



TIBETAN BULLETIN

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2024

Focus

9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups
Convenes in Brussels

US House Passes Resolve Tibet Act With a
Decisive Bipartisan Support

Feature

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Gives Customary Discourse
on the 'Day of Offerings'

Chinese Perspective

China's Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend Mega-dam
Not Feasible Due to Risks

www.tibet.net/en/tibbul

NEWS FROM TIBET & EXILE

- 3 12th Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace Declares His Holiness the Dalai Lama “Universal Supreme Leader of the Buddhist World”
- 4 Sikyong Penpa Tsering Participates in Hearing on “Legal Status of Tibet” at Estonian Parliament
- 5 The UN China Review Finds Unprecedented Support for Tibetan Rights by Member States, While Beijing Shuts Down Criticism

DOCUMENTATION

- 7 Kashag Urges PRC Govt to Immediately Release all Tibetans Detained in Derge Protests and Respect Rights & Aspirations of Tibetans
- 8 Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Strongly Condemns Brutal Suppression of Peaceful Tibetan Protesters in Derge

FOCUS

- 9 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups Convenes in Brussels
- 15 US House Passes Resolve Tibet Act with a Decisive Support

CHINESE PERSPECTIVE

- 22 China’s Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend Mega-dam Not Feasible Due to Risks



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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2024

REGULARS

News From Tibet & Exile3
Contact 31

Quotes32

12th Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace Declares His Holiness the Dalai Lama “Universal Supreme Leader of the Buddhist World”



Vice President of India, Jagdeep Dhankhar and Minister of Earth Sciences of India, Kiren Rijiju with the ABCP President, the Most Venerable Khambo Lama of Gandan, Gabji Demberel Chojjams.

The 12th General Assembly of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP), which was held in New Delhi on 17 and 18 January 2024, unanimously declared His Holiness the Dalai Lama to be a “Universal Supreme Leader of the Buddhist World” in recognition of His lifelong contributions in bringing closer the Buddhist communities and strengthening a sense of oneness of humanity.

The two-day conference themed “The Buddhist Voice of the Global South” also proclaimed 6 July, the day of His Holiness’ birthday, as the “Universal Day of Compassion,” honouring the core teachings of Lord Buddha and His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama to build a harmonious and peaceful world. The conference further acknowledged in its resolution the importance of the continuation of Gaden Phodrang Institution and rejected any interference from governments or individuals in the recognition of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama’s reincarnation.

Prominent world leaders from various countries have written messages for the inaugural ceremony of the 12th General Assembly of ABCP, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama Himself. In His letter, His Holiness expressed appreciation to ABCP for taking initiatives to “create greater awareness of the need to promote peace in Asia and the wider world, as well as efforts it has made to strengthen Buddhist culture and values.”

“In the world today, it is very clear that our tendency to see other people in terms of ‘we’ and ‘them’ sadly leads to divisions that give rise to conflicts.” The letter continues, “This occurs because we fail to appreciate the oneness of humanity. However, when we recognise that we are all the same human beings, we can learn to live in harmony and friendship and help one another.” His Holiness’ message for the conference also touches on reducing the threats posed by poverty and environmental degradations, stating it will help not

just the people “who are alive today, but even generations yet to come.”

In addition, the conference’s opening ceremony was also addressed in person by the honourable Vice President of India, Jagdeep Dhankhar, and Minister of Earth Sciences of India, Shri Kiren Rijiju. It was attended by representatives from India, Mongolia, Russia, South Korea, Laos, Bangladesh, Japan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Bhutan, and Nepal.

Secretary Chime Tseyang from the Department of Religion and Culture participated in the ABCP’s conference as a representative of the Central Tibetan Administration.

On the second day of the conference, after the delegates had read their reports, the Secretary of ABCP Indian National Centre, Sonam Wangchuk Shakspo, read out the resolution adopted by the conference.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Participates in Hearing on “Legal Status of Tibet” at Estonian Parliament



Sikyong Penpa Tsering addressing the gathering at the hearing on “Legal Status of Tibet” at the Estonian Parliament.

In a significant moment for the Tibetan freedom movement, on 25 January 2024, a hearing on the ‘Legal Status of Tibet’ was held at the Estonian Parliament chaired by MP Juku-Kalle Raid, Chair of the Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet and a member of the Foreign Affairs Commission. About 35 parliamentarians, journalists, academics and Tibet supporters were in attendance to hear Sikyong Penpa Tsering; Representative Sonam Frasi from the Office of Tibet, London; Professor Hon-Shiang Lau and Dr Michael van Walt van Praag.

After the chair MP Juku-Kalle Raid opened the hearing by giving background and the significance of the event, Honourable Sikyong was the first to speak – giving historical context to the Tibetan narrative, Middle-Way Approach and the importance of correcting historical facts of Tibet’s independence before its invasion by the People Republic of China (PRC).

Then, Prof Lau gave evidence of Chinese Imperial records that proved without any doubt that the Chinese Imperial Houses, Ming and Qing, never recorded Tibet as part of China. The undisputed and veritable Chinese imperial records that proved Tibet was never a part of China since antiquity were strengthened further by Dr Michael van Walt van Praag’s presentation from a legal perspective that explained why China has been looking to buy the legitimacy of its occupation of Tibet by insisting on its

trading partner governments to declare ‘Tibet as an internal issue of China’ as a justification for denying Tibetan people the right to self-determination, and how this position breaches international law.

Representative Sonam Frasi then consolidated the discussion by drawing reference from Tibet’s historical and legendary records that speak of Tibet’s genesis, explaining the pre-destined relationship between the Tibetan people and the Dalai Lamas that was primarily to bring peace to the world. He also highlighted the profoundly colonialist nature of PRC’s rule in Tibet and concluded that restoring peace to Tibet and finding a resolution to the peaceful Tibetan freedom movement will enhance global faith in peaceful, non-violent alternatives to the vicious cycle of violence we see in many parts of the world today.

The former first Prime Minister of independent Estonia, Honourable Mart Laar, has sent a message of support for the hearing, which was read in Estonian by MP Juku-Kalle Raid and in English by Roy Strider, a long-term staunch Tibet supporter. The hearing was followed by a reception at the parliament, where the speakers and the audience members had more time for interaction. Members of the Parliamentary Tibet support group and local supporters hosted a dinner in honour of the visiting Tibetan delegation.

Honourable Sikyong was received at the airport on 24 January by MP Juku-Kalle Raid, who also gave a personal tour of the Estonian Parliament on the following day, during which they met the President of Riigikogu, Lauri Hussar as well as the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Two media outlets followed and reported Sikyong’s visit to the parliament. As a result, Estonian media gave the event excellent coverage that day.

Kalon Norzin Dolma Presides Over Annual Meeting of Representatives of Offices of Tibet

The Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), held a meeting of the Representatives of the Offices of Tibet at Kagyu Centre Yeunten Ling in Huy, Belgium, from 27 to 28 February 2024, followed by a day-long diplomacy training on 29 February.

Chaired by Kalon Norzin Dolma, the two-day meeting was attended by 11 Representatives, the Coordinator of the Bureau du Tibet in Paris, and a Buddhist Philosophy teacher from the Office of Tibet – Pretoria, along with Additional Secretaries and an accountant from the DIIR. DIIR Secretary Karma Choeying introduced agendas of the meeting to the participants and updated on the status of resolutions adopted during the previous meeting.

During the meeting’s inaugural, Kalon (Minister) Norzin Dolma of the DIIR gave a keynote speech outlining the major undertakings of the CTA, particularly the resolution of the Tibet-China conflict through the restoration of peaceful dialogue per the Middle Way Approach policy. Speaking to the Representatives, DIIR Kalon emphasised that it is imperative to push for human rights violations and the persecution of Tibetan religion and culture inside Tibet in order to gain the support of foreign dignitaries while applauding their efforts that have so far worked well. The Kalon implored Representatives to continue their efforts, which have led to the passing of resolutions, the release of declarations by many parliaments in support of the Tibetan cause, and the Sikyong and Kalon’s meetings with numerous notable members during their overseas visits in the respective countries.

The UN China Review Finds Unprecedented Support for Tibetan Rights by Member States, While Beijing Shuts Down Criticism

On 23 January this year, 24 United Nations Member States mentioned Tibet and Tibetans in their oral statements during China's fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle. Among these, 21 countries raised serious concerns regarding the human rights situation in Tibet, resulting in 23 recommendations.

China's human rights record was the major focus of intense scrutiny over its treatment of Tibetans, Uyghurs, and dissidents in Hong Kong. The States that raised Tibet at China's review were Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The statements by the Member States offered a wide-ranging look at China's human rights violations in Tibet, urging a review of Beijing's rights record to focus on its cultural genocide and political indoctrination. The major focus was particularly on China's repression of cultural and religious rights. The Member States expressed concerns over human rights violations in Tibet and in particular called for the abolition of the colonial boarding schools that separated over 1 million Tibetan children from their families, language, religion and culture. The States also called for the authorisation of private schools, the release of arbitrarily detained Tibetans and unhindered access for UN representatives to Tibet.

As usual, the PRC government has portrayed boarding schools in Tibet as a means of bridging the gap between urban and rural populations for equal education access; however, it has failed to provide evidence that the curriculum in the schools does not undermine Tibetan language or culture among young Tibetan students. The Chinese delegation maintained that Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and cultural

rights based on a variety of statistics that provide little support for their claim. Relocation policies were outlined by the Chinese delegation as operating with the consent of Tibetans. The Chinese ambassador refuted criticism and denounced allegations as smears, lies, and defamatory attacks on China.

Karma Choeying, Secretary of the Department of Information and International Relations, applauded the substantial increase in the number of States raising Tibet at the UN China Review and said: "We are grateful to all states that raised Tibet's grave human rights situation under the unlawful rule of the PRC government. Considering the severity of the situation within Tibet, China should be attentive to the Universal Periodic Review and comply with the recommendations provided by Member States of the UN. In addition to complying with its obligations to respect the protected rights of Tibetans and others, China must immediately cease its assimilationist practices that undermine Tibetan identity."

Several months before China's review by the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Tibetan Bureau Geneva, together with the Central Tibetan Women's Association and the Tibetan Community of Switzerland and Liechtenstein, have already submitted a report in July 2023 detailing systematic and widespread patterns of human rights violations in Tibet. Aside from providing recommendations to the international

community, the report also highlights aspects of Chinese government's repressive policies on Tibetan culture, including colonial boarding schools, Sinicization of Tibetan identity and language, crackdown on religious freedom, transnational repression, surveillance system, destruction of Tibetan environment, and arbitrary arrests.

China underwent its third cycle of the UN Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights implementation review before the Universal Periodic Review in February last year. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights concluded its review of China with its concluding observations noting widespread violations by the country. It requested that the PRC government immediately cease its operation of colonial boarding schools in Tibet, and its program of mass relocation of Tibetans, and called to allow Tibetans to exercise their cultural and religious rights without interference.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a process through which all UN Member States are provided the opportunity to review the human rights records of all other Member States every five years. The UPR aims to offer constructive criticism and to ensure scrutiny of every country's human rights record and recommendations for compliance with international human rights law. China's previous UPR was held on 6 November 2018.



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THE TIBET MUSEUM

Four CTA Departments Hold Joint Press Conference on Household Listing Survey



(R-L) Additional Secretary Sonam Sangpo (DoE), Secretary Palden Dhondup (DoH), Secretary Chime Tseyang (DoRC), and Joint Secretary Tsering Youdon (DoHe).

The Department of Religion and Culture (DoRC), Department of Home (DoH), Department of Education (DoE), and Department of Health (DoHe) jointly held a press conference on the Central Tibetan administration’s household listing survey project at the Lhakpa Tsering hall on 2 February 2024.

Speaking to the media during the press conference, Secretary Palden Dhondup, on behalf of all four departments, introduced the objectives of this survey. He said, “As we currently lack a proper household list of the Tibetan communities in India and Nepal, this forthcoming survey would provide us with an accurate statistic and help us efficiently formulate future projects. In the past, because of the dearth of actionable data, our high-cost projects have sometimes gone into ineffective.” Hence, on behalf of all four departments, he implored, “We urged all the members of the Tibetan community across Tibetan settlements in India and Nepal to participate in this survey to cooperate with our endeavour” that will allow the Central Tibetan Administration to serve exile-Tibetan’s welfare successfully.

According to Secretary Palden Dhondup,

the survey will be held between coming February and April this year with the help from Sambodhi Research & Communications Pvt. Ltd through funding from the Tibet Fund. He said, “Several meetings were held yesterday with the Tibetan Settlement Officers to inform their roles in this survey as they represent all four departments at their respective settlements.” Similarly, in order to make this household listing survey a successful one, seven trainings at different regions will be provided beginning from 17 February with the field experts’ help to all the enumerators selected from the Tibetan settlements.

The joint press conference was also addressed by Secretary Chime Tseyang (DoRC) and Joint Secretary Tsering Youdon (DoHe). Additional Secretary Sonam Sangpo participated in the joint press conference on behalf of DoE.



2nd Tibetan IT Professionals’ Conference Held at Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education

The 2nd Tibetan IT Professional Conference Agenda was held at Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education (DLIHE) in Bangalore from 3-4 January 2024. The conference concentrated on job recruitment and skill development for new Tibetan IT graduates seeking opportunities. It aimed to link talented individuals with job openings in CTA and the Tibetan community while providing chances for skill enhancement, knowledge enrichment, and networking to empower attendees in excelling in the IT field, particularly within the Tibetan community.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering was the chief guest for the event where he talked about how important it is for new Tibetan IT professionals to grow and take opportunities in this ever evolving world of tech. He also mentioned various steps taken by the CTA in digitalising a lot of data. Sikyong also interacted with participants at the event.

Special guest Radharani Thakuria, Project Management Specialist at United States Agency for International Development (USAID) / India, spoke about how the Tibetan exile community is one of the most thriving exile communities in the world and echoed her continued support for Tibetans.



Participants for the 2nd Tibetan IT Professional’s Conference with Sikyong Penpa Tsering.

Canada's Governor General Recognises Tibetan Family with Distinction

On 7 December 2023, the Rabgey family from Lindsay, Ontario, was awarded the Meritorious Service Cross by Canada's Governor General, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon.

One of the highest distinctions a Canadian civilian can receive, the Meritorious Service Cross was established to recognise individuals for exceptional deeds that bring honour to Canada.

Overseen by the Chancellery of Honours in the Office of the Governor General, the Meritorious Service decoration acknowledges activities or deeds, over an extended period of time, that are innovative, set exemplary standards for others, or significantly enhance the quality of life within a community.

Phuntsok (Pencho) Rabgey, Tsering Dolker Rabgey, Dr. Losang Rabgey and Dr. Tashi Rabgey were awarded the Meritorious Service Cross in recognition for their lifetime dedication to the service and empowerment of the Tibetan communities in Tibet, as well as their creation of Machik—an organisation that has sparked widespread support both within their local community of Lindsay, Ontario, and among the Tibetan diaspora in North America.

Governor General Mary Simon delivered the commendation in her native Inuktitut as well as English and French. As an Inuk, she is the first Indigenous person to hold the office of Governor General of Canada.

The Meritorious Service Cross and Medal are bestowed upon individuals whose specific actions have been inspiring and have made a positive difference, demonstrating a passionate commitment to fostering meaningful

change. Recipients of the honour undergo a meticulous selection process that is non-partisan and merit-based. Candidates are thoroughly researched and reviewed by an independent advisory committee before final approval by the governor general.

The Rabgey family's lifetime of commitment to the uplifting of Tibetan communities in Tibet and in the diaspora has contributed to the fostering of global citizenship, community building and ethical engagement in Tibet around the world.

Kashag Urges PRC Govt to Immediately Release all Tibetans Detained in Derge Protests and Respect Rights & Aspirations of Tibetans

The Central Tibetan Administration is highly concerned by the brutal crackdown on peaceful Tibetan protesters in Derge, Tibet by the authorities of the People's Republic of China (PRC) resulting in mass arbitrary detention and injuries to many Tibetans. Since last month, Tibetans have been appealing to halt the planned construction of hydroelectric power plant that would result in forceful relocation of hundreds of Tibetans from their ancestral village and destruction of centuries-old monasteries dating back to the 13th century that house a wealth of ancient relics and murals of Buddha.

On 14 February 2024, at least 300 Tibetans peacefully protested outside the Derge (Ch: Dege) County government in Karze "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" in the traditional province of Kham, now incorporated into Sichuan Province, appealing to stop the hydroelectric dam construction and to withdraw the official order for Tibetans to relocate. A week later, on 20 and 21 February, County officials and security forces in large numbers arrived at the two monasteries – Wontoe and Yena – in Wonpotoe (Ch: Wangbuding) township to prepare for their demolition. At that time, a large number of Tibetans appealed again by kneeling and crying in desperation to the Chinese officials to stop the demolition. Chinese police deployed in the region on 22 February severely beat Tibetans using weaponries resulting in injuries that necessitated hospitalization for many participating in the peaceful protest and also led to mass arrest and detention.

The construction of Kamtok (Ch: Gangtuo) dam, the 6th of 13 dams proposed along the upper reaches of Yangtze river, or Drichu in Tibetan, will submerge two villages – Wonpotoe (or Wontoe for short as locally known) in Derge County, Karze, and Shepa Village in Jomda County in Chamdo (Ch: Changdu) – as well as six monasteries along the riverbanks namely Yena, Wontoe, Khadho, Rabten, Gonsar and Tashi Monastery. Additionally, the Wontoe and Yena monasteries are at immediate risk of irreparable destruction of its ancient relics and murals of historical and religious significance.

Tibetan protesters are primarily concerned about the Chinese authorities' failure to legitimately consult with local Tibetans whose traditional livelihoods and customary way of lives are at the risk of facing complete disruption with the planned dam construction to which they have no say. The massive power of this hydroelectric plant, capable of generating 1.1 million kilowatts of electricity, will be transferred through the Ultra High Voltage "West to East" (Ch: xi dian dong song) transmission network only to Chinese cities, while Tibet will not be benefited from the hydropower plant in any significant way.

This recent crackdown on peaceful Tibetan protesters in Derge County demonstrates the disregard for the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Tibetan people by the Chinese Communist Party. Currently, the Chinese authorities have completely

shut down internet access and censored information relating to the protest on social media platforms as part of the widespread security clampdown in the area.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the President of the Central Tibetan Administration, said, “The crackdown of non-violent protests in Derge, as well as the disregard for Tibetans’ fundamental rights by the Chinese authorities, is unacceptable on all levels. These punitive measures demonstrate China’s preference for its communist ideology and economic interests over ensuring and upholding fundamental human rights of Tibetans. We urge the PRC government to immediately release all Tibetans detained in Derge protests and to respect the rights and aspirations of Tibetans. There is an urgent need for the world to hear the Tibetan voices and to confront the reality of Chinese misrule in Tibet.”

As we have urged and communicated to all foreign ministries, UN bodies and relevant offices for immediate attention and action, we reiterate our appeals to the international community, to call upon the PRC government to:

- *Immediately and unconditionally release these Tibetan protesters who have been wrongfully detained for exercising their fundamental rights and to ensure proper and timely medical treatment for the injured Tibetans;
- *Immediately halt the construction of mega hydropower dams in Tibet without the consent of the local population and taking into consideration its ecological implications;
- *End the current crackdown, the forced and involuntary mass relocation of Tibetans from their ancestral lands and stop forced relocation without their consent in order to implement so-called economic development projects;
- *Respect the religious sentiments and rights of the Tibetan people to practice and preserve Tibetan Buddhism and ancient monasteries;
- *As a signatory to multiple international covenants and treaties, the PRC government must respect the rights and aspirations of the Tibetan people.

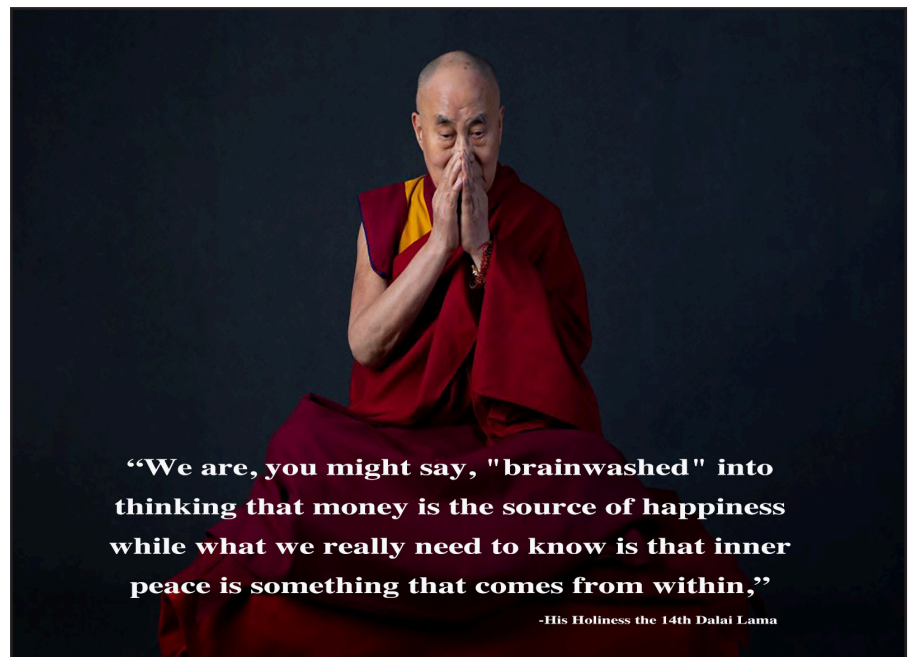
Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Strongly Condemns Brutal Suppression of Peaceful Tibetan Protesters in Derge

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile strongly condemns the brutal crackdown on Tibetans in Derge, Kham. Reports indicate that more than 1,000 Tibetans have been arrested for participating in peaceful protests against the construction of a dam on the Driчу River. These protests, ongoing since 14 February 2024, aim to halt the building of the Gangtuo hydropower station, a component of a massive 13-tier hydropower complex with a planned capacity of 13,920 megawatts.

The construction project would force the relocation of two villages – Upper Wonto and Shipa – home to about 2000

residents, and result in the demolition of six historic monasteries: Wonto Monastery, Yena Monastery, Khardho Monastery, Rabten Monastery, Gonsar Monastery, and Tashi Monastery. These monasteries house irreplaceable Buddhist relics, including ancient murals from the 13th century at Wonto Monastery.

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile urgently calls for the immediate release of detainees, an immediate halt to the dam construction, and respect the will and desires of the local people for any projects in the region.



9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups Convenes in Brussels



Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration addressing the 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups.

The 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups commenced its three-day session in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, on 23 February 2024.

Over 170 members of Tibet Support Groups from 42 countries, along with the leadership of the Central Tibetan Administration, began a three-day meeting to strengthen their efforts to address the severe and urgent situation in Tibet. The event is organised by the Tibet Interest Group from the European Parliament in partnership with the Belgium-based International Campaign for Tibet at the Thon Hotel in Brussels. The Office of Tibet-Brussels and the Department of Information and International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration facilitated the event, funded by the Tibet House Trust in London.

Following the opening remarks from Representative Rigzin Choedon Genkhang and ceremonial prayer recitation from the monks, President of Tibet Interest Group Mikulas Peksa from the European Parliament delivered

the welcome address, thanking Belgium for supporting the conference.

Dr Hans Gert Pottering, former president of the European Parliament, then gave his inaugural address. In his speech, Dr Pottering stated that he prefers all people in the world, regardless of their religion, as long as they are peaceful. He believed that they are brothers and sisters, and one must defend their right to live in peace and protect their identity and religion. He called for the immediate abolishment of the boarding school system that is imposed on children in Tibet. He further emphasised the significance of the European Union in raising the matter of human rights violations in China, specifically the situation in Tibet, and in addressing all political and human rights issues in its dialogues with the Chinese authorities. He reiterates the call on the Chinese government to resume engagements with the representatives of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

A video message from the Vice President of the European Parliament, Heidi

Hautala, was also displayed during the inaugural.

Kalon (Minister) Norzin Dolma of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) expressed her gratitude to all the attendees for their strong support and solidarity with the Tibetan people and the cause of Tibet in her address. Kalon stated that the conference will help formulate and develop coordinated and action-oriented strategies to solve the Sino-Tibet conflict through dialogue as per the Middle Way Policy. She hoped that the conference outcome would help strengthen the movement and advocacy to restore the



Sikyong Penpa Tsering during the special plenary session.



Video message from the Vice President of the European Parliament, Heidi Hautala, for the 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups.

lost dignity and human rights in Tibet.

DIIR Kalon then proceeded to read the message from His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. In the message, His Holiness expressed that despite the great difficulties faced by the Tibetan people, the faith and aspirations of the majority of Tibetans who reside within Tibet have remained strong and unwavering. Furthermore, His Holiness expressed his confidence that the friends and supporters of the Tibetan community will continue to assist and support the leadership of the Central Tibetan Administration in meeting the aspirations of the Tibetan people.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the keynote speaker, said the Central Tibetan Administration is fully committed to following His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's wisdom, whether it's to do with politics or whether it's to do with the welfare of the exile community. At the same time, the Tibetan political leader emphasised the older generation of Tibetans to take charge of nurturing and adequately equipping younger generations to take on the responsibility of furthering the Tibetan struggle for freedom. Sikyong said, "There are many young Tibetans who have taken over the leadership of Tibetan associations. There



President of Tibet Interest Group Mikulas Peksa, European Parliament, giving the welcome address.

are various associations represented in this conference, and most of their presidents are present. The Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group (V-TAG) has also been established to provide a platform for all Tibetans, especially for the younger generation, to take on leadership roles." Furthermore, Sikyong recommended reading materials by Dr Michael van Walt van Praag and Professor Lau Han Shiang, who have both provided extensive evidence that Tibet was never a part of China, in order to better understand Tibet as an independent nation prior to its illegal occupation by the Chinese government.

Before concluding his talk, Sikyong emphasized the importance of collaboration, pooling resources, and avoiding hesitation when pursuing a common goal.

Wangpo Tethong, Executive Director of Executive Director of the International Campaign for Tibet – Europe, delivered a vote of thanks before wrapping up the opening ceremony.

During the closing ceremony on 25 February, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, Kalon Norzin Dolma of the Department of Information and International Relations, and Senator Eustache-Brinio, Chair of the French Parliamentary Group for Tibet, delivered speeches, sharing their insights and perspectives. Additional Secretary Tenzin Lekshay from the Department of Information and International Relations (CTA), as the master of the ceremony, led the closing session.

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel stressed in his keynote speech that issues pertaining to Tibet need to be addressed on a deeper level than politics because they affect the survival and maintenance of Tibetan culture, which is based on compassion and nonviolence.

He also recognised the critical roles played by Tibetan advocates and support groups in determining the development of the Tibetan struggle. He stressed that the history of Tibet holds great significance, and the selfless dedication



Kalon Norzin Dolma reading the message from His Holiness the Dalai Lama for the 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups.

of support groups is highly valued. Tibet needs support now more than ever, and it is crucial that the international community views the Tibet-China conflict as an international issue rather than as China's internal matter, as the PRC dictates.

He further demanded that decision-makers and policymakers comply with international law and refrain from endorsing or acknowledging China's sovereignty claims over Tibet in any way. The Speaker added, "Apart from the routine operations of the legislative body, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile has programs to reach out to international and Indian parliament members and the general public in India through state advocacy campaigns".

The Speaker concluded by stating that the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile is organising the 9th World Parliamentarian Convention on Tibet in Tokyo, Japan. He hoped that many members of the parliament would attend with the assistance and support of those attending the 9th International Tibet Support Groups Conference.

Senator Jacqueline Eustache-Brinio, who also serves as the President of the French International Information Group



Dr Hans Gert Pottering, former president of the European Parliament, addressing the gathering.



Senator Jacqueline Eustache-Brinio, the President of the French International Information Group on Tibet, speaking during the concluding ceremony.

on Tibet, highlighted in her valedictory speech that the Chinese authorities continue to undermine the three main pillars of Tibetan identity: religion, language, and culture. She further stated that the Tibetan religion is being closely monitored and disrespected, while the Tibetan language is being neglected in educational and professional settings. Even Tibetan children are being forced to attend boarding schools where they are taught in Chinese and indoctrinated to adopt a new Chinese identity. “She stated that all the measures taken by the authorities which destroy the Tibetan people’s identity and the natural environment not only worsen their suffering but also raise concerns for Western countries. Therefore, it’s imperative that every political institution, NGO, and public figure should speak out clearly on the issue of Tibet, regardless of economic interests, to inform Beijing authorities of what is unacceptable to them. As senators of the Information Group on Tibet, we will continue to intervene with the French Government for the prisoners in Tibet as well as for Tibetans who come to seek asylum and to denounce the failure to respect human rights.”

In her concluding address, Kalon (Minister) Norzin Dolma of the



Members of the Tibet Support Group during the closing session of the conference.

Department of Information and International Relations emphasised the importance of the 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups as a symbol of the continued relevance of the Tibet cause. “This cause has been primarily shaped by the spirit and commitment of His Holiness Dalai Lama to compassion, nonviolence, dialogue, and reconciliation,” she remarked.

She also thanked the participants for voluntarily contributing their time, energy, expertise, and resources to the Tibetan’s struggle for freedom over the years. The impact of their efforts has been felt internationally, with an increased spotlight on Tibet and greater visibility for the cause. This has led to increased pressure on the PRC government and the international community through innovative grassroots activism, parliamentary procedures, lobby efforts, media engagements, and the utilisation of UN initiatives and different mechanisms. She also expressed gratitude for the participants’ sense of kinship, connectedness, and commitment to the cause of Tibet and to the people of Tibet. Their efforts have been vital for seeking a resolution to the long-standing Sino-Tibet conflict and improving the human rights situation inside Tibet.

Moreover, Kalon spoke about Tibet and how China’s harsh policies have resulted in the gradual elimination of Tibetan culture, language, and identity. This includes the curtailment of religious freedom, intensified surveillance, restrictions on movement and trade, ecological damage, and water insecurity. These challenges persist, but the collective efforts of the Tibet Support Groups and Central Tibetan Administration have yielded some positive results, bringing Tibet back into the global spotlight. However, there is still much work to be done, and we must continue to work together with a strategic approach to make further breakthroughs in areas we have not yet reached. We must also consolidate and reinforce the progress we have already made in order to achieve the ultimate resolution of the conflict in Tibet through dialogue.”



Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel addressing the gathering during the concluding ceremony.

Secretary Karma Choeying of the Department of Information and International Relations delivered a vote of thanks. He emphasised that “we are complementary partners rather than competitors. Therefore, we must work closely with a sense of camaraderie and unity. Many of you have been supporters of Tibet for a long time, and your association with us and indelible commitment to the cause is a testament to your genuine concern for the fight of the Tibetans. I have no doubt about it.” “Our fight for freedom for Tibet and a peaceful world is not just our fight alone. We have a responsibility to pass on the baton to the younger generation to continue the struggle. In 2021, under the leadership of Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the Central Tibetan Administration initiated the Voluntary Tibetan Advocacy Group (VTAG) to encourage young Tibetans from different parts of the world to actively advocate for the Tibetan cause. We currently have 521 motivated young Tibetans in 39 VTAGs across 18 countries, and we are working hard to bring more young people into the network to carry on the legacy of our generation. These young advocates are expected to work closely with Tibetan Support Groups (TSGs) and other stakeholders to promote the Tibetan cause,” the Secretary concluded.



Group photo taken after the successful conclusion of the 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Message for the 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups

I send my warmest greetings and Tashi Delek to everyone participating in the 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups being held in Brussels, Belgium from February 23 to 25, 2024. The widespread interest of the international community across the world has been a major source of encouragement and support in our efforts to preserve our identity and keep the Tibetan cause alive. I therefore want to thank all of you who represent those friends and supporters that have voluntarily devoted time and resources to working for the just cause of the Tibetan people. As I often say, we consider you not as pro-Tibetan but pro-justice.

Although the global political environment has been changing rapidly, the fundamental issue of Tibet remains the same. Therefore, I would like to reiterate here some of the points I have made to this conference in the past, as well as on other occasions.

The question of Tibet is not merely a matter of justice and human rights, but is about the preservation of Tibet's unique and distinct culture, which has the potential to contribute to human development. The religious aspects of Buddhism may be of relevance only to Buddhists, but I really feel that Buddhist science - including the science of mind - and Buddhist culture (based around compassion and nonviolence) can be of great benefit to humanity, and even to those who do not practise Buddhism or follow any religion. It is also important to note that today more and more Chinese are following Buddhism.

Another crucial issue is the ecology of Tibet. It is well known that the plateau provides freshwater resources to more than two billion people, who make up 30 percent of the global population. However, due to the climate crisis created by human activities, the rate of warming on the Tibetan plateau is nearly double the global average. This presents a severe threat to the region's water balance. Therefore, protection of the Tibetan environment is truly a global concern.

In 2011, I voluntarily and happily devolved my political responsibilities to the elected Tibetan leadership. Since then, I have dedicated my

efforts to fulfilling four commitments: the promotion of human values; the encouragement of inter-religious harmony; keeping Tibetan Buddhist culture - the basis of our identity - alive; and creating greater awareness and interest in ancient Indian wisdom, focussing on compassion (karuna) and non-violence (ahimsa). I am sure you will join me in contributing to creating a more peaceful world.

It is my hope that before long the Chinese leadership will understand the real value of Tibet's culture of peace and compassion, which has enormous potential to contribute to enriching both China and the world at large. No matter how powerful the People's Republic of China becomes, it is important that China must earn the trust and respect of the international community in building a peaceful world.

Despite undergoing great difficulties, the faith and aspiration of our people, the majority of whom are inside Tibet, have remained undiminished. I am confident that our friends and supporters of Tibetans will continue to assist and support our leadership of the Central Tibetan Administration in its efforts to fulfill the aspirations of Tibetans. Their heartfelt wish is to live in freedom and dignity. As the Tibetan saying goes, there will be a time when the sun emerges from behind the clouds.

With my prayers and good wishes,



CONFERENCE STATEMENT: 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups

The Ninth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups (TSGs) was convened in Brussels, capital of the European Union, with over 170 delegates from 40 countries around the world.

Since the last gathering of TSGs in Dharamshala in 2019, we have seen a greater understanding of China's threat to global peace and security. This has increased opportunities for political advocacy to resolve the Tibet-China conflict. Towards this goal, Conference participants celebrated campaign victories and milestones achieved, many of which were identified as priorities in the 2019 Dharamshala Action Plan: the 2024 passage of the bipartisan Resolve Tibet Act in the U.S. House of Representatives; the 2023 European Parliament resolution calling for an immediate end to the repressive colonial boarding school system in Tibet; the two-fold increase in governments speaking out for Tibet at China's United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2024; the growing statements of concern and condemnation of China's policies and practices in Tibet from key UN Committees and Special Rapporteurs; the diplomatic boycott of China's 2022 Winter Olympic Games; the shuttering of hundreds of Confucius Institutes around the world; the cancellation of PRC-sponsored propaganda inserts in major media outlets; and the recent decision by Thermo-Fisher to cease sales of DNA test kits in Tibet.

In a world deeply traumatized by violent conflicts, the Conference expressed its respect and admiration for the Tibetan people's continued commitment to nonviolence and democracy in their decades-long struggle for freedom and human rights, under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Participants expressed their strong belief that nonviolent advocacy to resolve the Tibet-China conflict must

be a priority of the international community, and declared their deep commitment to this goal by increasing the level of strategic collaboration with movements fighting for their human rights and freedom, including the brave people of East Turkistan, Southern Mongolia, Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as the countless Chinese defenders of human rights and democracy, especially the new generation of activists inspired by the White Paper Revolution.

The Conference drew upon the diverse skills, experience and perspectives, as well as the sense of common purpose, of TSGs from around the world. Among the Conference participants were many individuals who have remained committed to the Tibetan Freedom Movement since protests rocked Tibet in 1987, and are now helping to train and mentor a new generation of skilled and dedicated Tibetan activists in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Australasia, represented at this Conference by dozens of engaged youth. It welcomed the participation of activists working on behalf of East Turkistan, Southern Mongolia, Hong Kong and Taiwan and expressed solidarity with our common goal of freedom and justice.

Attendees drew motivation from the message of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Conference, including his statement: "I always believe that our supporters are not pro-Tibetan but rather pro-justice." He is, and will always be, an inspiration for TSGs.

Rigzin Genkhang, Representative, Office of Tibet, Brussels, welcomed all participants to the Conference. The Conference also listened with appreciation to remarks from Mikulas Peksa, President of Tibet Interest Group, European Parliament, and Prof. Hans Gert Pöttering, former President of the European Parliament, as well as by Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Senator Eustache-Brinio, Chair of the French

Parliamentary Group for Tibet, and Norzin Dolma, Kalon, Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering in his keynote address reiterated the Central Tibetan Administration's commitment to the Middle Way Policy, while expressing the need to stress the historical status of Tibet as an independent country to counter China's false narrative on Tibetan history and to add value to the Middle Way Policy.

The Conference listened with grave concern to briefings detailing the ongoing repression of human rights in Tibet. The Conference highlighted the systematic effort by the Chinese Government to eradicate Tibet's distinct national and cultural identity through its system of colonial boarding schools, in which three out of every four Tibetan students, as young as four years old, are taken from their parents and denied the opportunity to be educated in their own language and culture.

The Conference condemned ongoing efforts to suppress religious freedom in Tibet, including through the attempt to control the process of recognizing reincarnations. The Conference reiterated that the Tibetan people have the right to manage their own religious affairs. Only His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and the people he entrusts, have the right to decide the process of recognizing his reincarnation.

The Conference demands the immediate release of all Tibetan political prisoners, including the Panchen Lama, who was subjected to enforced disappearance by the Chinese authorities at the age of six. It condemns the detention and mistreatment of all Tibetans advocating for human rights, including the recent case of Gonpo Kyi.

The Conference noted with alarm the illegal detention of over 1,000 Tibetans

in Dege in recent days for peacefully protesting a proposed dam, which will result in their forced resettlement and the destruction of several monasteries. It calls for the immediate release of all who have been detained, an end to all forced relocation of rural Tibetans.

The Conference is profoundly concerned about the devastating impact of China's policies on Tibet's fragile and vital environment, notably the damming of Asia's rivers, destructive mining practices and coercive settlement of nomads, all of which exacerbate the climate crisis and environmental destruction on the Tibetan Plateau, most likely destabilizing regional security. The conference calls upon the international community to recognise

its collective responsibility to the wellbeing and integrity of Tibet's fragile and globally important environment.

The Conference commends, and with great appreciation welcomes, the individual and joint declarations of support from governments around the world calling for an end to the violations of the Tibetan people's human rights. The Conference is grateful to the many elected representatives and government officials who continue to press the Chinese Government to meet the international legal obligations to respect the rights of the Tibetan people and to engage in dialogue with representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to pursue a mutually beneficial solution to the Tibet-China conflict.

The Conference participants reaffirm their commitment to supporting the Tibetan people in their struggle for freedom, self-determination, and respect for their human rights, and for protection of the Tibetan plateau's unique environment, until a resolution has been achieved that is satisfactory to the Tibetan people.

The Conference also looks forward to celebrating His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday in 2025 with activities befitting his stature to highlight his lifelong contribution to the wellbeing of humanity and of the Tibetan people, and to spread his message of peace, nonviolence and compassion.

Tibet Conference in Brussels Alarmed by Crackdown in Tibet

Tibetan leaders in exile and Tibet supporters are alarmed by reports about an ongoing major crackdown on Tibetan protesters in the eastern Tibetan area of Dege (Dege), where local Tibetans, among them Tibetan Buddhist monks, have non-violently protested against a dam construction project on the Driчу River on the upper reaches of the Yangtze.

The construction would lead to the relocation of approximately 2,000 Tibetans and to the destruction of monasteries in the area which are home to invaluable cultural heritage, partly from the 13th century. In peaceful acts

of defiance, Tibetans have protested in front of local government buildings and kneeled in front of Chinese officials, as videos of these protests have been sent from inside Tibet by local Tibetans, risking their own security. Chinese authorities rigorously persecute any such acts of spreading information.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the President of the Central Tibetan Administration, said, "The crackdown on non-violent protests in Dege is beyond condemnation. The Chinese authorities' disregard for the rights of Tibetans is unacceptable by any measure. The punitive acts demonstrate China's prioritization of its ideology and

interests over human rights. We call on the Chinese government to release all those detained and to respect the rights and aspirations of the Tibetan people. The world needs to hear the Tibetans' voices and confront the truth of Chinese misrule in Tibet."

In Brussels, more than 170 Tibetan leaders and representatives of Tibet Support Groups from 42 countries have come together at the 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups to discuss ways forward in the Tibetan freedom struggle.

Deeply concerned by reports of the PRC's mass arrests of Tibetans protesting construction of a dam that threatens displacement of villages & destruction of monasteries. PRC must respect human rights & freedom of expression and include Tibetans in the development & implementation of water and land management policies.

These centuries-old monasteries are home to hundreds of Tibetan Buddhist monks & contain irreplaceable cultural relics. The United States stands with Tibetans in preserving their unique cultural, religious, and linguistic identity.

-Under Secretary Uzra Zeya, the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues

US House Passes Resolve Tibet Act with a Decisive Bipartisan Support

On 15 February 2024, the US House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the bipartisan Resolve Tibet Bill, officially titled Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act (HR 533). The House’s approval of the bill signifies a major achievement for Tibetans and our supporters demonstrating a strong bipartisan support toward Tibet and the Tibetan cause. The bill reaffirms the US policy of supporting direct dialogue between the People’s Republic of China and representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or with democratically elected Tibetan leaders, without any preconditions, to resolve the Tibet-China conflict.

Following the passage of the bill in the House, Sikyong states, “On behalf of Tibetans in occupied Tibet and in exile, I extend gratitude to Representative Jim McGovern and Representative Michael McCaul for introducing the bill along with all the members for supporting this bill in the house. This achievement moves us closer to making the bill into law. We are now positively looking forward to the bill’s approval by the Senate.” Sikyong further adds, “This success reflects the collaborative advocacy efforts of the CTA, the International Campaign for Tibet, Tibetan associations and NGOs, Tibet Support Groups and individuals.”

The enactment of this bill will strengthen and reinforce the Middle Way Approach policy and the Central Tibetan Administration’s commitment to dialogue to resolve the Tibet-China conflict in the best interest of both the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.



Tibet Advocacy Section
Department of Information and International Relations
Central Tibetan Administration
12 January 2024

TIBET IN 2023

CHINA'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Tibet is the least free region in the world for the third consecutive year.

JANUARY

Two Tibetans Tatse and Dhonkho arrested without reason.

Tibetans in Drakgo warned not to share any information on recent demolition.

Unknown number of Tibetans died due to Covid with strict Chinese regulation on Information.

MARCH

Chinese police arrested Yangtso for contacting Tibetans in exile.

Tibetan writer Zangkar Jamyang known to have sentenced to 4 years.

Chinese police stepped up its restrictions on Tibetans during the anniversary of 10 March and 14 March Tibetan uprising.

MAY

China barred Tibetan writers, monks, and influential people from conducting public talks.

Sonam Gyatso was released from prison in very poor health.

Mining accident in Tibet by a Chinese company resulted in the disappearance of 6 Tibetans.

JULY

Chinese police canceled Kalachakra teaching by Lama Kalsang Tashi Gyatso in Tsoilho, Amdo.

Chinese authorities beat and detained Tibetan youths conducting trades during Horse racing event while allowing Chinese to carry on their trade.

SEPTEMBER

Schools in Tibet’s Karze and Ngaba ordered to ban Tibetan language use and Tibetan teachers are marginalized into unemployment.

Eight Tibetans arbitrarily arrested in Darlag for reportedly collecting donations for religious offerings.

Vice chairman of the “TAR” carried out propaganda work to indoctrinate Tibetan monastics in Nyenrong, Nagchu.

NOVEMBER

Tibetans Gyalo, Tsedho, Bhamo, and Kari were sentenced to two years in prison for religious activities.

PRC government released its infamous “White Paper” on Tibet titled “CPC Policies on the Governance of Xizang in the New Era: Approach and Achievements.”

Singer Golog Palden sentenced to three years in prison for writing “patriotic song.”



FEBRUARY

New Cybersecurity Law increases surveillance and censorship on Tibetans.

Tibetan political prisoner, Geshe Phende Gyaltzen died in prison due to Chinese police torture.

Increased restrictions and phone inspections during Tibetan Losar celebration.

APRIL

Gonpo Kyi was severely beaten for protesting against China’s unlawful sentencing of Dorjee Tashi to life imprisonment.

UN Rights Expert slammed China’s mandatory vocational training programs and labour transfer.

Officials clamped down on satellite equipments to only allow government-approved channels.

JUNE

Tibetans forced to pay respect to the Chinese Panchen Lama.

Tibetan university students compelled to give entrance exam in Chinese language only.

Monks of Shentsa and Sog County monasteries are forced to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

AUGUST

Tashi Wangchuk was attacked by Chinese police for his continued advocacy for the preservation of Tibetan language.

Tibetan writer Dhi Lhaden released from prison after 4 years.

Former political prisoner, Sonam Gyalpo, dies at age 68.

Approx. 951 Tibetan herders forcibly relocated from Damshung to Toelungdechen in the “TAR.”

OCTOBER

Chinese police arrested Kunchok Dakpa and Wangchuk Tso for allegedly contacting people outside the region and sharing pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama respectively.

A workshop in Tibet’s Ngari mandated 400 teachers and students to support the CCP and denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Language rights advocate, Tashi Wangchuk, denied business license and beaten by Chinese police.

DECEMBER

Tibetan women Tsomo and Nyidon arbitrarily arrested for discussing Tibetan Buddhism on WeChat.

Semkyi Dolma imprisoned for one and half years for contacting Tibetans in exile.

Rights defender Tsering Tso known to have subjected to 15-day “administrative detention” for exposing Chinese police’s racial discrimination against Tibetans.

Fours Tibetans arrested for engaging in religious activities.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Attends Long Life Ceremony in Bodh Gaya



Garden Tri Rinpoche offering a mandala to His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the Long Life Prayer at the Kalachakra Teaching Ground in Bodhgaya, Bihar, India on 1 January 2024.

On the morning of 1 January 2024, His Holiness the Dalai Lama left Gaden Phelgyeling for the Kalachakra Teaching Ground to attend a ceremony of offerings and prayers for his long life requested by the Central Institute of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, and its alumni, former students of the Dalhousie Tibetan School and people belonging to the Tibetan settlement at Paonta Sahib. Monks wearing crested yellow hats and playing horns led the way. A golden umbrella fluttered overhead. His Holiness smiled and waved to well-wishers lining the route.

From the platform, he smiled and waved again to the crowd, and many among them waved back. He greeted the distinguished Lamas, saluted the image of the Buddha surrounded by the seventeen masters of Nalanda in a large thangka behind the throne and took his seat.

The ceremony, led by the Chant-master of Namgyal Monastery and presided over by Garden Tri Rinpoché, opened with a

salutation to the Buddha, ‘the Subduer of the world’. Next came a recitation of ‘Clouds of Ambrosial Blessings’, Trulshik Rinpoché’s invocation of the series of incarnations of Avalokiteshvara in Tibet. The long-life prayers focussed on White Tara.

At a certain point Garden Tri Rinpoché came forward to present His Holiness with the long-life wand, which he accepted. A seven-limb prayer was chanted, and a large ritual cake was presented to His Holiness, who took a token portion. The Chant-master made a full mandala offering.

Next, Tri Rinpoché offered representations of the body, speech, and mind of the Buddhas, the vase, symbols [of the Buddhas] of the five noble families, the seven royal emblems, the eight auspicious symbols, the eight auspicious substances, and so forth. As this was going on, a procession of people belonging to the patron organizations passed across the front of the platform carrying an array of gifts that mostly

comprised volumes of scripture. Some of these were books that have recently been newly translated from Pali and Sanskrit into Tibetan.

Garden Tri Rinpoché, Jangtsé Chöjé Rinpoché, and Sakya Gongma Rinpoché followed by representatives of the patron organizations approached the throne to pay their respects. His Holiness gave each a white silk scarf and a red protection ribbon.

After the chanting of a prayer for His Holiness’s long life by his two Tutors and another by Jamyang Khyentsé Chökyi Lodrö, His Holiness addressed the congregation.

“Today, what I wish to say to my Dharma brothers and sisters, monks, nuns and laypeople, people with an interest in the teaching of the Buddha, who have gathered in this sacred place of Vajrasana, the seat of enlightenment, and offered this ceremony for my long life, is that when I look back, I rejoice in what I have been able to do in the world.

What's more I will continue to benefit sentient beings until I am more than 100 years old.

"In recent times we have seen conflict breaking out in the vicinity of Russia and other parts of the world as a result of neighbours regarding each other in terms of 'us' and 'them'. This creates division and overlooks the fact that as human beings we all belong to one family. It is my hope that if we learn to appreciate the oneness of humanity, that we are all the same as human beings, we will learn to live in harmony and friendship, able to be of help to each other. I consider it my responsibility to bring this to people's attention.

"Each of us, when we were born, was nurtured in our mother's love. We were suckled by her milk. As we grow up, we all want to be happy and not to feel pain, therefore we should remember how important love and affection have been to each of us. That's why we should help one another wherever we can.

"We don't need to create divisions on the basis of 'us' and 'them', we need to live together in peace. Differences in the colour of our skin or the faith we follow are of secondary significance when compared to our being the same as human beings. When we are born, we are not divided on the basis of national or religious labels.

"Today is New Year's day and I want to say, 'Tashi Delek' to all of you. We must try to make this year more peaceful, putting the problems and conflicts of the past year behind us. We can start by developing a sense of the oneness of all eight billion people alive today. As Buddhists we pray for the welfare of all sentient beings, but at least we should do what we can to help the beings of this world. What's important is to recognise our companions as fellow human beings—then we'll be able to create a more peaceful world.

"We increasingly face extreme weather events. Some places have been too hot, others have been flooded, still others have been stricken by drought. We must

pray that these calamities subside.

"I often point out how important it is to be warm-hearted, but our good heart must be guided by wisdom and good sense. Short term goals may not be enough, we must also judge what will be best in the long run. The key to leading a meaningful life is to help others as much as you can."

A final thanksgiving mandala offering was followed by a prayer to Buddha Amitayus.

A financial statement was read, first in Tibetan and then in English, declaring what was received and what was spent in support of the three days of His Holiness's teaching and today's Long-Life Ceremony. Norbu Tsering's family, Nyanang Tashi Dhondhup's family, Sonam Gyatso's family and the Lhaden Chotrul Monlam Trust gave significant support for the teachings. The Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies and its alumni, Shalu Monastery, the Paonta Sahib Tibetan Settlement, the Gelugpa University and Lhaden Chotrul Monlam Trust contributed to today's ceremony.

Thanks were offered to His Holiness for the teachings he has given, as well as to the local Bodhgaya administration, the local police for security and to members of Namgyal Monastery for their far-reaching contributions. Thanks were also expressed to others, too many to name, whose help ensured that all went smoothly.

Proceedings were concluded with the steady chanting of the Dedication Prayer from the end of the 'Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment', the 'Prayer for the Flourishing of the Teaching' and the 'Words of Truth', both composed by His Holiness, and lastly the 'Samantabhadra Prayer'.

Waving once more to the crowd and saluting the image of the Buddha, His Holiness boarded the golf-cart that then carried him back to the monastery.

For detailed news visit:
www.tibet.net

"Through Study, Reflection & Meditation, You Can Integrate What You've Learned With Your Minds", His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Gelukpa University Convocation

His Holiness the Dalai Lama was invited on 3 January 2024 to preside over the Gelukpa University Convocation and the award of Geshé Lharampa degrees to Geshés who had graduated over the last four years. He was met at the gate to the Kalachakra Ground by abbots of the great monastic seats of learning in south India—Ganden, Drepung and Sera—who escorted him to the stage. His Holiness sat in the middle with Ganden Tri Rinpoché to his right and Jangtsé Chöjé Rinpoché to his left.

Proceedings opened with a verse of homage to the Buddha:

I pay homage to the Chief of Shakyas
clan,
Who took birth in the Shakyas lineage
out of compassion and skilful means,
Who was invincible and defeated the
forces of evil beings
And whose body was like a majestic
golden mountain.

Moderator for the occasion, Geshé Tulku Tenzin Sherab, welcomed His Holiness, as well as other guests and dignitaries, to the stage. He explained that after the onslaught in 1959 that destroyed much of the Buddhist tradition in Tibet, many Tibetans were able to reach India due to the blessings of His Holiness. Monastics congregated in a camp in Buxaduar, where, under the guidance of His Holiness and his two tutors, a Geshé Lharam examination board was set up. Meanwhile, monks belonging to the three great Monastic Universities kept their traditions of study alive. The

moderator declared that the kindness of His Holiness in leading and inspiring all this cannot be repaid.

In 1970, a Gelukpa Examination Board was established, comprising abbots and examination officers, who laid out procedures and rules. Since then, more than 1000 Geshés have graduated. Many of them are serving the Dharma in different parts of the world.

Ganden Tri Rinpoché was invited to speak: “The custodian of the Buddhadharmā, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, is with us here today, as we gather to celebrate the Gelukpa University Convocation and the ceremony for awarding degrees. Those graduating today have studied thoroughly, exercised logic and debate and appeared for their exams. As a result, they will receive their Lharampa degrees. As Jé Rinpoché has advised, we must study, reflect and integrate what we’ve learned within.

“Once you have earned your Geshé degree, it’s customary to enter either Gyudmé or Gyudtö Tantric College to study the four interwoven commentaries of Guhyasamaja. This is a tradition that has been passed down without a break from the time of Jé Rinpoché. There are other texts to be memorized by newly graduated Geshés, but what is particularly important is to be able to pass on the reading transmission of the Guhyasamaja commentary. I urge you all to put effort into this. As Serkhong Tsenshab Rinpoché used to say, it is essential to keep this tradition alive.

“I pray that His Holiness the Dalai Lama and leaders of all our other Buddhist traditions may live long.”

“Today sees the conclusion of the Mönlam Chenmo or Great Prayer Festival,” His Holiness announced. “All of us gathered here are followers of the Buddha. We should recognise that the teaching of the Buddha is not about saying prayers and performing rituals. It’s mainly about using our minds to cultivate the awakening mind of bodhichitta and insight into emptiness.

“As a Buddhist monk, I generate the awakening mind and an understanding of emptiness the moment I wake in the morning, so my day is imbued with these principles. Generating bodhichitta enables me to fulfil the aims of myself and others and I call all sentient beings as my guests at the feast of enlightenment.

“I also do my best to combine bodhichitta with the view of emptiness, which is the way to overcome mental afflictions and disturbing conceptions. However powerful mental afflictions and disturbing conceptions may be, they are rooted in ignorance and so are without any sound foundation. Bodhichitta and emptiness, on the other hand, are more powerful and are supported by logic and reason.

“Jé Tsongkhapa advised:

In the beginning, I sought much learning. In the middle, all teachings dawned on me as spiritual instructions.

In the end, I practised day and night. I dedicated all this virtue for the dharma to flourish.

“Therefore, the more we learn, the more we gain insight and experience. The Buddhadharmā is logical and rational. As is mentioned in ‘Entering into the Bodhisattva Way’, there’s nothing that does not become easier with familiarity. The more familiar we become with emptiness, the more our ignorance is reduced.

“I work to integrate bodhichitta and emptiness with my mind every day, and I see the impact it has. Deity yoga is important, but being able to cultivate the awakening mind of bodhichitta and an understanding of emptiness are even more so. I urge you to really pursue these practices, confident that they will make you feel at ease. Bodhichitta and emptiness are what make life meaningful. Engaging in deity yoga in the absence of bodhichitta and emptiness will be ineffective.

“On this day when you are receiving your Lharampa degrees, we can recognise that studying the Buddhadharmā is

something incredible. It’s something particular to Tibet. I have friends from many other Buddhist countries, but few of them study as we do. My own studies began when I was a small child. As I told you the other day, when I was about three years old, I visited Kumbum Monastery and was struck by the sight and sound of young monks prostrating as they recited Om ara patsa na dhih. I was moved to imitate them. In due course, I came to Central Tibet to begin my formal studies. These included Collective Topics, Mind and Awareness, and the study of logic and reason. What effectively consolidated these studies was the practice of debate.

“We may be concerned about the current situation in the world. We may be anxious about the environmental challenges we face, but Manjushri will strengthen our intelligence to be able to resolve the problems we confront. That’s all I want to say for now.”

The moderator explained that the more than 300 Geshé graduates would file up onto the stage where Ganden Tri Rinpoché would present them with their degree certificates. This they did, white silk scarves being draped around their necks as they reached the stage. Having received their degree certificates, each of the Geshé bowed before His Holiness prior to leaving the stage.

Groups of Geshés who graduated in each of the last four years gathered around His Holiness to have photographs taken with him.

His Holiness expressed a wish to speak to the gathering once more.

“Jé Rinpoché told us that whatever we hear or read about, we need to apply the fourfold reasoning to really understand it. We might ask in relation to something—‘Is it a particle? Or is it not a particle? Is it both a particle and not a particle? Or is it neither a particle nor not a particle?’

“Having gained some understanding we explore and test it in debate. This is how we gain conviction in the teaching.

Then we extend our understanding by reflecting day and night on the meaning of whatever we've studied. This approach belongs especially to the Nalanda Tradition. Shantarakshita and other Indo-Tibetan scholars reflected on what they had learned and integrated it within themselves. It's important that we do this too. The point is to study, reflect and practise.

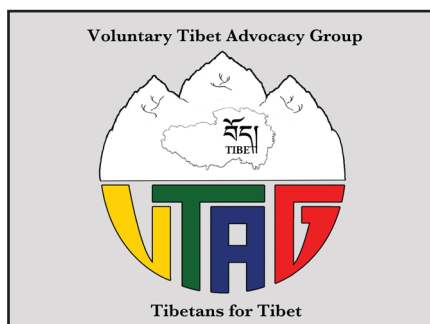
“We must look for the reasons behind the teaching. We can't rely merely on the words of the classic treatises we must transform what they mean into a living experience.

“Those of you who have received your Geshé degrees today have done well. Now, I urge you to set an example to others by putting what you've learned into practice. Through study, reflection and meditation you can integrate what you've learned with your minds.

“The day before yesterday a strong earthquake shook Japan. Many people there are now anxious about what'll happen next. Japan is a Buddhist country where they also recite the 'Heart Sutra'. Whenever a disaster takes place anywhere in the world we should feel sympathy for the people affected. So, today, let's recite the 'Heart Sutra' together for the people of Japan, especially the victims of the earthquake.”

The entire gathering joined together in chanting the 'Heart Sutra' as His Holiness had advised, completing it with a few recitations of the mantra of the Lion-faced Dakini.

For detailed news visit:
www.tibet.net



His Holiness the Dalai Lama Gives Customary Discourse on the 'Day of Offerings'



His Holiness the Dalai Lama joining in closing prayers as the teachings come to an end at the Main Tibetan Temple courtyard in Dharamshala, HP, India on 24 February 2024.

The Tsuglagkhang, the Main Tibetan Temple, and the courtyard before it were packed on 24 February with an estimated 8000 people, Tibetans, people from the Himalayan region, and others from further afield. They had all gathered to hear His Holiness the Dalai Lama give his customary discourse on the 'Day of Offerings', the full-moon day of the first month of the Tibetan New Year and the culmination of the Great Prayer Festival.

His Holiness walked from the gate to his residence to the throne at the head of the courtyard, below the temple. He was preceded by monks playing the Tibetan horn known as gyaling and another swinging a censer. A monk walking behind him carried a large yellow ceremonial umbrella. To the left of the throne, when His Holiness took his seat, was a gathering of eminent monks and to the right sat members of the Central Tibetan Administration. On the table next to him was a white orchid in full bloom.

A chant-master led a recitation of the 'Heart Sutra' followed by verses of homage to the Buddha, Manjushri, Maitreya, Nagarjuna from Tsongkhapa's 'Concise Stages of the Path. Meanwhile, tea and sweet rice were served. The

offering of a mandala and request for His Holiness teach was presented by Education Kalon Tharlam Dolma Changra followed by the Abbots of Gyutö and Namgyal Monasteries. The entire congregation joined together in chanting the verse for taking refuge and generating the awakening mind.

“So, today, we're all gathered here in this courtyard for a Dharma discourse,” His Holiness declared. “In the world today an increasing number of people are taking an interest in inner development, especially those whose lives have been focused on materialistic concerns. They are taking an interest in training their minds.

“The theistic religious traditions are good, but what distinguishes Buddhism is its thorough understanding of the workings of the mind. This is what attracts the interest of scientists. Our approach to finding inner peace by training the mind is both realistic and scientific. This is a tradition that has been upheld in Tibet and the regions around it.

“I have friends with strong religious faith who seek peace of mind in their belief in a creator god. However, we believe

we need to use our minds—to train our minds—to find inner peace. In the West there are people with no religious commitment paying attention to what the Buddha taught to reduce attachment and anger. Indeed, the primary antidote to anger is compassion.

“At the beginning of his work ‘Entering into the Middle Way’ the Indian master Chandrakirti pays homage to great compassion at the beginning of the path to enlightenment, in the middle and even at its fruition. Compassion provides a harvest of benefit.

“Compassion is crucial in our ordinary day-to-day lives. And in today’s world when people resort to violence and do harm to others, compassion has an important mediating role.

“I make compassion my primary practice and combine it with an understanding of emptiness. This brings peace of mind, a state of mind undisturbed by afflictive emotions, which brings good health and leads to long life.”

His Holiness explained that the teaching of the Buddha that had come to Tibet from Nalanda University depends not on faith but on logic and reason. Part of it includes an understanding of the workings of the mind. He emphasised the importance of understanding the trouble emotions can cause.

His Holiness mentioned that Songtsen Gampo, the Tibetan religious king, must have been very determined. Although he had married a Chinese princess, when it came to selecting a model for a Tibetan script, he chose the Indian Devanagiri alphabet. Then, during the time of King Trisong Detsen, Shantarakshita was invited to Tibet. He introduced the rigorous study of works by Nalanda masters like Nagarjuna, the key to which is the use of logic and reason.

His Holiness stressed that the more you employ reason and logic, the deeper will be your understanding of the Buddha’s teaching. He reiterated that thinking through what you’ve learned over and over again is very powerful.

The combination of study and analysis that underlies the Nalanda Tradition, he stated, is one of the world’s treasures.

“In a world facing great upheaval, it’s important to understand that anger, pride and arrogance are mentally disturbing. In many parts of the world there are people doing harm and hurting others. They could really benefit from teachings of compassion that are at the core of the tradition we have preserved. And we’ve kept this tradition alive by putting the teachings into practice. Our Chinese friends acknowledge that Tibetans are fundamentally good-hearted. Circumstances in the world may change, but peace of mind remains the same.

“We should try to explain our behaviour and values whenever we can. We have a tradition that gives rise to peace of mind, which is an essential factor if there is to be peace in the world. It’s important to recognise that when you’re overwhelmed by anger you have no peace within, but when you’re moved by love and compassion you do.

“I make the awakening mind of bodhichitta and an understanding of emptiness the very core of my practice. And, as I’ve said, it brings me peace of mind. I urge all of you to cultivate compassion and wisdom and base your own practice on warm-heartedness.

“Now, I would like to lead you through the All-Encompassing Yoga Mind, a practice I do every day which I think will be useful for you too. As human beings we are all the same. We all want to be happy not sad. We prefer to hear good news rather than bad. If you have a good heart, you’ll be popular, whereas if you’re proud and arrogant people will be reluctant to praise you.

“In ‘Entering into the Middle Way’ Chandrakirti pays homage to compassion at the outset because it is not only the seed of enlightenment, it’s also the water and soil that enable it to grow. I make compassion my primary practice because it brings me peace of mind and robust good health. Even

animals appreciate compassion.

“As soon as I wake in the morning, I reflect on bodhichitta. Then I consider how things appear to be objectively existent, but when I think it through, I see that they don’t actually exist that way. I reflect on these principles every day.

“Let’s meditate on the awakening mind, the wish to be of real benefit to others. Bodhichitta is a factor helpful to others as well as yourself in the short and long term. Now imagine this good-hearted, altruistic mind transforming into a white moon disc at your heart.

“Next, recall how you think of yourself as this or that and the way you appear to your mind as having a solid, independent existence. When you seek and don’t find anything existing that way, you recognize that you exist only as a designation dependent on language and concepts. Now, imagine this understanding of emptiness of a solid, independent existence transforming into a white vajra standing on the moon disc at your heart.

“Realization doesn’t occur immediately, but will dawn if you practise steadily.”

His Holiness led the gathering in reciting the All-Encompassing Yoga Mind mantra: Om sarva yogachitta utpatayami. Then, to stabilize the disciples’ minds and make the mind of all-encompassing yoga firm, he asked them to recite after him: Om surate samaya satvam ho siddhi vajra yatha sukham

His Holiness then recited a verse in praise of Avalokiteshvara—Chenresig—and the six syllable mantra, Om mani padme hung.

Greatly praised by all the Buddhas,
You have accrued all noble qualities,
And you are named the Deity with an Unwinking Gaze,
I pay homage to you, the Everlastingly Compassionate One!

He followed this by reciting a praise to Manjushri and his mantra Om ara patsa

na dhii.

I pay homage to Shri Manjugosha
Who bears a youthful form,
Is adorned by the lamp of wisdom
That dispels the darkness of the triple
world.

Finally, as is customary on this Day of Offerings, His Holiness read one of the Jataka Tales that recall Buddha Shakyamuni's previous lives. This story took place when the Bodhisattva was king of the Shibis. He encouraged his subjects to turn away from harm and embrace righteousness.

It happened that there was an exceptionally attractive young woman in the kingdom. She was named Unmadayanti, 'She Who Drives Men Mad'. Her father offered to marry her to the king, but he turned him down as his advisors recommended. She was then married to a member of the king's court. However, when the king encountered her while driving through the city he fell madly in love.

Unmadayanti's husband tried to persuade the king to accept her as his gift. But the king replied "No, that cannot be, and for what reasons? First, all my merit would be lost, and I am not immortal. Second, my wicked deed would inevitably become known to the public. And finally, when you were separated from your wife, you would burn with the fire of sorrow—a fire which would consume you as surely as flames consume dry grass."

His Holiness chose to stop there for the day. A thanksgiving mandala was offered and prayers for the flourishing of the Dharma were said. Then, smiling and waving to the crowd on his way, His Holiness walked steadily, but unhurriedly, back to the palace gate, from where he rode in a golfcart up to his residence.

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His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Losar Message

I'd like to wish my fellow Tibetans, both inside Tibet and those in exile, a Happy New Year this Losar—Tashi Delek to all of you!

Despite undergoing great difficulties in exile and living under a powerful Communist Chinese regime, our people, the majority of whom are inside of Tibet, have remained unscathed while I have been the leader.

Despite undergoing great difficulties in exile and living under a powerful Communist Chinese regime, the faith and aspiration of our people, the majority of whom are inside Tibet, have remained undiminished while I have been the leader.

Although the Communist Chinese rulers, after the '(so-called) peaceful liberation', have wished that we Tibetans forget our religious faith, we have held onto our convictions and our culture even more firmly—this is very good. Today, there is a renewed interest in Buddhism, not only among Tibetans, but even among some Chinese. In many parts of the world today, Tibetan spiritual and cultural traditions are regarded as logical, rational and of practical benefit when closely considered since they enable us to transform our minds in a positive way and bring about inner peace.

Nowadays, an increasing number of people in Western countries are taking an interest in Tibetan culture and spirituality. I'm also aware of an increasing number of Western scientists who admire the methods for developing a kind heart that is found in our culture, although they lack any religious belief.

The Communist Chinese have attempted systematically to eliminate our spiritual and cultural heritage. However, it has become clear that rather than destroying it, there is a renewed interest in our cultural traditions in the world today.

Our practice of kindness, the custom of being compassionate even to insects and other tiny creatures, has been passed down for generations from our forefathers. This is something that people around the world, who previously paid little attention to Tibetan Buddhism, are now taking an interest in our culture of good-heartedness and morality. So, it is important that we Tibetans take care of our culture and civilization by regarding it as one of the world's precious treasures.

As for me, I was born in Siling (in north-eastern Tibet) and moved to Lhasa when I was young. The Tibetan custom of cultivating a good heart lies at the core of our Tibetan Buddhist tradition that consist of Buddhist teachings of the highest quality of the Buddha's teachings and which we have preserved. Buddhist countries like Thailand and Burma preserve excellent Buddhist practices, but only Tibetans and Mongolians engage in rigorous study of the Dharma, although even in Mongolia, this has declined so much.

Tibet's civilized culture is like a universal treasure. You should continue to uphold it. As I said, people all over the world increasingly look to our culture and religion for inspiration, not because it includes prayers and rituals like making offerings, performing prostrations and so on, but because it deals with cultivating the mind. It explains how to enhance our sense of love and compassion. I feel it's very important that we put these methods into practice ourselves to set an example for other people around the world.

Tibetans are generally recognised as kind-hearted people, but we were not born in a different way, we are the same as other human beings. However, we've been brought up since childhood to have a kind heart and to observe the good habit of not killing even insects. We should keep this up and try to extend our kind-heartedness to people all over the world, whether they believe in religion or not. I urge you to keep this in mind and put effort into it.

Regarding Buddhist psychology, among Buddhist traditions, Tibetan Buddhism presents the most profound understanding of it. The classic treatises studied in the great monastic universities of Tibet, such as Sera and Drepung, present a thorough understanding of the workings of the mind and emotions. It's because this understanding contains methods for tackling mental problems in practical ways that it is so valuable. We have preserved not only the words of explanation but also the ways to implement them through a combination of study and practice.

This tradition of cultivating a good heart through a combined practice of study and contemplation that we Tibetans have preserved is now attracting interest around the world. Therefore, we Tibetans should do our best to maintain it with courage and determination.

I wish, in particular, to express my appreciation for my fellow Tibetans inside Tibet for the unflinching faith and devotion they possess. Still, I think it's important that the new generation of Tibetans has a deep understanding of the good customs we have upheld for more than a thousand years, not just because they are our customs but also because they accord with reason. In the reality of today's world, I think it's necessary that the new generation take a fresh look at the traditions we've preserved in the light of Western scientific interest. They need to understand why people in the West with no particular belief in religion take interest in our traditions. And they need to be able to recognize the value of the centuries-old cherished treasures of Tibet in order to preserve them well.

We all talk about peace, expressing hope for peace in the world. But peace has to be developed in our minds; it's not just about the absence of weapons. And the Tibetan custom of cultivating a warm heart is the best means for developing peace of mind. Please keep it up.

China's Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend Mega-dam

Not Feasible Due to Risks

-by Fan Xiao for Probe International

A transboundary super dam proposed for occupied Tibet, near its border with India, poses significant concerns and risks. A report by Chinese geologist Fan Xiao delves into the infeasibility of the massive development, revealing it isn't even needed.

As part of China's long-range objectives to create a modern energy system, the country's hydropower lobbyists have their sights set on the Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo, the fifth longest river in China and the largest river in Tibet Autonomous Region. The construction of a proposed super dam (the world's largest if built) on a transboundary river in a seismically active region carries significant risks and the potential for unprecedented costs. In addition to the concerns of Tibet and downstream nations, India and Bangladesh, analysts are voicing their alarm over the project's environmental and geopolitical dangers.

Among them is renowned Chinese geologist and environmentalist, Fan Xiao, who breaks down what's at stake in the following report translated by Probe International. He notes the dam is not needed "to reduce emissions" and cannot be justified as a climate change project. "In terms of Tibet's own energy needs, there is no requirement" for a super dam in this area. Hydropower stations in China's Sichuan and Yunnan provinces even have to release excess water due to lack of demand, he says. However, the allure of the "increased GDP, investment, and tax revenue" that such projects generate, says Fan, is a great temptation for governments and vested interest groups.

The Yarlung Tsangpo (its name in Tibet) is also known as the Brahmaputra, which flows through northeastern India and Bangladesh.

The Hengduan Mountains and Southeastern Tibet region, which extends from the Tibetan Plateau to the

Sichuan Basin, the Yunnan Plateau, and the Brahmaputra River plains in India, is the richest area in China in terms of hydropower resources.

Beginning in the 21st century, unprecedented large-scale cascade hydropower development has been carried out on the Min, Dadu, and Yalong rivers within Sichuan, as well as on the Jinsha and Lancan-Mekong rivers at the boundaries of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Tibet. This makes Sichuan and Yunnan the top two provinces in China for hydropower resources and the source of power for the "West-to-East Power Transmission" grid.

However, because the growth of hydropower capacity has exceeded the growth in demand for electricity, both Sichuan and Yunnan have increasingly resorted to "spilling" water – releasing water directly from reservoirs without passing it through power-generation equipment.

Despite the surplus supply of hydropower, plans are underway to build still more hydropower projects on the Yarlung Tsangpo, Niyang, Yigong Tsangpo, and Palong Tsangpo rivers in Tibet. It is worth noting that Tibet itself does not have the significant demand for energy that would necessitate large-scale hydropower development on these rivers. In addition to a lack of demand for Tibetan hydropower both domestically and internationally, there are also high costs associated with its transmission.

Furthermore, the cascade hydropower development of these rivers could result in significant ecological damage to the pristine and biodiverse environments of eastern and southeastern Tibet, often referred to as a genetic treasure trove of biodiversity.

This report discusses the infeasibility of the proposed massive hydropower development at the Great Bend of

the Yarlung Tsangpo River from the perspective of geological and environmental risks.

The Yarlung Tsangpo and its Great Bend

The Yarlung Tsangpo River originates from the Jiemayangzong Glacier on the northern slope of the Himalayas in Pulan County, Tibet. It flows from west to east for approximately 1,600 kilometers through the parallel valleys of southern Tibet within the Himalayan Mountain range. After reaching the town of Paizhen in Milin County, it turns north and forms a horseshoe-shaped bend on the northern side of Mount Namcha Barwa, with an elevation of 7,787 meters on the right bank, and Mount Gyala Peri, and an elevation of 7,257 meters on the left bank. From here, it cuts through the Himalayan Mountain range, and then flows southward into the Brahmaputra River-Ganges Plain in South Asia.

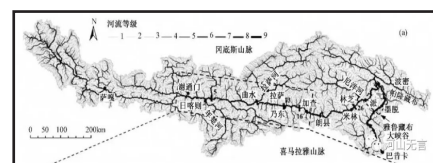


Figure 1: River network of the Yarlung Tsangpo River Basin (Credit to Wang Zhaoyin et al., 2014)

The Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo River, stretching from Paizhen Town in Milin County to Baxika Village in Motuo County, covers a length of 505 kilometers, with a maximum depth of 6,009 meters and an average depth of 2,268 meters. It is not only the world's largest canyon but due to its passage through the Himalayas, serves as a critical water vapor and geographical corridor linking the Indian Ocean to the southeast of the Tibetan Plateau, as well as connecting the Tibetan Plateau to the South Asian subcontinent.

This unique geographic feature has created China's largest marine glacial group in southeastern Tibet and serves as a significant meeting point for

different biogeographic regions. It also encompasses China's most complete mountain vertical natural zone, ranging from river valley subtropical monsoon forests to high-altitude alpine lichen ecosystems.

At an astounding vertical height of more than 7,000 meters on the southern slope of Mount Namcha Barwa, one can observe ecosystems and vegetation types resembling those found from the Equator to the North Pole. Due to the deep-cut canyon and strong warm, humid airflow from south to north, the tropical climate and natural zones of the Northern Hemisphere advance northward by approximately 6 degrees latitude in this region. This phenomenon extends to the northernmost boundary at approximately 29°30' north latitude, with elevations reaching around 1,100 meters, making it the highest limit of tropical vertical distribution in the Northern Hemisphere.

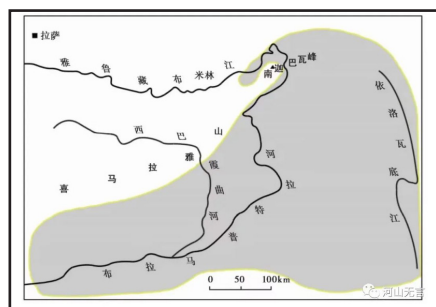


Figure 2: Indian Ocean tropical monsoon climate distribution region (Source: Chao Xie et al., 2017)

The formation of the Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo River and its grand canyon is not accidental. It is the result of a collision between the Indian Plate and the Eurasian Plate at both ends of the Himalayan orogeny, which formed two wedged “corners” known as the eastern and western “syntaxis” or tectonic structures in geological terms: the most intensely deformed regions in the Himalayan orogeny.

It is the pushing and squeezing of these two “syntaxis” that created the Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo River and the peak of Mount Namcha Barwa at the eastern end of the Himalayas, as well as the Indus River Bend and the peak of Nanga Parbat at the western

end of the Himalayas. The Tibetan Plateau is squeezed and narrowed like a waist in proximity to these two tectonic structures, leading to significant changes in the orientation of mountain ranges, such as the Hengduan range in the east and the Hindu Kush range in the west. It also results in the closely interwoven landscape of mountains and gorges, such as the natural wonder of the confluence of three rivers at the boundary of Tibet, Sichuan, and Yunnan.



Figure 3: Location of the eastern “syntaxis” and the western “syntaxis” of the Himalayas (shown as white circles on the map).

It is precisely because of the existence of this eastern Himalayan “syntaxis” that the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend has become the region with the most intense tectonic uplift at the edge of the Tibetan Plateau, featuring well-developed faults, deep topographic incisions, frequent earthquakes, and a high susceptibility to mountain hazards, such as landslides and rock falls.

The Great Bend region is susceptible to geological events, especially earthquakes

The formation of the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend’s landscape is related to the occurrence of major faults that have experienced significant activity since the Late Cenozoic era. Specifically, the river segments on both the north and south sides of the Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo, which run parallel to the Yarlung Tsangpo Fault (Milin-Mirui-Lulang-Dongjiu left-lateral strike-slip fault) and the Himalayan Central Thrust fault, developed due to these tectonic activities.

In addition, there are also faults that are

nearly perpendicular to the Himalayan Mountain range, crossing near the apex of the Great Bend, the western side of Mount Namcha Barwa, and near the Doshong La Pass. These faults include the Jiali Fault, Motuo Fault, and Apalong Fault. These faults formed at least around seven-million years ago (Zhang Jinjiang et al., 2003). The reason for the formation of the Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo River in this area is also related to the activity of the northwest-trending Jiali Fault.

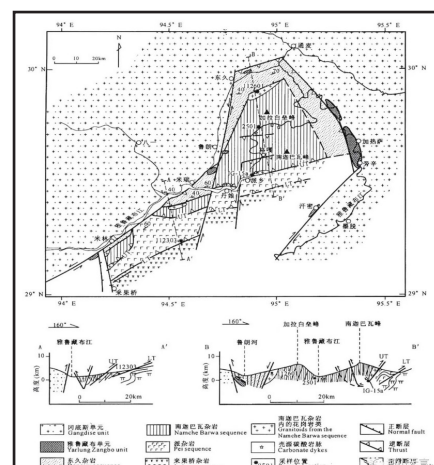


Figure 4: 1:1,000,000 geological map of the eastern “syntaxis” of the Himalayas (Source: Liu Yan et al., 2006)

Research suggests (Ding Lin et al., 1995) that due to intense tectonic movements, the uplift rate of the crust in the vicinity of the Great Bend reached 5 to 10 millimeters per year for approximately one million years. About three-million years ago, the average elevation in this area was around 1,100 meters, and by ~500,000 years ago, the average elevation had risen to approximately 4,400 meters. Intense tectonic movements and fault activity are naturally accompanied by strong seismic activity. Although historical earthquake records are scarce due to the remote location, according to the “The Catalogue of Chinese Historical Strong Earthquakes from the 23rd century BC to 1911 AD” there were two recorded strong earthquakes in the Chayu area near the Great Bend prior to 1911: a 6.5-magnitude earthquake in December 1878 and another 6.5-magnitude earthquake in July 1911.

One of the most famous modern

earthquakes associated with the eastern Himalayan tectonic structure is the magnitude 8.6 Chayu-Motuo earthquake that occurred on August 15, 1950. It is also one of the most renowned major earthquakes globally. The epicenter was located at approximately 28.4° north latitude and 96.7° east longitude. The most severely affected areas were in Motuo and Chayu, with the highest intensity level reaching XII. Buildings were completely destroyed, and despite the sparsely populated nature of the Great Bend region, around 1,800 people lost their lives.

Villages such as Yedong, Gelin, Beibeng, Zhibai, Didong, and Bibo were either swept into the Yarlung Tsangpo River along with landslides or buried by large landslide masses. Nine out of ten mountain cliffs collapsed, and numerous tributaries of the Yarlung Tsangpo River and its two banks experienced landslides that blocked the river. At least three locations along the main channel of the Yarlung Tsangpo River were blocked by collapsed landslide masses, leading to a temporary halt in the river's flow.

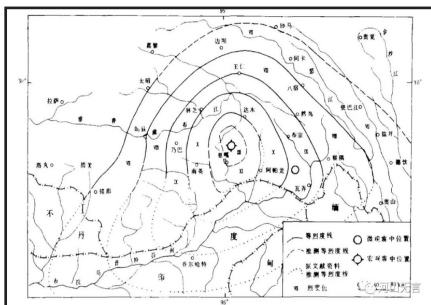


Figure 5: The Isoseismal Map of the 8.6 M Chayu-Motuo earthquake on August 15, 1950. Although the microscopic (instrumental) epicenter was near Lower Chayu, the macroscopic epicenter with the most severe surface damage, probably affected by the topography, was south of Xirang Village in Motuo County in the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend. (Source: You Zeli et al., 1991)

The Chayu-Motuo earthquake also triggered large-scale avalanches and ice avalanches. The Zelongnong Glacier on the southern slope of Mount Namcha Barwa was fractured into six segments, leaping in sections along the valley. The terminal ice mass destroyed the village of Zhibai at the mouth of the valley, resulting in 97 casualties. The ice mass then plunged into the Yarlung Tsangpo River, creating an ice dam tens

of meters high, which caused the river to be blocked for several hours.

The terminal end of the Zelong Glacier also shifted from its original elevation of 3,650 meters to 2,750 meters along the Yarlung Tsangpo River, with a horizontal displacement of 4.8 kilometers.

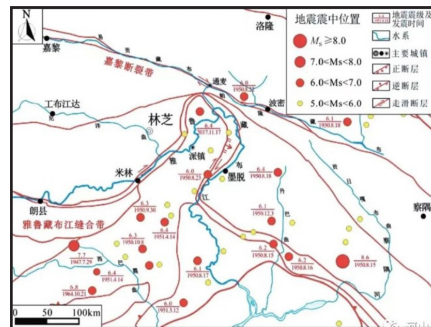


Figure 6: Distribution of earthquakes $\geq 5.0 M$ in the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend region in the last 70 years (Source: Li Bin et al., 2020)

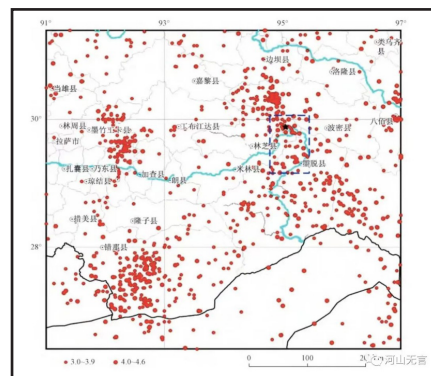


Figure 7: Distribution of destructive earthquakes in the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend and surrounding areas from 1970 to 2016 (small red circle: magnitude $\geq 3.0-3.9$; large red circle: magnitude $\geq 4.0-4.6$) (Source: Zou Zinan et al., 2019)

After the Chayu-Motuo earthquake of magnitude 8.6, frequent aftershocks continued for about a year. In the Great Bend region, there were 12 aftershocks with a magnitude of 6 or higher, with the highest aftershock reaching a magnitude of 6.4. The seismic damage caused by the earthquake exacerbated the occurrence of geological hazards such as collapses, landslides, and debris flow in this region for an extended period.

For example, the large landslide in the Jiamaqiming Gully, from Sotong to Tongmai in Bomi County, remained active for an extended period. Guxiang Gully in Bomi County experienced large-scale debris flows in 1953, which continued for more than half a century,

with over 6,000 recorded occurrences. The accumulated debris at the mouth of Guxiang Gully reached approximately 100 million cubic meters and blocked the Palong Tsangpo River, forming Guxiang Lake. In September 1969, the Zelongnong Glacier surged again, rushing into the Yarlung Tsangpo River where it formed a tens-of-meters-high ice dam, which was breached the following day.

Following the Chayu-Motuo earthquake of magnitude 8.6, this region has experienced strong earthquakes with a magnitude of 6 or higher in the past ten years, including a magnitude 6.9 earthquake in Milin on November 18, 2017, and a magnitude 6.3 earthquake in Motuo on April 24, 2019.

Due to tectonic uplift, river incision, seismic activity, and gravitational forces, a number of mountains on both sides of the Great Bend are in an unstable state, prone to collapse and landslides. According to some research findings (Zou Zinan et al., 2019), there are 108 major landslide masses within a certain range on both sides of the river from Jiala in Milin County to Xirang in Motuo County. The largest of these giant landslide masses had a volume of up to 4.5 million cubic meters.

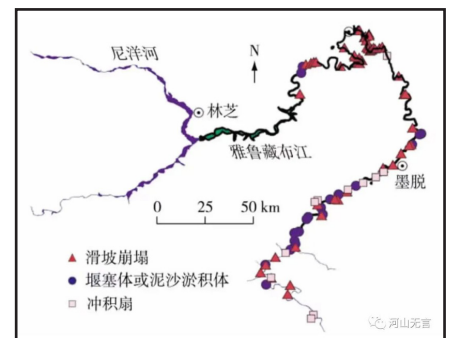


Figure 8: Distribution of risk points of mega-geological hazard chain in the Yarlung Zangbo River Great Bend area (the red triangle: landslides & collapses; blue circle: debris barrier or sediment accumulation; pink square: alluvial fan) (Source: Li Bin et al., 2020)

Furthermore, according to surveys (Li Xiang, 2019), in the section of the Great Bend from Jiarsa Township in Motuo County to Xirang, there are 43 large-scale landslides. The largest of these, the Motuo landslide on the left bank of the Yarlung Tsangpo River, has a volume of

up to 25.6 million cubic meters.

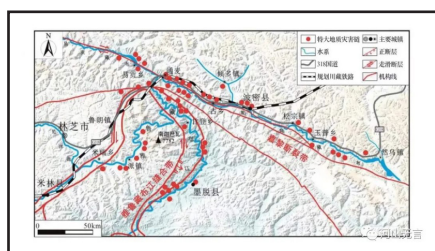


Figure 9: Distribution of the sites of landslides & collapses in the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend (the red triangle: landslides & collapses; blue circle: debris barrier or sediment accumulation; pink square: alluvial fan. Source: Yu Guoan et al., 2012)

Unprecedented costs and risks of building a giant hydro dam in the Great Bend

According to the proposed design, a high dam will be built near Paizhen Town of Milin County to hold back the Yarlung Tsangpo River, where a group of three giant tunnels, each with a diameter of 13 meters and a length of 34 kilometers will go through and beneath the Himalayas, forcing the river water to flow through the three giant tunnels rather than the big bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo River, and using the 2,400 meters of hydraulic drop after straightening the bend to generate electricity. At the lower end of the tunnels, a cascade of six dams will be built along the Xirang Qu, a tributary on the right bank of the Yarlung Tsangpo River, northwest of Xirang Village in Motuo County. Once completed, the Motuo Power Station will have a total installed capacity of 43.8 million kilowatts, thus becoming the world's largest super-giant hydropower station.

In an area with such high geological risks, the construction of a mega-project like the one in the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend carries several potential hazards:

- Massive engineering excavation: building high dams, constructing giant tunnels, and developing a large-scale cascade of power stations in this region requires extensive excavation work. This massive alteration of the terrain can lead to the formation of steep cliffs and overhanging faces, which can exacerbate slope instability and increase the risk of landslides and collapses.
- Accumulation of excavated material: the excavation of large tunnels generates a significant amount of discarded material and debris. Disposing of this material in the narrow and steep terrain of the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend or nearby river valleys can significantly increase the risk of landslides, debris flows, and erosion.
- Due to the project's location in a seismically active area, strong earthquakes can directly damage the project. If the project's design takes into account seismic resistance, the dam structure itself may be able to withstand the destructive effects of strong earthquakes. However, earthquakes often trigger other uncontrollable events such as riverbank collapses, landslides, and mudslides, which can pose a significant threat to the project structure and may lead to severe secondary disasters.
- The high dam and large reservoir that will store water near Paizhen Town poses a high risk of inducing strong earthquakes due to their immense storage capacity, significant water level fluctuations, and their location on the active major fault line of the Yarlung Tsangpo River. Additionally, the original presence of many existing or potential landslides and rockslide bodies on both sides of the Great Bend could be further destabilized or reactivated by the inundation of reservoir water, erosion of reservoir banks, and the repeated changes in reservoir water levels. All of these factors may exacerbate the occurrence of geological hazards in the reservoir area.
- The high dam and large reservoir's interception of sediment, leading to sediment deposition, is another significant hazard. While the Yarlung Tsangpo River is relatively low in sediment content compared to other major rivers in China, the increased soil erosion along its banks in recent years has led to a trend of rising sediment load. Furthermore, research indicates that the middle reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo River, from Lizhi in Zhongba County to Paizhen in Milin County, feature a wide valley where sediment accumulation can be as high as 900 billion cubic meters (Li Zhiwei et al., 2015). This stretch of the main river accepts sediment from tributaries including the Nianchu River, Lhasa River, and Niyang River. According to observations from the Nuxia Hydrological Station near the entrance of the great canyon, the Yarlung Tsangpo River carries an annual suspended sediment load (primarily fine sand) of approximately 30 million tons (Wang Zhaoyin et al., 2014). On the other hand, sediment generated in the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend area accounts for 50% of the sediment discharge into the Brahmaputra River (Yu Guoan et al., 2012). Therefore, the construction of a big dam in the Great Bend would lead to rapid reservoir sedimentation. As the riverbed rises, it would exacerbate upstream flood disasters. Additionally, the discharge of floodwater and sediment downstream would disrupt the existing riverbed structure in the lower reaches of the Great Bend, intensify the rate of riverbed incision in the large bend of the river, and increase the occurrence of landslides and rockslides in the Great Bend (Li Zhiwei et al., 2015). Moreover, the reduction in sediment transported to the Brahmaputra-Ganges Plain is a cause for concern due to its potential negative impacts on the downstream river environment.
- The diversion of water for hydropower generation in the Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo River will significantly reduce flow and water levels in the river section from Paizhen in Milin County to Xirang in Motuo County, which forms the large bend of the river.

This will have a major impact on the riverbed structure and the ecological environment in this river section. Moreover, it will increase the slope of the rivers along the length of the Palong Tsangpo and Yigong Tsangpo rivers that converge into the Yarlung Tsangpo River at the top of the Great Bend. This increased slope will enhance the river's erosion capacity and contribute to the geological instability of the Palong Tsangpo and Yigong Tsangpo rivers' surrounding environment.

The negative impacts on the geological environment mentioned above have been proven in many examples of cascade hydropower development in western Chinese rivers. However, the geological instability and susceptibility to geological disasters in the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend are far greater than in other existing rivers and sections in western China. Therefore, developing hydropower in the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend and constructing mega-engineering projects will incur unprecedented costs and face unprecedented risks.



Figure 10: The red line indicates the location of the giant hydropower development in the Grand Canyon of the Yarlung Tsangpo, upstream of the bend of the river. The dam will effectively cut-off the flow of water and divert it from Point A (Paizhen Town on the upstream) through three giant pipes to Point B (Xirang Village downstream). Once the high dam near Point A is completed, the water flow in the bend will be much less. In other words, the flow between Point A and Point B in the bend will be totally regulated by the high dam. Not surprisingly, the construction of high dams will completely alter the riverine conditions of the bend, especially the hydrological conditions.

In terms of Tibet's own energy needs, there is no requirement for constructing mega-hydropower stations in the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend. Even when considering the possibility of transmitting electricity from Tibet to

other regions (such as eastern China), there are significant challenges related to high transmission costs. Given that hydropower stations in Sichuan and Yunnan provinces have to release excess water without generating electricity, there appears to be a lack of demand in the electricity market. In view of the immense negative impact on the ecological and social environments in the Yarlung Tsangpo Great Bend, and the southeastern Tibetan region, it becomes clear that pursuing hydropower development in this area may not be worth the cost.

However, the allure of increased GDP, investment, and tax revenue generated by mega-hydropower projects can be tempting for governments and vested interest groups. Therefore, the potential environmental and societal risks resulting from flawed decision-making should be a cause for significant concern and scrutiny.

[1] About China's electricity supply and demand

China's continuous expansion of installed electricity generation capacity ensures that the growth in electricity supply exceeds the growth in electricity demand and there is no nationwide shortage of electricity. However, there are still periodic shortages during peak electricity demand periods, such as the winter heating season, or in regions which are heavily reliant on sources of power that are variable, such as hydro, wind, and solar power. For example, in regions like Sichuan, where hydroelectric power dominates, shortages may occur during periods of low river flow, requiring stable sources of power from coal or other forms of thermal generation to compensate and regulate the grid, contributing to the sustained growth of coal power in China's energy mix.

Therefore, considering China's abundant coal reserves and the stable output of coal-fired power plants, the country continues to rely on coal for electricity generation. Current localized electricity shortages are more related to the variability of energy supply than

a lack of overall generation capacity. Even in the case of coal power, China's dependence on imported coal from Australia, known for its high quality and low-cost thermal coal, contributed to an electricity shortage when diplomatic tensions led to a disruption of Australian coal imports. Once domestic coal production increased and coal imports from Australia resumed, such electricity shortages were alleviated.

Meanwhile, large-scale hydropower development plans in Tibet are primarily driven by the interests of the hydropower industry and the local government's pursuit of GDP growth and tax revenue. These plans are not needed for more power or to reduce emissions.

[2] While overall electricity demand is expected to grow (unless the economy experiences complete stagnation and negative growth), China's continuous expansion of installed capacity ensures there is no nationwide shortage of electricity. The relatively high cost of long-distance west-to-east power transmission from hydropower sources is a significant factor restraining demand for hydropower from western regions in China's eastern provinces.

China exports electricity to other countries, but the proportion of exported power to total electricity generation is small: In Yunnan Province, for example, in 2017, total electricity generation was 273.009 billion kWh and only 2.49 billion kWh of that was exported to Vietnam (1.32 billion kWh), Laos (0.33 billion kWh), and Myanmar (0.84 billion kWh). Though more recent data is not available, I believe that any exports are unlikely to constitute a significant market for Chinese electricity. Yunnan did, however, export 123.17 billion kWh (or 45% of its total electricity generated) to other provinces in eastern China through West-East Power Transmission Grid, to Guangdong Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in particular. It is interesting to note that 227.763 billion kWh, or 83%, of Yunnan power was hydroelectric power.

Regarding the power transmission grid,

China already has a unified ultra-high-voltage grid, but the establishment of a nationwide extra-high-voltage grid has been under discussion. While an extra-high-voltage grid could enhance transmission capacity, the high construction cost, poor economic viability, and significant safety concerns have led many experts to oppose its implementation, making it currently unlikely.

[3] A syntaxis is an abrupt major change in the dominant orientation of the main fold and thrust structures in an orogenic belt.

[4] The Late Cenozoic era, also known as the Neogene and Quaternary periods, is a major division of geological time. It is the most recent era in the Earth's history, spanning some 23 million years ago to the present day.

[5] "The Catalogue of Chinese Historical Strong Earthquakes from the 23rd Century BC to 1911 AD" was published by the China Seismological Press in 1995; part one of the fourth edition of "The Catalogue of Chinese Earthquakes". This historical earthquake catalogue covered a time span of more than 4,100 years, from the 23rd Century BC to 1911 AD. It contains 1,034 historical earthquakes with magnitude greater than 4.7. Part two of the fourth edition of "The Catalogue of Chinese earthquakes" — "The Catalogue of Chinese Present Earthquakes" — was published by the China Science and Technology Press in 1999. This catalogue covered the time period 1912-1990, and listed a total of 4,289 earthquakes. See: Methodology to determine the parameters of historical earthquakes in China.

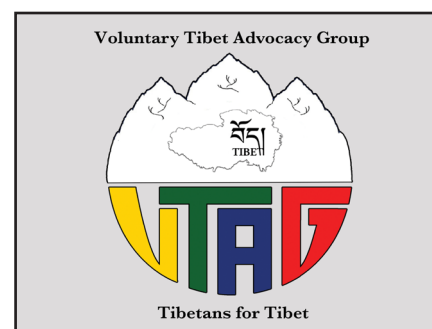
[6] Seismic intensity is a way of measuring or rating the effects of an earthquake at different sites — the degree of damage on the earth's surface and to man-made structures, such as dams and buildings, for example. Intensity ratings are expressed as Roman numerals between I at the low end and XII at the high end. Signs of building damage for seismic intensity IX: brick (earth and

stone) wooden structure houses mostly destroyed and severely damaged; through type timber frame houses a few destroyed, most severely damaged and moderately damaged; fortified brick and concrete structure houses mostly severely damaged and moderately damaged, a few slightly damaged; unfortified brick and concrete structure houses a few destroyed and mostly seriously damaged and moderately damaged; most of the houses with reinforced concrete frame structure are seriously damaged, most of them are moderately damaged and slightly damaged.

[7] A debris flow is a mixture of water and particles driven down a slope by gravity. They typically consist of unsteady, non-uniform surges of mixtures of muddy water and high concentrations of rock fragments of different shapes and sizes. Debris flow differs from landslide in its "flowing" feature. Flow means relative movement in numerous layers of the medium, whereas a slide occurs only along one or several interfaces or beds.

[8] Usually, this dam is referred to as the Motuo Power Station, which is actually a hydroelectric complex, consisting of a high dam upstream for water storage, three massive pipelines for water diversion, and six downstream power stations. According to the data obtained by the author, the total installed capacity of the Motuo Power Station is 43.8 million kilowatts, but there are also articles that mention a total installed capacity of 60 million kilowatts. Both of these figures are unofficial because Chinese authorities have not publicly disclosed relevant data.

[9] Based on the study, "Earthquake Hazards and Large Dams in Western China," by John Jackson for Probe International, the construction of more than 130 large dams in a region of known high seismicity represents a major experiment for China with potentially disastrous consequences for its economy and citizens. A comparison of more than 130 large dam locations to seismic hazard zones, for dams that are already completed, currently under construction, or proposed in western China, reveals 48.1% of these dams are located in zones of high to very high seismic hazard, the majority (50.5%) are located in zones of moderate seismic hazard, with only 1.4% are located in zones of low seismic hazard. Moreover, the rapid rate of construction and the location of some of these dams around clusters of $M > 4.9$ earthquake epicenters, from events that occurred between 1973 and 2011, is cause for significant concern. The risk of earthquake damage caused by the region's high natural seismicity is compounded by the risk of Reservoir Induced Seismicity (RIS) which results from the seasonal discharge of water from the region's reservoirs. The risk of earthquake damage to dams is also compounded by the increased risk of multiple dam failures due to the cascade nature of dam spacing.



China Doesn't Want You to Say 'Tibet' Anymore

-by Chun Han Wong for The Wall Street Journal

A yearslong shift toward the Chinese name 'Xizang' is accelerating as Beijing prepares for a fight over the choice of successor to the current Dalai Lama.

Tibet is no longer “Tibet,” not in China anyway.

Chinese officials are increasingly using the term “Xizang,” the official English spelling of the name that China’s ethnic Han majority applies to the Tibetan homeland on the country’s far western frontier.

The shift dovetails with a broad assimilation drive targeted at China’s ethnic minorities and outlying regions that has intensified under Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who has sought to forge a singular national identity—one centered on the Han majority and loyalty to the Communist Party.

Amid these efforts, Beijing has also been stepping up preparations for a fight over the choice of successor to the current Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people, who turns 89 in July. China’s officially atheist leadership has denounced him as a separatist, and insisted that they get to choose the next incarnation of the Dalai Lama.

For decades, Chinese officials and state media typically referred to “Tibet” in English-language communications, applying a name widely used across the West. That began to change in recent years, as China’s Foreign Ministry and a nationalistic party tabloid switched

to using “Xizang,” the standard Romanization of the region’s Mandarin Chinese name that is pronounced, roughly, “shee-ZAHNG.”

Beijing has stepped up its usage of the “Xizang” label in recent months. At an academic seminar in August, Chinese scholars advocated replacing English references to “Tibet” with “Xizang,” a view that the party agency handling ethnic affairs promoted on social media. Two months later, the Chinese government arranged a diplomatic conference in the Tibetan city of Nyingchi, titled “Xizang Trans-Himalayan Forum for International Cooperation,” where Tibet was generally referred to as “Xizang” in English.

Major state-media outlets, such as the Xinhua News Agency, increasingly referred to “Xizang” in English-language reports.

The most authoritative use of “Xizang” came in November, when the Chinese government’s top publicity office published a white paper on the “Governance of Xizang,” departing from references to “Tibet” used in previous policy documents.

The semantic switch opens a new front in the Communist Party’s efforts to reshape global narratives on China in favor of its preferred nomenclature, particularly on what Beijing regards as its core interests, experts say.

Chinese officials will seek to popularize the “Xizang” label on the international stage—particularly in the Global South—by appealing to anti-Western sentiment, said Matthew Akester, an independent Tibet researcher based in the Indian town of Dharamshala, where the Tibetan government-in-exile is located. “There is an international pro-China constituency that may well be turned by something like that.”

Beijing might eventually use coercion as

well, Akester says, including economic pressure and commercial boycotts against governments and businesses that continue to refer to “Tibet.” “There will be consequences for not using ‘Xizang,’” he predicted.

The Communist Party’s United Front Work Department, which handles religious and ethnic affairs; the State Council Information Office, the Chinese government’s publicity arm; and China’s Foreign Ministry didn’t respond to requests for comment.

The adoption of the “Xizang” label is “designed to fulfill their political ambition of legitimizing their claim over Tibet,” said Tenzin Lekshay, a spokesman for the Tibetan government-in-exile. “The Sino-Tibet conflict is longstanding, and changing the name will not resolve the problem,” he said. “Rather, it will create more complexity.”

China’s Communist Party has sought to consolidate its control over Tibet since sending troops into the region in 1950. Since then, Beijing has directed long-running efforts to assimilate ethnic Tibetans and quash what it calls separatist forces led by the Dalai Lama, who was a teenager when the People’s Republic took control of Tibet.

The assimilation drive intensified after Xi took power in late 2012. While his predecessors relied more on economic development as a way to naturally integrate ethnic minorities, he has taken a comparatively hard-line approach, with the party taking an active role in reshaping cultural identities.

In Tibet, Beijing has in recent years imposed increased restrictions on Tibetan religion, education and language, while boosting the government’s ability to surveil residents. Chinese officials generally reject claims that they are diluting or suppressing Tibetan culture, instead arguing that the Communist Party has improved lives and livelihoods

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Department of Finance, CTA

for people in Tibet, while upholding their religious and ethnic identities.

Historians say the present-day Chinese name for Tibet, “Xizang,” dates back to China’s last imperial dynasty, the Qing. That name came from a Chinese transliteration of “Gtsang”—a reference to the name of one area within historical Tibet.

“The name ‘Xizang’ is wholly imbued with a Chinese viewpoint,” Elliot Sperling, an Indiana University historian of Tibet, wrote in 2011. “Indeed, one might say that use of that name subliminally reinforces it: The first syllable means ‘West,’ i.e., it situates Tibet according to the way it’s perceived from China.” “The meaning of Xizang is essentially determined by politics,” Sperling wrote, pointing to differences in how various Chinese regimes defined the region’s boundaries. China’s current government doesn’t have an officially authorized Chinese term for “the traditional and historic realm of Tibet,” wrote Sperling, who died in 2017.

Chinese authorities have used “Xizang” in the past, though sporadically. For instance, the Tibet regional government has used xizang.gov.cn as the main address for its website since at least the mid-2000s, though Chinese officials at the time generally referred to “Tibet” in English remarks.

“Tibet” remained the prevalent English label well into the Xi era. For instance, a government white paper published in 2021 by the State Council Information Office was titled “Tibet Since 1951: Liberation, Development and Prosperity.”

The latest white paper, published in November, identifies the region as “Xizang” throughout the text, though “Tibet” still appeared in references to an airline and a museum that bear the name, as well as the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. It also used “Tibetan” as a demonym and adjective in references to local residents and culture.

China’s Foreign Ministry spearheaded the use of “Xizang,” using the standard

Romanization in official statements and translations with increasing frequency over recent years. For instance, when Foreign Minister Wang Yi hosted an event on Tibet in 2021, the ministry published a summary of his remarks that referred to the region as “Xizang.”

Global Times, a nationalistic party-run tabloid, has also been rendering Tibet as “Xizang” in its English-language reports about the region since 2021.

The party’s United Front Work Department published a social-media post in August that discussed the “Xizang” label, citing Chinese academics as saying that “Xizang” is a more accurate English name for China’s Tibet Autonomous Region, a provincial-level administrative division that Beijing formally set up in the 1960s.

The article noted that “Tibet” has often been used to refer more broadly to areas influenced by Tibetan culture, which includes the Tibet Autonomous Region and parts of neighboring provinces. “This wrong concept has been around for a long time,” and distorted international views about the geographical scope of Xizang, Wang Linping, a professor at Harbin Engineering University, was quoted as saying.

The article also argued that rendering Tibet as “Xizang” is justified for the sake of complying with regulatory requirements, citing a Chinese government decision in 1978 to uniformly use Beijing’s official Pinyin Romanization system to spell the names of Chinese people and places.

“Using Pinyin means acting in accordance with the law and implementing our relevant laws and regulations,” Lian Xiangmin, deputy director-general of the state-affiliated China Tibetology Research Center, was quoted as saying.

Some people in the West will have different opinions, but China handles Tibet-related affairs following the law, Lian said. “Whether they can accept it or not is their problem.”

Department of Finance Invites Applications for Tibet Corps Volunteer Service for Year 2024-25

Tibet Corps, an initiative administered by the Social and Resource Development Fund within the Department of Finance, Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), serves as a vital platform for Tibetan professionals, university students, and retired scholars residing in India, Nepal, Bhutan, and overseas. This program facilitates their engagement with the CTA, allowing them to contribute their diverse skills and expertise to both public and private sectors. Under the auspices of the Central Tibetan Administration, the Tibetan Professional Volunteer Service Program continues to thrive, with plans for the fiscal year 2024-2025 already in motion. Individuals who meet the program’s eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply before the deadline of April 30, 2024, to participate in this meaningful endeavour.

Volunteering Eligibility Requirements

- A Tibetan, or a person of Tibetan origin
- A current or graduate college students, retired or working professionals
- Possess specialised knowledge in a professional field or subject
- Commitment to serve between three months to a year of service

Application Process for a Tibet Corps Position

- Applicant can fill the form from the Tibet Corps website (www.tibetcorps.org)
- Applicant must submit resume and a cover letter
- Working professionals must submit no objection letter from the employer

Tibet Corps Service Opportunities

- Service opportunities can be based in Dharamshala within one of the CTA offices or field based in one of the Tibetan settlements, public health and schools
- Volunteer will receive an orientation on the CTA and its departments
- Volunteers will receive a monthly stipend of Rs. 7,000 and accommodation
- Volunteers will receive an appreciation certificate from the Central Tibetan Administration upon completion of their tenure

Note: The Department of Finance may review and decide if and when deemed necessary. Contact No: 7807379041, tibetcorps@tibet.net

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Kashag Condoles Demise of Kyabje Doboomb Tulku Rinpoche



(File Image) Kyabje Doboomb Tulku Rinpoche

The 16th Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration expressed its deep condolences at the passing away of Kyabje Doboomb Tulku Rinpoche on 2 February 2024. Rinpoche passed away on 29 January 2024 at the age of 82.

The Officiating Sikyong, Kalon Norzin Dolma of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), wrote, “On behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration, the Kashag would like to offer its profound condolences to the administrators of Kyabje Doboomb Tulku Rinpoche’s Monastery and his devoted followers.”

“Rinpoche had dedicated most of his life in fulfilling His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s wishes of preserving and promoting Tibetan religion and culture. We earnestly pray for his swift rebirth and continue his noble teachings and dharma activities for the benefit of all sentient beings.”

Born in 1941 in Gakye Gudor in Kham, Kyabje Doboomb Tulku Rinpoche was recognised as the reincarnation of the previous Kyabje Doboomb Rinpoche by Yangtrul Thupten Jampa Tsultrim Tenzin at the age of two. At 12 years of age, Rinpoche enrolled into Drepung Loling Monastery in Tibet. After arriving into exile in 1959, Rinpoche joined Buxa Chogar and later attained Acharya degree which is equivalent to Master’s degree from Varanasi’s Sanskrit University in 1972. In 1973, Rinpoche served as the head of research section at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. Two years later, Rinpoche attained Geshe Lharampa degree from Drepung Loling Monastery. As per the instruction of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Rinpoche took on the duties of the Assistant Secretary at the Private Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1977. In 1981, Rinpoche served as the Director of the Tibet House based in Delhi for 30 years.

Compassion is crucial in our ordinary day-to-day lives. And in today’s world when people resort to violence and do harm to others, compassion has an important mediating role.

-His Holiness the Dalai Lama

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QUOTES

“In recent times we have seen conflict breaking out in the vicinity of Russia and other parts of the world as a result of neighbours regarding each other in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’. This creates division and overlooks the fact that as human beings we all belong to one family. It is my hope that if we learn to appreciate the oneness of humanity, that we are all the same as human beings, we will learn to live in harmony and friendship, able to be of help to each other. I consider it my responsibility to bring this to people’s attention.” - His Holiness the Dalai Lama during Long Life Ceremony in Bodh Gaya

“We don’t need to create divisions on the basis of ‘us’ and ‘them’, we need to live together in peace. Differences in the colour of our skin or the faith we follow are of secondary significance when compared to our being the same as human beings. When we are born, we are not divided on the basis of national or religious labels.” - His Holiness the Dalai Lama during Long Life Ceremony in Bodh Gaya

“The crackdown on non-violent protests in Derge is beyond condemnation. The Chinese authorities’ disregard for the rights of Tibetans is unacceptable by any measure. The punitive acts demonstrate China’s prioritization of its ideology and interests over human rights. We call on the Chinese government to release all those detained and to respect the rights and aspirations of the Tibetan people. The world needs to hear the Tibetans’ voices and confront the truth of Chinese misrule in Tibet.” - Sikyong Penpa Tsering in Statement Released by the 9th International Conference of TSG following Clampdown in Derge

“We urge China to promptly release those detained and to cease the dam construction. It is crucial for China to acknowledge the peaceful protests of Tibetans, addressing their concerns about preserving historic monasteries and safeguarding their homes.” - Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel on his personal X (formerly known as Twitter) platform
