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TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Monthly Translation and Analyses Digest

The Electronic Monthly Digest is a compilation of selected stories from the Chinese state media that are related to human rights and other issues related to Tibet. The publication provides translation and analyses of Chinese government propaganda publications that are otherwise available only in Chinese and Tibetan language.



In this issue

Textbooks drafted for Tibetan Buddhist monastic institutions

Political reeducation training in Lhasa

Fate of Tibetan orphan children 9 years after Yushu earthquake

Mass propaganda campaign to enforce loyalty for Party accelerates

Chinese Communist Party drafts textbooks for Tibetan Buddhist monastic institutions

Earlier this month, Chinese authorities held a high-level meeting to review the progress of a textbook project on Tibetan Buddhism. The textbooks will in due course become mandatory course material in all Tibetan Buddhist monastic institutions and the Buddhist colleges built by the Chinese authorities to cultivate patriotic Buddhists.

Chinese state media reported that the project is part of the decisions taken at the Party's 19th National Congress to prioritize "comprehensive implementation of the basic principles of the Party's religious work, adherence to the sinicization of China's religion, and

active guidance of religion to adapt to the socialist society". Since 2015, the Beijing-based Higher Tibetan Buddhist College under the guidance of the Party Central Committee has researched and drafted the textbooks for all three levels of Tibetan Buddhist academic degree system.

The editorial committee of the 'Tibetan Buddhism Three-level Academic Degree Textbook' project held its third meeting on 23 April in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. The meeting was attended by relevant officials from the Central United Front Work Department, the Sichuan Provincial Party Committee, and representatives of the monasteries. Senior representatives from all six Tibetan Buddhist colleges based in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), Beijing and provinces of Sichuan, Gansu, Qinghai, Yunnan also attended the meeting.

In the past three years, numerous textbooks have been drafted for the general course and professional course categories in Tibetan Buddhism. The former includes textbooks that are based on courses available in local colleges and universities while the latter focuses on interpreting Tibetan Buddhism according to Xi Jinping's 'new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics'. So far, 25 volumes of textbooks have been completed including 14 volumes of textbooks for general courses at the primary, intermediate and higher levels of Buddhist classes and 11 volumes of tutoring materials. Other textbooks include eight sets of five major textbooks for professional courses, totaling 135 volumes.

Some of the titles of the new textbooks are "History of the Relationship between Tibet Autonomous Region and the Motherland", "An Introduction to the Theory of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics", "Constitution and Legal Basis", "Modern and Contemporary History of China", "Basic Chinese Course", "History of Famous Patriotic Characters in Tibetan Buddhism", and 'Current Political Education'. The last textbook is edited every six months because it is based on Xi Jinping's 'new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics' and the spirit of the Party's 19th National Congress.

During his presentation at the meeting, Namlha Tashi, the deputy director of the Beijing-based Higher Tibetan Buddhist College summed up the *reason* behind the textbook project: "By improving the contents of the teaching materials, we can ensure the smooth functioning of the Tibetan Buddhism academic degree system as well as to unify thoughts, accumulate strength, lay a solid foundation to promote the textbook project, and continuously increase the strength of the patriotic united front for development and stability of TAR and other Tibetan areas in four provinces." He added that the textbooks for general courses are "distinctive, illustrated, simple and easy to understand" and "in line with the relevant requirements of the party and the state on ideological and political education".

It was announced at the meeting that the Chinese authorities had **signed** agreements with the relevant Monastery Management Committees (MMCs) of the monasteries of Labrang, Sera, Drepung, Sakya, Lubug, Somang, Tsang, Dzogchen, and others to introduce the textbooks in their monastic curriculums. The textbook project covers all six Tibetan religious traditions including Bon and Jonang.

It was revealed at the meeting that the Sichuan Tibetan Buddhist College was responsible for drafting four general course textbooks such as the "Brief Chinese History", "Public Security", "Overview of Modern Science and Technology Development" and "Contemporary China". By October 2018, the Gansu Provincial Tibetan Buddhist College had completed the drafting of two general course textbooks on the "Brief History of Tibetan Buddhism" and the "Basics of Applied Buddhism in Tibetan Buddhism (Tibetan)" both of which will soon be subjected to final evaluation. The Dechen Tibetan Buddhist College of Yunnan Province was mainly responsible for the preparation of textbooks for the history of the Red Army's Long March through Dechen. Aba, the deputy dean of the college **said** the inclusion of the Long March history into teaching materials and patriotic education is "conducive to enhancing the unity of the Han and Tibetan nationalities." The Qinghai Tibetan Buddhist College had established the Academic Textbook Compilation Committee in the beginning of 2018, the Qinghai Tibetan Buddhist

College headed by Rinchen Namgyal, Vice President of the Chinese Buddhist Association. He said the process of textbook drafting process is based on



the instructions provided in "Methods to cultivate Buddhist experts at Qinghai Tibetan Buddhist College" and "General guidelines on editing Tibetan Buddhism Three-level Academic Degree system".

Drubkhang Thubten Khedrub, member of the Standing Committee of the National Committee of the CPPCC, president of the TAR Branch of the Chinese Buddhist Association, and deputy director of the Fourth Tibetan Buddhism Academic Work Steering Committee, **stressed** the importance of taking guidance from Xi Jinping's new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics to "vigorously cultivate high-quality talents who are politically reliable, religiously accomplished, ethical, and critical, and strive to complete the historical mission of the state, and actively guide Tibetans". He further pointed out that the Party and the government attach great importance to the work of Tibetan Buddhism and are very concerned about the fostering of Tibetan Buddhist representatives, before

reminding that “it is required to resolutely resist religious infiltration from abroad and prevent religious extremism.”

In his **concluding remarks** at the meeting, Rinchen Wangdue, deputy director of the textbook committee said, “The textbook project is one of the foundations of the Tibetan Buddhism Three-level academic degree system. It is of great significance to hold a meeting at this time. First, the central authorities attach importance to it. General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized the work of textbooks especially at the symposium of teachers on ideological and political theory in schools. Second, the Buddhist colleges are in a critical period of running schools.”

Wangdue made the distinction between the 'hardware' and 'software' aspects of

'enforcing Party's religious basic religious policy. The former indicates the external infrastructure of stability maintenance in monastic institutions such as setting up of MMCs and police stations within the monastic compounds as well as deployment of human and technological surveillance mechanisms. The internal infrastructure of stability maintenance is provided by the textbook project, which enables the authorities to regularize patriotic education or political reeducation through the introduction of the politicized textbooks in the formal course materials of the monastic institutions. As Wangdue noted, “The hardware construction in all parts of the country is basically completed. The textbooks are the top priority of software. All Buddhist colleges need textbooks in the classroom.”

Tibetan Buddhist faculty members undergo political reeducation training in Lhasa

Chinese authorities held a ceremony to mark the second political **training course** for Tibetan Buddhist faculty members in Lhasa. On 10 April, the Lhasa Municipal Religious Affairs Bureau organized the opening ceremony of the second training course for Tibetan Buddhist faculty members. A total of 100 participants, mainly from the faculty and staff of the temples and counties (districts) of Lhasa, were trained for 10 days on the Party's basic religious policy.



The training is aimed at “broadening the horizons of religious circles, improving the administrative capacity of the Monastery Management Committees and the



Fate of Tibetan orphan children still accounted for 9 years after Yushu earthquake

A recent Xinhua *article* gave a glowing update of the reconstruction and development work in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. The report dated 15 April provided details on the shiny modern city that has replaced the “remote, backward town” of Yushu. It also included a brief story of a 16 year-old orphan named Lodru Gyatso who has been living in a local orphan school since he lost his father in the earthquake.

The earthquake measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale hit Yushu on 14 April 2010 and left about 3,000 people dead or missing, according to official estimates.

In an interview this month on the subject of press freedom in Tibet, a Tibetan journalist who had worked for the official Qinghai News Network for 16 years told TCHRD about hundreds of Tibetan orphans who were taken to

self-management ability and level of Monastery Management organizations, and promoting religious management.”

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A total of 100 participants were trained for 10 days on the Party’s basic religious policy.

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Chinese cities and towns purportedly for adoption.

Dolma worked as a journalist, newsreader, and editor at the network until 2012 when she left for exile in Paris. Her account of the aftermath of the Yushu earthquake raises important questions over the treatment and handling of earthquake victims particularly orphaned children by Chinese government authorities and agencies working in emergency management and disaster relief services. Below is an edited transcript of the interview:

“Amid the debris and destruction of the Yushu earthquake, about 200 to 300 Tibetan orphans were taken to China. There were many instances of such

things happening after the earthquake. I have seen and heard local people sharing stories of how certain orphans were taken away. For about five or six years after the earthquake, there were government media reports that publicized stories about Tibetan orphan children living in China supposedly adopted by Chinese parents. There were Chinese who had gone to Yushu and left with groups of 20 orphans for adoption. The government media reports showed the so-called happy lives of these orphans in their adopted homes in China. Some children were shown learning martial arts, military exercises, or attending schools.

“I remember in one instance local authorities took away 40 orphans to Beijing where they claimed a school was being built for the children. Another group of 50 orphans were also taken away but no one knew where although it was far away from Tibet. These are all scattered figures and I really wonder how many were taken away!

“Many Tibetan parents wanted to adopt the orphans but local authorities made it impossible for them to do so. They had to meet certain conditions before they were allowed to adopt such as the requirements that both parents must be employed; the employment must be of permanent nature; parents must not have more than two biological children; parents must earn adequate salaries. The conditions were so high that it was impossible to fulfill them. As a result, no Tibetan parent was able to adopt the orphan children. On the other hand, some Chinese parents were able to

adopt orphans in bulk, sometimes in groups of 20 to 30 children.

“Many Tibetan orphans have literally gone missing because they have not been seen or heard since their adoption in China. Many injured orphans who were taken to government hospitals after the earthquake did not return home and were most likely taken away seemingly for adoption in China. I truly believe that they have gone missing and their fate still remains unaccounted for.

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Another group of 50 orphans were also taken away but no one knew where

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“The tall claims made by Chinese authorities in official Chinese media that they have rebuilt Yushu and brought development to the local people are not entirely true. The development that they are talking about is concentrated in Yushu urban town while the majority of Tibetans who live in various counties and townships have been left out. To the outsiders, the shiny modern structures in Yushu town might look impressive. But their quality and design is no match for the structures that stood before the quake. For instance, there were many instances of walls developing cracks soon after the construction work was completed. They destroyed many

old buildings and replaced them with poorly-designed modern structures. In one instance, local authorities built many new residential buildings in Yushu Town to ostensibly house local Tibetans. This did not happen. Instead Chinese migrants later occupied most of these houses. Still Chinese authorities forced local Tibetans to say in media interviews that they were grateful for the Chinese government for helping them rebuild their lives. Local Tibetans have no choice but to say what they were asked to say. Before such interviews, they were thoroughly instructed on the main talking points and had to express gratitude to the Party and the State.”

Mass propaganda campaign to enforce loyalty for Party accelerates

Aside from increasing the domestic stability budget in Tibetan areas, Chinese authorities have also accelerated patriotic education campaigns to promote Party's ideology and enforce allegiance to the Chinese Party-state. Over the years, the patriotic education campaign has been implemented under various names such as 'legal education' and 'national unity' campaigns but their essential goal has remained the same: to monitor and crush any kind of dissent and critical viewpoints.

The most recent variant of patriotic education campaign known as “Four Emphases and Four Loves” is primarily aimed at farming and nomadic communities, monastic institutions as



Dolma

well as children and young people in all parts of Tibet. The ‘four loves’ campaign **requires** Tibetans to “Love the core by emphasizing the Party’s kindness/Love the motherland by emphasizing unity/Love your home by emphasizing what you can contribute/Love your life by emphasizing knowledge.”



On 12 April, the 2019 ‘Four Loves’ campaign was launched in Lhasa City. Chinese state media **reported** the attendance of more than 470 ‘representatives of the masses’ as well as representatives from Jebumgang Street, Haicheng Primary School and Guru Temple located in the Lhasa Chengguan District.

The ceremony highlighted the rigorous methods practiced by the Lhasa Chengguan city authorities to implement the campaign through “systematic educational approach and periodic workshops in order to promote guidance to all nationalities (‘ethnic groups’) and cadres to feel gratitude for the Party and follow the Party’s lead”.

According to local Chinese authorities, the Chengguan District of Lhasa City has so far carried out 20 mass education workshops and distributed more than 10,000 brochures and leaflets on the ‘four loves’ campaign.

Sonam Tsering, the deputy secretary of the Lhasa City Chengguan District Committee and the chairman of the CPPCC, was quoted as saying at the ceremony that the mass propaganda campaign is “a systematic project to strengthen the ideological and political education of the masses, consolidate the grassroots foundation, and respond to the new challenges of the anti-separatist struggle”.

On 29 April, a workshop was held to train the cadres working as “grassroots and cultural propagandists” in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) County in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.

More than 90 propaganda committee members as well as propaganda and cultural cadres from 22 townships (towns) and 5 Monastery Management Committees (bureaus) attended the training.



Chinese state media **reported** that the participants in the training would become the backbone of the Party’s grassroots propaganda in Kardze County and cooperate with the county Party committee to carry out various activities and regulations. The primary mission of all training participants is to become a good transmitter of the Party’s voice and the major conduit to implement the ‘Four Loves’ campaign in the farming and nomadic communities in Kardze County.

Since March this year, Chinese authorities have carried out the ‘Three Loves, One Adherence’ propaganda campaign in 1300 villages, village committees, schools and

monasteries in Chamdo Prefecture, TAR. The campaign emphasizes love for the Chinese motherland, the Party and the hometown and adherence to the country's law and constitution. The campaign involved more than 20,000 cadres and workers providing mass propaganda to over 200,000 farmers and nomads.



In early April, two meetings were held in quick succession by the TAR branches of the Communist Youth League (CYL) and the plen Pioneers (YP) in Lhasa. The meetings underline the renewed importance given to the role of young people including children and youth in promoting the Party's political and ideological priorities and expanding the work of Party building in grassroots communities to combat any challenge to the Party's power and position.

The third plenary session of the sixth TAR Young Pioneers was held on 10 April in Lhasa. The meeting highlighted Xi Jinping's



speeches on children and a series of important instructions for the work of the Young Pioneers, particularly excerpts from Xi's speech on ideological and political theory in school and the political enlightenment and values of children at the teachers' symposium.

The meeting announced that in 2019 the YP branches at all levels in TAR would focus on educational activities aka ideological and political education by strictly integrating school education, family education and social education. In addition, training of various young pioneers at all levels will be strengthened.

On 11 April, the second plenary session of the 10th TAR National Committee of the Communist Youth League was held in Lhasa. At the **two-day meeting**, it was announced that by 2022, which is the 100th founding anniversary of the CYL, the TAR CYL branch would strive to

reverse the weakened form of CYL’s grassroots influence in TAR and significantly enhance its role in Party building.

The meeting also decided to set up eight special committees under the TAR CYL national committee to further develop party building, strictly govern the CYL, deepen the reform of CYL, build grassroots youth organizations, promote ideological and political leadership of youth, promote youth rights and crime prevention, promote rural revitalization and poverty alleviation, etc.

As subsidiaries of the Party, both CYL and YP are used to unite young people of all nationalities in PRC under the Party leadership to preserve the one-Party rule. Children above the age of six are targeted for recruitment in YP while young people between the ages of 14 and 28 are encouraged or lured to join the CYL given that the CYL membership comes with various benefits and incentives. The institutional support and recent expansion of both organisations have led to the acceleration of political indoctrination campaigns in schools and universities. For instance, the goal of YP is to **promote** “indoctrination of children by cultivating [positive] feelings of the Party and the socialist motherland.” The YP membership oath requires its young members to “promise to follow the lead and teachings of the Chinese Communist Party, to study well, to work well, to labor well – to prepare myself and sacrifice all my energy for Communism.”

While the reforms announced in 2017 claim to provide greater representation and power to children vis-a-vis their adult grassroots counselors, there is little doubt that the reforms are primarily aimed at **tightening** ideological control in light of the Party’s efforts to increase and expand its networks and influences at all levels of grassroots organisations and communities.

