



ICT'S TIBET ROUNDUP — ISSUE 13

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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. CCP rising ideologue in Tibet

Between August 8-9, Pan Yue, Deputy Minister of the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and a rising ideologue within the Chinese Party-State system, visited Tibet to emphasize the importance of implementing the Party's strategies for “ethnic governance” in the Tibet. During his visit, Pan Yue highlighted the need to study and apply the principles from the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, focusing on CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping's instructions for strengthening “ethnic work” which in effect means to convert Tibetans into Chinese.

Pan Yue's emphasis on “forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation” as the main line of the Party's ethnic work raises concerns about the CCP's relentless campaign to convert Tibetans into Chinese. Pan's meetings with the CCP leaders in Tibet, Wang Junzheng, Secretary of the Party Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region, and Yan Jinhai, Chairman of the Autonomous Region, focuses on enhancing China's national unity and cohesion which inevitably leads to strengthening CCP-driven “integration policies” which aims to eliminate the distinct identity of Tibetans. In a vague imply to exporting CCP's governance model in Tibet to Xinjiang, Pan Yue “pointed out that Tibet has an important position in the overall ethnic work and is a strategic place to consolidate and achieve stability and well-being in Tibet and to develop the surrounding areas.”

2. People's Armed Police counter-terrorism drill in Tibet projects Tibetan dissent as terrorism

Tibet Corps of the People's Armed Police conducted counter-terrorism drill for "mountain capture-annihilation combat and anti-hijacking in low-rise buildings", reported the state affiliated media [China Youth Daily](#) on July 18. The specific location of the drill was not disclosed for the simulation of what the state media described as "five terrorists hiding in Mountain No. 2 intending to carry out terrorist activities against important cities."

Although Tibet has not seen any incident of terrorism nor large-scale protests in recent years, the counter-terrorism drill sheds light on how the Chinese armed police are perceiving and projecting Tibetans as "terrorists" for expressing their dissent with the party-state.

3. Grassroots propaganda event

Conducting relentless propaganda at the grass-roots level to propagate the governance of the Chinese party-state and show down the historical-traditional Tibet governance system, village work team conducted "anti-secession struggle" propaganda for the Tibetan farmers and herdsmen in Khari Village, Chagrashar (Jangraxa) Township in Lhundrub (Linzhou) County in Lhasa. Chinese [state media](#) reported that the goal of the propaganda was to "educate" farmers and herdsmen to listen to, be grateful to, and follow the Communist Party" and to make the Tibetans believe themselves as Chinese in the Chinese nation-state. Such indoctrination campaigns are being conducted across villages in Tibet as part of the broader efforts to implement the instructions chalked out during the 20th Party Congress held in October 2022.

4. Political criteria in job recruitment announcements

As highlighted in previous issues of the Roundup concerning political criteria in public job recruitment announcements, an August 8 [announcement](#) regarding the recruitment of 85 Lhoka (Shannan) college graduates by public institutions in China's Hunan and Anhui provinces for 2024 includes political criteria in its recruitment conditions. Specifically, point 4 in the recruitment conditions states that Tibetan job applicants must "oppose secession and safeguard national unity and ethnic solidarity."

Similarly, an August 3 public [announcement](#) regarding the recruitment of civil servants requires political loyalty from Tibetan university graduates applying for jobs in 2024. The announcement specifies that applicants must "oppose secession and safeguard the unity of the motherland and national unity."

These requirement underscores the political considerations embedded in employment opportunities for Tibetans, reflecting broader Chinese policies

aimed at ensuring loyalty to the state. The inclusion of political loyalty as a condition for employment highlights political allegiance as a prerequisite for Tibetans pursuing public sector roles.

5. Indoctrination summer camp

On top of holding Tibetan students in state boarding schools for intensive ideological indoctrination, the Education and the Public Security Department of the officially designated “Tibet Autonomous Region” also organize additional indoctrination summer camps for the youth. The camp ran for six days for 100 middle school students from seven cities.

The camp included immersive courses and semi-military management with courses in “patriotism education, legal knowledge, discipline education, police skills training, and mental health training” according to Chinese [state media](#) on July 31. Cai Shoukuan, a member of the Party Leadership Group of the Education Department, states the camp’s purpose as young people to “strengthen ideals and beliefs, further cultivate their love for the party and the country, forge a sense of community among the Chinese Nation, and establish correct worldview, outlooks on life and values, and correctly take the first step of their lives”.

RELIGION

6. Chinese Panchen back in Tibet for extended visit

CCP-appointed “Panchen Lama” Gyaltsen Norbu's extended visits to Tibet continue after Beijing increased his visibility in the region in recent years. Norbu, installed by the CCP as the Panchen Lama, continues his efforts to boost his prominence in Tibetan society. Meanwhile, the real Panchen Lama, Gendun Choekyi Nyima, recognized by the Dalai Lama, has remained in incommunicado detention since 1995.

Norbu holds several concurrent titles in the Chinese party-state system, including being a member of the Standing Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Vice President of the Buddhist Association of China, and President of the Tibet Branch of the Buddhist Association of China.

In his state role, Gyaltsen Norbu visited several Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in Nagchu (Naqu)’s Driru (Biru), Sog, Drachen (Baqen) counties, and Sernyed (Seni) district between July 31 and August 10 to propagate the CCP’s policies to sinicize Tibetan Buddhism. Norbu also attended social events like Nagchu’s horse racing festival and the “Rural Revitalization and Nagchu” exhibition. Chinese state media reported that during a “Three Consciousness” event, Norbu instructed the monastics to integrate the CCP’s

“Three Consciousness” campaign into their daily religious activities to realize the vision of a socialist society. As the CCP’s point person for influencing Tibetan Buddhist faithful, Norbu “stressed the need to thoroughly study and implement the spirit of the 20th CPC National Congress and the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee,” according to Chinese state media.

7. Sports activity to adapt Tibetan Buddhism to socialist society

From July 17 to 18, the Zitho Temple Area Management Committee of Lhorong (Luolong) County, Chamdo (Changdu) City, organized a "Three Awarenesses" education and "Healthy and Uplifting" sports competition for the monastic community, reported Chinese [state media](#).

While the event was framed as a sports activity, it also served as a soft approach for broader political objectives for the cadres to build “friendship” with the monks to check their thinking and behavior. The competition was meant to integrate Tibetan Buddhism with traditional Chinese culture, to foster a sense of community within the Chinese nation and promoting the adaptation of Tibetan Buddhism to socialist society, according to state media. The emphasis on integrating Tibetan Buddhism with Chinese culture and socialist values reflect broader efforts by the Chinese government to exert control over Tibetan religious practices and identity.

DEVELOPMENT

8. Points for goods at “points supermarket”

Chinese [state media](#) on July 9, reported that a rural governance points-based system has been implemented since early this year to incentivize positive behavior among Tibetan villagers in the Ngari (Ali) Prefecture, TAR, which lies in the western edge of Tibet. According to the plan, Tibetan villagers could earn points for “good behavior” and exchange them for school supplies and goods at the village “points supermarket.” For “good behavior”, Tibetan villagers are “scored on eight aspects: patriotism and love for the party, law compliance, education and propaganda, co-governance and co-construction, ideology and morality, public welfare actions, hard work and prosperity, and environmental improvement” on a quarterly basis. State media informs that the points-based system is part of the broader efforts in the Ngari region to strengthen grassroots party building and rural revitalization policy.

9. Double standards in protecting cultural heritage sites

Chinese state media [Xinhua](#), on August 8, praised General Secretary Xi Jinping as a protector of Chinese cultural heritage by highlighting an incident from the 1990s when Xi, then secretary of the Fuzhou Municipal Party

Committee, halted the demolition of Lin Juemin's former residence, a site significant to Chinese revolutionary history. [Xinhua](#) reported that Xi intervened to prevent the residence from being destroyed for a development project and implemented regulations for cultural relic preservation to safeguard Lin's residence and the city.

In contrast, Tibet faces challenges in preserving its ancient cultural sites. The 500-year-old [Wonto Monastery](#) in Derge (Dege) County is threatened with demolition for the construction of the Kamtok Dam. Similarly, the 135-year-old [Atsok Monastery](#) in Dragkar (Xinghai) County was demolished in July 2024 to make way for the Yangkhyil (Yangqu) Dam. Atsok Monastery's status as a cultural heritage site was revoked to facilitate the dam's construction.

Xi Jinping has frequently emphasized the importance of cultural preservation, stating that cultural heritage is an irreplaceable resource for China, as demonstrated by his intervention to protect the former residence of Chinese revolutionary Lin Juemin. However, the situation in Tibet highlights the challenges against Tibetan cultural heritage sites in the face of China's development priorities. While Xi has made significant efforts to preserve cultural sites within mainland China, such as implementing regulations for the protection of cultural relics, Tibetan monasteries like the 500-year-old Wonto Monastery and the 135-year-old Atsok Monastery face demolition due to dam construction.

We welcome your feedback! Send any thoughts about ICT's Tibet Roundup and ideas for future changes to research@savetibet.org.



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