



HUMAN RIGHTS *update*  
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# HUMAN RIGHTS

*update*

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TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY —

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Following is the Executive Summary reproduced from TCHRD's Annual Report 2005: Human Rights Situation in Tibet*

The year 2005 was eventful for Chinese-occupied Tibet. The fourth round of Sino-Tibetan dialogue between the Dalai Lama's envoys and Chinese representatives took place in Berne, Switzerland. The People's Republic of China (PRC) celebrated with aplomb the commemorative event of the 40th founding anniversary of the "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"), completed track laying of Qinghai-Lhasa railway project, released White Papers on issues of international concern, and unveiled its "revolutionary" 11th Five Year Plan for Economic and Social Development. President Hu Jintao's personal interest in Tibet and his direct involvement in controlling Tibetan areas is clearly evidenced by his appointment of close allies to the most important position in Tibet — "TAR" Party Secretary. In November 2005, Tibet witnessed Hu's close ally Zhang Qingli, appointed as the acting party secretary of the "TAR", after Yang Chuantang, who was appointed as the "TAR" Party Secretary in December 2004, reportedly fell ill.

June 4, 2005, marks the 16 years of bloody crackdown on democracy in and around Tiananmen Square. Nations, mostly of the Third World kind, have rallied to support China's anti-secession legislation of March 2005, which is designed to "take back" at a time and in a circumstance of its choosing a piece of territory called Taiwan. The year also saw important inspection visits in China of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, the President and secretary of the US, British Prime Minister and other important delegations. While Beijing authorities' regular fuss over the Dalai Lama's meetings with important world leaders saw no let up, its top leaders

like Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao made the rounds of their regular international visits striking up business deals, renewing contacts and generally attempting to refine and soften its international image. China's technological prowess was evidently manifested and claimed with the success of the second manned spacecraft Shenzhou VI mission in 2005.

Beijing authorities upheld the age-old rhetoric of remarkable achievements made in the field of human rights protection and enjoyment of human rights and freedom in accordance with law in China at every opportune time. At the panel discussion of "TAR" deputies to the Chinese National People's Congress (NPC) held on 5 March 2005, President Hu Jintao stressed the importance of constructing a harmonious socialist society full of "democracy, rule of law, faith, vitality and order", echoing a notion recently endorsed by the central authorities as the new guidelines for the country's social and economic development. China's Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing says China has great respect for each individual's human rights in China.

Current buzz that abounds in the legal circles and human rights community and generating optimism is China's possible review of death penalty next year with an amendment to China's Criminal Procedure Law in the upcoming 10th National People's Congress. Beijing and many governments around the world have hailed its 2004 constitutional amendment seeking to protect human rights as the "first time ever". Enforcement mechanism and actual implementation over the stipulation is where China watchers, legal scholars and human rights organization, have always had concerns.

That PRC is committed towards

upholding the standards of human rights and democracy is revealed in its White Papers on *Human Rights, Democracy, Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China* and the most recent on *Peace Development* released by China's Information Office of State Council in 2005. Though human rights abuses and lack of democratic freedom have been a concomitant feature of the PRC for the last 46 years of its rule in Tibet, China has in its White Paper on democracy admitted the problems the country encounters and the need to reform its political system. The 11th Five Year Plan too has cited the need to "strengthen the construction of socialist democratic politics" and to "respect and safeguard human rights". Similar acknowledgement of challenges that China faces on its road of development are clearly stated in the White Paper on Peace Development which admits, "Chinese government and people are well aware that China is still a developing country facing a lot of difficulties and problems on its road of development". Hopeful observers talk of more and more openness, of increased respect for law, greater institutionalization and transparency of government process and so forth.

Contrary to the signs, statements and show of progress, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is alarmed by the increasing reports of human rights violation in Tibet in 2005. Tibetans in Tibet witnessed increased restrictive measures on religion, security and ideological control, limits on freedom of expression, opinion and conscience, and lack of rule of law. A "culture of fear" and a "palpable sense of fear and self censorship" is pervasive in Tibet. There is a deep seated and widespread zero-tolerance level on any activity or viewpoint that is

suspected as challenging the Communist Party's control over aspects of society it deems crucial. As of December 2005, estimated 2524 Tibetan refugees have fled Tibet across the Himalaya and into India, reporting repression and seeking freedom in exile. According to information received and researched by TCHRD in 2005, it becomes clear that severe repression in the eastern regions of Tibet like Sichuan Province in the recent years has now once again shifted towards areas within the "TAR".

Jampa Phuntsog, Chairman of "TAR", highlights Beijing's current policy in Tibet by referring to "two famous slogans" as the two most crucial things that the Tibetans should do today: "Hold a clear-cut stand in fights against splittism and firmly advance Tibet's development". At a closed meeting held prior to the 40th founding anniversary of the "TAR", President Hu Jintao stressed the importance of eliminating "separatism" and accelerating economic development in Tibet. These oft-repeated mantras of stability and development are used to increase central control by pursuing a policy of greater assimilation of Tibet into a "unified" Chinese state. Following the meeting's decision to "resolutely oppose all kinds of separatists and sabotage activities, and uphold the motherland's unity and Tibet's stability", China's top security officials called for stepped up intelligence work to smash the activities of hostile forces. Internally, marked socio-economic tensions have forced the People's Armed Police (PAP) to commission special units, known as anti-riot squads, to deal with terrorism, violent crimes, riots and threats to public security, and this squad will also be responsible for safety during major public occasions such as the "TAR" anniversary and the 2008 Olympic Games.

The Dalai Lama had expressed regret at the "very, very repressive policies in TAR" and China's human rights records, undemocratic actions, the lack of the rule of law and the unequal implementation of autonomy rights regarding minorities being responsible for tarnishing China's image. The Dalai Lama's envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen had called "no positive change" and "increased repression" inside Tibet,

even after opening of direct contact, as the "most disturbing" and of "great concern".

## Civil and political liberties

The Chinese authorities regard "religious extremism" as one of "three evil forces" along with "separatism" and "terrorism" in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and Tibet, said Amnesty International in its first report on China that focused specifically on human rights defenders. Reports also emerged of military exercise drill code named "Task Force 05" which began in Lhasa on 14 August 2005 to deal with sudden outbreak of untoward incident, and participated by the security wings of Lhasa Security Bureau Police, (PAP) and State Security Bureau (SSB).

At a meeting of all cadres of offices and departments within Lhasa City on 18 August 2005, Beijing authorities called for unprecedented precautionary measures during the events leading up to the 40th founding anniversary of the "TAR", described as an important "political responsibility". Jia Qingling, Politburo Standing Committee member and Chairman of China's People's Political Consultative Committee (CPPCC), was quoted as saying on the occasion, "Separatist activities must be strictly cracked down on in accordance with law, so as to ensure social stability and state safety." Anti-separatists strategies like the "summer strike hard" campaign and the "patriotic re-education" campaigns were unleashed to purge dissent activities and to inculcate "proper" ideology, and allegiance to the "splittist" Dalai Lama in any form became the chief target of repression.

The ambiguous charges of "endangering state security", and anti-terrorism provisions in China's Criminal Procedure Law are widely used to criminalise "separatist" activities in the politically restive regions like Tibet and Xinjiang. Tibet this year experienced heightened security and restrictions during the "TAR" founding anniversary.

In 2005, TCHRD has recorded 20 confirmed and known cases of Tibetans who were arrested for their political beliefs and possession of items deemed "reactionary" by Chinese such as the Dalai Lama's photo, banned Tibetan national flag and literatures from exile. As of December 2005, TCHRD

has recorded 132 known political prisoners languishing in various prisons and detention centres across Tibet.

There is also rampant misuse of administrative detention, lack of fair trials, torture and mistreatment of prisoners, and coerced confessions. The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture highlighted the existing system of "re-education through labour" as serious human rights violations necessitating abolition.

## Religion

Of all the human rights violations of Tibetans, the dramatic rise of religious repression has been the most concerning this year. As in the past, the official suspicion of interlinkage between Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan nationalism has led to harsher and stricter policies on religion. China's new regulations on Religious Affairs, which became effective on 1 March 2005, and the subsequent meetings on religion only helped to limit and curtail religious freedom in Tibet.

In an attempt to adapt religion to socialist way of life and to exert state control, the Beijing authorities has resorted to intensive "patriotic re-education" campaign, anti-Dalai Lama campaign, imposed control over monastic curriculum, practice and study of Tibetan Buddhism, and persecuted popular religious figures leading to continuous degeneration of the essence of Tibetan Buddhism. Drepung Monastery was in the highlight this year owing to one death, several expulsions and mass sit-in protest of monks over denunciation of the Dalai Lama under the banner of "patriotic re-education" campaign.

2005 being the 10th year anniversary of the disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet, total absence of additional information on his whereabouts and well-being is a cause for great concern. In the mean time, Beijing leaves no stone unturned in vigorously promoting Gyaltzen Norbu, "fake Panchen", as the real Panchen. *Xinhuanet* news service June 28 reported the Chinese Panchen Gyaltzen Norbu touring dozens of counties in Tibet and cited as saying he would "carry forward the patriotic traditions handed down from his predecessors and do his best to promote the country's

## Monk under arbitrary detention

Tsering Dhondup, 32, was born in Bushang Village, Ridrong Township, Phenpo Lhundrup County, "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"). After attending the village elementary school for a few years, Tsering at 17-years of age was ordained as a monk at Sera Monastery in Lhasa. In the monastery, he was appointed as the care taker of the idols. After a year he was given the responsibility of running the monastery's shop.

In July 2005, Tsering suddenly disappeared from the monastery. Tsering's elder brother and the monastery administrators began a frantic search for him. Unable to locate him anywhere, they were left anxious about his well being.

Thirteen days later, officials from the Lhasa Police Station telephoned the monastery administrators about Tsering being under their custody. The officials alleged him of carrying out political activities and was being detained for interrogations. When Tsering's elder brother and few monks from the monastery went to visit him in the police station, the officials informed them that he was already

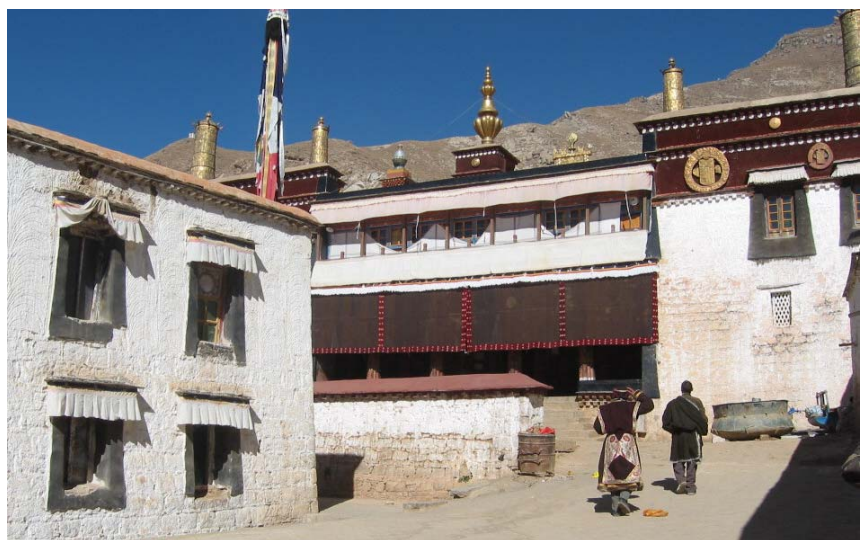
transferred to Gutsa Detention Centre for further interrogations.

According to unconfirmed reports, he was probably detained for pasting pro-independence bills whereas some said that he distributed pictures of the Dalai Lama which he had bought in bulk from someone else. When the police came to search for evidence, Tsering's room and the monastery shop were searched thoroughly. However, no incriminating evidence came into their possession after the search.

In the absence of any evidence, the family members of Tsering are anxiously waiting for a positive outcome.

Currently he remains to be detained without any charge.

In other instances of arrests during the "patriotic education" campaign, eight monks from Sera Monastery have been arrested in May 2005. Their whereabouts also remain unknown. The monastery came under heavy scrutiny this year during the birthday of the Dalai Lama on 6 July 2005. It was reported that Chinese policemen were posted inside and around the monastery to keep vigil of the monks' activities. On 6 July 2005, no monk was allowed to leave the monastery compound. ♦



Pilgrims offering prayers at Sera Monastery in Tibet

reunification, unity of the various ethnic groups, and the social and economic development." The Dalai Lama's special envoy Lodi Gyari said, "Its not about a young boy, a young prisoner, but the issue of reincarnation. When a good communist says he wants to have the final say in reincarnation, that's an issue a good communist should stay out of."

## Information

Control, censorship and surveillance over media and free flow of information remain widespread in Tibet. Owing to concerns over sensitive regions like Tibet and Xinjiang, compounded by Beijing's stability concerns inside and international image outside, the information inflow and outflow from Tibet have been severely restricted. Considering the tremendous lack of transparency and secretive nature in which Chinese authorities work, monitoring and evaluating human rights violations in Tibet has continued to be a challenge.

Internet service providers, Web sites and Internet cafes are expected to limit what their customers see and do online, and U.S. companies that provide Web sites to the Chinese are not exempt. Yahoo, for instance, filters its search results so that a search for "Free Tibet" in Chinese yields zero web pages. Google does not censor its searches, although the Chinese Government's system blocks many web sites that Google links to. Microsoft stops internet users searching for the words for democracy, freedom, human rights or demonstrations. China also banned a computer game called "Soccer Manager 2005" because it classifies Taiwan, Hongkong, Macau and Tibet as countries.

Brave Tibetan writers like Woesser, who aired their "incorrect" views on the Dalai Lama, Tibet's history and political prisoners in Tibet, faced persecution, while websites that promote discussion on sensitive topics were ordered closed. China's media is state-owned and strictly controlled by the government, thereby resulting in denial of the public right to know and media's right to provide information on current happenings in China and outside. Radio broadcast in Tibetan such as Voice of Tibet (VOT), Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA) were most of the time blocked and jammed.

## Development

The recurrent theme in Beijing's discourse on Tibet has been its "developmental" and "beneficial" role in Tibet. The PRC has emphasized the "right to live and develop" as the "most urgent demand of the Chinese people" and further considers the "right to subsistence as the most important of all human rights, without which other rights are out of the question".

Tourism, traditional Tibetan medicine, minerals, wood and traditional craftworks have been listed as the five pillar industries that "TAR" will develop. Through the 1999 Western Development Program and other development projects specifically targeting Tibet, Beijing's effort to develop Tibet has resulted in infrastructure developments in certain urban regions of Tibet. Such an effort is noticeable in the investment of 6.42 billion yuan in 24 projects covering agriculture, industry, communication, road, school, energy and public health at the "TAR's" 40th anniversary while official reports stated an earlier investment of 500 million yuan in 43 projects on the "TAR's" 20th anniversary and 4.6 billion yuan in 62 projects on the 30th anniversary. Jampa Phuntsok, "TAR" Chairman said that in 2004, over 16.6 billion yuan (US\$ 2 billion) yuan was invested in building infrastructure in the "TAR" with most of the investment coming from Beijing under its "Western Development Program". At a national conference on Tibet, while recording an annual economic growth rate of 10.7 percent over the past five years, the Chinese Government has decided to invest 31.2 billion yuan (about 3.76 US dollars) in 117 projects in the "TAR" over the coming five years.

In contrast to official reports of rapid economic growth and improved subsistence and development rights and state investments, the actual condition of Tibetans tell a different story with Tibet remaining China's poorest administrative units. By any measure, Tibetans are poor, with low Human Development Index levels, with evidences of systematic exclusion, deprivation, discrimination and marginalisation in all areas of life. Since over 80 percent of the Tibetan population is nomads and farmers residing in rural areas, they have been marginalized from the economic growth.

Beijing's spending in Tibet is described as a "bubble economy with little trickle-down benefit to the ordinary citizen" because of the state investment being urban oriented and its poor integration with the local economy. The impoverishment in Tibet emerges from the very process of state-led modernization as Tibetans become less able to participate in the economic opportunities available. For every yuan the state spent in the "TAR" in 2001, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by only 0.47 yuan and this negative multiplier effect has been a characteristic of Chinese investment in Tibet since the 1950s.

The United Nations has warned that the increasing wealth gap between rural and urban areas in China, which is among the highest in the world, could threaten the stability of the Communist nation despite its government's efforts to stem the growing tide. Though China has been able to lift 250 million people out of poverty over the past 25 years, the inequality in income has doubled, according to new report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This is further corroborated by World Bank President, who said on 18 October 2005 that China has 150 million people living in acute poverty despite its impressive economic growth decades in the past two decades.

While China claims to prioritise economic and subsistence rights for the Tibetans as in its 11th Five year Plan where growth in a "fair, balanced and sustainable" is called for, Tibetans have actually failed to benefit from Beijing's development from the rights and need perspective of development. This failure can be rightly attributed to the denial of right to self-determination and meaningful autonomy of Tibetans in particular. Reasoning economic development as political control takes away the essence and meaning of real and meaningful development for Tibetans. For instance, the completion of track laying for Qinghai-Tibet railway project, described a marvel of engineering feat, has more a political and ego motive behind it than to actually benefit and develop the Tibetans. Official statements have stressed the need for a railway to "consolidate national defense" and to "unite nationalities".

Additionally, the urban oriented rapid growth strategies and the practice of population transfer of Chinese immigrants into Tibet does not help to benefit the Tibetans. While lauding China's promise of zero-tax for the agricultural sector within five years, the Dharamsala-based exile Tibetan government had accused the local government there of continuing to impose a range of taxes and fees on the Tibetan farmers and nomads.

## Education

Based on reports and testimonies emanating out of Tibet, TCHRD found no evidence of major improvements and progress in the field of education. The situation is not the same in every region owing to differences in "local flavors". As was the pattern for the past many years, the education in Tibet has not helped towards freer and fuller development of the children. Though Beijing claims increased investments in education in Tibet, the quality and accessibility of broad based education in Tibet still remains a distant dream in most rural areas of Tibet.

The ideological content of educational aspect was strengthened in 2005 as evidenced by the Education Department's decision to "strengthen and improve ideology and ethnic education for primary and secondary school students and ideology and political education for college students." The extensive and almost exclusive use of Chinese language in commerce and administration has relegated Tibetan as a second rate language. Moreover, biased representation of history, exorbitant school fees and lack of qualified personnel in rural areas to impart knowledge are still factors of concern.

## International concerns

China's lack or absence of human rights and democratic freedom has featured prominently in reports, dealings and statements by many governments, UN representatives and human rights watchdogs. Human Rights Watch had described China's human rights situation as "dire" and "dismal". China was sharply condemned in the US State Department's report entitled "Supporting Human Rights and Democracy" released in March 2005. The US-based Freedom House has categorised Tibet amongst the two "worst-rated territories" for the 2004-2005 period, in terms of respect for political rights and civil liberties. Listed under "Disputed Territories" and its freedom rating as "Not Free", Tibet scored seven in both political rights and civil liberties, making it as the region having the lowest level of freedom.

The near lifting this year of arms embargo by European Union, torn between the lure of China's market and moral scruples, failed owing to China's adoption of anti-secession

law threatening military action against Taiwan. Volker Ruehe, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the German Parliament, said, "It will not be lifted". Following the ninth annual round of dialogue on human right between Beijing and Australia on 27 June 2005, Australia notes continuing areas of concern in human rights regardless of the considerable progress made by China in the field.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights had raised the issue of the missing Panchen Lama and called for ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights during her china visit. Upon their China visit, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention have criticised imprisonment without trial through its "re-education through labour system" (*Chi:Laogai*), widespread use of ambiguous terms in political arrests such as "disrupting social order" and "endangering state security", and recommended better protection of fundamental rights guaranteed in the Chinese Constitution. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), after examining China's record for the first time, noted with "concern the reports from sources other than the State party relating to the right to the free exercise of religion as a right to take part in cultural life, and the use and teaching of minority languages in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region and the Tibet Autonomous Region". The Committee also expressed concern "about the lack of effective consultations and legal redress for persons affected by forced evictions and demolitions, including those of historic structures, buildings and homes in Lhasa, Tibet".

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Mr. Manfred Nowak, after his two-week investigations of Chinese prisons and detention facilities this year, noted some progress in reducing violence against prisoners since China signed the Convention Against Torture (CAT) in 1988. Nevertheless, the UN investigator condemned the widespread use of torture and "obtaining confessions" and fighting "deviant behaviour" to be the central goals of criminal justice system. He experienced many attempts to "obstruct or restrict" his investigation. China later denied reports of torture and said the general principle of

the visit was fully respected. During an examination of a report on China, the President of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Jacob Egbert Doek, called for demands for an independent person to verify the well being of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, Xlth Panchen Lama of Tibet. While Beijing's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Sha Zhukhang, told the committee that the child and his family "do not wish to be disturbed by foreign visitors because that could have negative effects". Gedhun was a Tibetan child like any other, who was in secondary school and received good results, the Chinese delegation said.

China's violation of human rights again came under the scanner at the 61st session of the UN High Commission on Human Rights (UNHCHR) in Geneva even though no member states sponsored resolutions critical of world's key human rights violators such as China, Iran, the Russian Federation in Chechnya, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Zimbabwe. Joanna Weschler, U.N. advocacy director for Human Rights Watch rightly noted, "This session has been a powerful demonstration of the need to scrap the commission and replace it with something new and better. Even though the commission took some positive steps, overall it was even more timid than in preceding years. This only confirms the need to replace the commission with a body that would take more decisive action against human rights violations wherever they occur, respond to human rights crises, and be ready to follow up on commitments made by violating countries." In that context, the calls for bold measures by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to give human rights their rightful central place in the UN and to succeed in its reform of the UN human rights machinery is of paramount importance.

## China, human rights and dialogue

Human rights in PRC have been a perennial perplexing issue. Such perplexity originates from Beijing's unique outlook, perception and applicability of human rights in general. Beijing glosses over the universality of human rights with its cultural

relativism concept, defends its lack of civil and political liberties with the "paramount" right to subsistence, and the underlying objectives and ideological principles of Chinese communism that upholds duty towards state over individual rights limits the nature and content of human rights discourse in the PRC. Politically sensitive and volatile regions under China like Tibet, Xinjiang, and Taiwan, have been Beijing's Achilles' heel, for whom national stability and reunification supersedes even the fundamental human rights. It remains to be seen how long can China continue to limit free speech and other civil liberties with its increasing role in global politics and economy and where human rights issues still remains a bone of contention for smooth relationship between nations.

Since the mid-1990s, Beijing has lobbied intensively in the international arena to transform the "confrontational approach" adopted by many countries in their human rights relations with China to a face saving bilateral dialogue. The fact that bilateral dialogue is characterized by lack of transparency, accountability and timeline has not deterred countries from pursuing this "non-confrontational" path. Such willingness and effort from both the parties have been ascribed to the great global economic promises and a rising superpower that China has come to represent.

The White Paper on Peace Development released 22 December 2005 had acknowledged "China cannot develop independently without the rest of the world. Likewise, the world needs China if it is to attain prosperity". Most of the third world countries follow China and the developed liberal west has "adapted to it in varying degrees and numerous ways". Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing reviewed China's diplomatic performance in 2005, saying that the country has made substantive achievements on diplomatic stage despite complex international environment. In such a scenario, no real progress on human rights could be achieved, as the issue becomes a mere diplomatic exercise and a political gimmick. The European Parliament expressed disappointment at the lack of substantial results as regards the dialogue in its resolution passed on 8 September 2005.

President Hu Jintao, a fourth generation

leader, now holding the country's three top positions as Chairman of the Central Military Commission, General Secretary of the Communist Party, and President of China, is a man of many shades. Amid uncertainty about his political views and standpoints, President Hu is described as an "unyielding leader determined to preserve the Communist monopoly on power". At the same time, with the resumption of Sino-Tibet contacts in September 2002, four rounds of discussions were held between the representatives of the Dalai Lama and the concerned officials of the PRC government. The Dalai Lama credits China with economic development in Tibet, acknowledges its rise as a major global player and further commits to his long held Middle Way Policy to seek genuine and meaningful autonomy for all Tibetans living in the three traditional provinces of Tibet within the constitutional framework of the People's Republic of China.

Despite lackluster response from the Chinese side, many governments have welcomed the discussions and hope for substantial result out of the contacts established. Vice Minister Zhu Weigqun was pleased that direct contact has now become stable and "an established practice", and that existing gaps could be narrowed down through more meetings and exchange of views. The Dalai Lama's envoy said an important beginning has been made and the necessity for both parties to demonstrate their sincerity and trustworthiness by taking small tangible steps.

## Conclusion

The violation of human rights of Tibetans in civil and political rights as well as in economic, social and cultural rights is rightly traced to denial of right to self-determination of Tibetans inside Tibet and lack of implementation and abuse of laws. Through its policies and propaganda, constitutional guarantees and international legal provisions to which it has committed, Beijing claims to provide all freedom and rights to its citizens.

After the establishment of "TAR" in 1965, China's Constitution and the National Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law of 1984

provides for Tibet's autonomy in areas of politics, economy, religion, culture, economic undertakings, natural resources, education and others. However, an emerging pattern over the past four decades of Chinese rule has been a centralized control in Tibet characterised by top-down approach that is ridden with stability concerns and development rhetoric. Such an approach has resulted in denying Tibetans their due autonomous rights and the right to self-determination as guaranteed under China's Constitution as well as China's much-hyped Regional National Autonomy Law and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) respectively. The unrelenting calls for human rights and freedom by brave Tibetans in the midst of repressive atmosphere, unabated reports of human rights abuses of Tibetans in all sectors of life, and exodus of Tibetan refugees every year clearly confirms the absence of meaningful autonomy enjoyed by Tibetans in Tibet.

TCHRD believes that a positive outcome in terms of genuine self-rule or meaningful autonomy out of the pre-negotiation contacts between the Dharmasala and Beijing would mean more fundamental rights and freedom for people of Tibet. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called freedom, democracy, and human rights "non-negotiable demands of human dignity". TCHRD also underscores the importance of openness, transparency, accountability, freedom and respect for rule of law in China. Otherwise no amount of cosmetic changes, empty sloganeering, and rule making and policy formulation will bring about any real progress in human rights situation in China. With the threat of loss of Tibetan identity, it is high time Beijing government realize that the Dalai Lama is "not the problem but the key to the resolution of Tibet's problems" as well as towards the achievement of Tibet's stability in the long run. ♦



# TCHRD ACTIVITIES

*Bulletin*

## HBF India Office Director visits TCHRD

The Director of India Office of the Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBF), Dr. Clemens Spiess, visited TCHRD on 9 December 2005. Mr. Urgen Tenzin, Executive Director, and Ms. Norzin Dolma, Assistant Director, of the Centre briefed Dr. Clemens about the works and activities carried by TCHRD from the foundation's consistent funding and support. On behalf of the Centre, Mr. Urgen thanked Dr. Clemens and the HBF for its consistent support to TCHRD over the years. ♦

## Briefings by TCHRD staff

■ A delegation of staff, House Small Business Committee and US-China Interparliamentary Exchange, on visit to Dharamsala hosted a luncheon meeting with the representatives of the Tibetan non governmental organizations (NGOs) at Chonor House in McLeod Ganj on 12 December 2005. The Executive Director and the Assistant Director of TCHRD met the delegation over the lunch and briefed them about the human rights situation in Tibet.

The delegation from the U.S consisted of Mr. J. Matthew Szymanski, Chief of Staff, and Mr. Chris Szymanski, Professional Staff, of the House Small Business Committee and US-China Interparliamentary Exchange, Lt. James Garrison, U.S. Army Congressional Liaison Officer and Mr. Jai Nair, Political Officer, U.S Embassy in New Delhi. Whereas the Tibetan ngos delegation comprised of representatives from the Tibetan Youth Congress, Tibetan Women's

Association, National Democratic Party of Tibet, Gu-Chu-Sum Movement of Tibet and TCHRD.

■ During the World Human Rights day on 10 December 2005, Mr. Jampa Monlam, Researcher, briefed a group of demonstrators observing a candle light vigil in support of the monks of Drepung Monastery in Lhasa, Tibet, and demanding an immediate stop to the conduct of the "patriotic re-education" campaign in Tibet. Drepung monastery in November 2005 came under heavy scrutiny by the police and the monks were subjected to political education to show their allegiance to mainland China. A monk died during the conduct of the campaign in the monastery and a sit-in protest by the monks took place when the authorities expelled five monks from the monastery for failing to abide by the official directives.

■ Tenzin Norgay, UN Affairs Personnel of TCHRD, briefed a group of students from the University of Denver about the human rights situation in Tibet on 12 December 2005. The students who had come to the town as part of the Project Dharamsala of the University's International Service Learning raised pertinent issues of concern during the question-answer session after the briefing.

■ On 23 December 2005, Mr. Jampa Monlam briefed a group of Tibetan students from various schools in India about TCHRD, its works and the activities carried out by the Centre. The student group had come to Dharamsala for a workshop organized by the Delhi based Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre (TPPRC). ♦



An informal briefing to the students of Denver University in session