



Tibet Society Newsletter

November 2018

“If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito”
His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

News of the Tibet Society, what’s happening in Tibet and the Tibetan Exile world, and news of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

China’s HR Record Scrutinised at the UN



China’s [Universal Periodic Review](#) (UPR) took place on 6 November in Geneva, providing the opportunity for scrutiny of their human rights record, including in Tibet. UPR is the review of the human rights performance of the 193 member states of the United Nations (UN) which takes place every four-and-a-half years.

This year’s UPR session was China’s third peer review and saw 153 UN member nations participate. The session took place amidst widespread demonstrations, with at least 1,000 human rights activists gathered outside the UN headquarters in protest – Tibetans and Muslims holding Tibetan flags and banners bearing photographs of activists, journalists and citizens who have been abducted or incarcerated by the Chinese government.

In the days before China’s UPR, a forum was organised by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile together with the Office of Tibet, Geneva. The forum saw experts, academics, activists, diplomats and advocacy groups from around the world gather to discuss the deterioration

of human rights in Tibet, East Turkestan (Xinjiang), Southern Mongolia and Hong Kong and called on UN member states to use the UPR process to make China accountable for these repressions.

This year’s UPR saw a rise in the number of UN states that raised concern for the situation in Tibet—13 countries specifically mentioned Tibet compared to seven last year—with nine countries issuing 12 recommendations relating to lack of freedom of religion, assembly and association, and movement. During China’s second UPR in 2013, seven states made Tibet-related recommendations.

New Zealand put forward a strong recommendation for China to resume a two-way dialogue between Tibetan and Chinese representatives; a recommendation previously raised in 2013 and rejected by China. In addition to the nine states making recommendations on Tibet, Austria, UK and Japan expressed concern about Tibet in their verbal statements to China, and written questions on Tibet were submitted prior to the review by Belgium, UK, Sweden, USA, Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

Tibet campaign groups are buoyed at the number of states using the UPR to put increasing pressure on China to

address the repression and human rights abuses, but called on more states to speak out in future in the face of the systematic and deepening crackdown in Tibet under the leadership of Xi Jinping. China denied the allegations—as it did during its last UPRs in 2009 and 2013.

Le Yucheng, China’s Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, said the critical statements were not based on facts and were full of prejudice. He said that China’s human rights situation had not worsened and members of his



Le Yucheng at the UPR

delegation attempted to explain how Tibetans enjoy freedom of religion saying, “We will not accept the politically driven allegations by some countries and attempts to intervene in national affairs.”

Swiss-based Tibetan monk and ex-political prisoner Golog Jigme, who was a member of the Tibet Advocacy Coalition project team, said “China would like the world to continue to ignore its violations in Tibet, but 13 countries have taken a stand for human rights in Tibet, and more will follow. Although Tibet is under lockdown, the Tibetan people’s concerns have been heard here today.”

China Quits International Event in Protest at Tibet

The Chinese authorities have once again sought to limit Tibetan participation in an international event—this time one specifically aimed at highlighting climate change and the need for sustainable tourism. The event, [‘Expotural 2018, the Mountain and Sustainable Trade Fair at the IFEMA’](#) (International Trade Fair of Madrid) took place from 1-4 November.

The President of the Central Tibetan Administration, Dr Lobsang

Sangay, together with Thubten Wangchen, a Tibetan monk, Member of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and Director of Casa Tibet in Barcelona, were invited to participate in the event – upon hearing this China immediately raised their objections with the local Spanish authorities. Tibet Society UK was informed that China had initially reserved 400 square metres of space at the event for their own exhibit—costing around €50,000/£44,000.

Following discussions with the Mayor of Madrid, who refused to pull Tibetans from the list of participants, China withdrew from the event in protest, along with its funding.

Over the last few years, numerous companies have caved in to Chinese pressure to exclude reference to Tibet or His Holiness the Dalai Lama in their business activities—including [GAP](#), the [Marriott International](#) and [Mercedes](#).

Parliamentary News



MP Speaks Out

Karen Lee, MP for Lincoln (Labour) and Shadow Fire Minister, raised the human rights situation in Tibet with The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom in the House of Commons on 30 October, saying “The Human Rights situation in Tibet is deeply worrying. Without transparency, it is difficult to know exactly how many Tibetans have been imprisoned unjustly in China. I therefore asked the government to help facilitate the access of independent observers to Tibet”. She elicited a good response of “hear hear” from the House before Jeremy Hunt replied, “I do completely share the concerns that she’s raised and that is one of a number of human rights issues that we raise regularly with the Chinese foreign minister and I will continue to do so.”



Karen Lee tweeted [the video](#) which attracted messages of support.

MP Supports Tibet

Tibet TV – the exile Tibetans English medium news service – featured Tim



Loughton in their “[In Conversation With Tibet TV](#)” programme. Tim is the Conservative Member of Parliament for East Worthing and Shoreham. He co-chairs the UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet and is a long standing member of the Tibet Society. He spoke to Tibet TV during his recent visit to Dharamshala, the seat of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, with two fellow MPs on a trip organised and facilitated by Tibet Society.

Tim said they were there to show support for the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, for the Dalai Lama and for the Tibetan

cause, and that they were “representing the great support that there is in the UK for the Tibetan cause”.

He said they were very privileged to have an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to have the opportunity to speak at length with him about the situation in Tibet and the human rights abuses. He said they had also discussed the environmental destruction happening in Tibet. Tim assured His Holiness of the support they can give by raising the issue in Parliament, with our Ministers and at the United Nations.



Tim was asked about His Holiness’s visit to the UK in 2012 and the fact that he was one of two who were not allowed to meet His Holiness officially. He replied that this was due to pressure from China and said it is important that this behaviour is exposed and that people stand up to China.

He said the Parliamentary group’s work includes organising debates in the House of Commons, at international conferences and by speaking to Ambassadors, and by putting pressure on China to allow access to Tibet so that people can observe what is happening there.

Asked what inspires him to champion the cause of Tibet, Tim said the cause of Tibet is synonymous with the cause of freedom and justice and that the Tibetan people have been a huge inspiration to people across the world for 70 years.

He promised they would return to parliament and redouble their efforts to make China understand they must change and treat people better.

Tibet Parliamentary Group

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet (APPGT) met on 12 November for its AGM. The members were all re-elected and joined by new member Marion Fellows—the SNP Member for Motherwell and Wishaw. She is the SNP’s Small Business spokesperson and has a background in education and business.

All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) are informal cross-party groups pursuing a particular topic or interest, they have no official status within Parliament. They are run by and for

Members of the Commons and Lords, though many choose to involve individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities. In the case of the Tibet APPG, Tibet Society acts as secretariat and liaises closely with the members—it’s a very important element of the Society’s work for Tibet. The APPGT’s purpose, as stated on the APPG page of the parliament.uk website is “To put pressure on Her Majesty’s Government to encourage negotiations between the Chinese Government and representatives of the Tibetan Government-in-exile, whilst recognising that Tibet is an occupied country which had independent ties with Britain.”



Chinese Reporter Let Off

Charges against Linlin Kong, 48, a Chinese TV reporter, have been dropped. She was arrested and charged with slapping a delegate at the Tory



party conference. She heckled activist Benedict Rogers—head of human rights group Hong Kong Watch—during his speech while he was participating in a discussion about political freedoms in Hong Kong. She then slapped Enoch Lieu, a student party volunteer three times when he asked her to leave. A video circulating on social media shows her behaving aggressively. Prosecutors say there is “insufficient evidence to convict her” but there is speculation in the media that they are backing down in the face of pressure from China—the Chinese Embassy has called her removal from the Tory conference “completely unacceptable”.

Tibet News



Self-immolation in Tibet



8 Nov, Ngaba County, Amdo in eastern Tibet. Dhorbe, a young Tibetan man aged 23, died after setting himself on fire as a protest against the Chinese regime in Tibet. During his protest he is reported to have shouted, “Long live the Dalai Lama” and to have called for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to be allowed to return to Tibet. Dhorbe comes from the Jhakor division of Choeje-Ma Township in Nagaba. It is not known what has happened to his remains. *Radio Free Asia* quoted some monks from Kirti Monastery who have contacts in Ngaba as saying that Dhorbe's father's name is Chopa and his mother, Trinle Kyi, died a few years ago, and that he lived with his uncle. No further information is available at present because of the Chinese administration's clampdown on communications in Ngaba. Dhorbe is the 154th person to self-immolate, and the 41st in Ngaba.

Reciprocal Access: Good News!

There is progress in the United States on the [Reciprocal Access to Tibet Bill](#). On 28 November it was unanimously approved by the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Senate is now expected to take up the bill.

The bill was passed by the US House Judiciary Committee and the full House of Representatives in September.

“The unanimous support expressed today by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee once again reflects the widespread concern of the American people for the situation inside Tibet and for the lack of access for US citizens,” said Matteo Mecacci, president of the International Campaign for Tibet.

The Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act calls on countries to give equal rights to one another's citizens. At present, Chinese citizens travel freely throughout the US, while American journalists,

diplomats and tourists are banned from Tibet. If the Act is passed, Chinese officials who keep Americans out of Tibet will be denied entry to the US. One of the goals of the legislation is to pressure China into letting international observers into Tibet so they can help expose China's human rights violations against the Tibetan people

Protest in Chone

A protest against a fresh drinking water diversion has taken place in Se Tsang township in Chone county; the government plans to divert water from Se Tsang to nearby Hrin Tsang township in Batse county. *Radio Free Asia* reported that several police vehicles arrived on the



scene, but there were no known detentions or assaults. Other protests have taken place in Chone against Chinese policies affecting herders there.

DIFF in the Rain

The [Dharamshala International Film Festival](#) (DIFF) has been living up to its motto of “Bringing Independent Cinema to the Mountains” since 2012. This year with their Community Outreach initiative DIFF, despite torrential rain in Dharamshala, has provided a forum for filmmakers from around the world to connect with the local communities of Gaddi Village and the Dharamshala region.

Grant from Canada

An education grant of 5.4 million Canadian dollars (£3.2 million) has been announced by the government of Ottawa. It is being awarded for the education of young Tibetans in exile based in India, Nepal and Bhutan, and will be released over the course of the next five years through the Central Tibetan Administration. Canadian MP Arif Virani, a major supporter of Tibet, was instrumental in acquiring the funding.

Monlam Festival

A life size portrait of the Karmapa was displayed and honoured at the five-day

Kagyü Monlam festival in Tibet, reports *Radio Free Asia*. The Monlam festival



coincided with the traditional Buddhist Lhabab Duchen holiday and was held at Japa monastery in Nangchen county in Qinghai, with 4,000 monks and nuns and “tens of thousands of Tibetan lay devotees from all over Tibet” taking part. Chinese authorities in Tibet have often restricted the display of photos of the Karmapa, confiscating them from monks and warning drivers not to carry them in their vehicles, but there have been no reports of reprisals for people attending the Monlam festival this year.

“Sinicising” Buddhism

[Human Rights Watch](#) has reported that the Chinese authorities are “sinicising” religion by requiring Tibetan monks and nuns to act as propagandists for the Communist Party. They are now required to undergo political training and to demonstrate willingness to “play an active role at critical moments”. The implication is that they must agree to forestall or stop any attempts to protest against state policy.

Twitter Defies China

Jack Dorsey, the co-founder and chief executive officer of Twitter, met His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Delhi and tweeted a picture with the caption “You're an amazing teacher”. Twitter is banned in China and by meeting His Holiness, Dorsey may well have jeopardised any chance of establishing Twitter there. Other social media apps are complying with China's demands so they can trade in the country.

“Thank You India”

Tibetan people living in India are being encouraged to write to the Indian Government to express thanks to India for supporting and giving sanctuary to Tibetans and the Tibetan cause. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile are spearheading the letter writing campaign and all Tibetan schools in India are taking part.

News of His Holiness the Dalai Lama



The Dalai Lama, the Quantum Effect and the Chinese Scientists



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with fellow Nobel laureate Professor Yuan Tseh Lee

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has hosted the first conference with Chinese scientists to discuss the role of the Quantum Effect as it applies to both scientific and Buddhist views. The conference was

held at Tsuglag Khang Temple in McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala, from 1 - 3 November and was organised by the Dalai Lama Trust.

His Holiness said the two purposes of the meeting were to expand our knowledge and, secondly, to look at the use to which knowledge is put. Citing the example of scientific research producing weapons of mass destruction, he said that such destructive developments provoke fear – their development may have been a remarkable achievement, but their only purpose is to kill. The meeting also looked at ways to achieve global sustainability.

His Holiness has been meeting scientists from around the world for the last 30 years and felt a conference with mainly east Asian scientists would be appropriate and meaningful “given the religious and cultural proximity shared by the two peoples”.

The panel for the Quantum Effect dialogue consisted of His Holiness, Nobel Laureate Professor Yuan Tseh Lee and a group of nine well established Chinese scientists, most of whom were from Taiwan. Also in attendance were approximately 50 other Chinese scientists, researchers and scholars, together with 270 Tibetan researchers, Men-Tsee-Khang students and students from other Tibetan educational institutions.

While current relations between China and Tibet are strained, His Holiness gave historical examples of when these two cultures held close ties. He explained his belief that Chinese and Tibetans can benefit from each other, saying that the Chinese can benefit from the Tibetans’ preservation of Buddhist knowledge, and Tibetans can benefit from the Chinese in material and economic ways.

Dr Yueh-Nan Chen asked His Holiness "if his understanding of quantum physics helps his meditation." His Holiness replied, “My daily practice is to meditate on emptiness, and altruism as well.”

Prof Maw-Kuen Wu asked for an explanation of how His Holiness understands the way things evolve from space. His Holiness answered, “When we talk about empty space, we have to get a clear perspective on the context. There’s a lot of space here in this room, for example. There are also many particles here. At an atomic level, each atom occupies space. How empty space fulfills its role is complicated. Particles have space to move around and they can even bump into each other. In the quantum physics presentations we’ve heard, we’ve focused on the physical world. Now we also have to focus on the inner world, paying more attention to mental consciousness.”

His Holiness’s 27th Visit to Japan

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama left Dharamshala for a short visit to Delhi on 9 November followed by a teaching tour in Japan from 10 – 22 November, his message during the tour was the importance of being united in spirit which he delivered through his teachings of compassion and togetherness in the face of the problems of the present world.

While in Delhi, His Holiness inaugurated the yearlong celebration of the 550th anniversary of the birth of Sikh spiritual leader Guru Nanak Jayanti. Dr Manmohan Singh, the Sikh former Prime Minister of India welcomed His Holiness to the event.

Arriving in Yokohama, Japan, for his 25th visit to the country, His Holiness spoke to Rina Yamasawa of *NHK*, the English-medium Japanese news site, and recollected his first visit to Japan in 1967. He spoke of the cooperation that he seeks with the Chinese government regarding the preservation of Tibetan culture and language. “The Chinese can help us with infrastructural development and we can help them with



His Holiness at the National Convention Hall of Yokohama

Buddhist psychology,” said His Holiness. During his time in Yokohama His Holiness gave teachings and conferred the *Avalokiteshvara* initiation. And in keeping with his interest in the link between science and Buddhism,

he participated in a dialogue with leading Japanese scientists on modern science and Buddhist science; topics for discussion included neuroscience, senses and consciousness along with quantum physics, in connection with the Buddhist understanding of mind. “Scientists’ brilliant minds have predominantly focussed on the physical world. But human beings are not just physical beings. We also have feelings and consciousness. It’s appropriate that scientists learn about the inner world of mind and emotions”, said His Holiness.

On Kyushu Island to the west of Japan he prayed for the victims of the recent Kumamoto earthquake and floods.

His Holiness returned to Dharamshala on 25 November.

The Tibet Society, the world’s first Tibet support group, was founded in 1959. Funded by its members, it has been working for over 50 years to seek justice for Tibet through parliamentary lobbying, campaigns and actions.

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