

TIBETAN BULLETIN

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1

JANUARY-APRIL 2009

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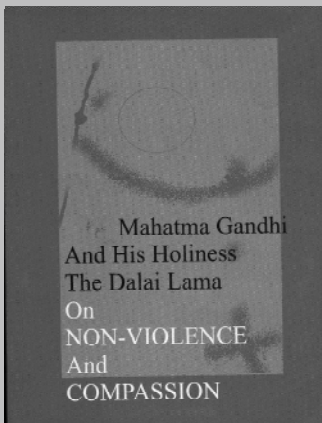
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Ancient Wisdom for Modern Living



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

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

The book is equipped with a CD. To order the book, please contact: Publication Officer, Publications Section, Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, Dharamshala-176215, H.P., India

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REVIEW

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

—*Tibetan Bulletin*

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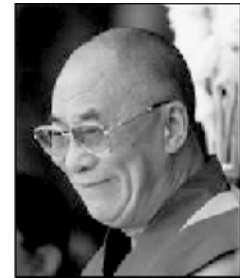
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TIBETAN BULLETIN

Tibetan Bulletin is an official bi-monthly journal of the Central Tibetan Administration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.



Signed articles or quotations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Central Tibetan Administration. Contributions are welcome and may be addressed to the editor, *Tibetan Bulletin*. However the publisher regrets its inability to return unused articles unless they are accompanied by a self-addressed envelope with adequate postage.

Tibetan Bulletin is distributed free of charge. To subscribe please email the circulation manager or see page 31.

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Tibetan Bulletin is published by:

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Tel: +91-1892-222510 / 222457

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Kashag Welcomes UN Chief's Tibet Remarks and Reaffirms Its Commitment to Dialogue

The Central Tibetan Administration said it welcomes the remarks made by Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the UN, that he hopes the Chinese government will sincerely pursue the dialogue between the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese leadership to resolve the issue of Tibet.

"I hope the Chinese authorities will continue to resolve all these issues through dialogue. The dialogue started some time ago between the representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government. I hope this will continue in a sincere manner so that all the concerns coming from Tibet will be resolved smoothly and harmoniously," Mr Ban Ki-moon told reporters in Geneva on 12 December 2008.

The Kashag, in its statement on 18 December 2009 said: "These forthright remarks by the Secretary General of the world body indicate the concerns of the international community as a whole on the current sad state of Tibet. We believe that such remarks will serve as an impetus for the Chinese authorities to resolve the issue of Tibet to the satisfaction of the Tibetan and the Chinese people.

"At the same time, we are dismayed by the remarks made in response to the Secretary General's comments by the Chinese foreign ministry's statement saying that the door to dialogue is still open while reiterating many pre-conditions that make it impossible for the dialogue process to move forward."

The statement issued by the Chinese foreign ministry said, "The key is whether the Dalai Lama examines and corrects his political stance, abandons his wrongful position on 'Tibetan independence' and genuinely matches his words with actions."

The Kashag said, in fact, this attitude of the Chinese authorities is the real obstacle to the advancement of the dialogue process. This attitude is the one that firmly closes the door for further dialogue.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has committed himself to the Middle-Way

Approach since 1979. His Holiness is not seeking Tibet's separation from China. Therefore His Holiness has no reason to correct his political stance. All his actions absolutely match his words. The whole world knows His Holiness the Dalai Lama's position of not seeking Tibetan independence for the last three decades. Therefore, the PRC's assertion about wrong position on Tibetan independence is absolutely baseless and unsustainable. Their imagination about His Holiness' position on Tibetan independence shows either that they want to distort His Holiness the Dalai Lama's intention for their political purpose or their lack of will to address the problem of Tibet. Nothing is farther from the truth in saying that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is seeking Tibetan independence or semi-independence or independence in disguise. However, we are confident that such an obvious untruthful statement can not mislead or fool the enlightened international community.

During the latest round of talks held in Beijing in November, the two envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Mr. Lodi Gyari and Mr. Kelsang Gyaltzen, presented, at the instance of the Chinese counterpart during the earlier meeting, a memorandum on genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people. The memorandum puts forth the Tibetan position on genuine autonomy and how the specific needs of the Tibetan nationality for autonomy and self-government can be met through application of the principles on autonomy of the constitution of the People's Republic of China. On this basis, His Holiness the Dalai Lama felt confident that the basic needs of the Tibetan nationality can be met through genuine autonomy within the constitution of the PRC. Now that the memorandum has been made public, any sensible person can verify from the document whether His Holiness the Dalai Lama is seeking independence or semi-independence or independence in disguise.

The Kashag reiterated its sincere commitment to the dialogue process to resolve the issue of Tibetan within the framework of the Chinese constitution for the benefit of both Tibetans and Chinese people.

"We are always ready to have dialogue with the PRC at anytime, anywhere if the PRC authorities wish to do so," the Kashag said.

Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Felicitates US Speaker Pelosi on Re-election

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile congratulated Nancy Pelosi on her re-election as the speaker of the US House of Representatives. Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat from California, defeated Republican John Boehner by 255 votes to 174 on the first day of the 111th Congress on 7 January.

"On behalf of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, I am most privileged to convey our heartiest congratulation on your re-election to the historic responsibility of the first ever woman speaker of the U.S congress," said Gyari Dolma, deputy speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, in a congratulatory message to Pelosi on 9 January.

"Your opening remarks at the 111th congress are in itself a directive for all parliamentarians worldwide. We are confident that you will take the congress forward and will once again succeed to lead the house to rise to the challenge, recognizing that one's love of country is stronger than the issues, which may lead to division.

We continue to cherish your visit to Dharamsala; coming as a beautiful ray of hope at a time, we, Tibetans were facing one of the darkest time in our history. We thank you for your support to the peaceful initiatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people. With leaders like you in the helm of power and responsibilities, the victims of human rights violations and the deprived can hope for dignity and justice.

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile sincerely congratulate you on your re-election and our best wishes are always with you."

Shortly after the Chinese military crackdown on peaceful demonstrations in Tibet in March last year, the speaker Pelosi, led a prominent delegation of the US Congress, for an urgent visit to Dharamshala, to show concern and support for the Tibetan people.

Speaker Pelosi said during the visit that if the freedom loving people throughout the world do not speak out against China's oppression in China and Tibet, we have lost all moral authority to

speak on behalf of human rights anywhere in the world.

Describing the situation in Tibet, as a “challenge to the conscience of the world”, the US speaker urged that the Chinese government should engage in negotiation with His Holiness the Dalai Lama to resolve the issue of Tibet.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Lauds Chinese People’s Call for Democracy

Coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the UN General Assembly’s adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 2008, hundreds of citizens of the People’s Republic of China expressed their political ideas to usher a democratic and constitutional government.

The manifesto – Charter 08 - calls not for ameliorative reform of the current political system but for an end to some of its essential features, including China’s one-party rule, and their replacement with a system based on human rights and democracy. It was signed by prominent Chinese citizens from both outside and inside the government, and include not only well-known dissidents and intellectuals, but also middle-level officials and rural leaders.

“I am greatly encouraged by the launching of a Charter ’08 by academics, artists, farmers and lawyers in China on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Their call for political, legal and constitutional reform is admirable,” His Holiness the Dalai Lama said lauding the efforts of the Chinese people to promote democratization and protection of human rights in China.

His Holiness said: “I personally believe that President Hu Jintao’s call for a harmonious society is a laudable initiative that can provide space to the viewpoints being expressed by a growing number of Chinese people. A harmonious society can only come into being when there is trust among the people, freedom from fear, freedom of expression, rule of law, justice and equality.

I would like to urge the Chinese leadership to consider making efforts to

bring about unity and stability in a civilized way.

I would also like to take this opportunity to call upon the government of the People’s Republic of China to release prisoners of conscience, including Hu Jia, who have been detained for exercising their freedom of expression.”

After Australia, “Chinese-Tibetan Friendship Association” formed in Japan

Following suggestions from His Holiness the Dalai Lama for maintaining a harmonious relationship between the Chinese and Tibetan peoples, some Tibetan and Chinese people living in Japan formed a “Friendship Association” on 14 February.

The association aims to strengthen better understanding between the two communities and to promote peace and stability in China and Tibet.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama underlines the importance of reaching out to the Chinese people, so that they could have a clear understanding about the real situation in Tibet. The Tibetan and Chinese community based in Australia took the initiative to establish the first harmonious association on 7 July 2008.

The Tibetan community in Japan organised a function-cum-interactive dinner gathering to commemorate the inception of the friendship association. Around a hundred Chinese and Tibetan people living in and around Tokyo attended the function.

Mr. Kalsang Dhondup, President of the Tibetan Community, in his opening remark, greeted the gathering and expressed his happiness that the two communities have “come together to show to the world that we are not against each other, that we love and respect each other and that we can live peacefully together”.

Mr. Lhakpa Tshoko, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Japan and East Asia welcomed the formation of the Association and said that it was “in line with the principle of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who has always preached love, compassion, non-violence and universal

brotherhood.”

Describing the newly founded “Chinese-Tibetan Friendship Association” as a non-political entity, the Tibetan representative hoped it could “contribute immensely in clearing many doubts and misunderstanding between the two communities”.

“It is a friendship association formed at community level and this will greatly help in promoting peace and stability in China and Tibet,” Mr Tshoko said.

Dr. Tsewang Nishikura was appointed the president of the association. Mr. Liu Bao and Lee Komatsu are appointed as its Vice Presidents, and Mr. Kalsang Dhondup as the General Secretary of the Association.

Dr. Tsewang, while accepting the responsibility, urged the respective communities to abide by the policy of peace and friendship, and in promoting better understanding, which he hoped would help send good message to the people in China and Tibet.

Vice President Mr. Liu Bao expressed great happiness about the successful formation of the Association. He said that he had been to Tibet several times and had good many Tibetans as friends. Commending Tibet’s “unique Buddhist tradition of peace and concept of others before self”, Bao said Chinese people “have many things to learn from Tibetan”.

In his speech, Bao insisted on the need to have more communication between the two communities.

“Whatever the Chinese government has done, it represents the Government’s stand only, which does not represent Chinese people,” Bao said, and prayed for the success of the Association.

An elderly Chinese man said he was so happy that he wanted to dedicate a song for the occasion and played harmonica. A group of Tibetan and Chinese casually performed Tibetan dance together at a corner. A young Tibetan girl sang a Tibetan song. The performances drew great appreciation and ovation from the crowd.

His Holiness Honoured for Contribution to Global Peace and Rights of Tibetans

In recognition of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his steadfast commitment to nonviolent efforts in resolving the issue of Tibet and contribution to global peace, the Italian cities of Rome and Venice bestowed their honorary citizenships on His Holiness.

His Holiness received the honours during his recent visits to Rome and Venice from 8 – 10 February. During the presentation of diploma of honorary citizenship to His Holiness in Rome, Mayor Gianni Alemanno appealed to the Chinese leadership to resume dialogue with the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the autonomy of Tibet. He also called on the Italian government to support this initiative.

“Your (His Holiness the Dalai Lama) presence here is a sign of our moral rejection of injustice, violence and repression ... aimed at defending a people’s identity and the right of each of us to express our spirituality and culture,” Alemanno said.

“We stand by you and strongly demand the full recognition of the autonomy of the Tibetan nation,” the mayor said, presenting His Holiness with a statue of the she-wolf that raised Rome’s founders Romulus and Remus, according to legend.

In his address, His Holiness said, it was an “encouragement to support the non-violent efforts and it gives me courage. Today, as I was recognised for my efforts for achieving genuine autonomy for Tibet, I think the Tibetan people will not feel abandoned in their struggle for the just cause of Tibet.” His Holiness said, while this award is being presented, the situation in Tibet is very tragic and things are extremely tense. His Holiness said that “our way of approach to resolve the Tibetan problem is to bring benefit to the Tibetan and the Chinese people.”

In Venice, Mayor Cacciari praised “the intelligence with which His Holiness the Dalai Lama has conducted his battle

for the freedom and self-determination of Tibet”.

“The battle is not over and we intend to show our support by giving you honorary citizenship,” said the mayor, who is a leading Italian philosopher.

In his brief address, His Holiness expressed concern over the deteriorating situation in Tibet after the crackdown on peaceful Tibetan protesters in March last year.

“Many people are still being arrested in Tibet, many disappear, are beaten, have their legs and arms broken and are prohibited from opening Tibetan schools”.

“In such a difficult period, receiving your sympathy and feeling it passed from heart to heart encourages me and makes me happy,” said His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is seeking genuine autonomy for Tibet.”

His Holiness was in Germany for his second leg of the European visit on 10 February.

In Baden-Baden, Germany, His Holiness was awarded with the German Prize “Deutsche Medienpreis”, in recognition of his “active advocacy of reconciliation, tolerance, humility and respect during a time of religious tension, self-destructive, addiction to profit and ongoing violations of human rights”. It supports His Holiness’s non-violent struggle for the rights of the Tibetan people, which he has been leading for over 50 years from exile in India.

The award was presented by Media Control, one of Germany’s leading market-research companies as well as an interpreter in media-studies, analysis, and evaluation.

A 20-member jury consisting of Germany’s most important and influential media chief editors voted His Holiness the Dalai Lama for the 2008 Award.

“The preservation of the Tibetan culture is important not only for the Tibetans but for millions of other Asian population. It is one of the important religions of the world,” His Holiness

said in his address at the award ceremony. Many dignitaries, including Mr. Roland Koch, prime minister of the German state of Hesse and Mr Karlheinz Koegel, chief of Media Control attended the function.

Mr. Roland Koch, in his eulogy said His Holiness the Dalai Lama was a special person in the world and history. His Holiness had managed to make people curious about the fate of Tibetans and the nonviolent self-determination of Tibet.

Mr. Koch, a friend of His Holiness and Tibet for over 20 years is one of the senior politicians in German. He said, “What message will be given to the next generation, if we don’t support a peaceful struggle.”

Previous recipients of the German media award include Nelson Mandela, Kofi Annan, Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, King Hussein of Jordan, and King Juan Carlos of Spain.

Tibetan Community in Australia and New Zealand Mourn Bushfire Victims

The Tibetan community in Australia and New Zealand last weekend offered prayers and condolence to show their sympathy and support for the victims of the tragic bushfire incidents in Australia.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama sent a condolence message to Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on 11 February.

“I am deeply saddened by the loss of so many lives and the devastation of houses, towns and sources of livelihood for many others following the shocking bush fires that have swept some parts of the state of Victoria over the last few days,” His Holiness said in his message.

“I extend my deep sympathy and heartfelt condolences to all those families who have been directly affected by what I understand are the worst bush fires in Australian history.”

“I offer my prayers for those who have lost their lives, the bereaved and those who have been injured.”

The devastating wildfires in Australia have left more than 180 people dead and thousands homeless, media reports say.

Tibetan Plateau under the Mercy of Climate Change and Modernization:

[We (at the Environment and Development Desk at DIIR, CTA) would like to alert all our readers about the impacts of Climate Change and Unplanned Urbanization on the Tibetan Plateau in a series of short articles in this bulletin.]

The Significance of the Tibetan Plateau

Tibet referred to as 'The Third Pole' and 'The Water Tower of Asia' clearly reflects the significance of its snow capped mountains and its alpine grasslands. Since time immemorial, the plateau holds the Hindu Kush Himalayan Ice Sheet, considered as the largest ice mass outside the two poles. Its plateau contains 46,000 glaciers covering an area of 105,000 km². Tibetan Plateau (*herein referred to as TP*) is guarded to the south by the mighty Himalayas, to the north by Kunlun, to its west by Hindu Kush and Pamir ranges. Glacial runoff from these regions feeds the largest rivers across Southeast Asia, including the Driчу (Yangtze), Machu (Yellow), Zachu (Mekong), Ganges and Singhe (Indus) rivers. From the arid plains of Pakistan and India to the rice paddies of southern Vietnam, from the great Tonlesap lake of Cambodia to the North China plain, these rivers bring life and joy to millions of peoples.

Glaciers and Rivers

There is little doubt that melting glaciers of TP provide a key source of water in the summer months; as much as 70% of the summer flow in the Ganges and 50–60% of the flow in other major rivers. Perhaps the most critical region in which the melting glaciers will negatively affect water supply (in the next few decades) will be China and parts of Asia, including India. The melting glaciers will recharge the mighty rivers for within a short period but later as the resource diminishes, the river runoff will decrease leading to drought. These snow peaks and glaciers enable Tibet to be the source of four major rivers that meets much of Asia's water demand. For instance, Driчу

Tsangpo (*Yangtze River*), originating from the TP flows about 6,300 km eastwards to the East China Sea and plays a vital role in the socio-economic development of China. And Yarlung Tsangpo or more famously known as the 'Brahmaputra River' drains an area of 651,335 km², connecting Tibet (50.5%), India (33.6%), Bangladesh (8.1%) and Bhutan (7.8%). With an average discharge of 20,000 (m³/s), it originates from the glaciers of Mt. Kailash range. In short, close to 47% of the world population thrives on the watershed originating from the TP. The total river basin area (*as of 2003 data*) is estimated above 5,477,700 km². For China alone, 30 % of its fresh water supply is met from the rivers flowing through Tibet.

Permafrost layers as carbon stores

Unlike the ones that are widespread in the Arctic and boreal regions of Northern Hemisphere, the *permafrost*¹ prevailing on the TP (1.3 to 1.6 million km²) are alpine permafrost due to its high altitudes. This type of permafrost is characterised by having warm permafrost and possessing rich ground ice and being amongst the most sensitive to climate change and thus being particularly vulnerable to warming temperature. The presence or absence of the permafrost layer entails major variations in the soil's physical structure, determining, to a large extent, the hydrological and nutritional status of the soil, which in turn, is pivotal in determining the vegetative coverage, plant community structure and productivity.

Many researchers indicated in their studies that, a significant statistical correlation exist between the thickness of the permafrost *active layer*² and the vegetative cover in the alpine landscapes of TP. And the thawing of

permafrost or increase in the active layer corresponds to the decrease in the vegetative cover. The alpine permafrost on TP stores about 12.3 Pg C (*equivalent to 12,300 Million tons of C*) or 37% of the total Grassland soil organic carbon (*herein referred to as SOC*). A separate study conducted at the source region of the Yellow River by a group of Chinese researchers indicated that a significant amount of **methane**³ (*herein referred to as CH₄*) is trapped in the permafrost layer of that region.

Under the influence of warming climate, the rise in temperature (*above 0°C*) favors the thickening of the active layers; it further triggers the microbial decomposition of organic matter within the frozen soil, eventually leading to a huge amount of carbon entering the atmosphere (*climate feedback*) and intensifying global warming.

The degradation of permafrost, besides disturbing the carbon balance over the plateau, will also lead to a series of interconnected irreversible, yet gradual changes; it would result in the lowering of water table, loss of soil moisture content, extinction of native plant species, desertification and drying of swamps, it would also put the modern constructions at risk.

Alpine Grasslands and Meadows

Tibet's rangeland (*Tib: Jhangthang*), from the Northern Plateau of upper Tibet to the extreme eastern edge of the plateau, with an average altitude of 4000 to 5000 meters, covers approximately 70% of the total of Tibet's area. The types of rangeland vary from alpine meadows and mountain scrub to mountain sparse wood and mountain desert, which helps sustain domestic herds and nurture a wide variety of wildlife species.

These rangelands and its cold alpine grassland soils are the major carbon sink and house a greater organic carbon pool. During the thaw season, the alpine meadows appears to absorb 'or' take up CO_2 at the rate of (1840 – 3050) $\text{mg}/\text{m}^2\cdot\text{day}$. According to some renowned researchers, the Alpine grasslands (*alpine cold steppe and alpine cold meadows*) being the most dominant ecosystem on the TP occupies over 60% of the total area and stores a large amount of organic carbon. Their studies showed that total SOC storage (*sampled from the top 1 meter soil*) in the alpine grasslands of TP was estimated about 7.4 Pg C or 7400 Million tons of C. They also indicated that the light fraction organic carbon (*herein referred to as LFOC*) is enriched in the top soil and the changes in the vegetative cover (*due to grassland degradation*) could easily loose a significant amount of LFOC. They observed that when the alpine meadow was severely degraded, the LFOC decreased by 92%. This easily released LFOC accounts for 34–54% of the total organic carbon (*herein referred to as TOC*).

Furthermore, the alpine cold swamp meadow soils of the Amdo plateau have approximately the same TOC content (14.4 kg/m^2 for the 0–0.30 m soil layer) as wetland soils in Arctic regions, but its TOC content is far higher than that of a tropical savannah. With respect to the total carbon storage in the biomass of the TP, it was estimated to be 1.87 Pg (*equivalents to 1870 million tons of C accounting to over 56% of the total biomass of grasslands of China.*)

Lakes and wetlands as carbon sequesters

Lakes and Wetland throughout the world plays a pivotal role in recharging the aquifers in the arid and semi-arid regions of the world. Wetlands in Tibet play a major role in regulating the flow of rivers and also are the major carbon stores. They act like sponge, absorbing water during the summer when the water is in excess and releasing it in the winter when the runoff is short. Even though, the role

of wetland in the global carbon cycle is poorly understood, and more information is needed on different wetland types and their functioning as both sources and sinks of greenhouse gases (*herein referred to as GHGs*). But as noticed in different parts of the world, the role of wetland as a carbon sink or source was closely related with the water table and the amount of precipitation.

The recent warming of climate has been linked to the contraction of wetlands in the TP. According to a China Daily news report, the recent contractions in the wetlands have led to reduced flows of the Driчу (Yangtze) and Machu (Yellow) rivers.

Fresh water wetlands on TP are distributed in the zones of $31^\circ - 35^\circ \text{N}$ and $89^\circ - 95^\circ \text{E}$ with an area covering approximately 1,33,000 km^2 . With their wealth of stored carbon, wetlands provide a potential sink for the atmospheric carbon, if not properly managed could become a source of GHGs. Statistics of the natural wetlands (excluding lake and floodplain) area by geographic regions in China revealed that Tibetan Highland holds over 51% of total natural wetlands. These wetlands are dominated by Salt Marsh, Peatland and Freshwater Marsh. Chinese researchers have indicated that alpine wetlands of Tso Jhang (Ch: Haibei) northeast of the TP absorbed about 316 $\text{g CO}_2/\text{m}^2$ during the growing season and emitted 546 $\text{g CO}_2/\text{m}^2$ in the non growing season. According to the Regional Environment Protection Bureau, the wetlands of Lhalu (with a total area of 6.2 km^2), situated to the northwest of Lhasa, absorb 78,800 tons of carbon and produce 57,300 tons of oxygen annually. These wetlands absorb and store huge amounts of carbon, the main component of global warming gas. This extreme high organic carbon concentration in the cold wetland is due to the low rate of organic matter decomposition owing to its low mean average ground temperature. According to some researchers, the annual CH_4 emissions from freshwater wetlands on the TP were estimated between 0.75 to 1.05 Tg, equivalent to approx. 0.9 Million tons of CH_4 . This warming climate will not only alter the role of wetlands but also result in the melting of permafrost soils,

subsequently emitting the trapped methane. Wetlands tend to trap carbon-rich sediments from watershed sources, but may also release dissolved carbon through water flow into adjacent ecosystems. Such horizontal transport pathways may affect both sequestration and emission rates of carbon.

Influence on Asian monsoon pattern

TP plays an important role in regulating the Asian monsoon. During summer, the TP intensifies the pressure gradient between the south Asian landmass and the Indian Ocean leading to the flow of air and moisture from the sea.

According to many scientists and researchers the ground freezing and thawing of the TP have a significant influence on the atmospheric circulation. The rise in the soil moisture content (*due to active layer thawing*) increases the level of heat exchange between the atmosphere and ground surface. Heat and moisture variations produced by these processes play an important role in the climate of East Asia. For instance, the onset of summer precipitation in southern China and in the middle and lower basin of the Driчу Tsangpo (*Yangtze River*) are influenced by the spring thaw timing over the TP. In consistent to that, the significance of spring snow depth over the TP correlates with the amount of summer precipitation on the middle and lower basins of Driчу Tsangpo.

The plateau's seasonal heating during summer and spring plays a principal role in determining the large-scale circulation in summer. Heating over the TP tends to generate a surface cyclonic circulation and upper-atmosphere anti-cyclonic circulation which results in the appearance of a large air motion in the eastern side of the plateau. Hence the summer monsoon of East China is attributed to the heating up of the TP.

Impacts on the Tibetan Plateau

Tibetan Plateau is currently experiencing the impacts of climate change in its worst form, with the current warming of

mean air temperature and to enhance this warming process, there is further input of GHGs from the climate feedback and ongoing anthropogenic activities. As a result (not only to our concern), the glaciers are retreating, grasslands are degrading, lakes and wetlands are shrinking, rivers are drying and desertification is taking its toll. The immediate recipients of the climate change impacts are those innocent herders and villagers who have been living in harmony with nature for generations. As mentioned precisely by Julia Klein, ‘climate warming is an unusual environmental problem since the primary GHG emitters driving these changes can be far removed (*due to the large spatial disconnect between drivers and recipients*) from the most vulnerable recipients of the climate change effects’.

Critical components to Tibet’s ecosystem are undergoing major transformations due to climate change. It has led to the receding of Tibet’s 46,000 glaciers, the shrinking of over thousands of lakes, the drying up of wetlands, the thawing of permafrost, and reduced flow regimes in many rivers. Furthermore, abnormal weather conditions due to climate change (*such as non-sequential rainfall, delayed in milking season, reduced growth of calf, etc.*) has made subsistence farming and herding more unpredictable. Frequent landslides are causing land-use disruptions in the region. In addition, glacial lake outbursts and floods have increased in recent years.

According to the China National Climate Change Assessment Report published in early 2007, scientists from twelve different departments (*including China’s Ministry of Science and Technology*), foresees a 5-10% reduction in agricultural output by 2030, more droughts, floods, typhoons and sandstorms, and a 40% increase in the population threatened by plague. It also reported the possibility of damage to the recently built Tibetan railway.

Desertification of Grasslands

In general, many factors are responsible, over a long period of time for the prevailing condition of the TP’s alpine grasslands and meadows. Apart from the natural climate warming and its feedback, various anthropogenic factors on the TP are responsible for speeding up this degradation. According to some Chinese researchers, the primary reasons that caused the centre of gravity of grassland to move along multiple directions are the various ways the people have utilized the grassland during the different time periods throughout the past 30 years (1950-1980).

In brief, the overall plan during those periods of *Collectivization*⁴ and *Household Responsibility*⁵ was to maximize the agricultural production (*more famously known as winter crop*) from the grasslands, during that era, almost 20 million hectares of grassland were converted to croplands, by state-owned farms, state-owned forestry operations, and other state-owned enterprises. They were all labeled “newly claimed virgin croplands” in the 1950s and the trend continued over the last few decades, these grasslands are now severely degraded due to this conversion. For instance, in Amdo (Ch: Qinghai), about 670 km² of grassland were converted to cropland and nomadic herders were forced to assume an agricultural lifestyle which was unfamiliar to them and unsuited to local conditions. In Amdo, this took desertification to a point beyond control. The first state farms in Tibet, founded by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) in 1952 to the west of urban Lhasa and just east of the borders of Toelung Dechen county, had historically been land used primarily for grazing sheep owned by the Tibetan government. This land appropriation by PLA soon went beyond Lhasa to Shigatse, Chamdo, Tingkye, Kongpo and Ngari. The Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976 further intensified this commune system to the extent that private ownership of land and animals ceased altogether.

Today, we know that, for the past three decades or more (*in the process of increasing the agricultural outputs*)

TPs alpine grasslands (with its permafrost soil) has been plowed and exposed to hazardous chemical fertilizers. Once these natural grasses above the permafrost soil are destroyed, it is very difficult to replenish under the same condition with the current warming climate.

As of today, to the general community and for some researchers, the innocent herders and the nomads were the scapegoat for anthropogenic activities related to grassland degradation. To offset this issue (*despite all the other options*) in the name of modernization or for easy governance, these nomads and herders were forced to move into permanent settlements by the Chinese government. This localization or the policy of ‘Sedentarization’ has not only taken the pride of the nomads but also made them dependent on the central government for future aid. In Amdo, about 100,000 nomad families have been settled/voluntarily forced to move in permanent houses. The Chinese government has spent millions of dollars in the relocation process. Some of the newly moved nomads (*in a recent coveted video file*) clearly express the deprivation of their (only) aesthetic values and helpless state at that time, when they were left with no other options but to move into these houses. This type of development or modernization if it comes at the cost of losing one’s freedom or the mobility of the nomads, then certainly it has to do more than just merely protecting the grasslands. According to Professor Sen (Economist, 1990 Nobel laureate) in his classic work “Development as Freedom”, he argued that development is “not the mere accumulation of goods but the enhanced freedom to choose, to lead the kind of life one values”.

Technically, the degradation of TP grassland are due to many factors such as permafrost degradation, irrational human disturbance (*mining, road construction, conversion to cropland, gold collection, overgrazing etc.*) climate warming and non sequential rainfall patterns, etc.. Interestingly, apart from the other assumptions leading to

the degradation of TP grasslands, Julia *et al.*, in their field research work at (*Haibei Research Station situated at 37°37'N, longitude and 101°12' E*) has shown clearly that grazing (*simulated by clipping*) is practically reversing the grassland degradation. According to their study, global warming and grazing cancels each other and they were no significant effect on Above Ground Net Production (ANPP), in fact those control samples (unclipped grasses) showed less ANPP. They have indicated that grazing prolongs/ extends the growing season and the improves the plant C:N ratio (carbon to nitrogen ratio). Their study indicated the following points;



Desertification near Mt. Kailash (Tibet)

Grazing can alter the age structure of leaves and regenerate older plants.

It also helps to keep the expansion of invasive plants under control.

Species richness in the clipped plots remains stable whereas the species richness in the surrounding, unclipped plots decreases.

In the absence of grazing, there is faster decreases species richness compared to warming with grazing.

Grazing can increase the rangeland productivity and can reduce the negative effects of warming on both vegetation production and quality.

Once the grasslands are degraded, desertification takes over in tune with the warming climate. The snapshots taken in the year 2008 clearly shows the desertification of pasturelands near Ghang Rinpoche (Mt. Kailash).

Desertification is now a major issue for Tibet, especially in the northeast, the source region of the Machu and Driчу rivers. From the field evidence and analysis of remote sensing images (*as of year 2004*), the area of grassland degradation and soil erosion at the source area of Driчу has reached 106,300 km², accounting for 67 % of the total area. According to UNDP report (2007), Tibet's grasslands are being

turned into desert at a rate of 2,330 km² each year. Other researchers indicated that the degradation rate of grassland is 6,700 km²/year and the rate of desertification is approximately 107,000 km²/year.

Other human induced factors;

Infrastructure development such as highways, new townships for settlers and railroad tracks

Reclamation of communal land, the traditional pastures of semi-nomads, under a new policy to allow commercial development

Growing rapeseed on low-lying pastures - particularly by Chinese settlers and military units - around the pastoral plains of Amdo's Tso Ngonpo (Lake Kokonor)

Uncontrolled gold mining and illegal harvesting of wild medicinal herbs on grasslands with the connivance of local authorities

Elimination of indigenous predators leading to the loss of natural checks on the population growth of pest species

[In our next issue, we will focus on the degradation of permafrost and glacial meltdown on the Tibetan Plateau due to Global Warming]

1. **Permafrost:** The subsurface earth materials remaining below 0°C for two or more years
2. **Active layer:** The top layer of permafrost soil that thaws during the summer and freezes during winter. The temperature in the lower levels of the soil will remain more stable than that at the surface, where the influence of the ambient temperature is greatest. This means that, over many years, the influence of cooling in winter and heating in summer will decrease as depth increases
3. **CH₄ (Methane):** -21 times more Global Warming Potential (GWP) than Carbon dioxide
4. **Collectivism:** Forcing the peasants to organize themselves into millions of production units (known as collectives) and to pool their land and other significant means of production.
5. **Household Responsibility:** Or 'The Responsibility Contract': That an individual household, or a set of households with the land lease to the government, they assume the task of production for and payment to the government. For the farmers: Virtually free from any interference from either the collective or the government, the Chinese peasants

devoted their hearts and souls to the land under their control and made every effort to provide whatever consumers were demanding.

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Tibetan Plateau in Peril

by Michael Zhao

Climate change is usually discussed as tomorrow's problem. But the world's most elevated land, the Tibetan Plateau, is already feeling the effects of warming temperatures, melting glaciers and permafrost, and degrading pastoral ecosystems. Put simply, the Tibetan Plateau is melting, endangering much of Asia and the world's population.

Asia Society's Center on U.S.-China Relations has recently launched China Green, a multimedia site dedicated to visually documenting China's environmental issues. The first project, "Tibetan Plateau in Peril," shows in stunning videos and interactive images that the roof of the world is edging toward an ecological disaster, with grave implications for about a third of humanity. Many of Asia's mighty river systems find their headwaters from the glaciers and wetlands on the plateau; hundreds of millions depend on these waters for their very lives.

On a recent fact-finding trip to the Anyemaqen (pronounced ah-nee-MAH-chin) area and the headwaters of the Yellow Rivers on the Tibetan Plateau, I learned that while some areas have been less affected, many Tibetan nomads are finding their pastures, and their nomadic way of life, slipping toward an abysmal ecological collapse.

Mt. Anyemaqen is one of the most revered spirit mountains in the ethnically Tibetan areas of west China. The family of Cairang-Duojie, 33, has lived at the foot of Anyemaqen for generations. He and his family see the ice-capped mountains everyday when they herd their yaks and fetch their water from the streams near their home. These are the firsthand witnesses of things that are slowly but surely changing.

"My grandfather told me that the glacier used to be one large piece," Cai-duo said, referring to the Halong Glacier that extends up the slope of

Anyemaqen. "When I was little, it had already split into two thin strips." Fingering a pair of Greenpeace photos of the glacier from 1985 and 2005 while studying the juxtaposition, he told me that the larger piece of the glacier has retreated by a third since 2005.

In Madoi County, about 70 miles to the west of Mt. Anyemaqen, things look much drier. Sand dunes have encroached on wetlands and pastures that were once dotted with lakes. I learned from my translator and his NGO group that in windy times sand could cover whole sections of the road. Herd levels in the county have continuously fallen from a peak of 650,000 head in 1980 to only 200,000 head in 2005, about the same level as the 1950s. Madoi nomads are now even finding this herd level difficult to sustain. It is the direct result of degrading grassland.

In the village of Zhajia at the border of Madoi and Qumalai Counties, where the Yellow River flows through twin lakes, people are starting to see the beginning of a crisis.

Zhajia Village used to be one of the most productive animal farms in southern Qinghai Province, largely due to its fat sheep. Nowadays, many families don't find enough grass, or grass nutritious enough, to raise a herd of sheep. And Suodajia's family is one of them. He lamented that one-half to two thirds of the village's grassland has degraded.

The family put the blame on overfishing in the lakes and a foreign mining firm digging gold in nearby mountains. But there is a more fundamental problem. From an ecological perspective, a warming plateau melts away glaciers a lot faster and evaporates a lot more water from the wetlands, lakes and rivers, drying up pastures and turning some fragile areas on the grassland into sand dunes. The melting of permafrost, the layer of frozen earth underground that holds water for above ground vegetation, drains water

and nutritional supplies to grass and other plants on the ground, further adding to the degradation.

Just like rivers flow off the plateau, through the gorges in central China and empty themselves into the seas, the problems on the Tibetan Plateau can export quickly to the lowlands.

The Yellow River, which gets nearly half of its water from the Tibetan Plateau, now rarely flows all the way to the sea year round. The Yangtze, Mekong, Salween and other rivers that flow off the plateau seem to be doing fine now. But with accelerated warming and faster melting of glaciers and permafrost, these great rivers will soon be under threat.

Meteorological scientists warn that the changes in heat composition and air pressure over the Tibetan Plateau may have implications beyond Asia's river basins, as shifting dynamics of the atmospheric circulatory system over the plateau could change wind and monsoon patterns across much of the world. There is still yet no model to predict what will happen, but there's plenty of evidence to warrant immediate action to avoid a crisis that would imperil billions of people across Asia. Our Center on U.S.-China Relations at Asia Society believes that to win in this climate game, the biggest two players, that is the United States and China, have to be both on board. That's why we're organizing a Jan 16 conference on the effects of global warming on the Tibetan Plateau at Asia Society in New York. We're about to publish a report, jointly with the Pew Center on Global Climate Change and a few other organizations, to help bring the two nations closer together in dealing with this common challenge of our time. Only by working together will we save the Tibetan Plateau, and the many millions who rely on its headwaters for life.

Reproduced from Far Eastern Economic Review. Michael Zhao is multimedia producer for the Asia Society Center on U.S.-China Relations and editor/producer of China Green.

Memorandum on genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people

I INTRODUCTION

Since the renewal of direct contact with the Central Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 2002, extensive discussions have been held between the envoys of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and representatives of the Central Government. In these discussions we have put forth clearly the aspirations of Tibetans. The essence of the Middle Way Approach is to secure genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people within the scope of the Constitution of the PRC. This is of mutual benefit and based on the long-term interest of both the Tibetan and Chinese peoples. We remain firmly committed not to seek separation or independence. We are seeking a solution to the Tibetan problem through genuine autonomy, which is compatible with the principles on autonomy in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The protection and development of the unique Tibetan identity in all its aspects serves the larger interest of humanity in general and those of the Tibetan and Chinese people in particular.

During the seventh round of talks in Beijing on 1 and 2 July 2008, the Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the Minister of the Central United Front Work Department, Mr. Du Qinglin, explicitly invited suggestions from His Holiness the Dalai Lama for the stability and development of Tibet. The Executive Vice Minister of the Central United Front Work Department, Mr. Zhu Weiqun, further said they would like to hear our views on the degree or form of autonomy we are seeking as well as on all aspects of regional autonomy within the scope of the Constitution of the PRC.

Accordingly, this memorandum puts forth our position on genuine autonomy and how the specific needs of the Tibetan nationality for autonomy and self-government can be met

through application of the principles on autonomy of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, as we understand them. On this basis, His Holiness the Dalai Lama is confident that the basic needs of the Tibetan nationality can be met through genuine autonomy within the PRC.

The PRC is a multi-national state, and as in many other parts of the world, it seeks to resolve the nationality question through autonomy and the self-government of the minority nationalities. The Constitution of the PRC contains fundamental principles on autonomy and self-government whose objectives are compatible with the needs and aspirations of the Tibetans. Regional national autonomy is aimed at opposing both the oppression and the separation of nationalities by rejecting both Han Chauvinism and local nationalism. It is intended to ensure the protection of the culture and the identity of minority nationalities by powering them to become masters of their own affairs.

To a very considerable extent Tibetan needs can be met within the constitutional principles on autonomy, as we understand them. On several points, the Constitution gives significant discretionary powers to state organs in the decision-making and on the operation of the system of autonomy. These discretionary powers can be exercised to facilitate genuine autonomy for Tibetans in ways that would respond to the uniqueness of the Tibetan situation. In implementing these principles, legislation relevant to autonomy may consequently need to be reviewed or amended to respond to the specific characteristics and needs of the Tibetan nationality. Given good will on both sides, outstanding problems can be resolved within the constitutional principles on autonomy. In this way national unity and stability and harmonious relations between the Tibetan and other nationalities will be established.

II RESPECT FOR THE INTEGRITY OF THE TIBETAN NATIONALITY

Tibetans belong to one minority nationality regardless of the current administrative division. The integrity of the Tibetan nationality must be respected. That is the spirit, the intent and the principle underlying the constitutional concept of national regional autonomy as well as the principle of equality of nationalities.

There is no dispute about the fact that Tibetans share the same language, culture, spiritual tradition, core values and customs, that they belong to the same ethnic group and that they have a strong sense of common identity. Tibetans share a common history and despite periods of political or administrative divisions, Tibetans continuously remained united by their religion, culture, education, language, way of life and by their unique high plateau environment.

The Tibetan nationality lives in one contiguous area on the Tibetan plateau, which they have inhabited for millennia and to which they are therefore indigenous. For purposes of the constitutional principles of national regional autonomy Tibetans in the PRC in fact live as a single nationality all over the Tibetan plateau.

On account of the above reasons, the PRC has recognised the Tibetan nationality as one of the 55 minority nationalities.

III TIBETAN ASPIRATIONS

Tibetans have a rich and distinct history, culture and spiritual tradition all of which form valuable parts of the heritage of humanity. Not only do Tibetans wish to preserve their own heritage, which they cherish, but equally they wish to further develop their culture and spiritual life and knowledge in ways that are particularly

suiting to the needs and conditions of humanity in the 21st century.

As a part of the multi-national state of the PRC, Tibetans can benefit greatly from the rapid economic and scientific development the country is experiencing. While wanting to actively participate and contribute to this development, we want to ensure that this happens without the people losing their Tibetan identity, culture and core values and without putting the distinct and fragile environment of the Tibetan plateau, to which Tibetans are indigenous, at risk.

The uniqueness of the Tibetan situation has consistently been recognised within the PRC and has been reflected in the terms of the '17 Point Agreement' and in statements and policies of successive leaders of the PRC since then, and should remain the basis for defining the scope and structure of the specific autonomy to be exercised by the Tibetan nationality within the PRC. The Constitution reflects a fundamental principle of flexibility to accommodate special situations, including the special characteristics and needs of minority nationalities.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's commitment to seek a solution for the Tibetan people within the PRC is clear and unambiguous. This position is in full compliance and agreement with paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's statement in which he emphasised that except for independence all other issues could be resolved through dialogue. Whereas, we are committed, therefore, to fully respect the territorial integrity of the PRC, we expect the Central Government to recognise and fully respect the integrity of the Tibetan nationality and its right to exercise genuine autonomy within the PRC. We believe that this is the basis for resolving the differences between us and promoting unity, stability and harmony among nationalities.

For Tibetans to advance as a distinct nationality within the PRC, they need to

continue to progress and develop economically, socially and politically in ways that correspond to the development of the PRC and the world as a whole while respecting and nurturing the Tibetan characteristics of such development. For this to happen, it is imperative that the right of Tibetans to govern themselves be recognised and implemented throughout the region where they live in compact communities in the PRC, in accordance with the Tibetan nationality's own needs, priorities and characteristics.

The Tibetan people's culture and identity can only be preserved and promoted by the Tibetans themselves and not by any others. Therefore, Tibetans should be capable of self-help, self-development and self-government, and an optimal balance needs to be found between this and the necessary and welcome guidance and assistance for Tibet from the Central Government and other provinces and regions of the PRC.

IV BASIC NEEDS OF TIBETANS Subject Matters of Self-government

1) Language

Language is the most important attribute of the Tibetan people's identity. Tibetan is the primary means of communication, the language in which their literature, their spiritual texts and historical as well as scientific works are written. The Tibetan language is not only at the same high level as that of Sanskrit in terms of grammar, but is also the only one that has the capability of translating from Sanskrit without an iota of error. Therefore, Tibetan language has not only the richest and best-translated literatures, many scholars even contend that it has also the richest and largest number of literary compositions. The Constitution of the PRC, in Article 4, guarantees the freedom of all nationalities "to use and develop their own spoken and written languages ...".

In order for Tibetans to use and develop their own language, Tibetan

must be respected as the main spoken and written language. Similarly, the principal language of the Tibetan autonomous areas needs to be Tibetan. This principle is broadly recognised in the Constitution in Article 121, which states, "the organs of self-government of the national autonomous areas employ the spoken and written language or language in common use in the locality." Article 10 of the Law on Regional National Autonomy (LRNA) provides that these organs "shall guarantee the freedom of the nationalities in these areas to use and develop their own spoken and written languages...."

Consistent with the principle of recognition of Tibetan as the main language in Tibetan areas, the LRNA (Article 36) also allows the autonomous government authorities to decide on "the language used in instruction and enrolment procedures" with regard to education. This implies recognition of the principle that the principal medium of education be Tibetan.

2) Culture

The concept of national regional autonomy is primarily for the purpose of preservation of the culture of minority nationalities. Consequently, the constitution of PRC contains references to cultural preservation in Articles 22, 47 and 119 as also in Article 38 of the LRNA. To Tibetans, Tibetan culture is closely connected to our religion, tradition, language and identity, which are facing threats at various levels. Since Tibetans live within the multinational state of the PRC, this distinct Tibetan cultural heritage needs protection through appropriate constitutional provisions.

3) Religion

Religion is fundamental to Tibetans and Buddhism is closely linked to their identity. We recognise the importance of separation of church and state, but this should not affect the freedom and practice of believers. It is impossible for Tibetans to imagine personal or community freedom without the freedom of belief, conscience and

religion. The Constitution recognises the importance of religion and protects the right to profess it. Article 36 guarantees all citizens the right to the freedom of religious belief. No one can compel another to believe in or not to believe in any religion. Discrimination on the basis of religion is forbidden.

An interpretation of the constitutional principle in light of international standard would also cover the freedom of the manner of belief or worship. The freedom covers the right of monasteries to be organised and run according to Buddhist monastic tradition, to engage in teachings and studies, and to enroll any number of monks and nuns or age group in accordance with these rules. The normal practice to hold public teachings and the empowerment of large gatherings is covered by this freedom and the state should not interfere in religious practices and traditions, such as the relationship between a teacher and his disciple, management of monastic institutions, and the recognition of reincarnations.

4) Education

The desire of Tibetans to develop and administer their own education system in cooperation and in coordination with the central government's ministry of education is supported by the principles contained in the Constitution with regard to education. So is the aspiration to engage in and contribute to the development of science and technology. We note the increasing recognition in international scientific development of the contribution which Buddhist psychology, metaphysics, cosmology and the understanding of the mind is making to modern science. Whereas, under Article 19 of the Constitution the state takes on the overall responsibility to provide education for its citizens, Article 119 recognises the principle that "[T]he organs of self-government of the national autonomous areas independently administer educational ... affairs in their respective areas..." This principle is also reflected in Article 36 of the LRNA.

Since the degree of autonomy in

decision-making is unclear, the point to be emphasised is that the Tibetan need to exercise genuine autonomy with regard to its own nationality's education and this is supported by the principles of the constitution on autonomy.

As for the aspiration to engage in and contribute to the development of scientific knowledge and technology, the Constitution (Article 119) and the LRNA (Article 39) clearly recognise the right of autonomous areas to develop scientific knowledge and technology.

5) Environment Protection

Tibet is the prime source of Asia's great rivers. It also has the earth's loftiest mountains as well as the world's most extensive and highest plateau, rich in mineral resources, ancient forests, and many deep valleys untouched by human disturbances.

This environmental protection practice was enhanced by the Tibetan people's traditional respect for all forms of life, which prohibits the harming of all sentient beings, whether human or animal. Tibet used to be an unspoiled wilderness sanctuary in a unique natural environment.

Today, Tibet's traditional environment is suffering irreparable damage. The effects of this are especially notable on the grasslands, the croplands, the forests, the water resources and the wildlife.

In view of this, according to Articles 45 and 66 of the LRNA, the Tibetan people should be given the right over the environment and allow them to follow their traditional conservation practices.

6) Utilisation of Natural Resources

With respect to the protection and management of the natural environment and the utilisation of natural resources the Constitution and the LRNA only acknowledge a limited role for the organs of self-government of the autonomous areas (see LRNA Articles 27, 28, 45, 66, and Article 118 of the

Constitution, which pledges that the state "shall give due consideration to the interests of [the national autonomous areas]]". The LRNA recognises the importance for the autonomous areas to protect and develop forests and grasslands (Article 27) and to "give priority to the rational exploitation and utilization of the natural resources that the local authorities are entitled to develop", but only within the limits of state plans and legal stipulations. In fact, the central role of the State in these matters is reflected in the Constitution (Article 9). The principles of autonomy enunciated in the Constitution cannot, in our view, truly lead to Tibetans becoming masters of their own destiny if they are not sufficiently involved in decision-making on utilisation of natural resources such as mineral resources, waters, forests, mountains, grasslands, etc.

The ownership of land is the foundation on which the development of natural resources, taxes and revenues of an economy are based. Therefore, it is essential that only the nationality of the autonomous region shall have the legal authority to transfer or lease land, except land owned by the state. In the same manner, the autonomous region must have the independent authority to formulate and implement developmental plans concurrent to the state plans.

7) Economic Development and Trade

Economic Development in Tibet is welcome and much needed. The Tibetan people remain one of the most economically backward regions within the PRC.

The Constitution recognises the principle that the autonomous authorities have an important role to play in the economic development of their areas in view of local characteristics and needs (Article 118 of the Constitution, also reflected in LRNA Article 25). The Constitution also recognises the principle of autonomy in the administration and management of finances (Article 117, and LRNA Article 32). At the same time, the Constitution also recognises

the importance of providing State funding and assistance to the autonomous areas to accelerate development (Article 122, LRNA Article 22).

Similarly, Article 31 of the LRNA recognises the competence of autonomous areas, especially those such as Tibet, adjoining foreign countries, to conduct border trade as well as trade with foreign countries. The recognition of these principles is important to the Tibetan nationality given the region's proximity to foreign countries with which the people have cultural, religious, ethnic and economic affinities.

The assistance rendered by the Central Government and the provinces has temporary benefits, but in the long run if the Tibetan people are not self-reliant and become dependent on others it has greater harm. Therefore, an important objective of autonomy is to make the Tibetan people economically self-reliant.

8) Public health

The Constitution enunciates the responsibility of the State to provide health and medical services (Article 21). Article 119 recognises that this is an area of responsibility of the autonomous areas. The LRNA (Article 40) also recognises the right of organs of self-government of the autonomous areas to "make independent decisions on plans for developing local medical and health services and for advancing both modern and the traditional medicine of the nationalities."

The existing health system fails to adequately cover the needs of the rural Tibetan population. According to the principles of the above-mentioned laws, the regional autonomous organs need to have the competencies and resources to cover the health need of the entire Tibetan population. They also need the competencies to promote the traditional Tibetan medical and astro system strictly according to traditional practice.

9) Public Security

In matters of public security it is important that the majority of security personnel consists of members of the local nationality who understand and respect local customs and traditions. What is lacking in Tibetan areas is absence of decision-making authority in the hands of local Tibetan officials.

An important aspect of autonomy and self-government is the responsibility for the internal public order and security of the autonomous areas. The Constitution (Article 120) and LRNA (Article 24) recognise the importance of local involvement and authorise autonomous areas to organise their security within "the military system of the State and practical needs and with the approval of the State Council."

10) Regulation on population migration

The fundamental objective of national regional autonomy and self-government is the preservation of the identity, culture, language and so forth of the minority nationality and to ensure that it is the master of its own affairs. When applied to a particular territory in which the minority nationality lives in a concentrated community or communities, the very principle and purpose of national regional autonomy is disregarded if large scale migration and settlement of the majority Han nationality and other nationalities is encouraged and allowed. Major demographic changes that result from such migration will have the effect of assimilating rather than integrating the Tibetan nationality into the Han nationality and gradually extinguishing the distinct culture and identity of the Tibetan nationality. Also, the influx of large numbers of Han and other nationalities into Tibetan areas will fundamentally change the conditions necessary for the exercise of regional autonomy since the constitutional criteria for the exercise of autonomy, namely that the minority nationality "live in compact communities" in a particular territory is changed and

undermined by the population movements and transfers. If such migrations and settlements continue uncontrolled, Tibetans will no longer live in a compact community or communities and will consequently no longer be entitled, under the Constitution, to national regional autonomy. This would effectively violate the very principles of the Constitution in its approach to the nationalities issue.

There is precedent in the PRC for restriction on the movement or residence of citizens. There is only a very limited recognition of the right of autonomous areas to work out measures to control "the transient population" in those areas. To us it would be vital that the autonomous organs of self-government have the authority to regulate the residence, settlement and employment or economic activities of persons who wish to move to Tibetan areas from other parts of the PRC in order to ensure respect for and the realisation of the objectives of the principle of autonomy.

It is not our intention to expel the non-Tibetans who have permanently settled in Tibet and have lived there and grown up there for a considerable time. Our concern is the induced massive movement of primarily Han but also some other nationalities into many areas of Tibet, upsetting existing communities, marginalising the Tibetan population there and threatening the fragile natural environment.

11) Cultural, educational and religious exchanges with other countries

Besides the importance of exchanges and cooperation between the Tibetan nationality and other nationalities, provinces, and regions of the PRC in the subject matters of autonomy, such as culture, art, education, science, public health, sports, religion, environment, economy and so forth, the power of autonomous areas to conduct such exchanges with foreign countries in these areas is also recognised in the LRNA (Article 42).

V APPLICATION OF A SINGLE ADMINISTRATION FOR THE TIBETAN NATIONALITY IN THE PRC

In order for the Tibetan nationality to develop and flourish with its distinct identity, culture and spiritual tradition through the exercise of self-government on the above mentioned basic Tibetan needs, the entire community, comprising all the areas currently designated by the PRC as Tibetan autonomous areas, should be under one single administrative entity. The current administrative divisions, by which Tibetan communities are ruled and administered under different provinces and regions of the PRC, foments fragmentation, promotes unequal development, and weakens the ability of the Tibetan nationality to protect and promote its common cultural, spiritual and ethnic identity. Rather than respecting the integrity of the nationality, this policy promotes its fragmentation and disregards the spirit of autonomy. Whereas the other major minority nationalities such as the Uighurs and Mongols govern themselves almost entirely within their respective single autonomous regions, Tibetans remain as if they were several minority nationalities instead of one.

Bringing all the Tibetans currently living in designated Tibetan autonomous areas within a single autonomous administrative unit is entirely in accordance with the constitutional principle contained in Article 4, also reflected in the LRNA (Article 2), that “regional autonomy is practiced in areas where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities.” The LRNA describes regional national autonomy as the “basic policy adopted by the Communist Party of China for the solution of the national question in China” and explains its meaning and intent in its Preface:

the minority nationalities, under unified state leadership, practice regional autonomy in areas where they live in concentrated communities and set up organs of self-government for the exercise of the power of autonomy.

Regional national autonomy embodies the state’s full respect for and guarantee of the right of the minority nationalities to administer their internal affairs and its adherence to the principle of equality, unity and common prosperity of all nationalities.

It is clear that the Tibetan nationality within the PRC will be able to exercise its right to govern itself and administer its internal affairs effectively only once it can do so through an organ of self-government that has jurisdiction over the Tibetan nationality as a whole.

The LRNA recognises the principle that boundaries of national autonomous areas may need to be modified. The need for the application of the fundamental principles of the Constitution on regional autonomy through respect of the integrity of the Tibetan nationality is not only totally legitimate, but the administrative changes that may be required to achieve this in no way violate constitutional principles. There are several precedents where this has been actually done.

VI THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF THE AUTONOMY

The extent to which the right to self-government and self-administration can be exercised on the preceding subject matters largely determines the genuine character of Tibetan autonomy. The task at hand is therefore to look into the manner in which autonomy can be regulated and exercised for it to effectively respond to the unique situation and basic needs of the Tibetan nationality.

The exercise of genuine autonomy would include the right of Tibetans to create their own regional government and government institutions and processes that are best suited to their needs and characteristics. It would require that the People’s Congress of the autonomous region have the power to legislate on all matters within the competencies of the region (that is the subject matters referred to above) and that other organs of the autonomous

government have the power to execute and administer decisions autonomously. Autonomy also entails representation and meaningful participation in national decision-making in the Central Government. Processes for effective consultation and close cooperation or joint decision-making between the Central Government and the regional government on areas of common interest also need to be in place for the autonomy to be effective.

A crucial element of genuine autonomy is the guarantee the Constitution or other laws provide that powers and responsibilities allocated to the autonomous region cannot be unilaterally abrogated or changed. This means that neither the Central Government nor the autonomous region’s government should be able, without the consent of the other, to change the basic features of the autonomy.

The parameters and specifics of such genuine autonomy for Tibet that respond to the unique needs and conditions of the Tibetan people and region should be set out in some detail in regulations on the exercise of autonomy, as provided for in Article 116 of the Constitution (enacted in LRNA Article 19) or, if it is found to be more appropriate, in a separate set of laws or regulations adopted for that purpose. The Constitution, including Article 31, provides the flexibility to adopt special laws to respond to unique situations such as the Tibetan one, while respecting the established social, economic and political system of the country.

The Constitution in Section VI provides for organs of self-government of national autonomous regions and acknowledges their power to legislate. Thus Article 116 (enacted in Article 19 of the LRNA) refers to their power to enact “separate regulations in light of the political, economic and cultural characteristics of the nationality or nationalities in the areas concerned.”

Similarly, the Constitution recognises the power of autonomous administration in a number of areas

(Article 117-120) as well as the power of autonomous governments to apply flexibility in implementing the laws and policies of the Central Government and higher state organs to suit the conditions of the autonomous area concerned (Article 115).

The above-mentioned legal provisions do contain significant limitations to the decision-making authority of the autonomous organs of government. But the Constitution nevertheless recognises the principle that organs of self-government make laws and policy decisions that address local needs and that these may be different from those adopted elsewhere, including by the Central Government.

Although the needs of the Tibetans are broadly consistent with the principles on autonomy contained in the Constitution, as we have shown, their realisation is impeded because of the existence of a number of problems, which makes the implementation of those principles today difficult or ineffective.

Implementation of genuine autonomy, for example, requires clear divisions of powers and responsibilities between the Central Government and the government of the autonomous region with respect to subject matter competency. Currently there is no such clarity and the scope of legislative powers of autonomous regions is both uncertain and severely restricted. Thus, whereas the Constitution intends to recognise the special need for autonomous regions to legislate on many matters that affect them, the requirements of Article 116 for prior approval at the highest level of the Central Government - by the Standing

Committee of National People's Congress (NPC) - inhibit the implementation of this principle of autonomy. In reality, it is only autonomous regional congresses that expressly require such approval, while the congresses of ordinary (not autonomous) provinces of the PRC do not need prior permission and merely report the passage of regulations to the Standing Committee of the NPC "for the record" (Article 100).

The exercise of autonomy is further subject to a considerable number of laws and regulations, according to Article 115 of the Constitution. Certain laws effectively restrict the autonomy of the autonomous region, while others are not always consistent with one another. The result is that the exact scope of the autonomy is unclear and is not fixed, since it is unilaterally changed with the enactment of laws and regulations are higher levels of the state, and even by changes in policy. There is also no adequate process for consultation or for settling differences that arise between the organs of the Central Government and of the regional government with respect to the scope and exercise of autonomy. In practice, the resulting uncertainty limits the initiative of regional authorities and impedes the exercise of genuine autonomy by Tibetans today.

We do not at this stage wish to enter into details regarding these and other impediments to the exercise of genuine autonomy today by Tibetans, but mention them by way of example so that these may be addressed in the appropriate manner in our dialogue in the future. We will continue to study the Constitution and other relevant

legal provisions and, when appropriate, will be pleased to provide further analysis of these issues, as we understand them.

VII THE WAY FORWARD

As stated at the beginning of this memorandum, our intention is to explore how the needs of the Tibetan nationality can be met within the framework of PRC since we believe these needs are consistent with the principles of the Constitution on autonomy. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama stated on a number of occasions, we have no hidden agenda. We have no intention at all of using any agreement on genuine autonomy as stepping stone for separation from the PRC.

The objective of the Tibetan Government in Exile is to represent the interests of the Tibetan people and to speak on their behalf. Therefore, it will no longer be needed and will be dissolved once an agreement is reached between us. In fact, His Holiness has reiterated his decision not to accept any political office in Tibet at any time in the future. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, nevertheless, plans to use all his personal influence to ensure such an agreement would have the legitimacy necessary to obtain the support of the Tibetan people.

Given these strong commitments, we propose that the next step in this process be the agreement to start serious discussions on the points raised in this memorandum. For this purpose we propose that we discuss and agree on a mutually agreeable mechanism or mechanisms and a timetable to do so effectively.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Address to the Plenary Session of the European Parliament

By His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama

Your Excellency, Mr. President, Honorable Members of the Parliament, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour to speak before you today and I thank you for your invitation. Wherever I go, my main

interest or commitment is in the promotion of human values such as warm heartedness this is what I consider the key factor for a happy life at the individual level, family level and community level. In our modern times, it seems that insufficient attention is paid to these inner values. Promoting

them is therefore my number one commitment.

My second interest or commitment is the promotion of inter-religious harmony. We accept the need for pluralism in politics and democracy, yet we often seem more hesitant about the plurality

of faiths and religions. Despite their different concepts and philosophies, all major religious traditions bear the same messages of love, compassion, tolerance, contentment and self-discipline. They are also similar in having the potential to help human beings lead happier lives. So these two are my main interests and commitments.

Of course the issue of Tibet is also of particular concern to me and I have a special responsibility to the people of Tibet, who continue to place their hope and trust in me during this most difficult period in the history of Tibet. The welfare of the Tibetan people is my constant motivation and I consider myself to be their free spokesperson in exile.

The last time I had the privilege to address the European Parliament (EP), on October 24, 2001, I stated, “despite some development and economic progress, Tibet continues to face fundamental problems of survival. Serious violations of human rights are widespread throughout Tibet and are often the result of policies of racial and cultural discrimination. Yet, they are only the symptoms and consequences of a deeper problem. The Chinese authorities view Tibet’s distinct culture and religion as the source of threat of separation. Hence as a result of deliberate policies an entire people with its unique culture and identity are facing the threat of extinction”.

Since March this year, Tibetans from all walks of life and across the entire Tibetan plateau demonstrated against the oppressive and discriminatory policies of the Chinese authorities in Tibet. With full awareness of the imminent danger to their lives, Tibetans from all across Tibet known as Cholka-Sum (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo), young and old, men and women, monastic and lay people, believer and non-believers, including students, came together to spontaneously and courageously express their anguish, dissatisfaction and genuine grievances at the policies of the Chinese government. I have been deeply saddened by the loss of life, both

Tibetan and Chinese, and immediately appealed to the Chinese authorities for restraint. Since the Chinese authorities have blamed me for orchestrating the recent events in Tibet, I have made repeated appeals for an independent and respected international body to conduct a thorough investigation into the matter, including inviting them to Dharamsala, India. If the Chinese government has any evidence to support such serious allegations, they must disclose it to the world.

Sadly, the Chinese authorities have resorted to brutal methods to deal with the situation in Tibet, despite appeals by many world leaders, NGOs and personalities of international standing to avoid violence and show restraint. In the process, a large number of Tibetans have been killed, thousands injured and detained. There are many whose fate remains completely unknown. Even as I stand here before you, in many parts of Tibet there is a huge presence of armed police and military. In many areas Tibetans continue to suffer under a state of de-facto martial law. There is an atmosphere of angst and intimidation. Tibetans in Tibet live in a constant state of fear of being the next to be arrested. With no international observers, journalists or even tourists allowed into many parts of Tibet, I am deeply worried about the fate of the Tibetans. Presently, the Chinese authorities have a completely free hand in Tibet. It is as though Tibetans face a death sentence, a sentence aimed at wiping out the spirit of the Tibetan people.

Many honorable members of the EP are well aware of my consistent efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution to the Tibet problem through dialogue and negotiations. In this spirit, in 1988 at the European Parliament in Strasbourg I presented a formal proposal for negotiations that does not call for separation and independence of Tibet. Since then, our relations with the Chinese government have taken many twists and turns. After an interruption of nearly 10 years, in 2002 we re-established direct contact with the Chinese leadership. Extensive

discussions have been held between my envoys and representatives of the Chinese leadership. In these discussions we have put forth clearly the aspirations of the Tibetan people. The essence of my Middle Way Approach is to secure genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people within the scope of the Constitution of the PRC.

During the seventh round of talks in Beijing on 1st and 2nd July this year, the Chinese side invited us to present our views on the form of genuine autonomy. Accordingly, on 31st October 2008 we presented to the Chinese leadership the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People. Our memorandum puts forth our position on genuine autonomy and how the basic needs of the Tibetan nationality for autonomy and self-government can be met. We have presented these suggestions with the sole purpose of making a sincere effort to address the real problems in Tibet. We were confident that given goodwill, the issues raised in our memorandum could be implemented.

Unfortunately, the Chinese side has rejected our memorandum in its totality, branding our suggestions as an attempt at “semi-independence” and “independence in disguise” and, for that reason, unacceptable. Moreover, the Chinese side is accusing us of “ethnic cleansing” because our memorandum calls for the recognition of the right of autonomous areas “to regulate the residence, settlement and employment or economic activities of persons who wish to move to Tibetan areas from other parts of the PRC.”

We have made it clear in our memorandum that our intention is not to expel non-Tibetans. Our concern is the induced mass movement of primarily Han, but also some other nationalities, into many Tibetan areas, which in turn marginalizes the native Tibetan population and threatens Tibet’s fragile natural environment. Major demographic changes that result from massive migration will lead to the assimilation rather than integration of the Tibetan nationality into the PRC and gradually

lead to the extinction of the distinct culture and identity of the Tibetan people.

The cases of the peoples of Manchuria, Inner Mongolia and East Turkestan in the PRC are clear examples of the devastating consequences of a massive population transfer of the dominant Han nationality upon the minority nationalities. Today, the language, script and culture of the Manchu people have become extinct. In Inner Mongolia today, only 20% are native Mongolians out of a total population of 24 millions.

Despite the assertions by some hard-line Chinese officials to the contrary, from the copies of our memorandum made available to you it is clear that we have sincerely addressed the concerns of the Chinese government about the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the PRC. The memorandum is self-explanatory. I would welcome your comments and suggestions.

I take this opportunity to appeal to the European Union and the Parliament to use your good offices, sparing no efforts, to persuade the Chinese leadership to resolve the issue of Tibet through earnest negotiations for the common good of the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

While I firmly reject the use of violence as a means in our struggle, we certainly have the right to explore all other political options available to us. In the spirit of democracy, I called for a Special Meeting of Tibetans in exile to discuss the state of Tibetan people and the state of the issue of Tibet and the future course of our movement. The meeting took place from November 17-22, 2008 in Dharamsala, India. The failure of the Chinese leadership to respond positively to our initiatives has reaffirmed the suspicion held by many Tibetans that the Chinese government has no interest whatsoever in any kind of mutually acceptable solution. Many Tibetans continue to believe that the Chinese leadership is bent on the forceful and complete assimilation and absorption of Tibet into China. They

therefore call for the complete independence of Tibet. Others advocate the right to self-determination and a referendum in Tibet. Despite these different views, the delegates to the Special Meeting unanimously resolved to empower me to decide the best approach, in accordance with the prevailing situation and the changes taking place in Tibet, China and the wider world. I will study the suggestions made by about 600 leaders and delegates from Tibetan communities around the world, including views we are able to gather from a cross section of Tibetans in Tibet.

I am a staunch believer in democracy. Consequently, I have consistently encouraged Tibetans in exile to follow the democratic process. Today, the Tibetan refugee community may be among the few refugee communities that have established all three pillars of democracy: legislature, judiciary and executive. In 2001, we took another great stride in the process of democratization by having the chairman of the Kashag (cabinet) of the Tibetan Administration in exile elected by popular vote.

I have always maintained that ultimately the Tibetan people must be able to decide the future of Tibet. As Pandit Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, stated in the Indian Parliament on December 7, 1950: "The last voice in regard to Tibet should be the voice of the people of Tibet and nobody else."

The issue of Tibet has dimensions and implications that go well beyond the fate of six million Tibetans. Tibet is situated between India and China. For centuries Tibet acted as a peaceful buffer zone separating the two most populated countries on earth. However, in 1962, only a few years after the so-called "peaceful liberation of Tibet" the world witnessed the first ever war between the two Asian giants. This clearly shows the importance of a just and peaceful resolution of the Tibet question in ensuring lasting and genuine trust and friendship between the two most powerful nations of Asia. The Tibetan issue is also related to Tibet's fragile

environment, which scientists have concluded, has an impact on much of Asia involving billions of people. The Tibetan plateau is the source of many of Asia's greatest rivers. Tibet's glaciers are the earth's largest ice mass outside the Poles. Some environmentalists today refer to Tibet as the Third Pole. And, if the present warming trend continues the Indus River might dry up within the next 15-20 years. Furthermore, Tibet's cultural heritage is based on Buddhism's principle of compassion and non-violence. Thus, it concerns not just the six million Tibetans, but also the over 13 million people across the Himalayas, Mongolia and in the Republics of Kalmykia and Buryat in Russia, including a growing number of Chinese brothers and sisters who share this culture, which has the potential to contribute to a peaceful and harmonious world.

My maxim has always been to hope for the best and to prepare for the worst. With this in mind, I have counseled the Tibetans in exile to make more rigorous efforts in educating the younger generation of Tibetans, in strengthening our cultural and religious institutions in exile with the aim of preserving our rich cultural heritage, and in expanding and strengthening the democratic institutions and civil society among the Tibetan refugee community. One of the main objectives of our exile community is to preserve our cultural heritage where there is the freedom to do so and to be the free voice of our captive people inside Tibet. The tasks and challenges we face are daunting. As a refugee community, our resources are naturally limited. We Tibetans also need to face the reality that our exile may last for a longer time. I would therefore be grateful to the European Union for assistance in our educational and cultural endeavors.

I have no doubt that the principled and consistent engagement of the EP with China will impact the process of change that is already taking place in China. The global trend is towards more openness, freedom, democracy and respect for human rights. Sooner or later, China will have to follow the world trend. In this context, I wish to commend the EP for

awarding the prestigious Sakharov Prize to the Chinese human rights defender Hu Jia. It is an important signal as we watch China rapidly moving forward.

Chinese intellectuals openly criticized the harsh crackdown of Tibetan demonstrations by the Chinese government in March this year and

on the issue of Tibet have helped greatly to highlight the plight of the Tibetan people and to raise the awareness of the issue of Tibet amongst the public and in



With its newfound status, China is poised to play an important leading role on the world stage. In order to fulfill this role, I believe it is vital for China to have openness, transparency, rule of law and freedom of information and thought. There is no doubt that the attitudes and policies of members of the international community towards China will impact the course of the change taking place in China as much as domestic events and developments.

In contrast to the continued extremely rigid attitude of the Chinese government towards Tibet, fortunately among the Chinese people – especially among the informed and educated Chinese circles – there is a growing understanding and sympathy for the plight of the Tibetan people. Although my faith in the Chinese leadership with regard to Tibet is becoming thinner and thinner, my faith in the Chinese people remains unshaken. I have therefore been advising the Tibetan people to make concerted efforts to reach out to the Chinese people.

called for restraint and dialogue in addressing the problems in Tibet. Chinese lawyers offered publicly to represent arrested Tibetan demonstrators at trials. Today, there is growing understanding, sympathy, support and solidarity among our Chinese brothers and sisters for the difficult situation of the Tibetans and their legitimate aspirations. This is most encouraging. I take this opportunity to thank the brave Chinese brothers and sisters for their solidarity.

I also thank the European Parliament for the consistent display of concern and support for the just and non-violent Tibetan struggle. Your sympathy, support and solidarity have always been a great source of inspiration and encouragement to the Tibetan people, both in and outside of Tibet. I would like to express special thanks to the members of the Tibet Inter-Group of the EP, who have made the tragedy of the Tibetan people not only a focus of their political work but also a cause of their hearts. The many resolutions of the EP

governments here in Europe, and all around the world

The consistency of the European Parliament's support for Tibet has not gone unnoticed in China. I regret where this has caused some tensions in EU-China relations. However, I wish to share with you my sincere hope and belief that the future of Tibet and China will move beyond mistrust to a relationship based on mutual respect, trust and recognition of common interest – irrespective of the current very grim situation inside Tibet and the deadlock in the dialogue process between my envoys and the Chinese leadership. I have no doubt that your continued expressions of concern and support for Tibet will, in the long run, have a positive impact and help create the necessary political environment for a peaceful resolution of the issue of Tibet. Your continued support is, therefore, critical.

I thank you for the honor to share my thoughts with you.

Brussels, 4 December 2008

First Special General Meeting of Tibetans in exile convened Under Article 59 of the Charter

The historic special general meeting of the Tibetan people unanimously reaffirmed Tibetan people's faith and allegiance in His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to continue to follow the Middle-Way Approach to engage China in finding a peaceful resolution of the Tibetan issue.

It was decided that the Tibetan people will remain steadfast to the principles of non-violence in all its activities to resolve the issue of Tibet under the leadership of the Central Tibetan Administration.

The meeting was convened by His Holiness the Dalai Lama taking into consideration particularly the present critical situation in Tibet and the lack of positive response from the Chinese leadership to resolve the issue of Tibet.

"The meeting reaffirmed our faith and allegiance in the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to out rightly refute the Chinese government's claim that His Holiness and the Central Tibetan Administration cannot represent the Tibetan people," Mr Karma Chopel, speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, said in his closing remarks.

"The envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama have challenged the Chinese leadership to hold a referendum of the Tibetan people if they wanted to know whom they consider their sole representative and leader," Mr Chopel said.

"We affirmed that His Holiness and the Central Tibetan Administration are the sole representative of the Tibetan people," the speaker added.

The special general meeting also strongly appealed to His Holiness the Dalai Lama not to take semi retirement

or retirement and to continue to lead the Tibetan people.

"The Tibetan delegates also called upon the Chinese government to stop criticizing and making baseless allegations against His Holiness the Dalai Lama, as it not only hurts the sentiments of the six million Tibetan people, but also many Buddhist followers including many Chinese people who follow Buddhism," the speaker said.

"It also hurts the feelings the all those people who have respect and love for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his untiring work for world peace and universal responsibility," he said.

The delegates lauded the courage and determination of Tibetans living in Tibet for expressing their suggestions and opinions to find a way forward to resolve the issue of Tibet under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The meeting called upon the Kashag to terminate the ongoing talks with the Chinese leadership if the Chinese government does not agree to the demands and reciprocate positively to the overtures of the Tibetan people.

Some of the delegates expressed frustrations over the Chinese government's lack of positive response to the mutually beneficial solution of the Middle-Way Approach, discrediting His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the continued repressive measures being undertaken in Tibet.

The delegates unanimously agreed that the uprising of the Tibetan people across the traditional provinces of Tibet in March this year is a call against the wrong policies of the Chinese government and Tibetans bear no ill feelings against the Chinese people.

Out rightly rejecting the Chinese government's decree on getting its approval in selecting the reincarnation of spiritual leaders, the delegates resolutely called upon the Chinese government to uphold and follow the Tibetan traditional method of recognizing the reincarnation of Tibetan spiritual leaders.

While addressing the gathering, Kalon Tripa Prof Samdhong Rinpoche said we have made our demands clear to the Chinese government by presenting the "memorandum on genuine autonomy for Tibet." We will not make any further compromise on our demands outlined in the memorandum, he added.

Kalon Tripa reiterated that the main issue of contention between China and Tibet is only the welfare of the six million Tibetan people. It is not at all related to the personal status of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; nor is it related to the status of a few Tibetans who are close to him. We would like to once again make it very categorical that concerning them that we do not have a single issue to be discussed with the People's Republic of China.

Kalon Tripa encouraged the Tibetan people to put concerted effort on the proposed 11 model action plans, broadly categorised as educational, social, economic, religion and culture.

These plans include engaging in meritorious actions to enhance the collective merit of the Tibetan people; establishing close ties with all the people who have cultural, religious and linguistic affinities with the Tibetan people; sustaining Tibetan language and culture by providing an adequate level of modern education to the children; providing help for the education and health care of Tibetans in Tibet; spreading awareness on the current state of Tibet and clarifying

misunderstandings and misinterpretations - including to the Chinese based in the Mainland China; preserving the unity and harmony of Tibetan community in exile; and others.

Kalon Tripa expressed his heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to all the national and international press, documentary filmmakers, for extensive coverage of the special meeting and taking special interest and initiative on the issue of Tibet.

He also thanked the Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat for putting concerted effort in successfully organising the special general meeting on Tibet.

The delegates expressed their gratitude to governments, parliaments, groups and individuals, and especially the government and people of India for their continued support for the Tibetan people and the Tibetan cause.

581 delegates representing Tibetan community based in 19 different countries – US, Canada, Switzerland, England, Australia, France, Belgium, Taiwan, Russia, Japan, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Hungary, Nepal, Bhutan and India – attended the six-day special general meeting on Tibet, from 17–22 November held in Dharamsala.

Recommendations of the First Special General Meeting

The letter from the office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressed jointly to the Speakers and the members of the Kashag (Cabinet), dated 11 September 2008, stated, “In order to hold an extensive discussion and debate with regard to the Tibetan cause in the light of recent emergency events in Tibet and the international scenario, His Holiness the Dalai Lama wishes to convene a Special General Meeting around November or December of this year under article 59 of the Charter. Timing and participants of the meeting should be planned at the earliest by the Parliament and the office of His

Holiness the Dalai Lama should be informed accordingly.”

Since the Parliament was in session at that time, the programme of the Special General Meeting was prepared jointly by the Parliament and Kashag and was unanimously adopted after thorough discussions for His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s approval. His Holiness approved the same.

Accordingly, the first session of this historic first Special General Meeting was inaugurated in Dharamsala on the twentieth day of the Ninth Month of the Tibetan Royal Year of 2135, 17 November 2008. Special invitees were the Supreme Justice Commissioner and the other two Justice Commissioners of the Supreme Justice Commission, Joint Chairman of the Public Service Commission and Election Commission, Auditor General of the Audit Commission, eight Kalons including Kalon Tripa, 41 members of the Parliament; 18 former Kalons, 32 former members of Parliament, 66 Central Tibetan Administration staff, one Special Envoy and an Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 10 Representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama stationed abroad, 78 representatives of the Local Assembly of Tibetan settlements across India, Nepal and Bhutan and of the general public where there is no local assembly, 60 representatives of regional Freedom Movement Committee, 32 representatives of Tibetan Associations abroad, 20 representatives from various NGOs, 58 representatives of the heads of the Tibetan schools; 30 monk and nun representatives from four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and Bon, 11 representatives from various autonomous institutions, and 48 volunteers from India, Nepal, Bhutan and abroad who are involved in the Tibetan cause. In total 560 participants from 19 different countries gathered together at the Tibetan Children’s Village (TCV) Hall for the inaugural session.

The two Speakers and the Kalon Tripa

led the procession carrying the photograph of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Hall amid religious chanting by the monks of the Namgyal Monastery, followed by youths in ceremonial dresses of the three traditional regions of Tibet. Thereafter, the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts sang the Tibetan national anthem, followed by one minute silence to pay tribute to the memory of all those brave men and women, specially those who have suffered and continue to suffer the brutal repression of the Chinese Government after the widespread protest movement across three regions of Tibet since 10 March this year.

The Speaker, Mr. Karma Chopel, gave the inaugural address to the first Special General Meeting. After Kalon Tripa, Prof Samdhong Rinpoche Lobsang Tenzin’s address, all the participants were divided into 15 sub-committees and held extensive discussions for three and half days at Gangchen Kyishong, the seat of Central Tibetan Administration on the specific agenda of “the Tibetan cause in the light of recent emergency events in Tibet and international scenario”. Apart from these discussions, opinions were also received from Tibet, Tibetan settlements, organisations, educational centres and individuals.

On 21 November, once again participants gathered at the TCV Hall and the Chairman of each sub-committee presented his report of the result of each discussion group. On 22 November 2008, at eight in the morning, all the Chairmen of sub-committees and members the organising committee of the Special General Meeting of the Parliament’s Standing Committee met to prepare the summary of recommendations of the 15 groups. By 1:30 in the afternoon, the final recommendations, which follow, were adopted after presentation to the plenary body.

With regard to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people:

1. His Holiness the Dalai Lama was

unanimously enthroned by the people and deities of Tibet as the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet. This was welcomed by Tibet's neighbours, including China which is a clear indication of His Holiness being the undisputed spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people. This also means that the Central Tibetan Administration is the sole and legitimate representative of the Tibetans in and outside Tibet, which the CTA has inherited from many centuries. This historical experience of the Tibetan people proves the baselessness of the recent rhetoric and propaganda of the Chinese government, which says that His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration have no right to represent Tibet and the Tibetan people. The Tibetans in and outside Tibet strongly oppose such remarks.

2. We strongly urge His Holiness the Dalai Lama through this Special General Meeting with the deepest respect, to continue to shoulder the responsibility of the spiritual and temporal leadership of the Tibetan struggle at this crucial period by not stating even a word of semi-retirement and retirement. As the pledge of successive reincarnations of the Dalai Lama, there is none other than His Holiness to continue to protect the people of snow-land, Tibet.

3. Through this Special General Meeting, we strongly urge the Chinese Government to immediately stop the baseless and unimaginable accusations against His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This has made an incurable wound in the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people in and outside Tibet, particularly in all the followers of the Tibetan Buddhism, including the Chinese Buddhists and in the justice-and-truth-loving people all over the world. This has also contributed to ethnic tension between Tibetans and Chinese thus damaging the long-term interests of unity and co-operation amongst the nationalities.

With regard to the policy and stance of the CTA:

1. Based on the suggestions received to this Special General Meeting from in and

outside Tibet and after frank and candid discussions held by the delegates in regard to the future policy of Tibet, it came to a unanimous decision to straightly follow the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama based on the prevailing situation from time to time. Majority decision to continue the policy of Middle-Way-Approach. Besides that, looking at the Chinese Government's behavior in the past, views to stop sending envoys and to pursue complete independence or self-determination if no result comes out in the near future were also strongly expressed.

2. The Middle-Way-Approach, independence or self-determination, whatever is pursued in the Tibetan struggle, we shall not deviate from the path of non-violence to achieve our aims.

With regard to the Government of the PRC and Chinese people:

1. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration in an effort to resolve the Sino-Tibetan problem, by adopting the Middle-Way-Approach, a memorandum on genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people, within the framework the constitution of the PRC, was recently presented to the Chinese Government. Leave alone giving positive response, the PRC Government rejected every single clause of the memorandum and accused the CTA of seeking independence, semi-independence or independence in disguised form. Therefore, the dialogue process did not produce any substantive result to the Sino-Tibetan problem and the whole responsibility of this failure is solely with the PRC government.

2. The cause for the recent widespread demonstrations in the Tibet is the outburst of long pent-up dissatisfaction and suffering of Tibetans. The reasons for this outburst are due to harsh and severe policies adopted towards Tibet and Tibetans for all these years since China's occupation of Tibet. The reasons for

the continuing Tibetan protests stem from the systematic plundering of Tibet's natural resources, the annihilation of Tibetan tradition and custom, specifically forcing Tibetans in the so-called patriotic education, a campaign which forces Tibetans to vilify His Holiness. The Tibetan protests continue because of the policy of large-scale population transfer of Chinese into Tibet, which further undermines the already-worsened state of Tibetan religion and culture and causes the destruction of Tibet's ecology. The protests also took place because of violations of all fundamental human rights.

3. Because PRC had alleged that they have evidences to prove that recent unrest in Tibet have been 'triggered, instigated, planned and orchestrated' by the 'Dalai clique', His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration insisted that an international investigating body be allowed to travel to Tibet to verify the PRC's claims. And that delegates from China can also visit Dharamsala to investigate and validate their allegation. However, the PRC did not have the gumption to accept both these suggestions. Moreover, PRC could not even bring forth one single evidences in support of their claims before the world audience. This has clearly pointed to the fact that demonstrations and protests in Tibet since March this year are because of repressive policies adopted by PRC towards Tibet and Tibetans since its occupation. Therefore, the PRC government should accept responsibilities for their mistakes.

4. This is to reiterate, through this Special General Meeting, that the cause of Tibetan struggle is a struggle for the rights of Tibetans. It is a struggle against the wrong policies of PRC towards the Tibet and Tibetans. The Tibetan struggle is in no way to wage against Chinese people, as it is being portrayed by the PRC.

5. In order to destroy Tibetan Buddhism, the PRC instituted new regulations on

measures for the recognition of incarnate lamas or 'Living Buddhas'. We totally oppose any interference by a government which is avowedly atheist to interfere in spiritual affairs for political advantage. We strongly oppose the 'Patriotic Education' campaign that is being increasingly forced down in various monasteries in Tibet.

With regard to improving and enhancing institution and project works:

A 'Report' will be compiled shortly by the Secretariat of the Parliament on suggestions and feedbacks received from Tibetans inside and outside Tibet, as well as recommendations of respective groups, in carrying out administrative tasks, tasks related to education, information broadcasting, health, and finance. This Report will be distributed to concerned departments for their information and action.

Gratitude and appreciation for all the supporters for the Tibet Cause:

This is to sincerely thank, through this Special General Meeting, all Tibet Support Groups all over the world, Governments, general public, Parliaments, other international organizations, and specifically the people and Government of India, for all their consistent support for and solidarity with cause of Tibet and Tibetans during all these years.

On behalf of all the participants of the first Special General Meeting Twenty-fifth Day of the Ninth Month of the Tibetan Royal Year of 2135 22 November 2008

Mr. Karma Chopel, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

Mrs. Dolma Gyari, Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

N.B. Translated from the Tibetan original. Please consider the Tibetan as authentic and authoritative.

Special International Tibet Support Groups Meeting

The Special International Tibet Support Groups Meeting, held in India, from 29 November – 1 December 2008, concluded with a strong call to action, condemnation of the PRC's intransigent approach on Tibet, and an expression of solidarity with the Tibetan people at a time of crisis.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama had asked Tibet supporters attending the Special International TSG Meeting, called by the Core Group for Tibetan Cause, India, to "provide suggestions to our elected leadership on the best possible course for the realisation of the Tibetan people's fundamental aspirations". The gathering followed the Special General Meeting of the Tibetan People held in Dharamsala, base of the Tibetan government in exile, from 17-22 November.

The Special TSG meeting opened with one minute's silence for those who have died in Tibet, particularly since the uprising from 10 March 2008 onwards, and for those killed in the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

More than 100 delegates from over 30 countries expressed a sense of urgency due to the brutal crackdown in Tibet and the Chinese government's recent propaganda offensive following talks with the Dalai Lama's representatives. Continued commitment to a non-violent approach and support for the Tibetan people's right to self-determination was agreed.

Outrage was expressed at the Chinese government's hardline stance against the Dalai Lama, with particular reference to lack of progress in talks with Chinese officials. Participants pledged to support Tibetans in seeking a new framework for engagement. They welcomed the fact that the Memorandum of Genuine Autonomy had been made public by the Dalai Lama's representatives prior to the Special Meeting in Dharamsala in

November.

During lively and intense debate, many delegates pressed for the Tibetan government in exile to reassess the Middle Way approach (which currently seeks genuine autonomy within the framework of the PRC) in favour of independence if there is no substantive improvement in the Tibetans' situation in the near future and sincere engagement from the Chinese side.

Delegates to the Special International TSG Meeting reaffirmed their commitment to putting the needs and wishes of Tibetans in Tibet first. They expressed heartfelt admiration for the great courage of the Tibetan people in their peaceful resistance across the plateau since March. The protests are a rejection by the Tibetan people of Chinese rule in Tibet, expressing a resentment that has built up over nearly 60 years since China's invasion and reached a breaking point. Through their dissent, Tibetans are conveying the message that the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile represent their interests, and not the Chinese government. The meeting expressed profound concern over the continuing suffering of the Tibetan people, now under *de facto* martial law, and the delegates' solidarity with political prisoners and the families of the hundreds of disappeared.

The meeting welcomed the recent Special General Meeting of the Tibetan People, which provided opportunities for diverse opinions from the Tibetan community to be openly expressed and discussed. This was an important democratic forum that should be continued in order to strengthen Tibetan institutions and civil society in exile. Delegates noted that while the meeting was held in exile, efforts were made to ascertain the views of Tibetans in Tibet, despite an intense climate of fear and Chinese government restrictions. The Special General Meeting re-affirmed the solidarity of Tibetans from across the Tibetan

plateau, just as Tibetans in Tibet from all three provinces (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo) have demonstrated strong unity in their assertions of Tibetan national, cultural and religious identity.

Delegates highlighted the 21st century relevance to the world of the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual tradition and culture, especially in terms of offering alternative ways forward for conflict resolution.

The meeting re-affirmed TSG recognition of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile as the pre-eminent and legitimate representatives of the Tibetan people. Delegates agreed to continue to work to achieve formal recognition of the Tibetan government in exile in the international community. Delegates recognised the importance of preserving the institution of the Dalai Lama, and acknowledged that the Dalai Lama's leadership extends to millions of Buddhists worldwide and peoples of many different countries in the Himalayas, Mongolia and beyond.

Delegates agreed to intensify their efforts in order to bring an end to the injustices in Tibet. Advocacy work with stake-holder governments in the region was discussed, including protection of vulnerable Tibetans in Nepal at a time when the Chinese government has stepped up its influence in the region. Tibet is of tremendous geopolitical significance. Delegates also agreed that awareness must be raised, particularly in Asia as a matter of urgency, about Tibet's critical importance as the earth's 'third pole' and a watershed of Asia's great rivers affecting millions of people.

It was noted that the Chinese political campaigns have led to further unrest and increased tensions between Chinese and Tibetans. There is a risk that this could intensify further in the build-up to the 50th anniversary of the 10th March uprising in 2009. There was particular commitment at the meeting for developing new strategies for targeted outreach to the Chinese people, particularly given the upsurge in anti-Tibetan sentiment and Chinese nationalism as a result of distorted

representations of the situation in Tibet by the Chinese government.

Specific suggestions and recommendations on advocacy, monitoring, campaign action, Chinese outreach and the dialogue process will be presented to the Tibetan government in exile following the meeting.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Message to the Special International TSG Meeting

I am very happy that a special meeting of the Tibet Support Groups from different parts of the world is taking place in India. I would like to thank all the participants who have come from great distances to discuss how the Tibet movement can be advanced so that the suffering of the Tibetan people can be ended.

The Tibetan issue is a moral and just issue and, as I always maintain, we do not consider you all as being pro-Tibet. Rather, you are all pro-justice. The Tibetan issue is also not merely the issue of rights of the Tibetan people, but has an international aspect to it. Tibet's cultural heritage is based on Buddhism's principles of Ahimsa and Karuna. Thus, it concerns not just the six million Tibetans, but the over 13 million people in the world who share this culture, which has the potential to contribute to a peaceful and harmonious world. Secondly, the Tibetan issue is also related to the issue of Tibet's fragile environment, which, scientists have concluded, has an impact on the broader region involving billions of people. Thirdly, the Tibetan issue has implication on the two large countries of India and China. A meaningful solution of the Tibetan issue will help bring peace between these two countries, which together have over one-thirds of the world population.

Our democratically-elected political leadership will brief you on the outcome of the Special General Meeting of the Tibetan people that was held recently. I had suggested the convening of such a meeting so that our elected leadership is fully briefed on the diversity of the thinking of the Tibetan people,

particularly in view of the deteriorating situation in Tibet and the present international scenario, as well as on the different ways to bring progress in the cause of the Tibetan people. I hope you will all have a frank and candid discussion on the future course of action of the Tibet movement, based on the recommendations made by the Special General Meeting of the Tibetan people. I would like you to provide suggestions to our elected leadership on the best possible course for the realisation of the Tibetan people's fundamental aspirations.

Your meeting is taking place when the Tibetan people and society in Tibet are passing through a very challenging period. The Tibetan people courageously expressed their discontentment with and vented their long-simmering resentment against the policies of the government of the PRC from March this year. Any government that puts the interest of all its people first would have realized the gravity of the issue and come up with measures to remedy the situation on the ground in Tibet. However, rather than taking such a step, the Chinese government completely ignored the Tibetan cries for justice and equality, and cracked down upon the Tibetan people as a whole. The situation in Tibet continues to be grim with a huge presence of police and military in many towns and cities. In fact, in several parts of Tibet, a de facto martial law rule has been in force and Tibetans are living in a state of siege. Thus, the life of the Tibetan people in Tibet today has become very critical and they need all the assistance our supporters can render.

As you are all aware I have made sincere efforts to find a mutually satisfactory solution on the Tibetan issue with the Chinese leadership. My envoys have categorically conveyed to the Chinese leadership my commitment to the Middle-Way Approach that takes into consideration the aspirations of the Tibetan people as well as the concerns for the unity and stability of the People's Republic of China. I had hoped that the renewed contact that we had with the Chinese leadership since 2002 would lead to such a solution. My

envoys presented the Chinese leadership at the latest eighth round of talks earlier this month with a clear outline of the basic needs of the Tibetan people, rights that are enshrined in China's own Constitution and statutes. Unfortunately, my envoys have come back clearly finding doors to any possible reasonable talks being closed. The Chinese Government only wants talk about my personal wellbeing." The Tibetan issue concerns the welfare of

the Tibetan people as a whole and not at all about my person. As such the Tibetan people collectively should think over the issue of the common good of Tibet and decide accordingly. But it is becoming clear that the voice of the Tibetan people alone is not sufficient to persuade the Chinese leadership to change its rigid position and policies. I would like to seek continued effort by the international community to help alleviate the suffering of the Tibetan people. In this

effort, our support groups all over the world have key role to play.

I want to conclude by expressing my profound gratitude to all members of the Tibet support groups who have stood steadfast by the Tibetan people in our time of need. You have been a significant source of support to us and I have no doubt that you need will not just continue, but even strengthen, your efforts in the coming months.

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's message to the Chinese people on the occasion of the Chinese New Year

On the occasion of the Chinese New Year, or the Spring Festival, I extend my affectionate greetings to all our Chinese brothers and sisters across the globe, including those living in Mainland China.

The past year witnessed many developments throughout the world and particularly in China, at times worrying us while at other times filling our hearts with happiness. Besides having to bear the brunt of natural disasters and other problems that hit the country, China also had the proud moments like hosting the world's greatest sporting event, the Olympic Games. The year that ended is, therefore, marked with great changes taking place everywhere.

These days, due to the global economic meltdown, the people of the world in general, and of the developing countries in particular, are plunged into an abyss of anxiety and suffering. To pray for the end of all sufferings of humanity, as well as for their happiness and well-being, is a responsibility that rests on all believers.

Besides having a long history of over 5000 years and a splendidly rich cultural heritage, China is also the most populous nation in the world. Moreover, it is emerging as a super power in terms of political, economic and military might. However, China cannot perform the responsibility of a

super power in this modern and progressive world if there is no freedom, rule of law and transparency in the country.

President Hu Jintao's policy of creating a harmonious society is indeed laudable. Such a policy is indispensable for China as well, if it were to make a mark globally. Harmonious society should, however, come about through mutual trust, friendship and justice. It cannot be brought about by brute force and autocracy.

Not only should the Chinese citizens have economic facilities, but they should also enjoy the freedom of conscience, education and to know what is actually happening around the world. These freedoms are indispensable for human societies. If - in this fast-changing modern world - one does not keep abreast of the daily happenings around the globe, then it goes without saying that one will be naturally left behind. In China today, popular news outlets such as television, radio and Internet - including the international news services like the BBC and CNN are blocked - thus preventing its people from knowing the true information about the world's events. I am immensely disappointed by such negative actions of the Chinese government, which greatly hamper the fundamental rights as well as the short and long-term benefits of the Chinese people.

The 21st century is regarded as a century of information revolution. And yet some countries of the world, which includes China, impose restrictions on the free flow of information. Such actions are anachronistic and hence there is no way that these can be sustained in the long run. Therefore, I believe that China too will soon become more liberal in terms of disseminating and sharing information.

Last year, many Chinese intellectuals came out with a number of articles and other campaign activities, calling for freedom, democracy, justice, equality and human rights in China. Particularly in a recent development, we saw an increasing number of people from all walks of life signing up to an important document called the Charter '08. This is indicative of the fact that the Chinese people, including the intellectuals, are beginning to demonstrate their deep yearnings for more openness and freedom in their country. It is, therefore, a matter for all of us to take pride in.

While once again extending my warm greetings to the Chinese people, I hope and pray that in the coming year the People's Republic of China will be able to create a meaningful harmonious society by ensuring equality, justice and friendship among all its nationalities.

The Dalai Lama
25 January 2009

Chronology of Peaceful Demonstrations in Tibet

Tibet: China Tortures Tibetan Youth to Death, More Protests Reported in Kham

28 January 2009

Severe custodial torture of Tibetan detainees by the Chinese prison officials led to death of a Tibetan youth in Dzogang county of the Chamdo prefecture of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Pema Tsepak, aged around 24, a painter by profession, sustained severe kidney injury due to torture by the officials of the Public Security Bureau and armed personnel during the detention. On 23 January, he was taken to hospitals in Dzogang county for treatment and later shifted to another hospital in Chamdo, but his life could not be saved, sources said. According to sources, Pema Tsepak was detained along with a group of Tibetan youths for carrying Tibetan national flags and making peaceful protests on 20 January. The other detainees were identified as Thinley Gyatso alias Thinley Ngodup, Bhu Dhargyal, Norbu Tashi, Pema Tsepak and Gonpo Dadul. The condition of Bhu Dhargyal and Thinley Ngodup are said to be critical as they have been subjected to severe beatings and are currently held in a prison inside Chamdo. Meanwhile, Norbu Tashi is still being kept in custody in Dzogang county, whereas Dechen Dolma, Thinley Gyatso and Lolhatso were temporarily known to have been released on 24 January.

More protests near Dege Monastery in Kham

On 7 January, the local Chinese government officials at the Dege Monastery in Kham, have convened a meeting and advise the Tibetan residents to celebrate the upcoming Tibetan New Year. The local residents are strongly against the celebration as hundreds of fellow Tibetans were killed in the Chinese government's crackdown across Tibet in March last year. Sources also reported that the local Chinese police have opened fired on a group of protesting monks from the Dege Monastery in Kham, around 9 p.m. (local time) on 27

January. Moreover, sources could not tell the exact number of casualties as the area is under heightened repression. Some of those detained were identified as Ven Tsering Wangchuk, Chu Gha, Tashi Dorjee, Sonam Norbu, Choejor Palden and Dongthok Tashi. The detail list all the detainees, number of casualties and the causes of the protests could not be ascertained, as the Chinese government have imposed heavy security in the area.

29 January

Namkha Sonam, a Tibetan youth in Shershul, Karze (Ch: Ganzi) County, Karze "TAP" (incorporated into a Chinese province of Sichuan), was arrested for chanting slogans of "Free Tibet and Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama".

According to confirmed reports, Namkha Sonam, aged 27, was arrested and severely beaten by officials of the Public Security Bureau on 7 January.

Following the arrest, Namkha's father and brother approached the office of district authority to plead for his release. But the officials rejected their appeal and continue to keep Namkha in protective custody.

On 15 January, the concerned officials of the Public Security Bureau in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) County, Ngaba "TAP", Amdo (incorporated into Chinese province of Sichuan), arrested a Tibetan monk named Lobsang Kirti, aged 27, for distributing suspicious leaflets. He was picked from a photocopy centre in the town around 5-6 p.m. (local time), sources said.

Lobsang Kirti is a student of Kirti Monastery and has written several articles in journals and newspapers. He is also a member of the editorial board of "Gangtse Metok" an official publication of Kirti Monastery.

A Tibetan monk is in critical condition after being severely beaten by the

officials of the Public Security Bureau (PSB) in Pasho (Ch: Basu) county in Chamdo Prefecture of the Tibet Autonomous Region on 29 January.

According to sources, around midday on 29 January, a Tibetan monk of Nera Monastery in Pasho shouted slogans of the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and he was seen carrying a picture of His Holiness in his hands. He was arrested and severely beaten by the PSB officials and he is believed to be in critical condition.

Another monk was also known to be badly thrashed in the incident.

The details of the incident and identities of the monks could not be ascertained, as the Chinese authorities have imposed heavy restrictions in the area.

2 February

A county level court sentenced two Tibetans in Karze (Ch: Ganzi) County, Karze "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture," Sichuan province, including a monk and a nun, to imprisonment for their alleged involvement in peaceful protests in June 2008, a Dharamshala-based human rights group reported on 2 February.

Ngawang Lhundup, aged 22 and Kel Nyima (age unknown), both monks of Kardze Monastery were detained by the Kardze County Public Security Bureau on 9 June 2008 for staging a protest demonstration at the Kardze County headquarters, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) said.

"Ngawang Lhundup was sentenced to four year imprisonment, while the whereabouts of Kel Nyima still remains unknown," sources told TCHRD.

Ngawang Lhundup was born to Sangay Wangchuk (father) and Yarkong (mother) at Dhago Village, Dhago

Township in Kardze County.

In a separate court trial in January 2009, Pema Lhamo, a nun of Kardze Gaden Choeling Nunnery was sentenced to three years' imprisonment term by the same court for her participation in a peaceful protest in Kardze County on 14 May 2008.

She was arrested from the site of the protest along with six other nuns of the same nunnery and a layperson. There is no information on the current status and whereabouts of Tibetans who were also arrested along with Pema Lhamo.

Meanwhile, the Chinese authorities are enticing Tibetans in Karze with monetary gift of a 500 Yuan to celebrate this year's Tibetan New Year or Losar.

Instead of celebration, the Tibetan people have decided to mourn for hundreds of Tibetans, who were killed during the Chinese government's violent crackdown on peaceful protests across the three traditional provinces of Tibet, since 10 March 2008. China's ruthless clampdown on peaceful Tibetan protesters last year left 219 Tibetans dead, 1294 injured, around 5,600 people still under arrest or detention and more than 1000 missing.

The *Times Online* reported Tuesday that police in Tibet's capital Lhasa arrested dozens of Tibetans for supporting campaign against celebrating the Tibetan New Year.

Witnesses told *The Times* that uniformed and plainclothes police and members of the paramilitary People's Armed Police were involved in the sweep, which began on Monday. They raided tea houses, which are popular with young Tibetans, and picked up people of all ages in the street.

In Lhasa, government employees have been ordered by the authorities to provide guarantees that they will report to work every day, stay in their offices and not take part in any disturbances. They have been told to make sure that their family members comply and have been warned that those who disobey

will be severely punished, *The Times* reported quoting sources in Lhasa.

10 February

According to sources in Tibet, the People's Intermediate Court has announced an 18-month prison sentences to 4 Tibetan monks belonging to Shelkar Monastery in Dingri, Shigatse Prefecture in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

The four were among the group of 13 monks arrested for protesting against the Chinese government's "patriotic education" of denouncing His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 5 March 2008.

Sources said 3 monks have been kept under detention, among which the authorities treated Khenrab Tharchin with the most repressive measures.

The authorities had released the remaining 6 monks on 19 January, sources said.

Among those released, the authorities expelled Ven Lobsang Jinpa from the monastery under the pretext of having convicted for political activities.

The remaining monks are allowed to stay in the monastery only after their relatives signed an agreement of not engaging in political activities. The authorities have imposed strict restriction on the movements of the monks. The restrictions on Shelkar monastery have also been increased, sources said.

The court in Meru district, Ngaba Prefecture (incorporated into China's Sichuan Province) sentenced Chopel alias Uchoe, aged 33, to 4 years imprisonment for his role in a demonstration on 17 March 2008.

According to sources, Chopel's left eye was blinded as he was not given medical treatment for a deformity developed during the detention.

Nevertheless, the prison authorities continue to punish him with hard labour, sources said.

The Chinese government's repressive measures in the form of patriotic reeducation in Samye Monastery, Lhoka Prefecture, forced a Tibetan monk to commit suicide, sources said.

Namdol Khakyab, aged between 20 to 30, born in Nyemo County, who studied at Samye monastery, committed suicide in his room in November 2008, some three months after the monastery was closed by the Chinese authorities.

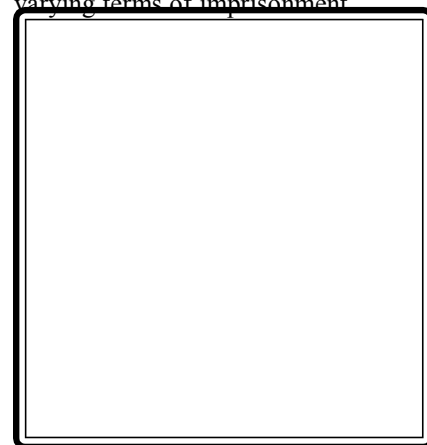
He left a suicide note claiming the whole responsibility of his own death.

According to sources, the monastery in Samye came under intense repression since 3 March last year following the Chinese government's crackdown on peaceful protesters across Tibet.

Sources confided that following a demonstration by the entire monks of Samye monastery, concerned authorities immediately dispatched armed police to suppress the protesters. For three days, neither the monks were not allowed to go out, nor any visitors were permitted to enter the monastery.

Following this, a large contingent of military personnel and authorities from the Public Security Bureau assigned to give patriotic education were sent to the monastery. Nine monks were arrested with the onset of an intensive education campaign of defaming His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Moreover, in June 2008, the Lhoka Intermediate People's Court sentenced nine monks of Samye monastery to varying terms of imprisonment.



The Year of the Shoe-Olympics

by Thubten Samphel

Dharamsala Diary has learned while ago that Chinese scholars had started sometime back to put their heads together at the fag end of every year to give it a name. 2007 was the year of prices go up. This year is the messy year. Some bloggers have pointed out that this story of Chinese scholars holding a meeting to christian years is a hoax. There is no such gathering of scholars in China. Whatever, the case, Dharamsala diary likes to believe this story. In this vein, watching world events from our mountain perch, this diary would say, this is the Shoe-Olympics Year

Reporters' Shoes and Presidential Response

The shot was bull's eye. The dodging was perfect, timed to the last second. After the first shoe-throwing event, the reaction was presidential. President Bush stood there behind the podium, like any confident leader fielding hard questions and skilfully dodging them, and seemed to ask, do you have more shoes for me? As if in answer, a second one came, flying. President Bush dodged that one too.

When interviewed later on CNN on the incident, President Bush said, "That's an interesting way to express one's self."

That nameless, shoe-less Iraqi reporter, whose real job seems to be a professional and Olympic champion shoe-thrower, must have wondered to

himself: that's an interesting way to dodge my shoes, too. I'm used to leaders dodging my difficult questions but not my expensive shoes.

Now we know which country will grab all the gold in the Olympic Games for any shoe-throwing competition in the future.

Amid the doom and bloom of the world's current financial crisis, the shoe industry is sure to boom, especially that particular brand which might become the hottest product from desert to sandy desert. For all those teeming millions salivating to make billions, when the most of the world lives on less than a dollar a day, here's a bit of a financial advice. Invest in the shoe industry. Good money can be made from it.

Financial Crisis and Climate Change

And talking about doom and gloom, the wrenching global financial might have a silver lining. For planet Earth. Less money available means less consumption. Less consumption means less exploitation of the Earth's natural resources. All this adds up to less emission and a better and cleaner environment. For now, at least.

China's Year

The year 2008 also belongs to China. No other country, except for Iraq and Afghanistan, has dominated the world media in such a sustained way, grabbing

media headlines. This year is the year of Chinese triumphalism. The biggest foreign exchange reserve in the world, a set at the big table, a walk in space and the holding of the spectacular Beijing Olympic Games. China's moment in history has arrived. China has once again reclaimed and re-gained its traditional geopolitical and cultural position as the Middle Kingdom.

Not so fast you might say because 2008 also saw China having its share of problems. Starting from the snowstorm in February that swept large parts of China to the train tragedy to the sustained and widespread China's Tibet troubles to the earthquake that devastated Sichuan, China muddled through from one tragedy to scandals after messy scandals, which all came out after the bright, spotlessly clean Olympic rug was removed.

Now, the global financial crisis has hit China with tsunami force. Millions are laid off, thousands of factories are shutting down and strikes and protests are on the rise. Amidst all this *luan* in China, there is a ray of hope. On 10 December, the International Human Rights Day, a group of more than 300 Chinese scholars, writers and activists launched Charter 08, demanding that the Chinese people deserve better governance. At the last count, the number of people who have signed this call for democracy has surged to thousands. Dharamsala Diary hopes that one day, not too far in the distance, we can say this is the year of China's democracy.

CTA Seeks Qualified and Dedicated Tibetans for its Worldwide Offices

In view of the prevailing critical situation of the Tibet issue, the Central Tibetan Administration desires to expand and reinforce its diplomatic activities at the international level. We, therefore, would like to invite qualified, capable and dedicated Tibetans to serve for a specific period as volunteer or on contract basis at Dharamsala or in the Offices of Tibet. Interested individuals are requested to submit your credentials and work experience through the Offices of Tibet at your respective areas.

As Central Tibetan Administration may not be able to engage all the interested individuals at once, the list will be maintained to enable us to request any of you as and when such services are needed.

Tibetan Media

Sheja (official Tibetan monthly)

Department of Information & International Relations,
Dharamshala-176215, HP, India
Email: sheja_editor@gov.tibet.net
Web: www.tibet.net/tb/sheja

NewsTibet

241 E. 32nd Street
New York, NY 10016
Email: tendar@igc.org
Web: www.tibetoffice.org

Tibetan Freedom (official Tibetan weekly)

Department of Information & International Relations,
Dharamshala-176215, HP, India
Email: tibfreedom@gov.tibet.net
Web: www.tibet.net/tb/tibfreedom

Tibet Bulletin (official Chinese bi-monthly)

Department of Information & International Relations,
Dharamshala-176215, HP, India
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Tibetan Exile-community Human Resource Survey

Background: Ever since His Holiness the Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetans were forced into exile to India and neighboring countries in the aftermath of occupation of Tibet by communist China in 1959, the Tibetan exile community under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama has accorded the highest priority in providing education to the Tibetan children. Beginning with the first Tibetan school at Mussoorie, India in 1960 with fifty students, over the years more than seventy seven residential and day schools have been established in India, Nepal and Bhutan with support of the host governments and international support.

Besides, providing adequate school education facilities, the community has been making concerted efforts to provide as many scholarships as possible for pursuing further studies in various disciplines in India and abroad. It is also recognized that many individual parents have taken strong responsibility to provide best of education to their children wherever they are residing. As a result of the collective efforts at the community and individual levels, tremendous progress has been made in the field of education in the last five decades and many persons have been able to achieve high degree of excellence and specialization in diverse fields of professions and learning.

Objective: However, currently the CTA and Tibetan community do not have any comprehensive database of all persons who have completed education and training in different specialized fields. It is now opportune time to maintain such a database to assess human resource capital of the Tibetan exile community primarily for networking and also for planning in utilizing this vast pool of talented and skilled manpower for its development. His Holiness has also spoken time and again need for such a database and enhanced networking among ourselves.

Keeping the above objective in mind, the Department of Education is conducting a worldwide survey to assess human resource capital in the Tibetan community. This survey is targeted to all those who have already obtained Doctor of Philosophy (PhD); Master of Philosophy (M.Phil); Master or equivalent in any field of study; degree in western and traditional medicines, Engineering, Agriculture Sciences, Pedagogy; Accountancy, Commerce or in any other specialized fields of learning.

Therefore, we request all Tibetans residing and working in any part of the world, who have already obtained qualifications in any of the above stated fields notwithstanding when that have been acquired to kindly fill up the attached survey form online and send it to us through concerned settlement office/offices of Tibet/ local Tibetan Associations which ever is relevant or directly to the Department either by mail or email(education@gov.tibet.net) before 30th of April 2009. The form can also be downloaded from Sherig websites (<http://www.tcewf.org>)

Thanking you for your cooperation

December 6, 2009

