INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

FF BE WATCH

SUMMER 2020 INSIDE:

His Holiness Speaks on COVID-19

Tale of the Four Harmonious Friends

New Compassion-Based Education Program

Petition: Help Pass the TPSA

US State Department Fulfills Important Requirement of RATA



RAISING OUR VOICES SUPPORTERS GATHER FOR VIRTUAL TIBET LOBBY DAY

The people of Tibet deserve to

SMILE... LAUGH... LIVE FREE.

100

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Photo: Olivier Adam

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Dear Friend,

I hope this issue of *Tibet Watch* finds you well. In spite of the challenges this year has brought, ICT's community of compassion pushes forward to pursue our mission of helping Tibetans in their peaceful struggle for democracy and human rights.

Our physical office in Washington, DC has been closed since mid-March. But we are grateful that we have been able to keep our entire team intact and our day-to-day operations running smoothly from home while we are apart.



His Holiness' message to keep going during this difficult time-

shared during a recent interview on ABC's "Nightline"—has been very inspiring to us: "Like our own cause, we never thought to give up. We try, try... One fail. Again effort. Fail. Again effort. That's the proper way." I encourage you to turn to page 6 to find more words of wisdom from the Dalai Lama in response to the global pandemic.

We are happy to report that a successful and reimagined Tibet Lobby Day was held in March, even as Congress was closed to in-person visits from the public. This year's event drew more than 150 participants from across the country who took part in virtual meetings with legislators and their staff. Read more about our 2020 Virtual Tibet Lobby Day successes in the feature story on pages 4-5.

We are so thankful that ICT members have continued to show their dedication and commitment to the Tibetan people during this time of uncertainty. Your response to petitions to government leaders and calling attention to China's destructive actions through social media has been nothing short of inspiring.

I hope you will continue to make Tibet a priority even as the world around us seems to be shifting on a daily basis. Your support, especially now, empowers our efforts and energizes our team.

As we go to press, I am thrilled to share that the State Department just announced that Chinese government officials responsible for keeping Americans out of Tibet will be denied entry to the US through the implementation of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act. **This news proves your support for Tibet** *does* **make a real difference. Thank you for taking action to help create change.**

And we're not stopping with the US. Our latest report, titled "Access Denied," shines a light on the lack of reciprocity in EU-China relations. And we are also working to advance pivotal legislation which we believe is crucial to the future of US policy on Tibet and China—and your help is needed. Please take a moment today to sign the petition on page 11 and add your voice to those calling on Senate leaders to guide the Tibetan Policy and Support Act to passage.

Finally, our work teaches us that the pain of those who are oppressed by the arrogance of power is universal. I want to personally thank you for choosing to support ICT in our work to craft policies and programs to spread the values of justice, tolerance and coexistence against systemic racism in Tibet. As a justice-seeking organization, we extend our solidarity to the men and women who are bravely standing up for their rights in Tibet and around the world.

In solidarity,

to Thece

Matteo Mecacci

TIBET LOBBY DAY 2020



TIBET LOBBY DAY GOES VIRTUAL

As in years prior, ICT and many of our supporters planned to advocate in person on Capitol Hill for Tibet Lobby Day 2020. However, as COVID-19 spread across the country at the end of March, Congress was closed to the public. Thankfully, our team was able to quickly pivot and take our Tibet Lobby Day efforts virtual.

Instead of traveling to Washington, DC, our team and more than 150 activists mobilized to secure and hold phone meetings on Tibet with legislative offices on March 23-24. It was not easy to rearrange dozens of face-toface meetings into conference calls, but the response we received to this change of plans both from Congressional offices and Tibet supporters was amazing.

Our discussions and priorities this year focused largely on the Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TPSA), which passed the House of Representatives with an overwhelming vote in January 2020. The Act is now awaiting debate and passage in the Senate before taking the final step of being signed into law by the President. Tibet Lobby Day efforts were bolstered by support from thousands of ICT members who signed two key petitions. The first urged Senators to support the fundamental human rights of Tibetans through passage of the TPSA, while the second urged the full Congress to stand with and prioritize Tibet and the Tibetan people. Tibetan-Americans alongside other Tibet advocates and supporters raised their voices to lobby the US Congress on these important points.

Tibet Lobby Day 2020 achievements include:

11,284 PETITIONS

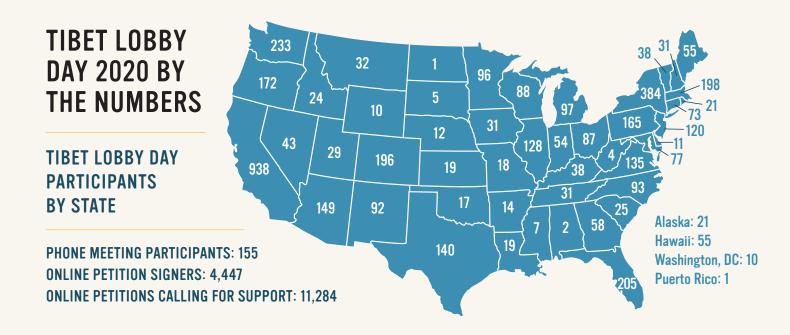
were sent by 4,447 online supporters to their elected representatives urging them to prioritize Tibet.

155 PARTICIPANTS FROM 24 STATES

held 83 phone meetings with legislators and their staff to discuss and strengthen the Tibetan cause.

Since Tibet Lobby Day, 8 MORE SENATORS HAVE SIGNED UP AS COSPONSORS OF TPSA

ICT thanks our community of compassion for overcoming the challenges of the global pandemic to keep the Tibetan cause on the legislative agenda. We could not do it without you!



REFLECTIONS ON TIBET LOBBY DAY 2020

"Lobby Day is important to me because for two days, Tibetans all across the USA come together to lobby their representatives to push for meaningful change for Tibet. I think the goal for all Tibetan communities is to do this year-round. Tibet Lobby Day can provide individuals with the training and experience to accomplish that goal."

— Olo, Massachusetts

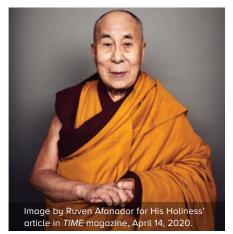
"Over the years, I have seen the practical impact of our lobbying efforts led by the International Campaign for Tibet in our nation's capital. To see the lobbying points and the bills I have presented in Congressional offices being adopted as the law of the nation continues to inspire me to lobby our Congress members and be a part of this legacy." — Lodoe, New York

"I was really nervous even though I wasn't talking with the Senator directly, but one of their staffers. I was surprised to see how supportive and interested the staffers were about the bill and the situation in Tibet." — Sonam, Illinois "This is my first time lobbying, but I have been observing ICT's work for a long time. I applaud how ICT builds and maintains relationships with representatives. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak to the Congressional representative and advocate for Tibet. It was also about updating my information and knowledge about the current situation inside Tibet. I appreciate your efforts in bringing young Tibetans to lead and lobby for Tibet."

— Tenzin, New York

"My experience was very enjoyable because I personally know all the students who participated this year, and it was so mesmerizing for me since I got to see this side of them I have never seen before. When they were speaking to the members of Congress, they had motivation and I could feel their inner activism, which was very moving." — Tenzin, California

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA Responds to Covid-19



His Holiness the Dalai Lama has offered words of wisdom concerning the novel coronavirus pandemic over the past several months. These have been published in Time magazine, included in his Earth Day 2020 address as well as featured in special messages he has issued upon request. Below are excerpts from his responses on several key topics.

Ingenuity and Courage

"[D]espite the enormous challenges we face, living beings, including humans, have shown a remarkable ability to survive. No matter how difficult the situation may be, we should employ science and human ingenuity with determination and courage to overcome the problems that confront us. Faced with threats to our health and well-being, it is natural to feel anxiety and fear. Nevertheless, I take great solace in the following wise advice to examine the problems before us: If there is something to be done—do it, without any need to worry; if there's nothing to be done, worrying about it further will not help." (Special message, March 30, 2020)

Interdependence

"We Buddhists believe that the entire world is interdependent. That is why I often speak about universal responsibility. The outbreak of this terrible coronavirus has shown that what happens to one person can soon affect every other being. But it also reminds us that a compassionate or constructive act—whether working in hospitals or just observing social distancing—has the potential to help many." (*Time* magazine, April 14, 2020)

Environment

"I came to appreciate the importance of environmental concern only after escaping from Tibet in 1959, where we always considered the environment to be pure. Whenever we saw a stream of water, for instance, there was no worry about whether it was safe to drink. Sadly, the mere availability of clean drinking water is a major problem throughout the world today. We must ensure that the sick and the valiant health-care providers throughout the world have access to the fundamental necessities of clean water and proper sanitation to prevent the uncontrolled spread of disease. Hygiene is one of the bases of effective health care." (Earth Day address, April 22, 2020)

Coordinated Global Response

"This crisis and its consequences serve as a warning that only by coming together in a coordinated, global response, will we meet the unprecedented magnitude of the challenges we face. I pray we all heed 'The Call to Unite.'" (Special message, May 1, 2020)

Hope for the Future

"As a Buddhist, I believe in the principle of impermanence. Eventually, this virus will pass, as I have seen wars and other terrible threats pass in my lifetime, and we will have the opportunity to rebuild our global community as we have done many times before. I sincerely hope that everyone can stay safe and stay calm. At this time of uncertainty, it is important that we do not lose hope and confidence in the constructive efforts so many are making." (*Time* magazine, April 14, 2020)



TIBETAN POET REFLECTS ON MANY FORMS OF PLAGUE

Acclaimed Tibetan writer and blogger Tsering Woeser has published a poem cycle in response to COVID-19. Entitled "Epidemic Three-line Poems," the cycle of

forty poems was written in Beijing as the virus spread in China. In a conversation with the translator Ian Boyden, Woeser said that oppression from the Chinese government did not abate during the epidemic; on the contrary, it intensified. That harsh reality is reflected in this excerpt (right); from Part One of the poem cycle. The full work can be found at http://chinaheritage.net/ journal/poems-from-a-plague-a-tibetan-meditation/

1.

No place exists that will not fall to the enemy No epidemic exists that is not terrifying No, there exists another plague far worse than this one

2.

"The good and bad dying indiscriminately" Anguished cries everywhere, we swallow the salt of our overflowing tears

3.

Like wild grasses, no, like garlic chives cut by the curved blades of one plague and another with unparalleled swiftness, without sound, without rest

THE FOUR HARMONIOUS FRIENDS

"The Four Harmonious Friends" is an ancient Indian Jataka tale of an elephant, a monkey, a rabbit and a bird. The story centers on four animals who work together and show respect for one another in the tradition of the Dharma.

It begins with a bird that feeds on the sprouts of a very small tree, close to the ground. Because the bird cannot fly, the tree soon grows too tall for it to reach. A rabbit comes along and lifts the bird up on its back. But the tree grows higher. Soon a monkey comes along who can climb the tree and pick fruit for the bird and the rabbit. But it cannot reach the highest branches. When an elephant comes along, the monkey climbs on the elephant's back, the rabbit climbs atop the monkey and the bird climbs atop the rabbit. In this way, they can reach the fruit of the highest branches, and all of them have enough to eat.

In other versions of the story, the four animals set out to make offerings and pay homage, with each younger animal carrying the older on his back as a sign of respect. Each animal in turn teaches the others an aspect of moral conduct and takes responsibility for leading animals of a similar kind in living a moral life. These teachings spread from animals to people, creating greater happiness and comfort in the world.

The story of the four friends illustrates the interdependence of all beings; it demonstrates how we can work together in harmony, not being afraid to ask for help and lean on one another, in order to overcome any hardship. We find "The Four Harmonious Friends" especially relevant in this time of global pandemic. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama reminds us, the way forward is through compassion in action, mutual support and respect for one another.

The image used here depicts the Four Harmonious Friends and is from a painting found at Tibetan Homes Foundation School in Mussoorie, India. Artwork like this is very popular and can be found in Tibetan schools, businesses and homes across the world.

Photo: Tenzin Lekshay

EUROPEAN LEADERS VOICE SUPPORT FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND ACCESS TO TIBET

Momentum is continuing to build in Europe in support of Tibetans' right to select their own religious leaders—and against China's efforts to cut Tibet off from the outside world.

High-ranking officials in the German federal government and the European Commission, which is the EU's politically-independent executive arm, put out statements early this year backing Tibetans on both of those crucial issues.

Their statements, which follow major legislative victories in the US, show that China's policies in Tibet are attracting greater international rebuke and that foreign governments are increasingly willing to speak up for basic freedoms and justice for Tibetans.

Niels Annen, minister of state at the Federal Foreign Office in Germany, released a statement in February saying, "The Federal Government is of the opinion that religious communities may regulate their affairs autonomously." He added, "This includes the right to determine their religious leaders themselves."



NEW ICT REPORT

Access Denied, our new report (published June 15, 2020) makes an urgent call for reciprocity in EU-China relations, especially with regard to access to Tibet. Read the full report at https://bit.ly/Tibet_access_denied.

US BANS CHINESE OFFICIALS UNDER NEW ACCESS LAW



In early May, ICT called for support of Tibet through a key petition urging Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to fulfill the promise of the 2018 Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA). RATA requires the State Department to identify the Chinese officials responsible for keeping Americans out of Tibet and forbid them from entering the US. On July 7th, Secretary Pompeo announced that the State Department has indeed restricted visas for those Chinese authorities "substantially involved" in creating and enforcing policies that keep Americans from entering Tibet. This move represents yet another sign of the State Department's intention to insist on reciprocity and to take China to task under the RATA legislation.

We are so grateful to the 2,286 ICT members who responded enthusiastically to the May petition, and the thousands more who pushed for the passage of RATA over ICT's many years of advocacy on this issue. Your support in advocating for this legislation and helping to ensure its implementation had a major impact!

ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS IN THE LAND OF SNOWS

On April 22nd, ICT recognized Earth Day by calling attention to the environmental destruction happening at the hands of the Chinese government in Tibet. Tibet's natural resources are not only breathtakingly beautiful, they are also crucial to survival: over a billion people in Asia depend on its water reserves. Recent reports from *Reuters* and the *New York Times* confirm that China's damming of Tibetan rivers has caused drought in downriver countries like Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Not only that—China's destructive policies extend to displacing Tibetan nomads from their native land, mining sacred areas, clear-cutting forests and polluting Tibet's air, land and water. As a result, the Tibetan plateau is warming three times faster than the rest of the world, and its rapidly melting ice has dire implications for monsoons in Asia and even weather in Europe.



As China continues to exploit Tibet's resources for its own economic and geopolitical interests, ICT is committed to advocating for Tibetans in seats of power around the world and publishing investigative reports that expose China's wrongdoings. On Earth Day, ICT members used the hashtag #savethethirdpole to call attention to this issue on social media by displaying "Save Tibet. Save the Planet." stickers.

SEE LEARNING OFFERS NEW COMPASSION-BASED EDUCATION PROGRAM



On May 21, 2020, Professor Lobsang Tenzin Negi of Emory University presented a virtual "Tibet Talk" for ICT members. As Director of the Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics

at Emory, Professor Negi has been instrumental in launching Social, Emotional and Ethical (SEE) Learning, an innovative new K-12 education program inspired by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Professor Negi explained that the program centers on the education of heart and mind to complement the traditional development of external, material skills through schooling. It is based in secular ethics, the basic human values that are common to us all—including compassion, kindness and forgiveness—whether or not we follow any religion. The program is designed to equip children with skills like social and emotional intelligence in order to foster awareness and compassion in responding to the world around them.

Professor Negi mentioned that emotional problems like depression develop by the age of fourteen, so providing tools that children can use to understand and manage their emotions can have far-reaching impacts on their lives. The curriculum is tailored to specific ages and includes lessons in mindful listening, dialogue, how to transform conflicts and understanding the interdependence of the world.

SEE Learning officially launched in New Delhi in April 2019, at an event attended by ICT President Matteo Mecacci. Its content is drawn from the writings of His Holiness and the work of educational psychologists and other experts. The curriculum has been translated into sixteen languages so far and incorporated into schools in 26 countries around the world.

An orientation to the SEE Learning program for educators is available

on the website at seelearning.emory.edu. Pandemic resources and at-home activities for children and parents can also be found there.

Professor Negi's discussion of SEE Learning is part of a series called Tibet Talks, conversations with engaging thinkers, leaders, activists and artists, available on ICT's website at **www.savetibet.org/live**.

MUSIC AND MANTRA

Earlier this summer, His Holiness the Dalai Lama released an album of sacred Buddhist mantras and teachings set to music. Titled *Inner World*, the album combines His Holiness' voice with accompanying music from more than 30 instruments. A portion of the proceeds from the album, which released on July 6th, His Holiness' 85th birthday, will support the SEE Learning program.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FROM ICT'S STAFF

Are you spending more time reading at home, as we are?



CAPTURED IN TIBET Robert Ford

Tencho Gyatso, Director of Outreach, recommends this book written by the first and only foreigner employed by the Tibetan government in 1950 about his experience of

being in Tibet during the final years of independence.



THE DALAI LAMA: AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE Alexander Norman

John N., Advocacy Officer, recommends this first authoritative biography of the Dalai Lama, which came out very recently.



THE 14TH DALAI LAMA: A MANGA BIOGRAPHY Tetsu Saiwai

Rinchen Tashi, Deputy Director for Chinese Outreach, recommends this graphic novel that illustrates the incredible life's journey of <u>Tibet's spiritu</u>al leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.



THE MOUNTAINS OF TIBET Mordical Gerstein

Lizzy Ludwig, Director of Development, recommends this luminous children's book about a simple Tibetan woodcutter's reincarnation.

journey to reincarnation.

Shop these books at Amazon Smile (smile.amazon.com) and please designate International Campaign for Tibet as your charity of choice. Amazon will donate a percentage of your purchase to support ICT.



Rick Hanson is a clinical psychologist, senior fellow of the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley and a *New York Times* best selling writer. He founded the Wellspring Institute for Neuroscience and Contemplative Wisdom, and has been a supporter of the International Campaign for Tibet for nearly twenty years. We spoke with him via video call from his home in California to find out what draws him to supporting Tibet and its people.

Dr. Hanson traces his interest in Tibet to his college years in the late 60s and early 70s, when he began learning about Eastern philosophy and religion. As he studied Buddhism, it became clear to him that,

"TIBET IS A TREASURE CHEST OF MARVELOUS TEACHINGS, DEEP WISDOM AND SACRED PRACTICE FOR TWO THOUSAND YEARS."

It also became clear that the country had been unfairly invaded and occupied: "I have a lot of respect for Chinese civilization. On the other hand, it is very clear that Tibet is its own country with its own people who have the right to determine their own future, and also very clear that terrible things have happened to two generations growing up under occupation."

When he learned about ICT, he remembers, "My heart said, 'I want to help." He felt ICT was skillful and effective in its advocacy for Tibet by "reaching out with an open hand of cooperation to American lawmakers." Asked what he wishes more Americans understood about Tibet, he drew a parallel to US history and the English settlers who came to America to live on their own

Member Spotlight:

RICK HANSON, LOYAL FRIEND TO THE TIBETAN PEOPLE

terms (along with, of course, many Africans brought here in slavery): "Many of us have a natural sympathy for the little guy who is being pushed around by the big guy."

Learning from a Pandemic

Dr. Hanson sees Tibetan Buddhism as a source of perennial wisdom that holds lessons for us all. Some of these are directly related to the challenges of COVID-19 that we are experiencing right now. He mentioned two essential lessons emerging from the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The first involves the value of investing in ourselves as individuals: "As long as everything is basically ok, we are sort of propped up by our daily activities and experiences. But when a pandemic comes and things fall apart, we are left with what we have cultivated inside ourselves. The lesson here is to use this time—and all times—to develop our resilience, patience, compassion, mindfulness and gratitude."

The second lesson is about investing in our communities and countries as a whole. "Like individuals, as long as a country is not seriously challenged, in some sense it can get away with undermining the common good. It's like a house that is being chewed up from the inside by termites in the walls. As long as there are no big storms, it all seems fine. But when storms comes—as theu always do-the house of the country starts falling down, and I believe that is what we are seeing today in America. We need to invest in institutions and reestablish norms that promote our common welfare—such as public health, science, a free press and general respect for the truth."

He continued: "I've been told that there is a Tibetan saying—'If you take care of the minutes, the years will take care of themselves.' We each have a remarkable power to practice with the next minute, and the one after that, and cope with it and learn from it and contribute in it. Then we can be stronger and safer together, wiser and more loving, for the sake of others as well as ourselves."

The same can be said of supporting our Tibetan brothers and sisters. At the end of our call, Dr. Hanson paused to reflect on the resilience of the Tibetan people, "The vision of what is possible that comes from Tibet has influenced my work so much—that sense of, 'We don't want to stop here, we want to keep going.' There is that fundamental valuing of awakening, of taking the next step, whatever that is, including to benefit all beings. Who knows, maybe some of that determination comes from living high in the mountains!"

Join Dr. Hanson in helping to preserve and promote Tibetan culture. Contact Brian Ahern at brian.ahern@savetibet. org or 202-580-6770 to learn about opportunities to get more involved in ICT's work.

NEW BOOK

NEURO DHARMA

Neurodharma: New Science, Ancient Wisdom, and Seven Practices of the Highest Happiness

Published in May 2020, Rick Hanson's new book

reflects his interest in deep personal practice, drawing on the combination of brain science and penetrating Buddhist teachings. It is available wherever books are sold.

CALLING ALL MEMBERS: URGE SENATE LEADERS MITCH MCCONNELL AND CHUCK SCHUMER TO HELP PASS THE TIBETAN POLICY AND SUPPORT ACT

In January 2020, the Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TPSA) passed in the House of Representatives with an overwhelming majority. The bill is currently before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, and we are pushing for it to move to a debate and ultimately a vote before the full Senate. **Please sign the below petition urging Senate Leaders Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer to steward passage of the TPSA**.

THIS LEGISLATION WILL:

- Establish as official US policy that the selection of Tibetan Buddhist leaders—including a future Dalai Lama—can only be decided by Tibetan Buddhists, free of Chinese government interference.
- Prohibit the opening of any new Chinese consulate in the US, until a US consulate is allowed to open in Lhasa.
- Extend US funding through 2025 for humanitarian programs in Tibet and Tibetan exiled communities, providing much needed financial stability.

- Protect Tibet's natural resources, including its precious water supply.
- Strengthen the international effort to find a longstanding political solution for peace.

Passage of this crucial Act has been a focus of our advocacy work for several months, including in meetings with Senate offices during Virtual Tibet Lobby Day 2020. <u>Please join us in this effort by taking a</u> moment to add your name to the petition below and return it in the attached envelope. We will deliver all ICT member petitions together to demonstrate the widespread support for TPSA.

Please take a moment to add your name to the petition below.

PLEASE CLIP HERE & MAIL YOUR PETITION IN THE ATTACHED ENVELOPE

TO: SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MITCH MCCONNELL SENATE MINORITY LEADER CHUCK SCHUMER

FROM: A CONCERNED CITIZEN

As a strong ally of the Tibetan people, I am writing to urge you to facilitate and encourage passage of the Tibetan Policy and Support Act.

This bipartisan bill will significantly enhance US support for the Tibetan cause through key provisions, including rejection of China's ultimate affront to religious freedom in Tibet: the Communist government's unconscionable scheme to pick an illegitimate Dalai Lama.

I hope you will show your compassion for the oppressed people of Tibet, and I thank you for your leadership on this important human rights issue.

Sincerely,		
Sign Here		
Name	State2	Zip Code INTERNATIONAL FOR TIBET



1825 Jefferson Place, NW Washington, DC 20036 **savetibet.org**

Stay Informed, Stay Connected

Via our websites and social media, keep informed about the Tibet movement and the work of ICT. Like us, follow us, share us and help us spread the word.



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((ADDRESSEE 1)) ((ADDRESSEE 2)) ((ADDRESS1)) ((ADDRESS2)) ((CITY, STATE ZIP))

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Compassionate monthly supporters help ensure that ICT continues the critical work of shining a light on the injustices being suffered in Tibet—every day, every month, all year long.

JOIN FRIENDS OF TIBET: Enroll online today at savetibet.org/FriendsofTibet. To learn more, contact Brian Ahern at 202.580.6770 or brian.ahern@savetibet.org.

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA CELEBRATED HIS 85th BIRTHDAY!

"Dear Brothers and Sisters, I would like to thank you all for your greetings on the occasion of my 85th birthday... I am touched by your affection. I am in good health and look forward to live long to continue being of some service to humanity..."

With my prayers and good wishes, Dalai Lama

Excerpt from July 7 Thank You Letter from His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Photo: Olivier Adam