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COMMENTARIES

The Seventh Tibet Work Forum: An Assessment

By Tenzin Tseten, September 11, 2020 (Tibet.net)



Chinese President Xi Jinping speaks during the Seventh Tibet Work Forum in Beijing, China, August 29, 2020. /Xinhua

The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has convened its Seventh Tibet Work Forum for two days in Beijing from August 28 to 29. As the number suggest six forums have been previously held since the beginning of reform era. However, this doesn't mean that no policy implementation organ of this sort has existed during the Party's nascent administration in Tibet.

During its initial years, the Party leadership has formed a working committee on Tibet where all the major policy decisions were formulated and put into implementation. The Tibet Work Forum (TWF) or as it properly called the National

Forum on Work in Tibet (ཀྲུང་དབྱང་ཐོག་གྱི་ལས་དོན་སྒྲིག་གི་འགྲན་མཁའ་ཚོ་ལྟེན་མཁའ་འདུལ།) has become the main policy organ for Tibet since it was first started in March 1980 under the leadership of Hu Yaobang, then General Secretary of the CCP. The TWFs have been attended by the top leaders from the Party, Government and military organs. More precisely the TWFs have been chaired by the General Secretary of the CCP, which reflects the significance of the Party's policy formulation on Tibet.

Since the Fifth TWF, Beijing has made a decision to include all the Tibetan inhabited areas in the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan and Gansu into the larger framework of the TWF, which Tibetans in exile have considered a major shift in the China's Tibet policy. The decision surrounding the policy shift could be attributed to the 2008 protests that spread across the Tibetan Plateau.

Unlike the previous five forums, the Sixth and the Seventh forums took place in the month of August under the leadership of Xi Jinping. Here we can't ignore the timing that these two forums were summoned right after the Beidaihe summit, a highly-secretive annual gathering of the Party elders and the current Party leaders at a seaside resort in Hubei province where they engage in horse-trading and other important issues concerning domestic and foreign policies. The timing indicates the significance of Tibet in Xi's vision of 'China dream', a grand vision that is predicated on the principle of rejuvenation and primacy of China.

We can't ignore at the same time a theory that claims the Seventh TWF was not solely intended for Tibet, rather it was used as a pretext to highlight the geo-strategic importance of Tibet in China's foreign policy vis-à-vis India. This make sense given the recent visit of Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), including a trip to the disputed border with India. Though the name of the border area was not mentioned, a propaganda photo in which he was seen sitting with a Tibetan couple in traditional Lhoka attire somehow indicates





that he has visited Tsona county in Lhoka prefectural city which shares the border with Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh. His visit was seen as rare and unusual since Tibet related inspection and assessments are usually conducted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the United Front Work Department (UFW). At the same time, his visit strongly echoed Xi's strategic thinking of governance based on the secure borders and stability in Tibet (ཐུལ་ཁབ་སྐྱོང་བར་སྡོན་ལ་མཐའ་མཆམས་སྐྱོང་དགོས་པ་དང་། མཐའ་མཆམས་སྐྱོང་བར་སྡོན་ལ་རིས་པ་དུ་ཐོན་པ་ཉན་སྐྱོང་དགོས་པ།).

Furthermore, Ding Yexian (Ch), deputy secretary of the TAR Party Committee who oversees the stability maintenance in TAR, is still seen in Lhasa despite his official transfer announcement in early July. It has now become clear that Beijing withhold his transfer for couple of reasons. First, Ding was needed in the TAR during Wang Yi's visit to formally show him around how stability maintenance measures are being implemented. Ding was also seen accompanying Gyaltsen Norbu, China's handpicked 11th Panchen Lama, during the latter's visit to TAR (link in Tibetan) from end of July to mid-August. Second and more importantly, the TAR Party leadership needed Ding's expertise in the field of stability maintenance and development to lay the groundwork for the Seventh TWF.

We could also argue in the same manner that Wang Yang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo and the Chairman of the CPPCC, visited TAR in early July compounded by the visit of the Politburo member and Vice Premier Hu Chunhua to the TAR in early August to assesses the poverty alleviation had largely paved the way for the Party leadership in laying the groundwork for the Seventh TWF.

The latest forum laid down the “ten must” that are designed for the Party's strategy of governing Tibet in the new era, at least, for the next five years. However, some guidelines outlined in the “ten must” need a deeper look given its far-reaching impact. Xi Jinping issued a similar guideline in 2018 that demands religious personnel in Tibet to uphold the “four must” to make them patriotic, party loving, law-abiding and influential.

Though this is not a new development but the debate surrounding an overhaul in the system of regional autonomy, the nucleus of China's minority policy, in a recent academic discourse on nationality in China has been further downplayed by Xi Jinping in his speech given at the Seventh TWF. Xi said, “Practice has fully proved that the Party Central Committee's policies on Tibet work are completely correct, and that Tibet's sustained, stable and rapid development is an important contribution to the overall work of the party and the country.” In fact, Xi made a similar statement at the Central National Work Conference held in September 2014 as well as at the Sixth TWF held in August 2015.

Beijing's lack of interest for a change in its Tibet policy could be linked to deeply entrenched vested interest of millions of officials associated with anti-splittism bureaucracy at every level, the UFW for instance. We could bring here the argument put forward by Beijing-based Tibetan writer Tsering Woesser to shed some light on this view. Woesser writes, “These officials are all eating minzu rice. If ethnic policies are adjusted or changed, this will have a big impact on their interests, and thus they will attempt to block any adjustment to ethnic policies”.





Similarly, thousands of middle ranking Chinese cadres formally called Aid Tibet Cadres (ATC) from inland provinces who are assigned senior political positions in the TAR-level Party and Government departments under the Aid Tibet Program (ATP) would certainly resist any change in Tibet policy. The reason behind is this. Since its launch in 1994 at the Third TWF, the ATP has linked the entire TAR to China in terms of infrastructure building and development projects. This involves a large amount of money invested by the assisting provinces, central ministries and state-owned enterprises. These powerful stakeholders monitor their projects through ATCs who receive quick promotion, which is usually not the case if they are not assigned to work in the TAR. Wu Yingjie is an ATC who eventually became the top honcho of the TAR is a perfect case in point. This way the ATP has become a sort of career advancement platform for the ATCs and moneymaking machine for other stakeholders.

Another development worth highlighting in the context of ongoing mass re-education campaign in Tibet is Xi's strong emphasis on the work pertaining to ideological indoctrination in schools at the Seventh TWF. Xi said, "We must attach importance to strengthening ideological and political education in schools, put the spirit of patriotism throughout the entire process of school education at all levels and types, sow the seeds of loving China in the depths of the hearts of every teenager". In other words, there has been a growing sense of insecurity within the Chinese establishment concerning the younger generation Tibetans taking part in every aspect of Tibetan freedom struggle. With regard to this Beijing's decision to return to re-education rather than solely relying on the securitization in Tibet is perceived as a long-term solution to ensure long-term stability (ཡུན་ནི་འཛིན་པ་ལྟོག་པའི་འཛིན་པ་) in Tibet.

In a similar vein, Xi emphasizes in his "ten must" the importance of unity between nationalities and also arguably promotes the idea of intermarriage between Tibetan and Chinese. The policy of incentive-based intermarriage between Chinese and religious minorities like Tibetans and Uighurs was first promoted through a symposium held in Lhasa, the capital city of the Tibet, in 2014. Chen Quanguo, former party secretary of the TAR, stressed at the symposium that "to promote fraternal ethnic intermarriage as an important starting point to promote the great unity of all ethnic groups in Tibet." Chen even used a Tibetan proverb Love each other like tea and salt to portray the intermarriage in the context of social phenomenon. It can be, however, interpret in a simple and convincing way. What happens if you add salt to tea? The tea tastes a little salty, but you don't see salt anymore. The salt dissolves in the tea. This apparently is an act of Tibetans "fusion" and "mingling" into Chinese. According to an official report cited in the Washington Post, mixed marriages in Tibet have increased annually by double-digit percentages for the past five years, from 666 couples in 2008 to 4795 couples in 2013, possibly indicating some degree of urgency of this policy.

My final impression is that Beijing doesn't felt the need to exhibit some kind of Tibetan participation in the Seventh TWF, at least, their chosen 11th Panchen Lama. But for the sake of representation, Pema Thinley, Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress who has previously served in a various important positions in the TAR, including its deputy Party Secretary was apparently the only Tibetan included.

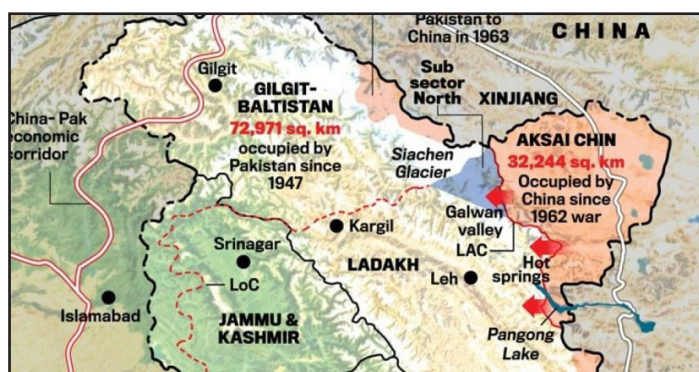


Tibet in Sino-India Relations: A Six Decades of Miscalculation and the Heavy Cost

By Tenzin Lhadon, August 31, 2020 (Tibet.net)

He who holds Tibet dominates the Himalayan piedmont; he who dominates the Himalayan piedmont threatens the Indian subcontinent, and he who threatens the Indian subcontinent may well have all of South Asia within his reach, and with that, all of Asia – George Ginsburg and Michael Mathos

Mao employed a strategic ingenuity in terms of looking at Tibet as the backdoor for China's expansion and dominance in Asia. On the other hand, some India's elite still consider it as a buffer zone between India and China. This difference in approach to the Tibet issue has become the crux of the Sino-India rivalry. Both India and China are increasingly aware of the geostrategic importance of Tibet and the intimate connection their strategic interests has with Tibet. If Tibet is a designated "core issue" in Beijing's national interest, it is equally vital to Indian national security. Tibet thus presents itself, even today, as the central to the Sino-Indian conflict. However, given the asymmetric nature of India-China relations, the Tibet issue in Sino-India relations has been consciously pushed towards the shadows of the diplomatic corridors between the two nations.



(Photo: cisindus.org)

The recent Galwan incident is thus the resultant lack of India's failure to assess the enormous importance of the role of Tibet in Sino-India relations. Although India and China are not waging open war (which the two cannot afford to do so in a nuclear age), we see their conflicts have reached a new level, which is unprecedented. Scholars can interpret and explain in many different ways as to why and how these conflicts escalated and more importantly, the

reason behind the recurring nature of the conflict. On a surface level, the border issue is seen as a dominant factor, but the motivating factor and sometimes the primary reason behind Sino-Indian strategic rivalry in inner Asia and the Himalayas is Tibet, as Beijing pointed out during Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China. As Tibet looms large in Sino-Indian relations and politics, even after 60 years of Chinese occupation, the two stakeholders approach the Tibet issue according to their own strategic interest. Historically, India and China has had minimal understanding of each other, pertaining to their limited interactions due to which both the parties have poor understanding of the psyche and system of the other. This lacuna between China and India has been critical in understanding and approaching Tibet in their own terms, thereby later deciding the political fate of Tibet according to their interest. The fallout of such miscalculation has been profound, and became intractable with the border issue determining the overall relations between India and China.

The border issue and the mutual distrust and hostility thereafter stems from their respective colonial heritage and more importantly because of the ambiguity and obscurity of British India's stand over the status of Tibet. On the one hand, the British saw the importance of trade in terms of regional border (Arunachal and Ladakh) while at the same time were involved in trying to fan off Russian



influence in Central Asia. On the other hand, Britain simultaneously tried to appeal to the Qing dynasty and the National government by accepting their 'suzerainty' over Tibet. This ambiguity over Tibet was a policy inherited by Nehru, evident in his acquiescence to the CCP's claim that their occupation of Tibet was an internal matter of China but at the same time acknowledging that there was a problem for Tibetans in Tibet in terms of their freedom. This ambiguity and uncertainty continues to drive India's policy towards Tibet vis-a-vis China. For instance, in 2003 the Vajpayee government acknowledged that Tibet was part of China, but every time there is a problem in the border area, they historically refer to the Simla agreement, which was signed by Tibet and British India and was not recognized by China. It is not about the specifics of the policy but the nature of the policy, which remains ambiguous. The ambiguity over the political status of Tibet was a calculative measure under British India and it was the same under Nehru as well. The new independent Republic of India under Nehru continued this policy that has far-reaching implications which probably Nehru probably failed to comprehend.

Moreover, the border issue is the direct reflection of the validity of an independent Tibet, with a bona fide treaty making power that has significantly exposed the deep rooted insecurity between India and China. This not only question China's legitimacy over Tibet but more importantly reflects China's obduracy on the border issue with India and its intransigence on Tibet at present. Beijing also wants to deny India's use of the Dalai Lama, both as an added bargaining chip and as a living testament to Indian claim on its borders, as noted by Dawa Norbu. The mutual suspicion and distrust between India and China after the 1962 clash has further added to this insecurity. Likewise, the insecurity on Tibet became worse after the Tibetan issue was internationalized, garnering huge support for its cause earning pockets of diplomatic influence. This led Beijing to be oversensitive and often engage in diplomatic retaliation. Hence, Tibet plays an integral role in the modern history of Sino-Indian relations. However, the centrality of Tibet in the dynamics of Sino-Indian relations and politics from 1950 has been reduced to political inferences, either as a bone of contention between India and China or an 'irritant factor'.

In fact, Tibet in Sino-India relations has suffered from Nehru's idealism and traditional realist outlook under current system. Therefore, India continues to downgrade the role of Tibet in its relationship with China, thereby avoiding the political potential of the Tibet issue. However, the contrary view of Tibet's centrality to the India-China conflicts has gained a rare audience in Indian scholarship with a handful of them including Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli of Jawaharlal Nehru University admitting that as long as the Tibet issue is not resolved in favour of China, the border dispute will continue to destabilize India-China relations. In fact, it is an indictment of India's policy that unlike China, it pretended that Tibet was not a factor in Sino-India relations. The optimism in Sino-India relations on the growing economic ties coupled with studied diplomatic silence that suited the interest of both has led to marginalisation of Tibet in Sino-India conflict. This has practically done no good to both the parties in improving their relations since the Sino-India relations is becoming more fragile rather than the opposite. The rivalry that is embedded with insecurity, mistrust and repeated miscalculation and marginalisation of the role of Tibet need to be revisited, readdressed and redefined in Sino-India relations.





Reverberating through time: Ama Adhe and the Women Warriors of Tibet

By Tashi Choedon, August 4, 2020 (Tibet.net)



Ama Adhe
(Photo: tibetorallhistory.org)

Yesterday on August 3, Ama Adhe breathed her last breath in Dharamsala. She was 88. Ama Adhe, known mostly for enduring twenty-seven years of her life in prison, represents the resistance and brutalization showcased and suffered by Tibetans of her time. Her story reflects the larger political question of Tibet and Tibetan people and the extended range of people who resisted, fought and were killed following the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Adhe Tapontsang, also known as Ama Adhe, was born in 1932 in Nyarong in Kham, eastern Tibet. She later moved to Karze and settled in a place called Lhobasha while she was still a young child along with her mother Sonam Dolma and father Dorje Raptan and her brothers and sisters. Her birthplace Kham historically becomes an important place where the Chinese Communist military was first stationed. The insidious invasion into Kham became a gateway for incursions into larger parts of Tibet to establish the Chinese clout and influence over the

rest of Tibet. In the 1950s, the Chinese troops called “The Eighteenth Army of Southwest Military Region” had already made their way into Kham in Karze.[i] The Chinese at first seemed to be friendly, giving silver coins to the Tibetans, which later turned to attempting to win Tibetans trust. Soon enough the Karze streets were inundated with the parades of Communists waving signs and holding large photographs of Mao Zedong and Zhu De. The Chinese plunged into various diatribes to justify their presence as well as build their power over eastern Tibet. They put up a garrison and made Karze as the place where the Chinese cavalry operated.[ii]

In 1954, the Chinese soon released a series of policies in Karze that stood in stark contrast to Tibetan worldviews. The military trucks were also soon ushered in later in 1956. The Chinese subjected many Tibetans to thamzing sessions (struggle sessions) where Tibetans were chastened, beaten and killed. In the ensuing months, Tibetans rose in rebellion against the Chinese and attacked them. The revolt led by Dorji Yudon fought and attacked the Chinese garrison in Nyarong. At the initial stage of the battle, the Tibetans rebels defeated the Chinese troops but after sending over fifteen thousand soldiers of the Eighteenth Army, Tibetans fought but forced to flee into the forest. After the battle, Tibetan warriors fled into the mountains. Ama Adhe’s role became important in that juncture as she formed and spearheaded an underground resistance movement confiding in the trusted friends of her plans. She laid out a series of plans in 1956 and took them to action the next year. Over sixty women participated in the resistance; the women gathered and discussed their plans speaking in subdued voices at night to avoid being noticed by the Chinese guards. The group silently examined the military strength and workings of the Chinese stationed. Ama Adhe took an active role in informing the men hidden in the forest of the latest Chinese development by forming contacts and communications. The women then would meet at a rendezvous point at night and pass on the information and food provisions to the Tibetan men in the forest. Ama Adhe’s story exemplifies the sacrifices and resistance delivered by many Tibetan women who were engaged in the resistance movement. [iii] Her story symbolizes the subtle resistance of the Tibetan women





against the Chinese occupation but it also foregrounds other forms of resistance. The sole role of which a woman called Dorji Yudon played a crucial part who led the Tibetan armed resistance to fight the incoming Chinese troops.[iv] While Ama Adhe showcases the subtle resistance staged by the Tibetan women, Dorji Yudon, on the other hand, represents the many active roles played by Tibetan women in staging a military resistance against the Chinese occupation. Both of these women and many other women equally succeeded in blurring the gendered distinction of Tibetan women and men by their uniquely active presence in the resistance movement.

Ama Adhe was later arrested. She was separated from her three year old Chime and her new born child Tashi Khando. Many Tibetans who were arrested became separated from their loved ones which is one of the debilitating consequences resulting from colonization and breakdown of communities and their members. During the interrogations she refused to give away the names of the other women to the Chinese cadres. She was then sentenced to twenty-seven years in prison. Her life in prison was larger reflection of the Communist treatment of their (political) prisoners in Tibet. The Chinese shifted Ama Adhe and Tibetan prisoners like her intermittently to many other prisoners and Labour Camp. She witnessed, amidst the ruins and rubbles around, a chamber of a monastery that had turned into a prison where they were detained. Ama Adhe suffered severe brutalization in prison where she endured the ordeals of food deprivations, hard labour and gendered violence.[v] In Gyothang Gyalgo, a hard labour camp, she along with many prisoners endured food deprivation with hard labour and by the time she was sent back to Dartsedo, out of one hundred women who had been transported, only four had survived, including Ama Adhe herself.[vi] But for Ama Adhe what kept her alive all through the ordeal was her belief in Tibetan Buddhism and her prayers. She would recite mantras and prayers in prison to fortify her spirits.

During Deng Xiaoping's liberalization period, Ama Adhe finally became released in 1985 and reunited with her daughter, other family members and friends. After an arduous journey into exile she reunited with her elder brother Jughuma in Nepal. She and her second husband Rinchen made their way to Dharamsala to meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In exile, she represented Tibet on many international platforms and shared her experiences in prison to highlight the plight of Tibetans and the Chinese role in it. The reform era, though, ushered in a relatively relaxed political climate, the policy ended up being a short lived and even farce when a new group of Tibetan protestors, mostly young nuns and monks, rose in rebellion against the Chinese in 1987 that lasted till the mid-1990s.[vii] This further unleashed further repression and caused innumerable suffering for the people in Tibet.

Over the years of being in exile, Ama Adhe shared her experiences to many people from all over the world who visited her home in Mcleodganj in Dharamsala. Ama Adhe story is a testament to the resistance and resilience shown by the Tibetan people and also to Tibetan women for whom religious and cultural identities are important to their sense of agency.

[i] Blakeslee, Joy, Adhe, Ama, 'Ama Adhe, The Voice that Remembers: The Heroic Story of a Woman's Fight to Free Tibet', Wisdom Publications, 1997, pg, 257,(43) [ii] ibid (46-49) [iii] ibid, (72-73) [iv] McGranahan, Carole, 'Narrative Dispossession: Tibet and the Gendered Logics of Historical Possibility' Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol, 52, No 4. Cambridge University Press, 2010. pg 768-797, (782-788) [v] Blakeslee, Joy, Adhe, Ama, 'Ama Adhe, The Voice that Remembers: The Heroic Story of a Woman's Fight to Free Tibet', Wisdom Publications, 1997, pg, 257,(112) [vi] ibid, (132) [vii] Barnett, Robert, 'Women and Politics in Contemporary





Tibet', 'Women in Tibet, (eds) Hanna Havnevik and Janet Gyatso, C. Hurst & Co. Ltd, United Kingdom, London, 2005, pg 436, (322-366)

Brahmaputra dams: A China-India political quagmire

By Dechen Palmo, July 29, 2020 (Asia Times)

China's dam-building threatens to choke off the flow of one of India's most important rivers



The Brahmaputra River runs from its origin in western Tibet through India before flowing into the sea in Bangladesh. Photo: Pfly / WikiCommons

Both the 12th and 13th Five-Year Plans adopted by the Chinese State Council have called for large-scale expansion of hydropower projects in the southwest, including all three provinces of Tibet. The Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra River) is one of the main international rivers identified for hydropower expansion in Tibet.

Jiacha Dam to begin operation next month



Jiacha Dam. Photo: China Society for Hydropower Engineering (CSHE)

This is the second large hydropower dam after the Zangmu to be built on the mainstream of the Yarlung Tsangpo. According to the China Society for Hydropower Engineering, Tibet's Jiacha Hydropower Station was successfully gated to store water this month. It has also been reported that the Jiacha station will put into operation the first of its scheduled three units in August. At present, the installation and commissioning of the generator are reportedly in place and fully functioning. The dam has three units and their cumulative installed

capacity will reach 360 megawatts. It is expected that the annual power generation will be 1.704 billion kilowatt-hours. The Jiacha (Gacha) Hydropower Station is located in Gyatsa county of the





Tibet Autonomous Region on the middle reaches on the Yarlung Tsangpo. Construction of Jiacha Dam was begun in December 2015 by Huaneng Tibet Power Generation Company Ltd (HTPG), a subsidiary of the state-owned China Huaneng Group. This 100-meter-level gravity dam has successfully closed the gates to store water, marking the completion of the main project of the dam. It is reported that once the dam is put into operation in August, the project will transmit its power jointly with the Zangmu Hydropower Station, which will supposedly solve the problem of power shortages in Tibet.

Impact of Brahmaputra dams



Photo: CSHE

The Brahmaputra River flows for more than 3,000 kilometers through Tibet, India and Bangladesh on its journey from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal. It is of great importance to India for three reasons. First, in terms of its ecological significance for India, its basin is shared by Arunachal Pradesh (41.9%), Assam (36.3%), Meghalaya (6.1%), Nagaland (5.6%), Sikkim (3.8%) and West Bengal (6.3%). The Brahmaputra basin belongs to the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot, one of the 12 hotspots of mega biodiversity on Earth recognized by

the World Conservation Union (IUCN). Its unique physiographic and climatic provide unique habitats for a variety of flora and fauna, including many endangered species. The basin is reported to have about 7,233 animal species that include 195 species of mammals, 607 of birds, 115 of reptiles, 54 of amphibians, 267 of fish, and 4,953 insect species. The plant resources of this region are enormous and represent the rich floristic wealth of India.

Second, the river is of great importance for the socio-economic life of the people in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. The river valley is home to many tribal communities that are dependent on the river for their livelihoods. The Adi tribe in Arunachal Pradesh reveres the river as Aane, or “Mother.” The Brahmaputra Valley, known as Siang in Arunachal Pradesh, is considered the rice bowl of the state and several villages are directly dependent on the river.

Likewise in Assam, people and communities in 22 of its districts use the river to sustain their livelihoods in the raising of cattle, fishing, and cultivation of different types of crops, irrigation, and riverine transport. Approximately 59%, 18%, 13%, and 4% of the surveyed households depend on the river for agriculture, fishing, transportation of men and material, and log collection respectively.

Finally, the damming of the Yarlung Tsangpo is not only a question of environmental and socio-economic issues but also of politics. The river is of great importance in the present-day geopolitical context since it is also linked to Sino-Indian border disputes. The two countries have contested claims in disputed areas called South Tibet in China and Arunachal Pradesh in India, which now controls the area. The disputed area occupies about an area of 90,000 square kilometers and has a population of more than 1 million. Now with the second dam being built on the Brahmaputra, India, which recently had a deadly conflict with China in Galwan Valley, has to face a choice: either to oppose or block the construction of this dam through militarily intervention or to allow





China to continue its dam-building, which threatens to choke off the flow of one of India's most important rivers. Therefore, the consequences of the direction the future of the Brahmaputra River moves toward will reverberate in the political, social, and environmental corridors of India's and China's foreign policies.

Tibet and Provincial-level leadership Transfer: An Analysis

By Tenzin Tseten, July 28, 2020 (Tibet.net)

In the run-up to the 20th Party Congress expected to be convened in late 2022, the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and other Tibetan areas witnessed a high-level leadership transfer/promotion. Yan Jin Hai (b.1962) has been transferred to TAR from Qinghai province ([link in Chinese](#)) and Ding Ye Xian has been transferred to Qinghai province from TAR ([link in Chinese](#)). While it is not completely clear yet, it very much looks like Yan and Ding simply have exchanged positions with each other (lateral transfers).



Yan Jin Hai and Ding Ye Xian (Ch)

Yan is a Tibetan born in Tsoshar Kamalog in Tsongon (མཚོ་ལྗོན་མཚོ་གར་བཀའ་མ་ལོག།). He joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1983. He has built his career in Qinghai province in the span of over 30 years. Prior to his transfer to the TAR party committee as a deputy secretary, Yan held important positions in Qinghai province. He was a standing committee member of Qinghai provincial party committee and a vice-

governor of Qinghai provincial government. In the national level, Yan is one of the two Tibetan alternate members in the 19th central committee of the CCP. The other one is Norbu Dhondup (b.1960), who is currently a member of the standing committee of the TAR party committee and the party secretary of Chamdo prefectural city.

The inclusion of Yan in the TAR party committee has increased the number of Tibetans in the TAR's apex body. There were only two Tibetans, Lobsang Gyaltsen (b.1957) and Che Dalha (b.1958), among five people in the TAR party committee, including its party secretary Wu Yingjie. It is quite likely that Che Dalha, who is currently a full-member of the 19th central committee of the CCP and also the governor of TAR, would replace Lobsang Gyaltsen as the chairman of TAR's People's Congress in the next reshuffle. Considering age and party seniority (two important factors in the leadership transfer/promotion in China's political system), Lobsang Gyaltsen sits on top of the TAR promotion list to replace Pema Thinley as a member of the standing committee of the National People's Congress (NPC).





Similarly, Pema Thinley (b.1951), a veteran Tibetan party cadre in TAR with military background and one of the two Tibetan members of the standing committee of the NPC, remains the safest bet to replace Jampa Phuntsok (b.1947) as a vice chairman of the NPC. On the other hand, Jampa Phuntsok would join the group of retired Tibetan party elders like Ragdi, who still yields enormous influence in TAR. The other Tibetan member in the standing committee of the NPC is Jamyang Shepa Rinpoche, who is the head of Labrang Tashi Khyil monastery in northeastern Tibet (Amdo) in present day Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province. He holds several ceremonial positions namely, deputy director of the ethnicity committee of the NPC, chairman of the Buddhist Association of China and the president of China's Tibetan Language Buddhism Institution. According to an unverified source, Jamyang Shepa Rinpoche appointed Jamyang Gyatso Tsang, one of the top Geshe (erudite scholar) from his monastery to become the tutor of Gyaltsen Norbu, China's handpicked 11th Panchen Lama.

It is still unclear about Yan's other roles in TAR apart from a deputy party secretary. Usually the deputy party secretaries hold the chairmanship of several leading small groups in TAR. Leading small groups are where the TAR party committee formulates Tibet-specific policies. More importantly, Yan would likely become a full member of the central committee of the CCP at the next Party Congress. It is important to note that the number of Tibetan representation in the full and alternate categories in the 20th central committee of the CCP may vary. This has been clearly seen from previous compositions of the Tibetan representation in the central committee of the CCP from both categories.

On the other hand, Ding Ye Xian has become a deputy party secretary of Qinghai provincial party committee and the acting governor of Qinghai provincial government. Sooner or later he will take up the post of governor succeeding Liu Ning (Ch), who was transferred to Liaoning province. Ding would most likely follow the path of Hao Peng, who was a TAR's vice governor before he was transferred to Qinghai and eventually promoted to the chairman and party committee secretary of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC). While he was in Qinghai, Hao served as the provincial governor between 2013 and 2016 succeeding Luo Huining.



Penpa Tashi (Pinyin: Bian Ba Zha Xi)

Another interesting transfer cum promotion (link in Chinese) coming out of TAR is of a Tibetan party cadre Penpa Tashi (b.1964), who is from Lhodrag in Lhoka. He has been transferred to Beijing to take up the post of deputy director of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC). During his long stint in TAR, he held many significant positions such as party secretary of Nagchu prefectural city, TAR vice governor, member of the standing committee of the TAR party committee and head of the TAR propaganda department. His early career was largely spent in Beijing working in the United Front Work Department (UFWD) and eventually heading its Tibet Bureau.

This begets an important question. Who would replace Penpa Tashi as a member of the standing committee of the TAR party committee? Considering the party tradition, the replacement has to be either come from TAR government or People's Congress. The appointment of Penpa Tashi in the SEAC (མི་རིགས་ལས་དོན་ལྷན་ཁྲུན་ཁང་།) as its deputy director could be speculated in a way that the party is grooming him to become the head of the Commission. In that case, he would become





the first Tibetan to head the Commission since its inception in 1949. However, the importance and visibility of the SEAC and the State Administration for Religious Affairs (ཨིས་ཁྲུན་ས་ལས་དོན་ཁྲིམ་ཚན་པ་), the two key government agencies responsible for “ethnic” and religious affairs have been diminished substantially by virtually making them subordinate to the UFWD, where the SEAC will report to the UFWD, while the SARA and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO) will be absorbed into the UFWD as two internal bureaus. It remains to be seen a major reshuffle in TAR and other Tibetan areas ahead of the 20th Party Congress, particularly in the TAR People’s Political Consultative Conference.

* Ms. Phentok of Tibet Policy Institute contributed to this article.

Tibet in U.S.-China relations: A real politik rivalry

By Tenzin Lhadon, July 14, 2020 (Tibet.net)



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (Photo: AFP)

With the U.S. State Department announcing its new visa restrictions on Tuesday against Chinese officials involved in restricting American citizens and officials from entering Tibetan areas, their disagreement on the Tibet issue has yet again captured the spotlight. The retaliatory move under the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 is a part of recent wave of decisions by the U.S. government that has resulted in sanctions and restrictions against the Chinese government and its officials over

the last several years, most recently in reaction against Beijing’s crackdown against protesters in Hong Kong, according to Lara Jakes of the New York Times. Beijing immediately retaliated by imposing similar restrictions on U.S. officials involved in “egregious conduct related to Tibet issue”.

These tit-for-tat moves over their normative differences, reflected in the new visa restrictions, can be interpreted and defined in a real politik manner, something that has been represented only implicitly. Therefore, the Tibet issue in sense, has also been confined and limited within the normative framework, especially in U.S. – China relations. However, the geopolitical relations between great powers is rarely defined by norms but by rather hard politics. Due to the nature of this relationship, the two nations, over the past year have been involved in a tat-for-tat relationship vis-a-vis their economic and political relationship. The Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 is one such measure while the recent statement by the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo highlights both the increasing curtailing of freedom of speech and press in China as well as the U.S.’ stand





on the issue. While Beijing has constantly obstructed travel for U.S. diplomats and citizens into Tibetan areas on grounds that “China only imposed restrictions based on geographical and climatic conditions”. On the other hand, the Chinese officials and the citizens enjoy far greater access to the United States. Although the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo did not reveal who and how many of the Chinese officials would be held accountable, this will nevertheless add to the increasing rift between the U.S. and China. The widening of the rift have led some observers to believe that the two nations are entering a new Cold War era. The Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has even said that the relations between China and the United States are facing the most serious challenges since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1979.

American interest in Tibet stems from ‘fascination’ to geopolitical and ideological considerations to the current and continuing activities in raising Tibet’s profile internationally. This has prompted various U.S. lawmakers, congressmen and senators to extend their support for Tibet’s cause. From 2010 to 2020, there have been 19 bills, resolutions and law sponsored by various stakeholders in U.S. constituencies on Tibet with the latest bill (H.R. 6948), introduced by US Congressman Scott Perry, calling onto “authorize the President to recognize the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China as a separate, independent country”. Most of the U.S. legislative measures, including the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (TPA) and the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act that was signed by President Donald Trump into law, resonate United States’ rhetoric on Tibet, which is to support the aspirations of the Tibetan people to safeguard their distinct identity.

Amid rising tensions between the U.S. and China, with their relations taking a steep downturn, especially after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. has intensify its criticism of China’s handling of issues concerning Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Beijing in reaction has repeatedly warned Washington against meddling in its internal affairs. The Secretary of State earlier singled out China, together with Iran, as the worst place in the world for those belonging to a minority religion, for treating religious minorities as national security threats that require surveillance, imprisonment and sometimes death. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) also documented China’s abuses against Christians, Uighur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and others in its 2019 Annual Report, calling the State Department to designate China as a country of ‘particular concern’ for its systematic violations of religious freedom since 1999. The U.S. has also condemned the new national security law imposed in Hong Kong and shown concern over the escalating protest against the Chinese government.

In his statement, Mike Pompeo noted the United States remained “committed to supporting meaningful autonomy for Tibetans, respect for their fundamental and unalienable human rights, and the preservation of their unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity.” He further stated that international access to Tibet was a matter of regional and environmental security. Calling the Tibetan region as being increasingly vital to regional stability resonates with U.S. concerns that the geopolitical status quo in Asia is being challenged by China. China and U.S. are increasingly competing for global and regional influence particularly with the former attempting to alter the current global governance system, which it perceives as being western centric. Therefore, the recent developments such as the trade war, the visa ban on the Chinese officials, bandwagoning with the EU against ‘China threat’ etc needs to be analysed in view of these developments. The Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act is similarly a measure on the part of the U.S. to curtail China’s influence as well as assert its position in Asia.





How Ban On Chinese Apps ‘Separated’ Tibetan Exiles From Families

By Tenzin Dalha, July 7, 2020 (The Quint)

For Tibetans-in-exile, WeChat has been a primary mode of communication with their loved ones inside Tibet.

Recently, the Government of India’s Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology banned 59 Chinese apps including WeChat, TikTok, Mi Community and UC browser, saying that they are prejudicial to India’s sovereignty, integrity and national security. This one-of-a-kind blanket ban on Chinese technology companies comes in the midst of a larger demand to boycott Chinese products in the country. The ban came a couple of weeks after similar warnings were issued by Indian intelligence, where the agencies red-flagged 52 apps linked with China – noting that the apps compromise user data and extract a large amount of personal data.

How WeChat Emerged As Primary Mode of Communication In Tibet

Indian intelligence agencies have been warning and reporting on threats from spyware in Chinese Android and iOS apps over the years, advising users to be cautious about data extraction and cyber espionage against India. Calls for defending India’s tech sovereignty has been issued even by the Indian armed forces, cautioning against the dangers of Chinese instant messaging apps.

The official announcement further stated that the recommendations made by the intelligence agencies were backed by the National Security Council, signalling the concurrence of India’s highest security agency on the threats posed by these apps to India’s internal security, and their detrimental impact on data security. Indian netizens have welcomed the decision and further urged the government to take more substantial and effective measures.

Around 71 percent of Tibetan refugees in India use the instant messaging app WeChat, which is among the 59 banned apps. The world’s largest standalone messaging app – WeChat – is infamous for constantly refining its technology to monitor – and censor – content from its more than 1.17 billion monthly active users. However, with China banning foreign instant messaging and social media apps including WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter, WeChat – by default – emerged as the most viable line of communication. For Tibetans in exile, over the years, WeChat has remained a primary mode of communication with their families and loved ones inside Tibet.

Snapshot

- *Around 71 percent of Tibetan refugees in India use the instant messaging app WeChat, which is among the 59 banned apps.
- *With China banning foreign instant messaging and social media apps including WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter, WeChat – by default – emerged as the most viable line of communication.
- *For Tibetans in exile, over the years, WeChat has remained a primary mode of communication with their families and loved ones inside Tibet.
- *Although heavily censored and monitored, WeChat, among Tibetans, was symbolic of our continued wish to remain connected.

For Tibetans, WeChat Was A Symbol Of Desire To Stay Connected – Despite Surveillance

When we interviewed the Tibetan prominent activist and India’s National Director for Students of Free Tibet (SFT), Ms Rinzin Chodon, she said: “The recent announcement by the Indian government banning 59 Chinese apps is a political move sending China a strong message, as a result of the recent aggressive intrusion by PLA (People’s Liberation Army) in the Indian territory.





This will definitely have both positive and negative impact on people, especially as WeChat is the most commonly-used app to communicate with exiled Tibetans. Therefore, the banning of this app will pose great inconvenience... There surely are different alternatives, but it's easier said than done, especially for Tibetans living under 24/7 surveillance by the CCP. However, we have witnessed how the CCP use WeChat to surveil and persecute Tibetans inside Tibet, for sharing information and content as simple as a photo of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.”

Rinzin Chodon

Although heavily censored and monitored, WeChat, among Tibetans, was symbolic of our continued wish to remain connected and interact socially on various private and public issues, helping us fill – albeit with risks – our large voids in communication. However, sharing what China calls ‘politically sensitive information’ in the form of texts, photos and videos over WeChat, have led to arrests and imprisonment. Chinese authorities have arrested 10 people in Lhasa for spreading ‘rumours’ about the coronavirus outbreak on 12 Mar 2020 on WeChat.

WeChat Was A Personal & Political Tool For Tibetans In Exile

Yet, for many Tibetans, WeChat has become an indispensable part of their social lives. A Tibetan woman who had recently escaped from eastern Tibet’s Amdo Province, told this author: “I saw the news about Indian government’s ban on Chinese apps including WeChat and immediately contacted my families inside Tibet and shared the news. I once again noted all their phone numbers so that we will be able to stay in touch.” She is aware that phone lines inside Tibet are notorious for remaining jammed, and security personnel regularly listen to calls. “At least with WeChat, we were able to remain in constant touch. Now, I am more concerned.” Tibetans have also used WeChat for purposes beyond communicating with people inside Tibet. A number of Tibetans in exile use the app to form large groups, where topics – ranging from health, politics, and religion and current affairs – are vigorously discussed and debated. Dr Sonika Gupta, Associate Professor in Chinese Studies and Global Politics at the Department of Humanities and Social Science (HSS), Indian Institute of Technology-Madras, Chennai notes that the ban has put Tibetans in exile in a difficult situation.

“Since the last election campaign, WeChat has begun to be used in a massive way – both in the political and personal networks – in exile,” says Dr Gupta. “While the CTA has expressed concerns that WeChat compromises the security of users and their families, it has not been possible for the CTA to discontinue its use. The ban by the Indian government will achieve this but at a visible human cost, especially to those Tibetans in exile, a large part of this group includes young Tibetans who arrived in India in the 1990s to study in Tibetan schools, most without any accompanying family members.” Dr Sonika Gupta, Associate Professor in Chinese Studies and Global Politics, IIT-Madras.

Tibetans Once Again Plunged Into Eerie Silence Of Not Knowing’

WeChat provided a heavily censored and dangerous communication line between Tibetans in Tibet and India. Nevertheless, it was a medium that helped families remain connected over exciting news as well as mundane daily routines. Friends and old classmates shared memories, and teachers and students shared their learnings. With this one move, it seems that the Himalayas have grown taller, and Tibetans have once again been plunged into the eerie silence of not knowing. The 59 Chinese apps banned by the government have been taken down from Google App Store and Apple Play Store in India, blocking avenues of their access respectively.





Dalai Lama, an Environmentalist: A Commitment of 70 Years

By Tempa Gyaltsen Zamlha, July 5, 2020 (The Quint)

As the Dalai Lama turns 85 this year, his dedication towards the environment has not dimmed in the slightest.

“I was born in a small village called Taktser, in the northeast of Tibet, on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Wood Hog year of the Tibetan calendar, that is, in 1935,” writes the Dalai Lama in his first ever biography *My Land and My People*, published in 1962. Eighty-five years since then, on 6 July 2020, people across the world will be celebrating his birthday and his life’s work of promoting universal peace and compassion. As commendation of the Dalai Lama’s immense global contribution to world peace and religious harmony, he has being hailed as one of the world’s most respected, admired and influential living figures. The focus of the Dalai Lama’s colossal endeavours extends from the cause of the Tibetan freedom struggle to universal ethics to bridging the gap between science and religion. Yet another vital aspect of his professed goals towards which he has consistently worked for has been calling for wildlife conservation and environmental protection ever since he took political responsibility of Tibet in 1950. From ordering measures for forest protection, banning hunting during the period of independent Tibet, ending poultry farming, supporting vegetarianism in the exiled Tibetan community in India, calling for tree plantation and wildlife protection in Tibet, highlighting ecological importance of the Tibetan Plateau, and urging for global cooperation on climate change — the Dalai Lama has consistently worked for environmental conservation for the last seven decades.

An Environmentalist: A Core Principle

Environmental conservation has been a core principle of the Dalai Lama. This principle has been clearly represented in the Three Main Commitments of his life. After the devolution of all political responsibility to a democratically elected leader of the Tibetan people in 2011, the Dalai Lama evocatively stated that he would continue to devote his life to three main commitments — the promotion of human values, the promotion of religious harmony, the preservation of Tibet's spiritual heritage and protection of its environment. The last commitment reaffirmed his lifelong objective of striving for environmental conservation. Such a significant pledge from the Dalai Lama, who is both the most revered person in Tibet as well as a deeply admired global figure, immensely strengthen the cause of environmental conservation.

Furthermore, the Dalai Lama has been a strong supporter of global cooperation on climate change and global warming. His statement, during the 1992 address to the Parliamentary Earth Summit at the Rio Earth Summit, reads: “I believe that to meet the challenge of our times, human beings will have to develop a greater sense of universal responsibility. Each of us must learn to work not for his or herself, family, or nation, but for the benefit of all mankind.” In a video message to the delegates of Paris Climate Summit in 2015, Dalai Lama rightly noted that human beings are responsible for the current climate crisis and that it is not a question of one nation or two nations, but a question of humanity affecting the whole world. In a similar manner, the Dalai Lama sent another written message, delivered by hand by this author, to the Conference of Parties (COP 24) and its delegates on 20 November 2018, the message states: “I extend my greetings and prayers to my dear brothers and sisters, delegates to the 24th Conference of Parties (COP24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ... I would sincerely like to thank all of you who have selflessly and tirelessly put effort into creating a better environment for the world so that future generation will be able to live a healthy, happy life.”





First Nobel Laureate to be Recognized for Their Environmental Conservation Effort

The Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for his decades' long commitment to a peaceful struggle, even in the face of extreme aggression for the restoration of freedom in Tibet. However, he also became the first Nobel Laureate to be recognised for his motivation and concern towards global environmental problems as well. In a press release, dated 5 November 1989, on their decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wrote: "The Dalai Lama has developed his philosophy of peace from a great reverence for all things living and upon the concept of universal responsibility embracing all mankind as well as nature. In the opinion of the Committee, the Dalai Lama has come forward with constructive and forward-looking proposals for the solution of international conflicts, human rights issues, and global environmental problems." This recognition was a significant milestone in the Dalai Lama's endeavours for environmental conservation, one that has been supplemented and strengthened by a global acknowledgement of his efforts as an environmentalist.

A Continuing Quest for the Environment

As the Dalai Lama turns 85 this year, his dedication towards the environment has not dimmed in the slightest but continues to grow stronger. The strength behind such dedication stems from the core principle of environmental conservation that is one of the foundational pillars of his belief while he increasingly advocates for a more compassionate human society and a positive relationship with the global environment.

His three commitments to the world have seen him transcend the perception of being a Buddhist or a Tibetan leader to a global figure that is respected and revered across borders, religions, cultures, and politics. As a consequence of such recognition, the Dalai Lama has been able to highlight the importance of environmental conservation, achieve long lasting results and become not just a beacon for compassion and universal ethics, but also as one of the most important ambassadors for environmentalists all over the world.

A Geo-strategic Importance of Tibet: China's "Palm and Five-Fingers Strategy"

By Tsewang Dorji, July 2, 2020 (The Taiwan Times)

China warned India that it will open new fronts in the Himalayas soon after the violent face-off took place between Chinese and Indian soldiers in Ladakh along the Indo-Tibetan border, which will cost heavy load for both India and China. At the height of coronavirus crisis in the world, all the media have focused on China's military aggressions in Ladakh and Sikkim. But the root cause of China's military incursions across the Indian Himalayan borders is barely known by the Indian public. This article aims to explore the geo-strategic importance of Tibet is a fundamental strategic blueprint for the protracted India-China dispute over the Indo-Tibetan border. China's military aggressions in India, Bhutan and Nepal is strategically designed by the Chinese communist leaders' perception that Tibet is the palm and Himalayan regions are the five-fingers. China considered Tibet as the palm and Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh as the five-finger.





Physical Map of Tibet (Credit: TEW)

In the early 20th century, British India adopted its forward policy towards Tibet for expanding her market and at the same time, British desired to establish Tibet a buffer against the Czarist Russia's threat to India. British successfully made Tibet a buffer state between Russia, China and British India after British India's short invasion of Tibet in 1903. Subsequently, Chinese nationalists viewed British invasion of Tibet as a security threat to China from its backyard. British left India in 1947. The Communist Party of China established the People's Republic of China (PRC) on October 1, 1949. After that,

China invaded Tibet in 1950. Subsequently, centuries old a zone of peace between India and China disappeared. After China's occupation of Tibet, the first ever Sino-Indian military face-off was seen in the world's highest border – the Himalayas. Since then, more than thousands of Chinese military incursions took place across the Indian Himalayan borders. By invading Tibet, China asserted Tibet as a treasure of its strategic asset to speed up China's expansionist policy towards the Himalayan nations and beyond. And also, China's militarization of the Tibetan plateau triggered the geopolitical tensions in South Asia. China sees Tibet as a strategic passage to extend China's geopolitical ambition in South Asia. Mao Zedong, the founding father of PRC and firm believer of Tsun Tzu's strategic doctrine – “the Art of War”, strategized Tibet as the palm of China to expand its sphere of influence in South Asia. China invaded and occupied Tibet in order to bring the “five-fingers” Himalayan regions under its supremacy.

The 2017 Doklam stand-off and recent China's occupation of a Nepali village Rui Gaun of Gorkh district are just tip of the iceberg of China's military aggressions in the five-fingers Himalayan regions. Today, China is actively encroaching in the Himalayan borders of Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh for further encircling India to boost “China's Strategy of Encirclement India”, which aim to an encircle India through different fronts.

Professor Ashok Kapur rightly illustrated “China's Strategy of Encirclement India” in his book entitled “India and the South Asian Strategic Triangle”, where he writes “The China's India war of 1962 created a military front in the Himalayan regions. The PRC-Pakistan strategic partnership has created a diplomatic with security and defence fronts against India. The encirclement of the Chinese port facilities in Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Pakistan has created commercial and trade fronts against India”. All these geostrategic tensions are strategic ramifications of China's aggressive policy towards India.

Strategically, the Tibetans were the first line of the defence for India. They ultimately safeguarded the 3,488 kilometres long border from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh. Since the disappearance of Tibet as a traditional buffer state between India and China in 1950, the two Asian giants faced military escalations in along the Indo-Tibetan border. The shifting of Indo-Tibetan border into Sino-Indian border itself has created unprecedented geopolitical enigma in the Himalayas. The centrality of Tibet issue in the Sino-Indian geostrategic relations is an ultimate resolution





for resolving the Sino-Indian dispute over the Indo-Tibetan border. The renowned international scholars on China study such as Mohan Malik, Professor Dawa Norbu and Brahma Chellaney argues that Tibet lies at the heart of the Sino-Indian relations.

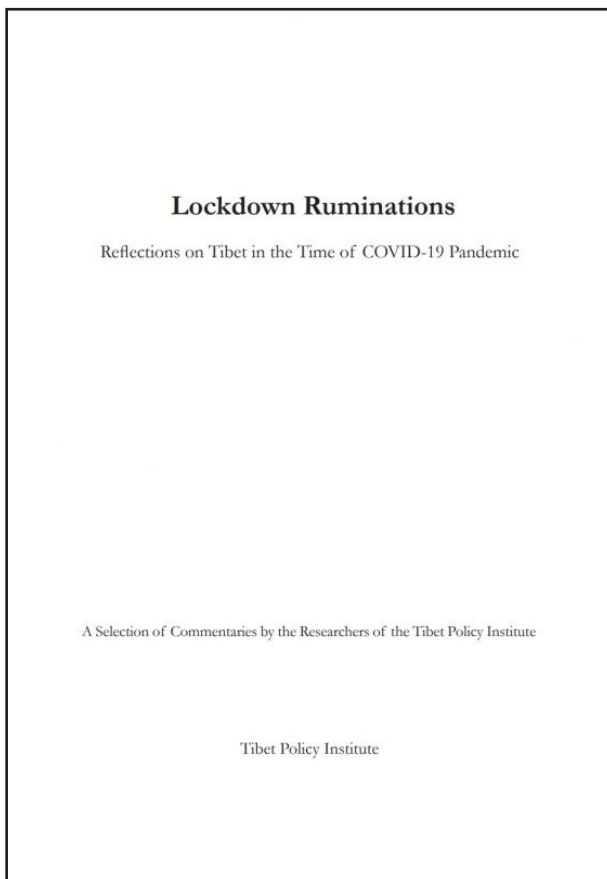
Professor Dawa Norbu explicitly stated that “The crux of the Sino-Indian strategic rivalry is this: if the Chinese power elite consider Tibet to be strategically important to China, the Indian counterparts think it is equally vital to Indian national security”. The present Chinese leadership has recognized the Tibet issue as a core issue of China’s national security and strategic engagement in South Asia. Thus, this is the right time for India to craft India’s new Tibet policy, because China’s strategizing Tibet as the China’s palm and Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh as the five-fingers of Tibet is not a rhetoric. It is happening in the Himalayas.





Lock down Ruminations

Reflections on Tibet in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic.



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EVENT

THE TIBET POLICY INSTITUTE
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5-8 October 2020 at 3.00pm IST
(Media Partner: Tibet Online TV)

Monday, 5th October 2020 (Moderator: Tsewang Dorji)

A Cultural History of Ladakh

Mr. Nawang Tsering Shakspo, author of *A Cultural History of Ladakh*

Tuesday, 6th October 2020 (Moderator: Dr. Tenzin Desal)

Tibetan Ethnicity in the Central Himalaya

Professor Ramu Manivannan, University of Madras

Tracing the trans-Himalayan connection and its significance for Central Himalayan History

Dr. Vasudha Pande Associate Professor, Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi

Wednesday, 7th October 2020 (Moderator: Tsewang Dorji)

Interactions, Connectivities and Disruptions: Narratives from Tibet and the Eastern Himalayas

Dr. Jigme Yeshe Lama, Assistant Professor, University of Calcutta

The Impact of the Lepchas Encounter with the Tibetan Buddhism in Sikkim

Dr Anira Phipon Lepcha, Assistant Professor, Sikkim University

Thursday, 8th October 2020 (Moderator: Dr. Tenzin Desal)

Imagined Geographies in the Indo-Tibetan Borderlands: Culture, Politics and Places

Dr. Swargajyoti Gohain, Assistant Professor, Ashoka University

Monks and Monasteries: Understanding change and continuity in the present era

Professor Uden Bhutia, Assistant Professor, Government General Degree College at Pedong



