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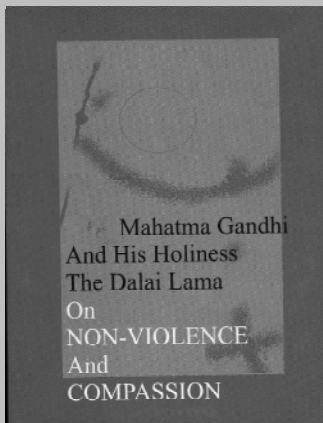
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Ancient Wisdom for Modern Living



Mahatma Gandhi and His Holiness the Dalai Lama on Non-Violence and Compassion

Edited by Dr. Satish Inamdar; Published by the Department of Information and International Relations, CTA, 2005; Printed at Omkar Offset Printers, Bangalore; Price Rs 450 (postage extra); Pages 365 +

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REVIEW

“Readers will remain grateful to Dr. Satish Inamdhara for a wonderful and insightful compilation of the thoughts of the two of the world’s truly great teachers. *Mahatma Gandhi and His Holiness the Dalai Lama on Non-violence and Compassion* deserves to become a book of daily reading for all those concerned about the sorry state of our so-called modern world.”

—Tibetan Bulletin

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CHINESE WRITING ON TIBET

Tenzin Monlam

Since the recent events of 10 March and the ensuing turmoil over the Olympic torch relay, there has been much discussions on Tibet among the general Chinese population and especially the intellectuals. The official Chinese mouthpiece, Xinhua, tried to whip up communal tension with its propaganda, yet it had unintended effects. Now the Tibetan issue is seeping deep into the Mainland and into the minds of the intellectuals. In China and around the world, Tibet has been discussed extensively in blogs, publications and daily papers. While there have been various attempts at misinformation, there have also been enlightened, balanced and very rational discussions among the Chinese population. These small voices of reason and rationality are being heard amidst the cacophony of extremism and propaganda.

The truth about the Tibet situation that the Chinese government tries so painstakingly to distort or hide from the world and its own citizens is getting out in thousands of blogs and discussion forums that have cropped up overnight. These blogs, discussion forums and online publications, despite the presence of the so-called “net nannies” of the government, have started to initiate discussions on subjects otherwise considered taboo. These forums of discussions have been a reality check on how and what the response of the common man in the streets of China is towards our issue.

The radical nationalism that the official state media whipped up with the purpose of creating rift and tension among the ethnic Chinese and the Tibetans is being questioned and challenged by its own citizens. The recent petition made public by leading Chinese intellectuals and writers entitled ‘Twelve Suggestions for Dealing with the Tibetan Situation’ mention two points. The two in the twelve points are:

1. At present the one-sided propaganda of the official Chinese media is having the effect of stirring up inter-ethnic animosity and aggravating an

already tense situation. This is extremely detrimental to the long-term goal of safeguarding national unity. We call for such propaganda to be stopped.

2. We support the Dalai Lama’s appeal for peace, and hope that the ethnic conflict can be dealt with according to the principles of goodwill, peace, and non-violence. We condemn any violent act against innocent people, strongly urge the Chinese government to stop the violent suppression, and appeal to the Tibetan people likewise not to engage in violent activities.

This policy of the government to deliberately feed the masses with propaganda in order to manipulate nationalism as a counterforce against international criticism is a dangerous double-edged sword. The policy can, on the other hand, disable the government to clearly and logically tackle the Tibet problem. Overseas political commentator Liang Jing wrote in his essay titled ‘The Dalai Lama’s Wisdom and Ignorance of the Han’, published in China Digital Times’ that “As long as the majority of the Han people cannot cast off their ignorance, Chinese leaders hardly dare face the Tibet issue rationally.”

People are also beginning to see and realize that an unresolved Tibet issue has become a tool of career and livelihood for thousands of officials who cannot afford to let the issue of Tibet be decided amicably. In Wang Lixiong’s article ‘The Cry of Tibet’ published in the Wall Street Journal, dated 28 March 2008, Phuntsog Wangyal, a Tibetan now retired in Beijing who for years had been a leading Communist official in Tibet, has observed that “a doctrine of ‘anti-splittism’ has taken root among Chinese government officials who deal with religion and minority affairs, both in central offices in Beijing and in Tibet. Having invested their careers in anti-splittism, these people cannot admit that the idea is mistaken without losing face

and, they fear, losing their own power and position as well.”

We can observe a gradual shift in the understanding and attitude of the Chinese citizen towards the issue of Tibet and Tibetans. Zhang Boshu of the Philosophy Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences based in Beijing, in his assessment work, Titled, ‘The Way to Resolve Tibet Issue’, clearly mentions that “Short sighted politicians in our own country have been pleased that their petty schemes to stir up nationalist sentiment have been so successful. This not only manipulates domestic opinion but also uses so-called “mainstream public opinion” to oppose the criticisms coming from international society. On the other hand, this serves to push for the consolidation of the situation in Tibet in the hope of getting through the Olympics peacefully. They did not realize that the Tibet issue has already become a major factor affecting China’s future. Solving the Tibet issue will take courage and great wisdom. Petty scheming could ruin Tibet and ruin China”. He is also critical of China’s handling of the Tibet policy and recounts Hu Yaobang’s early 80s liberal policy as perhaps the ideal way. He is straight forward and clear in his acceptance that “many of the tragedies in contemporary Tibetan history are directly linked to the Communist Party system and the social policies that the Party carried out. “

A better informed and enlightened China is slowly emerging out of the murkiness of misinformation created by the official propaganda networks. Wei Jingsheng, in his article ‘No time to close our eyes’, dated 17 March 2008, in a Global Viewpoint article, testified to this emergence when he said, “The old lies and propaganda don’t work anymore. In the past, many Han Chinese didn’t know about the sufferings of the Tibetans. Now thanks to travel, tourism, cell phones and the Internet, the majority Han understand that the Tibetan struggle against tyranny

is the same as their own.”

It is to be noticed that while some of the Chinese writings on Tibet have been discreetly sympathetic to our political cause, most of the writings treat the Tibet issue as an internal human and religious rights crisis. While sympathetic to the Tibetan cause in a general way, they usually and mostly refrain from making any political comments. So while there is a growing awareness and concern about the Tibet issue in general, most of the writings on Tibet are still toned down. Besides the Tibet issue, the Chinese writers have been unusually bold and vocal in their criticism of the government on various other policies. The government’s refusal to abide by the promise of a free and fair media during the Olympic games drew much criticism from sections of journalists and writers, both domestic and international.

If not anything else, the recent outburst of information and discussion on Tibet has sensitized the usually very unaware Chinese people on the culture and issue of Tibet. After the initial phase of anger and hatred has died down, sections of thinking population, genuinely amazed on why the Tibetans would not want to be part of the Chinese culture, many resorted to queries and investigation on their own in various blogs and sites, dodging government firewalls. Tang Danhong, a poet and documentary filmmaker from Chengdu, Sichuan, wrote in an article in her blog(hosted outside of China), which was later posted on 28 April 2008 in Chinadigitaltimes that “For anyone who has been to Tibet, he/she should sense such a religious belief among Tibetans. As a matter of fact, many are shocked by it. Such attitude has been carried on throughout their history, and is expressed in their daily lives. This is a very different

value, especially compared with those Han Chinese who have no beliefs, and now worship the cult of money. This religious belief is what Tibetans care about the most. They project this belief onto the Dalai Lama as a religious persona.” Such kind of thinking is increasingly found in the various blogs and discussion forums reflecting a genuine change in the perspective of the Chinese population on the culture and issue of Tibet.

It is in these little islands of free speech and information from inside China and the Diaspora that the people to people communication without the interference of propaganda happens and hopes of truth and reconciliation prevails. A more informed and enlightened China is in the interest of both China and Tibet in the long and short run.

TIBET AND THE OLYMPICS

No time to close our eyes

By Wei Jingsheng



If there has been any lesson in all my years as an activist for democracy and human rights in China, it is that only international

pressure coupled with internal pressure will yield solid results.

Now, as what the Dalai Lama has called “cultural genocide” goes on in Tibet, it is wholly unacceptable that the International Olympic Committee refuses to take a stand against the Beijing government crackdown.

Far more than Steven Spielberg, who quit his advisory role for the Olympic celebration because of the Chinese government’s unwillingness to pressure the Sudan government over the

genocide in Darfur, the Olympic committee has a special obligation to act.

Improvements in China’s human rights were a quid pro quo for granting the games to Beijing. So how can the committee proceed as if nothing has happened when blood is flowing in the streets of Lhasa?

If the committee does not act to put pressure on Beijing, as would be consistent with its obligations, it risks this Olympics being remembered the way the 1936 Games in Berlin were.

Already, the “spirit of the Olympics” in Beijing has become associated with genocide by two of the world’s top spiritual and cultural leaders. Indeed, if the IOC and the rest of the world community does not pressure Beijing to stop the crackdown and improve human rights now, a boycott of the games will be seen as widely justified.

The Tibetans have long chafed under the oppression of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1959, when the Dalai Lama fled to exile in India, the protest of the Tibetans was harshly suppressed in a crackdown that lasted more than a year. Almost a million Tibetans reportedly lost their lives.

In 1989, the current Chinese party leader, Hu Jintao, then in his capacity as a provincial leader, suppressed yet another revolt in Lhasa by bringing in the military to kill people in the streets.

And, of course, the whole world knows about Tiananmen Square in that same year. Clearly, without human rights and the rule of law, neither Tibetans nor the majority Han Chinese are safe from persecution at the whim of the Communist authorities.

The old lies and propaganda don’t work anymore. In the past, many Han Chinese didn’t know about the sufferings of the Tibetans. Now thanks to travel, tourism,

cell phones and the Internet, the majority Han understand that the Tibetan struggle against tyranny is the same as their own.

Of course, the Chinese authorities have expressed their willingness to resolve the Tibetan issue through negotiation. But, just as with the case of Darfur, there is no sincerity behind this peaceful face unless international pressure is brought to bear.

The IOC's unwillingness to pressure Beijing at this moment is tragic because these Olympics are a turning point in modern Chinese history.

By acting as host to the Olympics, the Communist Party's rulers have turned their palace into a global glass house. They can no longer show the smiling face of the "peaceful rise" of China to the world and the stern face of brutal suppression at home.

The Olympics will force China to show its true face. Only international pressure, by the IOC and others, will make sure it is the face we all want to see.

Wei Jingsheng, a prominent Chinese dissident who spent 18 years in Chinese prisons, now lives in exile in Washington. A Global Viewpoint article published on March 17, 2008

OPINION: THE CRY OF TIBET

By WANG LIXIONG



The recent troubles in Tibet are a replay of events that happened two decades ago. On Oct. 1, 1987, Buddhist monks were

demonstrating peacefully at the Barkor — the famous market street around the central cathedral in Lhasa — when police began beating and arresting them. To ordinary Tibetans, who view monks as "treasures," the sight was intolerable — not only in itself, but because it stimulated unpleasant memories that Tibetan Buddhists had been harboring for years.

A few angry young men then began throwing stones at the Barkor police station. More and more joined, and then they set fires, overturned cars and began shouting "Independence for Tibet!" This is almost exactly what we saw in Lhasa two weeks ago.

The fundamental cause of these recurrent events is a painful dilemma that lives inside the minds of Tibetan monks. When the Chinese government demands that they denounce their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, monks are forced to choose between obeying, which violates their deepest spiritual

convictions, and resisting, which can lead to loss of government registry and physical expulsion from monasteries.

From time to time monks have used peaceful demonstrations to express their anguish. When they have done this, an insecure Chinese government, bent on "annihilating unstable elements" in the "emergent stage," has reacted with violent repression. This, in turn, triggers violence from Tibetans.

In recent decades, the Chinese government's policy for pacifying Tibet has been to combine the allure of economic development on the one hand with the threat of force on the other. Experience has shown that this approach does not work.

The most efficient route to peace in Tibet is through the Dalai Lama, whose return to Tibet would immediately alleviate a number of problems. Much of the current ill will, after all, is a direct result of the Chinese government's verbal attacks on the Dalai Lama, who, for Tibetan monks, has an incomparably lofty status. To demand that monks denounce him is about as practical as asking that they vilify their own parents.

It should be no surprise that beatings of monks and closings of monasteries naturally stimulate civil unrest, or that civil unrest, spawned in this way, can turn violent.

Why aren't these simple truths more obvious? Phuntsog Wangyal, a Tibetan now retired in Beijing who for years was a leading Communist official in Tibet, has observed that a doctrine of "anti-splittism" has taken root among Chinese government officials who deal with religion and minority affairs, both in central offices in Beijing and in Tibet. Having invested their careers in anti-splittism, these people cannot admit that the idea is mistaken without losing face and, they fear, losing their own power and position as well.

Their ready-made tag for everything that goes wrong is "hostile foreign forces" — an enemy that justifies any kind of harsh or unreasoning repression. When repeated endlessly, anti-splittism, although originally vacuous, does take on a kind of solidity. Careers are made in it, and challenging it becomes impossible.

I am a supporter of the Dalai Lama's "middle way," meaning autonomy for Tibet in all matters except foreign affairs and national defense. This arrangement eventually would have to mean that Tibetan people select their own leaders — and that would be a major change from the way things are now. Tibet is called an "autonomous region," but in fact its officials are all named by Beijing, and are all tightly focused on their own personal interests and the interests of the Communist Party. Tibetans can clearly see the difference between this

kind of government and self-rule, and there is no way that they will support bogus autonomy.

It follows — even if this is a tall order — that the ultimate solution to the Tibet problem must be democratization of the Chinese political system itself. True autonomy cannot come any other way.

It is time for the Chinese government to take stock of why its long-term strategy in Tibet has not worked, and to try something else. The old problems remain, and they are sure to continue, perhaps in places like the “Uighur Autonomous Region” of Xinjiang, if a more sensible approach is not attempted.

Mr. Wang, a Beijing-based writer, was the organizer of the recent 12-point statement on Tibet by 30 Chinese intellectuals. This article was translated from the Chinese by Princeton University Prof. Perry Link.

*Source: The Wall Street Journal
March 28, 2008*

THE WAY TO RESOLVE THE TIBET ISSUE

Zhang Boshu:

Here is an assessment of the Tibet situation by Zhang Boshu of the CASS Philosophy Institute in Beijing, translated for CDT by a reader who wishes to remain anonymous:



Zhang was born in Beijing in 1955. He received an MA in economics from Zhongguo Renmin Daxue in 1982 and in 1985 passed the entrance examination for the Institute of Philosophy of the graduate school of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. His research has been on critical theory in continental Europe in modern western philosophy. He obtained MA and PhD degrees in philosophy in 1988 and 1991. He has held a post in the Philosophy Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences from 1991 to the present. In recent years he has striven to understand the lessons of success and failure in the history of the past century of China's democratic transition and institutional modernization. He has gradually settled upon criticism of 20th Century Chinese despotism as his main research topic.

Ever since March, the issue of Tibet and the Olympics have been stirred up together, drawing the attention of the entire world. Short sighted politicians in our own country have been pleased that their petty schemes to stir up nationalist sentiment have been so successful. This not only manipulates domestic opinion

but also uses so-called “mainstream public opinion” to oppose the criticisms coming from international society. On the other hand, this serves to push for the consolidation of the situation in Tibet in the hope of getting through the Olympics peacefully. They did not realize that the Tibet issue has already become a major factor affecting China's future. Solving the Tibet issue will take courage and great wisdom. Petty scheming could ruin Tibet and ruin China.

How did the Tibet issue arise?

The Tibet issue is first of all a human rights issue.

Although the authorities are not willing to admit it, I want to say it plainly. This problem that plagues the leadership of the Communist Party, if we look at its origin, was created by the Chinese Communist Party itself as the ruler of China.

We don't have to look too far back in history. Whether in fact the relationship between the Tibet government and Beijing from the Yuan Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty was one of relatives or of equals is a matter of dispute among academics. For now, we don't need to pay any attention to controversy. What is most important is that from 1912 onwards, Tibet was for a long period in a de facto “state of independence”. That

situation continued until 1951 when the Tibet local government signed an agreement with the Beijing central government — the “Seventeen Point Agreement on the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet”. The document was moderate and constructive. The agreement stressed that Tibet is part of China but also recognized that Tibet's current system would not change and that the Dalai Lama's position would not change. We can call that the earliest version of “One Country, Two Systems” in contemporary China.

In 1954, the 19 year-old Dalai Lama and 16-year old Panchen Lama both went to Beijing to take part in the First National People's Congress, attending as honored guests of Mao Zedong. They were appointed Vice Chair of the NPC and Vice Chair of the National People's Consultative Congress, respectively. Tibet's future seemed bright. Problems began to appear in 1955. Mao Zedong's utopian socialist social transformation began to accelerate that year. Ripples spread from the Chinese interior to Chengdu and the Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai, and Gansu Provinces. In these areas, which were not bound by the 17 Point Agreement, “democratic reform” broke out on a spectacular scale. Radical local Communist Party leaders sought to carry out “democratic reform” and “socialist transformation” simultaneously so as “to make spectacular progress in just

one step". They struck hard against the masters of the serfs and their "representatives", confiscating the lands and property of monasteries and forcing collectivization, slandering the religious beliefs of Tibetan people, and forcing upper class people, lamas and monks to "reform their thinking".

The result was that they stirred up dissatisfaction and resistance among the Tibetan people. During 1956 - 1958, armed conflicts in the Tibetan areas grew larger and larger in scale. When one died another arose but were soon were put down by campaigns by the PLA to put down rebellion and wipe out rebels. Tens of thousands of Kham and Amdo region Tibetans fled across the Jinsha River into Tibet. This sowed the seeds for the 1959 Lhasa "rebellion". These historical circumstances led to the "rebellion" and indeed were a necessary condition for that event to occur.

There is no need to go into detail about what happened after that. The victorious "suppression of the rebellion" at Lhasa showed that the central government had achieved absolute control of all the Tibetan areas including Tibet itself. It also marked the rapid move of Tibet towards "socialism". Chinese of my age grew up hearing songs like "The Red Sun is rising about the snowy mountains" and seeing movies like "Serfs". In those days we really believed that under the leadership of the Communist Party "the serfs have been liberated" and were living happy lives. Later, after reading a lot of historical materials, I learned that there were many untruths in the propaganda.

The dictatorship system of the Communist Party, the arrogance and ignorance of leaders, and the extreme leftist policies pursued by them in the Tibetan areas brought terrible disasters to both the religious and lay people of Tibet. In 1962, the Panchen Lama, who was ranked as a "national leader," wrote a letter to Premier Zhou Enlai expressing his deep sorrow at what he had seen and heard of the suffering of the Tibetan

people. Since the Panchen Lama was certainly not opposed to the leadership of the Communist Party, and was loyally and faithfully reporting to the Party the actual situation in the Tibetan areas, this letter known as the "70,000 Character Document" can be seen as a document that accurately reflects the difficult situation of the Tibetan people during those years. I might as well quote from it here:

On "class struggle" in the Tibetan areas: "In most or in many areas, the cadres didn't care if the campaign was planned or carried out well. They were intent on making a spectacular display that would strike terror in people. They didn't care if they attacked the right people. The objective was to do the campaign on a big scale and achieve numerical targets." They attacked many people whom they shouldn't have attacked. Often "those who were the objects of struggle meetings had not done anything particularly bad or committed serious errors. So they had to make up many false and serious accusations. They exaggerated at will, turning truth and falsehood upside down." Many innocent people were forced to flee abroad against their will. Those who stayed behind lived in terror.

On the lives of the people in the Tibetan areas: "Because of the rise in the agricultural areas of the five unhealthy tendencies [Tr. Note: post Great Leap Forward Party critique of GLF excesses — wu feng "Ñ – over-egalitarianism, the common practice of exaggeration, confused orders, too many compulsory orders, and special privileges] and excessively tight controls on grain, and the standards for the amount of grain the people could retain was set too low, a severe grain shortage resulted, ...and many households had no grain. In some areas some people even starved to death. Formerly Tibet was a dark and barbarous feudal society but there had never been a shortage of grain like that, especially since Buddhism permeated the society, everyone rich and poor, had the custom of helping the poor and giving alms.

People could easily support themselves as a beggar, so we never knew of anyone ever having starved to death."

Implementation of "dictatorship" resulted in the improper deaths of many prisoners: After the "suppression of the rebellion", the proportion of prisoners in the Tibetan population reached several percent, something completely unprecedented. In 1959, Chairman Mao set forth a policy that since the population of Tibet was small, people shouldn't be killed or at most only a few people should be killed. But in fact, just the opposite happened. Except for the somewhat better treatment of imprisoned members of the upper classes, most people who were locked up in prison endured very bad conditions. The prison wardens didn't care about the lives or health of the prisoners. They often verbally abused and savagely beat prisoners. Moreover, wardens deliberately moved prisoners back and forth between very warm and cold places so that the prisoners could not adapt and their clothes were always unsuitable. Their clothes could not keep them warm, their mattresses were not waterproof, and the wind and rain entered their cells. They never got enough to eat, living in miserable conditions, yet they still had to get up early to do work. The hardest work was always given to these people. They became worn out physically, often came down with diseases. As a result of no rest and inadequate medical care, many prisoners died who should not have.

On religion and nationalities issues: "Under the so-called 'elimination of superstition', the first priority was opposing religion. The second priority was destroying images of the Buddha, Buddhist scriptures, and stupas." When they demanded that monks and nuns return to secular lives, "first in all the temples and monasteries, under the pretext of 'study' and 'mobilization', they brought all the monks and nuns together into a large hall or room, and made them study nervously day and night, forcing them to criticize each other in order to

create a big wave of sharp struggles and attacks. People who openly express their belief in religion were given labels such as a superstitious element or someone who doesn't like the revolution. They were constantly attacked without rhyme or reason. Even worse, in some places they made the lamas stand on one side and nuns and lay religious women stand on the other. They were then forced to chose each other in marriage. In Tibet, there were originally over 2500 temples. After 'democratic reform' there were only 70 left. Originally there were 110,000 monks and nuns. Ten thousand fled abroad, leaving 100,000 behind. After 'democratic reform' there were only 7000 monks and nuns left. What especially cannot be condoned is that in some areas there was deliberate desecration and insults to religion such as the Buddhist Canon used for compost. Many paintings of the Buddha and scriptures were used to make shoes or other objects. There is absolutely no reason for this. Because there were many insane things done that even a lunatic wouldn't do, people in all classes of Tibetan society were deeply shaken. Their emotions were in chaos and they became exceedingly sad and shed tears. They said 'Our land has been made into a dark place,' quoting a Tibetan proverb that means 'a place without religion'.

Alas, when I read these characters, my own heart bleeds and my face burns.

Most of these problems also existed in the Chinese interior as well. But they were more serious in Tibet. They were more extreme and more widespread there. No matter how well-meaning or noble was the initial motivation of those in power was to use their social ideals to transform Tibetan society was, its shocking results are all crimes. These are crimes that resulted from ignorance, arrogance, rage and violence.

Under these circumstances, the over 100,000 Tibetans who fled to India and other foreign countries called upon the entire world to support the human rights of Tibetans. Therefore the Tibet issue

became a symbolic issue for the entire world. What can be surprising about that? Moreover, this was going on during the Cold War and so in the minds of western people, Tibet became a focal point in the game of competing national interests in which China, the Soviet Union, India, the United States and other countries were engaged.

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency did in fact provide funding, technical and other support to Tibetans in exile. That was part of the effort of the United States to contain the "spread of communism". Chinese can of course curse the damn Americans for plotting to "split China" without revealing their real intentions. But on the other hand, if the Communist Party had not done so many stupid things in Tibet and forced Tibetans to flee into exile, what would other people have been able to say? What pretext could they have to butt in? I haven't even mentioned the Cultural Revolution. That "historically unprecedented" revolution, because it was even redder and even further left, was even more extreme and more cruel. Of course it created even greater disasters for the Tibetan people. I won't discuss them here.

Enlightened Communist Party Leaders Once Reflected on the "Leftist" Misfortunes that Brought Disaster to Tibet

Objectively speaking, there has been no shortage of enlightened people within the Chinese Communist Party leadership. At different times and in different positions they have opposed leftist work methods in Tibet. However, under these historical circumstances, they could achieve only limited results. Xi Zhongxun, from northwestern China, was a Vice Premier and Secretary General of the State Council in the 1960s. He was responsible for contact with the Panchen Lama. He made a very complete report to the State Council about the how the "Seventy Thousand Character Document" came to be written by the Panchen and so was charged with

"accommodating and not interfering with the Panchen. The Tenth session of the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party dismissed Xi Zhongxun and, in addition to the major crime of "using a novel to attack the Communist Party," also charged him with "accommodating and not interfering with the Panchen."

Another dismissed, high-level Communist Party official was Li Weihan, who was an old communist who had been head of the United Front Department since 1947. During April and May 1962, at a Nationalities Work Conference held in Beijing, some of the nationalities religious figures offered some sharp criticisms. Li Weihan remained calm and honestly said that he welcomed criticism from everyone. He praised the talk of the Tibetan Buddhist Lama Xijiashenzhi [romanization of Chinese name], saying that he was "open and above board, with "a heart as clear as a mirror" and stands as a symbol of "patriotism in the area of national minorities religious affairs". Li Weiquan's action was later severely criticized by Mao Zedong who said that "The United Front Department is neglecting the class struggle and is being capitulationist."

After the end of the Cultural Revolution, many issues in Tibetan affairs were neglected. Nationalities policy and the relationship between the Han nationality and the Tibetan nationality needed to be adjusted and the lives of Tibetans needed to be improved. In May 1980, just after Hu Yaobang had become General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, Hu and Wan Li flew to Tibet for an inspection visit. On the plane, Hu said to the accompanying Xinhua News Agency journalists: "In our policies in the national minority areas, we must always seek truth from facts, and adjust measures to suit local conditions so as to fully respect the autonomy the Tibetans have to govern their minority area themselves. That is the crux of all the Tibet issues." On May 29, in the work report that Hu Yaobang presented at the meeting with the cadres of the Tibet Autonomous Region, he

stressed that the development of Tibetan must resolve “six big issues”. The first is, under the unified leadership of the center, to fully implement the autonomy rights in the nationalities areas. “Any document, order or regulation which is not suitable for the conditions of Tibet should not be implemented.” “You should according to your own characteristics, draft specific decrees, laws and regulations, and rules to protect the special interests of your own nationality.” The second: “Under the present difficult conditions in Tibet, you should carry out a policy of recuperation and rebuilding and considerably reduce the burden on the people.” “We have decided that within several years required purchases by Tibetans will be abolished.” Third: “Tibet should implement special flexible policies to promote the development of production.” Fourth: “Devote the resources that the state is providing to Tibet to the development of agriculture and herding and the daily necessities most needed by Tibetan people.” Fifth: “With the condition that the socialist road be followed, develop science, technology and education in Tibet.”

Hu Yaobang especially stressed: “Looking down on Tibetan history, language and art is totally wrong... Loving the minority people is not a matter of empty words. Their social customs and habits must be respected. Respect their language, respect their history, respect their culture. If you don’t do that you are only speaking empty words.” Finally, Tibetan cadres should manage Tibet. Within two years, Tibetans should make up two-thirds or more of the cadres in Tibet. “We have been here for thirty years. We have completed our historical mission.” “Today there are 300,000 ethnic Han, including military, in Tibet. How can that ever do?” The above can be summarized in six characters “cut taxes, open up, and withdraw personnel”. These were the “emergency measures” energetically promoted by Hu Yaobang to resolve the Tibet issue.

These views, strong criticisms of social evils, were enthusiastically welcomed in the Tibetan areas. Of course because of historical conditions, the enlightened leaders of the Chinese Communist Party were unable to discuss and consider institutional perspectives on the problems that occurred in Tibet. Hu Yaobang in his May 29th speech said that we should not look back on the past but rather “unify ourselves and look to the future”. This reflects Hu Yaobang’s experience and resourcefulness and the frustrations of a generation of reformers in the Chinese Communist Party. After all, the many of the tragedies in contemporary Tibetan history are directly linked to the Communist Party system and the social policies that the Party carried out. This is all a result of these policies. If we do not reflect upon the origins of the Tibet issue, then we will not be able to resolve it.

New Symptoms Arose in the Tibet Issue During the Years of Reform

With opening and reform, especially since the early 1990s and the turn of the new century, the Chinese economy has grown very quickly. The central government has also certainly invested a lot of capital in Tibet and devised a series of special preferential policies and measures to accelerate the development of Tibet. There have been direct state investment construction projects, Chinese central government financial subsidies, and support for projects from partners around the country for the modernization and construction of Tibet. The overall economic level of Tibet has improved considerably as a result. However the political structure has remained the same as before with the Party exercising control over political, economic, cultural, and religious affairs just as before. An autonomous region in name, but in actual fact, autonomy was in the same lamentable state as before. The core of the Tibet issue has not been truly solved, and under the new social conditions a variety of new problems have arisen.

The market economy has become an economy controlled by influential people. It is that way in the Chinese interior, and it is that way in Tibet. The blending of the system of Party dictatorship and the policy of opening up created a new privileged stratum that includes Han and as well as Tibetans who have positions in Party and government institutions and cultural institutions. Faced with swarms of merchants coming from the Chinese interior, many ordinary Tibetans in Lhasa and other areas fell discriminated against and marginalized.

Even worse is the all encompassing control of religious affairs. On the surface, religious life in Tibet has already been restored. The state spent great sums repairing damage and protecting symbolic Buddhist structures, the temples are filled with burning incense. The Buddhist Canon will never again be used for compost. But this is just the surface of things. There is a deeper reality that is hidden behind these things as if beneath a mask.

The independent scholar Wang Lixiong has done much research on, and taken many trips to, Tibet. His conclusion: In Tibet there is no true religious freedom. On one hand, the government strictly controls the registration of religious activities in the temples, limits religious personnel to a certain “authorized personnel complement”, and forbids ties between temples. Religious activities outside the temples are forbidden. On the other hand, spontaneous religious activities outside government control are rigorously suppressed so that they will not have any influence.

In the Kang region of [Tr. note: ethnographic] Tibet, not far from the county seat of Sela County, is the mountain valley of Larong with its Wuming Buddhist Institute [Tr. note: also known as the Sertar Tibetan Buddhist Institute, Sertar, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, China. When founded in 1980, there were only 30 or so people at the Institute. At the

end of the 1990s, there were nearly 10,000 Tibetan and Han monks there. This worried the Chinese government. The authorities ordered that they reduce the number of personnel from the authorized number of 4000 nuns to just 400 and 4000 monks to just 1000. All the 1000 Han who had come to study Buddhism were forced to leave. This requirement was rejected by the Living Buddha who ran the Institute because to make a monk return to secular life involves a serious violation of vows. The government took action, sending people to destroy the housing of the monks. On July 10, 2001 during the height of the destruction of monastic housing, 1700 monastic cells were destroyed in a single day. "I have heard people describe that scene, the sounds of houses being destroyed, the dust rising up everywhere, on one side one thousand nuns crying, as if the world itself were shaking. In the area around the Wuming Buddhist Academy were many nuns in groups in the countryside hiding out to avoid pursuit by the government.

An even more deadly consequence of the strict control of religion has been breaks in the transmission of Tibetan Buddhism. Traditional Tibetan religion has an internal control mechanism. For example, although there is a reincarnation system for the Dalai and the Panchen, but in the Gelug School, eminent monks and heads of monasteries have a set term of office. They are chosen from among the most learned lamas. The winners in the competition can become the head of the Ganden Monastery — that is a natural teacher for the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. This system has continued for several hundred years without a break, thereby ensuring the authenticity in the transmission of the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism from generation to generation and ensuring as well the excellent character of eminent monks. But since 1959 this continuous process has been interrupted. From the 1980s to the present, although on the surface religious activities have been renewed, it has become hard to find a trace of the

very core of the religion — the pious beliefs of eminent monks, deep research into Buddhism and teaching aimed at enlightening all sentient beings.

The governing authorities operate a "reverse elimination" selection system among the leaders of the monks. "Any monk leader who insists on religious principles, refuses to be a tool of the authorities, will be subject to pressure and purging or even sentenced to prison as a warning to other clergy. Any monk with a relatively high traditional rank who keeps silent and doesn't cause trouble is a candidate for recruitment by the United Front Department. He will be given rewards but a club will be always be ready to intimidate him. Any monk willing to put personal advancement first, who is opportunistic, gives up religious principles, and willing to be a tool of the government will be given all sorts of advantages, membership in the National People's Congress, the National People's Consultative Congress or even higher government positions. The green light will be given for their activities, resources will be provided so that they will be a model who can draw in other leaders among the monks." In sum, therefore, although the Chinese Communists boast of religious freedom but their religious policy is aimed at the destruction of Buddhism, no less than it was in the days of Mao Zedong. Mao Zedong wanted to completely extirpate Buddhism. In Tibetan history there were eras when Buddhism was extirpated yet Buddhism still continued because the religion lived in the hearts of believers and so could not be destroyed by an external force. Today the Communist Party religious policy aims at the degeneration of the monk stratum of Tibetan society. This is a mortal danger to Buddhism."

As a consequence of all this, although Tibet has made considerable economic progress over the past thirty years and the lives of ordinary Tibetans have improved, Tibetans are still dissatisfied and "events" occur over and over again in the Tibetan regions. The Tibetan

issue is still "an issue" that is the focus of constant international attention. The events that have occurred since March are just new developments in the course of this ongoing transformation.

Demonizing the Dalai Lama is Extremely Stupid

After the "hitting, smashing, stealing and burning" event of March 14, the Chinese government immediately announced that this was instigated by the "Dalai Clique". When in April there was interference with the transmission of the torch, the authorities again asserted that the "Dalai Clique" had instigated "Tibet independence elements", with the aim of destroying the Olympic Games, in order to further the cause of "Tibet independence".

The "human rights issue" was substituted for the "independence issue" to serve the needs of people in authority. This is easy to see. But in their effort to dump this pile of shit on the head of the Dalai Lama, we can see how preposterous the traditional political logic of the Chinese communists is. This also reveals that the rulers lack a long term strategic vision and political wisdom.

The Dalai Lama is the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism. He is also one of the most famous political figures in the world. The year the Dalai Lama fled Tibet he was 24 years old. In half a century of exile, this ethnic Tibetan sage has blended the essence of Buddhism, magnanimity, liberal democracy and other universal values of contemporary civilization. Already in 1987, the Dalai Lama proposed the "Five Point Peace Proposal" which includes the suggestion that Tibet become a "peace zone", that "China end its policy of moving settlers into Tibet", that there be "respect for the human rights and democratic rights of the Tibetan people", that the government "restore and protect Tibet's natural environment", and that the two sides "hold sincere talks about the future status of Tibet and the

relationship between the Tibetan people and the Chinese people”.

In 1988, the Dalai Lama also made the “Strasbourg Proposal”, which proposed that “Tibet should become a self-ruled democratic political entity in union with the People’s Republic of China, in which “the Chinese government would be responsible for Tibet’s external affairs, but Tibet could establish offices overseas for the religious and cultural aspects of foreign relations” etc.

During the last seven years, the Dalai Lama has at many times and in many places stated clearly that he does not seek Tibet independence, only real autonomy for Tibet. On the methods and ways of achieving this he strongly calls for a peaceful “middle way”, which would involve honest dialogue with the central government and negotiations to resolve issues. Ever since 2002, the Dalai Lama’s special envoy has met with representatives of the United Front Department in Beijing six times in order to explain to the ruling Communist Party rulers the “middle way position” but has not gotten any response to the proposal. The rigid stance of the Chinese Communist Party is very easy to understand from their political tradition. The institutional arrangements for Tibet have already been decided. So what is there to talk about? Accepting the so-called “autonomy” of the Dalai Lama would shake the foundations of the party-state, so there can be no yielding on this point. Therefore, “talks” are for the Communist side just a perfunctory exercise and only done for show, and so of course there can be no concrete results from them. Yet these delays cause more and more difficulties for the Dalai Lama since he has to explain things to both the Tibetan exiles and to believers within Tibet.

There are many different organizations and groups among the Tibetans in exile with different political positions. There are radical ones like the “Tibet Youth Congress” which has attracted a lot of attention lately. It’s political position is

very different from the Dalai Lama’s “Middle Way”. The Tibetan Youth Congress was founded in 1970 mostly by second and third generation Tibetan exiles. Membership is now several tens of thousands with organizations in 40 countries. At the outset the Tibetan Youth Congress stood for non-violence, but it has changed its position over the past several years. At its 2007 annual meeting, the leader of the Congress said that the non-violence propounded by the Dalai Lama is good, but he has been saying this for many years without result. “Very many people don’t believe in it. They say it doesn’t work.” If it doesn’t work, then what? The Tibetan Youth Congress is inclined to use violence to solve the problem, including preparing a “popular uprising movement” in the Tibetan areas. It is said that over 700 Tibetans have volunteered and that they are willing to give up their lives to protect what they “stand for”.

The Dalai Lama has stated clearly that he opposes any scheme or action involving the use of violence. He said that if such an act should occur, he may have to “resign” to show his true position. Several days ago, the Dalai during an interview with Asia Week [Yazhou Zhoukan] said that he believes that giving up the Middle Way of setting aside efforts to achieve Tibet independence in favor of seeking a high degree of autonomy is still the mainstream view of Tibetans in exile as well as the mainstream view of people in the Tibetan areas. As for the Tibetan Youth Congress, the Dalai Lama said that he can only admonish the Tibet Youth Congress not to take the radical road. However, he has no way to order the Tibet Youth Congress to shut up.

Beijing may not completely trust the statements of the Dalai Lama because overcoming political enmity built up over a long time will take time. However, indiscriminately demonizing the other side, charging that the Dalai Lama is the commander in the “Tibet independence camp” and should certainly be punished by the entire nation, and reviled by

everyone, can only put the Dalai Lama in a difficult situation (while he is trying to put pressure on radical forces among Tibetans) and lead the Chinese communists into a political dead end (frozen into the rigid face of the dictator), giving up the freedom of maneuver needed in political negotiations. Isn’t this an extremely stupid way to behave?! Yet, in the final analysis, this is the obstinate and stubborn traditional political logic that haunts the Communist Party. According to this logic, there can be no equal negotiating partners. There can only be enemies locked in a life and death struggle. Even worse is how the rulers are haunted by their own logic of interests — for according to this logic, Tibet “autonomy” is intolerable. It would be a fundamental threat to the party-state, and a threat to a large group that benefits from this system. Considered in terms of these two logics, the demonization of the Dalai Lama becomes easy to understand. But where is justice? What are the prospects for the great family of the peoples of China? Considering the puerile and shallow “patriotism” and “nationalism” shown in the recent turbulent tide of meticulously planned and instigated demonstrations in both China and abroad by the new “Boxers”, as well as the very deep problems facing the country, one is left with a bitter and confused taste in one’s mouth and troubled deep into sleepless nights.

The Solution to the Tibet issue Should be Sought Within a Constitutional Framework

The Tibet issue is first of all a human rights issue. But it is not only a human rights issue. Abuses of human rights are an “effect”, not a “cause”. An irrational system of political dictatorship is what caused the “Tibet issue.”

Didn’t the Communist Party initially seek to help the Tibetan people and the million “liberated serfs”? I believe that this is true. Yet the history of the world is full of examples of evil deeds done with good

intentions. During the late Qing, the court made great reforms in Tibetan affairs and promoted reforms in order to prevent the great powers from continuing to encroach upon Tibet. In 1907, Zhang Yintang gave to the Qing Court “Twenty-four proposals for the governance of Tibet”. During 1905 - 1911, in the provinces of Sichuan and Kang, a reform to “change from indirect control through local chiefs to direct control by the central government”. The purpose in addition to consolidating Qing rule was to transform social traditions for the “good of” ordinary Tibetans. However, these “reforms” were strongly resisted by Tibetan people. Half a century later the Communist Party did the same thing in the Tibetan areas, albeit more systematically and with more determination. The result was larger scale harm to the people, religion and culture of the Tibetan areas.

In fact, history has already shown that China’s 20th century communist revolution was a mistake. It was a big wrong turn during a century of social transformation. It not only brought misfortune to the Han nationality, it also brought misfortune to the minority peoples. Today, people are thinking deeply about that history. Things that are past cannot be called back. But we should remember the lessons of history, and look at the issues of today and tomorrow with a scientific attitude. This is the responsibility of the present generation.

Respect for the fundamental rights of citizens, and respect for the distinctive cultures and traditions must be implemented in a constitutional political system. This is the basic path for solving the Tibet issue.

Recently Taiwan successfully changed the ruling party for the second time. This shows the superiority of the democratic system of government. It also demonstrates the necessity and urgency of changing the political system on the Chinese mainland. Clearly, the party dictatorship system of the Chinese Communist Party cannot accommodate

unification between Taiwan and the mainland, just as it cannot accommodate true autonomy for Tibet. Only by dissolving the present system and creating a constitutional democratic system in accordance with the universal values and principles of modern civilization can the day come when Taiwan finally returns to the motherland, Tibet achieves true autonomy, and Han and Tibetans get along with each other in harmony.

From the beginning of the 1960s, the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamasala, India started to experiment at building a system of democratic government. In his Strasbourg Proposal, the Dalai Lama said that “the Tibetan government should be composed of an independent administration and legislature chosen by the vote of all citizens and a court system.” The Dalai Lama even proposed changing the Tibetan form of government that combines politics and religion. He didn’t worry if he might become the “last Dalai” in Tibetan history. Tibetans have already made preparations for a democratic political system. Shouldn’t the central government in Beijing make similar preparations?

Certainly for the Chinese Communist decision-makers who now hold power, changing the present system and creating a new institutional framework would take a great deal of courage and wisdom. This would not be just for Tibet or for Taiwan; it would be for all the 1.3 billion citizens of the People’s Republic of China. To be honest, even after China has established a constitutional form of government, finding the reasonable sharing of jurisdiction between the central government and the nationalities areas will not be easy.

I once wrote an article entitled “Two Track Republican System: A Proposal for the Reform of the Chinese System of Constitutional Government”. In this article I pointed out that it is an uncontested fact that the “division of powers” and “autonomy” strengthen

the rights consciousness of citizens and increases their participation in public affairs (in the nationalities areas, autonomy also helps preserve the cultural traditions of nationalities and protects their special interests). Yet there is another aspect to this problem, that is the tendency of interests to expand and the “logic of collective interests”. The latter will certainly create some “problems of the commons” which will have to be solved by the intervention of a public power at a higher level that is above local interests, especially intervention by the central government.

Returning to the present, there is still a chance for the central government to solve the Tibet issue. That can be done by conducting genuine negotiations with the Dalai Lama. Recently Beijing has already said that it is willing to resume contact. That is good. Even if it is just a pose, it is positive. Everyone hopes that the talks can produce genuine results so as to create a harmonious bridge between the Han and Tibetan peoples while the Dalai Lama is still alive. If this issue is not handled well, then “splitting” might become a real and present danger.

As a Chinese citizen, I naturally don’t want to see Tibet split off from the household of our motherland. We should believe that the trend of human civilization is towards unifying rather than towards splitting. Unity is helpful for solving many of the problems that humanity is faced with. As a Chinese proverb goes, the melon that is grabbed roughly cannot be sweet — unity needs to be a voluntary unity based upon a community of interests. Forced compliance cannot produce good results. This simple truth can also be applied to politics.

(This article was written April 22 - 28, 2008 in Beijing.)

Big Brother, Tibet, and the Sichuan Earthquake

By Andreas Ni, a writer living in Shanghai.

Shanghai – Tight media control of the unrest in Tibet has been followed by what, to some, looks like far more open coverage of the devastating earthquake in Sichuan province. Is this a change in China's media strategy, or just a short term change in tactics?

This question stands out in view of Chinese public opinion in the latter phase of the Tibet crisis. Much to the consternation of the Western media, Chinese people worldwide lashed out against its allegedly biased coverage of the Tibetan riot. Throngs of Chinese expatriates and students took to the streets, protesting the prejudice they perceived in Western media reports. Angry youngsters even founded Web sites such as anti-cnn.com to express their outrage.

Western reporting, once commended for its veracity, now seems discredited across China, although sympathetic coverage of the loss of life in Sichuan may have redeemed the Western media somewhat. Even Chinese liberals admit that Western journalists blundered badly in Tibet, using cropped images and false captions as evidence of China's heavy-handed rule.

One sarcastic posting on China's popular Web portal Tianya even went so far as to say that "CNN is of the same ilk as CCTV (China Central Television). Both talk grandiosely and profusely about impartiality. Ironically, both turn out to be hypocrites."

One can argue that this trend bodes ill for China. But pessimism is misplaced. Much of the Chinese wrath is directed at biased reports, not at Western media in general.

And when one looks more closely at how Chinese responded, both to the unrest in Tibet and the Sichuan

earthquake, one sees tangible signs that the Chinese are embracing a greater degree of free speech.

Despite a news blackout during the riots in Lhasa, for example, Chinese Internet users managed to dodge the country's censorship. Much as they loathed domestic publications for blindly following the guidelines of Xinhua, China's state news agency, they were similarly contemptuous of Western media that mishandled the story.

As a result, those Chinese who use the Internet as a source for news awakened to the fact that no account – Chinese or Western – is flawless. Such skepticism, which is a fundamental attribute of the democratic mind, may have played a role in pushing the government toward more openness in Sichuan.

Indeed, the fact that many school buildings were flattened in Sichuan prompted an outcry from 'netizens,' who grilled local officials about whether it was substandard building codes or even a notorious "toufuzha construction scandal," namely, jerry-built projects, that had led to the disproportionate number of dead pupils. Under mounting public scrutiny, government officials felt compelled to promise that those responsible will be brought to justice.

Unlike in the past, when Chinese Internet users passively received information, years of exposure to concepts such as human rights and democracy have emboldened them to challenge entrenched yet dubious views, even if it means iconoclasm.

Chinese audiences are as fed up with the glowing encomiums broadcast by CCTV as they are with the simplistic, context-free reporting of Western media. Caught in the middle, Chinese increasingly sift for the truth on their own.

Many, indeed, tried to present to the outside world their own version of the Tibet story, rebutting the orthodox narrative – be it Chinese or Western – and posting comments and footage on YouTube and the BBC's bulletin board. Moreover, due to their repeated queries for explanation, a few Western media outlets eventually owned up to their mistakes.

After China's government became aware that independent grassroots movements could convince ordinary Chinese where government propaganda had failed, it lifted its initial ban on reporting on Tibet.

"Net nannies" – as China's Internet censors are often dubbed – blocked sensitive articles less frequently. China's government has apparently begun to appreciate the limitations of cover-ups and stonewalling, and perhaps also the merits of allowing some room for free speech.

This thirst for unbiased information highlights the dramatic change that the Internet has brought to China's political landscape. Nowadays, the government no longer monopolizes information and the right to process it. Insightful bloggers attract considerably more clicks than do official mouthpieces. A "virtual civil society" is in the making.

But can Web activism mature into a full-blown campaign for free speech without being manipulated by the government or blindfolded by Western media? The answer may prove to be mixed.

Admittedly, the fierce popular backlash against Western media was partially motivated by nationalist ardor, which played into the government's hands. The Internet can foster more demagoguery than sober analysis. But the best way to prevent this is to create an environment in which opposing views can clash

freely, enabling truth ultimately to triumph.

On the government's part, the more open media in Sichuan may be mere posturing to appease critics after the Tibet upheaval and the scuffle over the Olympic torch. The government's willingness to address squarely questions about shoddy infrastructure

will be a key test of the genuineness of its supposed new found tolerance of free speech.

Although free speech is no panacea for China's woes, only when it is established will the country's progress be sustainable. Despite the watchful eyes of Big Brother in Beijing, the Internet is sowing the seeds of free

speech in China. That may be the most important lesson of the crisis in Tibet and Sichuan.

Andreas Ni is a writer living in Shanghai.

Source: Minivan News
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Without rights, pride is empty

For Chinese-Americans, a sinking feeling

By W.G. Huang

Despite their deep-rooted political differences regarding China's Communist government, many Chinese-Americans had high hopes that the Olympic Games would bring pride and respect to our communities.

Chinese restaurants here in Chicago proudly put the Olympic mascots on display. Chinese-Americans like me make a point of buying Olympic souvenirs for friends when we travel to China.

The Olympics, we hoped, would show mainstream America that China is no longer a poor country where most people are starving but one wealthy enough to compete as an equal in international sports. Plus, the Games could help allay any bad feelings caused by the scandals surrounding unsafe toys made in China.

Yet already, excitement is giving way to embarrassment. The tumultuous Olympic torch relay, which passed through Hong Kong without disruption on Friday, left a trail not of pride and joy but of shock and anger.

Demonstrations by human-rights activists and pro-Tibetan groups outraged the Chinese government. In response, the news media controlled by the Beijing regime stirred up a nationalist frenzy. They depicted the protests as a ploy by pro-Tibetan separatists, the Western media and foreign governments to sabotage the Olympics and thus humiliate China.

In a recent speech, a senior Chinese

Communist Party official called upon the Chinese public to start a "people's war" against those who would dare to criticize and isolate China.

The hostile rhetoric, the ensuing nationwide demonstrations, the boycotts against Western companies, all of this is reminiscent of Chairman Mao and his mobilizing of young people to use violence against individuals who dared to challenge the communist regime.

The Chinese leadership is stirring up a nationalistic frenzy in part to justify its crackdown on internal dissenters. It also aims to distract people's attention from the problems of rampant corruption and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. The leadership specifically exploits the passions of young people who, ignorant of the horrors in the country's turbulent past, have become the regime's willing tools.

The people's war has since expanded overseas as well: Chinese nationals and even Chinese-Americans have shown up en masse at the Olympic torch relays, waving red Chinese flags and shouting pro-China slogans to drown out the voices clamoring for human rights.

I find this shocking. These "patriots" are terrorizing dissenters and trying to impose their views—as well as values associated with a totalitarian society—on people in the free world.

A couple of weeks ago, a female Chinese

student at Duke University attempted to mediate a small demonstration between the pro-China and pro-Tibetan students. For her trouble, she came under vicious attack from her fellow Chinese. She received death threats; her picture and personal information were posted on Web sites in China with captions such as "The ugliest Chinese student in the U.S." Her parents in China were forced into hiding. All this against a 20-year-old woman studying political science.

When the Olympic torch relay passed through San Francisco, a group of "patriotic" Chinese assaulted a human-rights activist, who ended up suffering severe neck injuries. Many other Chinese scholars suffered similar treatment and were branded "traitors" after they posted articles critical of the Chinese government.

These undemocratic tactics worry many Chinese-Americans like me, people who have chosen to become American citizens because we cherish the freedom and democracy here. As much as I want the Olympic torch relay and the subsequent Games to go smoothly, I cherish democratic values. Though I may not fully understand the views of the pro-Tibetan activists, I support their right to use the torch-relay ceremony in protest.

As someone who grew up in China in the 1960s and '70s, I understand well that athletics have had a deep political significance imbued with nationalistic

overtone. After the communist takeover following World War II, sports came to be seen as a way to prove the West wrong about China. After a century of humiliation and brutal oppression by foreign powers, China was eager to show that it was not the “poor, sick man of East Asia.”

In the words of the government, sports offered a way to *weiguo zhengguang*, or gain credit and face for our great motherland. That is why when the first Chinese athlete won the World Table Tennis Championship in the 1950s, he was treated as Americans treated Neil Armstrong after he stepped onto the moon.

But the past weeks have made me and many other Chinese-Americans realize that no matter how much patriotism is attached to the Olympic Games, a sporting event alone cannot gain China

the recognition and respect it so desperately craves.

Chinese-Americans need to exercise their hard-earned rights in America and unite in response to the Chinese government’s manipulation of nationalistic sentiments. Cracking down on dissent both inside and outside China could further tarnish China’s image and lead to a more justifiable boycott of the Olympic Games.

“Chinese nationals [here in the U.S.] have been staging counterprotests, which would have never been possible if they had been living in China,” observed Kang Zhengguo, a Chinese-American senior lecturer at Yale University, speaking recently at a human-rights rally. “Yet those demonstrators are taking advantage of the freedom here to vigorously promote a government that would deny such

freedom to its citizens.”

Even if I do not agree with them, I am glad these pro-China protesters can express their views and opinions freely in this great country, without worrying about detention or imprisonment. I hope they cherish this freedom. I hope this will be a good experience for those patriotic Chinese overseas to take home to China.

Maybe there they can help ordinary people in China gain their rights to protest if they do not agree with the government. Maybe in some way, the torch protests—like the Olympic Games themselves—can become a catalyst for change in China.

W.G. Huang is a freelance journalist and translator.

Source: www.chicagotribune.com

May 4, 2008

DANGERS OF INFLAMING CHINESE NATIONALISM

By ZHANG QUANYI

China is now facing a major challenge from within and without the country, in the wake of last month’s Tibetan riots, which began in Lhasa and spread to different counties of Tibet as well as parts of Gansu and Sichuan provinces that are inhabited primarily by Tibetans. According to China’s official Xinhua news agency, numerous shops, banks, malls, government offices and even police offices in different areas were either robbed, burned or destroyed by Tibetan mobs.

In addition to dealing with this internal situation, China has had to face waves of international criticism over its crackdown on the Tibetan uprising. This has been most apparent in the protests that have disrupted the Olympic torch relay, especially in Europe and the United States.

Within China, reports of these protests have been met with anger and dismay, inflaming a corresponding wave of Chinese nationalism. The increase of

anti-China sentiment in the West ahead of the Beijing Olympic Games could have disastrous results if efforts are not made to calm the situation ahead of the Summer Games.

The Tibetan protests and subsequent crackdown on monks and others no doubt tarnished the image of China. The fact that this has led to attacks on the Beijing Olympics has been a blow to the Chinese, who had hoped to take advantage of the Olympic Games to promote their image and their “soft power” around the world.

Big countries like the United States, France and Britain have expressed great concern over China’s management of Tibetan affairs. In response, the Chinese government has accused Western media of intentionally tarnishing China’s image by publishing false reports about the events in Tibet, including mistakenly identifying scenes of police battling with protesters in Nepal as taking place in Lhasa. Some media have even compared

China’s hosting of the Olympics to that of the Nazi regime under Adolf Hitler, when Germany held the Olympics in 1936.

Even at the torch-lighting ceremony held in Greece, the birthplace of the ancient Olympic Games, protestors showed up to interfere as Beijing official envoys were receiving the torch. A similar unhappy incident occurred in Istanbul, Turkey, and things only got worse after that, with protests in London and Paris leading to the dousing of the flame twice.

A few Tibetans and Muslim Uyghurs from the Chinese province of Xinjiang have been involved in attempts to disrupt the torch relay. The Chinese government has blamed both groups of trying to undermine the Beijing Olympics. It has also blamed the Dalai Lama and supporters of Tibet’s independence based in India of organizing the protests both inside and outside China.

Western leaders have been aggressive

in adding oil to the fire. French President Nikolas Sarkozy warned he might boycott the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel also said she would not attend. U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi even said the International Olympic Committee had made a mistake in awarding the 2008 Summer Olympics to China. On April 9, the U.S. House passed a resolution criticizing China over “repression” in Tibet. China expressed strong indignation over this, saying it would encourage pro-independence forces.

In contrast to the negativity swirling around the Olympics outside of China, within the country the people still hold a passionate and romantic view of the Games. As the Olympic opening day approaches, Chinese aspirations for the event to be a great success grow ever more intense.

Hosting the Games successfully is the long-cherished dream of the whole Chinese nation. People ranging from the bottom individual to the top state institutions have already spent tremendous energy in preparing for the event. Even overseas Chinese are proudly anticipating China’s success at holding the modern Olympic Games.

The Chinese also take it for granted that the success of this event will play a role in spiritually or symbolically erasing their

country’s designation as the “sick man of Asia,” a term given to China by Western colonialists in the late 1800s.

The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games in fact was China’s second bid for the Games. China had wanted to host the 2000 Summer Olympics, and put tremendous effort into its bid at that time.

In fact, the whole nation had taken it for granted that China would be successful. Unfortunately China lost by only two votes and Sydney, Australia became the host city.

This failure cast the whole nation into a feeling of dismay, if not shame. The nation had a similar experience during the long process of its application to join the World Trade Organization in the late 1990s. When China was declared unsuccessful in its bid, the Chinese people felt a great loss of face and a deep disappointment. These failures resulted in a series of anti-U.S. movements, as the Chinese began to grow suspicious about U.S. motives in seeking to contain China’s rise or economic take-off.

When the U.S.-led NATO “unintentionally” bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999, and in 2001 a U.S. EP-3 surveillance plane collided with a Chinese fighter, killing Chinese pilot Wang Wei, the fire of Chinese nationalism and anti-Americanism flared to levels that were temporarily

uncontrollable and unpredictable. Excited Chinese people, who attacked them by throwing eggs and rocks and even setting fires, surrounded the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in China.

The Chinese people have looked forward to the Olympic Games with intense anticipation. Their success will be the realization of a sweet dream for the whole nation. If their dream is shattered, it will make China lose face and deeply pain the Chinese people.

If the full fervor of Chinese nationalism is inflamed, the consequences might be disastrous. If the Games are ruined, the nation might feel compelled to take some sort of retaliatory action against the international community in order to release the pent-up anger of the people. China’s cooperative attitude in the international arena could shift, so that rather than a mere breaker of international norms, China could become a wild card. This is not a good thing for a state with mighty military power.

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Former Advisor to Party General Secretary Claims Regime Staged Lhasa Incident

By Wang Qian and Chang Qing

Mr. Ruan Ming was a speechwriter for former CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang.

The violent riots that the Chinese state-run media have reported as having taken place in Lhasa are not what they seem to be, according to a former highly placed Chinese Communist Party (CCP) official.

Mr. Ruan Ming claims the CCP carefully staged the incidents in Tibet in order to force the Dalai Lama to resign and to justify future repression of the Tibetans.

Since 1997 Ruan has lived in Taiwan, where he has served as a diplomatic advisor to President Chen Shui-bian. He is also the author, among other books, of *Deng Xiaoping: Chronicle of an Empire*.

Earlier in his life, he worked as the main speechwriter for Mr. Hu Yaobang, who served as General Secretary of the CCP from 1981-1987 and was admired by democracy activists as a reformer. Hu’s death in 1989 is said to have sparked the student demonstrations in Beijing of that year.

In an interview with Sound of Hope, Ruan warned international society that

in considering the unrest in Lhasa, it must keep its eyes open and be aware of the CCP's violent and deceptive nature.

At the heart of the deception in Lhasa was the murder of peaceful monks.

"The CCP carefully staged the unrest in Tibet to deceive the world. Before the incident, the authorities drove away all foreign reporters and even forbade them from going out," according to Ruan.

"The demonstration on March 10 was meant to be peaceful. You can see from the pictures that the demonstration was all monks," Ruan explained.

"The CCP arrested some of these monks and killed them. The killing angered some young Tibetans. By March 14, the Tibetans could no longer stand the killing of innocent monks and protested."

According to Ruan, when the young Tibetans reacted, they fell into the CCP's trap.

"The CCP seized this opportunity and took pictures of these Tibetans in violent actions and sent out officers to do a door-to-door search, calling on the 'guilty' to surrender themselves."

While Ruan said the CCP meticulously staged the whole thing in Lhasa, there were things it missed.

"All pictures from inside Lhasa came from the CCP, but the CCP forgot about the small Tibetan autonomous counties in Gansu, Qinghai, and Sichuan Provinces. Pictures of the dead bodies of those killed by the CCP that we saw came from outside of Lhasa. The CCP couldn't have imagined pictures of its killing would leak out from these small villages."

Ruan believes the events in Tibet are aimed at influencing world opinion.

"This time the CCP has a more thorough plot with carefully designed propaganda," said Ruan.

"The Dalai Lama has always proposed a peaceful solution to Tibet issues and has won the world's recognition. With all that in mind, the CCP has framed the Dalai Lama for having 'carefully planned and stirred up the event.'

"This is exactly like how the CCP framed Zhao Ziyang for the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989 and accused Zhao of 'splitting the Party and supporting unrest.'

"The Dalai Lama had already said he would resign if the unrest continued. The Dalai Lama is influential globally and if he really retired, the CCP could gradually push and label the Tibetans as terrorists

like the Xinjiang independence movement.

"This will give the CCP an excuse to ignore Tibetans appeals and to further repress them."

The CCP has kept out foreign media, because their reports might expose what is really happening there, according to Ruan.

"If the CCP opens up Tibet for foreign media, someone brave has got to talk. I don't believe there wasn't a single picture taken during the suppression.

"Why did the CCP need to do a door-to-door search right after the suppression? They fear there were pictures taken during the suppression and don't want them to leak out and circulate around.

"What could the CCP be searching for door-to-door if it wasn't for the pictures? I doubt it was for guns and weapons. If there were only few violent protestors as they claimed, how come 170 people are said to have confessed?

"How many monks have the CCP arrested and killed? The international media should be allowed to go into Tibet to investigate."

FIRST TIME I FEEL ASHAMED TO BE HAN, AND LUCKY NOT TO BE A PARTY MEMBER

The following blog post was signed as written by "a student from the Central University of Nationalities".

Translated by CDT:

I've wanted to write something for a while in the wake of the latest developments in Tibetan regions. But after seeing press reports by media outlets from home and abroad, I don't know whom to believe in. I lost my judgment. I tried to start writing, but then couldn't continue because my feelings are too complex. This afternoon, I talked to a colleague again about this issue and the conversation

escalated into a fight. The colleague finally used a very "Chinese Communist" style to stop me from "venting angry words." Faced with irrationality, I zipped my mouth. I've worked with a variety of people, but I didn't imagine that there are people who have been brainwashed so much, and I started to realize this issue isn't a small matter!

The key is, a lot of Han and some ethnic Tibetans with vested interests have become blind to the blue sky, white clouds, green mountains and water. Amidst the long history and mystical culture of Tibet, their brains are only thinking about how to commercialize these things. They don't know that many aspects of the Tibetan way of life, religion and custom, culture and values

are gradually being dismantled. Neither do they know that the dignity of Tibetans is shedding tears, and many Tibetans are struggling...

Looking at Tibet, I sometimes feel ashamed to be a Han. Since first coming to Tibet in 2006 I often think about these issues: What on earth does Tibet need, how should it develop and who does it need to lead that development? I have no power to resist anything, nor do I have the intention to resist, after all our motherland is slowly making progress and our party is gradually inching toward democracy. As an ethnic university graduate and a Han who now works in the Tibetan region, these topics have surrounded me every day of my working life.

In a civilized world in the 21st Century, when something incredible happens in a certain area but many people around us (including Tibetans) yell out about a crackdown and mass killing, should we seriously reflect on ourselves: Why? I have picked an article by an alumni [of the Central University of Nationalities] below. As a member of the Chinese nation, no matter which ethnicity, we, the future of the country, shall rethink the whole issue!

Those Who Throw Out Angry Rhetoric Please Apologize to Tibetan Compatriots

What I write has no intention to be separatist or to damage ethnic solidarity. I love my motherland, love my people and love all my compatriots. I only hope that in this huge family, we can truly love one another, understand and tolerate one another, and truly live a harmonious life.

We always mistakenly believe that whatever we do is progressive, but we are repeatedly committing mistakes.

While walking on the streets in Lhasa, I always have a subconscious sad feeling. In a sacred place like Lhasa, I cannot find where I belong, and I've lost my direction. Jiangsu Road, Beijing Road, so on and so forth, these names pop up

in front of my eyes. Roads named in Tibetan are few in number, and the city makes one feel like being in a mainland town. Children beggars swarm around me and when I see their aspiring eyes and the joy of getting some money, my heart bleeds, and language becomes pale. Occasionally, made-up ladies cozy up and wave toward me, wanting to say something but I understand they are not just saying hello to me.

The whole sacred city is filled with aid construction. I am not saying this is not good, and Tibetan people very much appreciate the help from other ethnic groups and the care from the central government. But those Hunan-aided and Shandong-financed post boards stand up high on the top of buildings, fearing that not enough people will recognize their generosity. But this philanthropic advertising is overstretched. Every ethnicity has its dignity, so imagine, will this hurt the feelings of the Tibetans? And the assistance buildings are not constructed based on Tibetan culture and ideas, but wild shapes and structures. Will Tibetans like these houses?

Nowadays, there are so many prostitutes on the boulevards and small lanes, they number at least in the thousands. There was once a women's movement that put out a slogan that says "Sichuan women get out, husbands return home." Imagine how many people are engaged in prostitution! We cannot blame the Tibetan ethnicity, these are imports from the mainland. And their influence is so deep that it's unimaginable. Those colorful women fill the streets wide and narrow and beam their seductive eyes around the crowds, which is for sure a blasphemy on Lhasa's image. Still, we have no regret and, instead, have turned the sacred town into a setting of indulgence and satiating lust.

Some even say that Tibetans are dark-colored and dirty. Yes, Tibetans are dark-skinned, but they have a red heart and pure belief. Look at us who believe ourselves to be light-colored. We feel proud about our faces being covered with chemical compounds. Tibetans are

not dirty, and their hearts are pure and kind.

We always stress the importance of Mandarin. Indeed Chinese is important and it's our national official language. But in Lhasa and many Tibetan ethnic regions, there is a popular saying that goes, "Tibetan is a formality but Mandarin is the rice bowl." That's exactly as I see it—Many Tibetan students work hard on Mandarin for their future, and, as a result, many forget their own language. Of course there are a lot of reasons for this, for example some schools don't have Tibetan language curriculum at all, and classes of mainland students are not allowed to speak Tibetan, etc. Language is the root of an ethnic group and to a great extent is a symbol that distinguishes one race from another. Without a language, an ethnic culture will also die along with it. On the other hand how many Han people understand Tibetan language and script? Which makes us feel deeply ashamed and sorry. There are so many Tibetans who can fluently speak Mandarin. I don't know whether I should be happy or sad about this, but I feel there's a serious lack of understanding between the two ethnic groups.

Han people have their own holidays and customs, so do the Tibetans. In Lhasa, along with more contact with other ethnic groups, many Tibetans started to celebrate Han holidays, such as dragon boat festival and tomb sweeping festival, etc. But few spend Tibetan holidays with Tibetans. Some say Han culture is so tolerant and so influential. But do you truly understand the Tibetan holidays?

When some people talk about sky burial, they associate it with cruelty and horror. But have you ever thought about that when a dead body is incinerated it perishes and when it gets buried it becomes part of the soil, while heavenly burial benefits other animals and alleviates their hunger, thus protecting them. What a noble burial and selfless funeral is this. But it is regarded as barbarian, primitive, cruel. So when you talk about this please read up a little and

understand more about it!

Many still stubbornly believe that rice is the best staple food. But when told that Tibetans eat Tsangba [roasted barley], their facial expression reflects shock, contempt, dismissal. It's ridiculous and stupid and ignorant because tsangba is actually a pure and unpolluted natural food.

All these examples are beyond reason but they happen around us. Some only know that there are Tibetans in Tibet, but don't know that there are Tibetans in other provinces. Some only know there's a Lhasa in Tibet but don't know any other place there. But they still randomly say outrageous things about Tibet.

Let's also talk about those cadres who assisted the development of Tibet. Were/are they really coming to help Tibet? So many of them have returned to their home bases for promotions after a short stint in Tibet. I heard about a friend's uncle, who stayed in Tibet for less than four years and took 800,000 yuan back to the mainland. There are many stories like this, going back home from Tibet to skyrocket in their career or buy villas, so on and so forth. Did they come to Tibet to work for the good of Tibetans? How much contribution did they make to Tibet? Where did the money go after the state earmarked it for Tibet? I don't even want to imagine, the more I think

about it the more frightful it gets.

Let me also talk about the inner land (neidi) classes for Tibetans. I don't know about other ethnic groups' neidi classes but I know quite a bit about the Tibetan ones. Everything they study is written in Mandarin and the history they learn is also Han history. What about Tibetan history? As a Tibetan who doesn't know his/her own history, is he/she still a Tibetan? Of course there is reason for this but shall we consider their racial feelings and ethnic belonging? Many years later, many kids have made tremendous progress in Mandarin but their Tibetan level is still elementary.

Let me also talk a bit about March 14.

China's coverage of it has been indeed thorough and detailed. But some issues have been haunting me still. For instance, in the news, a lot of information was "according to reliable sources/materials." I don't know how reliable these pieces of information are. Where on earth are the sources? Why not tell us, the public?

Videos on March 14 shown on the Internet are truly saddening. No matter which ethnic group, it's heart-wrenching. But let's look at the comments and our netizens, who speak about killing or exterminating in every sentence. Why are we so extremist? Why so partial?

How about let's try not to preemptively judge certain people without getting the whole story?

No ethnic group is composed of all good people. Why not say things like that? Shall we also reflect upon our own behavior and our own mistakes? To kill all Tibetans, isn't it a little irresponsible?

We did make efforts to develop solidarity and the growth of Han and Tibetan cultures. But we ignore the feelings and belief of Tibetan compatriots. We did give, but we didn't do it sincerely enough and not perfectly enough. Not only shall we give in terms of material, but also spiritual, support. We shall offer our help with an equal and caring attitude, not just to do cosmetic work. Think about it: China has run Tibet for so many years and now we have this situation over there, there are so many things we should reflect on about ourselves. We cannot always think that we are always right and we are the best.

For those who randomly say outrageous things, please apologize to our kind Tibetan compatriots. Only mutual understanding and trust can build up our truly harmonious society...

(Note: this article has been deleted three times on campus Internet forum. It was delayed for republishing today [April 1], only to express my opinion, there's no other motive. Viewers' tolerance is greatly appreciated.)

Chinese Bloggers on Tibet

While discussion of the recent riots in Tibetan areas and their aftermath is being strictly policed on the Internet inside China, a number of Chinese bloggers (many of them living overseas) have started to weigh in. Responses range from the rapidly nationalistic to the supremely even-handed, with those living abroad tending towards the latter. The following posts were selected and translated by CDT:

(1) A measured opinion from blogger A Dai. His blog is Desert Sand Storm. (Translated by Kate Zhao):

Recently, whenever I watch TV or read news online, there are Tibet riot stories from Chinese mainland media and foreign media. Regardless of the standpoint, at least, there are some true facts: someone protested in the street, someone lost financial assets, someone died in the riot.

Chinese media reporting suddenly raised nationalists' patriotic enthusiasm. Some blamed foreign media for intentionally distorting stories; someone criticized violence, even some of the overheated discussions appeared on the portal's news discussion column. Everyone

knows that in China, commercial news websites are under severe censorship nowadays, so if even the overheated discussions can pass the tightened scrutiny, we can only imagine about the blocked ones.

After reading domestic news these days, I still have the following questions:

The Chinese government contributed millions of dollars every year for Tibetan construction, so why do Tibetans still go protest in Lhasa?

How could the Dalai Lama, who was regarded as worthless in China, win the Nobel Peace Prize? And why can he meet frequently with top officials from the U.S., UK, Germany and Canada?

If it was an organized, premeditated riot with violent damage, why didn't we let foreign media report and win their sympathy?

Before clarifying all these questions, can we give up our anger first? I don't want to be the hunter with evil hands and blind eyes.

(2) Blogger Bingmao is a 22 year-old Chinese student who has been studying in Finland for the last three years. The following post was published on his blog on March 26, entitled "My Take on Tibet." (Translated by Linjun Fan):

Tibet has once again attracted the world's attention. What is disturbing the peace of the Tibetan Plateau and the stability of the Chinese government? It's easy to blame the Dalai Lama and some western countries for the problem. In my view, however, it's an issue of how an atheist ruling party finds a way to co-exist with a highly religious ethnic group.

Looking back on Tibet's history, the Dalai Lama and his followers fled China and established an exile government in 1959. He has garnered international support and used it as leverage to negotiate with the Chinese government. China has designated the Dalai Lama and members of the exile government as separatists. Who is right? There are conflicts of interest between the Chinese government and Dalai Lama, who are trying to attack each other. No information from either side is reliable. But we are clear that Tibet is now in the control of the Chinese government, whose economic and military power far surpasses that of the Dalai Lama, and that it's almost impossible for the Dalai to seek Tibet's independence now.

Dalai recently claimed that what he pursues is not Tibet's independence, but real autonomy for Tibetan regions. The

idea sounds peaceful. Why does the Chinese government still regard it as seeking Tibet independence? The Greater Tibetan Region proposed by the Dalai Lama includes not only Tibet, but also regions in Gansu and Sichuan provinces where Tibetans live. The land accounts for nearly two fifths of China's total territory. This request is far beyond what the Chinese government can offer.

A majority of Tibetans' living conditions and their level of education have been considerably improved since its liberation in the 1950s. To the envy of many Chinese provinces, the Central Government of China has been giving large amounts of economic assistance and a series of favorable policies to the Tibetan Autonomous Region. However, it seems that the expenditures of the Chinese government hasn't won Tibetans' heart. As we all know, Tibet has its unique culture and religion, and the Dalai Lama has a significant spiritual influence over Tibetans. In the hearts of Tibetans, all financial, military and political power are dwarfed by the power of their spiritual leader. Therefore, it's not hard to know which side Tibetans will stand on when a conflict between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government erupts.

The Tibetan problem is complex because Tibetans have strong religious beliefs; they are unconditionally obedient to their religious leaders, and the exiled Dalai Lama is their spiritual leader. If the Chinese government reconciles with the Dalai Lama, his influence over Tibetans would only grow stronger, while the influence of the Chinese government over Tibetans would dwindle. Tibet will probably go back to its old system, combining its religious institutions and government together.

What kind of measures should the Chinese government take to allow religion and socialism to coexist in this unique land? Giving Tibet complete autonomy would lead the road back to the old system of unity between church and government. How dark and horrible this old system was during the Middle Ages! On the other hand, the current

political control by the Chinese government has largely deprived Tibetans of their rights, and obstructed the continuation of Tibetan culture. Government officials are stationed in temples. Monks are not allowed to support the Dalai Lama. The new Panchen Lama was selected by the Chinese government and has to follow the leadership of party officials. The functions of Buddha, Buddhism, and monks in Tibetan life are all curtailed to various degrees, harming the spread of Tibetan Buddhism. Once people lose a true understanding of the religion, they can only stay on the level of superstition. The temples are reduced to a place for people to burn incense and seek blessings, and Tibetan Buddhism would gradually lose its true meaning.

This is a conundrum, especially to a big developing country as China, which has more to worry about and to fear. The Chinese government is waiting for the Dalai Lama, who is in his 70s, to die in a foreign country, and reincarnate into a new Dalai who is obedient to the Party. However, there are many uncertainties in this wait-and-see plan, because Tibetans follow Dalai, monks are willing to die for him, the exile government is in his control, and the western world is pouring out support for him.

This keeps the Tibetan region, which has high international support and strong religious beliefs, always on the edge of an explosion. If the Chinese government can't tackle its relations with the Dalai Lama well, any problem between the Taiwan Straits or any social unrest in China, might present an opportunity to the acutely-tuned Dalai Lama. He might exploit all his power and influence to take the advantage, and the possibility of Tibet's independence will greatly increase.

The Dalai Lama is not merely a form of address. Any slight towards him could cause deep-rooted hatred from Tibetans. A ruler needs to win people's hearts. All regimes in history have needed the support of the people to survive. As a party whose mission is to "Serve the People", the Communist Party of China needs to respect Tibetans' religious

beliefs and cultural traditions. The Chinese government should actively seek dialogue and cooperation with Dalai Lama. Only by doing so can it win the heart of five million Tibetans, and help Tibetan Buddhism spread far and wide.

One side (the Dalai Lama) wants to preserve its religion and culture; the other side (the Chinese government) wants Tibet to remain part of China. Because of a lack of trust, conflict arises between them even though their goals are not directly contradictory. Tibetans' living conditions have been improved considerably since its peaceful liberation, but the racial immigration policy and a series of anti-Dalai policies have damaged Tibet's religion and culture, causing Dalai's distrust towards the current Tibet autonomy given by the Central Government of China. On the other hand, the Chinese government is reluctant to give a large area of territory to such a favored religious leader.

Fortunately, the two sides don't have contradictory goals. Conflicts between them arise just in the process of the achieving the goals. As a centralized government, China can not tolerate the splitting of its territory. However, it needs to be careful in dealing with Tibetan unrest, since Tibet has its unique religious beliefs and nearly 40 years' history of independence.

The issue is extremely sensitive because it concerns relations between two different ethnic groups. It's not just about relations between Chinese and Tibetans, but also between Chinese and Uighurs and 53 other ethnic groups. The pressure from the outside world on the Tibetan issue is indeed high, but it should still be regarded as a conflict among the people, rather than a conflict between two enemies. It is critical for the two sides to find a way to establish trust, and allow atheists and Tibetan Buddhists to coexist on this magic land.

(3) The Following post is from a Hong Kong-based blog: Collecting Memories. (Translated by Kate Zhao)

When the motherland forces out all foreign

journalists from Tibet, TV channels in Hong Kong don't have first-hand footage, so they have to transmit China's state-run news. They copy the news totally (at least TVB, I don't know about other channels), and are willing to be the mouthpiece — What else can they do?

I don't really doubt the violence, robbery, and fire on camera, nor do I suspect the existence of a 'foreign influence', but our government/police are not vegetarians and I would never underestimate their power to clamp down on the "criminals" "according to the law." So I believe that what we see from the TV screen is part of the truth, while other important information (or even more important information) was blocked from the news. When I see policemen forced to open fire, surrendered Tibetans expressing their regret, innocent civilians in tears, I feel more confused on the definition of "lies."

A sentence comes to my ears: lies can be comprised of facts.

(4) This one is written by a blogger who calls herself The Girl With A Cat; she is studying in Germany. (Translated by Kate Zhao)

I just came back from Paris, and accepted a call from a friend: What's your opinion about Tibet?

Is this a question? Or is it a new question?

eeek, it doesn't matter East or West, Chinese, German, or English, people everywhere are debating the same frequently-used words: riot, independence, suppress, military army, boycott Olympics, nationalism etc.

OK, my opinions are:

1. It is Tibetan's rights to protest peacefully.
2. Revenging Han Chinese with violence rather than peaceful protest is barbaric.
3. Crackdown on the unrest is the duty of the police, but deploying the military

changes the whole nature of things. No excuses for that.

4. It's very stupid to force out all foreign media from Tibet, and it's evidence of the lack of transparency of the news and the lack of freedom of expression. Can you rely on the evicted foreign journalists to say good things about you? Can you let the world believe the Xinhua agency's press release? To tell you the truth, even I do not believe it.

5. As for common sense, an open society's media under freedom of expression is more credible than the media under the one-party rule, and one voice propaganda system. Western people were brainwashed by western media, just like Chinese people were always brainwashed by party newspapers, and CCTV. The question left is: domestic brainwashing vs. foreign, which one is better?

6. What do Tibetans really think? I don't know. At least before a democratic vote in Tibet, no one knows. Similarly, do Chinese people support their government? Before we have true voting rights, there is no answer.

7. After decades of brainwashing, at least most Chinese equate the Chinese government with China. Then if western media criticizes the Chinese government, Chinese people will be excited and eager to fight back, or feel guilty. But, in fact, why we should react like that?

8. Like writer Yishu said: When a man doesn't love his woman any more, her crying is wrong, her silence is wrong, breathing is wrong, even her death is wrong." Modify this a little bit. The attitude from the western media to China: when the western world believes China's politics are undemocratic, its harmonious show is wrong, its silence is wrong, its police clampdown is wrong, everything is wrong.

9. When we have no rights to choose our government, when we gave up our rights to protest for freedom, we should bear every prejudice from the western world. It's painful, but it's what we deserve.

10. At last, I don't think it's a special problem of nationality. Above of all, it's a question of democracy.

(5) US and THEM

Student blogger Mengsha, a member of the Zhuang minority, writes her thoughts about ethnic relations in China and the Tibet issue on the my1510.cn blog, partially translated by China Digital Times:

I suddenly remembered this event. In the summer of 2005, seven of us, all from a student theater group, went to Chengdu to attend a college student theater festival. After the performance, we took a train from Chengdu to go back to Lanzhou. There were only a few passengers in the car, almost all of whom got off within the borders of Sichuan province. After dark, there were only a few Tibetans and seven of us in our car. Soon a railway conductor came and asked us to sit in another car for safety reasons. We took our things and left the car. Now looking back, if I were one of those Tibetans at that time, how would I feel about this? Where did this feeling of "us" being threatened [by "them"] come from?

In my sophomore year I was in a dance group at the university. Our teacher especially invited two Tibetan students from the University of Nationalities to come to teach us. After they gave us lessons, they invited us to come to dance parties in their university. I really wanted to go, but no one else wanted to, so I did not go - because I dared not go there by myself. This psychology is interesting; most of us have never seen any unusual or bad behavior by students of other ethnic groups. But we are afraid of them for unknown reasons.

To me, it is even more puzzling, because I am part of a minority ethnic group myself. I am Zhuang. But my classmates do not seem to think very much of this. My roommates only noticed the difference when we were given "student aid for living expenses" each month: I got one Yuan more than them. How much can you really buy for one Yuan?

Two steamed buns. But they will protest exaggeratedly: "This is not fair! You are not poorer than us!" They were just joking with me, and this is because they see me as part of "us." I was not really being treated differently. We discuss such issues openly. One roommate said, "That is because you look just like us, (I insert: 'but you always say I look Vietnamese') and we have similar habits and customs in daily life. If you wear strange clothes, don't eat this, don't eat that, and get up in the middle of night to pray, than we may not get along that well." Another roommate was even more direct: "You are too short. You can't win if you fight with us."

...Later in my college life these were small events. Because we had many Muslim students, our university has a special dining hall for Muslims. Last year, the university assigned a Han Chinese as the manager of the Muslim dining hall, so some Muslim students protested. The result was that some Han Chinese students got really pissed off. Some wrote on BBS: The government has been very accommodating to you people, why are you still not satisfied? Why should we accommodate your customs, instead of you accommodating ours? The government has given you a privileged policy and you still want more? (Please note, there are many such viewpoints in online commentaries about recent events in Tibet.) And the rebuttal post (from Muslim students) then asked, Why does the government consider its policy toward ethnic groups as a "special favor"? Maybe the government itself thinks that's a "special favor" [not us]? Why whenever we demand something, is it immediately considered as "rebellion"?

These are my experiences of relations between different nationalities in the university. Simply put, the gap comes when both sides cannot communicate with each other.

But if I have to look for more reasons in other areas, I gradually realized that the government and some Han people think of it as charity to give ethnic minorities "favors," and that these minorities

should stay in their place after being given such "favors." They should not misbehave, or be so different [from Han]. But the problem is, the cultural and religious traditions of minority groups have far deeper historical roots than the government. You cannot expect a little "favor" could change that. As for the gap between people in different ethnic groups, I think they come from the following two aspects:

First, under the current political system, ideology is almost as important as sovereignty. To the Communist Party, it would be best if every Chinese believed their official ideology - so-called Marxism with Chinese characteristics. But there are still many people who believe in religion. And for those who do not believe in religion, the official ideology is not very attractive to them either. Therefore there are three different attitudes: those who loyally believe the official ideology (I really do not want to call it "socialism" or "communism"); those who do not believe but at least do not openly oppose it (I am one of them); and those who do not believe [the official ideology] but have their own beliefs. For the Communist Party, which based its legitimacy to rule on economic performance and nationalist ideology, the last kind is most terrifying. The state's distrust of those who do not believe in the state ideology diffuses into the society, creating the gap between different ethnic groups.

Second, Chinese political culture has never been interested in protecting an individual's rights and freedom, because it considers individual rights to be created by the state, and they can be taken back [by the state] at any time. The natural extension of such disrespect for individual rights is disrespect for minority's rights. People believe it is normal if you are just like others; otherwise, you are abnormal. People always sided with the majority and are afraid to be different from others. There even some people who distance themselves and mistreat minorities in order to show their identity with the majority. This is not limited to the area

of relations between nationalities. Also, if we take a serious look at the numbers, we will see many times that those “minorities” are actually a very large group of people.

I think that if the government still insists on impossible goals such as “unifying

thoughts,” there will be only more friction between different cultures and people. The best policy is to allow different cultures to co-exist. If a society cannot tolerate different thoughts and different cultures, if it cannot tolerate minorities and independent individuals, then its development is

very problematic. Even if one can temporarily suppress those dissatisfactions, it is even worse when those suppressed dissatisfactions accumulate. If I have to say that what I hope China will learn from all these events this year, it should be: more tolerance, more openness, more freedom.

Zhu Rui’s Letter to the Venerable Dalai Lama

Revered Dalai Lama:

I have to tell you that my impression of you in my childhood and youth was that you were a flayer of human skin, a demon who picked flesh from human bones. From this point alone, you have probably guessed that I am Han Chinese. Indeed, I grew up within the Communist education system. But in 1997, I chanced upon an opportunity to travel to Tibet. That was the first time I (secretly) saw your photograph, your kind and compassionate visage, and it made me doubt the Communists’ propaganda.

At the Festival of the Bodhisattva of Good Fortune that year, I went early to the Zulakang temple where the Bodhisattva’s covering had already been removed, and in the light as soon as I saw her face, the sound of a voice rose behind me. It was the mournful yet excited sound of an elderly voice. There before the Songsten Gampo hall, she sang while she poured wine into a goblet in front of the statue. Men, women and even the children all around immediately joined in the singing, and when the police turned up, their voices rang ever more brightly... “They’re praising the Dalai Lama,” a monk quietly told me.

That day, I moved out of my hotel and into the former home of a merchant on the Barkhor. Prior to 1959, the mistress of this family used to wear clothes most days worth 30,000 to 40,000 renminbi, but now all she had left was two sets of clothes. The home left to her by her ancestors had been demolished. The new home seemed to be worth more, but it was less than half the size of the old one and there was no running water and the communal toilets were constantly blocked, sending their unbearable

stench right out into the Barkhor street. This woman had no complaint about being plundered by the Communists, but there was something she was constantly saying, very quietly - I could only ever see her lips moving. I thought she was reciting the mantra, “Wish for a better life to come.” But one day, when there were only the two of us and she saw there was no one there outside, she said she was reciting a long-life prayer for you.

In April 1999 I went to Tibet for the second time where I lived in the home of farmers in Rizhika village in Jiru township, Zalang county in Rikaze prefecture. There was no running water there and no electricity. At dawn each day, the family traipsed to the river to carry water and in the evenings even the small children sat around the weak oil lamp twisting wool. Selling felt was pretty much the only means of livelihood the villagers had. Our food was very simple, with potatoes for two meals a day (aside from gruel for breakfast) being a luxury. But there in the home, in the place where the most light came in, was a picture of you in an exquisite frame draped all over with long white khada.

Later, I chose to work in Tibet. As an editor and journalist I had the opportunity to meet with some Tibetans who worked in Chinese Communist Party offices, and with my own eyes saw how in the most secret places in their homes they have photographs of you and yak butter lamps that had never been lit.

You are not the enemy of the Tibetan people, you are the father of the Tibetan people; you are the source of the Tibetan people’s compassion and happiness. You are Yeshe Norbu, the Tibetan people’s wish-fulfilling jewel;

you are Kundun, who forever will appear before all Tibetans whenever they call you; and you are Gyalwa Rinpoche, higher than all kings and the most precious of treasures. And evidently, the Communist authorities did not liberate Tibet, they robbed Tibet; they did not sow happiness, they created suffering.

Listening to your lecture at Madison in Wisconsin, I was filled with emotion. An ocean of Buddhist wisdom of the greatest depth and by degree ever more complex was systematically expounded by you until it miraculously became like rain, nourishing and vitalizing your listeners; you did your utmost to answer every everyone’s questions, embracing the smallest shred of individual pain and suffering; and even when someone asked a question about China-Tibet relations, with limitless patience and concern you emphasized the excellence of the Chinese nation, and encouraged friendly exchange between the Chinese and Tibetan peoples. And the Communists’ evil, their scheming, their corruption and dictatorship, when compared to your compassion, your transparency, your honesty and democracy - all shall undergo the test of time.

In March of this year, the Communists’ cruel 50-year colonial rule of Tibet gave rise to peaceful, non-violent protests at more than 100 locations throughout all Tibetan areas. The tragedy is that not only have the Communist leaders failed to reflect upon or adjust their policies in Tibet as a result, but condescendingly they actually dictated to you that there were the “four do not supports” as preconditions to dialog, making the white-hot Tibet question a problem for you personally. Their intention is to smother and even kill off the Tibet

question, and Tibet has now become an enormous prison. It's said that in Lhasa, one in three people is a plain-clothed police officer. The military has gone into even the most remote village and all telephone calls (especially foreign calls) are closely monitored...

Tibet's culture is profound and extensive, ancient and progressive, and I long ago saw the beauty of its traditions in the Tibetan people: devotion, kindness, gratitude, benevolence; and what has China's 5000-year culture left the Han people? Naturally, not all of it has been exquisite, and the Chinese authorities have used those dregs in gruesome details to enslave and shackle the Tibetan people with "traditions of unique benefit to all mankind!" In the twenty-first century when people leap over their countries' fences in a common pursuit of freedom, democracy and human rights, and respect for the singularity of their ethnic culture, it is precisely such colonial behavior as this that the world rejects as a thing of filth. There are more and more deep-thinking and incisive intellectuals in China who

are starting to see through the Communists, publicly expressing their own independent views on the Tibet question, demanding an end to totalitarian rule, the implementation of freedom of expression and freedom of the media, withdrawing the accusations against you of being a "splittist of the Motherland", and demanding "a resolution of the Tibet problem by means of respect, tolerance, consultation and dialog."

In the almost 30 years of reform and opening up, the trend has led China towards becoming a "great nation". In actual fact, it's no more than "As China enters the international mainstream, it is hitching a ride towards globalization." The loss of morality has permeated into even China's most remote villages, and evil and dissipation have become the fashion. Hosting the Olympics under circumstances such as these inevitably runs counter to the Olympic spirit. The superficial prosperity cannot conceal the void within. The need to reform bad governance is a fact that has been placed before every Chinese person. If the Communist leaders continue to be arrogant and imperious on the question

of Tibet and coerce and trample upon the Tibetan people, and deceive and mislead the Chinese masses, and if they continue to deny your irreplaceable value towards peace in the world and your unrivaled spiritual contributions, and adhere to the inhuman logic of "power grows from the barrel of a gun," their days will come to a sudden end one not too distant dawn. There is no doubt you will return to your land! When you are reunited with the suffering Tibetan people, please extend the warm light of your benevolence to care upon the heavy sins of China's vast land.

May the ship of your compassion for ever be among us!

From a Han who sympathizes with the suffering of the Tibetan people, and who has limitless respect for you: Zhu Rui.

—The English translation of the open letter is reproduced from the website of Washington, DC-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT). Writer Zhu Rui, who lived and worked in Tibet for several years but is now based in Canada.

NEWSBRIEF

Repression of Religious Freedom in Tibet intensifies: US report

The US state department's annual report on religious freedom said the level of religious repression in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas has increased over the past year.

The 2008 International Religious Freedom Report was announced in Washington, D.C. on 19 September, which was also submitted to Congress by the Department of State.

"We have encouraged the Chinese government to cease the patriotic, political education campaigns in which nuns and monks are forced to study communist texts and to denounce the Dalai Lama," said John V Hanford III, Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, while announcing the report.

Describing religious freedom as a "universal aspiration", he said, "Our promotion of this human right is grounded both in national interest and international norms."

The report noted that the preservation and development of the Tibetan people's unique religious, cultural, and linguistic heritage, as well as the protection of their fundamental human rights, continue to be of concern.

It said the Chinese government has increased restrictions on religious freedom, including interference with the process of selecting and training reincarnate lamas, stricter control over the ability of monks and nuns to travel between monasteries, and limits on the construction or renovation of monasteries.

The report was also critical of the

"patriotic education campaigns", which it said were "major factors that led monks and nuns from a number of monasteries to mount peaceful protests in Lhasa on 10 March 2008."

Expressing concern over thousands of Tibetans detained following the unrest, the report said authorities locked down monasteries as well as detained and physically abused an unknown number of monks and nuns, or expelled them from monasteries throughout Tibetan areas. It also noted that the U.S. Government continued to encourage greater religious freedom by urging the PRC Government and local authorities to respect religious freedom and preserve religious traditions.

Following the protests in Tibet on 14 March, the US Government urged the PRC Government to engage in constructive dialogue with His

Holiness the Dalai Lama and his representatives and to address policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions due to their impact on Tibetan religion, culture, and livelihoods, the report added.

Special General Meeting on Tibet to be convened in November

The ongoing sixth session of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on Monday approved a motion tabled in the house regarding a draft proposal to convene the special general meeting on Tibet, which will be submitted to His Holiness the Dalai Lama to receive the final authorization.

Considering the urgent situation inside Tibet and the situation in the world in general, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has called for a special meeting as enshrined in the article 59 of the Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile.

The draft proposal was put forward by Kalon Tripa and supported by the deputy speaker.

After an extensive discussion and deliberations on the proposal, the Parliament unanimously approved that the meeting would be held from 17 - 22 November at the Tibetan Children's Village School in Dharamshala.

The composition of the representatives for the meeting include members of the Tibetan Parliament, members of the Kashag, former Kalons, former members of Parliament, CTA officials-based in Dharamshala, two envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and representatives of His Holiness, settlement or welfare officers, representatives from the local assemblies, Bod Rawang Denpai Legul Tsogchung, four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and Bon religion, head of the schools and overseas Tibetan associations and representatives from Tibetan non governmental organizations.

The heads of the three independent bodies of the Central Tibetan Administration will attend the inaugural

and final day of the meeting.

During the first four days of the meeting, ten or fifteen small committees would be formed to deliberate on the proposal and each committee will submit their recommendations to the general meeting on the fifth day. Based on these recommendations, a final resolution would be passed.

Chinese Writer Speaks on Repression on Tibetan Religion and Culture

Tibetan Buddhism is the spirit of Tibet, and the biggest offence to Tibetans is to insult this spirit. Although the Chinese constitution stipulates the freedom of religious belief, this "freedom" does not exist in Tibet, and many obstructions are set to keep people away from their belief, Ms Zhu Rui, a Han Chinese writer, said in an interview with *The Epoch Times*.

The current regulation forbids anyone under 18 years of age to become a monk. However, in the past, there was no age limit. In Tibet, monasteries are also schools, and these have produced many extraordinary Tibetan scholars, Zhu Rui said. She said: "In the temples, one can be taught architecture, linguistics, literature, etc. Tibetan Buddhism is not just the essence of mankind's spirituality; it also has close ties with science. In some aspects, it is even more advanced than current science. This contributes to the reason why many scientists generate interest in Tibetan Buddhism." "Unfortunately, the Chinese people under the communist regime do not bother to grasp a deeper understand of Tibetan culture. They hold groundless views on age regulations for monasteries, claiming that one would become ignorant and incompetent if entering the temple at a young age," she added.

She further said: "The regime also casts restrictions on what can be taught in the monasteries. Every monastery has a work team from the regime. They turn the monk's study time to communist patriotism education, with every monk

needing to pass with a red certificate. Upon visiting one temple, a monk showed me his certificate." Without such a certificate, the monk would be kicked out of the temple. Very often, the most disciplined monks were kicked out because they put their belief above the so called "patriotism education", she added.

"What has happened in the temples now is communist politics under a religious coat, and is completely against the spirit of Buddhism," said Ms Zhu Rui, who has written several novels, poems, and essays, with most of her works related to Tibet, including 'Why Tibetans Want to Protest', 'Write to Some Chinese' and 'A Letter to His Holiness the Dalai Lama'.

She was also critical of the regime for abolishing some of the religious system that has been passed down for many generations. "Take the Geshe exam, for example. Geshe is the highest position in the temple, equivalent to Ph.D. The System of Debating Buddhist Scriptures has not been abolished, but has been changed completely," she added. She said: "In the past, monks would annually go to a valley close to Lhasa to hold their Buddhist Scriptures Debate forum. Now the number of monks permitted to participated is restricted, and often the forum is cancelled for no reason."

She also said the Chinese government put strict restrictions on religious festivals in Tibet, which are the most illustrious and colorful part of Tibetan culture.

She noticed some of the festivals such as the butter lamp festival, although is not banned, are closely monitored by heavy police vigil. People who worked in the government were absolutely banned to participate in this activity, she added.

Speaking on the destruction of Tibetan traditional buildings, she said, "The ancient Tibetan buildings are part of Tibetan culture, and have inestimable values in architecture, history, culture, and aesthetics. In the past, there were over 500 ancient buildings around Barkhor Street in Lhasa. But only 93 remained when I visited in 1997, the

majority of them were demolished by the communist regime.”

She was also critical of the elements that bring moral degeneration into Tibet. “Currently, Tibet is full of prostitutes; hairdressers on the streets of Lhasa are mostly brothels. One often spots seductively dressed females from the neighboring Sichuan province, wandering on the streets of Lhasa,” she said.

“According to one dermatologist at the People’s Hospital in Lhasa, before 1978, there was no single case of a sexually transmitted disease among the 11,081 people being surveyed. But in 2002, there were over 10 cases daily, and the diseases showed many variations,” she added.

Resolution Calls for Earnest Negotiations on Tibet

The US Senate passed a resolution on 17 September calling for earnest negotiations between the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai and the Chinese government for a mutually agreeable solution that addresses the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people.

The resolution was introduced by Senators Gordon Smith (R-OR) and Russell Feingold (D-WI), which was approved unanimously by the U.S. Senate on 17 September.

The resolution said that the talks in October should focus on the welfare, cultural, political, and religious autonomy of the Tibetan people, and not on the person of the Dalai Lama.

It affirms that the human rights of Tibetans and their right to practice religion free of government regulation is not an internal matter of any one country.

The resolution calls on the US President to take a more personal and engaged interest in the successful conclusion of these negotiations, both unilaterally and in coordination with United States allies.

It calls on the US government to press the Government of China to respect freedom of speech and freedom of association, as required by international law and as enshrined in the Constitution of China and to release those who have committed no crime other than peaceful protest.

It urged the Chinese government to end the “patriotic education” campaign against lay and clerical Tibetans and allow Tibetans to practice their religion freely.

UN Human Rights Council Discuss Tibet

During the current UN Human Rights Council’s 9th session discussing human rights issues around the world, the government and NGO delegates were once again drawn to the attention of deteriorating situation in Tibet under Chinese rule. The session started on 8 September and will end on 26 September. NGOs were given the opportunity to present their statement under agenda item 4 which deals with Human Rights situations that require the Council’s attention.

Mr. Tenzin Samphel KAYTA spoke on behalf of four NGOs. He drew the Council’s attention on the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet and government of Nepal’s decision to deport Tibetans living in Nepal without proper residential papers.

He highlighted that even though China had agreed in April to receive the High Commissioner for Human Rights at a later date, this still hasn’t taken place.

Mr. KAYTA expressed concern at reports of death of Tibetan due to torture while in detention. He mentioned the case of Nechung, a 38-year-old Tibetan woman who was tortured in late-March after nine days detention. She had taken part in the peaceful protests in Tibet. Tibetan monasteries are even today under very tight armed control and thousands of Tibetans - farmers, nomads, monks, nuns and students - have disappeared.

He mentioned that the UN Committee Against Torture raised a question to the Chinese authorities last month about the “30 persons were found guilty and sentenced less than six weeks after the events, please clarify the basis of the sentences, including how many cases involved confessions from the defendants. What opportunity to appeal the verdicts is provided to the defendants? Is there an independent review or oversight board assigned to these cases, and if so, has it examined any of them?”

In his concluding statement, Mr. Kayta urged the Council to encourage the Chinese authorities to immediately receive the High Commissioner for Human Rights and relevant Special Procedure mandate-holders to visit Tibetan areas of present-day People’s Republic of China.

In response to NGOs statement on Tibet, the Chinese delegation said the NGOs statement misrepresented the fact. The Chinese delegation said that what happens in Tibet is part of China’s internal affairs. Tibetan question is not of religious, national or cultural issues neither is it a question of human rights. Promotion and protection of human rights has been enshrined in Chinese constitution. The delegation also said China attaches great importance to human rights and uphold human beings at the center of all activities and working to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedom of Chinese citizens. Chinese government has also been working to promote and protect human rights in Tibet.

In a separate address to the Council, the International Commission of Jurist said “Violent crackdown on the peaceful protest in Tibet of March 08, including arbitrary executions, use of excessive non-lethal force by the security forces and arbitrary detentions, has not been investigated to date. The ICJ has been receiving reports of continuous arbitrary and incommunicado detention of monks and other perceived opponents, short of any due process guarantees. Those sentenced to severe prison terms,

including the life imprisonment remain in jail, without the review of legality of criminal procedures organized under distress. The ICJ once again calls on the Chinese government to inform the Council on the investigation into the crackdown, which will be meaningful if assisted by the relevant Council's Special Procedures."

Tibetan Parliament Lauds US Senate's Resolution on Tibet

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile expressed gratitude to the US Senate for unanimously approving a resolution urging the government of China to begin earnest negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the future of Tibet.

"The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on behalf of the six million suffering people of Tibet, deeply thank the U.S. Senate for unanimously approving Senate Resolution 643 on September 17, 2008 urging the government of China to begin earnest negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the future of Tibet," said Speaker Karma Chopel, in a letter written to Mr. Dick Cheney, chairman of the United States Senate, on 26 September.

"Our heartfelt gratitude is also due to Senators Gordon Smith (R-OR) and Russell Feingold (D-WI) who took the leadership to introduce the legislation," Speaker Karma Chopel added.

He said: "The Senate Resolution 643 is a clear recognition that the parleys between the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government since 1979 have not made any headway only because the Chinese side was not willing to enter into actual and earnest negotiations instead of just talks."

"It is therefore high time now that the other Parliaments and Governments concerned for Tibet and China to support this resolution and impress upon the Chinese side to realise the urgency of the matter," he added.

DIIR submits report on 'torture against Tibetan people' to the UN

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), through its Tibet Bureau based in Geneva, submitted a report on "the continuing use of torture against the Tibetan people" to "the United Nations Committee Against Torture on Violations by the People's Republic of China Against The People of Tibet", on 29 September.

The report details narrative of events from 2000 to 2008, presenting evidence of torture used against Tibetan people under the political and religious repression imposed by the Chinese government in Tibet.

It presents a detailed account of the Chinese government's violations of the convention against torture by attributing those with 'evidence of torture in connection with recent protests in Tibet', 'torture as a common practice in Tibet even before the March demonstration', 'failure of China's legal system to ban the use of torture', 'absence of independent judiciary' and the 'Chinese authorities threat of disciplinary action against lawyers'.

The report, which evaluates China's compliance with the convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment (torture convention) with respect to Tibet, said, "China continues to engage in widespread and systematic violations of the torture conventions against the Tibetan people."

China has also failed to make genuine progress in the areas of concern noted by this committee in its '1996 and 2000 Concluding Observations', which is supported by the recent findings of the Special Rapporteur on Torture, following his mission to China, noted the report. The report asked the committee to examine China's compliance with the Torture Convention taking into consideration the significant events in Tibet since 2000.

It said significant measures were implemented to curtail and repress the free practice of religion in Tibet, to deny the Tibetan people any meaningful right of free expression, and to marginalize Tibetans through a concerted effort to support the influx of Chinese settlers.

These measures have been enforced through police intimidation, arbitrary arrest and detention, and torture used to punish and terrorise the Tibetan communities. Indeed, across a broad array of economic, social and political rights, the Chinese government has failed the Tibetan people, the report added.

The report is critical of the increasing repression and economic marginalisation of Tibetans, which culminated in a sustained and widespread series of protests – almost all peaceful – throughout Tibet beginning on 10 March 2008.

Chinese authorities responded by detaining thousands of Tibetans, many of whom were treated with extreme brutality both while being detained and during their detention, shooting and killing unarmed protesters, locking monks and nuns inside their monasteries, imposing a heavy police and military presence in all cities and most towns of any significant size as well as remote nomad encampments, severely restricting travel within Tibet, and instituting "patriotic education" campaigns within the monasteries, the reported noted.

The Central Tibetan Administration urges the United Nations Committee Against Torture to scrutinize China's compliance with the Torture Convention with particular attention to Tibet.

It also requests the committee to address the continuing use of torture against the Tibetan people and submit recommendations for its consideration in order to end the use of torture in Tibet.

The Statement of the Kashag on the Forty-eighth Anniversary of the Tibetan Democracy Day

On this special occasion of the 48th anniversary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's extraordinary efforts to transform the Tibetan polity into a genuine democracy, the Kashag - as a way of



Kalon for Religion and Culture delivering the Kashags statement on Democracy Day.

expressing its immense gratitude to His Holiness - makes obeisance to him. The Kashag also extends its affectionate greetings and Tashi Deleg to all Tibetans living in and outside Tibet, as well as to the governments, parliaments, governmental and non-governmental organisations, Tibet support groups and the people of the international community who are supportive of Tibet and the Tibetans.

In our previous statements, the Kashag has dwelled - among other things - on the status of the Tibetan democratic polity and its weaknesses; the responsibilities that Tibetans in general and particularly the Tibetan exiles must shoulder; and the role of the Tibetan civil society, which is inclusive of the Tibetan NGOs. While reiterating all these points, the Kashag would like to emphatically state that all Tibetans should - at this very critical and crucial period - give more importance to their democratic duties than rights; that they should give more importance to the national and community's benefits than individual's and organisation's; and that they

should, in order to challenge the forces of division, strive towards combining their collective energies.

The principal reason why the Tibetans inside Tibet have had to endure continuous sufferings for the last almost 60 years - and as a result of it the very survival of the Tibetan people is at stake today - is due to the Chinese autocratic government's ultra-leftist policies. Under these policies, the basic rights of the Tibetan people, including their political, social, religious and cultural rights are trampled upon by the Chinese government. Therefore, until and unless the nature of the People's Republic of China's polity does not become more open, free and transparent, it is difficult for China to be able to resolve the problem of Tibet. Taking cue from this fact, the Tibetan people living in the free world should also work towards cultivating a culture of openness, freedom and transparency.

In order to establish a true democratic society, it is very important to have gender equality in general, and particularly women should equally partake in the administrative and political work of a country. Since ancient times until now, no gender discriminations of any kind have taken place in our society. However, going by the ratio of the Tibetan men and women taking part in administration and politics, there is a difference with women lagging far behind men. It is very important to bridge this difference in the future. The Kashag will soon come out with a policy to strengthen women's power in our society, and we request all of you to co-operate with us in this regard.

One of the difficulties of a democratic system when it comes to implementation - and particularly a problem often faced by the Asian countries - is the inability to make a choice when differences

emerge between one's political ideology and the policies adopted by the government of the day, as well as the difficulty in evolving a consensus among the contesting parties when it comes to the fundamental interest of the country and people. All these occur due to an inadequate level of education, or intellectual disposition, among the citizens. The Tibetan community is also undergoing the same kind of problems. Therefore, it is indispensable for the individuals and organisations to heed that in addition to upholding their respective ideological leanings, they should - as and when required - ensure the unity and cohesive force of the Tibetan people without letting it diminish the slightest.

For nearly 60 years, we have endured the oppression of a foreign country. Over these years, many heroic Tibetan men and women have sacrificed their every possession, including their precious lives, for the sake of Tibetan religion, culture, national identity and freedom. Paying homage to all these brave souls, the Kashag would like to request all Tibetans to learn from their sacrifices and continue the rightful and non-violent struggle of the Tibetan people until the issue of Tibet is resolved once and for all.

Finally, the Kashag prays for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the spontaneous fulfilment of all his wishes. May the truth of the issue of Tibet prevail soon!

The Kashag

Note: Translated from the Tibetan original

Taktser Rinpoche Thupten Jigme Norbu



The Central Tibetan Administration mourns the demise of Taktser Rinpoche Thupten Jigme Norbu, former representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Japan and former abbot of Kumbum monastery in Amdo.

Taktser Rinpoche, who is the eldest brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, breathed his last at his home in Indiana in the United States, on Friday evening, 5 September, owing to prolonged illness. He was 86 years old.

As a mark of respect and gratitude for dedicating his entire life to the revival of Tibet's heritage and hope for the

Tibetan people, the departments and offices of the Administration remained closed, following an hour-long prayer session at 2 p.m.

Senior officials of the Central Tibetan Administration, including the members of the Kashag, attended the prayer session.

In his brief address, Kalon Tripa Samdhong Rinpoche expressed his condolences to the family members over the sad demise of Taktser Rinpoche.

Taktser Rinpoche was recognized at the age of three as the reincarnated abbot of Kumbum monastery in Amdo, Tibet, one of the most important monasteries in Tibet, and was therefore already a prominent figure in Tibet's religious hierarchy even before his brother His Holiness the Dalai Lama was born.

In 1950, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama was still in Lhasa, Chinese officials attempted to persuade Taktser Rinpoche to travel to Lhasa and convince His Holiness the Dalai Lama to accept the "peaceful liberation" of Tibet, even promising to make him the governor of Tibet if he succeeded, according to one

account. Taktser Rinpoche eventually agreed to travel to Lhasa to see His Holiness, but evaded his Chinese escorts on route and instead conveyed to His Holiness the Dalai Lama his deep misgivings about China's influence in Tibet, and urging His Holiness to retreat to the border with India.

Upon leaving Tibet in the 1950s and over a long and prolific writing career, he wrote several academic papers and books on Tibet including his own autobiography, *Tibet Is My Country*, one of the first books on the Tibetan experience to have scholarly credibility. He went on to serve as Professor of Tibetan Studies at Indiana University in the United States, where in 1979 he founded the Tibetan Cultural Center.

Taktser Rinpoche was a tireless advocate for the protection of Tibetan culture and the rights of the Tibetan people in Tibet. Each year - including this year prior to the Beijing Olympics - he participated in long walks and cycle rides to raise awareness of the plight of the Tibetan people.

He is survived by his wife Kunyang Norbu, and three sons.

His Eminence the 100th Ganden Tripa Lobsang Nyima



The Central Tibetan Administration expressed its heartfelt condolences over the demise of His Eminence Lobsang Nyima Pal Sangpo, the 100th holder of Ganden Tripa.

His Eminence Lobsang Nyima - who ascended to the highest position in the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism in 1994 - passed away after a brief illness at Kles

Hospital and MRC at Belgaum in southern India, on the 14th day of seventh Tibetan lunar month and 14 September. He was 79.

The officials of the administration observed an hour-long prayer session at 2 p.m. on 17th Sept., following which the departments and the offices remained close.

Expressing condolences on behalf of the CTA, the department of religion and culture and Buddhist followers in general, Kalon Ven Tsering Phuntsok described the Ganden Trisur as "one of the most accomplished masters of Tibetan Buddhism, who has offered great service to the spiritual and temporal heritage of Tibet."

In 1945, at the age of 17, Gaden Trisur Lobsang Nyima began his spiritual learning on 'Five Treatises of Buddhism'

under the tutelage of former tutors of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, at the Drepung Loseling Monastic University in Tibet.

He received many degrees and posts, including Lharampa Geshe, abbot of Gyudmed University, abbot of Namgyal Monastery, Jangtse Choeje and an honorary doctorate degree conferred by CTIHS Varanasi.

Apart from achieving excellence in spiritual learning, he mastered the intricate arts of poetry and grammar.

His great work of writing includes "Religious History and Prayers for Lineages of abbots of Gyudmed Tantric Monastery", "An Eulogy of Maitreya (Gyalwa Jampa)" and "Prayers for Long-Life and Swift Return of Incarnations of Many High Lamas".

Tibetan Media

Sheja (official Tibetan monthly)
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Tibetan Freedom (official Tibetan weekly)
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Web: www.tibet.net/tb/tibfreedom

Tibet Bulletin (official Chinese bi-monthly)
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AN APPEAL

Tibetan Bulletin promotes awareness and provides facts of the situation in Tibet and Tibetans in exile. Produced bi-monthly and distributed free around the world, we are looking to increase our readership and improve the *Tibetan Bulletin*.

Today we would like to appeal to our esteemed readers for funding assistance, as we at the *Tibetan Bulletin* are running short of funds, making our publication erratic and irregular.

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AN APPEAL FROM TIPA

In the run up to the 50th anniversary of its founding anniversary, the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA) has initiated a project to archive as much of the entire corpus of the records of Tibetan performing arts as may be possible within our capability and resources. The TIPA Archive Project is designed to facilitate a proper documentation and ethnographic recording of all materials related to the Tibetan theatrical art. With this grand national aim in view, we appeal to all our former members, directors, researchers, instructors, artistes and staff to share with us whatever useful and relevant materials they may have in their possession for the project. The contributions could include images, pictures, slides, films, spools, Betacam, DVD, VCD, cassettes, Audio CDs, gramophone recordings, video cassettes (VHS) and others related to Tibetan performing arts.

The collected materials will be meticulously documented and eventually maintained in computerized database. Our aim is that the TIPA library would come to serve as a resource centre for researchers in ethnomusicology and related disciplines for interested scholars.

All the shared materials will be duly acknowledged, credited and returned to the concerned persons. We assure utmost confidentiality in every case where this is desired.

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