

# Tibet

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## PRESS WATCH

### INSIDE:

- Congressional Delegation to Dharamsala
- Testimony on Freedom of Religion
- Experiencing Tibet Lobby Day
- Petition to Secretary of State Tillerson



SUMMER 2017

*A publication of the  
International Campaign for Tibet*

INTERNATIONAL  
**CAMPAIGN  
FOR TIBET**



## STANDING TALL FOR TIBET

RICHARD GERE CALLS FOR SUPPORT ON CAPITOL HILL



(Above) Lisa Chronister created this very special stained glass frame that holds a portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

*"It is because it [ICT] is so wide ranging that I thought it was by far the best of all the possible causes I could support."*

## Member Spotlight

### Lisa Chronister, *Friend of Tibet*

Lisa Chronister is enjoying her second career as a stained glass artist in Austin, Texas after retiring in 2015 as a librarian.

Like her art, she has carried her passion for religion ever since her grad school days as a religious studies student. Although her focus then was Hinduism, she is now a practicing Buddhist. She says, "I always had a great deal of respect for the Dalai Lama, but I never felt a need to do anything until I actually started practicing meditation and practicing Buddhism." During that time of exploration and self-realization, Lisa became a member of the International Campaign for Tibet.

For the past 17 years, Lisa has been a devoted ICT member and she has been a *Friend of Tibet*—giving monthly—since 2010. She is a *Friend of Tibet* member because, "ICT is so actively involved in so many aspects of helping the Tibetan people and Buddhism in general." Lisa says that ICT "makes people aware of what is actually currently going on within Tibet, actively speaking with Members of Congress and people who can do something in their interactions with China and Tibet. And then ICT is so involved in the community in India in that it promotes the Dalai Lama's tours and his activities. So it is because it [ICT] is so wide-ranging that I thought it was by far the best of all the possible causes I could support."

Lisa was a bit reluctant to be in the spotlight but agreed to do so with the hope that more people will support Tibet every month through ICT. We hope so too, Lisa!



## FRIENDS *of* TIBET

### Become a *Friend of Tibet*

ICT members like Lisa Chronister make a special commitment to supporting human rights in Tibet by providing steady, reliable, core funding for ICT. Thanks to their regular monthly gifts, these loyal *Friends of Tibet* ensure essential funds are available for ICT to respond to emergencies and sustain ongoing program work for Tibetans.

#### Dedicated *Friends of Tibet* have made it possible for ICT to:

- Advocate on behalf of Tibetan political prisoners and refugees
- Monitor unexpected emergencies like the horrific destruction of Larung Gar
- Coordinate diplomatic visits such as the recent Congressional Delegation to Dharamsala to meet with His Holiness
- Support legislation like the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act

Benefits of the program include going green with fewer mailings, exclusive updates on ICT's work via conference calls with ICT leadership, and special discounts in ICT's online store—all while supporting the Tibetan cause in the most efficient way possible!

**Become a *Friend of Tibet* by enrolling online today at [savetibet.org/friends-of-tibet](http://savetibet.org/friends-of-tibet). To learn more, contact Brian Ahern at 202-580-6770, [brian.ahern@savetibet.org](mailto:brian.ahern@savetibet.org) or return the enclosed envelope requesting additional information on becoming a *Friend of Tibet*.**



# From the President



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Dear Friends,

I write to you in the midst of much energy and excitement at ICT as support for the Tibetan people continues to grow among Members of the U.S. Congress.

Our feature story this issue (pages 4-5) covers the most recent visit by our Board Chairman, Richard Gere—marking his third trip to Washington this year. Not only did he lead a successful two-day lobbying effort on Capitol Hill, but he also joined us to celebrate His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday among many important political leaders and friends of Tibet. Several Members of Congress took to Twitter to express their enthusiasm for the event, including Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN), who called Richard a “tireless champion for human rights and religious freedom in Tibet.”

Some of the attendees at the celebration were also members of a Congressional delegation led by Leader Nancy Pelosi, that traveled to Dharamsala, India, in May—the first such visit since 2008. I went to Dharamsala and was moved to see the warm welcome the Members of Congress received from Tibetans, including the children of the Tibetan Children's Village. You can read more about the delegation's visit on page 9.

When news of proposed budget cuts to Tibetan programs came in June, we activated our network on the Hill and have been working hard to reinstate the funds. Several thousand ICT members have helped us in this effort by writing to members of the House Appropriations Committee in support of funding for Tibet. Thank you for your collaboration!

As we go to press, senior Buddhist Lama Arjia Rinpoche has just testified about religious freedom in Tibet in front of a Congressional commission, along with Dr. Tenzin Dorjee, Nyima Lhamo, and Todd Stein, former Senior Advisor to the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues at the U.S. State Department and former ICT staff member.

And the *New York Times* has recently published coverage of our opposition to China's bid to make the Tibetan Plateau a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We spoke out against this designation because we believe it will only encourage China's efforts to displace Tibetan nomads who inhabit the plateau and safeguard its grasslands and wildlife. As a result of pressure from ICT and other groups, the Chinese government has issued a statement that it will “respect the will of local herders.” We will work hard to hold China accountable.

It is important to acknowledge that, even as we continue to move forward, we still face many challenges. More self-immolation protests have taken place since our last issue—a sobering reminder of the dire human rights situation inside Tibet. On page 10, we report with sadness those individuals who have recently chosen this form of protest, bringing the total to 150 self-immolations since 2009.

With that in mind, I hope that you will turn to page 11 to sign our petition to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and urge him to appoint a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, a role that safeguards support for Tibet in the U.S. government.

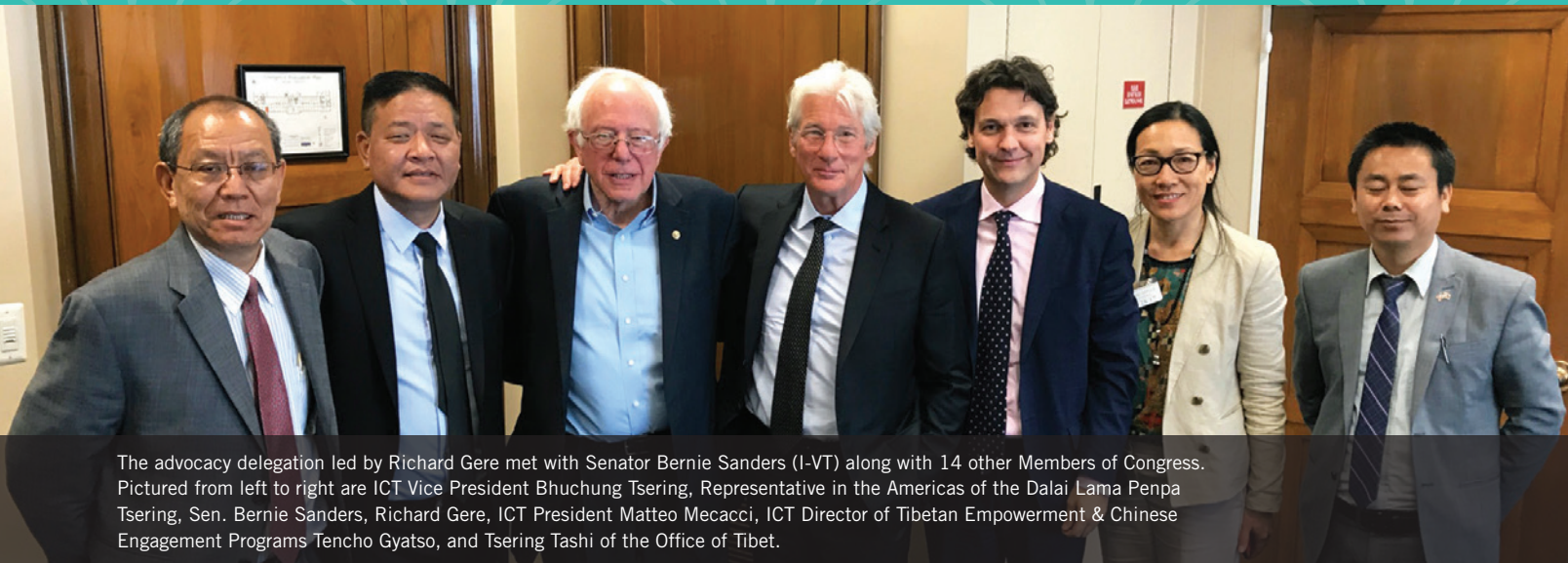
Thank you so much for all that you have done to allow us to expand our advocacy and pursue justice for the Tibetan people.

In solidarity,

Matteo Mecacci

Cover Photo: ICT Board Chairman Richard Gere spoke at a celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthday on Capitol Hill on June 27, 2017. He is pictured with several Members of Congress and staffers.

# Richard Gere on the Hill



The advocacy delegation led by Richard Gere met with Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) along with 14 other Members of Congress. Pictured from left to right are ICT Vice President Bhuchung Tsering, Representative in the Americas of the Dalai Lama Penpa Tsering, Sen. Bernie Sanders, Richard Gere, ICT President Matteo Mecacci, ICT Director of Tibetan Empowerment & Chinese Engagement Programs Tencho Gyatso, and Tsering Tashi of the Office of Tibet.

## Richard Gere Leads Advocacy Delegation on Capitol Hill & Political Leaders Gather to Wish the Dalai Lama a Happy Birthday

ICT Board Chair Richard Gere traveled to Washington, DC, this summer to lead an advocacy delegation that lobbied representatives on Capitol Hill on June 27 and 28. Joining him were His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Representative in the Americas, Penpa Tsering; Tsering Tashi of the Office of Tibet; and ICT's President Matteo Mecacci, Vice President Bhuchung Tsering, and Director of Tibetan Empowerment & Chinese Engagement Programs Tencho Gyatso.

The delegation briefed Members of Congress on the situation inside Tibet and on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's vision for the future of Tibet, as well as the importance of continued U.S. support.

Over the course of two days, the delegation met with 15 Members of Congress across the political spectrum—including leaders of the House and Senate Appropriations and Foreign Affairs Committees—who affirmed their support for the Tibetan people and their regard for His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

On the evening of June 27, ICT partnered with the Office of Tibet to host an event in anticipation of His Holiness' 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday on July 6. Prominent American leaders and devoted friends of Tibet joined Richard Gere at the Capitol Hill Visitor Center to wish His Holiness a happy birthday and assert their solidarity with the Tibetan people.

Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Representatives Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), and Jim McGovern (D-MA), along with Ambassador Keith Harper, former United States Permanent Representative to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, addressed the gathering of more than 200 people. Attendees included Members of Congress, Congressional staffers, civil society representatives, members of the Tibetan American communities in Washington, DC, Charlottesville, and Philadelphia, and members of ICT.

### THE DELEGATION'S GOALS FOR THE MEETINGS WERE THREE-FOLD:

1. Draw attention to the need to implement the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, which is the core legislation that guides U.S. policy on Tibet. The Trump Administration is mandated under the Act to undertake a series of policy initiatives, including the appointment of a U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues at the State Department.
2. Call for support for the bipartisan and bicameral Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (reintroduced in the House as H.R. 1872 and in the Senate as S.821). Demonstrating bipartisan support for the issue, the House version has Representatives Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Randy Hultgren (R-IL) as the lead sponsors while the Senate version has Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) as the leads. The Bills were introduced in the House and the Senate on April 4, 2017.
3. Outline how effective U.S. humanitarian and development assistance has been to the Tibetan people, both inside and outside of Tibet, and to seek continued assistance in the Congressional budgetary proposals and a reversal of proposed budget cuts to Tibetan programs.





(Left) Richard Gere greets Tenzin Tethong, the first president of ICT, at the gathering for His Holiness' birthday. (Right) Penpa Tsering, Representative in the Americas of the Dalai Lama, speaks at the event.

They paid glowing tributes to the Dalai Lama for contributions to peace and his efforts at making the world a better place. They also expressed their commitment to support the aspirations of the Tibetan people. Richard Gere was commended for his dedication to shining a spotlight on the plight of the Tibetan people, notwithstanding many challenges.

Speaking at the celebration, Rep. McGovern said, "Look at the political diversity you have just seen [among the speakers tonight]... We are here all together because we revere and love His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

I wish His Holiness a very happy birthday, but here's what I wish even more—that the Dalai Lama and the thousands and thousands of Tibetans who have been forced to leave Tibet and the Tibetan region be able to go home, be able to go home and live the life that they want. To be able to practice their religion and practice their traditions and celebrate their culture...

I think it's important that Congress stop talking the talk and walk the walk... It is time we implement policy... and I hope we will do that this year."

Richard Gere was the final speaker of the night. He expressed his appreciation to the Members of Congress and their staffs for supporting Tibet and to the staffs of ICT and the Office of Tibet.

Gesturing to an image of the Potala Palace in Lhasa that served as a backdrop, he mentioned that at a previous gathering with ICT members, His Holiness had pointed out his former room in the palace. Gere said, "How incredible would it be for the Dalai Lama to be back in that room?" The question was met with resounding applause from attendees.

## Members of Congress tweet their support for human rights in Tibet





# Arts & Culture



## Spotlight on French Photographer Olivier Adam

Olivier Adam is an official photographer for the Dalai Lama's teachings in Europe, as well as a student of Tibetan culture and Buddhism. Trained as a physicist, he is now a freelance photographer and teacher of photography in Paris, France.

Since 2008, Adam and his wife Dominique Butet, a journalist, have documented the lives of Buddhist nuns in the Himalayas, including Tibetan nuns in exile and former political prisoners. Their body of work, titled *Daughters of Buddha*, began in five nunneries near Dharamsala and later expanded to Nepal and Bhutan. Over that time, Adam and Butet have witnessed the positive impact of the Tibetan Nuns Project, an initiative founded in 1987 to provide Tibetan nuns in exile with education and humanitarian aid, allowing them to become well educated

and receive training in philosophical debate, formerly available only to monks. As a result, in 2016, twenty nuns from India and Nepal received the geshema degree, equivalent to a PhD in Buddhist philosophy, for the very first time in the history of Tibetan Buddhism.

Adam says that he and Butet have been "lucky to witness [the nuns'] recent evolution, that of a greater recognition of their place in society. Not only as religious people... but also in their resistance spirit—the way they take care of the Tibetan culture."

The sale of Olivier Adam's work on Etsy supports the Tibetan Nuns Project. Visit his shop at [www.daughtersofbuddha.etsy.com](http://www.daughtersofbuddha.etsy.com) and his website at [www.olivieradam.net](http://www.olivieradam.net).



Olivier Adam has generously shared his beautiful photography with ICT on numerous occasions, for which we are most grateful!



# Tibetan Empowerment Programs

## Taking a Step For Tibet

### My Experience of Tibet Lobby Day in Washington, DC

BY NANCY LINDBERG

Here we are in the United States, far from Tibet, wondering what we can and should do. Some of us have been to Tibet or exile communities in India and Nepal, and fell in love with the culture. Some of us are followers of the Dharma. Some of us are Tibetan-American immigrants or their children. Our existences are linked together, firmly or tenuously, by Tibet.

I am a Vermont native, wife of a Tibetan, mother of Tibetan-American children, past traveler in Tibet and past student and volunteer in Tibetan exile communities. In 2012, we decided to travel to Washington DC to participate in Tibet Lobby Day.

ICT had organized everything for the three-day event. The program started with orientation and lobbying practice. We learned about the “asks” for the occasion—specific, tangible requests we could make when we visited each of Vermont’s representatives. These “asks” pointed our representatives down a progressive path, one small step leading to the next, connecting Tibet to the reality of the U.S. government’s daily business.

With our children nearly grown, it was time to think about re-inventing our personal commitment to Tibet, in a way that extended beyond the bounds of our family and community. This was our next step. So it was that my husband, daughter and I found ourselves, slightly intimidated, wandering the Halls of Congress. Dressed in our best business attire, adorned with



Tibetan and American flag lapel pins and armed with khata and a briefcase full of information provided by ICT, we went forth to punctually attend appointments at each office of our state’s representatives.

Like anything in life, lobbying is a process. Prepare, practice, be on time, be thankful, get to the point, express more gratitude, take photos, share your successes, and remember to follow-up periodically when you get home.

At the first Tibet Lobby Day my family and I attended, we took a step... many steps even. My family has attended Lobby Day annually ever since that first experience. With each Tibet Lobby Day, we are grateful for the opportunity to personally tell our elected representatives something about Tibet.

**Lobby Day 2017 was held March 27–28. More than 130 Tibetan-Americans and Tibet supporters visited the offices of over 250 Members of Congress, while many others participated by sending thousands of electronic messages to their representatives. Tibet supporters also gathered in Brussels, Belgium, and Canberra, Australia to urge their elected officials to take action on Tibet.**



## Tibetan Youth Leadership Program 2017

The Tibetan Youth Leadership Program (TYLP) is a unique, week-long leadership development program for Tibetan-American college students organized by ICT in Washington, DC. This year’s program was held June 3-9 and included 12 talented young participants from across the country, some of whom were born in Tibet, Nepal, or India before immigrating to the U.S. Among them were Dean’s List students, alumni of Tibetan Children’s Village schools, athletes, youth advocates, and aspiring diplomats.

The TYLP is designed to train young Tibetans to become effective leaders within the Tibetan community by providing meaningful exposure to the U.S. political process and the discourse around foreign policy in the U.S. capital. This year’s program included workshops on Tibet activism, sessions on U.S.-China relations, meetings with Members of Congress, and visits to Human Rights Watch, the Office of Tibet, Radio Free Asia, the State Department, and Voice of America, where several students were interviewed in Tibetan.

# Leaders for Tibet Around the World



## Leader of the Central Tibetan Administration Visits Washington, DC

The leader of the Central Tibetan Administration, Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, visited Washington, DC, on May 22-25. The trip marked his first visit under the new Administration. During his visit, he met with eight members of Congress from both parties—including Senators Mike Lee (R-UT), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), and Tom Cotton (R-AR)—all of whom expressed their support for Tibet.

ICT hosted a reception to welcome Dr. Sangay to DC on May 23. Those attending included a Member of Congress, Congressional staffers, serving and former Administration officials, representatives of NGOs, staff of the Office of Tibet, many members of the Tibetan community, and ICT Board members and staff. At the event, Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA), former White House official Mike Green, Ambassador Keith Harper, and the Vice President of ICT's Board, Gare Smith, spoke about their involvement with ICT and support for the Tibetan people. In his remarks, Dr. Sangay commented on his appreciation for the work of ICT and urged continued support.

On the evening of May 24, the Sikyong spoke at the Heritage Foundation, a leading conservative think tank. His keynote address was titled "One China Policy and the Middle Way Approach of the Tibetan People." ICT President Matteo Mecacci also spoke at the event and participated in the discussion that followed.



## Tibetan Buddhist Leader Discusses Climate Change in First Visit to UK

During his first visit to the UK on May 17-28, the Karmapa, a prominent Tibetan Buddhist leader, joined former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Rowan Williams together with scientists, scholars, and cultural figures in Cambridge for a dialogue on the environment hosted by the International Campaign for Tibet and Inspire Dialogue Foundation.

The Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, head of the Karma Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism and the only Tibetan reincarnate lama to be acknowledged by both the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama, escaped into exile in India in 2000. He traces his interest in the environment to being born and brought up in a nomadic family in eastern Tibet.

The Karmapa's visit included a two-day teaching to thousands of Buddhists and others in Battersea, London; a private meeting with His Royal Highness Prince Charles, known for his passionate concern for the environment and Tibet; and an address to the Tibetan community in Britain, among other activities.

During his visit, the Karmapa spoke about Tibet's critical environmental significance as the earth's Third Pole, and on the importance of the stewardship of the Tibetan environment by Tibetan people: "When it comes to protecting the environment of Tibet, one of the best sources to consult is the Tibetan people themselves, as they have related to it for thousands of years. Knowing it inside and out, they naturally understand how to create a sustainable environment. Their whole hearts and minds are invested there. The Tibetans' traditional approach to the environment sees it as a sacred field inhabited by gods and spirits. Their outlook has great sincerity and respect for their natural world."

At the dialogue in Cambridge, ICT's Kate Saunders gave a presentation on Chinese policies of nomad settlement and the implications of China creating nature reserves on the Tibetan plateau.



## Bipartisan Congressional Delegation Led by Nancy Pelosi Visits Dharamsala, India

A bipartisan Congressional delegation led by Democratic Leader of the House Nancy Pelosi traveled from Washington, DC, to the foothills of the Himalayas in May to meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the leadership of the Central Tibetan Administration, including Sikyong Lobsang Sangay and the Speaker of the Parliament, Khenpo Sonam Tenphel. They also visited Tibetan NGOs, the children at the Tibetan Children's Village, and the artists of the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts.

The trip was part of a journey that included India, Nepal, Germany, and Belgium, with a focus on national security, the global economy, bilateral and multilateral relations, and human rights.

In 2008, Leader Pelosi led a previous bipartisan Congressional delegation to Dharamsala. Representative Jim Sensenbrenner, a Republican Member of Congress who traveled with her on that trip, served as co-leader of the May delegation. Pelosi also led a separate Congressional delegation that visited Tibet in November 2015. All three trips were organized with the support and collaboration of the International Campaign for Tibet.

Among the Congressional Members traveling with the delegation this spring was Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA), who was instrumental in introducing bipartisan legislation, the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, to promote travel by Americans

to Tibet, where access is routinely denied by Chinese authorities.

Other Members of Congress joining the bipartisan delegation were:

- Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY), Ranking Member, Foreign Affairs Committee; Energy and Commerce Committee
- Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN), Appropriations Committee
- Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA), Ways and Means Committee; Small Business Committee
- Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-OH), Financial Services Committee
- Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), Vice Ranking Member, Budget Committee; Judiciary Committee

Over the course of two days in Dharamsala (May 9-10), the delegation members spent significant time with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. They also met Tibetans from all walks of life. ICT President Matteo Mecacci, who was present in Dharamsala, commented that he was "struck by the feelings of gratitude and renewed hope expressed by the thousands of Tibetans who came out to welcome the American members of Congress."

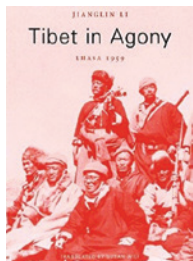


Photo credit: Office of Leader Pelosi

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE

### TIBET IN AGONY: LHASA 1959

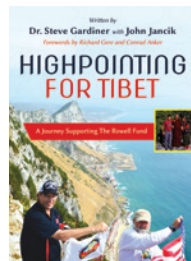
JIANGLIN LI



Chinese scholar Jianglin Li follows a diverse group of Tibetans through the historic events of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising in this book, newly translated from the original Chinese. She carefully compares Tibetan and Chinese eyewitness accounts of the unfolding crisis, and shows how they contradict official Communist Party narratives. During a book talk at ICT's Washington, DC office earlier this year, Li said translations of two more books she has written on Tibet should be released in the near future. We're looking forward to reading them!

### HIGHPOINTING FOR TIBET: A JOURNEY SUPPORTING THE ROWELL FUND

BY DR. STEVE GARDINER WITH JOHN JANCIK



Mountain climber and geophysicist John Jancik was inspired to climb the highest mountain in each U.S. state following the untimely death of his friend, the famed outdoor photographer Galen Rowell, and his wife Barbara, in a small plane crash in 2002. Jancik called this ambitious project "50 for Tibet." It would benefit the Rowell Fund for Tibet, a newly created tribute to the Rowells, providing grants to Tibetan writers, artists, and musicians.

*Highpointing for Tibet* is Jancik and climbing partner Steve Gardiner's account of the adventures they, friends, and family experienced on this journey across the U.S. and to several international highpoints in support of Tibetan art and culture. It includes more than 65 highpoint adventures and 38 photos as well as forewords by ICT Board Chairman Richard Gere and famed climber and Rowell Fund Advisory Board Member Conrad Anker. Proceeds from the sale of *Highpointing for Tibet*, available for purchase on Amazon, go to the Rowell Fund.

ICT is deeply grateful to Rowell Fund Advisory Board member John Jancik and Steve Gardiner for their dedication and generosity to The Rowell Fund for Tibet! Learn more about the Rowell Fund at [www.savetibet.org/rowellfund](http://www.savetibet.org/rowellfund).

## Ten Thousand Supporters Call for Release of the Panchen Lama



On May 17, ICT's Europe office in Amsterdam delivered a petition to Chinese President Xi Jinping calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who has been disappeared since 1995. Part of the ongoing "Where is the Panchen Lama?" campaign, the petition contained more than 10,000 signatures gathered in less than a month. Its demands included access to the Panchen Lama for UN observers and an account of his whereabouts and well-being.

On the day that the petition was delivered, more than 60 Tibetans and Tibet supporters gathered at the Chinese embassy in The Hague, Netherlands, for a special vigil to mark 22 years since the forced disappearance of the Panchen Lama by Chinese authorities. In a symbolic gesture, six year-old Tibetan Ngawang Sonam, who is the same age as the Panchen Lama was when he was disappeared, placed the petition through the mail slot at the embassy on behalf of ICT, the Tibetan community, and Tibet supporters.

## Tibet Advocates Testify Before Congress on Freedom of Religion

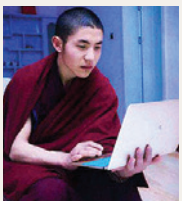


On July 12, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the U.S. Congress held a hearing on the subject of freedom of religion in Tibet on Capitol Hill. Senior Buddhist Lama Arjia Rinpoche spoke, along with Dr. Tenzin Dorjee (Commissioner for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom), Nyima Lhamo (niece of the late Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, who died in a Chinese prison in 2015), and former ICT staff member Todd Stein, who served as Senior Advisor to the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues at the State Department.

Their testimony concerned troubling legislation enacted by the Chinese government regarding the practice of Tibetan Buddhism. These include laws linking religious activity with terrorism; the imposition of state approval for reincarnations; and increased restrictions on Tibetans' religious pilgrimages to India. ICT helped facilitate the hearing and provided written testimony.

## Self-Immolation Report

Four confirmed self-immolations have occurred since our last report, bringing the total to 150 self-immolations since 2009. Each issue, we present with sadness those individuals who have most recently chosen this act of protest.



**MAY 19, 2017**

Jamyang Losel, a young Tibetan monk in his twenties, set fire to himself near the county hospital in Chentsa (Chinese: Jianzha) in Malho (Chinese: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai. He was immediately taken to a hospital in

Xining, the provincial capital, but died there, and his body was not returned to his family.

**Wellbeing: Deceased**

**MAY 2, 2017**

Reports have emerged of a self-immolation by a 16 year-old Tibetan student named Chagdor Kyab. Sources from the region told Radio Free Asia that after setting himself on fire near Bora monastery, Chagdor Kyab shouted, "Tibet wants freedom" and "Let His Holiness the Dalai Lama come back to Tibet" while he burned.

**Wellbeing: Unknown**

**APRIL 15, 2017**

Footage has emerged of a self-immolation of a Tibetan father of three, Wangchuk Tseten from Kardze Prefecture. A video shows police spraying fire extinguishers on a blackened body. It is not known if Wangchuk Tseten is still alive, although it is believed to be unlikely.

**Wellbeing: Unknown**



**MARCH 18, 2017**

Pema Gyaltsen, a young Tibetan man, carried out a self-immolation protest in Kham Nyarong. He was reportedly still alive for at least a few days following the self-immolation and was believed to be in a hospital within the provincial capital of Chengdu.

**Wellbeing: Unknown**



## CALLING ALL SUPPORTERS

### Urge Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to Abide by the Tibetan Policy Act



The Tibetan Policy Act (TPA) is a comprehensive and pragmatic expression of U.S. Congressional support for the Tibetan people that was established fifteen years ago, in 2002. Its stated purpose is to “support the aspirations of the Tibetan people to safeguard their distinct identity.”

Since its implementation, the U.S. government has taken decisive steps to abide by its mandates, which include, among other items:

- Encouraging the government of China to enter into negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama
- Establishing a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues at the U.S. State Department

Regrettably, no talks have taken place between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama since 2010. Moreover, the current administration has not yet appointed a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues to the State Department—leaving vacant this critical role, which ensures an envoy for Tibet in government and helps keep crucial support in place.

That is why we are asking for your help in urging Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to select an appointee as soon as possible.

**WE WANT TO SHOW SECRETARY TILLERSON THE STRENGTH OF OUR BASE OF SUPPORT FOR THE TIBETAN POLICY ACT AND THE URGENCY OF SELECTING A QUALIFIED CANDIDATE FOR THE ROLE OF SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR TIBETAN ISSUES.**

We ask all members and supporters to sign and return the enclosed petition to ICT in the attached envelope so that we can deliver them together for maximum effectiveness.

PLEASE CLIP HERE

## PRIORITY PETITION *to* U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE REX TILLERSON

Dear Secretary Tillerson,

I care deeply about the Tibetan people, and I am writing to remind you and the Trump Administration of your statutory obligation, established under the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, “to support the aspirations of the Tibetan people to safeguard their distinct identity.”

Of foremost concern is the appointment of a **Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues**. I support the letter (dated June 21, 2017) to President Trump from 37 Members of Congress, which states that:

“the first step toward addressing all of these problems [including ongoing human rights violations in Tibet and lack of dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama] is to name a new Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues.”

I am encouraged that both you and U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad have stated, on the record, that you will encourage dialogue between Beijing and representatives of the Dalai Lama. You further said that you will encourage China and all governments “to respect and preserve the distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of the Tibetan people worldwide.”

Please hold fast to these commitments in your engagement with China, with the understanding that now is a critical time for Tibetans, whose basic human rights and religious freedoms have been systematically suppressed.

I ask that you show your support for Tibet by abiding by the Tibetan Policy Act and naming a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Sign Here \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

INTERNATIONAL  
**CAMPAIGN**  
**FOR TIBET**

## Stay Informed, Stay Connected

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Contact Cynthia Hurst at 202-580-6775 or [cynthia.hurst@savetibet.org](mailto:cynthia.hurst@savetibet.org) to learn how you can make a difference for future generations of Tibetans.



Photo credit: Tenzin Choejor/OHDL

Celebrations in honor of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday were held at the Shiwatsel teaching ground in Leh, Ladakh, India on July 6, 2017.