

National Tibetan Uprising Day

~Tibetan Martyrs Day~

Perth March 10 Rally ~ Sun 8th March 2015



March 10

a day, that holds momentous historical significance, for Tibetans, both within occupied Tibet, and for those who have sought refuge around the globe.

March 10 represents the very aspirations of the Tibetan people, for a future which is free from Chinese government rule.

Known synonymously as *Tibet Uprising Day*, *National Tibetan Uprising Day*, *Tibetan Martyrs Day*, or simply as March 10, this date is commemorated by Tibetans, embodying their hopes for a future in which they can determine their own lives. March 10, is a day of remembrance, a day which many Australians can relate to, for it is not unlike ANZAC Day, or Remembrance Day.

Except that for Tibetans, their country was not saved; for Tibetans, their country is still being occupied; for Tibetans, the horrors that were inflicted by the NAZI's in World War II, have not gone away. For Tibetans, the nightmare which is portrayed by the NAZI's, is a reality, which Tibetans continue to live, to this very day. This analogy is not misplaced, in representing the *horrors*, the *torture*, the *genocide* and the *human rights abuses*, which have been perpetuated within occupied Tibet, by the Communist Chinese Party (CCP), who have held iron rule over China and Tibet, since coming to power in 1950.





Local Perth Tibetan Dharma scholar and teacher, Venerable Geshe (*equivalent of a PhD in Buddhist Philosophy*) Jampel Senge, a highly regarded Tibetan Buddhist monk, described the dire situation which Tibetans face today: *“Tibetans have no other means of expressing their misery than to burn themselves. The treatment of Tibetans in Tibet takes place with impunity and bears similarities to Nazi Germany’s Gestapo style killing of Jews in WW2.”*

It was on this fateful day, *“March 10, 1959, that the Tibetan Nation rose up against the Communist Chinese aggression against Tibet. Tibetans from all walks of life made a beeline to Norbu Lingka, to protect their sovereign leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who they feared was about to be kidnapped by the communists.”* Venerable Geshe Jampel Senge elucidated.

“The communists used brute force and massacred 87, 000 Tibetans on this fateful day. It culminated in the flight of His Holiness the Dalai Lama into exile, followed by some 80,000 Tibetans. Today there are over 150,000 Tibetans spread across the globe. All of them will be remembering this dark day with immense sadness, while at the same time fired by patriotism for their lost nation,” Ven. Geshe Jampel Senge said.

“Despite the brutality and inhumanity they’ve suffered at the hands of Chinese dominance for more than half a century, Tibetans are more united and more determined than ever to restore their country to its rightful owners; that is, the Tibetan people.”

“Since 2009, 136 Tibetans have torched themselves to let the outside world know of the extreme suffering of their people under Chinese Communism. No nation on this planet has had such a phenomenal number of self- immolations” Ven. Geshe Jampel Senge continued.

Unfortunately, on the eve of March 10, *“Norchuk, a 47 year old Tibetan nomad from Trotsuk village in Ngaba, became the 137th Tibetan to take up self-immolation as a form of protest against Chinese rule,”* reports Phayul News, *“she died on Sunday night.”*

*137 Tibetans have set themselves on fire, an act of protest, where no other form of protest is permitted. A violent act committed against the very nature of one’s own self-preservation; within a violently oppressed, occupied nation; a nation whose very culture deplores committing harmful acts against, not just other people, but against all living beings. **This is their only voice.***





TAGWA Chair, June Lowe, commented on the difficulty of maintaining media traction on this issue, given the passage of 56 years and the ongoing suppression of information and the increasingly influential role of the Chinese government.

"However, the length of this history should be cause for increased public concern, as the human rights situation in Tibet continues to deteriorate annually"
Ms Lowe said.

On 7 February 2015, the Tibet Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) released its 2014 Annual Report of the human rights situation in Tibet, noting that despite promised reforms, the situation in Tibet continues to deteriorate. The TCHRD Annual Report highlights deaths in detention, collective punishments, and restrictions on the right to freedom of assembly and association.

"Many young Tibetans, who protested their grievances by simply writing lyrics to highlight their plight, have been arrested by the authorities and are receiving prison sentences that range from 2 years to 13 years," Ven. Geshe Jampel Senge explained.

TCHRD has built a Political Prisoner Database, which now includes information on 2,110 known political prisoners. Prisoners are tortured, beaten and denied medical care, and an increasing number of Tibetans have died because of their treatment in detention.

Collective punishments are illegal under International Law. However, the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) warns that entire families and villages will be punished following a self-immolation protest. Protests are met with violent reprisals.



"There are over 70 Tibetan writers, singers and bloggers who have been imprisoned for the 'crime' of trying to preserve their culture and way of life," Venerable Geshe Jampel Senge said, adding, *"The occupying Chinese Government hides these acts of suppression behind a smoke screen of 'internal affairs of China' or 'sovereignty' and blame HH the Dalai Lama (rather than themselves) as the source of this unrest."*

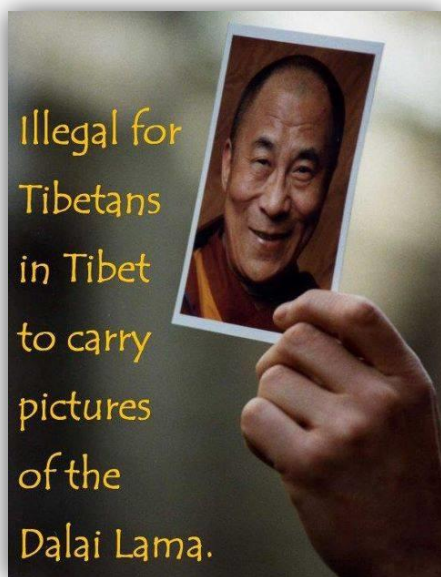
"They have criminalised self-immolators and punished and imprisoned their families. Those who try to save these burning people are thrown into jail, and the sanctioned and brutal reaction of police is to beat them with truncheons as they writhe in pain," Ven. Geshe Jampel Senge further explained.

TCHRD records show that healthcare and education in Tibet are at the lowest levels experienced anywhere in the Peoples Republic of China (PRC). Tibetan people are treated as second class citizens in their own land. Many schools do not teach the Tibetan language with Mandarin being the compulsory language in education. Tibetan language classes organised by parents are often banned.

Monasteries are the last place where Tibetan culture is taught. However, there are official policies to restrict the size of monasteries and limit the access of younger people.

On 23 Feb 2015, Chinese authorities in the Northwest provinces of Amdo announced that the young monks returning home for Tibetan New Year (Losar) would not be allowed to return to their monasteries and must enrol on local schools as lay students.

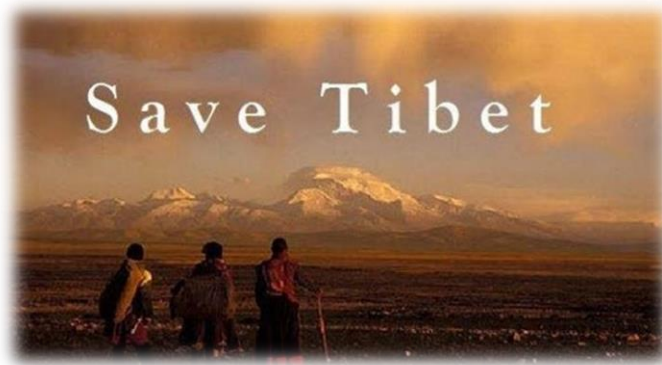
In Tibet, demonstrations of allegiance to HH the Dalai Lama are a dangerous affair, even owning a portrait of the Dalai Lama, is illegal and can result in severe punishments.



"Tibetans are at present facing the dire consequences of an oppressed and imprisoned people. There is now, no escape from their situation, as China has built the equivalent of the Berlin Wall along the border of Tibet - with the cooperation of cash starved Nepal. The Tibetan culture continues to be eroded and the people are gagged and held captive under Communist China's war of attrition," said Ven. Geshe Jampel Senge.

"There is no other point in Tibet's history," other than March 10, writes Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), "that (an event) continues to touch our lives so intimately and one that continues to inspire generations of the courage, resilience and the hope of the Tibetan people and one that continues to fuel the Tibetan freedom movement. Fifty six years later, Tibetans are still filled with the same devotion and passion to safeguard their leader and homeland from China's rule. Tibetans are still demanding independence and the freedom simply to be Tibetan – to speak their language, to practice their Buddhist religion, and to live freely in their own country. Tibetans inside Tibet are unequivocally demonstrating that they will not be controlled by Beijing, nor can they tolerate the extreme repression they have been forced to endure for the past six decades."

"Chinese are extracting Tibetan natural resources all over Tibet causing irreparable environmental damage by poisoning rivers and land. An example of this is the case of the disaster on 29th of March 2013 when 83 gold miners were killed in a massive landslide 70 kilometres from Lhasa. Whenever Tibetans protest, they are silenced with intimidation and accusations of separatism," explained Ven Geshe Jampel Senge.



The Honourable Ms Giz Watson, former parliamentarian, environmental activist, and staunch Tibet supporter, drew attention to serious environmental concerns in Tibet that compounded local social justice concerns, as well as having grave global consequences. *“The Tibetan Plateau is the largest high altitude landmass on earth, and the largest fresh water reserve outside the polar ice caps,”* the Hon Ms Watson said.

“Sometimes called ‘the Third Pole’, these glaciers feed Asia’s great rivers: the Yellow, Yangtze, Mekong, Salween, Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra. Data from the International Commission on Snow and Ice reveals that the warming planet is causing the Himalayan glaciers to shrink faster than glaciers anywhere else, and could totally disappear by 2035 – only 20 short years away.

The implications for water, food and energy security for the Asian subcontinent are dire. Potentially catastrophic floods and droughts will affect over 1 billion people in China, India, Nepal and Bangladesh and trigger massive refugee crises.

Chinese government policy to forcibly remove Tibetan nomads from their traditional pasture lands is causing loss of livelihoods, increased poverty, and social breakdown as well as exacerbating environmental degradation. The impacts on the nomads themselves are obvious and deplorable, but the environmental impacts are less well understood. Having grazed these high-altitude pastures for generations, these traditional practices have become integral to the ecosystem, and the removal of the nomads’ herds threatens the world’s last systems of sustainable pastoralism and the survival of the rangelands.

Tibetan and Western scholars point out that settling nomads runs counter to the latest scientific evidence that shows the importance of livestock mobility in ensuring the health of the rangelands and mitigating the impacts of global warming

It is imperative that the Tibetan Plateau is managed collaboratively with the state and the local population, which would also help ease local tensions,” the Hon Ms Watson continued.





Ms Watson concluded, *“With correct management, the Tibetan Plateau could become a conservation buffer zone against an environmental tragedy that threatens one-fifth of humanity. We call on the Chinese Government to treat this with the utmost seriousness and urgency. We urge the Australian government to use whatever influence it has to encourage and support moves to protect the social and environmental values of the Tibetan Plateau.”*

TAGWA calls on the Australian government to establish a strong human rights dialogue with the Chinese Government. To date, official Australian commentary on Tibet has been muted, with apparent concerns about damaging emerging trade relations with the PRC.

“This fear is misplaced. Indeed, a healthy trade relationship is based on the rule of law and assertive diplomacy. Assertive diplomacy has many advantages. First, it would support the many political progressives in China, supporting democratic reforms in the country. Also, by not speaking out, we are regarded by the Chinese government as weak and vulnerable: placing ourselves at a disadvantage as a trading partner. To develop a meaningful relationship with China, means confidently standing our ground on human rights in Tibet.” Ms Lowe said.

World-wide, Tibetan supporters have echoed this call in support, commitment and solidarity with the Tibetan people in their struggle for freedom and independence.

“From every corner of the world, Tibetans and their supporters will rise up for Tibet and stand in solidarity with the Tibetan people to show them that they are not alone and that the world is responding to their calls for freedom,” writes SFT.

We call *“our governments to action, to challenge China’s repression in Tibet and to unite in action to help resolve the Tibet crisis,”* we call on our governments to *“hold Xi Jinping and the Chinese government accountable for its extreme and violent policies against the Tibetan people”* and we *“commemorate Tibetans’ courageous resistance and demand freedom and justice for the Tibetan people,”* continues a statement from SFT, which reverberates the calls of Tibet supporters around the world.





“March 10th is a day that serves as a reminder to all – especially the Chinese government – that the spirit of the Tibetans who rose up 56 years ago grows stronger every day, that a new generation of Tibetans is determined to complete the struggle that began over half a century ago and that a growing global community stands in solidarity with them in their fight for freedom,” the SFT March 10 statement concludes.

Venerable Geshe Jampel Senge echoed this sentiment, humbly stating, *“With each remembrance of this tragic day, the Tibetan people simply ask that others be aware of the human rights violations that have taken place and continue to this day, and that when countries choose to recognize Chinese ‘sovereignty’ in Tibet, (for whatever reason), it is an endorsement of a brutal, unjustified and disrespectful form of colonisation.”*



56th Tibetan National Uprising Day – Tibetan-Australian Association statement

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/tagwa/56th-tibetan-national-uprising-day/793263170749137>

National Tibetan Uprising Day – TAGWA Perth March10 Rally statement

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/tagwa/-national-tibetan-uprising-day-rally-perth-/794200430655411>

Students for a Free Tibet #March10 Statement on 56th anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day

<https://www.facebook.com/Robert.A.F.Thurman/photos/a.10150127677196842.299435.13120816841/10153313658056842/?type=1>

(See also, Katherine Morton, ‘China and Environmental Security in the Age of Consequences’

Asia Pacific Review, 15:2, 2008: 52-67; and International Tibet Council,

‘Tibetan Nomads hold vigil in Chengdu to protect the grasslands’, 30.1.2015).

Based on the above linked statements.

Edited, co-written & published by dezmo hintz for TAGWA

