Tibetan children from their cultural and linguistic heritage were also raised by the United Nations earlier this year alongside many other prominent Human Rights advocates.

More than one million Tibetan children were forcibly sent to the state-run boarding schools in Tibet to fulfil Beijing's policy of eradicating Tibet's unique identity.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Birthday to be Celebrated as Peace and Justice Day in Contra Costa County, California

In a joyous occasion for Tibetans and the sign of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's undying positive influence, the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County, California has passed a resolution declaring His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's birthday as a Peace and Justice Day.

It materialised through the efforts of Tibetan activist and V-TAG member Tenzin Rangdol and Bhuchung Tsering of International Campaign for Tibet.



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Department of Information and International Relations-CTA Welcomes UN Experts Demand for Release of Nine Tibetan Political Prisoners

Three independent UN experts demanded the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to provide credible information about nine Tibetan environmental human rights defenders who were detained and sentenced to lengthy prison terms and called for their immediate release if China is serious about combating climate change.

In a statement released on 10 August 2023, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders Mary Lawlor; Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association Clément Nyaletsossi Voule; and Special Rapporteur on the Issue of Human Rights Obligations relating to the Enjoyment of a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment David Boyd jointly voiced concern over the PRC's lack of information provided over the detention and sentencing of Tibetans which they believed is a deliberate attempt to make the world forget about these human rights defenders. In addition, the experts expressed concern regarding the fact that the families of these activists have been kept in the dark regarding their fate.

Asserting strongly against China's impartial judicial practice, which is

often characterized by shady trials behind closed doors on vague and discriminatory charges. The UN experts stated that Chinese authorities have not provided a clear understanding of the circumstances surrounding those Tibetans' detention, trial, or sentencing. However, in cases where they have "sufficient" information, these Tibetan environmental activists have been imprisoned and sentenced to serve seven to 11 years in prison. Experts are not convinced that the human rights defenders have been provided with legal counsel during their detention or that "they have access to medical care while in prison".

The nine imprisoned environmental human rights defenders—Anya Sengdra, Dorjee Daktal, Kelsang Choklang, Dhongye, Rinchen Namdol, Tsultrim Gonpo, Jangchup Ngodup, Sogru Abhu, and Namesy—were arrested after protesting illegal mining activities at sacred mountains and exposing hunting of endangered species in the Tibetan areas of Amdo and Kham provinces now incorporated into China's Qinghai and Sichuan Province and the so-called Tibetan Autonomous Region.

With lack of information provided on the length of the sentences, the

whereabouts, and the well being of six of the human rights defenders, the experts have requested that the PRC government "provide details as to why and where they are being held, their health conditions, and allow their families to visit them" in their statement.

China's commitment to tackle the impacts of climate change has been called into question, as has the irony of punishing human rights activists in its fight against climate change and environmental degradation, as the experts emphasized. They urged "all nine Tibetan activists" unlawfully imprisoned for advocating for the protection of Tibet's natural environment "to be released immediately".

Kalon Norzin Dolma of the Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, welcomed the joint statement and thanked the experts for the investigation into China's unlawful silencing of Tibetan human rights defenders over the past decade. Kalon also urged China to release all Tibetan political prisoners who are incarcerated solely for exercising their basic rights to protect Tibetan culture, language and environment from being exterminated by the Chinese authorities.



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“One China Policy has Nothing to do with Tibet”, Sikyong Penpa Tsering



Sikyong Penpa Tsering at panel discussion titled “weaponisation of the One China policy”, organised by Foundation for Non-violent Alternatives, in Delhi.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering delivered a keynote address at an event that discussed the “weaponisation of the One China policy” at India International Centre in Delhi on 1 August 2023.

It was organised by Foundation for Non-violent Alternatives (FNVA) with the participation of several veteran diplomats and prominent experts from various institutions who talked on multiple aspects of the ‘One China Policy’.

Beginning with his address, Sikyong quoted an extract from a memoir of the well-known Tibetan diplomat late Gyari Lodoe Rinpoche, to shed light on the irrelevance of the One China policy to Tibet. Put simply, the excerpt elucidates One China policy as the result of the United States’ attempt to establish relations with the People’s Republic of China while maintaining its relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan) in the 1970s, which had no relevance to Tibet. The extract reads, “Yet, the PRC government vigorously pursues efforts to extend the application of ‘one-China’ to Tibet and, in recent years, it has misled a number of governments into believing not only that the ‘one-China’ policy applies to Tibet, but that it restricts the extent to which their government officials can interact with

Tibetan leaders in exile, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama.”

Sikyong said, “When you talk about Tibet, then you have to talk from 1945 to 51 and 54”, while briefly touching on the positions of the Indian government on Tibet and China since its independence. He reiterated, “One China policy or One China principle has nothing to do with Tibet and for Tibet; you will have to look at it from a totally different prism or historical perspective.”

Sikyong further highlighted the 17th point agreement between Tibet and China, which the Tibetan diplomats had to sign under duress, and the subsequent effort made by His Holiness-led Tibetan government to comply with the agreement that China eventually disregarded, causing His Holiness and several thousands of Tibetans to move into exile.

Former Indian Ambassador Lakhan Lal Mehrotra also addressed the event’s inaugural before Sikyong. He said, “The rise of China has created a new situation in which established global equations are breaking apart,” posing challenges throughout the international community. Specifically, he spoke about China’s relations with the US and India and its constant changes.

Acting Chief Justice Commissioner Karma Damdul Retires After 46 Years of Service

Acting Chief Justice Commissioner Karma Damdul of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission has announced his retirement from service after having served in the Central Tibetan Administration in varied positions for almost 46 years.

The retiring acting Chief Justice Commissioner has previously served as the Justice Commissioner following his appointment during the sixth session of the 16th Tibetan Parliament on 19 September 2018. On 1 October 2018, he took an oath of office.

As per the Code of Judiciary’s Section 15 under Article 67 ‘Judicial code and code of judicial procedure of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission’, the acting CJC will be assumed by one of two Justice Commissioners who has higher years of service. Hence, Justice Commissioner Karma Damdul took additional charge as the Acting Chief Justice Commissioner since 15 November 2021. The total of his services rendered in TSJC as Acting Chief Justice Commissioner for a period of 4 years and 9 months.

Acting CJC Karma Damdul was born on 1 July 1958 in Kongpo, central-eastern Tibet. He studied at CST Darjeeling till 10th standard and went on to complete his remaining schooling at CST Mussoorie. After completing high



Acting Chief Justice Commissioner Karma Damdul.

school, he voluntarily joined Special Frontier Force (SFF) and served there for 8 years.

In 1977, under the direct jurisdiction of Kashag, he studied political governance for a year. Between 1983-1989, he served at the Primary Agricultural Credit Co-operative Society in Bylakuppe's Dekyi Larsoe as an ad-hoc staff. On 1 July 1989, he was appointed as office secretary at Kollegal's settlement office. In 1994, he was appointed as the office superintendent at the Primary Agricultural Credit Co-operative Society in Hunsur and thereafter was promoted to the post of Section Officer.

In 1998, under the coordination of the Department of Home, he went to Israel to study various joint projects of Tibetan Co-Operatives. On his return, he was appointed as the Secretary of the Co-operative Society at Dekyi Larsoe. In 1999, he was appointed as the Secretary of the Co-Operative Society at Lugsam settlement.

Between 2001-2006, the acting CJC served as the settlement officer of Dekyi Larsoe. During this term, he was promoted to Deputy Secretary. In 2004, he was awarded for excellence in service. For two years between 2006-2008, he was temporarily appointed as the CEO of the Federation of Tibetan Co-operatives. From 2009 to 2015, he served as the settlement officer at various settlements including the TSO of Mainpat, the TSO of Gangtok and the TSO of Lugsam. In 2015, he was promoted to the position of Secretary and was appointed as the Chief Representative Officer of south zone settlements. In 2016, he was transferred to the Department of Religion and served there till his appointment as the Justice Commissioner in 2018. In 2021, as per the judicial procedure, he was appointed as the acting Chief Justice Commissioner and served the position till his retirement on 30 June 2023.

For detailed news visit:
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Kalon Norzin Dolma Addresses Press Conference and Releases a Book in Tokyo

Kalon Norzin Dolma of the Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, gave an exclusive interview to the Kyodo Tsushin News and later addressed a press conference at Shinjuku Bunka Center and released a book "Chibetto no Hanron" in Tokyo Shinjuku city on 14 July 2023.

Kalon thanked the media people for their interest in the Tibet issue and for attending the press conference. She briefed the journalists on the purpose of her visit and updates on the situation in Tibet, the status of the negotiation with the Chinese government, and how the media should be involved in helping achieve freedom and justice for all the oppressed communities around the world.

Questions from the media range from the health of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the status of the negotiation with the Chinese counterpart, and facts behind the colonial boarding schools in Tibet to the issue of the reincarnation of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Media also asked about her impression of meeting with the Japanese parliamentarians.

Kalon Norzin Dolma informed the media about the good health of His Holiness, how He participated in the public celebration of His birthday in Dharamshala and about His visit to Ladakh and the teaching schedules. Regarding the status of the negotiation, she explained the chronology of the negotiation from 2002 to 2010 and the presentation of the Tibetan Memorandum on genuine autonomy and the notes. "Although the negotiation has come to a deadlock officially, we are exploring various means to get the Chinese leadership on the table," she said.

Kalon informed that China has no historical and political rights and power to appoint the reincarnation of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. She

further said, "China has failed to win the trust and loyalty of the Tibetans despite all these years of oppression and indoctrinations; they see Tibetan religion and culture as the force behind the indomitable Tibetan spirit, so they are trying to interfere in the selection of the reincarnations of the Tibetan lamas, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The policy behind the colonial boarding school is to destroy Tibetan language and identity and to indoctrinate young Tibetans."

Kalon expressed great satisfaction in the meeting and assurance of support from Chairman Shimomura Hakubun and General Secretary Ishikawa Akimasa of the Japanese Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet and working committee members.

Later, Kalon Norzin Dolma released the book "Chibetto no Hanron", published by Shukosha, before the media. The book is the Japanese translation of Representative Dr Arya Tsewang Gyalpo's book "Harnessing the Dragon's Fume" by Kameda Hirofumi. The English original was published by the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) in 2021.

Representative Arya explained that the purpose of the book was to challenge and present counterarguments from Tibetans to the aggressive propaganda and blatant lies of the Chinese communist leadership to justify their tyrannical rule in Tibet.

More than eighteen people representing around eleven major and local media attended the press conference.



International Tibet Youth Forum Commences in Dharamshala



Group photo of the participants with event's guests, speakers and facilitators.

More than 100 Tibetan youth with different educational and professional background took part in International Tibet Youth Forum, a flagship initiative of the 16th Kashag.

The inaugural session, held on 18 July 2023, was presided over by Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration along with Secretary Karma Choeying and Additional Secretary Tenzin Lekshay.

Secretary Karma Choeying, Department of Information and International Relations, delivered the welcome address, highlighting the importance of the participants to keep up the efforts to sustain the movement long after the forum is over.

In his inaugural address, Sikyong expressed his happiness and hope that the Tibetan movement would be strengthened through the forum. "Since the opening of the V-TAG in 2021 in Zurich, through slow and steady steps today we have reached this pinnacle under the stewardship of the Department of Information and International Relations. The vision paper states that we should be able to hand over the reigns of the Tibetan movement to the

next generation of Tibetan youth. As His Holiness reminds us we should hope for the best while preparing for the worst, we hope to return to Tibet soon. Until that time, we should sustain our movement. The first generation of Tibetans who had no education, no experience had faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama and worked extremely hard to provide for us." He added that now the responsibility of the movement rests upon the shoulders of this generation and said this forum provides them the opportunity to interact and know about Tibet cause and more. This forum has brought together distinguished speakers, experts and knowledgeable in their domains, he said.

On this special occasion, His Holiness delivered a virtual message from Ladakh for the Tibetan youth, explaining that "the cause of Tibet is not only political, it's also about establishing world peace by training the mind on the basis of reason".

"By developing love, compassion and the special resolve to bring benefit and happiness to all sentient beings, we aspire to help all sentient beings, especially all human beings on this earth", His Holiness added and advised

the gathering to replace negative emotions with compassion.

Additional Secretary Tenzin Lekshay gave the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Sikyong and Secretary Karma Choeying. He also thanked the participants for making it to the forum despite the heavy rain situation in Dharamshala.

The guests speakers invited to interact with youth included former Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Kelsang Gyaltzen, former Chief Election Commissioner, Tashi Phuntsok, Director of Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Geshe Lhakdor, Executive President of Kreddha, Dr Michael Van Walt Van Praag, Professor Tsangdruk Topla, College for Higher Tibetan Studies, Tenzin Geyche Tethong, Former Secretary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tencho Gyatso, President, International Campaign for Tibet, Sherap Therchin, Executive Director, Canada Tibet Committee, Gloria Montgomery, Coordinator of Tibet Advocacy Coalition, Kyinzom Dhongdue, Strategic Campaigns Lead, Amnesty International, Australia and former political prisoner, Phuntsok Nyidron.

International Tibet Youth Forum Successfully Concludes with Participants Declaring Firm Commitment to Tibet Advocacy

The International Tibet Youth Forum was successfully concluded on a high note with a joint declaration from all 100 participants in the valedictory session, affirming their steadfast commitment to advocacy of “truth about Tibet” for seeking international support in resolving the Tibet-China conflict while making an urgent call for “free exercise of our (Tibetan) people’s right to self-determination”.

The closing ceremony was attended by Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile (TPiE), Dolma Tsering Teykhang, Kalon (Minister) Norzin Dolma and Secretary Karma Choeying from the Department of Information and International Relations, along with speakers and participants of the maiden International Tibet Youth Forum.

Kalon Norzin Dolma lauded all the partakers for their active participation in her address, including the speakers and facilitators while underscoring the crucial roles of Tibetan youths in the sustenance and advancement of Tibet cause vis-a-vis safeguarding Tibetan traditions.

“Everyone must dutifully fulfil their obligations as a Tibetan”, said the Kalon and assured the 16th Kashag’s complete support in the empowerment of Tibetan youths via provision of platforms to showcase their potential.

Kalon further commended the participants for adopting a joint declaration, saying it serves as a guideline for their future advocacy efforts.

In her valedictory speech, Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang emphasised the importance of educating Tibetan youths about the cause of Tibet and the political and administrative operations of the CTA. She also expressed her happiness at seeing so many Tibetan youths from the West visiting Dharamshala during their

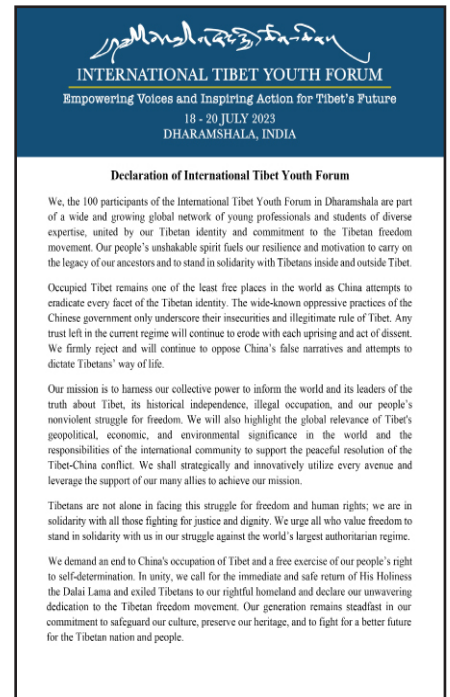
summer break to reacquaint themselves with their culture.

“You must never forget your root and should always uphold unique Tibetan aspects, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama constantly emphasises, to build a sense of identity”, said Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, and urged everyone to connect themselves with the plight of Tibet through hearing stories from their elderly families who undergone hardships. “The pain that you endure from hearing such stories of your dear ones is the foundation of your sentiments that would enable each of you to question your respective adopted countries’ policies on Tibet that are conditioned by the People’s Republic of China.”

Furthermore, the Deputy Speaker implored Tibetan youths to promote the Tibetan freedom struggle with a clear understanding of the facts in every possible means through enthusiastic networking and collaboration among young Tibetans. She also beseeched the youngsters to apprise their respective governments of Tibet’s status as an independent state prior to China’s illegal occupation and the CTA’s mutually

beneficial Middle Way Approach policy.

Secretary Karma Choeying conveyed a vote of thanks at the end of the seminar. In addition, the Secretary reiterated his introductory remarks of the forum’s opening ceremony, calling everyone to put their words into action and continue advocating for Tibet at their respective places.



Sikyong addressing the gathering during inaugural session of the International Tibet Youth Forum. Also in the picture are DIIR Secretary Karma Choeying and Additional Secretary Tenzin Lekshay.

Statement of the Kashag on Eighty-Eighth Birth Anniversary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama



Sikyong Penpa Tsering addressing the statement of Kashag on the 88th birthday celebration of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

On this auspicious occasion of His Holiness the Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama's eighty-eighth birthday, the Kashag — on behalf of the Tibetan people inside and outside Tibet — would like to pay our deepest obeisance and greetings to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We also extend our warmest welcome to all the distinguished guests present here today and everyone across the world celebrating this momentous day.

Today is a special day to celebrate and also to reflect with gratitude and pride the unparalleled leadership and legacy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama towards creating a happier life and a more peaceful world.

Born in a small village in Kumbum in the Amdo region in Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama assumed the throne of the traditional seat of the Dalai Lamas of Tibet in Lhasa. His Holiness the Dalai Lama attained the highest doctorate in Buddhist philosophy amidst a great assembly of scholars. At the young age of sixteen, His Holiness the Dalai Lama shouldered Tibet's spiritual and temporal leadership and undertook initiatives to bring about social reforms. However,

the invasion and occupation by the People's Republic of China brought Tibet on the verge of extermination, which compelled His Holiness the Dalai Lama to tread the path into exile.

The Kashag's statement of last year provided a glimpse of the immeasurable leadership and legacy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, particularly towards the Tibetan people, including the establishment of the Central Tibetan Administration in exile for the realisation of the just cause of Tibet and the preservation of Tibetan national identity.

On this occasion, we have endeavoured to highlight a fraction of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's profound meritorious services at the global level. His Holiness the Dalai Lama made His maiden visit to the Buddhist countries of Japan and Thailand in 1967. During His first visits to 11 countries in Europe in 1973, His Holiness the Dalai Lama strongly emphasised that, along with material development, there is an urgent need to cultivate universal responsibility and develop a good heart irrespective of whether one is a believer or non-believer.

In 1979, His Holiness the Dalai Lama embarked on visits to 24 cities and more than 40 universities and religious centres in the US, thereby establishing direct contact with Western society. At that time, His Holiness the Dalai Lama stressed on the need to develop a common approach, maintain harmonious coexistence among the different religious traditions of the world and incorporate a non-violent approach that could combat global challenges and create a more compassionate world.

It is well-known that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has had a great interest in Western science which is evident from His deep curiosity in machines since His childhood. In 1979, His Holiness the Dalai Lama initiated dialogue with renowned physicists such as David Bohm in Europe, and more such engagements with experts from psychology, neurology, traditional medicine and ecology took place at Amherst College in 1984.

The meeting between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Western scientists at His residence in Dharamsala in 1987 led to 35 successive ground-breaking Mind and Life conferences until 2022. Based on the Buddhist science of dependent arising and the Buddhist tradition of nonviolence, His Holiness the Dalai Lama engaged with modern scientists for more than three decades on a comparative study of India's Nalanda tradition of dependent arising and modern science, leading to an unprecedented enrichment of scientific knowledge.

The dialogues seek to find similarities between scientific logic and Buddhist metaphysics; similarities between Quantum physics and the Madhyamaka theory of all phenomena having no independent existence and Mind Only theory of negation of the existence of external reality; differences between the Buddhist view that the universe has neither beginning nor end and the

scientific concept of Big Bang theory; explanation on the evolution of life based on Darwin's theory of evolution and ecology by investigating whether plants and flowers possess the ability to sense and the positioning of objects as a basis for consciousness. Buddhism has offered significant contributions to modern science in neurology and psychology.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has emphasised that a compassionate motivation should be the cornerstone of any scientific research to ensure its results not become a cause of harm for sentient beings and environment. His Holiness the Dalai Lama's interaction with scientists has not only resulted in a transformation of the scientific view of religion but also broadened the horizon of the scientific field of research worldwide. Similarly, the Mind and Life Dialogues have played a pivotal role in establishing contemplative practices as a legitimate area of study and have drawn the interest of millions of people in understanding the benefits of the practices to both physical and mental health.

In the last fifty years, Tibetan Buddhism flourished across the world not just as a religion but also as a repository of Buddhist science and culture that developed and flourished over the last 1,400 years. Some scientists are expressing the view that Buddhist science should be recognised as a branch of science along with natural science and social science.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's collaboration with Emory University on the education of heart and mind resulted in the Social, Emotional and Ethical Learning (SEE Learning), which is now being accessed in more than 130 countries and has paved a new direction for education in the present and future. As stated by Emory University, SEE Learning is an innovative education system being implemented at the individual and societal level, imparting the science of compassion, the cultivation of awareness and tools of engagement. This education system has

offered a sacred method to a happier life for all humanity through developing universal human values not bound by state, nation and faith.

Travelling across the globe, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has visited around 60 countries in five continents over the years. Amongst these, His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited the US alone around 60 times; Germany 47 times; Japan 43 times; Switzerland 32 times; Italy 31 times and France 26 times. His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visits draw huge audiences filling auditoriums, stadiums and public parks. Till date, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has made around 500 international visits, constantly meeting with intellectuals, scientists and the general public. His Holiness the Dalai Lama also met with around 500 global political and religious leaders. In recognition of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's meritorious service to humanity, governments, parliaments, institutions and foundations have conferred over 200 honorary doctorates and awards, including around 73 awards in the US alone.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama proposed the Five-Point Peace Plan at the US Congress in 1987 and elaborated on His vision of the Middle-Way Approach at the European Parliament in Strasbourg in 1988. In 2008, a Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People was presented to the Chinese government. The Central Tibetan Administration remains fully committed to resolving the Sino-Tibet conflict through dialogue based on the Middle Way Policy.

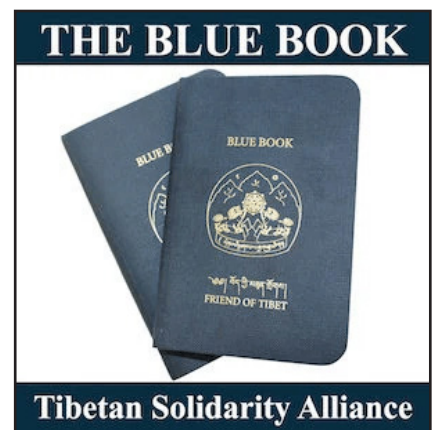
The four principal commitments of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the cultivation of human values, promotion of religious harmony, protection of Tibetan religion, culture and environment, and revival of ancient Indian knowledge cannot be adequately elaborated in a few paragraphs. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the refuge and inspiration for the world in general and Tibetans in particular.

As per the propitious prescience of the

guardian deities of Tibet and the repeated assurances of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, every Tibetan should consider it their sacred duty to work towards the realisation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's vision, ensure His long life and the flourishing of His meritorious services. Eschewing meaningless divisive regionalism and sectarianism, it is of paramount importance to forge unity among the Tibetan people and grasp the golden opportunity to realise the just cause of Tibet under the prevailing global situation. This will be a real offering and homage in honour of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthday. Therefore, the Kashag appeals to every Tibetan to be prudent in judging the opportunities and threats that confront our common cause.

Taking this opportunity, the Kashag would like to express our deep appreciation and thank the Central and State Governments of India for tirelessly taking the responsibility of looking after the security of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We also thank all those who have unwavering faith and devotion in the global vision and leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Finally, the Kashag prays for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the fulfilment of all His wishes. The Kashag also fervently prays for the swift return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Potala Palace and the reunion of Tibetans in and outside Tibet. May the truth of Tibet triumph soon and the light of peace prevail across the world.



Statement of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on Occasion of the 88th Birth Anniversary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama



Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel addressing the Statement of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on Occasion of the 88th Birth Anniversary of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

Today marks the 88th birth anniversary of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the destined deity of sentient beings karmically tied with the snowy land of Tibet, the manifestation of Avalokiteshvara, the lord of the three realms, the champion of world peace, a scholar-adept of the Buddha Shakyamuni's tradition, the saviour and the supreme leader of Tibetans. On the auspicious day of the 6th July, 1935, as a result of countless prayers and merits of his disciples, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was born in Kubum Taktser, located in Domey province of Tibet. He was born with auspicious signs that coincided with unmistakable and unfailling vajra prophecies made by innumerable deities and masters. As His Holiness has now reached his 88th year, on the behalf of Tibetans inside and outside of Tibet, with prostration and heartfelt gratitude, and with indomitable faith, reverence, and joy, I offer my warm greetings and good wishes.

No word is fine enough to describe the contribution His Holiness has made – through his infinite emanations as kings, ministers and mahasiddhas – in guiding infinite beings onto the path of favourable birth, and eventually,

to liberation. Under the temporal and spiritual leadership of Tibet, His Holiness the Great 5th Dalai Lama ensured happiness for all Tibetans. At times when humanity at large and Tibet in particular was going through one of its darkest times with dire situations, His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama consciously took the form-body – with all the major and minor marks – to lead Tibet. Endowed with a vast knowledge that is qualified with learning, reflection and meditation, also with explication, debate and composition, His Holiness has mastered in both the general and specialised field of study. With his nectar-like teachings embroidered with the clear realisation of bodhicitta and emptiness, it's not only the fruition of virtuous actions of Tibetans, but also of beings from far off continents to receive them.

Even as a young kid His Holiness was altogether from a different league in his conduct relative to those who were of his age. Complementing the auspicious signs that had appeared in Lhamo Latso and the prayers of his predecessors, he quashed all doubts to be designated as the unmistakable incarnation of the previous Dalai Lama by recognising

the ritual instruments belonging to His Holiness the Great 13th Dalai Lama. In 1939, His Holiness was invited to Lhasa – the capital of Tibet, and was officially enthroned in 1940 at the Potala Palace. Thus, the banner of auspicious interdependent was flown in all directions. He then immersed in studying the hagiographies of great practitioners, and accomplished his doctorate in Buddhist philosophy (Tib. Geshe Lharampa) in 1959. In 1949, when the Chinese communist army started the invasion of eastern parts of Tibet, and the situation across Tibet became tense and critical, His Holiness who was just 16 at the time, accepted the spontaneous appeal of deities and people of Tibet, and thus assumed the political leadership of Tibet in November 17, 1950.

His Holiness' noble endeavour in establishing peace and harmonious relationship between the two neighbouring countries – India and China, and his efforts in the democratisation of Tibetan polity, which includes the societal reform marked the beginning of joyous pace for Tibetans. However, with the invasion of Tibet, his efforts were cut short, leaving him with no option than to seek refuge in India. In exile His Holiness reached out to numerous Indian leaders, established the Central Tibetan Administration, and started working for the welfare of thousands who had followed his footstep into exile. With great love and compassion, he successfully established settlements, schools, handicraft centres, commercial enterprises, monastic institutions to preserve Tibet's unique religious tradition irrespective of different schools of thoughts.

With the urgency to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict, His Holiness immediately started establishing separate Tibetans schools for the future custodians of Tibet, the Tibetan children. These children who had studied in the exile schooling system, and later graduated

from different colleges and universities, resulted in an educated Tibetan community in exile. Today those who have had the opportunity of growing up and receiving education under His Holiness' benevolent leadership are serving the Tibetan diasporic community – shouldering numerous responsibilities in the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), different institutes securing Tibetan culture, hospitals, NGOs and so forth. Tibetans across the globe, which have grown into educated communities with specialised experts, are now shouldering not only personal responsibilities but also leading their respective communities. This has become one of the greatest victories for Tibetans. We should duly recognise that such an achievement has dawned upon us only with the blessing and kindness of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Considering the power of compassion as an essential component underlying all beings who aspire for happiness and to avoid suffering, His Holiness advocates the cultivation of universal ethics as a means to strive for the environmental protection, sustenance of religious harmony, conflict resolution and to end war. In these degenerated times marked by turbulent days and nights, His Holiness has been guiding Tibetans on the path of non-violence. Preserving and protecting the distinct culture of Tibet, which is intrinsically tied with the sublime dharma, he aspires to transform Tibet into a zone of peace. His Holiness has visited numerous countries in the west with the gift of spiritual wealth, and gave the heart of Buddhism, which includes Buddhist philosophy of dependent arising, non-violent conduct, and the essence of Bodhicitta practice that includes, love, compassion and altruism. With faith and devotion an increasing number of devotees from all walks of life, which includes dignitaries of governmental and non-governmental organisations, general public, and others from across the world, come to seek His Holiness' advice and teaching. All of them are positively impacted from his nectar-like guidance. As the kindness of His Holiness extends far beyond Tibetans to all sentient beings, the celebration of

his birth anniversary in different parts of the world offers yet another auspicious occasion to acquire merits.

In recognition of His Holiness' untiring work for the wellbeing of others, he was bestowed with over a hundred awards including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. He has also authored over two-hundred books, in Tibetan and English, on the importance of loving kindness and compassion, on ethics and environment. In commemorating this auspicious occasion, we should educate ourselves with the books he has authored thus far. As His Holiness often mentions that being practical in following his advice and being kind would be the best gift for him on his birthday, we should study and practice his advice, particularly his four principal commitments.

Moreover, he has transformed the Tibetan political system into a democratic setup with the establishment of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in 1960, followed by outlining a brief democratic constitution for the future of Tibet in 1961 and promulgation of the complete democratic constitution for the future free Tibet in 1963. In 1991, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile was fully transformed into a legislative body. The 11th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (then called the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies) adopted the Charter of Tibetans in exile. His Holiness the Dalai Lama signed the charter on 28th June 1991. This transformed the Central Tibetan Administration, then the Tibetan government in exile, into a fully democratic set-up – rooted in a system that's based on the rule of law, which consists of the three democratic pillars and autonomous bodies with different departments. As per the wish of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the first Kalon Tripa was elected by the Tibetan diaspora in 2001. In 2011, His Holiness the Dalai Lama formally devolved his political and administrative power to the elected leaders; it thus ended the nearly 400 years of Gaden Phodrang's government. His Holiness' transformation of the Central Tibetan Administration into a genuine and stable democratic setup remains one of the cornerstones of his

achievement in the sphere of religion and politics, and for which we must all be grateful.

Acknowledging the above stated contributions of His Holiness, the US government and congress has extended their support for Tibet by adopting legislations on Tibet. Similarly, there is a growing support for Tibet in Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Concern on Tibet was raised in the statement of the Group of Seven (G7) summit held in Japan in the month of May, and a resolution calling for China to stop its interference in religious freedom and forced assimilation of Tibetans in Tibet was adopted by the Czech Senate Committee. Tibet's issue was also brought up several times in Geneva summit for human's rights, and a report on Tibet entitled The Human Rights Situation of Tibetans and the Chinese Residential Boarding School and Preschool System was produced by the Canadian parliament's international human rights subcommittee. All these show that the international community recognises the need for extending political support to Tibet.

In order to resolve the issue of Sino-Tibet conflict, His Holiness envisioned the Middle Way – a win-win proposition for both Tibet and China – after years of contemplation, and a series of discussions with the speaker and the deputy speaker of the Tibetan parliament, Kalons, civil servants, and representatives of general public since as early as 1975. The Middle Way Policy was unanimously adopted by the Tibetan parliament on 18th September 1997, and became the official policy of the Central Tibetan Administration for the speedy resolution of Sino-Tibet conflict. Chinese leadership, not falling into the deception of financial and military power, should come to realise that true dignity of a country comes through resolving and understanding issues through trust and dialogue, rather than repression and domination imposed by the majoritarian race. With time the Chinese government should change their iron fist policy on Tibet, and try to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict through dialogue with the

envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Currently, under the repressive policy of China, Tibetans inside Tibet are not even allowed to possess pictures of His Holiness, let alone celebrating his birthday. Scrutinising all aspects of life, they are deprived of basic human rights.

Despite severe restrictions on celebrating His Holiness' birthday in Tibet, yet due to indomitable faith and samaya of Tibetans towards His Holiness, he often mentions that Tibetans inside Tibet are always in his thoughts and prayers. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Tibetans inside Tibet for reviving and protecting Tibet's honor, religion, culture and language.

Recently, a short clip of His Holiness the Dalai Lama was manipulatively edited by the Chinese government and circulated in various social media platforms to vilify His Holiness the Dalai Lama who is the ultimate leader of Tibetans and a figure of faith across the global Buddhist community. However, this act of malicious intent failed to restrict His Holiness' ever-expanding glow and pristine deeds unsullied by worldly faults in all the ten directions. I extend my special appreciation and gratitude to all Tibetans, dignitaries, and especially the Himalayan people for displaying their unwavering faith and devotion in His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama.

I, on behalf of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, would like to thank India and the people of India for always rendering their utmost support for the just cause of Tibet. We also like to extend our gratitude to the USA, European countries and others who have supported the Tibetan struggle, directly or indirectly, which include – governments and people of the world. I appeal for their continued and greater support to the Tibetan cause.

In conclusion, I extend my heartfelt and earnest supplication prayers for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to live a long and healthy life. May all his wishes be spontaneously accomplished and may the just cause of Tibet triumph at the soonest.

DIIR Statement on International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances

On the 40th anniversary of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, the Department of Information and International Relations, CTA remembers all Tibetans who have been forced into disappearance inside Tibet and strongly urges the People's Republic of China (PRC) to immediately release them.

Enforced Disappearance of any individual, regardless of whether it is for a short term or long term, is a crime against humanity and consists of multiple violation of range of internationally protected rights– the right to life, the right to be free from torture, the right to be free from arbitrary detention, the right to recognition before the law, and the right to a fair trial.

In its first Article of the International Convention to Protect All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the United Nations human rights instrument stipulates that no individual shall be subjected to enforced disappearance under any circumstances nor can it be justified against them. China, as one of the charter members of the UN, is required to render all assistance to the UN in fulfilling its duties under the Charter, including acting in accordance with the instruments and conventions in question, regardless of whether they have signed and ratified them.

Since Chinese occupation, Tibetans have frequently been subjected to prolonged and unnumbered periods in detention without any information regarding the wellbeing or whereabouts of the arrestees being provided to family and relatives, causing grave concern. Furthermore, arrestees are frequently severely tortured and subjected to ill-treatments while in detention, resulting in grave health complications that eventually result in prisoner death due to poor health conditions. One of the most notable enforced disappearance cases in the world is that of Tibet's 11th Panchen Lama, Jetsun Tenzin Gedhun Yeshe

Trinley Phuntsok Pal Sangpo, who was abducted and enforced disappeared from the public eyes by the Chinese authorities when he was only 6 years old along with his entire family. Even after 28 years, there is still no information on the wellbeing of the Panchen Lama, his whereabouts, or whether his existence remains in doubt, despite repeated appeals and demands for his release from the international community to the PRC.

PRC's Enforced Disappearance method is a two-fold approach by which it creates terror in victims' minds and bodies as well as in their families and relatives while simultaneously torturing prisoners in order to force confessions from them in order to justify the unlawful arrest and detention of Tibetans. A significant majority of Tibetans unlawfully arrested–lamas, monastics, community leaders, writers and poets, intellectuals, singers, nomads and students–are subjected to enforced disappearance for months before being brought before the Chinese courts for trial for their alleged “crimes” against the Chinese Communist Party.

DIIR reaffirms the call made by three independent UN experts on 10 August for the PRC government to provide credible information about nine Tibetan environmental human rights defenders who were detained and sentenced to lengthy prison terms and calls for their immediate release.

As much as the Chinese Criminal Procedure Law allows for enforced disappearances, it is imperative to replace it with a set of procedural safeguards that are internationally acceptable for suspects of “endangering state security” and “terrorism”. The Tibetan political prisoners subjected to enforced disappearance should be immediately released by China and their families should be informed of their whereabouts and conditions of imprisonment.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Confers Teachings to Followers in Leh During His Sojourn



His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressing the crowd on the first day of teachings at the Shewatsel Teaching Area in Leh, Ladakh UT, India.

People began pouring into the Shewatsel Teaching Area soon after the sun rose on 21 July 2023. Eventually, an estimated 45,000 filled the ground. His Holiness the Dalai Lama drove from the Shewatsel Phodrang to the teaching pavilion in a golf cart. Before him walked monks in their ceremonial yellow hats blowing horns. A symbolic yellow silk umbrella fluttered over the vehicle as it drove. His Holiness smiled and waved to the crowd as he passed. Meanwhile, before the throne, local schoolchildren displayed their debating skills.

Within the teaching pavilion His Holiness paid his respects and lit a lamp before the image of the Buddha. Assembled guests greeted him as he walked out to the edge of stage before the throne. From there he again smiled and waved to the crowd to the left, right and in front, as well as making a gesture into the space above. Tens of thousands of people folded their hands in response to his greeting.

Local Lamas and Tulkus sat around the throne as His Holiness took his seat.

A formal mandala offering was made by officials of the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) and the Ladakh Gonpa Association (LGA) and sponsors of the occasion.

“Today, here in Ladakh, I’m going to give a discourse on the teaching of the Buddha,” His Holiness began. “All religious traditions teach us to be kind and helpful to one another, which I appreciate. I value and respect all religious traditions. When I visit different places in different countries, I try to visit other people’s places of worship if I can.

“People on this earth fight each other for a variety of reasons, but when they do so in the name of religion, it’s really unfortunate. This is one of the reasons why I make an effort to establish inter-religious harmony.

“Here in Ladakh for example, the majority of the population are Buddhist, but there is also a substantial community of Muslims, as well as a number of Christians and others belonging to the

non-Buddhist traditions of India. They may all have different philosophical ways of explaining their traditions, but in the end they all come down to different ways of serving other beings. The Christians, for instance, are known for their work to provide education and health care, but all these traditions do good. For that reason, it’s important that they be on good terms with each other. And they can achieve that by gathering every now and then to get to know each other better.

“Today, the weather is better. It’s neither too hot nor too cold. Although they are invisible to us, I feel that local spirits, gods and deities have gathered here to listen to the teachings too.

“Today, we’ll go through the ‘Thirty-seven Practices of All Bodhisattvas’ by Gyalsé Thogmé Sangpo. The author was a bodhisattva who meditated in the Ngulchu caves. Of the many aspects of Buddhist practice in which he engaged, he mostly focussed on bodhichitta, cultivating the altruistic awakening mind. Tomorrow, I’ll give

the empowerment of Avalokiteshvara, the Great Compassionate One.

“I received the explanation of this text from the Kinnauri Lama, Khunu Lama Rinpoché. It’s a very beneficial teaching that deals with bodhichitta and the Way of the Bodhisattva. I meditate on bodhichitta every morning as soon as I wake up. There is no better way to fulfil our own goals or those of others. It gives me the courage to work for all sentient beings until the end of space.

“When I think of benefitting all sentient being and not doing anyone any harm, it gives rise to a joyful state of mind. It contributes to my being physically fit and ensures that I get sound sleep.”

His Holiness mentioned that all over the world people talk about peace. The First and Second World Wars of the last century were a period of great violence. So many weapons were used to kill and destroy. But it’s not enough to just declare we need to put an end to war, he said, as long as we aim for our own victory and the defeat of others. He pointed out that we’re all part of human society and we all depend on others.

He observed that even if we have different ways of thinking, that’s no excuse to fight with one another. He emphasized that we need a sense of the oneness of humanity and a wish to establish peace. These days, because we are all so much more interdependent, we need a strong sense of brotherhood and sisterhood.

His Holiness noted that from birth we’re all nurtured with love and affection. Children respond openly to their fellows without any discrimination. It’s only as they grow up that they learn to distinguish one from the other.

We may have differences of economic system, but we still need to live in peace and cooperation with our fellow human beings. We should think in terms of mutual benefit, not in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’.

He reiterated that just talking about

peace isn’t enough. Real world peace will only come about when we reduce arrogance and jealousy, anger and hatred and increase our sense of love and compassion. His Holiness stressed that we all suffer from the climate crisis and global heating, therefore we have to help one another.

“It’s basic human nature to be affectionate,” His Holiness continued. “Right at the beginning of our lives we have no wish to fight. But as we grow up, we learn to think in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’. Instead, we should think of all human beings as part of ‘us’. World peace will not fall from the sky or spring up from the earth of its own accord. In his ‘Entering into the Middle Way’ Chandrakirti praises the value of bodhichitta at the beginning, middle and end of the path. Therefore, we should increase compassion and reduce negative thoughts in our minds—that’s what’s taught in this text.

“As far as I’m concerned, bodhichitta is my main practice and my daily prayer is:

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

“Let’s look at the text. As I said earlier, I received an explanation of it from the Kinnauri Lama, Khunu Lama Rinpoché, Tenzin Gyaltzen. When they were both still in Tibet, my Senior Tutor, Kyabjé Ling Rinpoché studied poetry with him. So, when I expressed a wish to receive teachings from Khunu Lama Rinpoché, Ling Rinpoché said it would be good to do so.

“On meeting him, I asked Khunu Lama Rinpoché if he had studied Shantideva’s ‘Bodhicharyavatara’, the ‘Way of the Bodhisattva’ and he told me it was his principal practice. In due course, he taught it to me and it has been very beneficial to my mind. Since I received his explanation of it, I’ve always kept a copy close at hand next to my bed.

“We have deity practices according to which we imagine ourselves as deities,

but it is the ‘Way of the Bodhisattva’ that has really been beneficial to my mind.”

Turning to the ‘Thirty-seven Practices of All Bodhisattvas’ His Holiness noted that the very first lines consist of a homage to Avalokiteshvara, who embodies compassion just as Manjushri embodies wisdom. It’s because of past prayers that we now feel close to Avalokiteshvara and recite his mantra.

The next verse includes the author’s promise to compose the text. His Holiness remarked that countless Buddhas have made bodhichitta their main practice and have consequently been of service to sentient beings. So, as followers of Buddha Shakyamuni, we too should cultivate bodhichitta.

His Holiness stated that we all say, ‘I take refuge in the Buddha’, but we have to ask ourselves what the word Buddha means. The first syllable of the Tibetan term ‘Sang-gyé’ indicates someone who has overcome all defilements that comprise destructive emotions and their residual stains. The second syllable represents seeing everything there is to be known, such as the Two Truths, clearly. The Buddha, therefore, is someone who has overcome all negativities and gained full and clear knowledge of everything to be known.

Achieving perfect enlightenment, His Holiness went on, does not occur without gathering the causes and conditions. We not only need to be determined to achieve Buddhahood, but also need to eliminate all destructive emotions and obscurations to knowledge. And to do that we need to employ the innate mind of clear light.

“If you make an effort,” His Holiness advised, “you’ll be able to develop these qualities and day by day you’ll make progress. My own experience is that I was born in Siling and came to Central Tibet to find out about the Buddha. I’ve learned and practised and now have some experience of bodhichitta and emptiness. I’ve not only become familiar with them, but engaging with them has become easier.

“If you acquaint your mind with these practices, you will be able to see a transformation within. Along with the practice of bodhichitta, we should meditate on emptiness. All schools of Buddhism teach about it, but it is only the school of Middle Way Consequentialists (Prasangika Madhyamaka) that teaches that nothing whatsoever has any inherent existence. Things only exist by way of designation; by name. Things function as this or that, but they only exist by name or designation.

“The Buddhist tradition we have preserved in Tibet and the Himalayan Region is a complete presentation, all of which comes down to cultivating bodhichitta and the view of emptiness.

“First we study and then reflect on what we’ve learned. That leads to an understanding based on reflection and by meditating on that we generate a genuine experience of the teaching. I’m not just repeating empty words to you, this has been my own experience. You can develop bodhichitta and insight into emptiness in your own mind. As observed by a Bodhisattva on the path of accumulation looking towards the path of preparation, practice is about transforming your mind.

“When we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, the main thing to understand is that we should become the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha ourselves. We should ultimately embody the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha ourselves.”

After the promise to compose His Holiness read through the verses of the text, highlighting their essence as practices of Bodhisattvas—giving up homeland, cultivating seclusion, and because consciousness will eventually leave this body, letting go of this life. The next verses counsel, give up bad friends, followed by cherish spiritual teachers, take refuge in the Three Jewels and never do wrong.

“Attachment and anger,” His Holiness observed, “are not in the nature of the mind. If they were, we’d never have any other experience. But, as it

happens, negative emotions are only temporary, while love and compassion become stronger with acquaintance. The basic nature of the mind is clarity and awareness.

“Is it possible to curtail mental afflictions and overcome them? It is. Ignorance, for example isn’t of the nature of the mind, but it is because of ignorance, seeing things as being inherently existent, that anger and hatred arise in us. Examine your own experience and you’ll see that you can overcome destructive emotions and develop positive states of mind such as bodhichitta.

“It is clear that we can transform our minds. Here’s an example: Chinese communists have brought Tibetans so much trouble, but instead of feeling anger towards them, we can remember that they act out of ignorance and we can feel compassionate towards them. A verse in the ‘Offering to the Spiritual Master’ (Lama Chöpa) that summarizes this.

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

His Holiness then read briskly through the remaining verses, noting that where verse 22 refers to not taking to mind inherent signs of subject and object, it can apply to the views of both the Mind Only and Middle Way schools.

The colophon notes that the text was composed by the Bodhisattva Thogmé Sangpo. In the copy from which His Holiness was reading that was published by Lhatsun Rinpoché in Tibet, the publisher wrote:

Wishing to be of help to others but feeling incapable of doing so,
Streams of tears and compassion
Moisten my face and heart.

Thus, I give this advice to my disciples from my heart.

I am publishing this text with the intention of benefitting others, which is the foundation of training in the aspiring and engaging bodhichitta of the Great Vehicle. By the virtue of doing so, may the wishes of all who uphold, preserve and spread the teachings of the omniscient Buddha Shakyamuni, and in particular the supreme tradition that unites the explanations and realizations of Sutra and Tantra, taught by the Gentle Protector Tsongkhapa, be spontaneously fulfilled. May his lotus feet remain steadfast until the end of the cycle of existence.

He ended with an aspiration that the wishes of the patron of the publication, one Dorjé Tsewang, be fulfilled.

“I knew Lhatsun Rinpoché,” His Holiness revealed. “He told me that once when he was performing a rite of longevity based on White Tara, he had a vision of rays of light radiating from the heart of Arya Tara and striking an image of me nearby. He assured me that this was an indication that I would live a long life.

“We’ve finished the teaching for today. Tomorrow I’ll give the empowerment of the Great Compassionate One. Because this practice belongs to the category of Action Tantras, you should avoid meat, eggs and fish for breakfast.”

Once again, His Holiness came to the edge of the stage to wave to the crowd. And before boarding the golf-cart below to the door to the pavilion, he made a point of saluting the people gathered nearby, including a group of Ladakhi drummers. Then he climbed into the vehicle and was driven steadily back to his residence acknowledging members of the public on each side as he went.

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His Holiness the Dalai Lama Visits Tibetan Children's Village Choglamsar



Members of the Tibetan community on their feet as His Holiness the Dalai Lama arrives at the stage above the ground at TCV Choglamsar in Leh.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama took the short drive to the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) on 26 July 2023, small groups of members of the public gathered on the road to see him pass. Once he had taken the turning to the school, children and then a line of adults dressed in traditional Tibetan attire, sang and danced to greet him on the side of the road. Close to the stage dancers in yak and snow-lion costumes welcomed him.

His Holiness and other guests and dignitaries, who included the Leh DC, Santosh Sukhadeve, the CEC of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Tashi Gyaltzen, Presidents of the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) and the Ladakh Gonpa Association (LGA) Thubten Tsewang and Ven Tsering Wangdus and the Chief Representative of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) Dhondup Tashi were assembled in a small marquee. This overlooked the school sports ground where sat a 5000 strong audience. Everyone stood while the Tibetan and Indian National Anthems were played.

CRO Dhondup Tashi welcomed His Holiness and thanked him for kindly taking the time to talk to this gathering

of Tibetans in Ladakh. He mentioned that there are 5200 Tibetans in the Leh area and another 2000 nomads in the Chang Thang. He expressed gratitude to the Government of India and the local Union Territory (UT) administration for all the help they provide the Tibetan community. He also acknowledged the guidance and support the Tibetan community in Ladakh receives from the CTA headed by Sikyong Penpa Tsering.

The CRO mentioned that he had compiled a more extensive report that he had submitted to His Holiness in writing. He prayed that His Holiness live long.

The moderator announced that there would be presentations of singing and dancing—some old, some new. First a group of Tibetan school-children danced to a song that involved making offerings to Lamas and teachers. They were followed by 113 adults from the Leh and Chang Thang who danced joyfully to several modern songs with an insistent disco beat.

Another group of adults from Leh and Chang Thang performed a traditional song and dance from the Ngari region of Tibet that celebrated auspiciousness and prosperity. The dancers sang without accompaniment, lending rhythm to their

song by stamping their feet.

His Holiness was invited to address the gathering.

“My Dharma brothers and sisters,” he began. “Today, you presented your songs and dances with delight, confidence and pride. More importantly, you have done so with heartfelt faith. I'd like to thank you.

“Tibetans have a special bond with Chenrezig, the Great Compassionate One. Since the time of King Songtsen Gampo we have had our own written language. Then, during the reign of Trisong Detsen, the great Abbot and foremost scholar of Nalanda, Shantarakshita was invited to the Land of Snow. He advised that since we had our own language, we should translate Indian Buddhist literature from Sanskrit and Pali into Tibetan.

“The collection of translations of the Buddha's words and treatises of subsequent masters now comprise the collection of more than 300 volumes. It's the material from these books that we study. In due course, when Tibetan scholar-adepts composed their own commentaries, they consulted the original sources contained in the Kangyur and Tengyur.

“There is an earlier collection of translations that belong to the Nyingma tradition, and a later collection on which the Kagyu, Sakya and Geluk traditions rely. The Tibetan tradition is the only Buddhist presentation that depends on logic and reason. For more than a thousand years we have kept alive an approach that involves study, reflection and meditation.

“We have preserved both teachings and realizations of Buddhism. On the basis of texts dealing with logic and reason Chapa Chökyi Sengé formalized the Tibetan system of debate. We rely on logic, not taking the written word at face value. We examine and investigate what has been written in a way comparable to

a goldsmith's testing the purity of gold.

"The Tibetan tradition uses reason as the yardstick for assessing whether what has been written can be relied on as it is. In the course of debate a challenger may cite scripture to support his assertion. His respondent will respectfully doff his hat while considering the quotation, but if it does not prove the point, he puts his hat back on and states that the citation is not necessarily true and is not supported by logic."

His Holiness declared that the emphasis on logic and reason in the Tibetan tradition is one of the aspects that makes it attractive to modern scientists. Growing numbers of them are showing interest in what it has to say about psychology and the workings of mind and emotions. He reiterated that Tibetans examine what the Buddha taught in the light of reason and then seek to integrate what they learn within themselves. For example, things may appear in a certain way, but it is explained that they do not exist that way.

"Many people today," His Holiness added, "are not satisfied with material development alone. Aspects of the Tibetan tradition appeal to such people because they explain the different levels of subtlety of the mind. These include consciousness of the waking state, sleep, deep sleep and dream. Relying on explanations in tantric treatises Tibetans understand how the mind dissolves at the time of death and how the mind of clear light manifests.

"There are people who following clinical death remain in a state of meditative absorption known as 'thukdam'. Having observed this phenomenon scientists are now seeking to understand the process.

"We have kept our traditions alive for more than a thousand years, but we are not keeping what we know to ourselves. We are happy to share it with others.

"Following the immense violence of the First and Second World Wars there is much talk about peace. But peace won't come about as a result of

government announcements or leader's speeches. The foundation of world peace is peace of mind. This is another reason why there is interest in what the Buddha taught in countries that were previously unfamiliar with Buddhism. It is also true in countries where Buddhism once flourished but later declined. Jé Tsonkhapa refers to this at the end of his 'Great Treatise of the Stages of the Path'.

Wherever the Buddha's teaching has not spread

And wherever it has spread but has declined

May I, moved by great compassion, clearly elucidate

This treasury of excellent benefit and happiness for all.

"As a monk and a follower of the Buddha, I try to share what Buddhism has to teach with whoever may be interested, not so much as a religious practice but more as an exchange of knowledge. I am convinced that the traditions that flourished in Tibet stand the test of logic and reasoning and include knowledge and understanding that we can apply in our own lives.

"Study is important. In the past study was the province of monastics, but today, as general education has improved, lay people, young and old, can also engage in study. In schools we used to have Religious Teachers, now we have Philosophy Teachers. They explain the Buddha's teachings in ways that allow us to rely on them to achieve peace of mind.

"The practice of Buddhism isn't concerned with building temples or even reciting prayers and mantras. It's about cultivating compassion for all beings, focussed on helping them however we can. I urge you young people to pay attention to this. Experienced masters of the past have passed these traditions down to us. We have a responsibility to keep them alive and to share them with others.

"There are people who follow other traditions, Muslims and Christians, for

example, as well as people with little interest in religion. We are all the same in wanting to be happy and not wanting to suffer. Consequently, I try to promote harmony among these different ways of thought.

"The Tibetan language is important because it is the most accurate medium for explaining Buddhist philosophical ideas. Of course, in the past we didn't have vocabulary that would allow us to discuss modern science, but we are developing it in order to enrich our understanding. I would like to encourage you young people to keep this in mind."

Sonam Tsering, the chairman of the organizing committee for today's function paid his respects to His Holiness saying:

"You have shown great kindness to Tibetans and their culture. I would like to thank profoundly for coming to speak to us today."

He also thanked officials of the CTA and the LAHDC, the head of the Ladakh UT administration, the presidents of the LBA, LGA and the Ladakh Women's Association (LWA)

He prayed that all His Holiness's aspirations be fulfilled, that he enjoy good health and live a long life. The audience applauded.

As His Holiness came to the front of the stage to smile and wave to the audience, the school-children spontaneously broke into song in his praise. His Holiness, they sang, is the sun and moon of Tibet, the heart-jewel of all six million Tibetans.



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His Holiness the Dalai Lama Visits Ladakhi Muslim Community at Imam Bargah



His Holiness the Dalai Lama arriving at Imam Bargah, Chuchot Yokma, in Leh, Ladakh

On the morning of 12 August 2023, His Holiness the Dalai Lama took a short drive across the Indus to visit the Imam Bargah, a mosque in nearby Chuchot Yokma. He was received on arrival by representatives of both Shia and Sunni communities, who escorted him to his seat. The moderator of the event, a young woman, welcomed His Holiness and other guests.

Sheikh Nazir Ahmed Sharifi, Vice President of the Anjuman-e- Imamia chanted a moving prayer to formally open proceedings. Shia Representative, Ashraf Ali Barch, President Anjuman Imamia, addressed the gathering in Ladakhi. He expressed great admiration and affection for His Holiness as a man of peace, as someone who consistently declares that we are all the same as human beings, and as someone who makes great effort to promote inter-religious harmony.

Sunni Representative, Dr Abdul Quayoum, President of the Anjuman Moin-ul-Islam (AMI), addressed the gathering in English.

“Once again His Holiness the Dalai Lama is here with us in this mosque and it is the holy month of Muharram. His

Holiness is renowned for his teachings about peace, harmony, brotherhood and righteousness. He loves to come to Ladakh and we love to listen to him. We are thankful to you for keeping Ladakh in your heart, please don’t forget us.”

Dr Abdul Quayoum mentioned that a translation of the Holy Quran into Tibetan is being prepared and he read aloud from a foreword His Holiness has provided.

“I commend the Muslim Community of Ladakh for translating the Holy Quran into Tibetan. As I often say, all the major religions of the world convey the same message of love, compassion and altruistic service to other living beings. For thousands of years our various religions have brought immense benefit to countless human beings. I have no doubt it would be helpful if their sacred scriptures were translated into the different languages of the world.”

His Holiness spoke to the congregation of men and women in Tibetan and his words were translated into Ladakhi.

“Whoever I meet,” he said, “I consider we are all the same as human beings. All eight billion people alive today were

sheltered by their mother’s love and affection as soon as they were born. This is how things begin. Therefore, later, when we’re grown up and in the middle of our lives, we should do what we can to take care of others. If we do that, when we come to die, we’ll do so in an atmosphere of affection.

“The sad thing is that although we start out basking in our mother’s love and affection, we later come to focus on differences of religion, race or nationality that lead us to view other people in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’.

“What’s past is past, we can’t change it, but what we can do is to work to create a more peaceful world now and in the future. In addition to this, we have to take account of global heating. All over the world it is getting hotter and hotter. Scientists have warned us about this and the evidence is clear before us. Moreover, the Buddhist scripture, the Abhidharmakosha speaks of the world being destroyed by fire. What we see now may be the beginning of that process.

“Historically human beings have fought and killed each other. Now, when there are risks that affect us all, we should exert ourselves to help each other in an atmosphere of peace and harmony.”

As he bit into a ripe apricot, His Holiness remarked that he is 88 years old, but he still has all his teeth.

He observed that if we were all to cultivate a stronger sense of the oneness of humanity, we would be better able to work together out of love and compassion. People around the world, he said, are fed up with fighting and trying to solve problems through the use of force is out of date.

“Every human being on this earth is the same in wanting to be happy and not to suffer pain. I pray that the people of the world may not harm each other but live

in peace and harmony.

“Our gathering here at this mosque is a symbol of brotherhood and sisterhood. I’m a Buddhist monk, but I respect all religious traditions because at their core is a common message about the value of love and compassion. It’s not helpful to talk critically about ‘my religion’ or ‘their religion’.

“In Tibet nearly all of us follow the same Buddhist tradition and yet there are differences among the Sakya, Kagyu, Nyingma, Geluk and Jonang traditions. Sometimes we refer to these differences in terms of the colour of our hats, comparing ‘yellow hats’ with ‘red hats’ and so on.

Members of the audience listening to His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the program at Imam Bargah, Chuchot Yokma, in Leh, Ladakh, India on August 12, 2023. Photo by Tenzin Choejor

Members of the audience listening to His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the program at Imam Bargah, Chuchot Yokma, in Leh, Ladakh, India on August 12, 2023. Photo by Tenzin Choejor

“I have received instructions from teachers of all these different traditions and I’ve made an effort to put them into practice. One of the reasons I’ve done so is to establish harmony among our various Tibetan traditions.

“We’ve all come together in this mosque today to show our friendship and respect for each other. Among us here are members of the two major Muslim communities, the Shia and Sunni traditions, and I would like to offer a Dharma Wheel to each of them.

“In Ladakh we can observe a strong tradition of harmony and ethics. While preserving a sense of love and affection for one another as human beings, it would also be good to maintain harmony among our religious traditions.

“Now, it’s time for lunch.”

His Holiness and other guests enjoyed a sumptuous lunch together.

As he was about to get to his feet to leave, several members of the congregation came forward to seek his blessings. As he walked to the door, he smiled and waved to people on either side of the aisle, and they were pleased to smile in return. During the short drive through

Chochut Yokma and Choglamsar, groups of well-wishers lined the road with silk scarves and fresh flowers in their hands, eager to catch a glimpse of His Holiness as he passed. He reached his residence in just a few minutes.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Bestows Long-Life Empowerment at Khaltse, Ladakh

On 19 August, as soon as His Holiness the Dalai Lama took his seat on the stage, he acknowledged that the more than 25,000 people assembled on the teaching ground had come to see him out of deep affection and faith.

“Just a few minutes ago,” he told them, “I met a woman who is 106 years old, and like her I consider it to be auspicious to live long. As the number of people who show me trust and devotion continues to grow, it certainly helps the Guru to live long. Thank you. This gives me the courage to live to be more than 110 years old.” The congregation applauded with delight. “Of course, there is not much to be proud of if you’ve lived a long life dedicated solely to fulfilling your own personal goals at the expense of others. But to live a long and meaningful life in the service of others will definitely bear beneficial fruit.

“By cultivating the awakening mind

of bodhicitta, you earn merit. And by understanding emptiness, you accumulate wisdom. It is very important to train yourself to listen, to reflect on what you have heard or read and to then put them into practice.

“If you think about the awakening mind of bodhicitta, you will develop a sense of caring and compassion for all living beings, including gods and spirits. All of them have, at one time or another, been part of our lives, and related to one another too. Like us they seek happiness and do not wish to suffer. If you cultivate compassion for them, you too will reap the benefit, instead of attracting harm from these gods or demigods.

“Conflict and violence in the world arise due chiefly to self-cherishing attitudes that lead us to pursue self-fish aims and disregard the well-being of others, which ultimately brings suffering back to us. If



Members of the crowd lining the road holding flowers and burning incense waiting to welcome His Holiness the Dalai Lama

we consider all other human beings as being just like us, born from a mother's womb and nurtured in the shelter of her loving-kindness we will not only achieve peace of mind ourselves, we will also make others happy too.

“The Buddha was not an enlightened being from the start. His enlightenment came about as a result of training his mind to develop bodhichitta over a long period of time. Finally, he engaged in six-years of deep meditation before he attained complete enlightenment, full of wisdom and without any fault. Therefore, it is important that all of you, my spiritual brothers and sisters, pursue the path to Buddhahood by accumulating merit and wisdom.

“This morning, I am going to give you a long-life empowerment related to White Tara. The crucial factor in seeking to live long is to be warm-hearted. This is what will yield peace of mind, which is the most important factor in living a meaningful life.”

When he had completed giving the long-life empowerment, His Holiness told those gathered before him that he was glad they had firm faith and were motivated to practise diligently.

He observed that in India sometimes distinction is drawn between one caste and another. He told the gathering that if that is the case in the region of Sham, they should know that all human beings are the same with no need to regard some as high and others as low. He asked them not to dwell on such distinctions.

As for us, he said, we are all followers of the Buddha. We all have the same Buddha nature and the ability to achieve Buddhahood. Therefore, we would be better to work to develop the awakening mind of bodhichitta by cultivating love and compassion towards everyone. That's all, he said, and bade the audience good bye.

Soon afterwards, His Holiness boarded a helicopter, flew back to Leh, and returned to his residence at Shewatsel Phodrang.

Tibet and Mongolia's Historical, Political, and Religious Ties, and the Treaty of 1913

- by Dr Tsewang Gyalpo Arya (TPI)

Abstract:

Tibet and Mongolia had close historical and religious ties since the times of Genghis Khan who conquered nearly the whole of Asia and Eastern Europe in the 13th century. Tibetan Lamas and the descendants of Genghis Khan developed a unique relationship of “Cho-yon”, priest-patron, where the Mongol's military power protected Tibet from internal and external attacks and the Tibetan Lamas gave the Mongol chiefs moral and spiritual legitimacy to rule. Later, this priest-patron relationship continued with the Manchu Qing dynasty too. However, at the turn of the century, both Tibet and Mongolia became pawns of the Great Game of the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia and the Chinese invasion. Today, we have an independent Mongolia on one side, and Tibet and Southern Mongolia on the other under Chinese occupation. Through systematic suppression of information and distortion of history, China continues to claim sovereignty over Tibet and Southern Mongolia. This paper will examine Tibet – Mongol's historical, political, and religious ties to challenge the Chinese false claims and resurrect the 1913 Tibeto-Mongolian Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, the real aspiration of the two nations.

Tibet and Mongolia:

Tibet and Mongolia existed as independent nations with unique civilizations, languages, and cultures of their own. They were once strong military powers who later adopted the path of peace and non-violence. What was Tibet in the 7th to 9th century, Mongol was in the 12th to 14th century. Although Mongol Khans ruled the eastern empire, including China, under the Yuan Dynasty directly, it left Tibet to the Tibetans. The two shared a unique system of governance, politico-religious theocracy, based on the Buddhist principle of reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and the Khuthugtu Jetsundampa.

The system is still alive and respected, albeit in a different form.

Early Tibetan Military Power:

Tibet was once a military power in central Asia in the 7th to 9th centuries. Emperor Srongtsan Gampo (569-650 AD), who united the disarrayed Tibetan princely states, marched the Tibetan army far east into the Chinese territory and claimed the hand of Princess Wencheng Kungchu, and the Tang emperor Taitsung had to acquiesce. To the South, the Tibetan army got into the Indian border to subdue King Arjuna in Bihar for suppressing Buddhist religion and for harassing Chinese goodwill mission. The Tibetan Emperor helped restore King Narendradeva's reign in Nepal. To the North, Tibetan army went as far as the Tarim basin and captured the four garrisons of Anhsi, present-day East Turkistan. During the time of Emperor Trisrong Deutsan and Emperor Triralpachen in the 8th and 9th centuries, the Tibetan military power was at its peak. In 763, Tibetan troops raided the Chinese capital Changan, present-day Xian, and installed a new emperor, Ta-she. In 778, Tibetans helped Siamese King Imoshun in fighting the Chinese aggression in the region. In 790 Trisrong Deutsan's army recaptured the four garrisons of Anhsi or Anxi and the area around a lake in the north of Oxus River, present-day Amu Darya in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which came to be known as Al-Tubbat, a little Tibetan lake. During Triralpachen's time in 821, a peace treaty initiated by the Buddhist monks in Tibet and China was made and the contents of the treaty was inscribed on three pillars erected one at the Chinese capital Xian, one at Tibet-China border Gongumeru, and one in Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet.

The Tibetan emperors, who united Tibet and sought hegemony beyond borders, saw the need to enrich the moral and spiritual side of the Tibetan empire.

Emperor Trisrong Deutsan invited Indian Saint Shantarakshita and Tantric Guru Padmasambhava to teach Buddhism in Tibet. This was followed by the visits of many Indian masters to Tibet and Tibetans to India and Buddhism began to get firmly established in Tibet through royal patronage. However, Wudum Tsanpo, the 43rd Emperor of Tibet, was against this too much influence of religion which he felt was weakening the country and making it precarious to foreign invaders. But his unpopular policy to suppress religious institutions got him assassinated in 842 and thus started the disintegration of Tibet and the land remained without central leadership for about 400 years until the emergence of Sakya Lama's rule with the help of Mongols in the 13th century.

Buddhism in Tibet:

Tibet around that time was without a unified central leadership. There were regional power struggles among the small hegemonies and warring chieftains. But this period gave Tibet and the Tibetans a good time to interact with India and Nepal and Buddhism began to bloom in Tibet. With the complete burning and destruction of Nalanda and Vikramshila universities in 1193 AD, Buddhism gradually died in the land of its birth. Fortunately, the teachings found a safe haven in Tibet, where the major Indian texts were translated into the Tibetan language. Buddhism flourished in Tibet and played an important role in maintaining peace among the warring nations of Mongolia, Manchu, Nepal, and China.

Mongols' Conquest:

Mongols under the leadership of Genghis Khan rose in power in the 12th century and by the next century, most of Asia and Eastern Europe came under Mongolian domination. Mongols established five Khanates to rule the country and the conquered territories: Mongol Qipchag Khanate in Russia and Europe; Ilkhanate in Persia, present-day Iran, Iraq, Turkey, etc.; Chagatai Khanate in the area around present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kirghizstan; Ogedei Khanate in the area around the Mongol homeland; and the Yuan Empire

in present-day China, Burma, and Korea in the east.

Godan Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan who attacked Tibet 1240, later realized that the Mongol empire is strong but it lacked the deep moral and spiritual hallow of Tibet. His audience with Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsan of Tibet in 1247 at Liangzhou opened Mongolia to Buddhism. Later, Kublai Khan, who founded the Yuan dynasty in 1271, further promoted Buddhism in Mongolia with Sakya Phagpa of Tibet as his teacher. China's Sung Dynasty came under the Yuan Dynasty in 1279, which was a Mongolian dynasty. Therefore, the Chinese claim on Tibet and Southern Mongolia based on the Yuan Dynasty's conquest is irrelevant and a gross distortion of history. If this logic is to work, then Mongols have a far better reason to claim China and Tibet.

In the later part of the Yuan regime, its grip on power and administration began to wane due to internal feuds, corruption, and discriminatory policy. Ultimately, the peasants' Red Turban Rebellions (1351-1368) toppled the Yuan regime and the Chinese Ming dynasty took over in 1368. The Mongol Yuan Dynasty survived as the Northern Yuan Dynasty in present-day Mongolia and Southern Mongolia.

In 1644, the Chinese Ming Dynasty collapsed and the Manchu Qing Dynasty took over China just as Mongol's Yuan Dynasty took over China 365 years ago in 1279. In 1634 with the death of Lekdan Khan, the last Khan of the Great Northern Yuan dynasty, and his son Eiji Khan's submission of the Imperial Seal to the Manchu Emperor, Mongolia came under the influence of the Qing Empire.

Mongols and Tibetans' Coexistence:

Although the Yuan Dynasty disintegrated gradually, remnants of the Great Northern Yuan Dynasty and the divided Mongol Khans played important roles in Tibet's internal political and religious struggles. When Tibet was engrossed in internal power struggles for temporal and religious leadership,

the Mongol tribes under their chieftains sided with the Tibetan factions of their choice. Prominent Mongol tribes involved in the Tibetan infighting around the times were: Qoshot of Oirat Mongols, Dzungar, Chahar, Chogthu, Uruk of Torgut Mongols, and so on. Khuthugtu Khan, also known as Lekdan in Tibetan, the last Khan of the Great Northern Yuan dynasty, was a follower of the Karmapa school of Tibetan Buddhism. He along with the Chogthu Mongol tribes tried to suppress the Geluk school of Tibetan Buddhism. But Toru Bayikhan aka Gushri Khan, the leader of the Qoshot Mongolian tribe of the Oirat confederation, intervened and his victory led to the installation of the Fifth Dalai Lama, Thupten Gyatso, as the temporal and spiritual leader of the whole of Tibet in 1642. This was how the Dalai Lamas began to rule Tibet until the Chinese invasion in 1950.

The Great Game:

The great game of Anglo-Russian supremacy in Asia led British India to send a military expedition to Tibet in 1904 and the 13th Dalai Lama fled to Mongolia, where he was warmly received and the relations between the two countries strengthened. The Dalai Lama stayed in Mongolia for about a year and became aware of the Mongolian people's aspiration for a greater and closer union with Tibet and to do away with the Qing dynasty's influence. Both Mongolia and Tibet saw a prospect of a grand alliance of Tibet and united Mongols under Russian protectorate.

The 13th Dalai Lama of Tibet and the 8th Jetsun Dhampa Khuthugtu played important roles in keeping the two countries independent of Manchu, Russia, and the British. Manchu dynasty who executed the priest-patron relationship with Tibet well in the past became more assertive in laying claim on Tibet. British India fearing that Tibet would come under Russian influence occupied Tibet.

Russia and British-India looked at Mongolia and Tibet as important and profitable buffer states, important to keep the rivals at bay, and profitable

to keep their commercial and trade interest. Chinese suzerainty concept helped them to keep each other from occupying the regions and yet maintain their commercial sphere of influence in the regions. The Anglo-Tibetan Treaty of 1904 gave the British considerable rights in Tibet, but China was not happy about this treaty. To mollify China, the Anglo-China Convention was signed in 1906, and finally, the tripartite treaty, the Simla agreement of 1914, and the validity of this agreement is a still debate requiring separate papers. Russia signed an agreement with Mongolia promising to protect its autonomy and non-interference from China in the region's internal affairs in November 1912. This was followed by the Sino-Russian convention in 1913 and ultimately a tripartite treaty among Russia, China, and Mongolia in June 1915.

The ambiguities surrounding the treatise and the strong resistance from Tibet and Mongol made China assertive and later aggressive. The Republic of China invited Tibet and Mongolia to join the newly formed Republic. But both Tibet and Mongolia believe that though they had certain levels of relations with the Qing regime, it never compromised the sovereignty and independence of their nations. They firmly rejected China's proposal.

Russian, Tibet, and Mongol Alliance:

In this quagmire, Tibet and Mongolia, who were once military powers and later turned into peaceful religious nations, found themselves confronted with the new nation-state concept and the tightening noose of the great game gnawing at their independence. The 13th Dalai Lama's escape from British invasion and stay in Mongolia and his meeting with the 8th Khuthugtu Jetsundampa and the Mongolian princes in 1904 sparked a close feeling of shared history, religion, and culture. They saw the need to exert their independence and protect their religion and culture. In this direction, they saw hope in Tsar's Russia, strong and powerful, under whose reign Buryats, Kalmyks, and Tuva enjoyed a high degree of autonomy in practicing their Buddhist religion.

Here, Agvan Dorjiev (1853-1935), a Buryat Mongol, who studied in Tibet and rose to the rank of Tsennyi Khenpo, a debating partner and teacher to the young 13th Dalai Lama, played a very important role in promoting and preserving Tibet and Mongolia's independence. He advised both Khuthugtu and Dalai Lama to see the Russian Tsar as the ultimate protector of the faith and devoted his whole life to promote the Pan-Buddhist Kingdom under Russia's protection. Dorjiev visited Russia three times with messages from the 13th Dalai Lama to the Tsar seeking relationship and protection. Russia responded favorably and diplomatically but without making any concrete commitment.

Tibet and Mongolia Declare Independence:

Toward the beginning of the 20th century, the great game of British and Russia became more manifest, plunging Tibet and Mongolia into the whirlpool of geopolitics away from their spiritual world of peace and complacency. The geopolitics of the time tried to divide Tibet and Mongolia into outer and inner regions. While this was effected in Mongolia, Tibet withstood the division initially. (However, in 1965 the CCP created Tibet Autonomous Regions with central and western Tibet, and included Amdo and Kham provinces of Tibet into the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan.)

Having lost the Opium War in 1840 with British India, the Qing's power began to diminish in China and Western colonial powers began to exert their influence in China. Despite the fragile and unstable situation, the Qing emperor held an aggressive policy toward Tibet and Mongolia.

Taking advantage of weak and unstable Tibet after the British invasion in 1904, breaking the historical sacred priest-patron relationship, the Qing army invaded Tibet (1906-1910), looted the country, and brought immense destructions of monasteries and properties. The 13th Dalai Lama was forced to flee to India, where he

negotiated with the British India to support Tibet to expel the invading Manchu forces. In October 1911, China's decade long civil wars and the Xinhai Revolution led by Sun Yat-sen toppled the Qing Dynasty and China became a republic. This enabled Tibet to drive out the invading Manchu force and break all relationships with the Manchu based on the priest-patron principle. Although Tibet has been an independent nation since ancient times, the geopolitics and the needs of international diplomacy made the 13th Dalai Lama declare Tibetan independence on February 13, 1913.

Similarly, when the Qing regime adopted an aggressive policy to control the western frontiers, including Outer Mongolia, through stringent administration and cultural assimilation, the Mongols revolted. The Qing's colonial ethnic and cultural assimilation policy was greatly resisted by the Mongolians. The 1911 revolution in China and the fall of the Qing dynasty gave Mongols a good opportunity to revolt and reject the Qing's authority. Mongolia declared its independence and installed the 8th Jetsun Dhampa Khuthugtu as the temporal and spiritual head of Mongolia on November 30, 1911.

Sun Yatsen, the first Chinese President of the Republic of China, who took over the Qing regime rightly said that historically China has fallen under foreign rule twice, the first time under the Mongol's Yuan dynasty and the second time under the Manchu's Qing regime. He treated Manchu as a foreign power and declared Chinese republic and invited Mongolia and Tibet, even Nepal to join the republic. But both Khuthugtu[22] and the Dalai Lama claimed their independence and rejected the proposal.

The implication here is that China overthrew the Qing regime, which was a foreign entity, and the Republic of China was born. This helped Tibet and Mongolia also to shake off any influence or authority that the Qing regime had been claiming over the two regions.

Just as the Manchu Qing regime was a foreign invader for China, as declared by Sun Yatsen, it too was a foreign intruder for Tibet and Mongolia. With the collapse of the Qing regime, China won its independence, and Mongolia and Tibet too declared their independence in 1912 and 1913, respectively.

Tibeto-Mongol Treaty of 1913:

The Tibeto-Mongol Treaty of January 11, 1913, signed at Urga, present-day Ulan Bator, came as a response to the indifferent, condescending, and aggressive attitudes adopted by Russia, British, and China toward Tibet and Mongolia. The two countries realized that they were used as pawns in the selfish game of the three powerful neighbors. They found it odd that despite their independence since ancient times, why do they need the endorsement of foreign countries. So, they recognized each other's independence from any foreign influence and promised to help each other against foreign invasion, and bound themselves to work for the promotion of their faith and values. The preamble of the agreement reads:

“Mongolia and Thibet, having freed themselves from the dynasty of the Manchus and separated from China, have formed their own independent States, and having in view that both States from time immemorial have professed one and the same religion, with a view to strengthening their historic and mutual friendship and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nikta Biliktu Da-Lama Rabdan, and the Assistant Minister, General and Manlai baatyr beiseh Damdinsurun, as plenipotentiaries of the Government of the ruler of the Mongol people, and gudjir tsanshib kanchen Lubsan-Agvan, donir Agvan Choinzin, director of the Bank Ishichjamtso, and the clerk Gendun Galsan, as plenipotentiaries of the Dalai Lama, the ruler of Thibet, have made the following agreement.”

Articles one and two of the agreement succinctly declare the formation of independent Tibet and Mongol States and recognized and approved the authority of the Dalai Lama and the Khuthugtu as the head of the respective

states.

The remaining seven articles discussed how the two nations should collaborate and work together to safeguard their territories and faith from foreign intruders and how trade and commerce should be conducted for mutual benefits.

The three powerful neighbors received this treaty with a mixed feelings of doubt and concern. Instead of respecting the aspiration of the two countries, the great game used it to gain control and claim over the regions through the use of “autonomy” and “suzerainty” concepts and they questioned the validity of the treaty.

They purported that the treaty was invalid because it was signed by Avgan Dorjeiv, a Mongol Buryat and citizen of Russia, on behalf of Tibet. Some believed that the Dalai Lama had not authorized Dorjiev to sign such a treaty. We must know that Avgan Dorjiev was a respected scholar, tutor, and advisor to the 13th Dalai Lama, and his role as an emissary of Tibet is well documented. He escorted the Dalai Lama to Mongolia in 1904 when the British invaded Tibet. Moreover, the two other signatories, Donir Ngwang Choezin and Gendun Galsang, were authorized representatives of the government of Tibet posted in Mongolia. Tibetans have sometimes downplayed Dorjiev's role while dealing with the British officials, but this was more of a diplomatic move to assuage the British fear. Whereas in reality, the 13th Dalai Lama and Tibetan Kashag (cabinet) at that time relied heavily on Dorjiev's advice and his mission to Russia and Mongolia.

Doubt on the authority of Dorjiev to sign came up when Sir Charles Bell, British India's Ambassador to Tibet and a noted Tibetologist, wrote that Dorjiev's authority was based on a letter given to him by the Dalai Lama in 1904 when the latter was fleeing from the British expedition to Lhasa and the letter contain only religious matter and nothing of treaty making authority. However, from the several letters and authorizations that the 13th Dalai Lama

had given to Agvan Dorjiev, Prof. Jampa Samten clarifies that it was the letter of August 1912, not 1904, that authorized Agvan Dorjiev to sign treaties on behalf of Tibet and the letter did mention treaty making authority.

Dr. Michael van Walt van Parag, a noted international lawyer and a Tibetologist, made a legal examination of the treaty and endorsed the treaty as a valid international treaty made by the two nations who satisfy the treaty making criteria under international law. He concluded his finding with:

“The government of Mongolia today and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet and the government in exile constitute continuity in relation to the parties that concluded the 1913 treaty as the legitimate representatives of their respective nations. The question that then remains to be answered is whether and to what extent the 1913 treaty persists in its validity today. If the intention of parties is to give expression to the continuity of the profound bonds that unite them, ways of usefully implementing, reaffirming and building on the 1913 treaty today can be explored.”

Conclusion:

The important point to note here is: Mongols have played a far wider help in the form of priest-patron relations than the Manchus. Starting from the sacred intimate relationship between Mongols and Tibetans from Sakya Pandita and Godan Khan (1247) to Phagpa and Kublai Khan (1254), the third Dalai Lama and Altan Khan (1578), the fifth Dalai Lama and Gushri Khan (1642) and so on, Mongolia and Tibet enjoyed far deeper relations and Mongol Khans provided greater service to Tibet in the form of priest-patron relations. The 4th Dalai Lama, Yonten Gyatso, was a Mongolian and the Mongol's spiritual heads both the 8th and 9th Jetsun Dhampa Khuthugtu were Tibetans. If any military influence and conquest in the past justify a claim on the sovereignty of another country, then Mongolia has a much better reason to assert a claim over Tibet.

“Xizang”: China Insists on Depriving Tibet of Its Name

- by *Lopsang Gurung (Bitter Winter)*

There is an urgent need to study and research the roles played by the Mongol Khans and the Tibetan Lamas to explore the working of the priest-patron relationship, which kept the two communities close, yet without infringing on each other's sovereignty. This may help the modern world to understand the concept of politico-religious governance and peaceful coexistence.

Tibet and Mongolia, who were once military powers realized the horror and destructive nature of war and embraced the path of Ahimsa, non-violence, as taught by the Buddha. If the world wants to see a future without wars, it must follow the path adopted by Tibet and Mongolia.

China is a great civilization with rich history, culture, and potential to contribute positively to promoting peace, arts, and learning. The communist leadership should respect this great ancient civilization and refrain from rewriting and distorting the history of the nation and the occupied territories to legitimize the doings of the communist regime and suppression of freedom and democracy. The Chinese communist regime's irredentist claim on Tibet and Mongolia based on the vicissitudes of past relationships the two countries had with the Qing regime is not valid.

Free Tibet and Mongolia are very important to guide us to explore and further this non-violent path of governance and peaceful coexistence. War is not a solution to solve our differences, mutual respect and dialog are. H.H. the Dalai Lama has on numerous occasions said that the 20th century was the century of wars, we must make the 21st century a century of dialogs. Tibetans and Mongolians were way ahead in realizing this, but the modern world has kept them captive and chained. A free Tibet and Mongolia and H.H. the Dalai Lama's proposal of the Tibetan Plateau as a Zone of Peace will greatly contribute to promoting peace in Asia and the world.

On August 22, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken announced sanctions against Chinese officials responsible for the forcible separation from their parents and indoctrination of one million Tibetan children, which had also been denounced by the United Nations.

Blinken announced that, “The State Department is taking steps to impose visa restrictions under the authority of Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act on People's Republic of China (PRC) officials for their involvement in the forcible assimilation of more than one million Tibetan children in government-run boarding schools. These coercive policies seek to eliminate Tibet's distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious traditions among younger generations of Tibetans. We urge PRC authorities to end the coercion of Tibetan children into government-run boarding schools and to cease repressive assimilation policies, both in Tibet and throughout other parts of the PRC. We will continue to work with our allies and partners to highlight these actions and promote accountability.”

Just as it is depriving Tibetan children of their national and religious identity, China is trying to deprive Tibet of something not less essential for it to survive, its name. In 2021, “Bitter Winter” reported that, as one of his first acts, the newly appointed CCP Secretary of Tibet, Wang Junzheng, the former “Butcher of Xinjiang” and the Chinese official most sanctioned throughout the world for his human rights violations (by the U.S., the U.K., Canada, and the European Union), asked that “Xizang” rather than “Tibet” should be used as the name of the so-called “autonomous region” in official documents. We would take the liberty of referring readers to our 2021 article for an in-depth analysis of why the claim that “Xizang” is the ancient name of Tibet is fraudulent and in fact the word “Tibet” predated

“Xizang” by some 1,000 years.

After two years, both Wang Junzheng and his bosses in Beijing are taking notice that the campaign to impose the use of “Xizang” is not working. Even CCP publications do not always use the new name, and the officially proscribed word “Tibet” continues to appear. But the CCP is not giving up.

On August 14–16, the 7th International Symposium on Tibetology was organized in Beijing. The United Front released on August 16 a long statement about the Symposium through its official WeChat account.

The United Front clearly explains that the matter is not linguistic but political. It writes that “in a large number of contexts where the word ‘Tibet’ is used to represent Xizang abroad, its extended meaning includes not only Xizang, but also Tibetan-speaking prefectures and counties in Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan provinces. And this geographical scope highly overlaps with the so-called ‘Greater Tibet’ that the 14th Dalai Lama clique has long advocated for.”

The United Front denies that the campaign to change the name to Xizang has been a failure. “In recent years, it claims, if you have been to Xizang and paid attention to the English translation of ‘Xizang’ in the streets and alleys of many cities, you will find that the proportion of ‘Xizang’ [over ‘Tibet’] is increasing significantly. The use of ‘Xizang’ is also being widely adopted in China's foreign reporting on Tibet,” by which the document means mostly the propaganda outlet “Global Times.”

The United Front quotes Wang Linping, a professor at the School of Marxism at Harbin Engineering University, and the author of several propaganda works claiming that Tibet is part of China.

According to the statement, Wang said at the Beijing symposium that “the wrong concept of ‘Tibet’ has been around for a long time” and that “the use of ‘Tibet’ has seriously misled the international community.” He attributed the invention of the word “Tibet” to “British colonialist Charles Alfred Bell,” forgetting that the Italian traveler Marco Polo used it in the 13th century and before him variations of “Tibet” are attested in Turkish sources since the 9th century.

According to the United Front statement, which summarizes approvingly Wang Linping’s lecture at the symposium, “to get rid of the conceptual traps of the West and separatist forces in Xizang-related discourse and establish China’s dominant position in the international discourse system related to the area, it is urgent to impose in English the word ‘Xizang,’ which can accurately express China’s position. Recently, the Dalai clique has criticized the use of ‘Xizang’ in English, which just confirms that

using this word is an effective tool to destroy the key point of the discourse of the separatist forces.”

Again according to the United Front document, Lian Xiangmin, deputy director-general of the China Tibetology Research Center, stated that, “Some people in the West may have different opinions, but China handles Xizang-related affairs in accordance with the law. Whether they can accept it or not is their own problem.”

China’s latest crackdown on VPNs software in Tibet

- by Tenzin Dalha (TPI)

Inside Tibet, people live in a vigorously designed, managed and curated information bubble that the Chinese government made to subjugate Tibet and its people. China’s Internet censorship system, colloquially known as the “Great Firewall,” has suppressed freedom of expression and strictly monitored the information that could be accessed by its citizens.

The Great Firewall was established in 1998, when the Ministry of Public Security launched the Golden Shield Project, a giant mechanism of censorship and surveillance aimed at restricting content, identifying and locating individuals, and providing immediate access to personal records. In 2013, administration of the Great Firewall shifted to the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC). Regulation over Internet access has grown more comprehensive, specific and extensive with the State Council giving the CAC overall responsibility for Internet supervision.

Chinese President Xi Jinping’s rule has been characterized by the acceleration of artificial intelligence, repression of society and ideological control. His tenure in China has seen a combination of communication crackdown, ramped-up propaganda and rapid expansion of surveillance with the introduction of continuous efforts to bring new laws and

changes in the CAC.

According to Freedom House’s Freedom in the World 2023 report, Tibet is the least free territory on Earth. Tibet has a global freedom score of one out of a possible 100. This is the third straight year that Tibet has been at the bottom of the rankings. The world is blocked from knowing anything about Tibet, aside from what is available on official propaganda.

Restricting access limits diversity of opinion and can lead to more polarized and radical nationalist views. This could be potentially harmful to minorities whose views are not represented under the censored Internet.

In 2018, the Chinese government ordered the nation’s three telecoms to completely pull the plug on the usage of virtual private networks (VPNs).

The party-state does not restrict itself to limiting access to information on the cyberspace, as it also actively relays its own messages about its assumed successes — the wickedness of everyone from the US “imperialists” to the Dalai “separatists” who endlessly instigate Tibetan unrest.

Active messaging includes flooding online platforms with posts to sway the emotions of people away from

protest and toward acceptance of the official line. Authorities have silenced numerous leading writers, human rights lawyers and activists who served as the conscience of the nation.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) responded by targeting the VPN providers and either shutting them down or blocking their access. Data collected in September last year revealed that 31 percent of Internet users in China regularly used VPNs.

However, despite China’s sophisticated Internet censorship tools and policies, Chinese activists and bloggers have figured out ways to express themselves to the Chinese people and to the world. Tech-savvy individuals have played a prominent role in bringing freedom of speech to China with the introduction of new and updated software to penetrate the Great Firewall.

Using the Tor privacy network is another potential approach to attempt to bypass the Great Firewall. Motivated Tibetans have found it straightforward to acquire such software, which provides access to VPNs. Through this network, users in China can reach thousands of Web sites that are blacklisted by their government — including almost all Google services, many independent news sites and most foreign social media. That has changed sharply as a crackdown on the

Internet and civil society has become more stringent and sophisticated. The government’s messaging has grown more nationalistic.

By using VPNs, individuals in China can ensure that their Internet access is safe and secure. VPNs have been their mainstay in boring through the wall, enabling anonymous and unrestricted access for activists and journalists to information and securely spreading information that would otherwise have been censored. It is still possible to use VPNs and other circumvention tools to scale the Great Firewall, but it is getting increasingly dangerous to do so. Some people have gone to jail for selling VPNs, and others were fined for merely using them.

Most VPNs providers make it possible for people to be completely anonymous online, so that even Internet service providers cannot monitor their online activity. Using dedicated connections and virtual tunneling, a VPN provides the user with privacy, security and the freedom to browse the Internet without fear.

Under the authority of the newly appointed CCP Secretary of Tibet Wang Zunzheng, this last bastion of Internet

freedom, this safe haven for activists and journalists resisting one of the most despotic regimes on Earth, is being intensely censored.

The Chinese authorities frequently advise Tibetans not to engage in any anti-social activities, including contacting their family members and acquaintances outside Tibet. Families fracture as a result. Many Tibetans are detained under vague and fictitious charges, such as “leaking state secrets” and “inciting separatism.” Tibetans are jailed and interrogated with no apparent evidence of any wrongdoing, which has led to forced confessions. They are subjected to arbitrary arrests, detention and torture for exercising their rights and freedom of expression in cyberspace. Since the law applies, it has resulted in more scrutiny and direct suppression of freedom of expression and rights to privacy.

The law announced tougher punishments for “public disorder by engaging in separatist acts.” The law is a strategy by CCP to create more communication barriers between Tibetans inside and outside of the nation.

Many parts of Tibet have been reported to have banned Tibetans from having

any kind of contact with people outside the People’s Republic of China as a part of its Sanitization drive and the so-called anti-separatist campaign. The restriction on VPNs would also affect academics, researchers and software developers, as well as journalists and foreign businesses which have been the mainstay of China’s growing economy. Academicians would lack adequate access to overseas colleagues, journals and methods to communicate with universities around the world, while software developers who rely on codes hosted on Web sites based outside China would be handicapped.

Restricting VPNs and censoring information is not the way forward for a country trying to seek global limelight and portray itself as a rising world leader. Rather, the latest restrictions would further isolate China from the rest of the world, limiting its ability to learn about the world and share its opinions. The Chinese government should realize that without free and open access, the Internet can become a medium for government propaganda to hide information, and in some cases can fuel disinformation about any number of topics. There is a more possible way online ideas may also turn into offline activism.

Compassion is a state of mind unable to bear the sufferings of others. If we all had more compassion, there would be greater peace in the world.

-His Holiness the Dalai Lama

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Tibetan Freedom (Official Tibetan weekly)
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QUOTES

“People on this earth fight each other for a variety of reasons, but when they do so in the name of religion, it’s really unfortunate. This is one of the reasons why I make an effort to establish inter-religious harmony.” - His Holiness the Dalai Lama during teachings in Leh

“peace won’t come about as a result of government announcements or leader’s speeches. The foundation of world peace is peace of mind.” - His Holiness the Dalai Lama when addressing the Tibetan Children’s Village School in Choglamsar

“Eschewing meaningless divisive regionalism and sectarianism, it is of paramount importance to forge unity among the Tibetan people and grasp the golden opportunity to realise the just cause of Tibet under the prevailing global situation.” - Sikyong Penpa Tsering during the 88th Birth Anniversary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

“Chinese leadership, not falling into the deception of financial and military power, should come to realise that true dignity of a country comes through resolving and understanding issues through trust and dialogue, rather than repression and domination imposed by the majoritarian race.” - Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel during the 88th Birth Anniversary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama
