



TIBETAN BULLETIN

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VOLUME 18, ISSUE 1

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2014

FOCUS

US President Meets with His Holiness the Dalai Lama

His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Sikyong visit US Capitol Hill

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Religious Freedom in Tibet

Beyond Self-Immolations: The Protests of Driru in 2013

INTERVIEW

DIIR Secretary Speaks on Genesis of Tibetans' Contact with South Africa

CHINESE PERSPECTIVE

The Virtue of Nonviolence: My Impressions of the Dalai Lama



President Barack Obama meets with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the Map Room of the White House, February 21, 2014. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)



Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay handing out certificates to graduates during Martin Luther Christian University's Convocation ceremony in Shillong, Meghalaya, India on February 3, 2014. Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

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US Government and Human Rights Watch report Severe Repression in Tibet

China's policies in Tibet once again came under criticism from the US government and Human Rights Watch.

The Human Rights Watch said in its report published in January that the Chinese government systematically suppresses Tibetan political, cultural, religious and socio-economic rights in the name of combating what it sees as separatist sentiment including non-violent advocacy for Tibetan independence, the Dalai Lama's return, or opposition to government policy.

"Arbitrary arrest and imprisonment remains common, and torture and ill-treatment in detention is endemic. Fair trials are precluded by politicised judiciary overtly tasked with suppressing separatism. The Chinese government carries out involuntary population relocation and rehousing on a massive scale, and enforces highly repressive policies in ethnic minority areas in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia," it said.

In its annual human rights report issued on 27 February, the US statement said the Chinese government's respect for and protection of human rights in Tibet remained poor. "Under the banner of maintaining social stability and combating separatism, the government engaged in the severe repression of Tibet's unique religious, cultural, and linguistic heritage by, among other means, strictly curtailing the civil rights" of Tibetans, including the freedoms of speech, religion, association, assembly, and movement," it said.

It also reported serious human rights abuses such as extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial detentions, and house arrests. "There was a perception among Tibetans that authorities systemically targeted them for political repression, economic marginalization, and cultural assimilation, as well as educational and employment discrimination."

The report said Mandarin Chinese, rather than Tibetan, is used widely used in

all official communications and in the schools as the medium of instruction. "China's Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law states that "schools (classes and grades) and other institutions of education where most of the students come from minority nationalities shall, whenever possible, use textbooks in their own languages and use their languages as the media of instruction" (Article 37). The Tibetan-language curriculum for primary and middle schools in Tibetan areas was predominantly translated directly from the standard national Mandarin-language curriculum, offering Tibetan students little insight into their own culture and history," the report said.

The report said Tibetans face economic marginalisation and employment discrimination due to the language policy. "Proficiency in Mandarin was essential to qualify for higher education and to obtain a government job in the PRC. China's most prestigious universities provided no instruction in Tibetan or other ethnic minority languages. "Nationalities" universities, established to serve ethnic minority students and ethnic Han students interested in ethnic minority subjects, offered Tibetan-language instruction only in courses focused on the study of the Tibetan language or culture. Since Tibetan-language instruction was not offered for other higher-education subjects, there was a dearth of technically trained and qualified ethnic Tibetans, and migrants from other areas of China typically filled jobs in Tibetan areas that required technical skills and qualifications," the report noted.

Scottish Parliament Discuss Self-immolations In Tibet

The Scottish Parliament on 4 February held a lengthy debate on the wave of self-immolations in Tibet. The debate was held as part of a motion proposed by Maureen Watt, a Scottish politician and member of Parliament, to highlight the extraordinary and distressing situa-

tion prevailing inside Tibet.

The Scottish Parliament noted with grave concern that at least 127 (sic) Tibetans have self-immolated, often fatally, since February 2009. It said it understands that these actions are largely acts of protest against restrictions on religion, the Tibetan language, access to employment and the degradation of water resources and grazing lands.

It expressed concern at China's attempts to prevent accurate reports of self-immolations reaching the media and condemns the criminalisation of family members and sometimes witnesses to the incidents.

MP Maureen Watt, in her statement, have criticised the repressive policies of the Chinese government leading to Tibetan self-immolation and the subsequent military crackdown by Chinese authorities on the Tibetan people. She said that friends and relatives of self-immolators are being threatened or bribed by officials to cover up the genuine aspirations of the Tibetan self-immolators.

She spoke about the Tibetan people's right to preserve their language, culture and the rampant mining of Tibet's natural resources without any regard to the Tibetan people's religious sentiments.

US Ambassador to China calls for Sino-Tibetan Dialogue

US senator Max Baucus, nominated as Washington's next ambassador to China, said he would counsel the Chinese leadership to restart dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama without any preconditions to reduce the growing instability in Tibet.

In his testimony before the senate foreign relations committee on 28 January 2014, he said "I will call on Chinese authorities to allow an independent civil society to play a role in resolving societal challenges; take steps to reduce tensions and promote long-term stability in Tibet and Xinjiang; and restart substantive talks with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without precondition."

First Ever Tibet Festival held in Assam

The Chief Minister of the northeastern Indian state of Assam, Tarun Gogoi, said it was a great honour and privilege for Assam to host the first ever Tibet festival with the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Sikyong Dr. Lob-sang Sangay held in Guwahati from 2-6 February.

He praised His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a great leader of humanity and one

in the 7th century and flourished with the arrival of top Indian scholars such as Padma Sambhava and Shantarakshita. We Tibetans, as reliable students of India, have kept alive the Buddhist culture.

Tibetan culture, language and religion are facing grave danger of extermination under the restrictions imposed by some hardliners in the Chinese govern-



His Holiness the Dalai Lama wearing a jaapi (traditional Assamese hat) and a gamosa (traditional Assamese shawl) offered by the Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi during the inauguration of the Festival of Tibet in Guwahati, Assam, India on February 2, 2014. Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

who is concerned for the welfare of human beings throughout the world. He said His Holiness the Dalai Lama's message and blessings will usher peace, harmony and end of insurgency and hatred in Assam.

The Tibetans have a very rich cultural heritage and it will help towards promoting peace and brotherhood in Assam, the chief minister said.

Addressing the gathering, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said Tibet has an ancient civilisation, culture and history according to the findings of archaeologists and Chinese researchers.

Tibetan Buddhism originated from India

ment, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, Tibetans inside Tibet have maintained a compassionate attitude towards Chinese despite difficult circumstances. He said the festival of Tibet would help in raising awareness about the protection of Tibet's rich cultural heritage, which is on the verge of dying under the Chinese rule. On an optimistic note, he said around 400-500 million Chinese are connected and taking growing interest in Tibetan Buddhist culture.

Describing Tibetan Buddhist culture as a culture of peace and compassion, His Holiness said it is relevant and helpful in today's world affected by violence.

Meeting held to review problems of Tibetan refugees in India

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), FFR Division, at the instance of the Department of Home, Central Tibetan Administration, convened a meeting of the official of East Asia Division, MEA, Government of India with concerned Indian and Tibetan officials on 26 February.

The meeting was chaired by Shri Rajeev Sharma, Additional Secretary, MHA and was presided over by Shri K.K. Pathak, Joint Secretary, MHA. The chair started the proceedings by stating that the meeting shall review the problems of the Tibetan refugees and find way to address them.

The discussion focused on the issues relating to Tibetan Refugee Settlements pertaining to settlement land, civic amenities like drinking water, roads, electricity and other matters related to the development of settlements. Particularly issues related to settlement land records and rehabilitation issues existing in settlements in Karnataka, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, and Bhandara.

Kalon Gyari Dolma familiarised the chair with the problems faced by Tibetan refugees such as land lease documents not being issued, insecurity due to eviction fears from rehabilitated areas, livelihood avenues, unemployment among youth and non accessibility to developmental schemes of the government.

Shri Gautam Bambawale, Joint secretary, East Asia Div. MEA said that government of India considers His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetan refugees as honoured guest of India and India shall make all efforts to make their stay in India comfortable. The state officials gave their perspectives on the various issues relating to Tibetan refugees and assured their assistance and sustain their support.

Shri K.K. Pathak advised that CTA submit a proposal outlining the specific needs and problems of the Tibetan refugees in India so that a comprehensive policy for the TRs welfare can be framed.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Meets with President Barack Obama



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and the elected leader of the Central Tibetan Administration Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay during their visit to Capitol Hill in Washington DC on March 6, 2014. Photo/SonamZoksang

His Holiness the Dalai Lama met with President Obama this morning at the White House on 21 February. This was the third meeting between the Tibetan spiritual leader and the sitting American President. The earlier two meetings, also in the White House, took place on February 18th 2010 and July 16th 2011.

In an almost hour-long meeting, His Holiness shared his core commitment related to promotion of human values, fostering interfaith dialogue and preservation of Tibetan people's unique culture and rich tradition. The two leaders also discussed issues related to morality and leadership, and how one can produce new generation of ethical leaders in the 21st century.

President Obama said that he was honored to meet His Holiness again. He reiterated his support for the preservation of the unique religious, cultural, and linguistic traditions of Tibet. The President extended support for His Holiness' Middle Way Approach policy and reiterated that Chinese government should have constructive dialogue with His Holiness' representatives without any

precondition. President Obama asked His Holiness the Dalai Lama about Tibet and His Holiness explained the current situation. President Obama expressed his deep concern about the worsening human rights situation in Tibet and Tibetan areas in China.

Honorable Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay welcomed the meeting between His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and President Obama. "I welcome President Obama's strong endorsement of the Middle Way Approach policy and constructive dialogue without any precondition. This meeting sends a powerful message of hope to Tibetans in Tibet who are undergoing immense suffering. The meeting reflects the American government and people's continued commitment to freedom and democracy," said the Sikyong.

The US president reiterated his support for the Middle Way Approach and encouraged direct dialogue between His Holiness the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government to resolve the long-standing differences. "The President reiterated his strong support for the preservation of Tibet's

unique religious, cultural, and linguistic traditions and the protection of human rights for Tibetans in the People's Republic of China," the White House said in a press release.

"The President commended the Dalai Lama's commitment to peace and non-violence and expressed support for the Dalai Lama's "Middle Way" approach. The President stressed that he encourages direct dialogue to resolve long-standing differences and that a dialogue that produces results would be positive for China and Tibetans. In this context, the President reiterated the US position that Tibet is part of the People's Republic of China and that the United States does not support Tibet independence."

"The Dalai Lama stated that he is not seeking independence for Tibet and hopes that dialogue between his representatives and the Chinese government will resume," it said.

"The President and the Dalai Lama agreed on the importance of a positive and constructive relationship between the United States and China."

United States Government Appoints a New Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues



Dr. Sarah Sewall was appointed as the US Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights on 20 February. Her role also includes serving as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues.

Dr. Sewall previously served as a Senior

Lecturer in Public Policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. She served as a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Peace keeping and Humanitarian Assistance under President Clinton and as President Obama's national security and foreign policy transition team. Dr. Sewall is a former head of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University, a graduate of Harvard and Oxford universities, and a Rhodes Scholar.

Honorable Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay welcomed Dr. Sewall's appointment as both the Under Secretary and Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues. "Dr. Sewall brings deep knowledge and passion on human rights issues and will make a very strong Under Secretary and Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues. I want to thank Secretary of State, John

Kerry for the appointment and the US Senate for the confirmation and look forward to meeting and working with her," said the Sikyong.

Dr. Sewall is the fifth US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues. Maria Otero, Paula Dobriansky, the late Julia Taft, and Gregory Craig also served in this position.

Among the responsibilities of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues as outlined in the Tibet Policy Act of 2002, Under Secretary Sewall will work to promote dialogue between His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his representatives and the government of the People's Republic of China, as well as coordinate United States government policies, programs and projects related to Tibet.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Sikyong visits US Capitol Hill



Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Senator John McCain (R-AZ), His Holiness the Dalai Lama and His Holiness's interpreter Thubten Jinpa during a talk to Congressional staff at the Congressional Visitors' Center Auditorium at Capitol Hill in Washington DC on March 6, 2014. Photo/SonamZoksang

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay visited US Capitol Hill with His Holiness the Dalai Lama to attend the US House Leadership meeting in Washington, DC on 6 March. They met the US Speaker John Boehner, Leader Nancy Pelosi, Majority Leader Eric Cantor & Congressman Steny Hoyer for about 45 minutes. The US Speaker's website released the quote on its website "It's my pleasure to welcome His Holiness to the United States Capitol. His fight for religious freedom and tolerance has always brought Congress together in a bipartisan fashion. It's our

pleasure to have him today to continue those conversations and to show him our support."

Sikyong Dr. Sangay attended His Holiness' address to about 400 US Congressional Staff from both the house. Senator John McCain and Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi introduced His Holiness and the Sikyong to the Staffer. It was also attended by about 25 US Representatives.

The US Senate Foreign Relations Committee hosted a Working Coffee meet-

ing which was attended by its Chairman Senator Robert Menendez, Ranking member Senator Bob Corker, Senator Benjamin Cardin, Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Senator Christopher Coons, Senator Tom Udall, Senator Tim Kaine, Senator Marco Rubio, Senator John McCain, and Senator John Barrasso. In a meeting, His Holiness shared his three commitments of enriching human values, religious harmony and on the issue of Tibet's culture, Buddhism and its Environment. The committee jointly expressed its deep concern for the current situation inside Tibet, and extends every possible support on the issue of Tibet. Senator Udall also raised the alarming consequences of the Chinese population transfer to Tibet, and offer to extend every possible action to control such action.

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay explained to the committee about the Middle Way Policy of the Central Tibetan Administration, to resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully, within the framework of the Chinese constitution. He further elaborated that the Tibetan administration neither seek separation, nor accept the current repression inside Tibet.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Talks to Leaders of Silicon Valley on Importance of Tibetan Culture and Education



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and the elected leader of the Central Tibetan Administration Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay during their visit to Capitol Hill in Washington DC on March 6, 2014. Photo/Sonam Zoksang

In a meeting organised by the Global Leadership Incubator (GLI) organisation on 25 February, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay met with leaders of Silicon Valley to discuss how critical it is to preserve Tibetan culture and provide education to Tibetan children. The meeting was attended by more than 65 Silicon Valley tech leaders, as well as with some representatives of Ivy League institutions and a few philanthropic organisations.

The event began with Dr. Michael and Ana McCullough, who introduced the purpose and the program of the event. They expressed their gratitude to President Obama for meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama a few days ago. It was mentioned that the purpose of the meeting was not to be a fundraiser as such but rather to network the resources of the tech leaders to contribute to the concerns of the Tibetan people. Department of Education (DoE) Secretary NgodupTsering then gave a brief presentation on the activities, projects and challenges of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and DoE.

His Holiness then joined the meeting, and in his remarks touched on various

topics like the critical importance of both modern and traditional education for Tibetan children, as well as how to develop basic goodness, warm heartedness and compassion. His Holiness expressed agreement with the comment of a participant that Tibetan Buddhism could help spread the Tibetan cultural values of nonviolence, compassion and mindfulness. While agreeing to the shortcomings in modern education for cultivating warm heartedness, His Holiness dwelt on the efforts being made in collaboration with scientists to develop curriculum for promoting secular ethics in schools.

His Holiness concluded his participation by thanking the organisers and the participants for helping with Tibetan education, and mentioned that help is critical as Tibetan culture is on the verge of extinction. He joined the participants for a group photo.

His Holiness spoke for hour and a half before leaving for Los Angeles as the next stop on his busy itinerary. The floor was then taken over by Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay who related his personal story in the course of explaining the daunting challenges of his Adminis-

tration. He discussed how education is important for the Tibetan people considering the number of Tibetans compared to the Chinese population. In the course of answering several questions, he mentioned how a small grant can lead to a huge impact and finally, invited the participants to visit Dharamsala, the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration. The participants were offered a traditional scarf by Sikyong.

A number of participants, deeply moved by the meeting, expressed their support and help in whatever way possible.

GLI was founded in 2012 in partnership with the Tibetan Department of Education. GLI enabled one student last year to be admitted to Amherst College (which she will attend this year) and three more students this year, depending on their TOEFL scores at the end of March. Based on the past experience, Sikyong announced that next year all the students who secure more than 90% in their Board Exams will be invited for a selection interview for the GLI programs, as compared to the current practice of only interviewing for Gadhen Phodrang scholars.

Religious Freedom in Tibet

Introduction

Tibetan Buddhism is practiced by the majority of Tibetans and has been a core element of Tibetan culture and identity for centuries. However, since the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950's, the Chinese government has imposed successive repressive policies against its practice.

Today in Tibet, monasteries are forbidden to give traditional monastic education which forms an integral part of Tibetan Buddhism. Monks and nuns are, instead, subjected to regular "patriotic education" and other political campaigns that are fundamentally against the basic tenets of Tibetan Buddhism. Political indoctrination has replaced Buddhist education in monastic institutions where monks are drawn to serve the interest of the Beijing government and are made to work as docent in monasteries.

Chinese authorities often restrict or cancel religious festivals, forbid monks from traveling to villages to conduct religious ceremonies and maintain stringent control over the activities of religious leaders and during religious gatherings of Tibetans. Those who speak up for religious freedom are often charged on political ground, allegedly linking with the "Dalai Lama and his clique", and given harsh punishments.

One of the biggest concerns in Tibet today is the harassment, imprisonment, torture, and harsh sentencing of lamas and other Tibetan spiritual leaders for their loyalty towards the Dalai Lama. Possessing an image of the Dalai Lama or any object which resembles devotion to him and other spiritual teachers is 'political' in nature and perceived as 'insufficient' loyalty to the state and the Communist leadership which results in punishment.

The Chinese government propaganda of preservation of Tibetan culture and investment of millions of Chinese Yuans to renovate monasteries are nothing more than state's effort to boost tourism

in Tibet. In her book *Last Seen in Tibet*, Claire Scobie, who visited Tibet several times, reveals that Potala Palace once the chief residence of successive Dalai Lama is "now a museum with monks as caretaker".

The worsening religious freedom in Tibet is documented in various reports, including the annual US Report on Global Religious Freedom for 2012, released on 30 April, 2013. The report states that religious freedom in Tibet is "worse now than at any time over the past decade".

Spate of Self-Immolation protests

Since 2009, 122 Tibetans have self-immolated¹, of which 105 have died on the scene or shortly thereafter, whereas the conditions and whereabouts of surviving self-immolators are unknown. All of them have called for freedom in Tibet and return of their spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Tenzin Phuntsok, a former monk of Karma monastery, died after self-immolation protest on 6 December 2011 in Chamdo, TAR. He wrote in his last testament "Don't be disheartened, never be afraid. How long can we trust the policy which forbids us from practicing our religion?" The series of protests, including self immolations, are undoubtedly the expression of unbearable situation where Tibetans live under constant fear and suppression. The Chinese government responded to the self-immolation with more repressive policies, heightened restrictions, detention and by giving harsh sentence to friends and relatives of self immolators.

Enforced Disappearance, Detention and Harsh Sentencing of Tibetans Religious Heads

Enforced disappearance, detention and harsh sentencing of Tibetans, including religious heads are rampant in Tibet. The Chinese authorities have arbitrarily arrested, tortured, and sentenced thousands of Tibetans, including hundreds of religious heads, mostly due to their reli-

gious belief and faith towards the Dalai Lama.

Brief information of disappearance and imprisonment of prominent religious figures are;

Gedun Choekyi Nyima, 11th Panchen Lama: The Panchen Lama, one of Tibet's most revered religious leaders, has been missing since May 1995. Three days after the Dalai Lama named six years old Gedun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, the Chinese authorities abducted Gedun Choekyi and his family, and instead, appointed Gyaltzen Norbu as their Panchen Lama in November 1995. Gedun Choekyi was not seen since then.

Repeated requests from international human rights groups to visit him were denied by the Chinese government. The concluding observation report of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in October 2013 urged the Chinese government to immediately allow an independent expert to visit Gedun Choekyi Nyima and verify his health and living conditions.

Tulku Tenzin Delek: Tulku Tenzin Delek is a Buddhist religious leader, widely known for his social works in Karze, eastern Tibet (Ch: Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province), where he has established schools, clinics, orphanages, and old-age homes. He was arrested from his monastery in Nyagchu on April 2002 along with his attendant Lobsang Dhondup.

Given his leading role in public welfare and efforts in preserving Tibetan Buddhism, the Chinese authorities viewed him as a threat to the "social stability". Hence, Tulku Tenzin Delek, along with Lobsang Dhondup, was charged with masterminding a bomb blast in Chengdu and sentenced to death. Lobsang was executed on 26 January 2003 and Tulku's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on 24 January 2005 following international protest.

The imprisonment of Tulku Tenzin Delek has subsequently led to the closing down of his projects. According to a report released by Human Rights Watch 2004, "schools quickly failed due to the absence of leadership and fund. At the end of December 2003, schools windows and doors were broken and every one left. Two homes for the elderly were closed due to lack of funds". His health clinics in Karze area were also shut down.

Patriotic Re-education Session

Patriotic re-education (or simply patriotic Education) was initially launched in Tibet in 1996 as a part of Beijing's "Strike Hard" campaign against crime and corruption. The campaign has been expanding ever since, and today it has reached to the entire region, even to the remotest part of Tibet. The core message of the campaign was that the "loyalty to the state is pre-requisite to be a good monk or nun".

Under this campaign, Work Team (Tib: ledonrukhang), consisting both Chinese and trusted Tibetan officials, visit monasteries and nunneries and force monks and nuns to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama and declare their absolute support for the Communist Party leadership. During these campaigns, Tibetans must express their allegiance to the Communist party through an examination, or by signing a pledge. Moreover, under "Nine Must Haves" program, which is under the umbrella of Patriotic Re-education campaign, all monasteries and nunneries must display the portrait of the Chinese communist leaders and the Chinese National flag. Any attempts to boycott the session or defy the demands of the Work Team may result in expulsion, arrest or torture.

In Driru (Ch:Nagchu Prefecture, TAR), more than 18,000 Chinese cadres have arrived since September 2013 to conduct "patriotic re-education" campaign, demanding local Tibetans to pledge their love and gratitude for the party and the nation, and to put up Chinese flags on their rooftops ahead of the founding anniversary of the PRC on 1st October. This led to confrontation between

local Tibetans and Chinese police and resulted in harsh crackdown which left at least 40 Tibetans injured two of them critically injured. Whole County was under lockdown and resident of Mowa village in Driru were left with no access to food and water supply for more than 48 hours.

Similarly, Lodoe Rabsel, 40 and Namsey Sonam, 44, the abbots of Karma monastery along with seven monks, were arrested around 29 October, 2011 in Chamdo, TAR, after they refused to denounce the Dalai Lama².

Additionally, to tighten the control over the religious practice in the monasteries, the government controlled Democratic Management Committee (DMCs) has taken over the administrative role of abbots, traditional heads of monastery. The committee is composed of state-approved 'patriotic' monks and nuns, party cadres and government officials, in some cases 'trusted' Tibetan officials. It is given the responsibility of administering monasteries and imposing rules and regulation through Patriotic Education. It serves as a link between the Chinese government and the Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and monitors activities and movements of monks and nuns.

Reportedly, the Chinese government has so far established Monastery Management Committees in 1,787 monasteries since November 2011³.

Interference over Reincarnation of Lamas and Tulkus

On January 2007, China's State Administration of Religious Affairs issued a new regulatory measure called "Order no. Five" on "management measures for the reincarnation of living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism". The decree makes it compulsory for all the tulkus (reincarnated teachers) to get government approval.

According to China's 1991 Regulation on Religion, tulkus could not be used as means for "foreign infiltration", whereas 2007 regulation Article 2 says that "reincarnating living Buddhas shall not be interfered with or be under the dominion of any foreign organization or individu-

al" and shall be (article 7)"recognized by the provincial or autonomous regional Buddhist Association or the China Buddhist Association in accordance with religious rituals and historically established systems".

In August 2013 the Chinese government has forcibly shut down Gaden Dhargyeling monastery in Shak Rongpo in Nagchu County, eastern Tibet, (Ch: Nagchu Prefecture, TAR) over its alleged link with the Dalai Lama. The clampdown began in 2010 when it was alleged that the monastery had consulted the Dalai Lama over the reincarnation of its spiritual head, Rongpo Choejey Rinpoche. Same year, 75 years old Lama Dawa and another important monk of the monastery were arrested and sentenced to 7 years in prison under false charges.

China's interference in the centuries-old Tibetan Buddhist reincarnation practice is a gross violation of religious freedom enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Chinese constitution. More importantly, it is in complete violation of the collective rights of Tibetans to belief and practice their own religion.

Raids in Monasteries

The Chinese security forces often conduct night raids in monasteries to search images of the Dalai Lama, CDs of his religious teachings and any other object that is deemed 'subversive' to the party. Monks and nuns are often subjected to arbitrary detention, beating and torture during these night raids, some may even go disappear.

During one such raid in Nyitso Zilkar Monastery in Zatoe, eastern Tibet, (Ch: Yulshul TAP, Qinghai Province) dozens of monks were beaten and five monks:⁴ Sonam Sherab, 40, Lobsang Jinpa 30, Tsultrim Kalsang 25, Ngawang Monlam, 30 and Sonam Yignyen were arrested. Similarly, three monks of Tsodun Kirti monastery: Lobsang Senge, 19, Tenpa Yarphel 18, and Namse, 18 were arrested during an arbitrary night raid. Their whereabouts still remain unknown⁵.

Conclusion

Due to the consistent gross violation

of human rights in Tibet, and more so in the field of religious freedom, numbers of UN member states, international human rights groups and leaders have raised their concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet.

During the 17th session of the Universal Periodic Review on 23 October 2013, several UN member states (Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Switzerland, the US, the UK and Iceland) pressed China over its systematic attempts to undermine the religion and cultural rights of minorities, including Tibetans and Uyghurs.

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) based in Dharamshala, India calls upon the international community to urge the People's Republic of China to immediately stop the ongoing patriotic re-education campaigns in monasteries and allow free and unrestricted access to Tibet by international media, observers and UN mandate holders.

Issued by:

UN, EU & Human Rights Desk
Department of Information and
International Relations
Central Tibetan Administration

Footnotes

1 As of 12 November 2013

2 Two abbots of Karma Monastery arrested available at <http://www.tchrd.org/2012/01/two-abbots-of-karma-monastery-arrested/> retrieved on 8 October, 2013

3 Committees to ensure stability in Tibet's monasteries, *Global times* available at <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/696094.shtml> retrieved on 9 October, 2013

4 Monks beaten, detained in Nyatso Zilkar monastery raid available at <http://www.tchrd.org/2012/09/monks-beaten-detained-in-nyatso-zilkar-monastery-raid/> retrieved on 8 October, 2013

5 Police Raids at Gunpoint Raise Tension at Kirti available at <http://tibet.net/2012/08/18/tense-situation-at-tsodun-kirti-monastery-after-police-raid-and-arrest-monks-at-gunpoint/> retrieved on 8 October, 2013

BEYOND SELF-IMMOLATIONS: THE PROTESTS OF DRIRU IN 2013

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Driru (Biru in Chinese) — the name in Tibetan means a line of female yaks — is a Tibetan county under Nagchu prefecture (Nagqu) in the China-controlled Tibetan Autonomous Region. It has a total population of about 40,000 residents, 90 percent of whom are Tibetans with only 9 percent Han Chinese. It is located at a distance of one day's drive to the northeast from Lhasa and is surrounded by Pelbar county, Chamdo to the east, Drachen county to the north, and Nagchu county to the southwest. While ten other counties in Nagchu are comparatively quiet, and six other prefectures in the TAR are silent, Driru made headlines throughout 2013 by mounting a brave and persistent challenge to a relentless Chinese political "re-education campaign." On September 3, 2013, when government workers backed by several hundred armed paramilitary police swarmed Driru to enforce Tibetan loyalty to Chinese policies, Dayang, an old man of 68 from Donglha village in Driru's Tsachu township, held up a white scarf and called for the independence of Tibet, insisting that the Chinese leave Tibet, a Tibetan from the area reported

to RFA. Dayang was severely beaten and transported to a local hospital in Driru and then to Lhasa, where his condition was listed as critical. He was later sentenced to two years and six months in jail. But the story of resistance in Driru neither ended nor began with this daring old man who still languishes somewhere in an unidentified Chinese prison.

An area of political instability

Beijing authorities have identified Driru as an area of political instability with a potential for spreading unrest to other parts of the Tibetan region and beyond to Tibetan-populated areas in the Chinese provinces. This identification became more relevant when Chen Quanguo, Communist Party chief of the TAR, urged that the "Dalai Clique's" voice be silenced and replaced with the sounds of the Communist Party in every part of the TAR. But the Tibetans in Driru did things the other way around by letting the voices of the Dalai Lama be heard in the Tibetan areas. According to Driru-Samdup, a native Tibetan of Driru now living in Europe, Driru became "a target for excessive Chinese suppression in 2006, when the members of the Driru Tibetan community swiftly responded to a call by the Dalai Lama and abandoned the use of animal skins, excessive ornaments, and other animal products like ivory rosary. Some Driru community members also went to Lhasa, prostrating all the way from Driru, and made offerings to restore the face of the Jowo statue (the Buddha statue brought by the Chinese queen of Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo in the 7th Century) in

the Jokhang temple for the long life of the Dalai Lama.

“The Beijing authorities also saw a potential for future instability when they [Chinese] knew the Driru community is relatively well off, united, better educated, and active in the propagation of Tibetan language, culture, and ethnicity,” Ngawang Tharpa, another Driru native, added. So to bring about “political stability” the Beijing authorities “deployed several hundred government team members backed by armed police and paramilitary troops to force the Tibetans in Driru to fly the Chinese national flag from their homes,” Thupten, a Tibetan caller from Tibet, told RFA’s Tibetan service. Robbie Barnett, a Tibet expert at Columbia University in New York, sees China’s actions in Driru as an “attempt to try to contain dissent to a specific area... almost to try to make it a local ethnic issue, as if they see Driru people as a different community, a different group, even a subgroup different from other Tibetans.”

Defiant Driru

By treating Driru Tibetans as a different group, the Chinese efforts to subdue and break the will of Tibetans in Driru continued. Throughout September 2013, the Chinese government workers called meetings and went from village to village distributing the Chinese five-star national flags with poles ready for placing on the roof tops of Tibetan houses. But the Tibetans in Driru were defiant. On September 27, 2013, the Tibetans in Mowa and Monchen villages in Driru collected all the Chinese flags with the poles and dumped them into the local Gyalmo Ngulchu river. This action triggered a clash between the Tibetans and the Chinese force that resulted in the detention of 40 Tibetan villagers. In response to the Tibetan action, the Chinese authorities then expelled all children who lived in the two villages from the county schools. They also banned the collection of cordyceps fungus from the mountains, the main source of income for the locals. Tibetan residents were also denied access to medical treatments. To express their solidarity with the expelled students, 400 students

of Driru county schools walked out of their classes in protest, demanding that the students from the two villages be allowed to return to school. They were joined by roughly 800 Driru Tibetans of all ages. The Tibetans continued their protests by blocking traffic, sleeping in large groups on the highways, refusing to eat, and camping day and night in front of the Driru county center. Officials finally caved in and released 40 Tibetans after a senior official arrived from TAR headquarters in Lhasa. Later, the Tibetans found that several of those who had been detained had been severely beaten while in custody.

The detentions, restrictions, and crackdowns on the Tibetans continued in Driru. On October 6, Dorje Draktsel, a Tibetan resident of Driru, was detained and taken away by the Chinese police. And this quickly led to clashes and deaths.

Shooting and deaths in Driru

The first incident of shooting in Driru took place on October 7, 2013 when Tibetans in Driru protested against the detention of Dorje Draktsel. Several hundred Tibetans gathered in Dathang township and demanded Draktsel’s release, and at the same time over 300 armed paramilitary police arrived at the site, began firing tear gas into the crowd, and then started shooting. Four Tibetan villagers were killed and over 50 were wounded. Photos of bullet wounds were sent out, but no other details of the four Tibetans killed in the shooting were made available. But sources inside Tibet confirmed that three of those killed were from Sengthang village, and the fourth was from Tingring village. And the killing of Tibetans in Driru has not been confined to laypersons. Monks of the monasteries in Driru have formed a large part of the victims of Beijing’s campaign to address Driru’s “political instability.” In December 2013, a senior monk of Driru’s Tarmoe monastery was beaten to death by police, who then returned his body to his relatives with the stern warning of similar consequences if they [Tibetans] discussed his death with outside source. He was Geshe Ngawang Jamyang, a senior Tibetan monk who

was taken into custody with two friends on November 23 while they were on holiday in Lhasa. He was a popular religious teacher who had studied for 19 years in Sera monastery in India before returning to Tibet.

Crackdown on Driru monasteries

There are about 13 Buddhist monasteries in Driru county with 50 to 200 monks in each monastery. Most of the monasteries follow the Gelug tradition, but there are also monasteries following the Nyingma and Kagyu traditions. According to Ngawang Tharpa, a reporter for the Tibet Express, most monasteries in Driru were forced to shut down by the Chinese authorities in 2012 when the monks resisted the stationing of government work teams in the monasteries. The names of three monasteries that appeared in the news 2013 are Tarmoe, Rabten, and Dron Na. On November 23, the three monks of Tarmoe monastery were detained in Lhasa, their monastery in Driru was surrounded by police and the monks’ rooms were searched. Around the same time eight monks of Driru’s Rabten monastery who had studied in Palyul, Sershul, and Sertha monasteries in neighboring Chinese province were also detained. Tsering Gyal was one of those detained, while the names of the other monks are not known. Kelsang Chodar, a monk from Sogcounty in Nagchu was detained in Palyul, Kardze on the suspicion that he had spread information on Driru. He was released later in Chengdu, Sichuan. The Chinese authorities forced Tarmoe, Rabten, and Dron Na monasteries in Driru to shut down in 2013.

Targeting young and educated Tibetans

Many of the Tibetans who have been detained, sentenced, and jailed in Driru are the young and educated. Thondup, a caller from Tibet, told RFA that “they [the Chinese] are targeting the young and educated and the children of wealthier Tibetan families.” Reports from the area tell several stories of young and educated Tibetan youths who have organized themselves to speak pure Tibetan instead of Chinese, and to educate locals

on the importance of Tibetan culture and language. They have formed White Diet (vegetarian) groups to advocate a vegetarian diet, and have organized Lhakar events on Wednesdays, the Dalai Lama's auspicious day, to eat, dress, and speak like Tibetans. They have also organized debates on Tibetan culture, language, and religion. The younger Tibetans who have called in to the RFA Tibetan Service program said that the 2008 Tibetan Uprising opened their eyes to the importance of Tibetan identity. The educated younger Tibetans in Driru are part of this new younger Tibetan generation who were born and brought up in a Tibet controlled by China. In this year's uprising against the Chinese authorities in Driru, many of the Tibetans who are reported in the news are the younger members of the Tibetan community. To mention some examples for illustration, on November 3, 2013 seventeen Tibetans from Shamchu village in Driru were detained and released later after paying fines. They were 19 to 27 years old. Kundrak was 17 while the eldest among them was just 27 years old.

On November 12, Tsering Gyal, another Tibetan youth, was taken away for no apparent reason and released only after paying a fine of one thousand Chinese yuan.

On November 18, two school students, Lobsang Choying and Konchok Choephel, were detained for their participation in the students' protest against the authorities for expelling the students of Mowa and Monchen villages.

On November 18, 2013, a young woman name Thinley Palmo, 32, was detained and severely beaten in custody.

On November 23, two young monks of Tarmoe monastery were detained in Lhasa while on vacation with their teacher.

On November 26, Sonam Dorje, 16, was detained after he pasted protest fliers signed with his name on a government building the day before in Driru.

On November 30, Gonpo Tenzin, 25, and Thinley Tsekar, 22, two popular singers of Driru, were detained in Lhasa

and Nagchu town respectively.

On November 30, three young Tibetan writers were sentenced. They were Tenzin Rangdrol, 32, who was given five years; Topden, 30, who was given five years; and Konchok Choephel, 28,



China's People's Armed Police in Driru county this week following a mass protest by residents against the campaign to fly Chinese flags from their home

a monk, who was given six years for "anti-state" activities.

On December 13, a young monk named Tsokye was taken away from Rongpo monastery for speaking out against the Chinese-sponsored reincarnation of the senior lama of the monastery.

In December 2013, Thinley Tsekar, 22, a singer, was sentenced to nine years, Choekyab (age unknown) was given 13 years, and Tselha (age unknown) was given three years for inciting the local community to protest against the mining at Naglha Dzamba mountain in May 2013.

Burning of Flags

Driru Tibetans have not only refused to fly the Chinese national flag from their houses, but have even burned them or thrown them in the local river to express their defiance. During the past two years, a dozen Tibetan youths were detained for burning the Chinese flag in Driru. In December last year, Bumchok, 16, was taken to the county center for burning the flag. Then, on December 16, two Tibetan girls—Yangchen, 27, and Choe-dron, 19—were taken away for burning the Chinese flag. Earlier, in August 2012, a group of 8 to 9 Tibetan youths were detained and severely beaten on the suspicion of burning Chinese flags in Shachi Tomtak township in Nagchu,

a neighboring county of Driru. They were released later when the allegations against them could not be proved. According to Chinese officials, burning the Chinese national flag is considered to be a crime as severe as homicide. With full aware of the possible consequences, Ti-

betans in Driru have continued putting up posters, burned Chinese flags, and refused to fly the flag on their houses. But the Tibetan resistance in Driru was not confined to these activities, but took more drastic actions of self immolations.

Driru self-immolations

Since February 2009, 125 Tibetans have set their bodies on fire to protest against Chinese policies in Tibetan areas, and called for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for the Tibetans. Most of these fiery protests took place in the Tibetan areas in Sichuan, Qinghai, and Gansu provinces. Eight self-immolations took place in what China calls the Tibet Autonomous Region. The first was in Chamdo on December 1, 2011. In the following years two burnings took place in Lhasa on the same day on May 27, 2012. The third took place in Dhamshung on July 7, 2012, but in Driru four self immolations took place in two months of October and November 2012. All eight of the self-immolators in the TAR died, but it was only Gudrup from Driru who left behind a suicide note. According to a classmate of Gudrup who lives in Australia, the note said, "...We should invite the Dalai Lama to a fully independent Tibet. His Holiness has proposed a Middle Way approach to achieve genuine autonomy

for Tibet. But while we have waited for a very long time, the Chinese authorities have detained, tortured, and secretly killed many Tibetans, and many have

Due to a lack of access to Driru and harsh restrictions on the local Tibetans, it is very difficult to know the exact number of Tibetans who have been detained,

given daily “re-education instructions” and are subjected to interrogations. Some of them were later released.

Why Driru?

There are different answers to this question. Robbie Barnett, the Tibet expert at Columbia University, says, “Driru is an area which historically has never been particularly amenable to control by a state. The Tibetan government itself was only able to get effective access to most parts of Nagchu in the 1920s. It was a self-managed area for hundreds of years, and it didn’t identify with Lhasa for most of that time or with any other capital or outside control.” So the Tibetans in Driru have a historical tradition of resistance to control including the Chinese state control. Moreover it is a fact that Driru and its two neighboring counties, Drachen and Sog in Nagchu, are gifted with rich supplies of cordyceps fungus. And the Tibetan residents of these three counties are known for their wealth from the sale of this gift of nature, which can be harvested without much effort as explained by Ngawang Tharpa, a native of Driru. He also added that the Tibetans in Driru live in a very cohesive community with many educated members with a strong sense of unity in belief and action. In Driru, the united action of the monasteries and the villages were able to halt Chinese mining operations on Naglha Dzamba, a sacred mountain. However, efforts in many other parts of Tibet—Dzatoe in Yushul, Markham in Chamdo, and the Gyama mine in Medrogunkar—had failed to halt the mining. But Tsering Gyal, a researcher at the TCHRD (Tibetan Center for Human Rights, and Democracy) in Dharamsala, thinks that what is happening in Driru “is the cumulative impact of the Chinese crackdown on Rongpo monastery in 2005, the massive uprising in 2008, the united protest against mining at sacred Naglha mountain in 2013, and the self-immolations.”



A view of some of the many Chinese military convoys arriving in Driru county in Nagchu Prefecture (incorporated into Tibet Autonomous Region) to crackdown on Tibetans

disappeared just for speaking about the conditions of Tibetans in Tibet. So I now sacrifice myself by burning to vouch for the truth and to raise my voice for Tibet’s independence. I pray to the Three Jewels to bless Tibet and for help in the victory for truth.” Gudrup was 43, a resident of Yungkar village in Shakchutownship, Driru county in Nagchu, under the TAR.

Twenty one days after Gudrup’s death, two young Tibetans named Tsepo and Tenzin died in a fiery protest on October 25, 2012 in front of a school in Driru. And twelve days after this dual self-immolations, another young Driru Tibetan named Tsegyal, 27, set himself on fire in protest on November 7, 2012, and died 11 days later. Such drastic expressions of Tibetan resistance did not stop here in Driru. Twenty-one days after the death of Tsegyal, a group of seven Tibetans in Driru planned to carry out a mass fiery protest in Driru by burning all seven at the same time.. They were from Balkar village in Driru and planned to do it on the eve of World Human Rights Day on December 9. Their plan leaked out and the police tried to detain them, but all seven escaped, and in the police pursuit, “two were detained but the rest jumped into the river and ended their lives,” Dri-ruSamdrup told RFA.

Detention of 1000 Tibetans

jailed, or killed. Carole McGranahan, a Tibet scholar at the University of Colorado, in Boulder, said in The Washington Post on December 17, 2013, that “it is easier for journalists to get access to North Korea than to get access to Tibet.” While this is true in most Tibetan areas under Chinese control, it is even more relevant to the Driru, which has been identified as a “politically unstable area.” A Tibetan in exile with contacts in Driru told RFA’s Tibetan service that only about 30 percent of the information concerning Driru has come out of the area and other 70 per cent remains unreported due to the restrictions in the area.

Thus, information on the number of Tibetans detained or jailed and on their present condition has been sporadic and incomplete. The little information that we have cannot tell the complete story of Driru. However, callers from Tibet and others who have contacts in the area have told RFA’s Tibetan Service that several Tibetans have been sentenced to jail for different lengths of time. Since September 2013, over 1,000 Tibetans have been detained in Driru. Around 600 of them are detained in the Nagchu town detention center, roughly 200 are held in Tsamtha village in Driru, and another 200 are held in the Driru county center. We still don’t have exact numbers of the Tibetans from the Driru area who have been jailed. Those who are detained are

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Australia ABC Radio's Exclusive Interview with DIIR Kalon

Kalon Dicki Chhoyang of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), during an official trip to Australia, participated in an outreach program with overseas Chinese in Melbourne and Sydney on 28 and 29 January respectively. The outreach program was organised by the local Chinese-Tibetan Friendship associations of Melbourne and Sydney.

Kalon Dicki Chhoyang met members of the Chinese community in Melbourne on 28 January. She discussed the current critical situation inside Tibet and explained how the Chinese public can help assuage the sufferings of the Tibetan people inside Tibet.

Below is the full transcript of Kalon Dicki Chhoyang's interview to ABC Radio:

CHHOYANG: We have been very active in reaching out to the Chinese community for several years, and Australia has an important Chinese community, so of course we think it's very important to meet people who believe in social justice and want to learn more about the issue of Tibet. And our message to them, is very simple.

We are not seeking independence, that we're seeking a resolution to the issue of Tibet, through what we call genuine autonomy or the 'middle way' approach, within the framework of China's constitution, without challenging its political and territorial integrity.

LAM: And how do you read the mood of the Chinese diaspora – are they, if not supportive, at least empathetic?

CHHOYANG: You know, I think that gradually, people or individuals who're independent thinkers, are more open to hearing a version of what's going on inside Tibet and the policies that have been implemented inside Tibet, that are leading to the unrest we've been witnessing over the last half a century – a different version than the version that they (Chinese diaspora) grew up with, in the People's Republic of China.

So we hope that that message spreads – so hopefully, just like there's an entire generation in China that has absolutely no clue about what happened in Tiananmen Square in 1989. Hopefully, they will make the connection and say, "Well, we weren't told about Tiananmen Square, perhaps there're other events, where we haven't been given the accurate information.

Right now, the autonomy we're asking for, is for the Chinese government to implement the regional autonomy laws that it has in its own constitution. Right now, it's all in writing, but in actual practice, it has not been implemented. Where all the decisions are taken in Beijing and at the local level, people are left to execute decisions that were made in Beijing.

LAM: I'm sorry to interrupt, but



LAM: Do you find it an unequal struggle – a David and Goliath battle – given China's growing economic clout and indeed, using that wealth at its disposal, to perhaps influence global political agenda?

CHHOYANG: Oh yes, of course. China is an emerging global power – economically and consequentially as well, politically.

But what we firmly believe in, is the fact that we have truth on our side and that internationally, as China does pressure governments to not broach the subject of Tibet, the issue of Tibet is much more than just about Tibetans. It's about peaceful conflict resolution, about sending a message to other marginalised groups and other political movements, who may not be as committed as we are to non-violence. That it does pay to stick to non-violence.

For over fifty years, we have without any exception, steadfastly stuck to non-violence, and we are committed to do so.

there's also a migration of Han Chinese into Tibet. Are the newcomer Chinese interacting with the local Tibetans?

CHHOYANG: Well, actually, this is a very interesting question that you're asking, because in terms of regional autonomy, if one goes to autonomous Tibetan regions, and neighbouring Chinese provinces, most of the high officials are all Han Chinese and on top of that, very few speak the local language.

So how can you say you enjoy genuine autonomy when the local culture and language is not respected and also the local people do not have a say in mining projects, or economically marginalised, and also, very importantly, the language of instruction, with Tibetan being replaced with Mandarin, and this is a development over the last few years, which is absolutely unacceptable for local Tibetans.

LAM: But doesn't that make assimilation a little bit easier, that local Ti-

betans can now speak Mandarin, the language of rule?

CHHOYANG: Well, Tibetans, when they say they want to preserve their cultural identity, it's about including Tibetan culture and heritage, not about excluding Chinese culture. Of course Tibetans should learn how to speak Mandarin. Mandarin is a very practical language, it's our neighbours' language.

So what they're saying is, we do not want to learn Mandarin at the expense of our language – we want a choice – whether we can send our children to Tibetan medium (schools) or Chinese medium.

LAM: What is your reading of the situation, where the younger generation of ethnic Tibetans are concerned – are they learning to deal with Chinese rule now?

CHHOYANG: Well, I think that with the wave of self-immolation, now numbering 124 since 2009, it's very clear that Tibetans inside Tibet are sending a clear signal to both the authorities in Beijing, as well as to the international community, that their policies in Tibet have failed, and that no matter how powerful China becomes globally, the issue of Tibet is not going to go away.

It's very clear from the signal that we get from inside Tibet, as well as in exile, where we have inter-generational leadership transfer and we have a new emerging younger generation that is rooted in both traditional values and modern education, that are also deeply committed to making sure that their voices are heard.

We see a genuine of risk of cultural assimilation.

And while the international community is increasingly appreciating the messages of individuals like His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we need to make the connection that what he represents, his message, is representative of the cultural heritage, that is now in danger of disappearing. And he is a by-product of Tibetan culture.

And the culture doesn't live through books and museums, but through people.

DIIR Secretary Speaks on Genesis of Tibet's Contact with South Africa



Following the passing away of former South African President Nelson Mandela on 5th December, 2013, Mr. Tashi-Phuntsok, Secretary of Department of Information & International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration, who was the first Rrepresentative of His Holiness the Dalai Lam to South Africa, speaks to Tibet TV on Mandela, the anti-apartheid movement, and the genesis of Tibetan relation with South Africa.

Q. For what reasons do the people of the world pay homage to and mourn the passing away of former South African President Nelson Mandela?

A. In general, many countries gained their independence through struggle for freedom and fight against racial discrimination after the Second World War. In many South African countries, after independence, people got the opportunity to elect and form their own government. However, under the white people's oppression for many years, South Africa's Nelson Mandela led a remarkable struggle against racial discrimination and oppression of black South Africans. He faced 27 years of imprisonment for his struggle. Following his release in 1993, Nelson Mandela was elected as South Africa's first-ever black President in 1994. Hence, he is honoured worldwide for his anti-apartheid movement and struggle for freedom and justice.

Instead of enjoying his political power after becoming president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela dedicated his efforts in serving his nation and people. In honour of his achievements, he was awarded with as many as 250 awards including the Nobel Peace Prize, Bharat Ratna and the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal. Apart from being the President, he was also known for his fight against the racial discrimination and advocacy for children's education. Even during his imprisonment, he remained steadfast to reconciliation and peace with his oppressors. For these reasons, he was famous, honoured and loved.

Q. When did the first ever meeting of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Nelson Mandela take place?

A. His Holiness the Dalai Lama first met former South African President Nelson Mandela on April 20, 1996. The meeting was significant as both the leaders were leading a struggle for freedom and dignity of their people under oppression. In 1990's the worsening human rights situation in Tibet gained international attention. The success of Nelson Mandela's movement to gain equality, freedom and justice for South African black people provided hope for Tibetans to restore freedom and dignity in our own homeland. Between 1993 and 1995, we established an office in Delhi on Africa and Middle East Asia to raise awareness and garner support for the issue of Tibet. In 1994, I was assigned to embark on a visit to South Africa. At the time, there were hardly any people that the Tibetan administration was acquainted with. But then we got the opportunity to work with South African people during a course of twenty-day event organised by US NGO named Peace Tree, South Africa, at Khyalitshe, a predominantly inhabitant of black South Africans in Cape Town. Gradually, we were able to engage with people in Cape Town, Durban, Heidelberg, Johannesburg and Pretoria. Our efforts culminated in the

successful visit to His Holiness the Dalai Lama to South Africa in April 1996. The South African government accorded official welcome to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and president Mandela met him at the official residence in Cape Town. The two leaders exchanged greetings and His Holiness the Dalai Lama applauded Nelson Mandela's remarkable struggle for equality, freedom and justice through non-violence and reconciliation. His Holiness also appraised him about the issue of Tibet and discussed about establishing an Office of Tibet in South Africa.



Q. As the first representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to South Africa, tell us how the Tibetan Administration established contact with that country?

A. As I've mentioned earlier, in 1994, I visited South Africa for the first time. While taking part in an event in Cape Town, I came across people from different regions such as Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg. After the programme, Leonard Gibson drove me in his personal car from Cape Town to Durban, where I met Elizabeth Gayhood of Lamrim Buddhist Institution and she provided us with the accommodation in Durban. Later, we met Renato Palmi, founder member of the Tibet Support Group in South Africa, to discuss ways to form a Tibet Support Group in Durban. During my visit to Johannesburg, I met Guy Lieberman, founder of Dewachen Cen-

tre for the promotion of Tibetan culture, who was very supported us in every possible way. Whenever we organised activities related to issue in Tibet, he would come along with his family to show their solidarity. Mr. Steward Williams, a member of the SOS Kiderdorf, helped us with the legal procedures in establishing the Office of Tibet in South Africa.

The then foreign minister for East Asia and China, Mrs. Mazibuko and her co-worker Anneli Ahlers also supported us profoundly. The land and other infra-

structure for Office of Tibet in South Africa were made possible with the generous support and funds provided by Ms. Anneli Ahlers. Later, while serving as South Africa's Ambassador in France, Mrs. Mazibuko provided generous support to facilitate infrastructure at our Offices of Tibet in Paris and Taiwan. Other people who supported us include Ms. Lee Noriskin.

Q. In view of South African government's refusal to issue visa for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to attend Archbishop Desmond Tutu's birthday celebration last year, what could be the reasons behind the move?

A. Firstly, we should understand and consider the political stand of the South African government. South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC) party is a majority elected party of the

people. ANC's political aim is to work towards socialism. During ANC and Nelson Mandela's struggle for freedom and equality for its people, they enjoyed cordial relationship with China. To the contrary, during the time of white's rule, South Africa shared better ties with Taiwan than China. Our office in South Africa was established in August 1997 when South African government enjoyed cordial relationship with Taiwan. South Africa's liaison with China started only in 1998. I was there during the year in South Africa and the zeal with which the Chinese and the Taiwanese government struggled to improve their affiliation with the South African government was very predictable. Eventually, China succeeded and became more powerful. For instance, in 1999, His Holiness visited Israel and South Africa. We scheduled an official meeting of His Holiness the Dalai Lama with the then President Thabo Mbeki, yet due to some reasons the meeting did not take place. Despite Archbishop Desmond Tutu being a well-known for his struggle for his people and nation, his limitation in political power became evident His Holiness the Dalai Lama could not attend his birthday due to South African government's prolonged delay in facilitating visa to His Holiness. It reflects ANC's political stand, South Africa's strong ties with China and China's growing pressure on South Africa.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama first met former South African President Nelson Mandela on April 20, 1996. The meeting was significant as both the leaders were leading a struggle for freedom and dignity of their people under oppression. In 1990's the worsening human rights situation in Tibet gained international attention. The success of Nelson Mandela's movement to gain equality, freedom and justice for South African black people provided hope for Tibetans to restore freedom and dignity in our own homeland. Between 1993 and 1995, we established an office in Delhi on Africa and Middle East Asia to raise awareness and garner support for the issue of Tibet.

Sikyong Urges Effective Implementation of the Basic Education Policy at 6th Education Conference

Sikyong and Education Kalon Dr Lob-sang Sangay underlined the need for effective implementation of the Basic Education Policy at the 6th Tibetan General Conference on Education held in Dharamsala from 7-9 January. Over 200 Tibetan teachers from 37 schools across India and Nepal attended the conference.

Sikyong said, "Education is the only means through which Tibetans can improve our human resources and capacity for the administration as well as the Tibetan cause."

He profusely thanked all the teachers for dedicating their life towards education of Tibetan children and urged them to continue making extra effort towards the progress of education, as per the guidelines of the Basic Education Policy of

Tibetan exiles.

The three day conference unanimously passed three resolutions; the strengthening of primary education, teacher professional development and on the third resolution, the general conference unanimously praised the effective implementation of the basic education policy by the department of education and fully endorsed the measures in implementing the policy.

One particular initiative by the department of education which was highly acknowledged during the conference was the establishment of the teacher's training institute at Bhuntar.

The four year integrated programme of B.A,B.Ed and B.Sc.B.Ed will produce qualified teachers to teach effectively in accordance with the Basic Education

Policy for Tibetan exiles.

The Bhuntar initiative is costly for the education department but the Basic Education Policy would be qualitatively and substantively implemented in different schools through this teacher's training initiative.

Sikyong shared his views on all the three resolutions with the participants of the conference and pledged to continue the implementation of the Basic Education Policy to make greater progress in the standard of Tibetan education.

The sub-committees then held extensive discussions on the importance of primary education, professional development of teachers and the basic education policy of Tibetan exiles and proposed their recommendations during the concluding session of the conference.

Chinese speaks of clear understanding of Tibet issue after meeting Dalai Lama

Meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetans in exile gave me real understanding of the issue of Tibet, said a Chinese who is connected with a Sino-Tibetan friendship association in Australia.

Speaking at the friendship association's meeting in Sydney on 23 February, Mellech, the president of the association, said: "During my stay in China, I used to believe the Chinese government's claims that old Tibet was a backward and cruel society and it has brought development and happiness to Tibetans. But I was fortunate to get an opportunity to meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and come into contact with exile Tibetans in Australia. I felt very happy as the meeting opened my mind, which was clouded by the Chinese government's propaganda on Tibet. Now I have a clear understanding of the issue of Tibet."

"It is now our responsibility to help the

Chinese people, who are being misled by the Chinese government on the issue of Tibet, to know about the reality," Mellech said.

The representatives of the Tibetan community in Australia thanked the Chinese friends for their continued support on the issue of Tibet. They pledged to strengthen the Sino-Tibetan friendship association and make greater efforts to deal with the Chinese government's propaganda on the issue of Tibet. The Chinese liaison officer at the Office of Tibet in Canberra, MsDadon, attended the meeting.

The association said it would launch a new website in Tibetan, Chinese and English languages on the occasion of Tibet New Year on 2 March. It aims to help the Chinese people know about different aspects of the issue of Tibet, including its culture, language and religion.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama yesterday said the Chinese people have the right to know the reality. In an interview with the Wall Street Journal in Los Angeles, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said: "The 1.3 billion Chinese people have a right to know what is really going on. They have the ability to judge right from wrong and the censorship is detrimental. Meanwhile, it is important that the Chinese judicial system be raised to international standards."

When asked about the new Chinese leader Xi Jinping, His Holiness said that friends say he is more realistic. He cited the courageous stand he is taking against corruption and positive references in the recent 3rd plenum to improving the lot of poor farmers and improving the judicial system as grounds for hope.

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EU can play a leading role in the opening of a new page in Tibetan-Chinese relations

Speech of Kelsang Gyaltzen, Special Representative of H. H. the Dalai Lama at the 100th Meeting of the Tibet Intergroup of the European Parliament

It is a great pleasure and an honour for my Tibetan colleagues and me to participate in this special meeting of the Tibet Intergroup of the European Parliament. This opportunity means a lot to us Tibetans. For it offers us the chance to express to you personally our sincere appreciation and gratitude for your sustained and committed support and solidarity with the non-violent freedom struggle of the Tibetan people.

Your support and friendship sends a clear message of hope, encouragement and solidarity to the people of Tibet at a time when Tibetans in Tibet are undergoing the harshest wave of repression and persecution since the Cultural Revolution. Last Thursday, Lobsang Dorjee, a 25 years old native of Ngabacounty in Sichuan Province, became 126th Tibetan to resort to self-immolation to protest against the Chinese repression in Tibet. He is the second Tibetan to commit self-immolation in 2014.

As a Tibetan engaged in raising awareness and support for the cause of Tibet in Europe for many years, I am aware that there is a school of thought among politicians who consider public statements and resolutions condemning human rights abuses, calling for respect for human rights and peaceful conflict resolutions as empty gestures and window-dressing politic. They argue that such acts constitute a “loss of face” of the Chinese leadership and hence counter-productive. But on the other hand they are not willing to consider whether such restraint in avoiding the loss of face of Chinese leaders is also leading to the loss of more life of the repressed and persecuted people.

The so-called “silent diplomacy”, which this school of thought favours, often result – whether deliberately or unintentionally – in evasion, denial and silence

about oppression, injustice and abuse of basic rights and freedoms. This is psychologically and morally more devastating for victims of oppression and injustice than the actual repressive measures

In the case of Tibet we realize that there is little that can be done from the outside that immediately brings some improvements in the difficult situation of Tibetans in Tibet. However, statements of concern and support and resolutions on human rights violations in Tibet by distinguished bodies such as the European Parliament send the message to the people in Tibet that they are not forgotten, that Europe cares and is aware of their suffering and that Europe is committed in promoting a peaceful and just resolution to the issue of Tibet. This is a message with tremendous power to give hope and uplift the spirit of the Tibetans in Tibet. This is also the way to persuade Tibetans in Tibet not to loose hope and patience and not to resort to self-immolation in acts of protest. The Tibetan leadership in exile will continue to appeal to our countrymen to refrain from such drastic forms of protest.

Despite the very grim current situation in Tibet I believe there are grounds to entertain a degree of hope and optimism for some movements on the issue of Tibet in the near future. First of all the spirit of resistance of the Tibetan people in Tibet has never been stronger than today. Tibetans in Tibet have never been more united and determined in reasserting and defending their distinct culture, religion, language and identity. The majority of Tibetans in the frontline of the protest are under 30 years of age. This is a clear indication that this popular resistance is to stay on for a long time to come.

Furthermore, with little notice taken outside of China a vigorous internal debate has been going on in China on policies towards the minorities. Such a national debate on minorities has been non-existent in China a few years ago. This is a clear indication of the increas-

ing awareness and importance of issues related with minorities in China.

Moreover, there is a new leadership in China. According to information from Chinese sources within the new Chinese leadership there are people who feel that there is a need to address the problems in Tibet. But it also says that there is strong opposition to such views. The policy announcements after the Third Plenum of the Chinese Communist Party indicate that the top leadership will take more control of issues such as Tibet and Xinjiang. This is to be welcomed. So far the ossified and hard-line attitude of the entrenched party bureaucracy dealing exclusively with minorities policies has been the major obstacle to any changes on the Tibet issue. Moreover, the new Chinese leadership is yet to formulate and announce its thinking and policy on Tibet. There is movement in China on issues that have a bearing on the Tibet issue. Because of these developments it is a crucial time for members of international community to engage the Chinese government on Tibet. There is a unique window of opportunity to act on Tibet. The European Union can play a leading role in the opening of a new page in Tibetan-Chinese relations under the new leadership in China which is marked by the spirit of dialogue and reconciliation.

For this to happen there is a need for robust, coherent and concerted efforts by members of the international community. In this context it is crucial that the Tibet Intergroup of the European Parliament continues to take the lead in international efforts promoting a peaceful resolution of the issue of Tibet through dialogue and negotiations. I am, therefore, appealing to you personally and to the leaders of the European Parliament to ensure that the next legislative of the European Union continues with the long and honourable tradition of championing the peaceful and just cause of the Tibetan people by reconstituting a strong and vocal Tibet Intergroup. The people of Tibet need your continued support and solidarity.

Message from His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the occasion of the European Parliament's Tibet Intergroup on its 100th session on 19th February 2014

I would like to send my warm greetings to the members of the European Parliament's Tibet Intergroup on the occasion of its 100th session on 19th February 2014.

I have always believed in the need for better understanding, closer co-operation, and greater respect, whether it concerns relations between individuals, communities or nations. I look to the European Parliament as an inspiring example of such fellowship. I am, therefore, grateful that members of the European Parliament, specifically the Tibet Intergroup, continue to show interest in the welfare of the Tibetan people.

Although I no longer hold any political responsibility, as a Tibetan I cannot help but be concerned about my compatriots' well-being. The Tibetan issue is not only about the political rights of the Tibetan people, but also about matters that impact humanity at large. Firstly, because the Tibetan plateau has been shown to affect climate change and because the major rivers that rise in Tibet supply more than one billion people across Asia with water, the Tibetan environment is of crucial importance to the region. Secondly, because Tibetan Buddhist culture focuses on peace, non-violence and compassion, it is of value to the world and worth preserving.

The situation in Tibet at present is grim. Tibetan culture remains under threat. Meanwhile, the Chinese authorities are relentless in their suppression of any sign of protest or dissent. And yet, it seems the greater the suppression, the stronger is the Tibetan spirit of resistance. The only lasting solution will be when the Chinese Government addresses the Tibetan people's aspirations so they can be resolved through equitable negotiations. On our part, the elected Tibetan leadership has reiterated its commitment to the Middle Way Approach of not seeking separation, but genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people.

In recent times, the Chinese Communist Party has begun to focus on the needs of the rural population and the poor. Part of this involves the need to raise the functioning of the judicial system to international standards. People who know President Xi Jinping tell me that he works in a more open and realistic way. In fact, he seems to be taking some courageous steps to reduce corruption. I hope he will be able to bring about political reform in much the same way that Deng Xiaoping brought about the market reforms that have made China so economically powerful.

If China changes in a positive direction, we can hope for more transparency from the leadership. This in turn will lead to trust and respect. Such a development will enable China to earn the respect of the international community, while also resolving issues like the Tibetan question for the benefit of everyone involved. I hope bodies like the European Parliament can find ways to encourage China in this direction.

Once again I would like to express my gratitude to the Tibet Intergroup and trust that your deliberations during your 100th session will be fruitful.



Watch www.tibetonline.tv for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings and programmes, and news on CTA and Tibet.

The Virtue of Nonviolence: My Impressions of the Dalai Lama

By Qin Weiping
January 31, 2014



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with a group of Chinese writers after their meeting in New York on October 21, 2013. Photo/Jeremy Russell/OHHDL

New York City was still wrapped in slumber when I arrived at the Hotel Beacon, near Central Park, at six a.m. on October 20, 2013.

I had been invited to meet a legendary figure: the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet. Despite his worldwide renown as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, he is excoriated in the official Chinese media as an arch-villain the likes of Chiang Kai-shek. In Chinese propaganda, he appears as an “enemy” Tibetan separatist conspiring in exile with his “clique” to gain Tibetan independence and fragment the motherland, while instigating Tibetan unrest and self-immolations within China to further his plot.

As a young person born and raised in China, I opposed Tibetan independence. Frankly, I had a rather low opinion of the Dalai Lama, after having had it drummed into my head all my life that he was a criminal ring-leader. My eyes were first opened to other possible viewpoints while I was attending an international scholarly conference in America in May 2013. There I heard Mr. Kunga Tashi, Chinese Liaison Officer at the Office of Tibet in New York, explaining the Dalai Lama’s “Middle Way Approach.”

Instead of independence for Tibet, he said, the Dalai Lama advocated only that Tibet be accorded the rights guaranteed to Autonomous Regions under the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China. This contradicted all that I had ever been taught. I wondered why I had never heard mention of the Dalai Lama’s “Middle Way” during my time in China. Whom should I believe?

My curiosity aroused, I made an appointment with Mr. Kunga Tashi in June. He was the first Tibetan I had ever met, and he impressed me as a modest, reasonable, and scholarly individual. He told me how the Chinese military had occupied Tibet, unleashing a chain of events involving the Dalai Lama, who had fled into exile in India in order to preserve the unique Tibetan religion and culture, followed by more than 100,000 Tibetans. After leading his exile government into the modern democratic fold, he had retired from his political duties in 2011 and now functioned only as a religious figurehead, traveling the world to promote Buddhism, ecumenical human values, and religious tolerance.

I resonated deeply with Mr. Kunga Tashi’s account of the tragedy of modern Tibetan history, and I remarked to him that historical materials had recent-

ly come to light documenting the starvation deaths of tens of millions of Han Chinese during the endless turmoil of Communist political campaigns. Moreover, it was clear that the Tibetan people had only worsened their plight through their valiant attempts to resist Chinese suppression, and that the Chinese Communist Party had deliberately driven a wedge between Han Chinese and Tibetans as part of its “divide and conquer” strategy. Official Chinese claims that Tibet sought outright independence had alienated Han Chinese who would have supported the more limited Tibetan goal of autonomy within China, with its laudable aim of preserving the Tibetan linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage.

Nonetheless, in the free atmosphere of the West I had also heard calls for Tibetan independence, particularly from the Tibetan Youth Congress. Realizing that the Tibetan diaspora was divided, it occurred to me that the Dalai Lama’s “Middle Way” might be a mere expedient. To allay my misgivings, Mr. Kunga Tashi arranged an opportunity for me to meet the Dalai Lama and assess his sincerity firsthand, which I accepted eagerly. I was a former news reporter, and history makers fascinated me.

At the Hotel Beacon on that dark October morning, I underwent a rigorous security inspection and proceeded into the lobby, which was bustling despite the early hour of the day. There were about a dozen Tibetan Buddhists of all ages, who smiled at me politely, although I was unable to communicate with them in Tibetan. There was also a young Han Chinese woman exchange student from out of state, who had squeezed this trip to New York into her demanding schedule. With her was a young Tibetan woman for whom an encounter with the Dalai Lama was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream.

Finally, the Dalai Lama appeared in his monk’s robes, with a radiance and vigor

that belied his advanced age of seventy-eight. Following the Tibetan custom, I presented him with a white silk ceremonial scarf, and he shook my hands warmly and inquired where I was from. I replied that my home was Guangji, in Hubei, birthplace of SimaDaixin, the Fourth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism. The Dalai Lama thanked me in Chinese for coming, winning my heart with his kind, unassuming demeanor. The young Tibetan woman beside me had burst into tears at the mere sight of him, a reminder of Tibetan suffering under the draconian religious policies of the Chinese Communists.

Our morning meeting with the Dalai Lama was necessarily brief, because he was on his way to conduct a Buddhist ceremony. However, I knew I would hear more about his doctrine of nonviolence, love, and compassion at his public lecture on “The Virtue of Nonviolence” at the Beacon Theatre that afternoon. I arrived at the theater a couple of hours ahead of time, and found crowds already milling around in front. Tickets were scarce and expensive, but throngs of pious Tibetans in traditional dress had come nonetheless, believing that proximity to the Dalai Lama would bring them supreme joy and glory, even if they did not manage to catch a glimpse of him.

A full-house audience of almost three thousand—an approximately equal mix of Tibetans and Americans—had passed the security clearance and awaited the Dalai Lama in the theater. Thanks to the educational system the Dalai Lama had established in Dharamsala, many of the Tibetans spoke fluent English.

At two p.m., the Dalai Lama entered to a standing ovation from the audience. After starting off with a few humorous remarks, he moved on to the heart of his message, which overturned the usual definitions of “violence” and “nonviolence.” Nonviolence, he said, was any altruistic, compassionate act, even a harsh or seemingly violent one. Conversely, true violence was the failure—through selfishness—to take righteous action or to speak out against injustice. According to this Buddhist wisdom,

then, silence in the face of Chinese Communist tyranny counted as an act of violence!

The Dalai Lama stated that the twentieth century had been excruciatingly painful, as its two world wars had exacted a staggering human cost. Regrettably, stubborn conflicts persisted in the new century, but violence was entirely counterproductive. As the world population soared toward ten billion, each ethnic group, nation, and individual needed to stop thinking in terms of “us” and “them,” learning instead to regard all humanity as a single human community faced with shared problems: climate change, degradation of the environment, and the gap between rich and poor. Every human being, no matter how destitute, deserved the basic social guarantees that would enable him or her to strive for progress. The Dalai Lama wholeheartedly endorsed former Chinese Communist Party Secretary Hu Jintao’s ideal of a harmonious society. However, he cautioned that China had fallen short of its proclaimed goal: true harmony was not merely external, and could not be secured by the use of force.

The Dalai Lama stood and lectured extemporaneously for an hour in English, exuding the vigor of a man half his age, and interacting constantly with his spellbound audience. After hearing him declare humbly that he was “just one of the seven billion beings who inhabit this planet,” subject to the same physical, mental, and emotional problems as anyone else, it was easy to forget that he was an exalted religious leader lecturing from on high. He seemed more like a wise, humorous, grandfatherly figure explaining his simple credo that “warmheartedness” was the “real source of a happy life.” Suddenly I saw why he was so popular in the West: he addressed concerns that far transcended the borders of Tibet or China.

During the question-and-answer session, dissident Chinese artist Ai Weiwei asked the Dalai Lama (via Twitter) if he had any hope of returning to China. He replied that he had always wished to do so, but the Chinese government had denied him permission. He had not completely

given up, and especially hoped to make a pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai, a sacred Buddhist site.

In response to questions about Tibetan independence, the Dalai Lama affirmed that he neither sought it nor considered it a feasible option. True autonomy, on the other hand, with its preservation of Tibetan language, culture, and religious traditions, would be advantageous to both China and Tibet. Moreover, he added, most Tibetans in the diaspora supported his “Middle Way Approach,” with only a small minority demanding complete independence. This group was merely exercising its right to freedom of speech, he felt, as it had neither the capital nor a realistic strategy for achieving its goal. He said that he had discussed his “Middle Way” repeatedly with the Chinese since the 1970s, but they had shelved his proposal for reasons of their own. As he recalled his interactions with Mao and other Chinese Communist leaders, he seemed well disposed toward them and even called Mao a great revolutionary. I, however, saw things rather differently: I believed that Tibet would never have real autonomy unless China achieved true democracy.

I hope that the Dalai Lama will live long enough to see both dreams come true, for he is the key to solving the question of Tibet, and we who advocate democracy for China wholeheartedly share his respect for nonviolence. Han Chinese and Tibetans, both in China and abroad, must forge friendship through mutual understanding. We are, after all, fraternal peoples. And I now understand that the Dalai Lama, esteemed worldwide, is a font of wisdom for the entire human race.

NOTE: Qin Weiping, penname Qin Bang, was born in Hubei Province in February 1980. A former news reporter, young entrepreneur, and independent economist, he is an advocate of nonviolent democratic revolution in China. He maintained the officially registered micro-blog @QinBang on Sina and NetEase, totaling 9,000 entries and 320,000 followers, but it was silenced after tens of thousands of people within China responded strongly to an impassioned plea he made at a rally for human rights and democracy in China in Times Square, New York in 2013. The above article has been published in several Chinese news portals and it was translated into English by Susan Wolf.

Tibet's 'kind-hearted lion'

Bangkok Post
6 Jan 2014



For Tibetan exile leader Lobsang Sangay, the end is not more important than the means.

What's in a name? Perhaps a lot. Take, for instance, the name of Tibet's prime minister in exile, Lobsang Sangay. In the Tibetan language, it originally means "kind-hearted lion", which reflects his mission as the leader of the Tibetan struggle against China.

Sangay's name, however, has two meanings. "Both my date of birth and name have some confusion," the 45-year-old democratically elected leader told Asia Focus in an interview.

"My parents were traumatised when they arrived in India as refugees," said Sangay, who was born in a refugee community in Darjeeling in the east Indian state of West Bengal in 1968. "They didn't remember my date of birth. So when they went to school for my admission, they wrote March 10, the date of the uprising," he said, referring to the 1959 Tibetan uprising, which erupted in Lhasa, which had been under the effective control of the Communist Party of

China since 1951.

"About 30 percent of the parents did that," he added. "Some used July 6, the birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and others just write August 15, India's Independence Day."

"My name has also some confusion. I write 'Lobsang Sangay' in English which means 'the kind-hearted Buddha', but in Tibetan, it is written as 'Lobsang Sen-gay', which means 'kind-hearted lion'.

Of course, the latter sounds more appropriate. A Buddhist icon, the lion symbolises the role of the protector of religion – as this majestic animal is known for protecting the clan from enemies. But this "lion" had to be "kind-hearted", given that Sangay is the political successor to the Dalai Lama, who is revered across the world for his lifelong commitment to non-violence.

On Aug 8, 2011, the day Sangay officially took the oath of office, the Dalai Lama announced, "When I was young, the elderly regent Takdrag Rinpoche handed over the political power to me.

Today I am handing over it to young Lobsang Sangay."

And Sangay is mindful of his responsibility. On Dec 10, his office reiterated that the Tibetans remain committed to the "Middle Way" approach of the Dalai Lama, which "neither seeks separation from the People's Republic of China nor a 'high degree of autonomy', but genuine autonomy for all Tibetan people under a single administration ... consistent with both the National Regional Autonomy Law and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China."

While Sangay was democratically elected in April 2011, his qualifications and traits also match his responsibilities.

After graduating from a Tibetan school in Darjeeling, he went to college and earned a law degree in New Delhi. He later won a Fulbright Scholarship to Harvard Law School in Massachusetts in the United States, where he received his LL.M. degree. He also organised conferences between Chinese and Tibetan scholars at Harvard University.

Sangay left his comfortable life and a plum job at Harvard to work for the Tibetan cause for about \$300 a month. And he has an uphill task before him.

Tibetans and Chinese officials do not see eye to eye on most issues. What the autonomy for Tibet should look like, the territory of a self-governing Tibet, and the migration of Han Chinese people to areas traditionally inhabited by the Tibetans, none of the issues has been resolved.

However, Sangay, an expert in Tibetan law and international human rights law, believes it is not unreasonable for China to meet their demands, which, he maintains, are within the scope of the Chinese constitution.

For example, on Beijing's unwillingness to incorporate all Tibetan areas into one administrative unit, he said, "The Chinese government tries to create a scary picture – Oh, Dalai Lama and the Tibetans are seeking one-fourth of China; it's so unreasonable. But if it's not unreasonable to create two administrative units, for Mongolians and Uighur, why is it unreasonable when we Tibetans say that the Tibetan Plateau should have one administrative mechanism?"

Sangay added that Tibetans have been living on the Tibetan Plateau – known as the Roof of the World – for hundreds of years. "This Tibetan Plateau is not a political creation by us; it's a rational evolution of the area."

Asked if the Tibetans inside Tibet and those in exile are on the same page in their struggle and aspirations, Sangay said, "I think they clearly agree with us."

The middle way approach, he said, came about after a lot of consultation, in the 1970s between the Dalai Lama and exiled Tibetan leaders, and "took into consideration political scenarios, the power of China, the interests of India, the international community and the reality in Tibet and also history". Sources from inside Tibet were also part of the consultation, he said.

The acceptance of and reverence for the

Dalai Lama are a key barometer, Sangay suggested. "Even now, songs are composed and prayers are made in support for His Holiness. They all want to see the return of the Dalai Lama in body, spirit and mind, meaning they want his body to return based on what he said and what he has in mind."

However, since 2009, at least 124 Tibetans, mostly monks and nuns, have burned themselves apparently to draw the world's attention to an ongoing repression in Tibetan areas. Almost all of them have said they want to see the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, Sangay pointed out.

China has alleged that self-immolations are a result of instigation by exiled Tibetans, pointing fingers at the Dalai Lama and Sangay's office. Sangay said that neither the Dalai Lama nor the Tibetan administration in exile want Tibetans to take any such drastic action.

Despite the numerous self-immolations, mostly by Buddhist clergy, no Buddhist country has publicly condemned the alleged repression in Tibet. Only a few Christian-majority countries have spoken out in favour of Tibet.

"Generally, we believe that Buddhist countries have sympathy and a supportive mindset for Tibetan people, but they have geopolitical concerns," Sangay said. "There's a lot of pressure from China."

People from Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Sri Lanka and Thailand are supportive of the Tibetan cause, he said. "But because of these countries' proximity to China, we have not been able to make formal visits there."

Self-immolations have continued amid a lack of dialogue between the two sides. While China held talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama in the past, Beijing insists it will not accept the legitimacy of the office of Sangay, whom they claim is a "secessionist", an allegation Beijing also made against the Dalai Lama.

"They are still maintaining a hardline rhetoric," Sangay said. "But we have

always said that dialogue is the only way to solve the issue of Tibet. And we still continue saying that in all our statements."

But Beijing remains adamant. During his interaction with journalists in Belgium on Oct 22, Zhu Weiqun, head of the Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, accused Sangay of seeking separation and derailing the talks.

So can the Tibetan issue be resolved in the near future? "Yes," Sangay said. "Until recently, who would have thought that Aung San Suu Kyi [in Burma] would be released from house arrest?"

One difference between Sangay and Weiqun is that the Tibetan leader can clearly spell out the demands of the Tibetans without showing any sign of bitterness. On the other hand, facial expressions of Chinese officials often change when the Tibet issue is mentioned.

Shakespeare has famously, and rightly, said, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." But the word "rose" sounds more suitable for this flower, just as the words "kind-hearted lion" in Sangay's name.

The middle way approach, he said, came about after a lot of consultation, in the 1970s between the Dalai Lama and exiled Tibetan leaders, and "took into consideration political scenarios, the power of China, the interests of India, the international community and the reality in Tibet and also history". Sources from inside Tibet were also part of the consultation, he said.

The acceptance of and reverence for the Dalai Lama are a key barometer, Sangay suggested. "Even now, songs are composed and prayers are made in support for His Holiness. They all want to see the return of the Dalai Lama in body, spirit and mind, meaning they want his body to return based on what he said and what he has in mind."

The Dalai Lama And The Cult Of Dolgyal Shugden

By Robert Thurman,
The Huffington Post

Ever since 1997, when, according to detailed Indian police investigations, pseudo-monks who infiltrated to Dharamsala from China murdered the Venerable Lobsang Gyatso, a noted lama close to the Dalai Lama, and his two young disciples, the cult of the Dolgyal-Shugden spirit has been on the attack. The well-evidenced culprits were not tried as they escaped back into Tibet and China, but the cult continued its campaign at the behest of, and with substantial funding from, the United Front department of the People's Republic of China, the agency handling relations with non-Chinese "minority nationalities." The futile effort of the cult backed by the agency seeks to alienate Tibetans from the Dalai Lama, their beloved leader and even to turn world public opinion against the acclaimed Nobel Laureate and Gandhi heir. The final aim is to disrupt the Dalai Lama's fifty-year-long nonviolent "truth and justice" campaign, to free the six million Tibetan people to be themselves in the special autonomous minority region offered them by the Chinese constitution, so far only on paper.

The cult and agency attack campaign is futile since its main claims are so easy to refute:

1) The worship of their chosen deity was not "banned" by the Dalai Lama, since he has no authority to "ban" what Tibetan Buddhists practice. "Banning" and "excommunicating" are not Tibetan Buddhist procedures.

Although they are Buddhists who should focus on emulating the Buddha, members of the cult are free to worship their chosen "protector deity," whom they call Dorje Shugden, as much as they like. The young Dalai Lama himself did propitiate it as a minor worldly spirit or angel, until he studied the history of its cult and decided it was not a protector at all, but instead a mischievous "king" spirit known as Dolgyal ("king demon from Dol"). Once his historical stud-

ies brought him to that conclusion, he recommended that other lamas in his school cease their relationship, or at least keep it to themselves, since its liturgy contains condemnation of the minority sects of Tibetan Buddhism and of non-Buddhist religions. In the late 80s', when certain individual lamas began to proselytize its cult, inducting even Western practitioners new to Buddhism, especially in England, he took the step of asking such persons to refrain from attending his initiations and associated advanced teachings, on the grounds that they were not following his advice and so should not take him as their teacher. They then went on the attack, claiming they had been "banned" and "excommunicated," etc., when in fact the Dalai Lama was exercising his religious freedom by not accepting students who reject his advice, and actually go so far as to condemn him!

2) The cult of Dolgyal Shugden is that of a minor angel or demon, and never has been mainstream. To claim that "four million" people belong to it, or even "millions," is untrue.

3) The members of the cult do not come from numerous Tibetan sects, but exclusively from the super-orthodox fundamentalists of the majority Gelukpa sect or order.

4) The Dalai Lama has never asked anyone to persecute anyone, and members of the cult who mind their own business and do not attack the Dalai Lama are not bothered by other Tibetans. Those who do attack the Dalai Lama with outrageous name-calling—"dictator," "false lama," even "demon," and "liar," etc., naturally do provoke the vast majority of Tibetans, who adore their Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama himself has never approved of either the provocations or any harsh responses, and remains steadfast in his adherence to nonviolence in principle and practice.

5) The whole fuss would have died

down long ago except for the fact that the "hard-line" operatives of the "United Front Work Department" of the People's Republic of China, the agency in charge of dealing with China's "minority nationalities," sees the cult as a potential wedge they hope to drive between the Dalai Lama and his people and between him and world opinion. They therefore fund the leaders of the cult in Tibet, Mongolia, India and the West, and provide them the means to carry on their expensive propaganda campaigns. Evidence for this is very plain on the surface. For example, the so-called "Panchen Lama" reincarnation, whom the Communist party chiefs appointed after abducting and disappearing the five year old boy properly chosen in the traditional way by a committee of his monastery with approval of the Dalai Lama, is shown on the internet in various photographs sitting in front of a large icon of Dolgyal Shugden, as a sign of aggressive defiance of the Dalai Lama. The obvious fact is that the clearly stated purpose of the cult and the United Front agency of the PRC is to try to prove to the world that the Dalai Lama is not as nice as we all think, but is a bad, even "evil," person.

Whatever one believes about the reality of fierce angels or demons, it is clear that the leaders of the Dolgyal Shugden cult have done nothing over the last 30 years but cause trouble, both to their own followers and to the unity of the Tibetan people, both in exile and in Tibet. It has benefited no one except those misguided operatives in the Chinese government who wish to destroy Tibetan Buddhist culture, in order to assimilate systematically deracinated Tibetans into becoming second class Chinese citizens, and thus, through such a policy of crushing the identities and even lives of the "minority nationality" Tibetans, to secure forever their claim to the vast territories and resources of the Tibetan plateau. But as we have seen all over the world—and as aware persons can attest here in America with our still very

much present First Americans—history never does end, people do not give up their distinctive identities, and truth and justice inevitably arise from the ashes of

even genocidal flames.

Those who would like to read a thorough study of the Dolgyal Shugden cult

by a distinguished professional journalist, can download a kindle copy of R. Bultrini, *The Dalai Lama and the King Demon*, published by Tibet House US.

Statement of Tibetan American Community on Shugden Group's Security Threat to His Holiness the Dalai Lama

We the elected members of Tibetan Parliament in Exile from North America and Tibetan Associations of North America are gravely concerned by recent events that took place during the current visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the United States. While thousands of fellow Americans celebrated the Dalai Lama's visit to California, we Tibetan Americans have been shocked to see our respected leader, His Holiness, personally slandered by a group of religious extremists calling themselves the "International Shugden Community." Approaching His Holiness at close quarters and slandering him, the Shugden group has caused security concerns to the person of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Judging by their appearance we suspect that the majority of these people are members of a sect called New Kadampa Tradition (NKT).

We recall that it is some members of the Shugden group that have been charged by the Indian police of having murdered a prominent Tibetan Buddhist scholar and his students in India in 1997. Interpol has also issued warrants for their extradition from Tibet where they are hiding. Some members of this group have a history of violence and murder.

As the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, His Holiness the Dalai Lama feels it to be his moral responsibility to advise his Buddhist followers on what is in the best interest of the Tibetan tradition. It's in connection with this, drawing from his wisdom and years of critical examination, His Holiness has spoken about the negative aspects of the historically divisive and controversial Shugden practice. At the same time, His Holiness has clearly stated

that, in the end, it's up to the individual to choose what they wish to do. So why are the Shugden group bothering His Holiness when they do not want to heed his advice?

The Tibetan people rose up as one in 1959 when the Chinese Communists were posing threat to the person of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We cannot tolerate another threat emanating from people who should know better. What pains us deeply is how the Shugden group's activity makes mockery of the daily struggle that our fellow Tibetans undergo inside Tibet for whom His Holiness represents the sole source of hope and inspiration.

The American people, particularly the Tibetan American community, is very fortunate to have His Holiness the Dalai Lama with us in the United States during this Tibetan New Year period. He is scheduled to have programs in Minneapolis and Washington, D.C. before he returns to his temporary headquarters in India. We, therefore, ask our Government in Washington, D.C. to strengthen the security arrangements for His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the light of this threat from the Shugden Group.

We the Tibetan community in the United States offer our heartfelt prayer for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. May all his aspirations be fulfilled.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the Tibetan people's undisputed spiritual master and guiding force. The Dalai Lamas and the Tibetan people have a special bond going for centuries. The action of the Shugden group has deeply hurt the feelings of the Tibetan people and is a threat to the person of the 14th Dalai Lama.

1. Tibetan American Foundation of Minnesota
2. Tibetan Association of Western Massachusetts
3. Boston Tibetan Association
4. Capital Area Tibetan Association
5. Indiana Tibetan Association
6. Montana Tibetan Cultural Association
7. Northwest Tibetan Cultural Association, Oregon
8. Vermont Tibetan Association
9. Tibetan Association of Idaho
10. Tibetan Association of Northern California
11. Tibetan Association of Southern California
12. Colorado Tibetan Association
13. Chicago Tibetan Alliance
14. Michigan Tibetan Association
15. Tibetan Association of New Jersey and New York
16. Tibetan Association of Santa Fe, New Mexico
17. Albuquerque Tibetan Association
18. Ithaca Tibetan Association
19. Tibetan Association of North Carolina
20. Philadelphia Tibetan Association
21. Tibetan Association of Austin, TX
22. Utah Tibetan Association
23. Charlottesville Tibetan Association
24. Tibetan Association of Washington State
25. Wisconsin Tibetan Association
26. Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario
27. Tibetan Culture Association of Vancouver B.C
28. Tibetan Cultural Association of Quebec
29. Tibetan Association of Alberta

China and Tibet's Revolution in Exile

[Huffington Post]

By Thubten Samphel

Throughout China's long and turbulent history, no people along its imperial fringes have been such a nuisance to the Middle Kingdom as the Tibetans are today. However, unlike neighboring Xinjiang or Eastern Turkestan which is wracked by sporadic violence, Tibet poses no military threat to the People's Republic of China. Neither the Dalai Lama nor the Central Tibetan Administration question China's sovereignty over Tibet in any future settlement of the issue.

Regardless of this, Tibet is a challenge for China. The challenge comes from not what the Tibetans are doing to China but from what they are doing to themselves.

Witness the 127 young Tibetans from across Tibet who since 2009 set themselves on fire, calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to his homeland and freedom for Tibet. Regardless of the merits and de-merits of such acts, and there are plenty of arguments on both sides, these unnerve the Chinese authorities. Such acts recall China's own revolutionary past when Chinese individually and collectively sacrificed their all for the ideal of unified, just and egalitarian China. These acts also point in a fiery blaze of Tibetan determination to the fact that China physically controls Tibet but not Tibetan hearts and minds.

In any other society, such unprecedented protests would lead to anguished soul-searching and genuine attempts made to redress the stated grievances. In Tibet, the response is the thud of the iron-fist coming down on the fiery protestors, or what's left of them, their family members or their villages, imposition of tighter control of news flow and total lockdown.

The other Tibetan challenge constitutes a set of principles that the refugees have incorporated into their exile administration: non-violence, democracy, cultural renewal, and the growth of civil society. The challenge consists in the speed with which the Tibetan exiles have re-consti-

tuted their culture in exile and successfully re-interpreted the universalism of its values to the international community.

China has no earthly reason to fear this challenge. No matter how many Tibetans set themselves on fire or whatever uplifting principles the Tibetan refugees might have incorporated into the exile body politics, these pose no danger to China. In fact, Chinese leaders liken these efforts to "a fly flapping its wings against the king of mountains."

And they are right, to an extent. Tibet is firmly under Chinese control. It is now a part of the People's Republic of China since 1951 when the 17-Point Agreement was signed between Lhasa and Beijing, which is the legal instrument used by the Chinese authorities to justify the incorporation of Tibet into the People's Republic of China. Despite Tibetan protests about the legality of the 17-Point Agreement, all governments, including that of India, do not question China's sovereignty over Tibet.

Another crucial point in China's favor is that the position of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Tibet is unassailable, reinforced and serviced by a network of all-weather roads, airports and an expanding web of railway lines that make troop deployment and transport of supplies rapid. China's strong and assertive military presence in Tibet is cemented by the state-subsidized economic boom Beijing has sparked off on the plateau that continues to attract China's real "foot soldiers," the migrant workers who demographically and culturally overwhelm the Tibetans in cities, towns, and in the job market. Chinese companies exploit at will the vast, diverse and untapped natural resources of Tibet. In its more than sixty years of occupation of the plateau, China's position has never been better or stronger.

However, all this is accomplished in an ideological and spiritual vacuum. The country's earlier revolutionary zeal has

been replaced by a frontier town attitude. There is no guiding light, no moral compass. This moral vacuum has spawned all the major domestic problems that plague China today: entrenched, almost institutionalized, corruption, rising inequality, vicious land grabs and poisoned rivers. Only now President Xi Jinping and his team are addressing these issues in a serious and effective manner.

On this side of the Himalayas, the Tibetan exiles have been undergoing a quiet revolution of their own. It is nothing as dramatic as China's recent revolutionary past or its dazzling ongoing economic transformation. What the Tibetan exiles have managed to accomplish outside of their country, however, will have an impact deep into Tibet's and China's own future. The accomplishment is nothing less than the renewal and rejuvenation of Tibetan culture and its spread to the world. This renewal process has been strengthened by the re-establishment in exile of the key monastic institutions and the thick and growing network of cultural and spiritual resources that underpin the community and Tibetan Buddhism. The cultural renewal is accomplished within a democratic political environment that has triggered the talent and creativity of a new generation of Tibetan political leaders.

This has produced a vibrant, cohesive and productive community, constantly renewed and stimulated in the exhilarating freedom of India. In short, by his tireless efforts, the Dalai Lama has transformed one's people's political struggle into a whole civilization's right to exist and flourish. In the process, the Dalai Lama has created a strong, worldwide cultural and spiritual constituency for Tibet. By spurning the Dalai Lama, China is not just spurning the Tibetan people alone. China is spurning a composite, rejuvenated civilization and all the goodwill that goes with it.

(The writer is the director of the Tibet Policy Institute, a research center of the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala, India)

The United States of China

OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

[The New York Times]

By Scott Moore

Last week, China's two primary legislative bodies, the National People's Congress and the People's Political Consultative Congress, convened their annual meetings in Beijing. Although the delegates' primary function is to ratify decisions made by Communist Party leaders, the occasion of the two assemblies often stokes debate on policy reforms.

The delegates had much to discuss, including a recent murderous rampage on civilians at a train station in the south, linked by the government to a separatist movement in the west. Yet the most promising path for long-term political reform in China was not on the agenda: federalism.

China is by far the world's largest and most populous country not to use a federal system of government. Beijing tightly controls all political power and major decision making. In contrast, countries from Australia to Venezuela have tried to solve the problem of governing large and diverse territories by granting substantial autonomy to sub-national regions. These forms of federalism vary and, in places like Russia, even co-exist uneasily with authoritarianism.

Federalism has much to offer China — but it would require the leaders in Beijing to give real political and decision-making power to local authorities. As the current system works, the role of provincial and local governments is simply to implement policies from up on high.

In order to carry out the central government's dictates, local leaders are given wide discretion over how to spend money. Most national laws and regulations establish specific targets that provincial and local governments must meet, but local officials are left to deploy resources as they see fit. China's energy legislation, for example, sets efficiency targets that each province is responsible for meeting individually.

Surprisingly, local governments in China are responsible for a larger share of total government spending than in the federal United States or Switzerland. But this economic decentralization does not equal federalism: Local governments only carry out policy, they do not determine it.

This hierarchical structure reflects a long tradition of Chinese political thought. The notion of a single unitary state, or *dayitong*, has historically been seen as the natural goal of any government, and Chinese scholars and leaders have long warned of the dangers of "localism."

But adopting federalism would help to ease one of modern China's most fundamental governance problems: The fact that local officials often implement central policies halfheartedly, if at all. Caught in a system that gives them plenty of responsibilities but no accountability to constituents, China's local officials emphasize short-term economic growth over compliance with directives like antipollution and social welfare targets. The result is that environmental and social policies are often badly implemented. If provincial and local officials had a greater voice in developing policy, they would have a greater stake in the outcome of these policies.

This has always been a major problem in environmental protection: The central government sets unrealistic standards that local governments can't meet without jeopardizing economic growth. If local leaders could set locally appropriate standards, they would have both greater accountability and greater interest in ensuring these standards are met.

Yet federalism's biggest benefit for China is its promise to better address the concerns of restive minority regions.

Federalism is the best way to accommodate regional demands for autonomy short of breaking up the country. It is the smartest long-term strategy for dealing with separatist movements in Tibet and Xinjiang. In theory, these and sev-

eral other minority-dominated areas are "autonomous regions." In practice, Beijing calls all the shots and these regions enjoy nothing like the autonomy found in most federal systems. This facade is unlikely to preserve social stability in the long run. Implementing federalism would help ensure that minority-majority regions are given representation in the political system and help to address demands for greater autonomy.

Even more importantly, federalism represents the only conceivable, peaceful long-term solution to Beijing's nagging problem of Taiwan. China has made clear that independence for Taiwan is unacceptable, but Taipei is equally unequivocal that it will not live under an illiberal People's Republic. A form of federalism in which Taiwan — along with Hong Kong, Macau and China's ethnic-majority regions — maintain substantial autonomy is the most viable way forward.

Of course, a workable federal system in China would probably bear little resemblance to the systems of the United States and other Western countries. Instead, it might look more like the arrangements adopted by India, Pakistan, Malaysia and several other Asian countries, where the central government plays a far stronger role than it does in the West, and where many provisions are designed to preserve national unity. India's Constitution, for example, gives the central government power to intervene in local government if the country's integrity is threatened.

The great lesson of federalism is that countries can often become stronger by adopting a looser union. If China's leaders want to ensure their country's peace and prosperity over the long run, they would do well to chart a course toward a federal future.

Scott Moore is a research fellow at Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, where he studies Chinese politics.

Founder of Tibet's Communist Party makes a final plea for Dalai Lama's return

By Patrick Boehler,
South China Morning Post



Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal

The founder of Tibet's Communist Party has pleaded with the Chinese central government to allow the return of Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, to his homeland in an autobiography soon to be published in Hong Kong.

New Century Press, which published disgraced Communist Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang's autobiography, is set to release Bapa Phuntso Wangye's autobiography *A Long Way to Equality and Unity* on Friday.

In it, the 92-year-old, also known as Phunwang, asks the Beijing government to compromise with Tibet's exile government in Dharamsala, India, and allow the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet.

Phunwang appealed to former President Hu Jintao and several members of the Communist Party Politburo Standing Committee to "allow the hundreds of thousands of exiled Tibetan compatriots headed by the Dalai Lama to return home, live and work in peace," he wrote in the book, adding that his advice has been ignored.

The publication coincides with the first annual plenum of the National People's Congress in Beijing under Xi Jinping's presidency and follows a knife attack by Xinjiang separatists in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province, which left 29 dead last Saturday.

Phunwang in his book accuses the central government of having exacerbated tensions between China's Han-majority population and ethnic minorities. In a chapter titled "We cannot walk the road towards a Chinese Empire", he warns the gov-

ernment in Beijing that it should not rely on violence and economic development to cement its rule over its Tibetan population.

"It is significant that someone who has spent his whole life working with the Central government shows this kind of dissatisfaction with its policies," said BaoPu, the book's publisher.

The critique comes from the guerilla leader who founded Tibet's Communist Party in the 1940s before merging it with Mao Zedong's in 1949. He assisted Mao in his early negotiations with the Dalai Lama but was incarcerated in 1958, a year before the Dalai Lama fled to India.

Phunwang was only rehabilitated after Mao's death and Deng Xiaoping's rise to power in 1978. He has since lived in Beijing.

Bao said Phunwang had been working on the book for three years. The book is in Chinese as the former guerilla leader's health is deteriorating quickly. "He couldn't proofread the book anymore, this is why we have to publish the full

version of the book as it is," the publisher said.

In 2006, three scholars published an English-language biographical account of Phunwang's life under the title *A Tibetan Revolutionary*, which foreshadowed the scathing criticism of the current situation in his autobiography.

"The PRC considers itself a multiethnic state in which all groups have equal rights and power," anthropologist Melvyn Goldstein wrote in the preface. "Phunwang suggests it really operates too much like a Han Chinese state."

The Dalai Lama, 78, left Tibet after a failed uprising in 1959 and has since lived in exile, travelling the world campaigning for Tibetan spiritual autonomy. On Thursday, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate is expected lead the opening prayers at the US Senate.

China has blamed the spiritual leader and his government in-exile for inciting more than 120 self-immolations by Tibetans demonstrating against Chinese rule as ethnic tensions have continued to increase in recent years.

UPDATE: One day after this article was published, Dicki Chhoyang, the minister for Information and International Relations of the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, shared the following statement with the South China Morning Post:

"We welcome Mr. Phuntsok Wangyal's candid comments on how the Tibetan people are treated by the Chinese government. The concerns expressed by someone of his political stature will hopefully be seriously considered by the Chinese leadership. He is someone who is equally committed to the welfare of the Chinese State as well as the survival of his people and their distinct identity."

For detailed news visit:
www.tibet.net

The grim history of the real-life Shangri-La

Review by Amy Kazmin
[Financial Times]

In 'Tibet', Lezlee Brown Halper and Stefan Halper look behind a tragic past and uncertain future

Tibet: An Unfinished Story', by Lezlee Brown Halper and Stefan Halper, Hurst, RRP£20/\$29.95

In a world where modern communications has stripped most of the romance from faraway places, the myth of Tibet - shaped by British colonial-era officers and a few intrepid explorers - still exerts a powerful hold on the western imagination, even as 6m ethnic Tibetans suffer under oppressive Chinese Communist rule.

The country, depicted in works such as the 1933 novel *Lost Horizon* and numerous Hollywood films, has long been seen as a utopian, almost otherworldly Shangri-La - a "peaceful and tranquil place informed by reason and the miracle of self-discovery".

Tibet cache with the west has been no shield against Beijing's drive to remake society in the remote Himalayan region and reduce its complex religious traditions to an exotic tourist attraction. Tibet's fate was determined at the height of the cold war by tough realpolitik.

Yet in their gripping book, Lezlee Brown Halper and Stefan Halper argue that Tibet's powerful myth still poses a serious problem for Beijing. "As China seeks a leading role in global affairs, the reality of its mistreatment of the Tibetan people has clashed with Tibet's reified place in the western mind," the authors - both Cambridge academics - write. "The result is revulsion at the deconstruction of a culture, and dismay with a leadership that permits such excess."

The book explores the complex geopolitical calculations and prickly personalities that prevented Tibet winning recognition as an independent country after the second world war, then allowed it to be occupied by the People's Liberation

Army in 1950 with barely a peep from governments that Lhasa had looked to as friends.

Despite President Harry Truman's 1947 promise to stand by "free peoples resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure", Washington's support was constrained by its ties with the forces of Chinese nationalist general Chiang Kai-shek, who insisted Tibet was part of China. "It is one of history's greatest ironies, anti-communist supporters of the failing Chinese nationalist cause would prevent the US government from supporting Tibetan independence, due to objections by Nationalist China," the book notes.

India had deep cultural and trade ties with Tibet, its neighbour. But Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India, was determined to forge closer relations with China. Despite urging Beijing to resolve its differences with Lhasa peacefully, he was unwilling to go out on limb for Tibet - or even publicly oppose its invasion by the PLA.

In 1954 - piqued by Washington's growing ties with Pakistan - Nehru formally accepted Tibet as part of China. The Panchsheel agreement, as the last British head of mission in Lhasa wrote, "amounted to the countersignature by India of the death warrant of Tibetan independence".

From 1957, the US ran a clandestine programme training a small numbers of Tibetan resistance fighters and airdropped them back into Tibet to harass Chinese forces. But it produced limited results and was wound down in the 1970s, after Washington's detente with China.

Though the tragic outcome is already known, the book, based on recently declassified documents, is as gripping as a spy thriller, with vivid details and fully drawn characters in all their heroism and foibles.

Most poignant is the teenaged Dalai Lama, struggling to secure his people's interests. In December 1950, the 15-year-old cleric fled advancing Chinese troops, and took refuge just 12km from the Indian border. For months, US officials sent covert messages, promising to support the resistance, and urging him to seek asylum and publicly denounce an agreement a Tibetan delegation in Beijing had just been forced to sign, acknowledging Tibet as part of China.

Afraid to consign his people to protracted war with a powerful enemy, the young monk turned to traditional divination for guidance. Slips of paper - one for exile, and one for returning to Lhasa - were rolled into dough balls, and rotated in a bowl in front of a Buddha image. The dough ball with the paper advising return to Lhasa came out first. And so he did.

Today, the 78-year-old Dalai Lama, who finally fled into exile in 1959, is the living symbol of Tibet and all its aspirations, and the only meaningful potential interlocutor with Beijing on any reconciliation with the Tibetan people. The authors suggest China needs to rethink whether its repressive policies there are really in its national interest, especially given the region's special place in the global imagination.

There is little sign Beijing is prepared for such a shift. But, as horror grows over Tibetans immolating themselves in grim protest at Chinese oppression, the story of this tragic Himalayan region is not over yet.

The book explores the complex geopolitical calculations and prickly personalities that prevented Tibet winning recognition as an independent country after the second world war, then allowed it to be occupied by the People's Liberation Army in 1950 with barely a peep from governments that Lhasa had looked to as friends.

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QUOTES

“Under the banner of maintaining social stability and combating separatism, the government engaged in the severe repression of Tibet’s unique religious, cultural, and linguistic heritage by, among other means, strictly curtailing the civil rights of Tibetans, including the freedoms of speech, religion, association, assembly, and movement,” says US State Department’s Annual Human Rights released by Secretary of State John Kerry on 27 February 2014

“I welcome President Obama’s strong endorsement of the Middle Way Approach policy and constructive dialogue without any precondition. This meeting sends a powerful message of hope to Tibetans in Tibet who are undergoing immense suffering. The meeting reflects the American government and people’s continued commitment to freedom and democracy,” Tibetan political leader Dr. Lobsang Sangay on US President Barack Obama’s meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

“It depends on how you use them. If the person, himself or herself, has a certain inner strength, a certain confidence, then it is no problem. But if an individual’s mind is weak, then there is more confusion. You can’t blame technology. It depends on the user of the technology,” His Holiness the Dalai Lama to TIME magazine on the role of Facebook and Twitter.

“We Tibetans need to make the Chinese people our friends and we need to work to keep the support of the world community. Whatever progress you make in your lives, don’t forget the cause of Tibet or the importance of a Tibetan education. If some of you become the first Tibetan millionaires, well and good. There are already some Tibetans in the West who have funded schools in Tibet and clinics in monasteries. It’s very good to give such help,” His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibetans in California.
