



## ICT'S TIBET ROUNDUP — ISSUE 7

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ICT's Tibet Roundup is a twice-monthly compilation of curated news from various sources, including Chinese state media, official Chinese documents, briefings, information reported by Tibetans in Tibet and international commentary on Tibet. The roundup is organized in categories, including law, politics, culture, economics, climate and commentary. The focus is on presenting news and reports with limited analysis and editorializing.

### POLITICS

#### 1. Former teen protestor shares experience of prison labor

Namkyi, a recent arrival from Tibet and a former political prisoner, spoke about her protest experiences after maintaining a low profile since her arrival in India in June 2023. Now 24 years old, Namkyi, along with her sister, protested Chinese rule in October 2015 when she was 15. She recounted the three-year prison ordeal she had to endure after her protest.

Speaking at a [media conference](#), Namkyi described the suppression of Tibetan culture and religion under Chinese rule. She revealed the meticulous planning behind her and her sister Tenzin Dolma's protest in October 2015, during which they were arrested by Chinese police for carrying portraits of the Dalai Lama and marching for Tibetan freedom. Namkyi was sentenced to three years in prison for her participation in the march.

Recounting her prison experience, Namkyi said, "For the first three months, it was required to receive military training, 'patriotic education,' and learn the Chinese constitution. We had to undergo an oral test after studying numerous documents in Chinese and training for daily activities as prisoners. After three months, I worked in a labor camp where copper wires were produced, and my sister initially made cigarette boxes, and then we shifted to a wristwatch manufacturing camp."

Subsequent interrogation and torture in detention centers, including excessive heat, physical abuse, and deprivation of food and sleep, characterized Namkyi's 3-year-long imprisonment, during which she was coerced into confessing to trumped-up charges of "separatist acts against the nation."

After serving their sentence, Namkyi and her sister faced continued surveillance and restrictions on their freedom, compelling them to embark on a perilous journey into exile.

## **2. Chinese names predominant in new appointments to Lhoka's People's Congress**

Although Tibetans are generally well represented in the government, real power is concentrated in the hands of the Chinese within the Chinese party-state system, with the government subservient to the ruling Communist Party. This is evident in the list of [appointments](#) to the Lhoka (Shannan) Municipal People's Congress Standing Committee released on April 24. Among the seven new appointments to the standing committee, only one Tibetan name appears, while the remaining six are Chinese. It is worth noting that many Tibetans in the government have adopted Chinese names as a trend, reflecting the "Sinicization" efforts of the Chinese government.

## **3. Former Tibet propaganda chief indicted on bribery charges**

Dong Yunhu, a former Chinese propaganda chief for Tibet and Shanghai's top legislator, faces accusations of corruption. Once responsible for shaping China's message on human rights and Tibet, he now stands indicted on bribery charges, according to [South China Morning Post](#).

Allegations against Dong, 61, trace back to 1999 when he held a key role in shaping and promoting China's message on human rights and Tibetan affairs.

Dong initially trained as a philosopher and began his career at the Communist Party school, subsequently managing its School of Marxism and Human Rights Research Centre in the 1990s. Despite his academic background and published works on human rights, Dong's tenure saw him accused of corruption, as he ascended through leadership positions, including roles at the State Council Information Office and the China Society for Human Rights Studies.

## **4. Chinese spokesperson reiterates scope of dialogue position**

In response to a question from a Bloomberg reporter during a Foreign Ministry [press conference](#) on April 26 regarding back-channel talks between the Chinese government and the India-based Central Tibetan Administration, Wang Wenbin, a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, reiterated China's long-held position on potential talks. He emphasized that discussions would only occur with the personal representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Furthermore, any dialogue would focus solely on the personal future of the Dalai Lama and a select few individuals, rather than addressing broader issues of Tibetan autonomy.

## RELIGION

### 5. Party Secretary instructs party leadership and ‘Sinicization’ in Tibetan Buddhism meeting

Sheng-Yang, party secretary of Kardze (Chinese: Garze) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, gave instructions at a [special meeting](#) on Tibetan Buddhism on April 23, emphasizing the importance of upholding the party's leadership in religious affairs and adhering to the party's strategy for governing Tibet in the new era, as well as the Provincial Party Committee's arrangements for Tibet-related work. The party secretary listened to work reports from Rongdrag (Danba) County, Gyedsil (Jiulong) and Chaksam (Luding) County party committees during the meeting, which was attended by leaders from all levels of party committees and departments such as the United Front.

Implementing policy instructions from the top, Shen-Yang instructed the implementation of directives from General Secretary Xi Jinping regarding religious work, which includes following Xi's thoughts on socialism with Chinese characteristics and his expositions on religious work. Giving a lengthy speech with specific instructions on the the “Sinicization” of all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism during the meeting, the goal, according to Sheng-Yang's instruction, appears to be the Sinicization and adaptation of Tibetan Buddhism to a “socialist society.”

## DEVELOPMENT

### 6. Potala Palace peak tourist season fare limits accessibility for marginalized Tibetans

Once the winter seat of the 14th Dalai Lama and a symbol of Tibetan culture and heritage, Potala Palace has been commodified as a tourist attraction for Chinese tourists, cutting accessibility for local Tibetans.

In the midst of the peak tourism season, the Tibet Potala Palace Management Office has introduced [peak season fares](#) from May 1 to Oct. 31. Under these new regulations, full-price tickets for Line 1 of the Potala Palace are set at 200 yuan per person, with Line 2 tickets priced at 100 yuan per person. The requirement for advance reservations through the “Potala Palace Ticket Reservation System” or official WeChat account poses challenges for those without access to technology or internet connectivity, disproportionately affecting the marginalized Tibetan community.

The stringent reservation requirements, coupled with capped visitor numbers, risk marginalizing Tibetan locals from accessing their own cultural heritage site. Senior citizens over 60 and special groups are particularly

disadvantaged, as they are instructed to make on-site reservations one day in advance, subject to limited availability.

## 7. Xi Jinping directs industrial transformation in Tibet

General Secretary Xi Jinping presided over a [conference](#) on the “development of the western region in the new era” in Chongqing, directing the industrial transformation of Tibet under the CCP's slogans of “high-quality development” and “rural revitalization.” During the April 23 symposium, Xi emphasized the need to enhance various industrial parks, border economic zones and cross-border economic zones in border areas for “high-quality development.”

Furthermore, Xi instructed attendees to learn from and apply the experience of the “Ten Million Project” in China to modernize the Tibetan rural landscape. The “Ten Million Project” holds personal significance for Xi, as he initiated it in 2003 in China’s Zhejiang province during his tenure as governor to revamp and connect entire villages into industry chains.

We welcome your feedback! Send any thoughts about ICT’s Tibet Roundup and ideas for future changes to [research@savetibet.org](mailto:research@savetibet.org).



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