

INTERNATIONAL
CAMPAIGN
FOR TIBET

TIBET WATCH

WINTER 2020

INSIDE:

Tibet 2020

Special Coordinator for
Tibetan Issues Appointed

Portraits of Courage:
Extraordinary Tibetans

US State Department
Releases Report on
Access to Tibet

Petition: Stand Up for
Tibetan Political Prisoners

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET
presents

TIBET TALKS

Conversations about Tibet with engaging thinkers, leaders, activists and artists

STARTING MOMENTARILY

PROF. TENZIN DORJEE
US Commission on International Religious Freedom

Why Tibetan religious freedom matters
and my role on USCIRF

Thursday, May 7
1 pm EDT / 10 am PDT




**OUTREACH &
ADVOCACY**

GYALPO, JOHN, TENCHO



U.S. POLICY TOWARD TIBET
Two-Thirds Majority Needed for Passage

ON MOTION TO SUSPEND THE
RULES AND PASS, AS AMENDED

	YEA	NAY	PRES	NV
DEMOCRATIC	229			3
REPUBLICAN	163	21		13
INDEPENDENT		1		
TOTALS	392	22		16

U.S. HOUSE TIME REMAINING 0:00 C-SPAN

2020
FINDING STRENGTH IN ADVERSITY

A close-up photograph of two young Tibetan boys. The boy on the right is in the foreground, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He has short, dark hair and is wearing a green school sweater over a blue and white checkered shirt. The boy on the left is slightly behind him, smiling broadly with his eyes closed. He is also wearing a similar green school sweater. The background is softly blurred, showing hints of a wooden structure and greenery.

FLAME OF HOPE

MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE

You Can Make **2x the Difference** for Tibetans

ICT Board Chair Richard Gere and a group of friends
will generously match your year-end gift!

savetibet.org/matchmygift

Photo: Tenzin Choejor

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Dear Friend,

2020 has been a year of unprecedented uncertainty and challenge for us all. But here at ICT, it has also been a year of advocacy, a year of innovation, a year of perseverance and a year of certain progress.

I have thought many times of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's words: "Hard times build determination and inner strength." In so many ways, that has been true for us at ICT and for our movement. I hope it has been true for you as well.

Over the summer, we launched our *Tibet 2020* campaign (pages 4-5), encouraging members of our community of compassion to make their voices heard by the US presidential candidates. With your help, we let them know why Tibet matters and asked them to include Tibet in their platforms. As we go to press, while we do not yet know the outcome of the election, both candidates have committed to making Tibet a part of their agenda. That means the precedent set by past leaders on both sides of the aisle will continue, and Tibet will remain an important part of US diplomacy with China over the next four years. *Thank you for helping to achieve this remarkable success!*

New legislation has been another major focus this year. We are now beginning to see the promise of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 fulfilled. This summer, the State Department released a report detailing concrete examples of how the Chinese government restricts access to Tibet. And they have since taken the step of actively banning Chinese officials from entering the US who play a role in restricting access to the Land of Snows—a major sign of the US' commitment to fully implementing the RATA provisions, that we now intend to extend to other countries. Turn to pages 6 and 8 for additional details.

Meanwhile, the Tibetan Policy and Support Act remains at the forefront of our efforts. It unanimously passed in the House in January, and we await its vote in the Senate with cautious optimism. Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) are working hard to make sure it is signed into law this year.

And, after more than three years of intense advocacy by ICT members like you, the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo appointed US Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, Labor and Democracy, Robert Destro as the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues. While this represents concrete progress, we want to make sure that with few months remaining in the current administration, the commitment of the US government on Tibet is sustainable through the work of the office of the Special Coordinator. Read more on page 4.

I ask you to take a moment now to lend your support to the petition on page 11. It urges the US Secretary of State to speak up for Tibetan political prisoners in dealings with China. According to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, there are currently hundreds of Tibetan political prisoners suffering behind bars for their nonviolent resistance to Chinese oppression. We are working hard to get them released, but we need your help.

As we approach the close of 2020, I want to thank you for all that you do to shine a spotlight on the plight of our Tibetan brothers and sisters, and give them a voice in the halls of power.

On behalf of our entire team at ICT, I send our warmest wishes to you and yours for a happy, safe new year.

In solidarity,



Matteo Mecacci





TIBET 2020



THE NEXT FOUR YEARS ARE CRUCIAL FOR THE UNITED STATES—AND FOR TIBET

As the United States approached the November elections, the International Campaign for Tibet launched a campaign to raise awareness among the presidential candidates of China's ongoing and escalating oppression of Tibetans.

ICT's *Tibet 2020* campaign mobilized member outreach to the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates, urging them to keep Tibet a priority—and to include the Tibetan issue in their foreign policy agendas and platforms going forward. The campaign spotlighted the Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TPSA), which mandates that the ad-

ministration "support the aspirations of the Tibetan people to safeguard their distinct identity."

Tibet 2020 also asked the candidates to commit to the congressionally mandated appointment of a **Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues at the State Department**. According to the TPSA, "The central objective of the Special Coordinator is to promote substantive dialogue between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives."

The campaign also urged the presidential candidates to call for reli-

gious freedom for Tibetan Buddhists; demand that China open Tibet to the outside world; push for the protection of Tibet's fragile environment; and encourage the resumption of dialogue toward a peaceful resolution of the Tibet issue.

For decades, the US has supported the Tibetan people in their non-violent struggle against Chinese oppression. And American political leaders from both parties have taken actions to ensure the preservation of Tibet's cultural and religious heritage.

ICT President Matteo Mecacci said: "As the United States faces with increasing concern the expansion of influence of the Chinese government's authoritarian model and policies throughout the world, including in the US, it is crucial that the Tibetan people continue to receive and see an expansion of the bipartisan support that both Congress and past administrations have guaranteed."

Over the last four years, we have seen unprecedented bipartisan action from Congress and the executive branch to push back against China's bullying tactics both at home and abroad on a variety of issues, including with the passing of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018—and its continued implementation by the State Department—and with the introduction of the Tibetan Policy and

SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR TIBETAN ISSUES APPOINTED

On October 14th, Secretary of State Pompeo announced Assistant Secretary Robert A. Destro of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor will serve as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues. *Thank you for your support in advocating for this appointment.*

While we welcome this announcement—as the post has remained empty for the

past three years—the appointment of the Special Coordinator below the Under Secretary of State level will make it more difficult for the Administration to implement longstanding US Tibet policy. Moreover, it will be regarded by the Chinese government as a message that the Administration has downgraded the priority it gives to Tibet.

ICT is committed to ensuring that Special Coordinator Destro will fulfill the central objective of his role to promote dialogue between Dalai Lama envoys and Chinese government leadership. However, we urge the State Department and the new Administration to avoid creating a precedent to appoint the Special Coordinator at this lower level in the future.

Support Act, now under consideration in the Senate.

Legislation is a key element of policymaking, but its effectiveness depends on the implementation and articulation by the executive branch. For this reason, we called on

our members and Tibet supporters across the US to participate in *Tibet 2020* and engage the presidential campaigns of both parties to publicly state their strong support for the aspirations of the Tibetan people.”

Thousands of ICT members respond-

ed enthusiastically to our *Tibet 2020* outreach, making their voices heard via petitions, donations, phone calls to their representatives and social media messages. Thank you so much for helping make sure Tibet remains a priority for our government leaders.

TIBET TALKS HIGHLIGHT THE IMPACT OF ADVOCACY



As part of our *Tibet 2020* campaign, ICT hosted several live, online conversations as part of the *Tibet Talks* series (savetibet.org/live) with engaging thinkers and leaders in the Tibet movement and in US government. Greg Craig, the first US special coordinator for Tibetan issues; Ambassador Paula Dobriansky, who was special coordinator from 2001-09; and former Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) were among the recent guests.

Their discussions touched on Tibet moments in US history, the future of the Land of Snows and the deep bond between Tibetans and Americans. In addition to serving as the special coordinator, Craig went on to serve as White House Counsel to President Obama, while Dobriansky was the Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs.

During Dobriansky's tenure, a very powerful moment occurred in 2007 when His Holiness the Dalai Lama received the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award in the US. Rep. Ros-Lehtinen was among those who helped lead

the effort to award this prestigious honor to the Dalai Lama. By presenting His Holiness with the medal in the Capitol Rotunda, President George W. Bush became the first sitting president to meet with the Dalai Lama in a public setting outside the White House.

Bush and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) “came together, and they recognized him,” Dobriansky said. “And that was very significant in terms of demonstrating the importance that we attach to religious freedom and the importance of everything His Holiness is very much about.”

Craig recalls being the first US official to invite a Tibetan official for a meeting inside the State Department when he began meeting with Lodi Gyari, the special envoy of the Dalai Lama. “Having that meeting opened a door that had not been open prior to that,” Craig said.

Such breakthrough moments in Washington, DC helped show the impact of advocacy for Tibet, which has transformed the Tibetan issue into a passionate cause for many lawmakers in the United States. As Craig noted, the special coordinator position only came into being because of strong bipartisan support from members of Congress.

Rep. Ros-Lehtinen, who was an outspoken supporter of Tibet during her three decades in Congress, ex-

plained how the advocacy of Americans has helped Tibetans—and how it will continue to do so under the next administration. “Never underestimate the ability of a single person to move hearts and open minds,” she said. Ros-Lehtinen also encouraged Tibetan Americans to get involved in the political process, including by running for office.

These exchanges demonstrated the importance of ICT's *Tibet 2020* campaign, which called on members to tell the candidates for president why Tibet matters this election year—and beyond.



**AVAILABLE NOW:
TIBET TALKS
PODCAST**

Learn why Tibet matters in today's world. Listen to our *Tibet Talks* podcast, featuring interviews with engaging thinkers, leaders, activists and artists.

Our guests include politicians, professors, psychologists and bestselling authors, who will explain why Tibet inspires them and how it can impact you.

www.savetibet.org/pod

ICT HOSTS VIRTUAL SUMMIT FOR YOUNG TIBETAN AMERICANS

On June 3rd, ICT hosted a virtual gathering that brought together Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA), Ambassador for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback and nearly 50 Tibetan American youth activists from around the country, ranging from high school students to college graduates and PhD candidates.

The event, which included a special edition of *Tibet Talks*, took place in lieu of ICT's annual Tibetan Youth Leadership Program, which the organization was not able to hold this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Part of the program was live-streamed on Facebook and on ICT's website, and featured a discussion between Congressman McGovern, Ambassador Brownback and four graduates of the youth leadership program: Tenzin Rangdol (2015), Nima Binara (2001), Tenzin Pelkyi (2013) and Tenzin Jangchup (2013). The four expressed joy that ICT was

able to host an event for youths this year, even though it had to take place online rather than in person.

The graduates spoke to the US leaders about their own personal experiences as Tibetan Americans; the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA); and the pending list of Chinese officials to be denied entry to the US by the State Department under requirements of RATA, at the time not yet announced. They also discussed China's plan to name their own successor to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

McGovern told the youths his trip to Tibet "only reinforced my commitment to be an advocate for human rights for the Tibetan people, and I'm so happy to be allies with so many of you. What you're doing is important work, it's the right work, so I thank you for that."

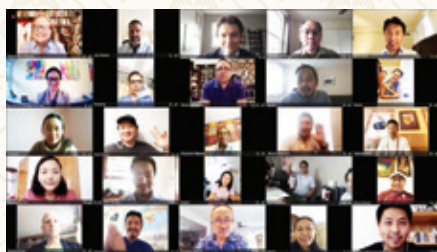
The congressman said Tibetan Americans' advocacy has helped



lead to Congress passing more Tibet-specific bills over the past few years than at any other time in US history. Brownback agreed that the outlook for future US support for Tibetans is promising. He also told the youths they can find plenty of opportunities to engage in advocacy within the US government.

Following the *Tibet Talk*, the youths had a private interactive session with Matteo Mecacci, ICT President, as well as ICT's Vice President Bhuchung K. Tsering, and Director of Outreach Tencho Gyatso. ICT leadership opened the floor for the attendees to ask questions and seek advice on further supporting His Holiness' vision for peace and justice for Tibet.

GOVERNMENT LEADERS TRAIN TIBET ACTIVISTS



Political leaders, government officials and activists gathered virtually on September 10th to provide advocacy training, advice and resources to Tibetan Americans and Tibet supporters at a special webinar organized by ICT. More than 40 people representing nearly 20 Tibetan associations across the United States attended.

The webinar began with ICT Vice President Bhuchung K. Tsering delivering a presentation in the Tibetan language about the need for

a change in the mindset concerning advocacy by Tibetan Americans. ICT President Matteo Mecacci also provided advice and updates on key Tibet-related legislation.

Bethany Poulos, foreign affairs advisor to Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), then took questions from the participants on Congress' priorities and action for Tibet. And Jonathan Stivers, the staff director of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China for Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA), offered an overview of the wide-ranging work of the Commission to promote human rights and the rule of law in China and Tibet, as well as tips on how to engage with US institutions and their staff.

"Our special advocacy training webinar encapsulated so much of what ICT is all about: uplifting the Tibetan people, partnering with leaders on Capitol Hill and building toward a

brighter future for Tibet with the help of new generations," ICT Director of Outreach Tencho Gyatso said.

The event was part of ICT's continuing efforts to empower the Tibetan American community—and an element of its *Tibet 2020* campaign.

ICT STAFF SHARES THOUGHTS FROM HOME

Although our office has been closed since March, ICT's work goes on! Our staff collaborated to film a video update from our homes, where we are working together (but apart) to advance our mission for Tibet.

Watch now at
<http://bit.ly/ICT-staff-message>.



PORTRAITS OF COURAGE

Tibetan Mirror is a project by Virginia-based artist Losang Gyatso that honors Tibetans known for their extraordinary courage and creativity. Colorful digital Pop Art renditions of portraits are published of Tibetan artists, activists and personalities, accompanied by interesting stories about each figure and his or her contribution to the Tibetan cause or Tibetan civilization.

"Each of them are exceptional and amazing for different reasons, but if I had to choose a favorite so far, I'd probably go with Rongye Adrak [a Tibetan herdsman and father of eleven who spoke out against Chinese oppression and was imprisoned for eight years]. His story is about an everyman who has just had enough abuse, sees through all the machinations of oppression and stands up to speak the truth for the benefit of his countrymen, without a shred of fear for his own comfort and safety," Gyatso said.

To read about the incredible featured Tibetans, visit [@tibetan.mirror](#) on Instagram or [@TibetanMirror](#) on Facebook.

Losang Gyatso was born in Lhasa, Tibet, but has lived most of his life in the UK and the US. He started making art in the early 1990s while working as an advertising art director in New York City.



US STATE DEPARTMENT RELEASES NEW REPORT; BANS CHINESE OFFICIALS

As part of the implementation of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA), the State Department in August released to the US Congress its second annual report assessing the level of access to Tibet granted to US citizens. The report covers the year 2019.

The report confirmed, as last year's did, that the Chinese government "systematically impeded travel to the [Tibet] Autonomous Region (TAR) and Tibetan areas outside the TAR for US diplomats and officials, journalists and tourists in 2019." It also described concrete examples of the systematic restrictions and discrimination suffered by US citizens while trying to visit the TAR or other Tibetan areas.

According to RATA, this report represents the basis for the sanctioning of Chinese officials by the State Department, which Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on July 7th. In response, the Chinese government vowed to retaliate with restrictions of its own.



On July 9th, ICT welcomed the United States' decision to bar Chen Quanguo, the architect of mass human rights violations in the TAR, from entering the US.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement that Chen and two other senior Chinese Communist Party officials who are serving in Xinjiang—known to Uyghurs as East Turkestan—are banned "for their involvement in gross violations of human rights." We are hopeful that additional Party officials will be prevented from entering the US in keeping with the provisions of the RATA legislation.

RICHARD GERE TESTIFIES IN SENATE ABOUT CHINESE RESTRICTIONS

On June 30th, the chairman of the International Campaign for Tibet spoke before a Senate subcommittee about how Chinese censorship and travel restrictions hurt US interests, particularly when it comes to Chinese-occupied Tibet.

Richard Gere, the world-famous actor, social activist and philanthropist, was one of four witnesses at the "Censorship as a Non-Tariff Barrier to Trade" hearing held by the Senate Finance Committee's Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs, and Global Competitiveness.

Throughout his testimony, Gere emphasized that China's censor



ship complements its refusal to give American journalists, businesses and ordinary citizens the same level of access to China—and especially Tibet—that their Chinese counterparts have to the United States.

Noting that Americans have a strong interest and appreciation for Tibetan people, Gere said: "The Chinese government highly restricts access to Tibet for Americans—including journalists and politicians—like no other areas of China, while Chinese citizens face no such limitations when they visit the US. They go where they want."

Visit <https://bit.ly/Richard-Gere-Testifies> to watch Richard Gere's full testimony.

UN OFFICIALS EXPRESS CONCERNS TO CHINA



On August 1st, five UN human rights experts and expert bodies raised concerns about Tibet's "disappeared" Panchen Lama and Beijing's reincarnation rules, citing fears about Chinese interference in the succession of the Dalai Lama.

In a statement to the Chinese government, the experts expressed concerns about the Chinese government's ongoing refusal to disclose

the whereabouts of the 11th Panchen Lama. Additionally, they said the Chinese government's rules on the appointment of Tibetan Buddhist leaders "may interfere and possibly undermine, in a discriminatory way, the religious traditions and practices of the Tibetan Buddhist minority."

The experts appealed to the Chinese government "to ensure that Tibetan Buddhists are able to freely practice their religion, traditions and cultures without interference."

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS CALL FOR STRATEGY FROM POMPEO AFTER CHENGDU CONSULATE CLOSURE

A bipartisan group of 110 US representatives have written to the State Department to raise concerns about China's closure of the US consulate in Chengdu—a critical vantage point for monitoring human rights in Tibet.

In a September 10th letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the members said that they "urge the Department to send to Congress a strategy

for continued monitoring of human rights" in Tibet and Xinjiang.

The consulate in Chengdu, which served as a main gateway to Tibet, closed in July under orders from the Chinese government. The letter notes that even before the consulate closed, US access to Tibet was heavily restricted.

TIBET TALK FEATURES AUTHOR BARBARA DEMICK



Photo: Madeleine Grant

ICT recently hosted Barbara Demick, author of the *New York Times*-reviewed *Eat the Buddha*, for an online *Tibet Talk* with Director of Outreach, Tencho Gyatso. The book, which the *Times* called “a brilliantly reported and eye-opening work of narrative nonfiction,” focuses on Ngaba, where the majority of self-immolation protests have taken place.

Demick said she was working as bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times* in Beijing when she discovered an interest in Tibet. As with her earlier books, here she hones in on a microcosm of the larger place by looking at one small town.

During her talk, Demick shared some impressions of life under Chinese rule—gathered from speaking to Tibetans in Ngaba—including the feeling that “If Tibetans are going

to accept Chinese rule, they want to be treated as Chinese citizens.” She also mentioned the “constant criticism of the Dalai Lama, which is really painful for people.” With regard to the lack of basic freedoms, she spoke about restrictions on Tibetan language and commented on the need for children to have a strong mother tongue, which aids their intellectual development.

Demick said she felt uneasy as an outsider writing about Tibet, but decided it was important to do so because, “It’s so difficult for Tibetans living inside Tibet to tell their own stories and even for Tibetans who leave, there is the threat of repercussions.”

Watch the hour-long *Tibet Talk* with Barbara Demick at www.savetibet.org/live.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE



**EAT THE BUDDHA:
LIFE AND DEATH IN
A TIBETAN TOWN**
Barbara Demick
Penguin Random House, 2020

In the powerful *Eat the Buddha*, Barbara Demick traces the history of the Tibetan town of Ngaba, as she did with the North Korean city of Chongjin in her award-winning book *Nothing to Envy*. Demick interviewed Tibetans from all walks of life—nomads, intellectuals, monks, a princess and more—to depict life in Ngaba from the first disastrous moment of contact with the Chinese Communist Party up until the present. Highly recommended.



**THE JEBUMGANG TEMPLE:
RITUAL ARCHITECTURE AND
THE DEFENSE OF THE
MODERN TIBETAN STATE**
Matthew Akester
Garuda Books, 2019

Tibet scholar Matthew Akester’s book explores the story behind the Jebumgang Temple, a lesser known

construction built in Lhasa just before the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama. Akester unearths an interesting story while investigating the origins of the temple, although he assumes a fairly advanced level of background knowledge on the part of the reader in regards to Tibetan Buddhist politics.



**THE DALAI LAMA: AN
EXTRAORDINARY LIFE**
Alexander Norman
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2020

As the title suggests, this biography of the 14th Dalai Lama tries to place his actions in the context of Tibet’s history and culture to show why his life has been remarkable—perhaps even more so than it already appears. Norman worked with the Dalai Lama to write *Freedom in Exile* and later wrote a history of the Dalai Lama lineage, so he has enjoyed personal access to the Dalai Lama.

The result may be the most detailed biography of the Dalai Lama to

date, but it isn’t without some flaws. Surprisingly, Norman mistakenly asserts that the Dalai Lama visited Bhutan during his escape from Tibet in 1959 and created a diplomatic issue; he did not enter Bhutan at the time. Also, some readers might disagree with Norman’s treatment of a few episodes, most notably the Dolgyal controversy.



**HIS HOLINESS THE
FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA:
AN ILLUSTRATED BIOGRAPHY**
Tenzin Geyche Tethong
Interlink Books, 2020

Written by a trusted aid to the Dalai Lama for forty years, this book features more than 400 photographs and documents and includes a personal message from His Holiness as well as memories and interviews with many of those who know him well. The author worked in collaboration with His Holiness’ youngest brother, who escaped Tibet with him in 1959, to create this intimate portrait.

Member Spotlight:

TENZIN CHODON, ICT MEMBER SINCE 2000



Tenzin Chodon came to the US from Dharamsala, India, in 1991 as part of the Tibetan-US Resettlement Project. Now a resident of Fairfax, Virginia, she is an avid reader, a lover of classic movies and a 20-year member of the International Campaign for Tibet. We recently spoke with Tenzin via video chat and learned about her early days in the US and her hopes for the Tibetan people.

"When someone asks where I'm from, I have to stop and think about it for a minute because there are so many stories behind me," Tenzin said. Like many Tibetan Americans, her life has spanned several countries and cultures. The Resettlement Project brought her from Dharamsala, India to Boise, Idaho, where she lived with a sponsor family for three months before renting a house with other newly

arrived Tibetans and finding hourly work to pay the bills. As with many Tibetans who came to the US through the Resettlement Project, her two daughters and her husband, who was employed by the Tibetan government in exile, stayed behind in India while she established a life here.

The community she met in Boise was very supportive, helping her learn about American traditions. But coming to the US showed her a stark difference between Tibetan and American cultures: "Our Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) school motto is 'others before self,' while in America it's 'me first.'" She remembered fondly the community atmosphere at the TCV school where she spent her childhood in Dharamsala: "My school was so wonderful... The elders and all the staff put so much passion and energy into our education, hoping that this new generation would make Tibet free. The model was that everyone joined together to take care of the children, and then the children would learn to take care of others."

For Tenzin, finding her voice as a Tibet activist has been the best part of life in the US: "Studying in a textbook about history and government is so different from actually living and feeling it... now that I came to the US, I am able to vote and to raise my voice and make Tibetans' voices heard in Congress. That has been the greatest feeling of living here. I want people in Tibet to be able to experience those freedoms too... and not be under the

control of a foreign government that tells them what to think."

She spoke about her half-sister, who still lives in a small town inside Tibet. They kept in touch by phone until another relative told Tenzin she could get her half-sister in trouble "just for having a link outside Tibet." She stopped calling to avoid putting her at risk.

Tenzin's hope is that someday His Holiness the Dalai Lama's vision for a peaceful solution for Tibet will be fulfilled: "His Holiness thinks we should be working with the Chinese because we are neighbors. The goal is for Tibetans to have their own self-determination and their own faith, which is a way of life."

She continued, "I want to see my people enjoy their freedom just as I am enjoying mine and be able to live without being scared all the time. I want Tibetan culture, Buddhism and all the knowledge we have to be preserved so that the world can use it."

Tenzin sent her sincere thanks to ICT members for "keeping the Tibet issue alive at the international level, everyday, which is something we cannot do on our own."

Thank you, Tenzin, for sharing your story and for being a vital part of ICT!

Join Tenzin Chodon in working toward Tibetan self-determination. Contact Brian Ahern at brian.ahern@savetibet.org or 202-580-6770 to learn about opportunities to get more involved in ICT's work.



Photo: Tibetan Oral History Project

ICT MOURNS THE PASSING OF PALJOR THONDUP

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Paljor Thondup, who died at his home in Santa Fe in August at the age of 72.

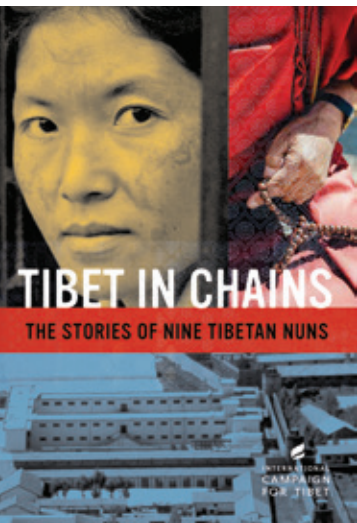
Thondup was born in the Dongpa Mayma village in the Nangchen region of eastern Tibet in 1947. When he was in his teens, following the invasion of Tibet by Chinese forces, he was part of a resistance group challenging China, eventually fleeing to India via Nepal. He later relocated to New Mexico.

Thondup was among ICT's earliest supporters and, in addition to providing counsel and support to Lodi Gyari, he also served on the ICT Board of Directors. The spiritual and cultural center he founded in Santa Fe, Project Tibet, will continue to be run by his family as a hub for the Tibetan community. His memoir, titled *Undeclared: Confessions of a Tibetan Warrior*, will be published by Tibet House US.

Paljor is survived by his wife and two sons.

CALLING ALL MEMBERS:

URGE THE US SECRETARY OF STATE TO STAND UP FOR TIBETAN POLITICAL PRISONERS



The International Campaign for Tibet has published a book titled *Tibet in Chains, The Stories of Nine Tibetan Nuns* in which nine of the nuns from the *Drapchi 14* tell their stories of persecution, torture and imprisonment as a result of their peaceful protest against Chinese oppression in the early 1990s.

The book contains vivid first-hand accounts of their lives in Tibet, their motivation to speak out in spite of the severe punishment that would follow and the horrors of their time in prison. The stories were compiled by Ngawang Sang-

drol, one of the *Drapchi 14* who was arrested at the age of 13 and served 23 years in prison for simply shouting, "Independent Tibet and long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama" in a marketplace near her home.

These women of faith survived to tell their tales and are now living in exile. *But hundreds of Tibetan men and women remain imprisoned in unspeakable conditions for their nonviolent resistance to the Chinese government.*

RAISE YOUR VOICE AND JOIN ICT IN ASKING THE US SECRETARY OF STATE TO PRESSURE THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE TIBETAN POLITICAL PRISONERS. BY SIGNING THE BELOW PETITION, YOU SPEAK UP FOR TIBETANS WHO HAVE BEEN SILENCED BY UNJUST IMPRISONMENT.

The *Drapchi 14* were 14 nuns imprisoned together in the notorious *Drapchi* prison in Lhasa, Tibet. They were known for their camaraderie and indomitable spirit, and for their recording of songs of love for their country and for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Those haunting melodies were smuggled out of prison... and out of Tibet... bringing worldwide attention to their plight.

PLEASE CLIP HERE & MAIL YOUR PETITION IN THE ATTACHED ENVELOPE

TO: US SECRETARY OF STATE

FROM: A CONCERNED CITIZEN

I'm writing to you today with concern for the hundreds of Tibetan political prisoners unjustly jailed by the People's Republic of China.

Putting their lives on the line, the Tibetan people continue to take bold steps in defending their language, religion and culture. Those currently imprisoned include a shopkeeper who petitioned the Chinese government for Tibetan-language education and a woman who celebrated the Dalai Lama's birthday with an offering of fresh fruit and cake.

Tibetan political prisoners endure harsh prison conditions including torture, deprivation of food and sleep and long periods in isolation cells. In the current political climate, even mild expressions of Tibetan cultural or religious identity can be punished by torture and arrest, and ICT has reported on Tibetan political prisoners who have died in custody.

The United States must urge Chinese government officials to release Tibetan political prisoners and allow their safe return to their families and communities. Please raise this issue at every opportunity with officials from the People's Republic of China.

Respectfully,

Sign Here _____

Name _____ State _____ Zip Code _____



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To learn more, contact Brian Ahern at 202.580.6770 or brian.ahern@savetibet.org.



At a virtual meeting of G7 leaders on September 12, 2020, His Holiness the Dalai Lama called on participants to address climate change. The meeting was hosted by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and focused on the theme "Addressing the Climate Crisis with Economic and Environmental Justice for All."

"We should think of the entire 7 billion human beings as one human community... rather than my nation or my religious group alone... thinking only of me, my nation, my group, is very narrow-minded... the future is interdependent. Now the time has come to think of the whole of humanity."

— HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

