

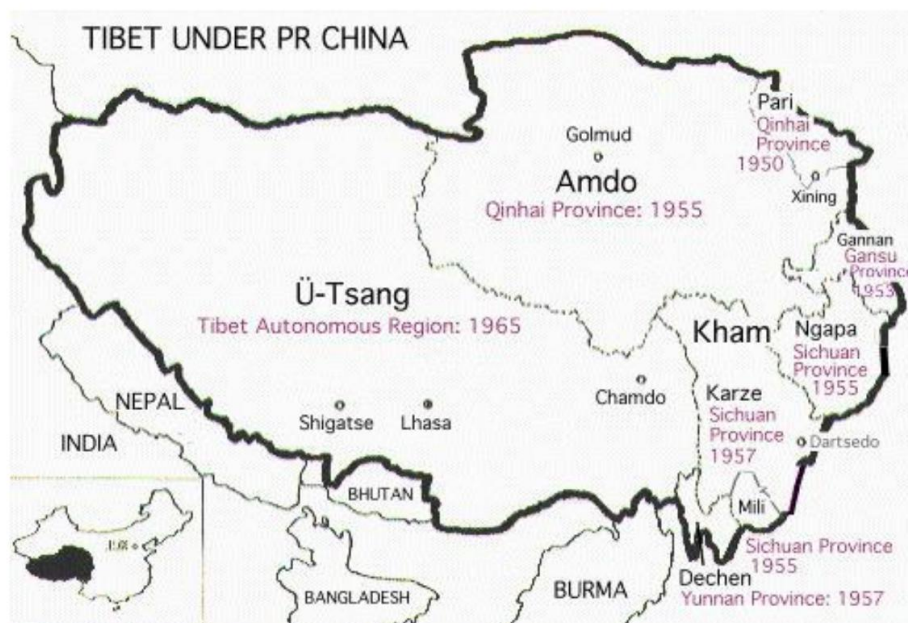
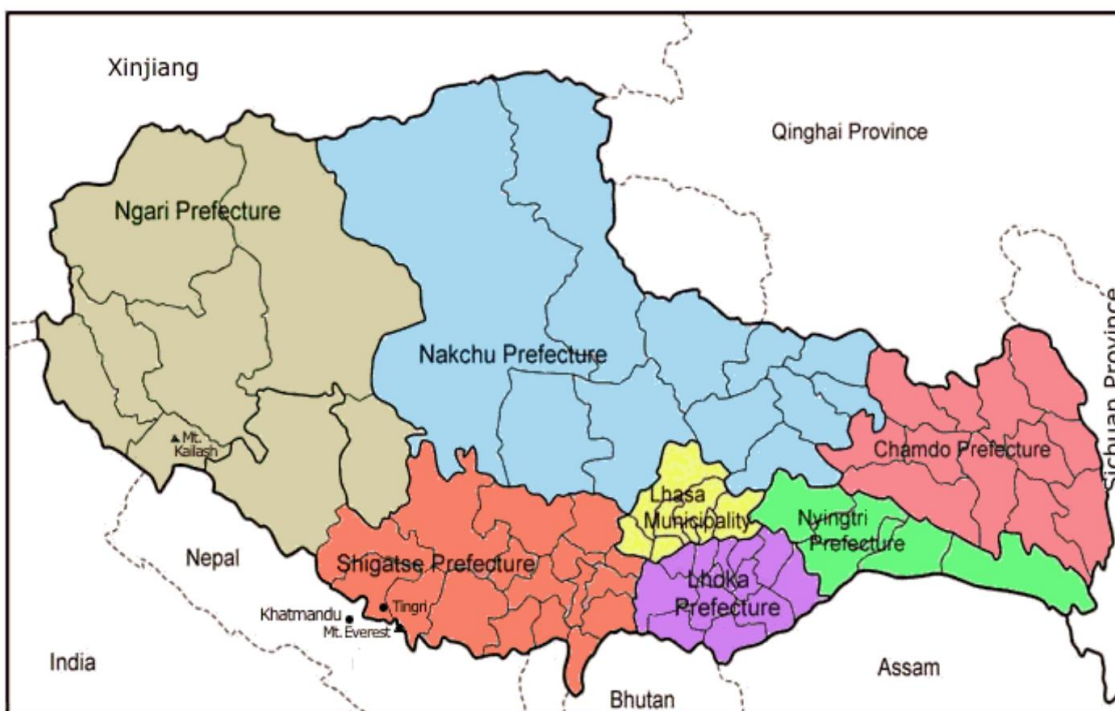


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TAR NEWS

China's State Council issues White Paper on Tibet

March 27, 2019

On March 27, 2019, the PRC State Council Information Office issued an 8-part 41-page White Paper titled “Democratic Reforms in Tibet- Sixty Years On”. It was issued just a day prior to the “serf emancipation day”. The paper mainly detailed the severe, deplorable conditions of the majority of the people in Tibet during the rule of the Dalai Lamas and the vast properties – almost 97 per cent of the total available land -- owned by the Dalai Lamas, the nobility and monastic orders. The White Paper also lists the achievements of the Chinese Communist Party in Tibet and the development that it has effected in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). It detailed the length of roads, rail, expressways and number of airports.

The White Paper, additionally, reaffirmed Beijing's right and traditional authority to ‘recognise’ and ‘appoint’ high-ranking Tibetan Buddhist lamas and reincarnations of ‘living Buddhas’. It mentioned, as one example, that Beijing had appointed the XVIIth Karmapa. Others mentioned as having been ‘recognised’ and ‘approved’ by Beijing are the 11th Panchen Lama in 1995, 7th Regent Reting Rinpoche, in 2000, and the 6th Dezhub in 2010, who it said was nominated and enthroned through the drawing of lots from the golden urn. The White Paper stressed that till 2018, China had incarnated 91 ‘living buddhas’ through what they call ‘traditional religious rituals and historical conventions’.

The White Paper also disclosed, in an attempt to counter negative reports, that religious activities are held regularly in TAR and that today there are 1,787 sites for the practice of Tibetan Buddhism, over 46,000 resident monks and nuns, and 358 ‘Living Buddhas’. It said there are also four mosques and over 12,000 native Muslims, and one Catholic Church and 700 believers.

The White Paper also claimed that among the 518 members of the 11th CPPCC Tibet Autonomous Regional Committee, 80 – the highest number – are representatives of religious groups (Buddhist associations), and 64 are from ethnic minority groups, the second-highest number.

(Comment: The White Paper is obviously intended to counter reports of suppression of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet. It also implicitly affirms Beijing authority to appoint the next Dalai Lama.)

Wu Yingjie convenes TAR Standing Party Committee meeting

March 22, 2019

TAR Party Secretary Wu Yingjie convened a meeting of the TAR Standing Party Committee on March 22, to convey the ‘spirit’ of the recently held NPC as well as other party meetings like that of the Reform Committee Meeting, lessons from the Training Sessions of the young and middle-aged cadres at the Central Party School etc.

At this meeting, Wu Yingjie specifically pointed out that TAR officials at all levels should understand the ‘importance’ of the recently held NPC and CPPCC sessions, further improve ‘political standpoints, implement “four consciousness” and “four self-confidences” and unify their thinking towards party’s decision-making and instructions. The main points of his talk were:

- i) To understand General Secretary Xi Jinping’s “important” instructions and thoughts on Chinese literature, philosophy, and social sciences and to construct the ‘inalienability’ of Chinese culture with that of ethnic groups;
- ii) to shoulder ‘political responsibility,’ to contribute to the ‘survival and development’ of the Chinese nation;
- iii) to promote rural revitalization with the theme of ‘the guardian of the sacred homeland,’ strengthen agricultural and pastoral areas and construct ‘spiritual civilization’;
- iv) to speed up construction of well-off border villages while ensuring consolidation of border areas and border security;
- v) to further strengthen the mission of “managing borders and stabilizing Tibet” and promote bottom-line thinking;
- vi) young and newly appointed cadres should strengthen their ideals and convictions, to keep their mission intact, obey party rules and study ‘Xi Jinping’s socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the new era’; and

vii)that the ideological and political theory class teachers such as those at the Tibet University should cultivate ideological and political education using ‘Xi Jinping’s thoughts on socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new Era’ and incorporate the same in text books and in political course books.

In conclusion, Wu Yingjie emphasised the need to maintain stability, develop the ability to sense a ‘problem’ before it occurs, and to create long term stability in Tibet.

China should prepare for ‘post-Dalai era’ uncertainties

March 27, 2019

An article published by Global Times (March 27) and authored jointly by Yang Sheng and Zhao Yusha said, “the 14th Dalai Lama is getting older and his exile group in India is getting divided, so China needs to prepare for the uncertainty brought by the power transition within Dalai Lama's group that might impact China-India relations in the future.” They accused India for putting Tibetan separatist activities’ under control (example given was, that the Thank You India event organized by the Central Tibetan Administration was asked to hold in Dharamsala instead of New Delhi as planned) and added “but it doesn't mean that the Indian government won't use his successors from the Tibetan exile group in India as a card to deal with China.” The article claimed how the meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Wuhan, in April 2018 had “healed the wounds” of the Doklam standoff in 2017, adding “before this meeting in March 2018, in order to foster friendly atmosphere with China, New Delhi ordered Indian officials to stay away from activities organized by Dalai Lama's group, and also banned a rally organized by Dalai Lama's group in New Delhi.” Lin Minwang, a professor at Fudan University's Center for South Asian Studies, said “however, China cannot expect India to totally cooperate with China regarding the Dalai Lama and his group because some forces in India won't give up the Tibetan exile group, a card that it can play when dealing with China.” He said "in order to prevent uncertainty that will harm China-India ties, China should also use the divided situation within the exile group to make efforts for the post-Dalai Lama era.”

The Dalai Lama’s exile group or Tibet-separatist forces surrounding the Dalai Lama in India are troubles for India when China and India are having good relationship, but when China-India relationship are tense, they will become a card that India can play to provoke China. He

added that “in 2017 during the standoff in Doklam, India allowed a Tibetan exile group leader to visit and place the group's flag at the site of Pangong Lake, a lake located in the China-India border area with the Line of Actual Control passing through it.

(Comment: Zhao Yusha has written another article in Global Times earlier which was negative regarding relations between Indians and Tibetans in Dharamsala.)

China launches new, regular political education campaign on Tibet's monks, nuns

March 22, 2019

Counties in TAR have launched a new political education drive in monasteries, described as a lecture tour to promote legal and policy awareness among monks and nuns and to safeguard national unity. Gonggar County in Shannan (Tibetan: Lhokha) Prefecture has already started its 2019 education campaign and plans to make the campaign a regular activity. The campaign uses “patriotic” monks and nuns as lecturers to lecture monks and nuns in the county on how to firmly uphold the leadership of the Communist Party of China and unswervingly follow the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics. They also speak on how to safeguard national unity and strengthen ethnic unity. At a special workshop held in 2018, monks and nuns were told to be politically reliable and take a clear-cut and firm stance, be profound in religious knowledge, be convincing in morality and play an active role at critical moments. Cona (Tsona) County in Shannan launched a similar campaign on March 11.

China tests Tibetan monks, nuns for loyalty to communist party rule

March 29, 2019

China says more than 30,000 Buddhist monks and nuns in Tibet Autonomous Region were tested on March 25 for their knowledge on laws and regulations and to improve their legal awareness and consciousness. This was the second test held in the region since Mar 2018. Subjects of the test included the Constitution, National Security Law, Anti-terrorism Law, Anti-espionage Act, Cyber Security Law as well as regulations related to religious affairs. The TAR Justice Department said the test reinforced the notion that “national laws are superior to religious regulations, and abiding by the law comes ahead of adhering to religious discipline.” The test, comprising a written test and oral exam, was administered in Tibetan. a

A management staff from the Sera Monastery in Lhasa said all religious administrative personnel in TAR have to take the exam and that about 98 per cent of religious personnel in Sera Monastery had passed the exam. The report said TAR had a total of 1,787 religious sites with more than 46,000 monks and nuns.

Gongga Airport T3 terminal to put into operation by the end of next year

March 26, 2019

The renovation and expansion project of the Lhasa Gonggar airport, Tibet's main airport, has been completed and will become operational by the end of 2020. Expansion of the T3 terminal building, a key project of the 13th Five-Year Plan of TAR, was resumed on March 1. Comprising 88,000 square meters terminal building with a surface of 149,000 square meters for the station, freight, fire rescue and corresponding supporting facilities will benefit an estimated 20 million passengers in 2025, and cater for 80,000 tons of cargo and mail and 58,500 aircraft landings according to a report in China Tibet Network.

Yang Lu, the person in charge of the new terminal building project at Lhasa Gongga Airport, said in an interview that the new T3 terminal building is in a "Y" shape. It is planned to complete capping of the east and west corridors of the terminal building in June this year.

The renovation and expansion project of the Lhasa Gongga Airport terminal area with a total investment of 3.907 billion yuan was launched in 2016. Official Chinese reports claim the renovation and expansion will play an important role for Tibet to open to South Asia in the "Belt and Road" Initiative.

Tibetan language app to introduce BRI

March 27, 2019

The official Global Times (March 27) quoted Pu Qiong, Deputy Director of Research Administration Department of the office of Tibetan language working committee, as saying that the TAR Government is going to launch a new Tibetan language application (app hereafter) in April to promote BRI. The report added that the app is a result of the growing interest in Tibet and Buddhist culture in recent years from outside the region and foreigners.

The course is available on Zhihuishu.com, a domestic MOOC platform and has an enrolment of more than 2,500 students from 15 Chinese universities. Pu Qiong said "As an ancient language, Tibetan could see its usage drop by 50 percent if it fails to advance with the times." He added that Tibetan language applications and software are expected to be introduced to countries involved in projects under the Belt and Road Initiative. Pu Qiong said the method used to develop the Tibetan language was established after the China-proposed Tibetan Code Character Sets for Information Interchange was adopted by the International Standardization Organization in 1997. Before 1997, countries including the US, India and the UK had developed their own standards for the Tibetan language.

Gongga County Public Security Bureau launched propaganda activities in school campus

March 28, 2019

The Gongga, Lhasa Public Security Bureau (PSB) has started a new propaganda campaign in schools where officials of the PSB travel to school campuses and teach students about the rule of law. Students were told to "learn the law, understand the law, abide by the law, and improve their self-discipline and self-protection ability, prevent and reduce illegal and criminal activities." A PSB officer explained the "Public Security's Administration Punishment Law," "Prevention of Juvenile Crimes Act," and other regulations to teachers and students in "plain language" and showcased typical vivid cases. Students were also asked understand and abide by traffic laws and regulations for safe and civilized travel.

Tibet Aid cadres provided special treatment in Lhoka

March 27, 2019

The Deputy Director of the Bureau of Education, Shannan, said this year they received 75 aid teachers to assist in teaching at the First High School in Shannan city. They are provided with equipment such oxygen generator, heaters, humidifiers and various others to support them to have a comfortable living. Wang Shengpeng, one aid teacher from Hubei said "The province has set aside special funds to purchase these facilities such as oxygen supply, which fully reflects their concern, care and love for the provincial and provincial governments for all the teachers. This assures we will root ourselves on the plateau and concentrate on teaching. We will continue to make unremitting efforts and make new contributions to the development of

education in Shannan City, Tibet”.

Hubei sent its first group of 50 teachers in 2016 and another 25 in 2018. All the teachers were reported to have stood firm on their political positions. Despite lack of oxygen and hardship, they actively integrated and improved the quality of education in Shannan city. To tackle difficulties such as high-altitude hypoxia, drying air, and cold weather, the relevant department decided to set up a special fund for transportation and providing the required equipment.

Nyingtri held a press meeting with Central Media group

March 26, 2019

The Central Propaganda Department organised thirteen major central media including the party’s mouth piece People’s Daily, Xinhua News, and China Radio and Television station to carry out large scale interviews and publicity activities before the so called ‘Tibet Million Serf Liberation Day’ on March 28. March 28 is a declared government holiday.

On March 23, the Party Secretary of Linzhi, Ma Shengchang held a press conference with the Central Media group. He was accompanied by Zhao Yongqi, the Deputy Secretary General and Deputy Editor-in-chief of the Tibet Daily Party Committee, Zhang Zhenguo, the Deputy Director of the Information Department of the Central Propaganda Department, and Zhang Haibo, a member of the Standing Committee of the Municipal Party Committee and Minister of Publicity. Ma Shengchang said “the Linzhi Municipal Committee has united and led the cadres and masses of all ethnic groups in the city to hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, thoroughly study and implement Xi Jinping’s socialist thoughts with Chinese characteristics in the new era, grateful for forging ahead, and guarding each other to properly handle the "Thirteen pairs of relations." Linzhi will focus on key tasks like of global tourism, project construction, improvement of people's livelihood, industrial development, and regional coordination”. He emphasized that Linzhi’s achievements are inseparable from the cordial care of the Party Central Committee, and ‘without the party there would be no new China, no new socialist Tibet, and no new Linzhi”. He hoped that the media group and all the reporters would successfully demonstrate the concern of the Party Central Committee with Xi as the core to the people of all ethnics groups and also able to show the merit and superiority of the socialist system.

During the ‘Serf Emancipation Day’ celebrations on March 28, people in Nyinchi were asked to sing the national anthem and attend the flag hoisting ceremony. Ma Shengchang reiterated that "Without the Communist Party, there will be no new China, no socialist new Tibet, no new Linzhi. Only by adhering to the leadership of the Communist Party of China, Linzhi people of all ethnic groups have a happy life today; Linzhi's tomorrow will be better". Mass performances and symposiums were also held.

Leadership Appointments and Dismissals

TAR People's Congress Standing Committee appointment and dismissal list

(Adopted at the Tenth Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region on March 27, 2019)

Removed:

Zhao Xiaozhou, the Vice Chairman of the Legal Affairs Committee of the People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region; Deputy Director of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of the Nationalities and Religions of the People's Congress of the TAR, and Standing Committee member of TAR People's Congress and has also represented as the Deputy Director of the Personnel Election Committee had been removed from these posts

Appointed:

Zhou Yifeng as the Deputy Secretary General of TAR Standing Party Committee

Chen Fanyan, as the Director of the Civil Affairs Department of the Tibet Autonomous Region

Tenzin Norbu, as Judge of the first trial of the civil trial of the Higher People's Court of the TAR

Tan Haibo, as the Judge of the Executive Yuan of the Higher People's Court of TAR

Removed:

Gu Zhenfen as a member of the Procuratorate Board and People's Procuratorate of the TAR

DEVELOPMENTS IN TIBETAN ETHNIC AREAS OUTSIDE TAR

Ngaba County introduces the first Sino-Tibetan bilingual rule of law propaganda studio

March 23, 2019

A video was circulated via Wechat from Ngaba (Aba) county about how a bilingual propaganda studio for promoting the Han-Tibet rule of law was officially set up in 2018. Luo Keji, Director of the Aba Prefecture Judicial Bureau of Sichuan Province, said that this is the first of its kind in the Tibetan region. Observing that there is a high population of monks and nuns in the Ngaba area, he said the studio will focus on teaching how the monks should abide by the law and promote religious law to respect the national law. It will also focus on gambling, illegal logging, stealing cattle and horses and destroying grassland and other problems. The video will be disseminated mainly through the public Wechat, Wechat groups and TV stations in the county. Ngaba authorities are trying to integrate propaganda regarding the rule of law with traditional culture and religion. More than 200,000 volumes of Tibetan-Chinese bilingual law books have been compiled to fully cover monasteries, farmers and herdsman.

Topgyal qualifies for Tokyo Olympics

March 25 2019

Topgyal, the bronze medalist of the men's marathon has qualified for both the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and 2019 Doha World Championships after winning the Xuzhou International Marathon on Sunday. Topgyal is a Tibetan who won the bronze medal at the Jakarta Asian Games. Among five female runners who participated in the Xuzhao International Marathon. Tsering Tsomo won third place. The Xuzhou International Marathon is a qualifying race for the 2019 Doha World Championships.

Increasing surveillance in Tibetan Regions outside TAR

March 25, 2019

Strict restrictions were imposed even after March 10, in TAR and Tibetan regions outside TAR. Tibet Times said many intersectional roads were blocked in Lhasa and people were instructed to follow the orders strictly on that day make sure roads remain clear.

In Qinghai, monasteries remained under constant police watch even after March 10 and 14. Police increased their presence and three police vehicles were parked in front of 'Rangwo' monastery in Rebgong. Radio Free Asia quoted sources as saying "teachers and communist party members at schools in Rebgong are urged to monitor the students and other people during the sensitive month of March". They were also issued a directive that stated they would be "fired from their positions if any incidents, such as raising the Tibetan flag at school occurred". Similar directives were issued to officials and party members of all towns and districts, who were asked to immediately report any cases of self-immolation, signs of protest, and public gatherings.

EXILE TIBETAN NEWS

New exile Tibetan minister's oath-taking held up over constitutional issue

April 1, 2019

The exile Tibetans' apex court was reported to have refused to administer the oath of office to a new Kalon (Minister) for failing to secure "not less than 50 percent of the votes" as mandated by the Charter of Tibetans in Exile. A total of 21 out of 43 exile Tibetan MPs had voted for Mr Topgyal Tsering Zongkha, currently Secretary of the Kashag Secretariat.

Although 50 percent of 43 is 21.5, Speaker Pema Jungney had declared prior to voting that the winner will have to secure at least 21 votes, given the parliament's rule book of numbers, which details how votes are to be determined and the basis of ignoring decimal points. The Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission was reported to have pointed to Article 22 of the Charter which requires that a candidate needed to secure not less than 50 percent of the total votes to be declared elected whereas the declared winner had secured what amounted to only 48.84 percent of the total.

President Xi greeted with Tibetan protest rally in Paris

March 28, 2019

Crowds of more than a thousand Tibetans and others demonstrated during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Paris on March 24. They marched with Tibetan flags and carrying

placards, calling for freedom in Tibet and the resumption of dialogue with the Dalai Lama. The chief guest at the event was French Senator Jacqueline Eustache-Brinio, who expressed her hope to see a French parliamentary fact-finding delegation visit Tibet. The protest rally was jointly organized by the Tibetan Community of France, Students for a Free Tibet, Tibetan Youth Congress, Regional Dokham Chushi Gangdruk, U-Tsang Welfare Association and Domey Welfare Association. Members from the Uyghur Association of France, a Vietnamese association, and others also joined.

US report: China systematic in impeding access to Tibet

March 28, 2019

The first of the US State Department's reports mandated by the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018 has been released and it says China continues to "systematically" impede access to Tibet with restrictions that have prohibited diplomats, journalists and ordinary citizens from visiting the Himalayan territory. It said even visits by US diplomats were "highly restricted," and "Chinese government-designated minders followed US diplomats and officials at all times, prevented them from meeting or speaking with local contacts, interrogated them and restricted their movement in these areas." The State Department has noted that last year China rejected five of the nine US requests to visit Tibet, including one by Ambassador Terry Branstad. China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said at the routine press conference on March 26, that "The RATA sends a wrong signal to Tibetan separatists and poses serious harm to the China-US communication and cooperation."
