



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

New Tibetan president sworn in as Dalai Lama speaks

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May 27, 2021

Penpa Tsering took over today as the new president of the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala, India at a simple ceremony on account of COVID-19 lockdown rules in place in India.

Penpa is the third directly elected Tibetan leader since the devolution of political authority by the [Dalai Lama](#) in 2011, and the second India-born Tibetan to occupy the position.

He took the oath of office today, May 27, 2021, from the Supreme Justice Commissioner Sonam Norbu Dagpo at a ceremony attended only by the outgoing president, (or “sikyong”), Dr. Lobsang Sangay.

Following the oath-taking, the outgoing sikyong handed over the seal of office, known as “Kadham Sishi Dekyi,” which was the seal of the Tibetan government introduced by the seventh Dalai Lama in the 18th century.

Dalai Lama lauds democracy

The Dalai Lama made brief remarks on the occasion virtually. While extending his best wishes to Penpa and expressing his thanks to Lobsang, the Dalai Lama said the Tibetans were a people with history, and since the time of Emperor Songtsen Gampo (7th century) and through the successive Dalai Lamas, a governmental structure had evolved.

Thereafter, after Tibetans went into exile, the system of people’s representatives was introduced, and the governance system has been proceeding along a genuine democratic path.

The Dalai Lama said Tibetans’ democratic process has been inspired by Buddhist philosophy and the Vinaya teachings of collective decision. He said the times are really changing, and China is changing, and reiterated that the [Middle Way Approach](#) was a mutually beneficial path to resolve the Tibetan problem if the Chinese leadership can really look at it from an open mind.

He also said that the small Tibetan population in exile has been able to preserve the [Tibetan Buddhist culture](#), which is a cherished treasure, and in the process opened the eyes of the international community to its logical and scientific nature and stainless continuation of the Nalanda Buddhist tradition.

The official website of the Central Tibetan Administration said more than 20,000 people from across the world watched the event live online.

Outlining his focus areas

Following the formal ceremony, Penpa made a separate public address online in which he outlined his focus areas being the resolution of the Sino-Tibetan conflict, strengthening of the democratic polity and the socio-economic welfare of the community.

Penpa said he will reach out to the Chinese government to find a mutually beneficial, negotiated, [nonviolent solution](#) to the Sino-Tibetan conflict, based on the Middle Way Approach. Such a solution, he said, can “set a good example in resolving conflicts around the world.”

He also said he “will put in every effort to seek increased interaction between Tibetans in Tibet and those in exile and work towards realizing the wish of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit China.” He expressed his solidarity with all the Tibetans who have been affected by the recent earthquake in Golog on May 23.

Penpa said one of his first tasks would be to contain the spread of COVID-19 within the Tibetan communities in India and Nepal. He said he will issue a statement on remedial measures and guidelines by the Central Tibetan Administration in two days.

Congratulation messages

Messages of congratulations to Penpa have come in from different parts of the world. European members of parliament have congratulated him, including members of the Tibet Interest Group of the European Parliament, Mikuláš Peksa MEP, Chair, Aušra Maldeikienė (MEP, EPP), Hannes Heide (MEP, S&D), Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó (MEP, NI) Antoni Comín i Oliveres (MEP, NI), Clara Ponsatí Obiols (MEP, NI), Ivan Štefanec (MEP, EPP), Patrick Breyer (MEP, Greens/EFA), Michael Gahler (MEP, EPP) and Francisco Guerreiro (MEP, Greens/EFA).

They applauded the democratic process of the institutions in exile and supported the resumption of dialogue based on the Middle Way Approach.

Michael Brand, spokesman on human rights and humanitarian aid of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the German Bundestag, also sent a congratulatory letter to Penpa.

There were tweets from [Tim Loughton](#), Conservative member of parliament from the United Kingdom, congratulating Penpa on behalf of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet.

In the US, Congressman [Jim McGovern](#), D-Mass., tweeted his congratulations and said he looked forward to working with Penpa and the CTA.

Earlier in the week, House Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#), D-Calif., sent a letter of congratulations to Penpa.

A US State Department spokesperson also [tweeted](#) this month that, “The United States congratulates Penpa Tsering on his election as the Central Tibetan Administration’s (CTA) next Sikyong. We look forward to working with him and the CTA to support the global Tibetan diaspora.”

International Campaign for Tibet

The International Campaign for Tibet offers our “Tashi Delek” and heartiest felicitations to Penpa and looks forward to working with his administration to fulfill the vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the aspirations of the Tibetan people.

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