



TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

A Personal Account

BY TENZIN PHUNTSOK ATISHA

Foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama



TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION



Dedicated to the safety and well-being of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama.

Born 25 April 1989 and recognised by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama as the true incarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama on 14 May 1995.

Three days later, the six year old and his family were removed by Chinese officials from their home in Tibet.

Nothing has been heard of them since.

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

A Personal Account

BY TENZIN PHUNTSOK ATISHA

Foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama

© Tenzin Atisha 2020

Published by Inklink

All rights for individual works reserved by the authors.

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Paperback edition ISBN: 978-0-9876403-5-2

Ebook edition ISBN: 978-0-9876403-6-9

Tibetan edition ISBN: 978-93-87023-55-0

Production by Inklink - 0407 825 316

Please visit Australia Tibet Council at www.atc.org.au/tibet1985
to download a full version of this book.

Front cover image: Larung Gar, Tibetan Buddhist city in Sichuan, China.
Image taken by Valerian Guillot on 6 October 2015.

Back cover image: L–R: author, Kalden, Kundeling Woesser Gyaltzen,
Kunzig Panchen Rinpoché, Alak Jigmé and Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering
in front of Panchen Rinpoché's residence in Beijing, 26 June 1985



THE DALAI LAMA

FOREWORD

In 1985 I sent the Fourth Fact-finding Delegation, headed by retired Kalön Tripa, Kundeling Wöser Gyaltzen, to the Kham and Amdo regions of Tibet. At the time, considering the advanced age of Kundeling, Tenzin Phuntsok, a junior member of staff at the Department of Information and International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in India, was selected to accompany him as a member of the delegation. Accordingly, with dedication and responsibility he has kept a detailed account of the visit, recording meetings and discussions with Chinese officials, including conversations with Tibetans sharing their innermost thoughts.

Following his retirement from the post of Secretary at the Department of Information and International Relations of the CTA, Tenzin Phuntsok has written this book entitled, *The Last Fact Finding Delegation to Tibet: 1985—what I have seen and experienced, a factual narration.*

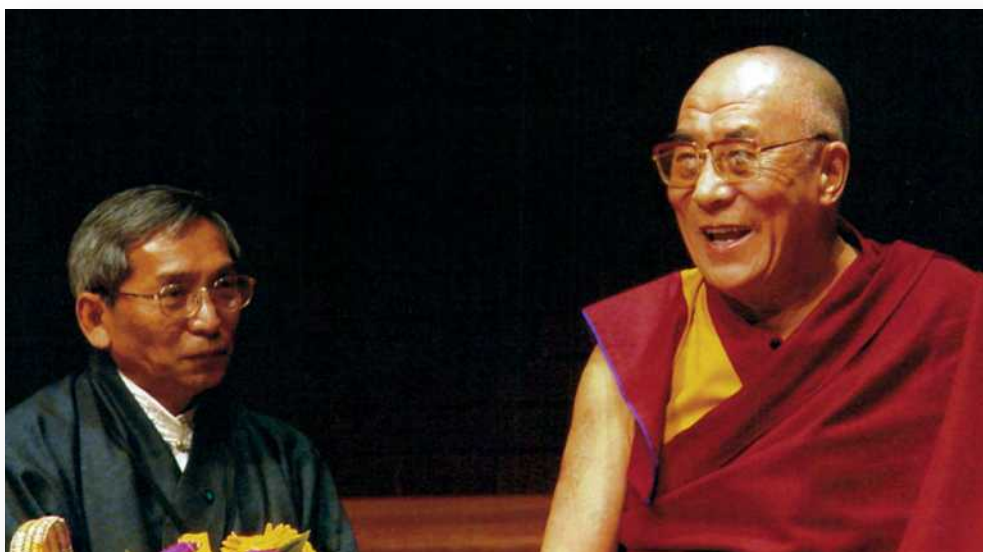
This book will be of interest to readers in general and for researchers of Sino-Tibetan history. It deals with the periods of friendship and of conflicts between Tibet and China. It also provides the fundamental viewpoints of Tibetan personalities then working within the Chinese government system, including the 10th Panchen Rinpoche, Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal and others, and their support for our Middle Way Approach; the determination of the Tibetans in Tibet and the great hope they place in those of us in exile. I commend the author for his work.

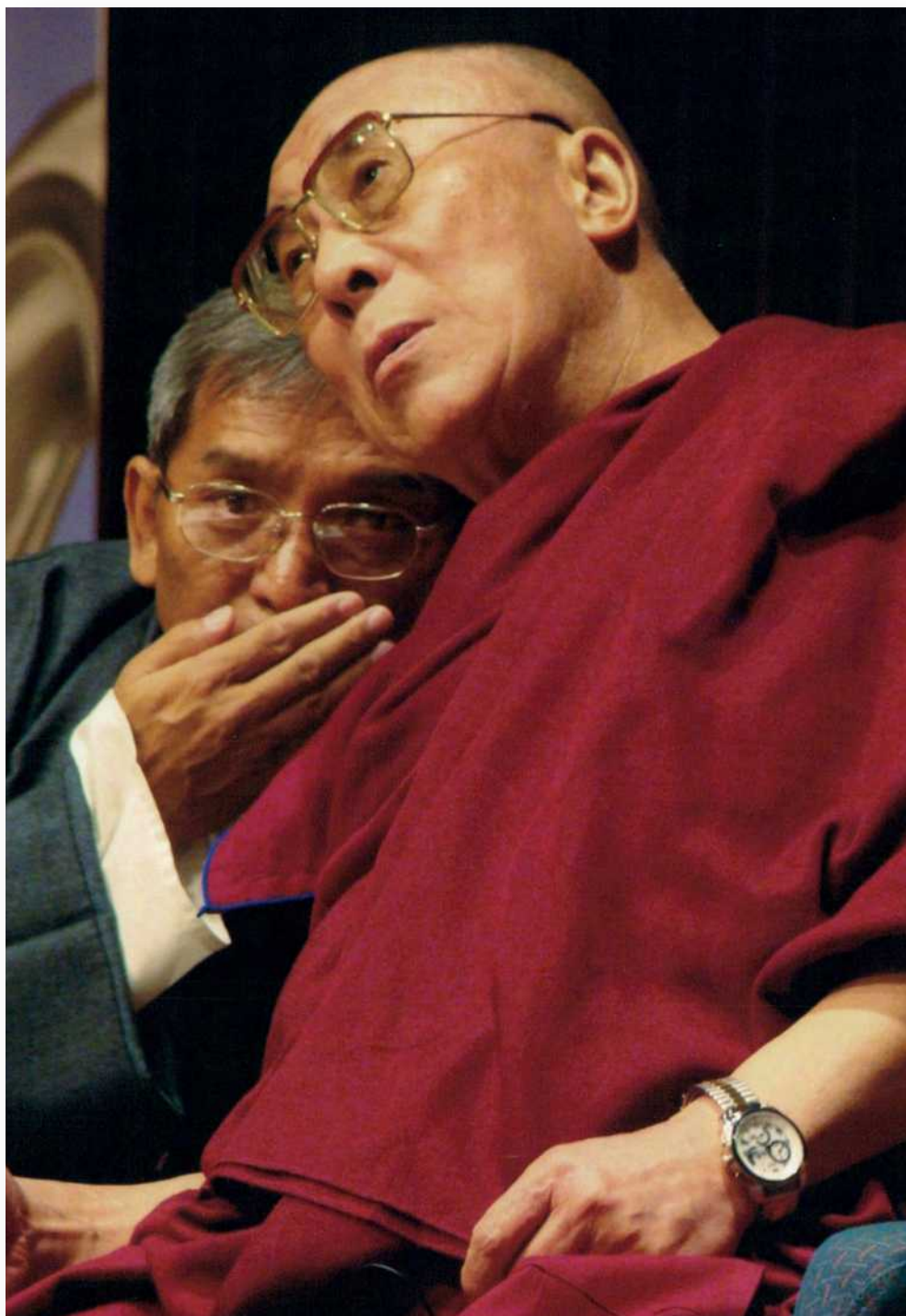
8 August 2019



The author honoured for services to Tibet with presentation of Songtsen Gampo statue and a certificate, Dharamsala, India, 2 May 2018

*Below and right: Castan Centre, Monash University, Melbourne, 8 June 2007;
His Holiness the Dalai Lama with the author, His Representative in Australia*





TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION



Map of Tibet

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION



Map depicting major areas visited

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication ii

Foreword v

Map of Tibet and Map Depicting Major Areas Visited viii

Introduction by His Eminence Professor Samdhong Rinpoché xv

Preface xxiii

Prelude xxv

The Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation 1

An Audience with His Holiness 6

Discussion about the Delegates' Programme 10

The Kashag's Guidelines 11

Travel Documents 13

In Delhi 16

Delhi–Hong Kong 17

Beijing 20

Discussions on Places to Visit 23

Meeting with the Nationalities Affairs Commission Officials 25

Pilgrimage to Yonghe Temple 28

Private Meeting of Ngabo and Kundeling 31

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Beijing People's Publishing House	36
Meeting with Deputy Minister of the United Front Work Department	37
The Great Wall of China	43
Meeting and Discussion with Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal	44
Official Meeting with Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé	47
Audience with Panchen Rinpoché	51
Visit to the Indian Embassy	60
Meeting with Tashi Wangchuk	61
Postponement of the Visit to Tibet	63
Mount Wutai Shan (Mount Wutai)	65
His Holiness' Birthday Celebration in Beijing	68
Kundeling's Private Meeting with Phuntsok Wangyal	71
Alak Jigmé and Kalden's Private Audience with Panchen Rinpoché	76
Alak Jigmé's Private Meeting with Phuntsok Wangyal	78
Discussion with Chinese Officials	79
Beijing to Xining via Xian	85
Arguments over Precious Pills	91
Discussions on the Visit's Duration	93

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Introduction to Amdo (Ch. Qinghai) Province	96
Further Discussion on Photographs and Precious Pills	98
Tso Ngön Nationalities' School and People's Publishing House	100
Visit to Gönlung Monastery or Youning Si	103
Kumbum Monastery (Ta'er)	105
More Debates on His Holiness' Photo and Precious Pills	107
Translator Dechen Wangdu	115
Rebkong	118
Rongpo Gönchen Chökhör Ling Monastery	123
Nomadic Community in Rebkong	130
Kyegudo	137
Tsekhör Thang and Chabcha (Hainan) in Tsolho Region	146
Chabcha (Hainan)	154
Tso Ngön (Qinghai Lake)	160
A Meeting in Xining	162
Xining to Lanzhou	164
Northwest Nationalities University	165
Pari or Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County	167

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Labrang Tashi Khyil (Xiahe) 171

Tsö 183

Pilgrimage to Gyalmo Göñ and Demo Thang 186

Luchu and Machu 187

Taktsang Lhamo (Langmusi) 191

A Round Table Conference on Gansu Visit 194

Lanzhou to Beijing 198

Round Table Conference in Beijing 200

Indian Embassy 204

Meeting with Minister of the United Front Work Department 206

Beijing, Hong Kong, Delhi, Dharamsala 217

Epilogue 220

Glossary of Tibetan Names and Terms 223

About the Author 239

Acknowledgments 242

End Notes 245

Index 255

INTRODUCTION

By His Eminence Professor Samdhong Rinpoché

Tibet, styled *Pur rgyal*, is a country with a marvelous history, distinct from its neighbouring countries, in both habitats and habitants, for many tens of thousands of years, since living beings came to exist on the roof of the world. Yet, due to the rather late flourishing of a written script and a system of communication still in use today, it has not featured in very ancient histories. After development of a script and a literary knowledge, the Tibetans translated innumerable texts, principally of Buddhist teachings and those of other fields of knowledge, from India and neighbouring countries and have maintained their studies, reflections, teachings and writings to a point where no other nation of people stands equal to them in undertaking such far-reaching works in a very short time. It can be decisively said that in terms of population and duration, there has not been any other country with the volume and the quality of translation works and writings surpassing that of Tibet.

However, an aspect of deficiency in that vast literary output is its lack of historical narratives. Because spiritual events (religious history) were considered greatly important, little effort was put into writing about politics, society, economy, education, the life of ordinary people or life stories of individuals and so on. The few that were written were a blend of historical facts, spiritual expressions of experiences, legends and records and are thus difficult to set apart as a genre. There were many biographical works of sublime teachers, yet most of them had *deeds visible to the common sight of all* interspersed with aspects of *the inconceivable secrets*, so it was difficult for historical facts to manifest in them. In general, when Buddha's teachings are categorised into the twelve branches of teachings, history ("as it occurred") is listed on its own. Because historiography as a knowledge did not flourish in Tibet, it appears that erudite Tibetans in general, and particularly Drolwai Gönpö (*sgrol*

ba'i mgon po, Tārānātha) and Rinchen Drub (*rin chen grub*), who wrote extensive historical chronicles, did not take that much interest in historiography.

By not perceiving their manifest “historical” (“as occurred”) importance while events were taking place, when effort is put into recording them in writing after much time has elapsed and the generation of those events is no longer alive, or when the events themselves are no longer within living memory, it is difficult to find complete details of the events when researched. The principal evidences of history are chronicles (documentations), oral narratives, reliance on past artefacts and so on. Evidences other than documentation offer mere approximations as bases for assumptions, so it would be difficult that they would provide credible ascertainment.

It is natural for historians to have dissimilar interpretations. When walking on a snowy mountain or on dusty ground, clear footprints are formed, yet after a while when they are erased by a fresh snowfall or a windstorm, searching for those footprints and describing them could only result in an approximate assumption. The possibility of creating an unerring and factual description would be remote, indeed akin to the coincidental meeting of “a bird encountering a stone.”¹

Recently, Gendun Chöphel, a writer of broad intellect as regards historiography, said:

When the wheel of time of the three times rotates,
The reflections of the past that have occurred and
disappeared
Written by the mind on the void space
Is [this] very marvelous illusory chronicle.

With understanding, one can admire Gendun Chöphel for having acknowledged the hardships and expressed the problem in such critical words. However marvelous an illusion be, it cannot be *that how it appears is how it exists*.

It is rare to see internationally undisputed and reliable works on ancient Tibetan history in general, and particularly of political history, in our Tibetan language, so there have been many occasions of having to rely on accounts written by foreigners in other languages. Also, it is observed that young Tibetans who want to research Tibetan history have to rely on histories of other nations and those written in other languages. This inadequacy in the understanding—by all Tibetans, old and young—of the history of Tibet as a nation and of its people, and of general fields of knowledge, is a matter to feel embarrassed about. It goes without saying that the main cause for these drawbacks is due to the lack of a tradition of historiography in Tibet; there had not been the tradition of immediately documenting factual events related with people and society's conditions. Moreover, those histories that were put into writing lacked qualified documentation.

We regularly experience problems arising from the absence of exact documentation and administrative memory as regards events directly related with the present karmic forces of Tibetans at home and in exile: Tibet's international relations from the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly the chronologies of military treaties, trade agreements and so on. There is some very slight progress in the manner of carrying out works by Tibetans, both governmentally and individually, with lessons to be learned from those experiences. For the last hundred and forty years—that is, since about the late nineteenth century up to the present—general political changes, the many ups and downs of Tibet and its urgent relationship with

the neighbouring countries, have mostly become as if faded from both memory and writing. Consequently, there has been no process to avoid repeating mistakes and to correct them; to develop procedures for making past experiences beneficial for the foundation of future works and plans. Many important political works have had to be decided in dependence on temporary factors at hand, thus some analysts have described many recent Tibetan officials as “Temporariests” (a system of temporariness), a remark difficult to consider baseless.

In the lifetime of living elderly Tibetans at home and in exile, many, many events have taken place: the communist Chinese occupation, the military intrusion into Tibet; the placing of the Seventeen-point Agreement; His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s visit to China and India; rebellion against communist China from all parts of Tibet; the peaceful uprising of the year 1959; the arrival in exile in neighbouring countries of His Holiness and many tens of thousands of Tibetans; the proclamation of the annulment of the Seventeen-point Agreement; movements for restoration of an independent Tibet; the stages of the nature of the Tibetan political system being transformed into a genuine democracy; the livelihood of Tibetans in exile; preservation of spirituality, culture and language; providing an all-encompassing education in both traditional and modern systems; determination of the Middle Way Policy; commencement of Tibet–China negotiations, and re-continuing of the negotiations; and so on.

Many events and works of greatly significant historical importance have taken place. Therefore, this period has been one of the most hectic times heralding the most significant changes in Tibet’s widely known history of some two thousand and three hundred years. Compared with the past, the events of this period have

not suffered from such poor documentation; rather have become included in international records, correspondences, news media and so on. Nonetheless, due to lack of proper documentation (some of the documentation projects initiated in recent times have not been successfully completed), the standard is unsatisfactory amongst exiled Tibetans in free countries.

Besides, out of attachment, hatred and bias, some have described the facts crookedly. There are not a few documents of that kind which, if left ignored might lead to the danger of numerous misunderstandings and doubts in future generations, subsequent to the finish of the present generation. If one reflects well on this crucial issue, all Tibetans, in particular exiled Tibetans in free countries, would need to record their individual, or organisation's and society's works and events as initially witnessed, without fabrication and repudiation and notwithstanding whether or not they appear to be important. It is very important that those records are documented to a standard concordant with modern scientific documentation. This would not only become the basis for future history but a means to resolve the present Tibetan issues. Such records would be invaluable in making decisions and implementing works to achieve the present and ultimate aspirations of the Tibetan people.

As everybody knows, immediately after the arrival in exile of the legitimate Tibetan government, headed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan political system was led towards genuine democracy, while and at the same time all means were applied to restore Tibet's independence. However, due to China's strength, the international situation and modern influences, general politics around the world driven solely by economic and military power, and so on, not only the struggle for independence might not be of successful fruition, there was also the danger of

the truth about Tibet soon disappearing completely from the international forum, unless a policy adhered to is adapted to times and which would be internationally recognised and worthy of gaining support. Foreseeing this, since around 1974–75 His Holiness the Dalai Lama formulated fully the innovation of the mutually beneficial Middle Way Policy.

When the Chinese leadership first contacted His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1979, His Holiness was immediately ready to accept their approach, engage in negotiation and re-connect contact that had remained broken for twenty years. Tibetans at home gained new hope and confidence. Around the world countries that cherished justice and truth—and especially those countries that supported Tibet—also found a new light of confidence. The issue of Tibet gained a more prominent and firmer status on the international stage and it became more convenient for many nations wanting to render their support of Tibetans and the issue of Tibet, to do so governmentally. In particular, the situation for Tibetans at home became slightly more liberal compared to the times before that contact. Quite a number of monasteries and educational institutions were restored, and more importantly, many young Tibetans from Tibet were able to travel across to study the major texts and receive education in exiled Tibetan monasteries and schools. Given the times, these were inconceivable benefits.

Considering the political state of related individual countries at that time, it would have been extremely difficult for them to have that good opportunity for Tibet–China negotiations and for Tibetans at home and those in exile to visit each other. This was not at all a work that could be achieved by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) alone; rather it was solely because of the benevolent deeds of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the great treasury of compassion. This was observable to all.

In the chronology of such marvelously factual events, since 1979 until 1985, four successive delegations, as envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and as representatives of exiled Tibetans, visited each of the three regions of Tibet where they met and had talks with many Tibetans. To have been able to do that is not only of unique historical meaningfulness, visits by those delegations have also created a distinct awareness that cannot be erased from the memory of the Tibetans.

Since the determination of the Middle Way Policy and renewed contact between Tibet and China, visits to Tibet by successive delegates making direct contact with the Tibetan public in Tibet is of greater importance than the governmental negotiations between the officials. Consequently, to create a detailed record for historical chronicles, without excess and omission, of all those events and works undertaken so that they can be read by interested members of the public and become reference resources whenever needed, for all who are related to the works, is indisputably an important duty for the administration and for any incumbent official.

In 1985, when the fourth delegation, led by former Kalön Tripa Kundeling Wooser Gyaltzen, visited the Dotö and Domé regions of Tibet, Mr Tenzin Phuntsok (Atisha), who was a member of the delegation and the junior member of staff in the Department of Information and International Relations, kept a detailed and factual written record of daily programs, beginning with how the delegation members were appointed, right up to briefing His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the visit and explaining observations from the visit to the Central Tibetan Administration's staff.

That this record and the observations made have now been put into the form of this book is an invaluable service to Tibetan polity, for which I rejoice and express

my admiration. I believe it will help fill the big gap of the recent history of Tibet and become a reliable and valid document for future generations to rely on as a resource, and to quote from. Since this writing is in the style of a daily record it has the subject matters in entirety and in orderly sequence; because it covers the background and factors relating to each event, it is decisive; because the factual events are not obscured by selfish interpretations and meaningless wordiness, the meanings are clear; considering the medium of the narrative is in current modern colloquial vernacular, it reads to be easily understood by all, high or low. This book stands multi-featured with those and other distinct characteristics.

Putting aside a question or two regarding particular wording and so on, this chronicle is a narrative of historic factual matters expressed as they are. It is not a display of literary composition, so its value is to be measured in terms of historical facts.

This mess of utterances, laden in my mental feelings, put together in the form of a Foreword, is expressed by Samdhong [His Eminence Prof. Samdhong Rinpoché], one with the form as a practitioner in the lineage of Shakyamuni Buddha. *Jayajagat!*

Tibetan Rabjung Year 992, Earth-Dog, 3rd month, 25th day

Dharamsala: 28 April 2018

PREFACE

In 1985, I had the opportunity to visit Amdo province in north-eastern Tibet as a member of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation led by Katri (former Prime Minister) Kundeling Woesser Gyaltsen. After 1959, the contact between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government was first established in 1979. In the following years, His Holiness sent four fact-finding delegations to Tibet and two exploratory delegations to Beijing.

In the years following my visit, I often thought about writing down my experience of this historic tour. However, I was not able to do so owing to work priorities. After my early retirement and a considerable improvement in my health, I finally had time. This account is primarily based on a number of diaries and notebooks that I kept during the visit.

Interactions between the Tibetan and Chinese authorities are important as they become parts of history of the two countries. This is particularly true for official delegations since any visit to Tibet from exile is political and therefore highly significant. Members of our delegation had interactions with Chinese leaders and met with prominent Tibetans such as Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé and Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal. We had also met with many ordinary Tibetans. Their eyewitness accounts will be crucial to scholars, writers and researchers on Tibet-China relations.

I have attempted to present a comprehensive picture of the conditions in Tibet as well as the hopes and aspirations of the Tibetan people. Despite a number of challenges we faced from the Chinese hosts throughout the visit, as per the wishes of His Holiness we tried to improve relations between the Chinese and Tibetans to the best of our abilities. The depth of respect and feelings of the Tibetans we met

towards His Holiness were very moving and anger against the Chinese occupation of Tibet was evident.

Based on my experience, I feel that the Chinese side did their best to facilitate a smooth visit for us. I have tried to write as comprehensively as possible but my lack of scholarship and writing skills were great challenges while carrying out this huge task. I have endeavoured to fulfil His Holiness the Dalai Lama's advice to record my experience honestly to the best of my knowledge. I hope and pray that this will be of some benefit to the future generations. There are bound to be many errors in this book for which I offer my humble apology in advance. Suggestions, feedback and opinions from readers would be highly appreciated.

Tenzin Phuntsok Atisha

Canberra, 29 April 2018

PRELUDE

In 1979, the Chinese Government and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile first made direct contact when Deng Xiaoping expressed a willingness to talk to Gyalo Thondup, the older brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Deng stated that anything other than Tibetan independence could be discussed.²

Consequently, His Holiness was able to arrange with Beijing for a series of fact-finding delegations to Tibet to assess the real situation.

The first delegation comprised five people with first-hand experience of Tibet before she lost her independence. It was chaired by Katri (Prime Minister) Juchen Thupten Namgyal, who was responsible for overseeing the duties of the cabinet of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, based since 1960 in Dharamsala, a small town in northern India. The other four members of the delegation were also part of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in India: Takla Phuntsok Tashi, Kalön (Minister) for the Department of Security; the Dalai Lama's older brother Lobsang Samten; the deputy speaker of the Parliament-in-Exile, Phunrap Lobsang Dhargyé; and Tashi Topgyal, secretary of the Department of Home. From 2 August to 22 December 1979 the delegates visited many places in Tibet including Lhasa, the capital city, and the areas known in Tibetan as the "three provinces", which include the Tibetan-inhabited areas in the eastern half of the Tibetan plateau that are not recognised by China as being part of Tibet.

The Second Fact-Finding Delegation comprised five prominent, young and educated men. They were Tenzin Namgyal Tethong, the representative of His Holiness in New York (the delegation's leader); Sangling Tsering Dorjé, the representative of His Holiness in Switzerland; Gyari Pema Gyalpo, the representative of His Holiness in Japan; Nampeltsang Lobsang Jinpa, president of the Tibetan Youth Congress; and

Phuntsok Wangyal, the leader of the Tibetan community in the United Kingdom. Between 1 May and 15 August 1980, the delegation visited various areas in Tibet, including Lhasa, until the visit was cut short by Chinese officials.

Members of the Third Fact-Finding Delegation included six people working in the field of education in the exiled Tibetan community. They were led by Jetsün Pema, younger sister of the Dalai Lama and head of Tibetan Children's Village schools; Chazotsang Rabten, rector of the Central School for Tibetans in Mussoorie; Lhagon Tulku, a teacher at the same school; Venerable Lobsang Tenzin, head of the Tibetan Children's Village school in Ladakh; Wangdu, a Tibetan language teacher from the Central School for Tibetans at the Rabgyé Ling settlement school in Hunsur, South India; and Yangmo Tso, a teacher from the Darjeeling branch of the Central Schools for Tibetans. They visited many places in all three provinces of Tibet from 1 June to 3 October 1980.

On 28 July 1981, a meeting took place between Gyalo Thondup and Hu Yaobang in Beijing.³ Hu handed China's Five-Point Proposal to Gyalo Thondup. This led to the cause of much confusion among the Tibetans and even today there is still debate surrounding the circumstances of the exchange, but what we know for sure is that China has still not changed its position from then. In 1985, our talks with Chinese leaders in Beijing also centred on this Chinese proposal. Therefore, it is important for the readers to fully understand the basis of the issue.

China's Five-Point Proposal included:

1. The Dalai Lama should be confident that China has entered a new stage of long-term political stability, steady economic growth and mutual help among all nationalities.
2. The Dalai Lama and his representatives should be frank and sincere with the central government, not beat around the bush. There should be no more quibbling over the events in 1959.
3. The central authorities sincerely welcome the Dalai Lama and his followers to come back to live. This is based on the hope that they will contribute to upholding China's unity and promoting solidarity between the Han and Tibetan nationalities, and among all nationalities, and the modernization programme.
4. The Dalai Lama will enjoy the same political status and living conditions as he had before 1959. It is suggested that he not go to live in Tibet or hold local posts there. Of course, he may go back to Tibet from time to time. His followers need not worry about their jobs and living conditions. These will only be better than before.
5. When the Dalai Lama wishes to come back, he can issue a brief statement to the press. It is up to him to decide what he would like to say in the statement.⁴

The Chinese Five-Point Proposal generated much debate in the exile community. There were two main issues with the Proposal. First, almost all of the points were addressed to His Holiness and how he would be treated if the agreement was accepted; there was no indication on what would happen to the Tibetan people and their situation. Second, if His Holiness were to “return”, he would not be able to return to Tibet and would only be allowed to visit “sometimes.” These issues raised several questions and risks that were left unanswered, so the Tibetan community condemned the proposal.

However, there is absolutely no clarity as to whether His Holiness the Dalai Lama or the Kashag (Tibetan Cabinet) were informed about it. When the Dalai Lama sent a delegation on 24 April 1982 to find out whether dialogue was possible, the members of the delegation were totally in the dark about this proposal.⁵ While in Beijing, they made it very clear to the Chinese side that they had no idea about the Five-Point Proposal. According to volume ten of Juchen Thupten Namgyal’s autobiography, His Holiness the Dalai Lama also did not know about the Chinese proposal. However, in his memoir *Noodle Maker of Kalimpong*, Gyalo Thondup mentions that he had informed the Kashag of the Chinese proposal.⁶ This is definitely not true and it is also very doubtful whether His Holiness was informed.

Once the delegation (comprised of Katri Juchen Thupten Namgyal and Kalon Takla Phuntsok Tashi and the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Lodi Gyari Gyaltsen) arrived in Beijing for exploratory talks, they came to know about the proposal from Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal.

It goes without saying that the delegates faced a great many problems because the agenda for talks that they had brought with them from Dharamsala was in a

totally different direction from the Chinese proposal. If His Holiness had indeed been informed about the Five-Point Proposal, it would have been impossible for him not to tell the China-bound delegation about its contents.

Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé and Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal were disappointed when His Holiness' delegates arrived in Beijing because the three of them thought that His Holiness had accepted and sent his representatives in response to China's Five-Point Proposal made through Gyalo Thondup. All three of them were unwaveringly against the proposal. To show his displeasure, Panchen Rinpoché did not immediately give an audience to the delegates and when they met with Ngabo he was indifferent and paid little attention to them. It is said that he even did not care to open the letter from His Holiness. When the delegates requested Ngabo's guidance, he simply said, "Since both sides [the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Chinese Government] have clearly decided on the basic issues of Tibet, you can discuss anything."⁷ Ngabo and the others were under the impression that the Dalai Lama had already accepted the proposal. In the end, when Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo and Phuntsok Wangyal came to know that the delegation knew absolutely nothing about the proposal, all three of them felt reassured and relieved. Only then did Panchen Rinpoché grant them an audience immediately and provide them with much advice and guidance.

Strangely, neither of the exploratory delegations sent by His Holiness in 1982 and 1984 gave clear responses stating that they did not agree with China's Five-Point Proposal. In the end, on 16 December 1984, His Holiness was compelled to make a public statement clearly rejecting the Five-Point Proposal and announcing that the central issue was not about his own return and status, but about the need to address the basic aspirations of all Tibetan people.

In 1985, the Assembly of Tibetan Deputies (currently known as the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile) in a press release stated: “Not only the Tibetans but the entire educated people of the world will laugh at the five conditions set for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. China’s dream to make Tibet’s Dalai Lama its stooge is utterly against the wishes of the six million Tibetans. Not only does this go against his dignity, but not even a single Tibetan will ever accept it.”⁸

In April 1985, during the fourteenth annual general meeting comprised of Tibetan Government officials, regional settlement representatives, members of parliament and Tibetan NGOs, a resolution was unanimously passed denouncing China’s Five-Point Policy. The resolution stated: “China has been continuously referring to the proposal, but it stands against His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s philosophy, the wishes of six million Tibetans, Tibet’s very history as well as the reality of the situation.”⁹

The content of what was discussed between Gyalo Thondup and Hu Yaobang about this proposal, only he can clarify and no one else. As noted here, because of the exchange, there was great miscommunication and confusion on both sides. In order to have a clear, multi-layered and thorough understanding of this issue, it is important for scholars and other concerned individuals to do further research.

In the midst of this, the Fourth Delegation’s visit to Tibet was confirmed. Reactions of the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation to the Chinese proposal in Beijing and the strong views of Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé, Phuntsok Wangyal and ordinary Tibetans will be discussed later.

THE FOURTH FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

The Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation was to have been made up of exiled people connected with religious affairs. However, China objected to the composition of this group and in 1985 the proposed visit was cancelled. The reasons given for the objection were many, although from the perspective of the Government-in-Exile, none were definite or clear enough to warrant cancellation. Eventually, both the plan and the members of the delegation had to be revised.

Next, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in India planned to send a large delegation to visit all regions of Tibet, including Ngari in Western Tibet. Preparations were made for four groups, each consisting of five members. However, the Chinese did not agree to such a large delegation of twenty people and this visit too was cancelled.

A series of talks with the Chinese Government followed. Finally, it was agreed to allow a delegation of Tibetans in exile to visit Amdo province in North-eastern Tibet (known by Tibetans as Tso Ngön and by the Chinese as Qinghai).

On 25 April 1985, the Kashag announced that the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation from His Holiness the Dalai Lama was scheduled to visit Tso Ngön in the near future. The members of this delegation consisted of six people, including Katri (former Prime Minister) Kundeling Wooser Gyaltzen,¹⁰ and the head of the Audit Section, Alak Jigmé Trinlé Lhundrup (hereafter referred to as Alak Jigmé¹¹—the word *Alak* is a title for high lamas in the Amdo dialect equivalent to Rinpoché), as well as two former members of the Parliament-in-Exile, Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering¹² from Kyegudo, and Amdo Kalden¹³ from Chabcha. The other two members, Thubten Samphel¹⁴ and I, Tenzin Phuntsok Atisha, were both from the Department of Information & International Relations. Thubten Samphel was the deputy-secretary of the department, and he was chosen to be the official photographer. Prior to

our trip, he took a crash course in photography in Delhi. I was working then as a section officer at the department and was assigned to the delegation as an assistant to Kundeling.

Kundeling headed the delegation and Alak Jigmé was the second-in-command. The decision to appoint Kundeling to lead this delegation was made after careful consideration of a message received from Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé (former Minister in Lhasa and Governor of Chamdo) and Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal (also known as Phunwang and founder of the first Tibetan Communist Party, who worked with the Chinese Communist Party). The two men were influential lay Tibetans that held positions within the political system in China. They had advised it would be wise to have a senior member in the delegation with intimate knowledge of Tibet prior to the Chinese occupation. The message was delivered by Kalon Tashi Wangdi, which he received through Tersey Tsultrim, who got it directly from Beijing.

Accordingly, the Kashag requested Kundeling to lead the delegation. Later, I learned that the reason Ngabo and Phuntsok Wangyal had asked the Government-in-Exile to include someone from the older generation was because the younger and less experienced members of the second delegation were said to have made outspoken comments during their visit. This had led to disturbances (open demonstrations against Chinese rule) by the public in Lhasa and especially in Ganden monastery, which was the reason their visit was cut short by the Chinese authorities. The Tibetan elders in Beijing therefore wanted someone with diplomatic skills and experience to lead the delegation in the hope that this would ensure a less contentious and more productive visit and promote an enduring relationship between China and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Alak Jigmé, Amdo Kalden from Chabcha and Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering from Kyegudo had been included in the delegation because they came from the region we were scheduled to visit.

How did I become a member of this delegation? Kundeling, the group leader, was advanced in age and his family requested the private office of His Holiness and the Kashag to send a reliable personal assistant to accompany him. Both offices agreed to this and the Kashag directed that candidates should be civil servants in the Tibetan administration. The Kundeling family suggested three names including Nampeltsang Lobsang Jinpa, president of the Tibetan Youth Congress, Dongchung Ngödup, an official with the Department of Security, and myself. Lobsang Jinpa had only recently returned from a visit to Tibet (which was cut short by the Chinese) and Ngödup was part of the Department of Security that also handled intelligence work, so these two individuals would have presented a number of conflicts of interest for China. After many deliberations, Jinpa and Ngödru were ruled out, leaving me as the remaining candidate to accompany Kundeling to Tibet.

Looking back now, I feel greatly honoured and humbled to have been entrusted to accompany him, given the number of high-ranking and experienced candidates in the administration who were available for this task. I am forever grateful to His Holiness, the Kashag and Kundeling's family for entrusting me with this responsibility.

After the names of the delegation members were announced, Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering, one of the delegates, disappeared from the community and could not be traced. According to Katri Juchen Thupten Namgyal, at a meeting of the Kashag and His Holiness, His Holiness asked Juchen to find out unofficially if Dra'u Pon had gone

to Taiwan. If Dra'u Pon had not visited Taiwan, then His Holiness advised that there was no need to change the composition of the delegation. The reason for this concern was that the Taiwanese government considered Tibet to be a part of the Republic of China. For this reason, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had put a ban on Tibetans travelling to Taiwan at that time, especially because anti-Tibetan activities were also being carried out in the exile Tibetan communities by the Taiwanese government's so-called Mongolian–Tibetan Affairs Commission. In volume eleven of Juchen's mammoth twenty-one-volume autobiography, he writes that he asked Dra'u Pon to come to his house and inquired whether he'd visited Taiwan. Dra'u Pon adamantly denied being in Taiwan, an act that would have disqualified him from being a part of the delegation. Accordingly, Juchen reported the matter to His Holiness and the Kashag. However, when the delegation returned from Tibet it was discovered that Dra'u Pon had in fact been in Taiwan during his disappearance. Later, His Holiness told Juchen that Dra'u Pon had lied about his visit to Taiwan. "It looks like you have been thoroughly misled by Dra'u Pon," His Holiness said. Juchen replied, "I have been completely fooled. It is a very sad and serious matter. I didn't think Dra'u Pon would do such a thing." Juchen wrote that when he confronted Dra'u Pon, Dra'u Pon said, "I had to say I didn't go to Taiwan at that time, so what should I do now?" Juchen said, "In the future you should not indulge in lies and should consider the consequences of your actions." Juchen told him that it was sad because he not only lied to him but also made him report the falsehood to His Holiness and the Kashag. Juchen further remarked, "These are matters of politics, so you should be more careful from now on."¹⁵ Dra'u Pon had only been able to remain as a member of the delegation because of his trickery.

Many years later, when I became the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Taiwan in 2000, I met the Tibetan protocol officer serving in the Mongolian–Tibetan Affairs Commission who had gone to receive and welcome Dra'u Pon when he visited Taiwan during his disappearance from India.

In his autobiography, Juchen also talks at great length about another event regarding the composition of the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation. There was great pressure to include another person in the delegation. The controversy that surrounded this issue eventually led to Juchen tendering his resignation to His Holiness, which was not accepted. The details of this matter can be found in Juchen's books.

At that time, I had no idea that these developments were taking place. I am sure that other members were also unaware of these issues. We proceeded to Tibet unaware of all this. In hindsight, I think it was probably good that we had no knowledge about these thorny issues, for it might have clouded our judgement and influenced the outcome of the delegation to Tibet.

AN AUDIENCE WITH HIS HOLINESS

On 20 May 1985, the six of us gathered in Dharamsala. The next day, along with Kalön Tripa Juchen Thupten Namgyal, Kalön Tenzin Geyche Tethong and Kalön Phunrab Lobsang Dhargyé, we had an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. His Holiness said, “This time you are going to visit the Amdo region. Although we had made preparations for a larger plan, the Chinese did not accept it. No matter, we have to go there and explore as much as we can. The Kashag will brief you in detail about which places to visit, but in Beijing you will meet with the Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo and Phunwang. Things will not work out if we talk about Tibet’s independence. The important thing is to have a united Tibet with complete internal authority to handle religious and cultural affairs. I think this is possible. It will be crucial for both sides to continue to meet.”

During the audience, His Holiness also told us to give these messages to people inside Tibet: “Every Tibetan must pay attention to education, study the Tibetan language, recite the *mani* mantra [*Om Mani Padmé Hum*]¹⁶ and the mantras of Guru Rinpoché [*Om Ah Hung Benza Guru Pema Sidhi Hum*]¹⁷ and Vajrakilaya [*Om Benza Kili Kilaya Sarva Bighanen Bam Hung Phat*]”. He also told us to “acknowledge and appreciate the people of Amdo who were already reciting *Mani* mantras.” His Holiness asked us to find out details about Han migration into Tibetan areas, the transportation of religious images and statues to mainland China, deforestation, mining and the transport of nomadic commodities such as butter, animal furs and skins to neighbouring Chinese cities.

Paying special attention to Tibetan history, His Holiness said, “Generally, history that has been recorded, whether in the Chinese or Tibetan languages, cannot be changed or erased because they are facts. But just as the Chinese put special focus

on history written in their language, we must pay attention to history written in our language. Therefore, I think it will be good to form a committee of historians and do a comparative study of history in the Chinese and Tibetan languages to find out what is the truth. We have had a priest–patron relationship, but never that of ruler and ruled. Propaganda is not good.”

This was the first time I had had a private audience with His Holiness at his residence. I was very nervous and excited, both at the same time. Tibetans spend their whole lives praying for the opportunity to meet their spiritual leader up close and to receive his blessings, and I was no different. At the time, I was a very junior officer who had only served for less than four years, so this kind of opportunity was extremely rare. The whole event was like a dream. Although I was hanging on his every word, when I had left the room, I realised I had been awestruck and failed to memorise all the points that His Holiness had raised. I could remember some bits, but others were like a cloud drifting further away.

Later the delegates met at the Kashag’s office, where Kalön Tripa Juchen Thupten Namgyal repeated what His Holiness said almost word for word. He urged each one of us to keep His Holiness’ guidance and advice in our hearts. I was amazed at how sharp-minded and precise his memory was. Tibetans acknowledged his powerful memory, but it was not always accurate. For instance, in 1985 during the *Kalachakra* Initiation in Bodhgaya, I was wrongly accused of disobeying his order. Because both I and my colleague Namgyal Shastri had Sanskrit rather than Tibetan names, there was some confusion between us: I, rather than Shastri, got a harsh scolding in front of all other staff members of my department. The reason for scolding was a failure to issue a press pass to a Tibetan photographer from Kathmandu. In fact, this Tibetan

had not deserved a press pass because he was there in an unofficial capacity and Shastri was strictly following the rules. The scolding was not necessary to begin with and it felt unjust, because it was Shastri who had been organising press accreditation for that event, not me. Although I felt the scolding was unwarranted, I didn't make an issue of the matter because Juchen was confused between two Sanskrit names—Atisha and Shastri. All the staff members of my department had a good laugh about it after the meeting.

After my confirmation as a member of the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation, I busied myself in studies and preparation. I went to Professor Samdhong Rinpoché, then vice-chancellor of the Centre for Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, to seek his blessings and more importantly, to ask for his guidance and advice. Rinpoché gave me valuable advice on many issues and also asked me to see if there was any possibility of locating old texts, in particular the *Tsema Namdrel* (Skt. *Pramanavarttika*), in the original Sanskrit. I also met with Nampel Lobsang Jinpa, president of the Tibetan Youth Congress, and Yeshe Chödak and Norbu Dönden, both of whom were working in the Office of the Dalai Lama, to seek their advice and guidance. They advised me to conduct various pujas and rituals and to pray for the success of the delegation and for my own tasks. Lobsang Jinpa asked me to talk about the Tibetan Youth Congress and introduce its goals and ideals to the youth in Tibet. He also asked me to carry a letter to Panchen Rinpoché on behalf of the Tibetan Youth Congress. I offered the letter to Panchen Rinpoché and whenever the occasion arose during the delegation I tried my best to speak about the Tibetan Youth Congress and their activities.

Officials and staff at the Department of Information and International Relations also asked me to look for texts and documents in Tibet that would be useful in

making the international community more aware of Tibet's history and current status. I also met with Tashi Tsering, the director of culture and history at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, who asked me to find copies of books and magazines including *Drangchar*, a literary magazine I had never heard of. Around this time, as per Tibetan tradition, some of my relatives living in McLeod Ganj came to me bearing white scarfs and barley wine to wish me good luck for this historic delegation. They told me they were very proud that I was part of it.

The Tibetan Government-in-Exile generously provided each delegation member with 2,000 rupees (about thirty US dollars in 2019 values) as a gift to cover any private expenses we might incur during the expedition. As soon as I received this money I ordered a decent, gold-coloured three-piece suit from A-One Tailor in Lower Dharamsala. This was my first suit. I also had my first *chuba* tailored. Before embarking on the trip, the Reserve Bank of India in New Delhi allowed us to exchange Indian rupees (our official funding for the trip) for 500 American dollars.

DISCUSSION ABOUT THE DELEGATES' PROGRAMME

On 22 May, two days after the audience with His Holiness, the members of the delegation were invited by the Kashag for a dinner, during which we were briefed about the places we were to visit and other scheduled events. Kalön Tripa Juchen Namgyal's autobiography records that His Holiness had said during our audience: "...the Fourth Delegation was to visit only Domé (the Amdo region), but if the opportunity arises, you might be able to visit Kanlho (Gannan in Chinese) Tibet Autonomous Prefecture and the Taklung area. But at this moment these arrangements are tentative.

"The only confirmed arrangements are that you will fly from India to Hong Kong, then to Beijing where the assigned Chinese officials will receive you. After a meeting with officials in Beijing, you are to travel to Xining via Lanzhou. Further arrangements will be made with the Chinese officials to visit various places in Tso Ngön. Since the earlier delegations could not visit Parik and Hasak areas, it would be great if the fourth delegation could visit these regions, especially if the visit includes historic and holy sites such as the monastery of Drotsang Dorjé Chang and the Martsang region [now in Tsoshar Prefecture].

"Speaking purely from the perspective of convenience, it would be best if you travel from Xining to Kumbum Monastery, Taktser, Lamo Dechen monastery, Malho Rebkong, and Chentsa Bido, and then return to Xining, then go to Geshong, Tongkho, Tsoelho Chabcha, Tso Kawa, and the Golok region, and finish at Kyegudo in the Yushu region."¹⁸

THE KASHAG'S GUIDELINES

On 10 June 1985 the Kashag provided set of official guidelines to members of the delegation that had eight-points. These stated that since all conversations during the visit would be political in nature, the members should be careful when speaking not to create any obstacles for future Sino-Tibetan contacts. In Beijing we would meet Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé and Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal; in Lanzhou we would meet Jamyang Sheypa Rinpoché, Gungthang Rinpoché, Apa Alo and Tseten Shabdrung, with whom we were to talk about Tibetan history, as His Holiness had earlier stated. These were the key leaders in Tibet who still wielded considerable influence and were loyal to Tibetans. We were to urge them to ensure that the names of places in Tibet remain as they were traditionally. In the case of Tibetans working for the Chinese Government but still maintaining loyalty to Tibet and respect for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we were to tell them about His Holiness' activities around the world and the status of exiled Tibetans. In general, we were to tell the Tibetans inside Tibet that His Holiness' vision and the aspiration of all Tibetans was to have a united Tibet comprised of all three provinces following our unique culture, language, religion and traditions. No matter what circumstances we may encounter in the future, we would remain united and continue to stay together.

The guidelines further stated that we were to clarify that Tibetan people did not accept or agree with China's so-called Five-Point Proposal and that the issue of Tibet is fundamentally a question of the Tibetan people's welfare and aspirations and not an issue about the personal situation of the Dalai Lama.

After the briefing we had a discussion among ourselves and then with the Kashag, which resulted in the creation of a four-point resolution, which was passed. The substance of the resolution was that we were to collect background research

and information regarding a possible visit to Tibet by His Holiness; if any of the delegates had friends and acquaintances in Tibet or China, they could meet with them; and that the delegates should pay special attention to religious institutions in Tibet and collect data on monasteries.

Because the visit was essentially political in nature, we were to pay special attention to what we talked about, how we behaved, and how we spoke to people at all levels. We were also to focus on the possibility of a future delegation to visit other regions of Tibet. The hope for the future was for Tibet to be a united entity where our culture, language and religion could be practiced. We were advised not to talk openly about or discuss Tibet's independence. We were to promote trust among the Tibetans and the Chinese in order to pave the way for a good long-term relationship.

The Government-in-Exile provided cash in Indian rupees and Chinese Yuan, as well as letters, gifts and ceremonial white scarfs from His Holiness for VIPs we were to meet. We had two boxes to carry containing threads¹⁹ blessed by His Holiness, precious pills, mani pills²⁰ (pills blessed with the mantra), *dutsi chömen*²¹ pills and photographs of our spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The Office of the Dalai Lama presented us with some Chinese currency from the 1950s and 1960s. It was only later that we found out to our surprise these notes were no longer in circulation, but a bank in China kindly exchanged them for us. Our guides were very surprised and shook their heads upon seeing these old notes from a bygone era.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

A particular incident I distinctly remember involved travel documents and the events that followed. Juchen Thupten's autobiography says that we were given clear instructions regarding travel documents from Hong Kong to China. That was not entirely true; the Identity Certificates (ICs) issued to us by the Indian government were valid for us to travel to Hong Kong because at the time visa applications for Hong Kong were issued by the British government. However, to enter China, the Chinese Government would not accept ICs but would instead issue VIP papers with

which we could travel to China.²² This led to great big problems as there were no clear guidelines or prior knowledge regarding what documents were to be issued by the Chinese. We nearly travelled on the standard documents issued by China to all its citizens. This would have implied that the delegation sent by the Government-in-Exile had accepted that we were Chinese citizens and that Tibet was part of China.

After arriving in Hong Kong, our Chinese guide Mr Liu asked each of us to provide a photograph so that he could prepare travel documents for us to proceed to Mainland China. However, on the afternoon of 18 June, just as we were about to leave for the airport, identity cards, red in colour, with five yellow stars on the cover, were handed to



*A copy of author's travel document
issued by the Chinese Government*

us. When I looked carefully, I was surprised to see that we were designated as Chinese citizens—with Tibet as part of China. I reported this to Kundeling immediately. He was equally taken aback and stared at the document with widened eyes.

Kundeling said I should further check with Thubten Samphel to avoid any unnecessary problem. I showed the cards to Samphel who acknowledged the same response that I had. Immediately, Kundeling called all of us together to discuss the documents and to decide what course of action we should take. Alak Jigmé, Dra'u Pon and Kalden said that since the Kashag had provided no clear guidelines on travel documents, it was possible that earlier delegations had also travelled with the same identity documents, so it should be all right for us to do the same. Kundeling looked at Samphel and me and said, "According to this document, we are travelling to China as Chinese citizens on a Chinese Identity Card." Both of us responded that this was correct. Kundeling then said, "If that is the case, then as the head of this fact-finding delegation I declare that we will never travel to China as Chinese citizens, otherwise this blunder will remain in history long after we have died. We will travel exactly like the earlier delegations."

The last statement, in fact, was a wild guess. None of us had any definite knowledge about what travel documents the earlier delegations had used!

The guide was told of our decision and advised not to load our luggage. We insisted that unless we were provided the same travel documents as the previous Tibetan fact-finding delegations we would return to India. The guide instantly changed his expression and made many phone calls to his superiors.

About an hour later, the guide told us to go to the airport where we were promised that we would be issued the same documents given to earlier delegates. On our

arrival we were indeed given new documents; they were white, on plain paper and rather small, containing just our names and our travel dates in China. They did not mention citizenship or any other detail, but this proved that we were not citizens of China. I knew the importance of our task ahead and was at that moment struck with renewed conviction that we would always have to be on our toes. The fact that we were able to overcome this crisis was due to Kundeling's political experience and acumen. I also believe that the guardian deities helped us in our time of need and we avoided making an historic blunder.

When we returned to Dharamsala, I suggested to our Government-in-Exile in writing that clear and proper guidelines regarding travel documents should be provided to any future delegation. If not, the Chinese could play tricks like what they tried on us.

However, according to Takla Phuntsok Tashi's book, *Mitse Jungwa Jöpa*,²³ a proposed Fifth Fact-Finding Delegation also faced problems with travel documents. When a series of exchanges took place with the Chinese embassy in Delhi regarding the travel documents to be used by members of that mission, which was headed by His Holiness' elder brother, Gyalo Thondup, the Chinese side said that a special office had been opened in Hong Kong where the Tibetan delegates would have to obtain the same documents as were given to Chinese living overseas. The Chinese embassy further said that this was a new rule and that the travel documents issued to earlier delegates would no longer be issued. Whatever the case may be, it was clear that the Chinese took this hardline position on travel documents because they realized that the fact-finding delegations were not bringing them benefits.

IN DELHI

At around 9:00 p.m. on 11 June 1985, members of the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, the monks of Nechung Monastery and officials and staff members of the Government-in-Exile gave us a fine send off. Four members of the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation left Dharamsala by bus at 10:00 p.m., arriving at the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New Delhi around 11:00 a.m. the next day. Kundeling had already arrived from Rajpur and Dra'u Pon from his settlement in Kumrao. On 13 June, Kundeling met with officials from the External Ministry of the Indian government and in the afternoon, we went shopping for things we needed for the journey. The following day, members of the Standing Committee of Chushi Gangdruk, the regional organization representing Tibetans from Kham, invited us to dinner to wish us well for the mission.

Kalön Tashi Wangdi, the representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Delhi, had contacted the relevant offices regarding our travel documents and visas, which took a few days. Just before we left Delhi, Kundeling—in the presence of Tashi Wangdi—instructed me to take notes and minutes of all meetings during the course of our visit to China. Alak Jigmé was directed to maintain a diary of our journey, to be written up each evening. This was one of the most important and clear-cut divisions of responsibilities for our visit. I also kept a private diary of my own to keep a record of all the events and happenings that occurred. I reported these to Alak Jigmé each evening so that he could add items to his own official diary.

The following account is primarily based on my private diaries.

DELHI-HONG KONG

At 3:30 a.m. on 16 June 1985 we left for Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport. Secretary Kalsang Yarphel from the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama came to see us off. Tsering Phuntsok also accompanied us to the airport but did not have the authority to go inside the airport, so he could not help us when our combined luggage turned out to be 175 kilograms overweight. Gyari Trinlé, manager of Middle Path Tours and Travels, was at the airport and kindly helped us resolve the weight issue by explaining to the staff that we were delegates of the Dalai Lama on a Fact-Finding Delegation to Tibet. After much deliberation they let us through with no additional costs and at 6:30 a.m. we boarded the Lufthansa flight. We arrived in Hong Kong at around 4:00 p.m. after a stopover in Bangkok.

This was the first time I had travelled overseas. Previously I had only been to Nepal by bus and train. The inside of the plane looked very impressive, the sky was a vivid blue and the view was immensely beautiful.

At Hong Kong airport a gentleman named San Winghung from Xinhua News Agency, the official news media of the Chinese Government, came to welcome us. Outside the airport Nancy Nash was waiting for us. An American citizen and friend of Tibet, she had visited Dharamsala on many occasions to see His Holiness and had been sent to welcome us by the Office of Tibet in Japan. As she hugged each one of us, Chinese bystanders looked on with surprise. San, the official from Xinhua, did not seem to like the fact that Nancy knew us so well. He indicated his disapproval with a strange facial expression. When Samphel and Nancy started conversing, San came to me and asked if I also knew Nancy. I said, "Yes, of course."

Mr San seemed surprised and suspicious about our heavy luggage. He asked what we were carrying. We told him that the weight was due to precious pills and

blessing cords. “I have never heard of such a thing,” he said. Then we got into a Xinhua bus and went to the Asia Hotel. Nancy came with us. In the hotel Chinese officials briefed us about our stay in Hong Kong and told us that because of the short notice they had not been able to arrange rooms next to each other.

That sounded a bit odd given they would have had ample time to make proper preparations but nonetheless we did not make a fuss and were checked into room numbers 1606, 1909 and 2003.

At around 7:00 in the evening, Nancy hosted a dinner for us at Jimmy’s Kitchen, where we were joined by George N. Patterson,²⁴ a Scot who spoke Khampa dialect very well. George told us it was a great opportunity for Tibetans to resolve the issue with China before Taiwan and Mainland China came to an agreement about the future of Taiwan. He also said that we must try to resolve the issue of Tibet before Deng Xiaoping died.

On reflection, we missed our chance to properly engage with Deng Xiaoping about the Middle Way Approach. The issue of Tibet remains unresolved to this day.

One interesting suggestion Patterson gave was that we should demand that China allow Derek Davies, an important journalist in Southeast Asia, to come with us. George Patterson thought this would have huge political significance.

However, Kundeling suggested diplomatically that no such demand be put forward because it would put the mission at risk. He added that perhaps the matter could be raised in the future.

Patterson also talked about an American named Tom Grunfeld who was conducting research about the CIA’s covert operations in Tibet from 1950 to 1955. Although Grunfeld had obtained a great deal of information from the government

of the United States of America, using the Freedom of Information Act, the names of many people were erased from the documents. Patterson said that he had helped Grunfeld in his research.

Our stay in Hong Kong coincided with the Queen's birthday on 17 June, which is a public holiday, so we had a problem shopping. In the morning we visited Nancy's apartment and then went to the Hilton Hotel to exchange our money. I had never seen such tall buildings in my life! The shopping malls just seemed to go on and on. I was most astonished at the tunnel built under the sea from one island to another. After lunch we did some more shopping and around 4:00 p.m. we went to the home of Michael, a major businessman who had invited us for tea. There we met a lady who was a member of a Christian group that had just returned from a three-week visit to Tibet. She showed us the group's photographs of Tibet and said that Tibetans there had no freedom and that the difference in accommodation for Tibetans and Chinese was vast. She told us Tibetans simply listened to the commands of Chinese officials and did what they were told to do. They had no freedom at all.

At 10:00 a.m. the next day, Kundeling told Alak Jigmé and me to meet with Wu Di Chao, the head of Xinhua News Agency. We thanked Mr Wu for the warm reception and for our safe and trouble-free stay in Hong Kong. We also relayed to him that Kundeling, our leader, could not come to see him due to his advanced age. Mr Wu asked us how many Tibetans were living in Punjab, about the relationship between Indians and Tibetans and whether we had good relations with Tibetans living in England. He also asked if we were aware of Tibetans from India visiting Tibet to meet relatives. We replied to all his queries and he then asked Alak Jigmé some personal questions.

BEIJING

That same day, 18 June, we boarded Chinese flight CAAC 106 and landed in Beijing around 5:00 p.m. We were welcomed at the airport by Mr Koh Chin Teh from the United Front Work Department, and Mr Ren Rin Zhuran, head of Tibet's United Front Work Department; Ms Chimé Lhamo, an official from the Nationalities Affairs Commission (who came from Lhasa); and the translator, Mr Dechen Wangdu from Gyalthang and the People's Printing Press. We were taken outside through the Diplomatic Gate without any complications or checking of travel documents. I took this as a sign that the visit would go well and thought it auspicious for Tibet's future as an independent country. We were ushered into a hotel near the airport where we were greeted and offered tea and light snacks by Mr Ko Wu from the Nationalities Affairs Commission, together with Si Yi Ting and Mr Koh Chin Teh from the United Front Work Department.

After this official reception we were taken to our hotel in Beijing. At dinner that evening we were joined by Mr Ren Rin, Mr Koh Chin Teh, Mr Wangdu, Ms Chimé and Mr Ko Wu. Ren Zhuran gave a short welcome speech and said we would discuss and confirm places to be visited. He was an official resource person trusted by high-level officials of the United Front, which is the agency that handles "minority groups" such as Tibetans, Mongols and the Muslims of Xinjiang (East Turkestan). As he was in charge of the Tibet section and any issue related to Tibet could not move forward without his approval. Except for the Second Fact-Finding Delegation, Ren was the key official involved in all the fact-finding delegations' tours of Tibet.

We noticed that Chimé, the only woman official, seemed to have little power and it appeared to us that the others were looking down on her. She was constantly standing to one side. Whenever Ren went in and out of a room, Chimé had to stand

and be very respectful, whereas her colleagues did not. On one occasion when Ren was making a phone call to an official, Chimé had to remain standing next to him for no apparent reason. She appeared anxious and nervous all the time and seeing her so mistreated made me very sad and angry. At the same time, I was happy to see a fellow Tibetan among so many Chinese officials in Beijing—but we never saw Chimé again.

I thought China's capital city Beijing seemed vacant and undeveloped compared with other world capital cities I had visited (such as Delhi and Kathmandu) and others I read about. Only a few people were out after 8:00 p.m. and there was almost no traffic on the roads. The only noise that could be heard was of dogs howling, which seemed to go on forever. The hotel, which belonged to the Nationalities Affairs Commission, looked like any other hotel. The beds had thick quilts, even though it was summer. We were given rooms 413, 409, 405, 404, 403 and 401.

In 2010, when I revisited Beijing as a member of the Task Force for the Ninth Round of discussions headed by Kasür Lodi Gyari and Kelsang Gyaltsen to talk with representatives from Chinese leadership, I was totally surprised to see how the city had changed in twenty-five years. Not only had it caught up with other capitals, it looked like a completely different city to the one I had visited over two decades before. There was so much activity, so much traffic and so many people about, regardless of the hour. On that visit I didn't see any dogs, let alone hear them howling.

During luncheons and dinner parties, everyone offered toasts in the Chinese style and gave speeches praising each other, though in some cases these speeches would be constructed carefully to carry hidden meanings. Generally, the first speech and the first toast were offered by the host, followed by the chief guest. Whatever

the function, the first move was always to make a toast with drinks served in tiny glasses which the guests raised in the air. Most of the dinners and luncheons we attended had at least three different types of drinks, such as *maotai* (a spirit), wine and beer. Out of courtesy, guests had to down whatever drink was being offered at least once. For someone who normally does not drink alcohol, the combination of these three is sure to make one thoroughly drunk. I was amazed to see that Chinese officials drank a lot and seemed to have amazing tolerance. Amongst us, only Dra'u Pon could drink on a par with them. As officials claiming to be representatives of a socialist system, they did not refrain from excessive drinking and enjoying sumptuous dinners. Unaccustomed to attending such expensive galas, dinners and luncheons, I was very careful to watch what I ate and drank in order to avoid undesirable outcomes. The Chinese do not have strict table manners and use their chopsticks to pick up any morsel from any plate and sometimes even to pass pieces of food with their own chopsticks to guests seated next to them. This, it seemed, was their way of showing closeness to their guests.

DISCUSSIONS ON PLACES TO VISIT

At 9:00 a.m. on 19 June, Ren Rin, Koh and Wangdu, the official interpreter, came to Kundeling's room to discuss the places to be visited in Tibet. Ren said, "Comrade Phuntsok Tashi [the Kalön for the Department of Security of the Government-in-Exile] told me that next year a delegation comprising women and religious persons would be coming and we agreed to this plan. This year is the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region," he said, "hence it is difficult for you to visit the TAR."

The "Tibet Autonomous Region" (TAR) is the Chinese term used since 1965 for the area under the jurisdiction of the Tibetan government before the Chinese invasion and occupation. It was originally known as Ütsang and includes a small portion of Kham. This is the area designated as the TAR by Communist China today. However, nowadays when we (Tibetans) use the term Tibet, we mean the whole of Tibet comprising the three provinces of Chölka Süm: Ütsang, Kham and Amdo. It includes the present-day Chinese administrative areas of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region, Qinghai province, two Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and one Tibetan Autonomous County in Sichuan province, one Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and one Tibetan Autonomous County in Gansu province and one Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province.

"But we've agreed to your visits to Tso Ngön or Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia," Ren continued. "You can visit whichever areas in Sichuan you want. Please let us know where you want to go."

Kundeling gave him our detailed plans of the places we planned to visit as discussed and decided with the Kashag. We told the Chinese that we had no plan to visit the TAR. We said that three members of the delegates were from the TAR and three were from outside the region. Given their knowledge of the area, we would ask

those from outside the region to choose which places to visit. Consequently, Alak Jigmé and the other two named all the places outside the TAR we were to visit.

Ren then said, “There have been three previous fact-finding delegations and this is the fourth. All visits went well and their goals were achieved, except for the one led by Tenzin Tethong. This time Gao, Wangdu, Li Tung Ho and I will come with you. Wherever you go we hope to have all preparations done well.” He added that he was in charge of making arrangements for the Fifth Fact-Finding Delegation to arrive the following year i.e. in 1986, but that visit never materialised. Our leader, Kundeling, told Ren it would not matter much whether we visited Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang, but we did plan to visit all the Tibetan areas on our route.

Ren responded by saying that since the delegation was expected to last two months, it would be better to stop in Tso Ngön region first and visit areas in Gansu later. To his question as to whom we wanted to meet, Kundeling listed Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo, Phuntsok Wangyal, Tashi Wangchuk (one of the earliest Tibetan Communists from Kham and also the first Tibetan governor of Qinghai province) and Ulanfu, the former party secretary of Inner Mongolia and the head of the United Front Work Department.

Ren said that he had accompanied all the previous fact-finding delegations except the second delegation, during which some unpleasant things happened. He hoped that this time no unfortunate event would occur. Kundeling jokingly asked Ren what unpleasant things had happened during the second delegation, to which there was no response. Ren said that we were representatives of two sides and should cooperate with and help each other. If we had any opinions, then these could be expressed to the people through him. “I pray that our plans will be successful,” he added. The meeting ended at 11:15 a.m.

MEETING WITH THE NATIONALITIES AFFAIRS COMMISSION OFFICIALS

Dinner the next day was attended by Mr Gao Tuo from the Nationalities Affairs Commission, Mr Sung Yingting from the United Front Work Department, Ren Rin, Ko Xing and Wangdu. Gao said, “Please feel at home. We are all the same. Take a good rest.” He talked about previous fact-finding delegations and mentioned Takla Phuntsok Tashi, Juchen Thubten Namgyal, Tashi Topgyal and Lobsang Samten, who had all visited at various times. “Lobsang Samten and Thubten could drink a lot,” said Gao. “Tashi Topgyal often talked about how dirty Tibetans were. Now that you are here, please say anything you want to say.” The last comment seemed to be a passive-aggressive jab, insinuating that even Tibetans think Tibetans are dirty. Gao also said something about Takla Phuntsok Tashi who had supposedly pointed out something Jetsün Pema, His Holiness’ sister, had said earlier as being untrue. On returning home from the mission, Jetsün Pema had said that there was such a scarcity of food in Tibet that a mother had to draw her own blood to feed her starving baby (Panchen Rinpoché also had an opinion on this issue, which I will narrate later). As I saw it, all these things that Gao said to us were meant to create a kind of suspicion among the delegates and instill dissension among the Tibetans.

Gao said that the foreign press printed fabrications based on the lies Jetsün Pema had told them about a mother drawing her own blood to feed her baby. I responded to him by saying that this was not a lie and that I was present when Jetsün Pema talked about this to the press. I added that she cried uncontrollably and was overwhelmed by emotion while talking about this.²⁵ He replied by saying the incident was not true. “Now that you are here you will find out,” he said, adding that policies had changed over many years and that things were not the same as before.

He said that everyone had the freedom to express their opinion and talked about

a Chinese man who wrote a big character poster demanding work. When we asked why the man had to write such a poster, Gao had no answer other than to repeat that the act signified that he had freedom of speech. Thubten Samphel jokingly asked whether the man was perhaps imprisoned. “No,” Gao responded and gave no further details as to what had happened to him.

“Where is Geshé Lobsang Wangchuk?” Samphel asked. We had reports that Geshé Lobsang Wangchuk, a historian and a monk imprisoned in 1959 for teaching the history of Tibet as an independent country, had been re-arrested for writing posters condemning the Chinese rewriting of Tibetan history, medicine and astrology. “I don’t know anything about this,” Gao said. Samphel pressed further, saying that all previous Tibetan delegations had inquired about Geshé Lobsang Wangchuk. “If you give us a written report about this, we can provide information on the matter,” Gao said. In truth, despite many written reports by all the previous delegations, the Chinese had provided no information on Geshé Lobsang Wangchuk. On 29 September 1983, His Holiness the Dalai Lama went so far as to openly appeal for his release, pleading for his life to be spared. We now know that after years of being tortured, he fell sick and passed away in prison in 1987.

We were asked if we had plans to talk to the media, to which we responded in the negative. If we had any such plan, we were told, then it had to be done through them. “Our embassy in Delhi was briefed by Tashi Wangdi [then the representative in the Bureau of the Dalai Lama in New Delhi] that this delegation is only to see things. So it’s better to do just that,” Gao said. Dra’u Pon said that the foreign media were asking us about a lot of things and that we had also heard many things, so this time we had come to see with our own eyes whether these things were true. Kalden

added that we would have things to say after visiting the places. “Then there should be no objections,” he said to Gao.

After dinner Samphel and I told Kundeling that it might be a good idea to talk more about the issue of Tibet, which led to heated exchanges between Samphel and Kundeling. My thought at the time was that this stand-off was the result of a generation gap and based on the experiences of both of them.

PILGRIMAGE TO YONGHE TEMPLE

On 20 June we were taken shopping in a huge supermarket; Kundeling did not join us. Whenever we had free time, we were taken to large shopping markets as if to showcase how much progress China had made. At first, Samphel and I did not buy anything, but later Samphel succumbed to his needs and had to buy some cigarettes. I bought nothing. A few years earlier Samphel and I had been part of an eight-member movement²⁶ in Dharamsala that initiated the boycotting of Chinese goods. I made a pledge then never to buy anything that was made in China. The movement later grew in size to incorporate large numbers of the exile community, including the Tibetan Youth Congress, which passed a resolution to make it an official policy to boycott Chinese goods.

I would like to talk about an incident relating to the above movement. A few days before the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation left Delhi on 12 June, I was going from Samyeling Tibetan Camp (popularly known as Majnu-ka-tilla) in Old Delhi in an auto-rickshaw to the Inter-State Bus Terminal. Two other auto-rickshaws filled with five to six passengers were chasing my rickshaw. They forcefully stopped my auto-rickshaw, dragged me out, ganged up around me and beat me savagely, shouting, “This is him! It’s him!” During the beating an Amdo man I knew from Dalhousie, shouted, “We’ve got the wrong man. I know him. He’s a good guy!” He tried hard to stop them. They then argued amongst themselves and finally turned back, leaving me alone. My shirt was torn, my glasses were broken and I had bruises and cuts on my body. If the man from Dalhousie had not recognized me, they would have beaten me to death. I was at a total loss to understand why they had attacked me.

A few years later, I met the same man from Dalhousie in Bodhgaya. When I asked him about the incident, he told me that the gang of Tibetans had beaten me

in Delhi because of my pledge not to buy Chinese goods. It seemed that my vow and the boycott movement had influenced others which in turn had impacted on the livelihoods of these people. When I asked the man who they were, he said that it was pointless for me know their names. He said many of them later regretted their actions and a few had gone abroad. It was strange that at the time I was being beaten I had no idea why it happened. Now that I had learned the reason, I felt uncomfortable telling other people about it because it would only make the Chinese happy and the Tibetans sad.

On the afternoon of 20 June, we visited Ganden Jinchak Ling or Yonghe Temple. The abbot of the monastery welcomed us and said he was happy that we had come and that in future we should work hard to promote religious activities. “I am happy that you have returned back home,” he said. To me this sounded like political propaganda. Alak Jigmé suggested that the monastery should have a good Tibetan teacher, to which Ren Rin responded, with a change of expression, that the abbot was a Mongolian.

In the old times, tradition dictated that the Tibetan government appoint the abbot of this monastery. The abbot had the rank of *dzasak* (third highest rank in Tibetan government). Built in 1789, this monastery had not suffered any damage during the Cultural Revolution because Premier Zhou Enlai personally protected it, along with several historically significant Tibetan monuments such as the Potala Palace, the Jokhang and Kumbum Monastery, from being destroyed by the Red Guards. This monastery was miraculously a part of that initiative.

We visited the Sangyé Lhakhang, the Gönkhang, the prayer hall of Jetsün Jampa Gönpö, reportedly built by the Seventh Dalai Lama from sandalwood, and the Kangyur Lhakhang, which had seats for both His Holiness the Dalai Lama and

the Panchen Rinpoché. The monastery had about eighty monks who were mostly Mongolians, with a few Tibetans from Amdo. On auspicious days they held religious rites such as Lama Chöpa,²⁷ Tongchö²⁸ and Sojong whenever desired.²⁹ Apart from some government funding, the income for the monastery came mostly from offerings. Monks were engaged in the study of Tibetan language and in learning prayers by heart. They asked us where His Holiness the Dalai Lama lived and whether he was fine, and many requested us to ask His Holiness to pray for them. We offered them precious *mani* pills and threads blessed by His Holiness.

PRIVATE MEETING OF NGABO AND KUNDELING

In the evening Kundeling and I went to meet Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé at his residence. The meeting lasted for about four hours. For the first two hours, Kundeling and Ngabo talked alone and no one was privy to what was discussed except, of course, His Holiness the Dalai Lama who was later briefed by Kundeling. I spent this time with Thutop, one of Ngabo's sons. Thutop was extremely surprised when I talked to him about the organizational structure of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. I told him we were apprehensive about China's mass Han migration into Tibetan areas and about its changing policies. Thutop told me that out of about forty-three developmental plans, only three had started and that China's primary aim was to turn Tibet into a tourist destination.

He asked me about salary structure in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and its sources of income and some other matters.

We had dinner with Ngabo, his wife Tseten Dolkar, his daughter Chönyi and son Thutop. Throughout the meal I noticed that Ngabo's right hand was visibly shaking as if it had no control. Ngabo told us that during a dinner party in Tibet he got drunk and fell down, banging his head against a piece of wood. He lost consciousness and was taken to the People's Hospital in Lhasa, where doctors told him that he had brain damage. When the matter was reported to the Chinese Government, he was air lifted to China for treatment. Doctors found that a vein had burst causing internal bleeding and a part of his brain was damaged. This left his right hand and right foot partially paralysed. The treatment did not have immediate results, "But now it's better," he told us.

It is beyond dispute that Ngabo was an important person in contemporary Tibetan history. He was also someone who aroused strong conflicting views from

many people. Many considered him a Chinese stooge, while others thought him a far-sighted politician who knew how to take advantage of historic opportunities. Still others considered him a good, honest person who had to take the blame under terribly difficult historic circumstances. From my point of view, I considered him a dedicated, far-sighted and mature politician with courage and deep faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama. When he passed away in 2009, in its official condolence message the Kashag called him a truthful patriot who tried to hold on to truth even under very difficult circumstances. However, future historians need to thoroughly study his case because it is very complicated and has multiple layers that need to be uncovered to find the truth.

In 1951, when the Seventeen-Point Agreement (by which Tibet lost its sovereignty) was signed under duress, Ngabo tried very hard to argue for all three provinces of Tibet to come under one administration. The Agreement spelled out that Tibet was part of China. When Ngabo's seal, as the Governor of Eastern Tibet, was required to authenticate the Agreement, he lied and said he did not have it with him (which he did) and so forced the Chinese to make a fake one, resulting in a forged document. Much later, during the National Uprising in 1959, he sent three letters to His Holiness the Dalai Lama implicitly warning the Tibetan government that the Chinese planned to attack the Tibetans.

Further, when Japanese dignitaries visited China in 1977, Ngabo said during a question and answer session that His Holiness the Dalai Lama was welcome to return to Mainland China. When this was widely disseminated in international media, it left the high-level Chinese officials in a state of "not-knowing-what-to-do." They could not deny it outright and had to accept it as their official policy because

the news had already been circulated. As a result of Ngabo's statement, in 1979 the Politburo of the Communist Party of China passed a special resolution about the return of the Dalai Lama, stating that he was always welcome to come back whenever he desired.³⁰

During the various fact-finding delegations to Tibet, Ngabo tried his best to recount historically important facts so the delegates would be fully aware of the situation. He re-emphasised to the delegates that there were no historical records of the Tibetan government ever paying taxes to China. Ngabo stated that he tried very hard during the signing of the enforced Seventeen-Point Agreement to have all of Tibet constituted as one political unit. According to Ngabo, Zhou Enlai said that the time for that was not ripe but it would be considered in future. He also added that "Tibet was the only nationality that entered into an agreement [the Seventeen-Point document of 1951] with China, and this alone showed that Tibet's historic and political status was unique." Ngabo reminded the delegates that a separate agreement, the Five-Clause Agreement, was made along with Seventeen-Point Agreement. The Five-Clause Agreement identified what would happen if His Holiness were to go into exile. Some of the other matters addressed in the agreement included the potential of a Tibetan police force being maintained and the circumstances surrounding the gradual phasing out of Tibetan currency, etc. He added that the delegates would have had no prior knowledge of such an agreement being in place, so it was important for them to know that it existed.

In 1981, when China released the Five-Point Policy towards His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Ngabo—fearing that the Government-in-Exile might unwittingly agree to it—strongly voiced to the delegates his vehement opposition to it. One could say

that throughout his whole life, Ngabo acted as the mediator between Tibetans and the Chinese Government. Through his work he ensured Tibetans were made aware of the prevailing circumstances surrounding their situation and without his input many important details would have been left untold.

Ngabo was a man with incredible courage. He knew that the Chinese Government was following in the footsteps of its predecessor, the Kuomintang, in trying to lay claim to the power to recognize the Dalai Lama; he unequivocally voiced his objection. On 31 July 1989, Ngabo spoke openly during a session of the TAR People's Congress and disputed the claim that it was Wu Chung Tsin (Representative of the Kuomintang) who conducted the official enthronement ceremony of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in 1939. He categorically denied that this happened and said there was no historical evidence to back those claims because he himself was present at the ceremony and was witness to the events that transpired. He asked why the communist government would want to follow the Kuomintang's policy to lie about historical events. At the TAR People's Congress, he also said "...religious freedom exists [in Tibet]; to practice Buddhism or not to practice is entirely up to the individual. It is absolutely acceptable to believe in the Dalai Lama and to revere him. As a Tibetan, I have served the Dalai Lama for eight to nine years as a Kalön and have complete solidarity and empathy with him."³¹

Ngabo also helped Panchen Rinpoché during the editing process of his historic 70,000 Chinese character petition by voicing his frank suggestions on how to best improve it before submitting it to the Chinese leaders in 1962.³²

While at his house I was greatly surprised to find that Ngabo's wife and daughter drank beer and smoked cigarettes, as these were considered highly unusual practices

for women at the time. Armed soldiers from the People's Liberation Army were always on duty at the door. The front door had a peephole through which they could check to see who knocked. As we were driving back to our hotel, Kundeling said with a heavy heart, "I could never live in a house like that, being under surveillance for twenty-four hours a day." Only then did I realise that under such circumstances one had to drink and smoke to cope with the situation. What seemed like a nice house was actually a prison. Kundeling felt the same way.

On the morning of 21 June, while the delegates were taken on a tour of the Nationalities University in Beijing, Samphel and I visited Shyam Saran, Councillor at the Indian Embassy. We went to obtain return visas to India. Later, we joined the other delegates for the remainder of the tour of the university. The university had a Tibetan research section with about three hundred students in four classes. The subjects included Tibetan language, logic and philosophy. We were told that there were some famous students such as Lhakpa Phuntsok, Lhakpa Tsering, Chimé Dorjé and Tenzin Dorjé. We met a well-known scholar, Dungkar Lobsang Trinlé, who was also a teacher at the department and had done a great deal of research into Tibetan history and culture. We thanked him for his dedication, hard work and service in preserving Tibetan culture and history.

BEIJING PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE

In the afternoon we were taken to the Beijing People's Publishing House, which, we were told, had been established in 1953. It published a great many titles and had over 800 people working there. The guide told us it produced about 250 titles and 180 magazines each year. That year, it had plans to bring out 272 titles. Included amongst its numerous publications were the works of Marx and Mao, and books on subjects such as science, the arts, music and ancient history. These titles were being distributed internationally.

The official guide welcomed us and hoped we would revisit the publishing house in the future too. We were told if we had any suggestions or thoughts we could express them openly. Kundeling said, "As representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we are happy to be here. We are glad to see this publishing house. There is progress everywhere in the world and we hope that Tibetan culture also makes equal progress. Anyone who considers these issues small matters is mistaken. [This was said in reference to the destruction and disparagement of the culture and arts of minorities during the Cultural Revolution.] People need hope accompanied by progress. If this happens, then we can only thank you."

Sangay, the vice-chairman of the People's Publishing House, said, "We have thirty-three Tibetan staff members and hope to increase the number by another ten to fifteen new employees. So far, we have published over one thousand titles in Tibetan. We have plans to publish new titles on logic and dialectics since we have full authority to bring out any titles we decide on. Therefore, you can suggest to us which titles to publish." Kundeling thanked him and jokingly asked, "Is it okay if reactionaries buy and take away some of these books?"

MEETING WITH DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE UNITED FRONT WORK DEPARTMENT

At around 4:00 p.m. that day, an official dinner reception was given jointly by the United Front Work Department and the Nationalities Affairs Commission on the rooftop of the Beijing Hotel. Before the dinner we were greeted in the reception room by Jiang Ping, the vice-chair or duty minister of the United Front. Jiang was of medium build, considered a good writer among his peers and possessed a golden tongue that was quick to utter compliments. However, after spending more time with him one could tell his heart was opaque and malicious. The overall impression he gave was that of a shrewd person with an artificial smile that never altered, even when his words were contradictory to his smile. Along with Jiang, we were also introduced to Ren Rin, the vice-chair at the Nationalities Affairs Commission, Zhang Chu Zhang from the United Front, and Kao Suren, Rin Chu Zhang and Ko Chu Zhang from the Commission. We were asked if anyone amongst us had visited China before. Kundeling and Dra'u Pon were the only ones with any prior experience.

Jiang Ping said, "The fact that this delegation was able to come is very good. Three delegations have come and reported His Holiness' vision to us. We welcome such delegations regularly. It is good to see things with your own eyes. Furthermore, having discussions will improve our relations. You can express your opinions like a family member." Kundeling responded by saying that the visits of the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama had made some improvement in the depth of our relationship, which is the wish of both sides. He remarked that it had been some time since the Third Delegation visited and with this Fourth Delegation His Holiness sent his good wishes to all the leaders of China. "We have nothing new to say. Since we are unable to visit the Tibet Autonomous Region, we have made plans to visit places in Tso Ngön, Sichuan and Gansu," said Kundeling.

Jiang responded. “It is good to visit these provinces. Kanlho Tibet Autonomous region in particular has made great progress. Sadly, the prayer hall of Labrang Monastery caught fire, which you will see later for yourselves. People in Kanlho are very sad about this misfortune. We have decided to rebuild the monastery. Jamyang Sheypa and Gungthang Rinpoché [the two highest lamas of the monastery] will take responsibility for this. The fire was a big tragedy but the police, with the help of local people, managed to put the fire out and were able to save the entombed bodies of the Jamyang Sheypa’s previous incarnations.”

When we met Ngabo he said the two lamas, Jamyang Sheypa and Gungthang Rinpoché, were in Beijing when the fire at Labrang broke out. Although they were airlifted back to Labrang, the fire had destroyed the prayer hall so they could not do anything.

Jiang continued, saying that the situation in Tso Ngön was good and the produce from nomads and farmers was better than in previous years. “The condition of nomads in Kyegudo and Golok is better than in other areas. But as you will see, they still haven’t managed to use modern technologies in their lives and have also failed to set up factories.” Jiang added, “Since the Third Plenary Session of the Communist Party there have been great changes in the people’s lives.” Kundeling responded to Jiang by saying that we had people within the delegation who had intimate knowledge about the areas. “We will tell you later about these places,” Kundeling added.

When Jiang commented that as some of us were visiting our country after thirty years and that the visit would go well, Kalden and Dra’u Pon relayed that they were from Chabcha and Kyegudo regions respectively. Jiang continued by saying that the Four Modernizations policy was the main focus for the entire country. “The

modernization of farming, factories, science and national defence are significant in unifying the country. We oppose imperialist countries like America and the Soviet Union because our mission is to have world peace. If we cannot attain world peace, then there will be no development. As per Deng Xiaoping's vision, One Country Two Systems is the way to unify our country. The world knows about this. Hong Kong will return to China and it is important they have the same system as ours. We are negotiating with Macau at the moment. Of course, we will also give Taiwan the same system we give to Hong Kong. The principle objective for us now is to unify all nationalities with the Motherland, including Taiwan."

He continued, saying that reforms in the cities and villages had made great changes and improvements. "In some cases, due to lack of roads and natural disasters such as drought, there may be some minority areas where conditions are poor. But it will not take long before progress takes place," he said.

"Your responsibilities are to see what is good and what mistakes have been made in the places you will visit. We have given a Five-Point Proposal to representatives of the Dalai Lama in which the most important point was harmony between nationalities and unity of the Motherland. This is our goal and responsibility. We are very happy that this delegation has come. This dinner is given jointly by the United Front Work Department and the Nationalities Affairs Commission. Our experience is that since the Third Plenary Session of the Communist Party, many policies have changed. One is to make people rich by doing business with the international community. The situation is good in the regions. You will see that things have changed, compared with earlier times. Some regions in China are still backward. We will have to face these mistakes and challenges together."

Kundeling said, “The things that you have said are clear. We would like to thank you for making our travel comfortable and easy from Hong Kong to Beijing. This is because under Deng’s leadership, you have shown respect for His Holiness. We see this as China’s respect and affection towards His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who has a very open-minded way of thinking. His Holiness works to improve the relationship between the nationalities and not destroy it. Because of this, His Holiness has sent this Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation and we are meeting with you now. After our visits to various places, we will update you about what is to be done. We are happy to learn that you welcome such ideas.

“We are, however, disappointed with your Five-Point Proposal. We are not happy with the People’s Republic of China’s so-called Five-Point Proposal. No Tibetan can agree to such a thing. Tibetan people have expressed their strong opinion on this matter and they are very disappointed. We will not discuss this now but will report on all these issues when we are done with our visit.”

When the translator asked Kundeling for clarification on whether he had used the word “disappointment”, Kundeling confirmed it was indeed “disappointment.” Kundeling further said that since 1959 Tibetan people have undergone unimaginable suffering. “Although, we are aware that things have improved a little lately.”

Alak Jigmé said that what the Chinese side were saying was nearly the same as His Holiness’ vision. Hence, we will update them on the situation after visiting various Tibetan places. “His Holiness the Dalai Lama advised us to see both the good things and bad things. His Holiness thinks not only about the welfare of Tibetans, but the entire human race. Consequently, His Holiness is highly respected around the world. The Tibetans are concerned with the situation of Tibet as a whole, not just the

welfare of the person of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We do not like your Five-Point Proposal. We hope that after the tour you will give us the same opportunity as now to discuss all these matters,” he said.

“Following the principle of finding truth from facts, you can of course express anything after your visits to the various places,” Jiang replied.

“Seeking truth from facts is a principle the international community also agrees with. If it is practiced, then it is good. I am seventy years old and if I claim to be thirty it would be a lie,” Kundeling said.

Jiang responded: “The Five-Point Proposal is something the Standing Committee came out with on 27 July 1981. This was something Gyalo Thondup and Hu Yaobang discussed. But of course, if you have issues with it we can discuss them later. Today, we just want to welcome you. After your visits we can share our thoughts like family members.”

To which Dra'u Pon said, “His Holiness the Dalai Lama wants happiness for the people and does not pursue his own welfare.”

The reception hall contained twelve sofa-sets and three chairs. All the seats were taken. I noticed that Jiang smiled widely, showing his teeth. That expression remained plastered on his face for two hours. I was completely taken aback to see how careful the Chinese were with their facial expressions and outward impressions. Jiang had served as the secretary to Yang Jingren for many years and when Yang was promoted to the head of the United Front, Jiang went along with him.

After the dinner reception and as we were about to take our seats in the car, a Chinese official came rushing down the stairs with Alak Jigme's bag, which he had left on the table. This was an important bag containing all our classified original

official documents and files. Fortunately, the Chinese had no idea of the contents. Before leaving India all of us had unanimously considered Alak Jigmé to be the most dependable person among us, so he was given the responsibility of safeguarding the official files. We bought a new bag and file folder in Hong Kong to stow all our confidential documents and by a lucky twist of fate that file did not fall into Chinese hands. I believe that the protector deities of Tibet may have played some part in this fortunate outcome. We were also thankful to the Chinese official for returning our bag so promptly to us. From that day forward, Alak Jigmé took special care to ensure such an incident was never repeated.

THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

On 22 June we visited the Great Wall of China and the tombs of the Ming emperors, constructed in 1584. Our Chinese guides appeared very excited about the excursion. We knew it was a world-renowned tourist attraction and a celebrated architectural achievement, but our hearts were longing for Tibet, so the visit left no special impression. The same was true of the Ming emperors' tombs. In the evening Dra'u Pon and Alak Jigmé went to see a circus performance.

We met with Phintso Thonden, His Holiness' former representative at the Office in New York, and his family members, who were visiting China. There was an American woman with them whom the Chinese viewed with great suspicion. I think they believed her to be an American spy.

MEETING AND DISCUSSION WITH BAPA PHUNTSOK WANGYAL

At 4:00 p.m. on July 23 we had a meeting with Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal at his residence. We stayed there until 5:30 p.m. (When I first laid eyes on him, Phuntsok Wangyal had a striking resemblance to my Indian headmaster, Mr Karan Singh, from my Tibetan refugee school in Dalhousie, a small hill station in northern India). Phuntsok's residence was an apartment in a high-rise building in the middle of the city. There were no guards or police anywhere to be seen. After the initial introduction and exchange of gifts, Phuntsok Wangyal asked about His Holiness' health and said he was extremely happy to have been able to make a phone call to His Holiness the year before.

Kundeling mentioned that His Holiness had asked the Fact-Finding Delegates to seek advice from Phuntsok Wangyal, Ngabo and Panchen Rinpoché regarding the delegation's goals and places to visit. Kundeling said, "During the reception hosted by the United Front Work Department, vice-chairman Jiang talked to us about the Five-Point Proposal. We told them the Tibetan people do not accept this proposal."

Phuntsok Wangyal clarified, "Gyalo Thondup and Hu Yaobang had discussed the Five-Point Proposal, but others had no knowledge about it. It has only recently been announced in the news media by Yin Fatang, who worked in Tibet for many years since the 1950s."³³ Yin, he said, could speak Tibetan and had been the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party in the 1980s. He was said to be an ultra-leftist who opposed and criticised the liberal policies Hu Yaobang had initiated in Tibet. Yin also disliked and opposed Phuntsok Wangyal's principle of the equality of nationalities and the rights of minorities in China. He plotted against Phuntsok Wangyal and accused him of harbouring Tibetan independence in his mind. Yin Fatang provided some explanation on this Five-Point Proposal, which made it a little clearer.

Phuntsok Wangyal said, “Whatever thoughts and opinions you have you need to express them openly. There is a difference in what you say and what I say. Although the central government policies are good and apply equally throughout all minority regions, there are cases where the local leaders do not practice them. The country is so big that the Chinese Government does not know about issues regarding Tibet. It was only after the First Fact-Finding Delegation’s visit and report that Chinese leaders in Beijing came to know about the real situation of Tibet. However, the ultra-leftists’ influence still prevails in many regions, so policies are still not properly put into practice.

“Therefore, when Hu Yaobang visited Tibet, he proposed that full autonomous status be given to the region. Likewise, Panchen Rinpoché also strongly petitioned to this effect. Whenever I met with Hu Yaobang, I told him that if the Tibetan people were not looked after properly, the race would be lost for good. He listened to my suggestions very carefully when I told him that the Tibetan people are the top priority. When Taktser Rinpoché [eldest brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama] came here, he too talked about this at great length.

“Keeping in view both the short-and long-term goals, we must think carefully about this present relationship. Whatever the matter, whether good or bad, it should be relayed to the Chinese leaders directly. Just as not all monks carry out the Buddha’s words, not every policy of the Communist Party is put into practice properly,” concluded Phuntsok Wangyal.

Later Phuntsok Wangyal took us to a famous Peking duck restaurant for dinner. The meal was carried out with great ceremony. The chef personally wheeled over a trolley covered with a white cloth. He lifted the cloth like a magician about to show

his trick, I did not know what to expect. He presented everyone with a whole duck. I was dumbfounded and somewhat sceptical. He took great pains to slice the meat thinly and had it wrapped in a thin layer of pancake with some vegetables. It was the first time in my life I ate duck and I really enjoyed the succulent meat.

OFFICIAL MEETING WITH NGABO NGAWANG JIGMÉ

On 24 June, we had an official meeting with Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé at his residence. The previous meeting was private and less formal, but today's meeting was strictly business. We greeted each other and offered our official gifts. Kundeling said that we had been advised by Dharamsala to meet with and seek guidance from Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo and Phuntsok Wangyal. Then he asked for Ngabo's thoughts on the Five-Point Proposal which had arisen from discussions between Hu Yaobang and Gyalo Thondup, given Yin Fatang's recent comment from Lhasa on the proposal and the fact that Tibetans opposed it.

Ngabo said, "It is good that this delegation has come. Among earlier delegations were Thubten-la, a monk and a businessman, Dapön [Takla Phuntsok Tashi] and Lobsang Samten. These people were from a higher level of society and did not understand the situation of ordinary people. The Second Fact-Finding Delegation was insignificant because they had neither experience nor understanding of things. So, they did not have the capacity to witness things properly. They may have done more harm than good.

"The Five-Point Proposal is a very controversial topic," Ngabo continued. "The main issue with it is that Gyalo-la's [Gyalo Thondup's] visits to China have built the basis for the relationship. This was a good achievement. I think it was during his third or fifth visit that discussions regarding this proposal began. How did this happen? Although I was in Tibet at that time, I have no idea. Gyalo-la has to report whether he agreed or did not agree to these things. Nothing clear has been heard about this, only a few uncertain things. There is absolutely no clarity on this. We do not know anything about the issue regarding the permanent return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I think it would be great to have things cleared up. This has also put

His Holiness and you in a difficult position. Two points are important: the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his permanent stay here. The other points are not that important.

“Regarding the Five-Point Proposal, the other three people also did not have a clear idea [referring to Katri Thupten Namgyal, Kalön Takla Phuntsok Tashi and Lodi Gyari Gyaltzen who came in 1982 and 1984 for exploratory talks with Chinese leaders]. The only thing we know for certain is that the Five-Point Proposal was translated from Chinese into Tibetan.”

Ngabo added, “You have to acknowledge clearly which points are acceptable and which need to be amended. It will be good to discuss things with Chinese leaders now that you are here. It is difficult for others to meet with Chinese leaders so I think the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation should make suggestions after you have examined the Five-Point Proposal. Some points are not central. About forty-three development projects have been started in Tibet and over twenty thousand people have been sent to implement them. The renovation of two hundred monasteries has also been started.”

Ngabo said, “The Cultural Revolution was like a flood that swept throughout the country for ten whole years. People did not work in factories. They kept on playing games. People did not do farm work. They did not pay for transportation and ate for free in restaurants. The country became a pauper. Most of the leaders in the country were assaulted. Things have changed since the Third Plenary Session of the Communist Party, so the arrival of this delegation is good. It is great to have people who have experience and know about things on the ground.”

Afterwards, everyone took turns to have their photograph taken with him. As

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION



*L–R: Thubten Samphel, Former Minister Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé and author
at Ngabo's residence in Beijing, 24 June 1985*

Ngabo played an important historical role, Samphel and I also took the chance to have our photographs taken with him.

At the time of the official visit there were only two guards. This was clearly staged to show Ngabo was “free” to move around as he pleased and there were no restrictions placed upon him. I think they must have forgotten we had visited him only four days earlier when we had seen all the soldiers standing outside that had now somehow disappeared. We were taken for dinner at a palace-turned-restaurant. During the dinner Ngabo said that he had put forward Phuntsok Wangyal’s name as a candidate for Party Secretary of Tibet, but this had been rejected. He also remarked that though both Dorjé Tseten and Ragdi had petitioned that the present secretary was unsuitable for the job, the Communist Party did not listen. Thutop, Ngabo’s son, enquired after the Khatok Shinkyong Tulku’s supposed delegation. (This was an incident where a high-ranking lama misled both the Tibetans inside Tibet and the Chinese Government into believing he was visiting Tibet on behalf of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is unclear what he hoped to achieve from this misrepresentation but after that incident he completely lost his standing in Tibetan society, both in exile and inside Tibet.) I replied that the Khatok Shinkyong Tulku delegation was not authorised by His Holiness to represent him. We also talked about Alo Chonzé Tsering Dorjé, who was an intensely patriotic figure but later somehow caved into the Chinese. The following day we rested.

AUDIENCE WITH PANCHEN RINPOCHÉ

At around 4:00 p.m. on 26 June, we had an audience with the Tenth Panchen Rinpoché, Jetsün Lobsang Trinlé Lhundrup Chökyi Gyaltsen. We prostrated ourselves before him and offered khatags. One by one we received blessings from him, after which Kundeling presented official gifts and letters. As I was receiving blessings from the Panchen Rinpoché, I quietly took out the letter from the Tibetan Youth Congress and presented it to him. Senior members of the Fact-Finding Delegation had no idea about this letter I had brought with me.

The audience took place in his personal library, which was in an old two-storey house. There were two soldiers standing by and Panchen Rinpoché's attendants were dressed in Tibetan attire. In a booming voice that seemed to shake the small library, Rinpoché asked if His Holiness was in good health. Kundeling replied that His Holiness was in excellent health and that his fame and popularity had spread across the free world. Panchen Rinpoché's demeanour and charisma immediately triggered within me a deep respect and faith in him. Before this meeting I considered him just another Rinpoché forced on to us by the Chinese. But the audience made me realize that I was an amateur and my knowledge was limited. I immediately prayed to be forgiven for my ignorance.

Panchen Rinpoché told us, "I am happy that you have come and glad to meet you all here. I am also extremely happy to hear that the All-Knowing One [Dalai Lama] is in great health and has plans to visit Europe soon to benefit all living beings." Kundeling introduced members of the delegation and explained that we had been advised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to meet Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo and Phuntsok Wangyal to seek their guidance. He further said that during the reception a few days earlier, Jiang had told us about the Five-Point Proposal that Hu Yaobang and Gyalo Thondup had discussed.

“What did Ngabo say regarding the Five-Point Proposal?” Panchen Rinpoché asked. Kundeling replied that Ngabo had advised us that we should raise the issue and talk clearly about what is acceptable and what is not in the proposal.

Panchen Rinpoché then said, “As Ngabo said, you should thoroughly check out this proposal and the issues surrounding it. There are many things involved in the proposal and you may or may not be able to agree to all of them. Hu Yaobang raised the Five-Point Proposal with Gyalo Thondup in 1981. Not only did Hu Yaobang raise it, he gave Gyalo Thondup a hard copy of it. I don’t know if His Holiness the Dalai Lama was informed about this. This was not announced to the outside world but kept an inner secret, because it was tentative [Tibetan: *tenpo meypa*]. There is a Tibetan saying, ‘There are vessels that can hold water but there are no vessels that can hold a secret.’ Some of it was leaked outside. It would have been good if the whole thing was let out, but this did not happen.”

Panchen Rinpoché added, “What Yin Fatang said was against the Communist Party’s line. It is up to His Holiness to decide if he wants to make an announcement about his return. As this is linked to the question of accepting the situation prior to 1959, the Communist Party re-announced this Five-Point Proposal.”

“Thupten told me it would be difficult for the proposal to work out,” Panchen Rinpoché said. “Whatever the case may be, you have to mention clearly what you agree with and what to disagree over. The crucial point is where would His Holiness live? Opposing all five points may lead to a deterioration of the relationship. It is perhaps better to raise this after your visit,” Rinpoché advised.

Rinpoché added that grave things have happened in Tso Ngön and Gansu regions. Some of the things that took place in these areas were worse than the



Kunzig Panchen Rinpoché in his library, Beijing; blessing the author with gifts of a holy Buddha image and autographed portrait, 26 June 1985

misfortunes in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Like elsewhere in the country, the Cultural Revolution had brought destruction in Labrang, Kumbum and Rebkong where the grain stores had been totally emptied and sacred images desecrated. In the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, some villages had been totally wiped out.

Panchen Rinpoché told us: “Things have changed since the Third Plenary Session of the Communist Party. The ultra-leftists who grew up after 1959 find it difficult to

adjust to new realities and hence there are difficulties in putting the liberal policies into practice. Human beings are like a sheet of white paper. Once a man's mind is made up it is difficult to change it, despite other criticisms. Once the colour has been painted on it, it cannot change back to white. There are five Tibetan regions where policies are carried out differently. Even within one region there are differences in various areas. Generally speaking, things have been best in Tso Ngön and Kanlho. Monasteries have become what people expected them to be."

He went on, "This is a large country but not a rich one. Big monasteries are provided with incentives but the smaller ones are not. Even the incentives given to big monasteries are not much. People in Tso Ngön and Kanlho are very religious and many are quite rich. The community has gained confidence and the monasteries have begun giving teachings again, but only recently. In particular, some smaller monasteries are doing very well.

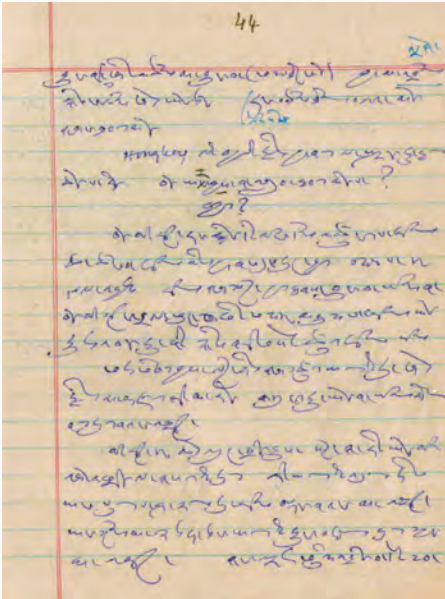
"Nationalities policies are better than before. There are cases where members of the minority nationalities [the PRC recognizes fifty-five, while in the Republican era the Chinese referred to just five] themselves lack education and funding. Overall, things have improved. Three of you [referring to Kundeling, Samphel and me] are from the Tibet Autonomous Region and the other three [Dra'u Pon, Alak Jigmé and Kalden] are from Tso Ngön. There are many different kinds of people in our community, including those who would immediately report whatever we say here today. But bear in mind to seek truth from facts." He stressed, "Whatever you report must be based on reality. Conditions were once terrible, but now things are not so bad. For example, it is now permitted to supply butter to Tibet [the Tibet Autonomous Region] from Amdo.

“For twenty-six years you have engaged in activities relating to Tibetan independence. These are considered actions to split the country. Now His Holiness has sent representatives and the relationship of enmity has softened. I think this is a great development. It is difficult to accomplish things only through demonstrations and distributing newspapers and pamphlets.

“Some of the delegations sent by His Holiness were good. Some were quite bad, which brought no benefits. You have to take the egg without scaring the bird. Therefore, there is no way to immediately start talking about independence. Hong Kong will return to China after one hundred years. Tibet too cannot separate,” said Panchen Rinpoché.

He went on, “My personal opinion is that if Tibet can have genuine autonomy under China, where Tibetans can have freedom to develop their religion, culture and economy then it will fulfil Tibet’s short-and long-term aspirations. I will work hard to achieve it. This is my opinion.

“When you go back you must report things openly. We will not meet again. If you have anything to say you can write to me in letters. You have to properly report about policies regarding nationalities and religion. You cannot just talk about the bad things and leave out the good things. In the end, you must work hard to have better relations. Printing bad news in the media only creates anger and cannot bring any good. Both the US and the USSR have remained cold towards China for a long time. If their ears remain tightly shut, there is nothing one can do. When you talk, it has to be something that is beneficial for both politics and religion. You have to engage in meaningful conversations to bring about a positive result. Just criticising does not help.”



*Quote from Kunzig Panchen Rinpoché
on 26 June 1985, from my diary:*

Page 44

important to talk with the Chinese about His Holiness giving teachings and making speeches once he returns. Rinpoché suggested that since there were a large number of youths in Lhasa and other areas who drink alcohol to excess and spend great amounts of time in disco halls, His Holiness must talk about the devastating impact of alcohol. It was with great emotion that Rinpoché said “Tibetan youths do not work hard, giving the impression that we are lagging behind.”

Looking at Kundeling (who is from Lhasa) with a broad smile, Panchen Rinpoché said, “Aristocrats have a roundabout way of talking. Khampas and Amdowas are straightforward people... Perhaps it is good to follow their practice and be upfront.”

Rinpoché continued, “The Tibetan language and culture must be preserved, particularly the Tibetan language. It should be considered the core of our cultural identity and taught widely. In Tibetan-populated areas, correspondence should be done in Tibetan and all subjects should be translated into Tibetan and taught in schools.”

Panchen Rinpoché told us it was



*Kundeling Woeser Gyaltsen with Panchen Rinpoché at his residence in Beijing,
26 June 1985*

Afterwards we had a Tibetan-style dinner at which Ren Rin and two other Chinese officials joined us.

The Panchen Rinpoché was not only an important Tibetan Buddhist spiritual master but also a patriot who faced many hardships with great courage to ensure the welfare of Tibetans and the happiness of all living beings. Sacrificing all his personal privileges, Rinpoché authored the historic 70,000 Chinese-character petition submitted to China's leaders on 18 May 1962. This was a time when hardly anyone



L–R: author, Kalden, Kundeling Woesser Gyaltsen, Kunzig Panchen Rinpoché, Alak Jigmé and Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering in front of Panchen Rinpoché's residence in Beijing, 26 June 1985

was critical of Mao's policies and followed him without question. Panchen Rinpoché wrote this historic criticism of Chinese policies and their impact on Tibetan lives, knowing that it would endanger his life. As a result, he was highly respected not only by Tibetan people, but also by numerous Chinese who admired him for his courage and honesty.

It was said that the Panchen Rinpoché carried a *thangka*³⁴ of Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion, with him everywhere. In 1961, Panchen Rinpoché publicly

folded his hands together at Shugtri Lingka in Lhasa and said that His Holiness the Dalai Lama was the manifestation of Avalokiteshvara. He prayed for the Dalai Lama to live long and return to Tibet soon. In 1964, when the Chinese authorities sent security personnel to arrest him, they saw this image and asked Panchen Rinpoché what it was. “It is the image of Chenrezig,” Rinpoché replied. “Is Chenrezig the same as the Dalai Lama?” the security men asked. When the Panchen Rinpoché answered in the affirmative, they arrested him along with the image. I heard of this event through Alak Khangyur Rinpoché, who was at the scene of the arrest (Khangyur was recognised as an incarnation by the Panchen Rinpoché. He is an Indian citizen living in Manali, India). As a result of all these brave acts, the Panchen Rinpoché was jailed for over a decade.

The Panchen Rinpoché was someone who genuinely supported the Middle Way Approach. During our visit he said, “We must work hard to gain a genuine autonomy for Tibet, where we can develop our religion, language and culture. With this we can remain under China. Independence for Tibet is hard. This is my personal thought.” He died under mysterious circumstances in 1989. He was fifty.

VISIT TO THE INDIAN EMBASSY

On the morning of 27 June, Thubten Samphel and I visited the Indian Embassy. During lunch with the First Secretary, Vijay, I raised some issues we had already discussed with Shyam Saran. I told him about Tibetans I had encountered who had left deep impressions on me. For example, I met a Tibetan woman from the People's Publishing House in Lhasa who claimed to be from the same place as Kundeling. With intense conviction, the woman said that His Holiness should never come back to China for fear of his safety. Another time, a couple from Lhasa showed me a framed photo of their son: behind the image they had hidden a black and white photograph of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I explained to Vijay that this couple from Lhasa said that whatever little respect the Tibetans were getting was only because His Holiness was living in India and that if His Holiness returned to Lhasa no one would care for Tibetans.

Shyam Saran had said that China was trying to create stability in Tibet, so it was possible that Chinese leaders might agree to His Holiness' return to Lhasa. "This is my personal opinion," Saran said. Shyam Saran later became India's foreign secretary and advisor to the Prime Minister. He had visited Tibet and has great respect for the Dalai Lama. Saran has since retired and is well known world-wide for his knowledge of international relations and politics.

MEETING WITH TASHI WANGCHUK

That evening we had a dinner meeting with Tashi Wangchuk, the former governor of Qinghai (Tso Ngön) Province. In 1935 Wangchuk was with the Red Army in Karze, his birthplace in eastern Tibet. At the time of our meeting he was one of four Tibetans in the National People's Political Consultative Conference.

Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering and Alak Jigmé knew Tashi Wangchuk from before and had already had a private meeting with him, during which Wangchuk had said, "You should only visit your birthplaces and no other areas. Three of the six autonomous regions are being administered by Tibetans and it is a problem when you distribute pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or give away blessed pills and give speeches to the general public. I am telling you all this as a friend." However, to us it seemed this was something the Chinese authorities had made him say, because a few days later there were feisty arguments between the members of the Fact-Finding Delegation and Chinese officials.

"If people do not have faith in religion, then of course we would not distribute His Holiness' photos and blessing cords," Dra'u Pon reasoned. "But as long as there are people who want to receive these, we will go on giving them. The same is true with us giving speeches. If people ask us to speak, we will speak. As per His Holiness' vision, we are here to build relationships and not destroy them." Tashi Wangchuk then said in that case it was all right to do so. Wangchuk told Dra'u Pon and Alak he was saying all this as a friend and told them not to tell the other delegates.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama recounts in his biography: "In 1955 after the conclusion of the National People's Congress session in Beijing, a banquet was hosted in my name at the Dalai Lama House for the delegates before their departure to their respective areas. On this occasion, Tashi Wangchuk was rowdy and made

Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé's life miserable. He made Ngabo totally drunk so much so that in the end Ngabo was forced to take shelter under my table. Tashi was very naughty that evening. The next day a similar banquet was hosted by the Panchen Rinpoché. On this occasion, surprisingly he was totally a changed person and did not make any noise. Perhaps he got a battering from his superiors. In fact, Tashi was from Kham Karze and did not have any connection with Amdo region. He joined the Red Army and went on its Long March at a very young age and later was appointed first governor of Amdo. However, he genuinely respected and liked me.”³⁵ Generally, it is believed that if one is totally drunk one speaks his mind truthfully. Tashi Wangchuk's behaviour on this occasion raises a big question.

POSTPONEMENT OF THE VISIT TO TIBET

During a dinner, Ren Rin told us there was a problem with proceeding on our visit as scheduled, and that it had to be postponed for a few days. The reason he gave was that the officials in the areas we were to visit had insisted to the higher authorities that they needed a few more days to make preparations for our visit. “We have no choice,” Ren said.

“In that case, would it be possible for us to proceed to the area bordering Tibet instead of being here?” Kundeling asked. Ren rejected this idea and suggested that we either make a pilgrimage trip to Mount Wutai Shan or go to Beidaihe, a summer resort where China’s leaders meet in an informal setting for closed-door discussions and holidaying. Consequently, we had to change our plans.

In fact, the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New Delhi and the Chinese Embassy had held numerous discussions regarding our travel itineraries and places to visit during our trip to Tibet. Everything had been agreed upon and finalised before we left Delhi. For Beijing to say they had received complaints from local leaders about their inability to make proper arrangements for us was a poor excuse. From this and other experiences, I came to realize the truth of our common perception that the Chinese leadership can never be trusted. They find any excuse to benefit themselves while totally ignoring requests from the other side that may put them in a weaker position.

After lengthy discussion, we finally decided to go on pilgrimage to Mount Wutai Shan. We considered going to Beidaihe for picnics a waste of time and it would also raise questions about our mission in China. Making a pilgrimage to the sacred mountain would at least benefit each of us personally and collectively we could pray for Tibet.

Later, we learned that the reason for delaying our visit was because we did not

agree to China's Five-Point Proposal regarding the Dalai Lama. It seemed there had been a great deal of discussion among the top Chinese leadership about our proposed visit to the Tibetan regions and whether we should be allowed to go at all. While we were visiting Mount Wutai, the Chinese officials were having discussions about possibly having us sent back to India instead of allowing us to visit the Tibetan areas agreed upon previously.

Some of Alak Jigmé's relatives came to Beijing unexpectedly to meet him. The local officials, who had heard this from other sympathetic Chinese officials, told Alak Jigmé's family members that because of the strange attitude of the delegates there was a very real danger that they would be sent back, The reason being that not only did they disagree with the Five-Point Proposal they adamantly opposed it. At the same time, our Chinese protocol officers had told their superiors that if we were allowed to visit Tso Ngön they could not take responsibility for our actions and other events might take place. Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal also briefly told Kundeling that our refusal to agree with the proposal had annoyed the top Chinese leaders. The other likely reason for their frustration was our insistence in Hong Kong not to travel to Beijing on Overseas Chinese documents.

MOUNT WUTAI SHAN (MOUNT WUTAI)

At around 10:00 a.m. on 28 June, we left Beijing by train and reached Shanxi province twelve hours later. Local religious leaders and officials from the United Front Work Department came to receive us at the train station. We were put up in a very old but very secure hotel.

The next morning, we visited an ancient Buddhist monastery, Pema Gön, built during the Tang dynasty and expanded in 1383. Because the monastery contained a vast number of ancient texts, the public was not allowed to go inside. At the time of our visit, there were only three monks. It was said that in 1984 the Communist Party gave 500,000 Yuan for the monastery's renovation.

That night the local United Front office prepared a rather elaborate dinner for the delegates. On 30 June we left Shanxi for Mount Wutai Shan, believed to be the holy abode of Manjushri, the wisdom deity for Buddhists. The journey was over two hundred kilometers. Dra'u Pon and I shared a room. In the evening, as an auspicious deed and in an effort to receive wisdom and blessings, we tried to recite the prayer of Manjushri³⁶ by heart. But we could not remember all the stanzas. This was one of the prayers we used to recite daily when I was in school. Back then I could recite it by heart all the time, so I felt terrible at not being able to remember the words in such a sacred place. After much trying and repeating, to our great relief we just managed to complete the prayer.

On 1 July, we met with a senior official from the local religious department. "During the Ming Dynasty there were over three hundred monasteries in the area, with over three hundred monks in each monastery," he told us. "But things have deteriorated. In 1984, the Chinese Government gave money to renovate the twelve main monasteries." We visited some of these religious institutions.

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION



L–R: Kalden, Kundeling Woeser Gyaltzen, Alak Jigmé, Thubten Samphel and the author at the eastern mountain, 2 July 1985, Wutai Shan

The next day we visited monasteries on the eastern flank of Mount Wutai Shan. It was summertime and the hillsides were beautifully painted with green grasses. It seems most of the monasteries in this area were saved during the Cultural Revolution and sustained minimal damage, in comparison to the Tibetan monasteries. On July 3 we went to monasteries in the vicinity of the mountain, particularly a meditation cave said to be connected with the Sixth Dalai Lama. I felt a special affinity for this cave and prayed hard for the long life of His Holiness and the welfare of all sentient beings. I added an extra prayer for my Tibetan brothers and sisters.

On 4 July we left Mount Wutai Shan and on the way, came across a five-storey stupa carved out of wood. The following day, we travelled to the city of Taitung where we saw about fifty famous caves. Of the 5,000 holy images and statues in these caves (some dating back over 1,500 years), we were told that 1,400 had been stolen and the remainder were being guarded. Many of these images were created before Buddhism was introduced to Tibet in the seventh century.

We left for Beijing that evening.

HIS HOLINESS' BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IN BEIJING

The following morning in Beijing, we were given room numbers 1009, 1024, 1936 and 1704 in a five-star hotel called the Shenyang. This new and famous hotel was a joint venture between China and the United States. On the morning of July 6, Panchen Rinpoché sent his relative and assistant, Dhargyé, with an image of Amitabha (*Tsepakme*) and a long white scarf for His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his birthday. Panchen Rinpoché sent the message, “May His Holiness live a long and healthy life and may all his wishes come true.” Rinpoché also sent a selection of fruit for us and gifts of holy, newly printed thangkas with his signature.

July 7 was Sunday. The next day we visited a carpet factory and that evening, as part of His Holiness' birthday celebrations, we invited about thirty Chinese officials for dinner at a popular Sichuan restaurant. We also invited Panchen Rinpoché, Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal, Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé's daughter Chönyi and many others, including Wangdu Jigmé, the son of Pomda.

Before this grand dinner, we went to the restaurant to make sure everything was in order. However, to our surprise and embarrassment the Chinese officials we had invited for the dinner were already there. I suspect that Ren Rin, who knew the time on the dinner invitation was 5:30 p.m., may have suggested an earlier hour to the Chinese officials, perhaps to cause confusion and embarrass us. After all the officials and the guests had sat down, Kundeling thanked the Chinese leaders for organizing our travels since our arrival in Hong Kong. He stated that His Holiness the Dalai Lama had sent a series of delegations in order to build a good relationship with China and to experience the ground realities in Tibet. “To mark His Holiness' fiftieth birthday celebrations, we have invited His Eminence Panchen Rinpoché as the chief guest and other guests including Jiang Ping and other officials. I want to

thank you all for accepting our invitation to come to this dinner.” Kundeling then proposed a toast in honour of Panchen Rinpoché. “May His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Panchen Rinpoché live long and may all their wishes be fulfilled.”

Afterwards, Panchen Rinpoché offered his prayers and wishes for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. “I welcome you to His Holiness’ birthday celebration. With the changes in the Communist Party’s policies and according to the principle of seeking truth from facts, there have been a number of delegations sent by exiled Tibetans to build a good relationship. I congratulate these efforts. Personally, I think we should forget all the unfortunate events that took place in the past and instead open a new chapter and work hard to benefit the welfare of the people. I hope there will be more delegations in future and hope that His Holiness will be able to come one day. Finally, I want to honour His Holiness the Omniscient One on his birthday. May he live long and all his wishes come true. Particularly, I pray that the aspirations of all Tibetans in exile will come true.” Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal added, “I fully support everything that Panchen Rinpoché has just said.”

Jiang Ping, vice-minister of the United Front department, offered his best wishes to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and said that he hoped His Holiness’ wishes would come true. A Chinese named Li Tsaomin said the same thing. Li’s Tibetan name was Sherab Topgyal and he spoke fluent Tibetan in the Lhasa dialect. In his book *Mitsei Jungwa Jopa*, Takla Phuntsok Tashi writes that Li—or Sherab Topgyal—was from Gansu Province and joined the Communist Party of China in 1947.

He was an intellectual who learned to read and write Tibetan in 1949 while working in Labrang and Tso Ngön areas. In 1952, he moved to Lhasa and was in charge of the United Front office. He was also the official translator for General

Zhang Jingwu when the General visited His Holiness and the Tibetan cabinet in 1951. During His Holiness' visit to India in 1956, the Chinese Government sent Sherab as an agent to keep track of His Holiness' activities. During the Cultural Revolution, Sherab was sent to a labour camp in Kongpo, southern Tibet, for not agreeing with Mao Zedong's policies. He was later rehabilitated and sent to Tibet a few times to observe the situation on the plateau. My impression of him was that if the Chinese were ever to send him to collect intelligence in exile, it would be an extremely difficult task to catch him as a spy, especially because his facial features didn't resemble the Han Chinese. He looked distinctly Tibetan and had the aura of a harmless old man.

On 9 July we were taken on a tour to a jeep and car factory in Beijing. The factory had many women employees and we were told that it had plans for a joint venture with a US automobile company to produce the Jeep Cherokee. On one of the many posters hanging on the wall, a particularly large one said in big English letters "Time is Money and Efficiency is Life" to encourage the workers!

KUNDELING'S PRIVATE MEETING WITH PHUNTSOK WANGYAL

In the afternoon of the same day, Kundeling went to see Phuntsok Wangyal for a private meeting. On his return he recounted their conversation to me. He told us that Phuntsok Wangyal wanted to know more about His Holiness the Dalai Lama's residence in exile and the functioning of officials in the exile government. "His Holiness should have good people working for him. It is of the utmost importance for His Holiness to have a perfect diet, routine sleep and compatible religious activities," Phuntsok told Kundeling.

"I have heard that the people working for His Holiness' Office are not able to fulfil his wishes and aspirations. Here, Panchen Rinpoché also has problems with finding good people to work for him. I fear that one day these people in the inner circle will cause problems for him. Please tell the Kashag to pay attention and take measures in this regard."

"The Department of Education is crucial," he continued, "but I have heard that there is some kind of association with the Kuomintang [the Nationalist government in Taiwan] and money is being taken. One must be careful. This is just between you and me," Phuntsok Wangyal told Kundeling. He was referring to the controversial activities carried out by the Kuomintang among the exiled Tibetan communities in a bid to win the Tibetan people over to their side.

He said that Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo and he had no fundamental differences in their outlook towards Tibet's future, although there were differences in strategies. "We are three bodies with one mind. Tell everyone that we will never let Tibet down," he said. Furthermore, Phuntsok Wangyal said that we should base our arguments on Deng's statement that "except independence, everything can be discussed", and Hu Yaobang's view that instead of talking about differences between Tibet and China one must focus on the future.

“When I met Gyalo Thondup he told me that he was simply a messenger and nothing more, to which I said that it was not appropriate to say such a thing. He not only speaks Chinese but also understands the prevailing conditions in China. One must finish what one has started. This unpalatable thing called the Five-Point Proposal has harmed both China and us, and this has gone up to the senior leadership.”

Phuntsok Wangyal told Kundeling, “Your disagreement and noticeable disappointment with the proposal is receiving a lot of attention from the Chinese authorities. You must think about this and make an effort to continue to build a good relationship. But whatever happens, it is important to be careful, calm and yet firm as His Holiness the Dalai Lama advised you.”

“Deng is in fact the Central Government. Hu Yaobang and Li Xiaonan have genuine concerns for Tibet but there are many who are critical of them. What is happening in Tibet is being taken note of by everyone concerned. What do you gain by being harsh with China? His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the sole person who can benefit Tibet. Others, such as the youth organizations, the United Tibetan Association, the Group of Thirteen, and so on cannot bring any benefit. This is something you have to think about,” Phuntsok Wangyal advised.

Kundeling told Phuntsok Wangyal that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile did not take any money from Taiwan’s Mongolian–Tibetan Affairs Commission. Regarding the functioning of His Holiness’ office, “I will report everything that you have said to His Holiness,” Kundeling assured Phuntsok Wangyal.

Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal was arguably one of the leading Tibetan Communists with a deep understanding of Marxist–Leninist ideology, and someone with a clear

position on the Marxist outlook towards nationalities, self-determination and equality amongst nationalities. Holding firmly to his belief in socialism, and under very difficult circumstances, he had strong loyalty towards Tibet and her people. Due to his unwavering beliefs, Phuntsok Wangyal was accused of “chauvinism and local nationalism” and had been imprisoned for eighteen years by the Chinese Government.

He had met with and advised all the fact-finding delegations. He played a crucial role in uncovering China’s Five-Point Proposal. It was through Phuntsok Wangyal that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile first learned of the proposal and his timely advice and guidance has greatly benefited us. It is also well known that he submitted four letters to the Chinese leadership stating that the issue of Tibet must be resolved during the lifetime of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, based on his approach to achieving genuine autonomy for all Tibetan people.

In 2004 Phuntsok Wangyal wrote to Hu Jintao:

The desire to have a united autonomous region of Tibetan nationalities was expressed way back in the 1950s by Dergé Kalsang Wangdu, leader of the Chamdo delegation and Deputy Director of the PLA Military Committee for the Chamdo region. During the Peaceful Talks with Tibet, the Tibetan delegation also voiced the same opinion to the Central Government, which the leaders acknowledged in principle. In 1956, when the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet was established, Marshal

Chen Yi, leader of the Central Government delegation, a Politburo member as well as the Vice-Premier of the State Council, stated at a senior cadre meeting in Lhasa: “It is alright to suggest to the Central Government that an united autonomous region of Tibetan nationalities be established, with Lhasa as its capital, by uniting all the Eastern Tibetan regions that are under the jurisdiction of neighbouring provinces like Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan. That will be beneficial for relations between Han and Tibetan nationalities, the progress and development of the entire Tibetan regions, and the sovereignty of the state.” Marshal Chen Yi’s far-sighted and strategic thinking made a deep impression on everyone.

Subsequently, in order to further discuss this matter, the Central Government ordered comrade Sangyé Yeshe (Tian Bao) to form a team to coordinate with the five provinces over this matter. But later, due to “leftist” influences over the entire policies of the nation, this matter came to an end. In 1980, a group of Tibetan cadres in Gansu’s Gannan Autonomous Prefecture wrote a petition to the Central Government hoping to establish a United Autonomous Region of Tibetan Nationalities—or an Eastern Tibet Autonomous Region like the TAR—which would include all the ten Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and two Tibetan Autonomous Counties.

With regard to the question of establishing a United Autonomous Region of Tibetan Nationalities, some concerned people think that this is a point of view suggested by overseas Tibetans, which is a big misconception since such ideas had already been there.³⁷

According to Phuntsok Wangyal, the tenth Panchen Rinpoché said: “The desire to demand a United Autonomous Region of Tibetan Nationalities is fair, reasonable and legal; this is also in line with the aspirations of the Tibetan people.”³⁸

In fact, Phuntsok Wangyal was stating that not only Tibetans in exile but also Tibetans living in the three provinces of Tibet have the united and ultimate desire to be under one banner, a solidarity or unity within occupied Tibet. This is also the primary objective of the Middle Way Approach proposed by the His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

On the anniversary of Phuntsok Wangyal’s death in 2014, the former Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, Samdhong Rinpoché, said that Phuntsok Wangyal was regularly consulted and provided advice regarding China’s overall situation and its constitution. But from the Buddhist point of view, one has no choice but to consider him as a colossal sinner because he was among the first Tibetans to guide and lead the occupying Chinese forces into Tibet. Although he might have had pure motives, his actions led to the annihilation of thousands of monasteries, the killing of hundreds of thousands of Tibetans and destruction of the nation’s rich cultural heritage.

ALAK JIGMÉ AND KALDEN'S PRIVATE AUDIENCE WITH PANCHEN RINPOCHÉ

On the same afternoon that Kundeling had a private meeting with Phuntsok Wangyal, Alak Jigmé and Kalden had a private audience with Panchen Rinpoché. During that meeting Panchen Rinpoché told them that one must seriously consider whether independence for Tibet is a viable possibility. "It is of little use to violently oppose China. I have submitted a secret request to the highest Chinese leadership to establish genuine autonomy for Tibet. Please offer my prayers for His Holiness to fulfil his wishes. Tashi Lhunpo, Sera, Ganden and Drepung [the four biggest Geluk monasteries in central Tibet] have responsibilities to be in touch with each other. We have accommodation at Shugtri Lingka [below the Potala palace] and hope that His Holiness will be able to visit Tibet," Rinpoché told them.

Panchen Rinpoché asked them if the exile government had any relationship with the Kuomintang government in Taiwan. Rinpoché added that it was important to maintain unity amongst the Tibetans because it would bring strength and respect from others. "Since the liberalization in Tibet there have been certain debates. I have talked about these. It is important to protect and promote the Tibetan language. The best way to do this is to learn and use the language. I am trying to have all official correspondence between Tibetan autonomous areas conducted in Tibetan."

"Independence for Tibet may be difficult. This is my personal opinion. Currently there is no autonomy, only authoritarianism. We need to investigate whether there have been some gains from all our hard work until now. If one misfortune after another keeps happening, then there is a great loss. In Tibet, although the youth shout for independence, they don't work towards it. At night they drink and dance. I request His Holiness to advise the younger generation about these things. For example, if a chair made by us is not proper, it is our fault when we don't get the same price for it that chairs made by others reach," Panchen Rinpoché said.

“I wrote the 70,000-Character Petition in 1962 with three main sections: religion, the suffering in all of Tibet, and the scarcity of food. When I was in solitary confinement for nine years, I was not scared because one has to die anyway and then be reborn. But although we have the same thoughts, we cannot openly speak them. You must know this. The Chinese Government pays great attention towards the propagation of information. Each piece of information must be capable of making a dent. You cannot just randomly do things. A film on what Jetsün Pema said was secretly shown to the leaders of the central authorities. We [Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo and Phuntsok Wangyal] also went to see it. I think what she said may have been a little exaggerated and far from the truth. But because of who said it, it looked as if it came from His Holiness. But of course, if someone else said the same thing it would be an entirely different case,” Rinpoché told Alak Jigmé and Kalden.

Alak Jigmé and Kalden told Panchen Rinpoché that the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had no dealings with the Mongolian–Tibetan Affairs Commission of the Kuomintang in Taiwan and that everything the Panchen Rinpoché said would be reported to His Holiness, without fail.

Alak Jigmé told Kundeling of his wish to offer the only video camera our delegation had to Panchen Rinpoché. At that time, a video camera was very hard to come by and had to be registered with the customs department when coming in and out of India. He had already told Panchen Rinpoché we would offer the camera, but although Alak Jigmé repeatedly made his request Kundeling declined to do so because it was the delegates’ sole camera and he feared repercussions from customs in Delhi. During this meeting, Alak Jigmé and Kalden offered our sincere apologies to Panchen Rinpoché because we could not present the video camera to him.

ALAK JIGMÉ'S PRIVATE MEETING WITH PHUNTSOK WANGYAL

On 10 July we went on a tour to a sweet factory. On the same day, Alak Jigmé had a private meeting with Phuntsok Wangyal, who told him that it was important to get things done strategically and tactfully. Phuntsok thought it was a good idea for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit China to meet with the Chinese leadership and to talk to the Tibetan youth.

He also told Alak Jigmé that it was perhaps not right to say that all five points in the proposal were wrong. “Until Gyalo Thondup talks again with the Chinese leadership about the Five-Point Proposal, his mission remains incomplete,” he said. He further asked Alak Jigmé whether the exiles have any relationship with the Kuomintang and whether it was true that His Holiness became a little cross during his visit to Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in south India when he saw two thrones in the temple, one for His Holiness and one for Panchen Rinpoché. Alak Jigmé clarified that there was no relationship between the Kuomintang and the Government-in-Exile and that also it was not true that His Holiness got upset on seeing two thrones in Tashi Lhunpo.

DISCUSSION WITH CHINESE OFFICIALS

At around 4:00 p.m. on 11 July, the vice-chair of the United Front office, Sung Jue Zhang, summoned us to a meeting, saying he had a few things to discuss. “It has been several days since you arrived, during which you have met with a few officials. You have also visited some factories and in accordance with the wishes of the Dalai Lama to build a stable relationship, we have made some progress. Do you have any thoughts to tell us?” Sung asked. Kundeling replied that our thoughts were basically the same as theirs.

“You are representatives sent by the Dalai Lama,” Sung continued. “We welcome you from our hearts. You are not here in your personal capacities and as a result, everything you say and do is connected with politics. I hope the visit will go well. The basic aim is to build good relations.” He also said that during the visit we had to discuss everything with Ren.

“Now I have a few things to say,” he announced. “One: You are delegates sent by the Dalai Lama. We welcome you and will give you a good reception. There are bound to be differences between us. We will send four of our officials to accompany you, leaving their own work aside. Whatever we say and do is to fulfil the Dalai Lama’s wishes and it is important for you to adhere to this.

“Two: We put forward a Five-Point Proposal and this was not something that an individual made up. It is in accordance with the thoughts and visions of Party Secretary Hu Yaobang and the Party.

“The essence of the proposal is to improve our relationship and to make efforts towards the Four Modernizations of the Motherland. We are happy to have the Dalai Lama return. Our aim is to improve the unity of the Motherland and to have good relations between the Han and Tibetans. Tibet is a part of the motherland and only on the basis of accepting this fact can we discuss any other issue.

“Minister Yang Jingren and Deputy Minister Jiang Ping said that we have explained the Five-Point Proposal to previous delegations. Whether you know about this or not is a different matter. Based on the proposal, some people said that it was wrong to have expectations from the Dalai Lama. The Party has great concern for the Tibetans. The proposal mentions that the Dalai Lama has to make an announcement. He can return whenever he wants. Likewise, regarding his place of stay, we can arrange this according to his wishes. The proposal was conceived in 1981 and announced in 1983. We hear many different versions of it.

“Three: Your visits must be made according to what the local authorities have arranged and prepared for. There is religious freedom in monasteries. It is not good to summon the public and collect money [he was referring to the donations people might offer for His Holiness and to Alak Jigmé]. People put effort into their work and this should not be disturbed. If this happens, then it will be against the wishes of the Dalai Lama. Likewise, photographs of the Dalai Lama should not be distributed. This is because it becomes a political act. You can distribute holy pills³⁹ and blessed threads only after our office has inspected these items. This is in accordance with the constitution. [In Tso Ngön a few days earlier, all holy pills in circulation were confiscated and burnt.]

“Four: Since 1978, ten delegations from the Dalai Lama have come here and relations have improved. Jetsün Pema carried out many actions to harm the relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Party. We have made special efforts relating to the relatives of the Dalai Lama.

“For example, during the visit of one delegation a person broke his leg while they were changing vehicles. When Gyalo Thondup visited Kangding, Yarphel

died out of sadness. These people made sacrifices in order to create better relations between us.”

I had no idea, neither did anyone in the delegation, as to whom Sung was referring when he mentioned these people who were injured and passed away for the advancement of our relationship. I still do not know if this was true or simply something he made up in the course of the conversation.

“We will talk about these once you return from your visit,” he continued. “The objective of socialism is to improve people’s lives. If there is anything wrong or there are areas for improvement, you can tell this to Comrade Ren.”

Kundeling said that it was good to hear things openly and that it would be wonderful to engage with each other like relatives. “It is great to hear that leaders from both sides should seek truth from facts. His Holiness the Dalai Lama says the same thing and this is also in tune with our mission. We are representatives of His Holiness and if we fail in our work, then it will go against his wishes. I am happy that we have the opportunity to talk before we embark on our visit. Otherwise, things may end up badly with the regional leaders blaming the leaders in Beijing, and the other way around. I am leader of this delegation and hence both Ren Rin and I have huge responsibilities. But I have some difficult things to ask regarding our work.

“First of all, we must be allowed to talk with the public and we will give you our assurance that nothing will be said against the Chinese Government. If we cannot talk, then it will be like a mute going on a visit. We have a few simple questions to ask the people such as whether they are happy, whether there is religious freedom and tell them that we are sent by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. But we will not call for a large gathering of people.”

Alak Jigmé said, “I am a monk. But I don’t give teachings in India, nor will I do so here. I work, and in this regard, you don’t have to worry.” Sung responded by saying that we could be in touch with people. “Particularly three of you who hail from Tso Ngön, can meet with people,” he said. “We are all members of the delegation, not just the three of them,” Kundeling retorted. “I think there was a mistranslation. Of course, all of you can meet and talk with people,” Sung then clarified.

Kundeling said that the second thing that needed clarification was that it was a matter of great sadness to be told not to distribute photographs of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. “You praise His Holiness and so we will only give His Holiness’ photographs to those who want them. We will not harass people to take the picture. His Holiness’ photos are associated with religion and therefore I don’t think it will create any harm.” Alak Jigmé added, “In fact, his photographs are an object of veneration. We will not make any announcements while giving out His Holiness’ photographs. People who advocate and wish for independence will do so even without the pictures of His Holiness.”

Sung retorted, “You have not come here to have picnics. This has political significance. Distributing the Dalai Lama’s photographs becomes political in nature. Seeing the distribution of the Dalai Lama’s pictures, foreigners would consider Tibet to be an independent country. Three points [in the Five-Point Proposal] are about the Dalai Lama: first as a religious person, then regarding his position, and third, his historical significance.”

Kundeling replied, “I am completely surprised as to why we are not allowed to distribute His Holiness’ photographs. I wonder what this is all about.” Sung responded, “You are different from individual visitors. Your duty is not a religious one, but to visit and see things.”

Dra'u Pon commented, "It never occurred to me that His Holiness' pictures would have any political significance. I am totally taken aback by you not allowing us to distribute the photographs. So far, we gave pictures without hesitation. It would be considered a failure on our part if we don't distribute His Holiness' photographs. This will raise issues. I am a little worried."

"When Zhang Jingwu first came to Tibet [in 1951] as Mao's representative, he distributed Mao's photographs. Now we are here as representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and yet we cannot give away his photographs. What has the situation become?" Kundeling asked.

I spoke up, saying that under Communist Party rule there was supposed to be religious freedom and since in reality this claim was untrue, we had come to inspect the situation. "If during our visits people ask for His Holiness' photo and if we tell them that the Communist Party has banned us from handing out the photos, what would the people think? Will this benefit or harm the unity among the nationalities? You must think over this carefully," I added. "If we are not allowed to distribute the picture of His Holiness, then it would be a joke to claim you have religious freedom in Tibet."

Two Chinese officials interjected, saying they were simply explaining to us the principal issue but it was up to us to think and act. Kalden replied, "A person must act to fulfil his wishes and so will we. But we assure you that we will not say anything to harm the unity of the people. We give you our word on this."

Kundeling said the third thing he wanted to talk about was the precious pills we had brought with us. "These precious pills are being taken by people all over the world," he said. "If you do not believe us then you can carry out any test on them."

“Regarding the precious pills,” Sung rebutted, “I simply said we must do as per our constitution. But you will find out that there will be differences in our opinions.”

“With the unity of the country as the base, we will carry out our work,” Alak Jigmé told him.

In spite of all the discussions, from our perspective the meeting ended with no clarity or concrete conclusions on anything. Nevertheless, a sumptuous dinner was laid on for us that night.

BEIJING TO XINING VIA XIAN

On 12 July, we visited the Indian Embassy to collect our return visas and told Mr Vijay what had transpired between our delegation and the Chinese side.

At around 3:00 p.m. we flew out of Beijing and arrived in Xian, the ancient Chinese capital. I felt happy on arriving in this city because during the era of the great Tibetan kings, their empire extended all the way to Xian after they defeated the Chinese army. I was also sad because the situation had reversed, with the whole of Tibet now being under Chinese rule and its people facing a life-and-death situation. Having the upper hand, China can now dictate to the Tibetan people, as well as their representatives and the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This is truly a sad state of affairs.

On 13 July, we went for a tour of the Tibetan Nationality Institute in the city, which was established in 1954 and was initially named the Xian Tibet School. In 1957, when China launched its “Democratic Reforms” in Tibet, many children from poor families were sent to this institution as a result of this campaign. In theory, the “democratic reform campaign” sought to level out the distribution of wealth in China. Educating the lower-class population was a major element of this initiative but in reality, parents were forcibly separated from their children. The “education” provided uprooted long-held cultural identities of the Tibetan people. Put simply, they were brainwashed by the Communist government. The school was later given its current designation and had about four hundred students, a small number in comparison to other universities. We found out that most Tibetan students were not happy to study there because of the region’s notoriously hot weather. Consequently, both the Tibetan students and the teachers were making efforts to move the university to Tibet.

They were on vacation at the time of our visit, so we met only the handful of students who had remained on the campus. Many of them accepted His Holiness' photos as we distributed them, but did so with clear expressions of fear. We met a teacher named Tsering from Phenpo in central Tibet. It appeared as though he wanted to say something but was scared, so we did not press him. In the afternoon, we toured some tombs from the Ming Dynasty.

On 14 July, we were taken to see over 8,000 terracotta statues of warriors dating back to the Qing dynasty, the famous Terracotta Warriors. It was fascinating to see all these statues and a little amusing to know it was meant to be for the emperor in the afterlife. As Tibetans believe in reincarnation, in my eyes it seemed almost wasteful to have expended all that effort on something no one would have a chance to use.

In the afternoon, we went to the Lidang Hills where there was a hot water spring used by Chinese emperors from the Tang dynasty. The official tour guides told us the hot water offered therapeutic benefits and people came there from all over China. They insisted that we also should participate. There were many small huts in which people were enjoying the hot spring water. Li (one of the youngest of four Chinese officials sent to accompany us) and I shared one hut. Since I had no previous experience of going to such a place, I followed Li who took off his clothes and went into the water totally naked. Feeling very uncomfortable and embarrassed but without showing any emotion, I too stripped down to my natural self and joined him in the hot water.

On 15 July we visited two famous monasteries in the city. On the same day, I posted the following letter from Kundeling to the Tibetan Cabinet in India from Xian:

To the esteemed members of the Cabinet

I have previously sent three⁴⁰ separate letters and hope you have received them.

In the meantime, the Qinghai provincial authorities have appealed to the Central Government and have relayed they need at least ten days to prepare for the visit of the delegation as they are visiting many places. The communication was made by phone. So, for those days they said we could either choose to have a short break at a seaside resort (Beidaihe) or go for a pilgrimage to Wutai Shan. The majority decided to visit Wutai Shan, so we all left Beijing on 28 June and returned on 6 July at 8:00 a.m. Since the timing coincided with the fiftieth birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we hosted an official banquet at a popular Sichuan restaurant to celebrate this auspicious occasion. Guests of honour included Panchen Rinpoché, Phunwang, vice minister of United Front Jiang Ping, and Office of Nationalities Affairs Commission's representative Chu Zhang Ren, Li Tsaomin, Ren Zhuran and others. Ngabo's daughter Chönyi, Pomda's son Jigmé and a total of thirty guests were invited (seated at three big tables).

I, Kundeling, as the head of the delegation and the host of the event, thanked the Chinese Government for their

excellent reception for the delegates. I especially thanked them for attending His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthday celebration and thus honouring him.

Jiang Ping, vice minister of the United Front Department, offered his best wishes to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his birthday and said that he hoped all His Holiness' wishes would be fulfilled. Afterwards, Panchen Rinpoché paid a rich tribute to His Holiness and his thoughts were also seconded by Phuntsok Wangyal.

Overall, the expression of friendliness prevailed from both sides. Not only were we able to celebrate His Holiness' birthday publicly in front of the enemy, the fact that we were able to do so in the heart of the Chinese capital is, in my opinion, a step towards political victory.

From here on the delegates will fly to Xian on 12 July at 1:00 p.m. We will visit some places and eventually reach Xining. After that we will visit places as per scheduled by the provincial authorities.

Kindly brief His Holiness.

*From: Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation Head Kundeling
and members*

Beijing Sheyuan Hotel

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION



*With Chinese officials from Beijing and fourth delegation members
from Dharamsala at Xian, 14 July 1985;*

*L–R: author, Kalden, Alak Jigmé, Gao Chuzhang, Kundeling Woeser Gyaltsen,
Ren Rin Zhuran, Dra’u Pon Rinchen Tsering, Thubten Samphel
and Dechen Wangdu*

We left Xian that evening and arrived in Xining at around 4:00 p.m. The next day we were received and welcomed by Tseten Zhuran from Tso Ngön's Department of Nationalities Affairs, Ma Pu Zhang from the United Front Work Department, Gendun from the Public Security Bureau, Tongkho from the Reception Centre and an official named Dorjé. We were put up in the Number One Hotel, which was built for Mao Zedong, though he never stayed there. Ironically, Kundeling had an opportunity to stay for a few days in what would have been Mao's suite.

ARGUMENTS OVER PRECIOUS PILLS

At around midnight on 16 July, Kundeling and Alak Jigmé updated us about the discussion they had had with Ren after the dinner. According to them, we had only about twenty days for our visit in Tso Ngön and at each place we were to abide by the local administration's arrangements as Sung had said earlier in Beijing. Ren told them that we would have more discussions later, but he hoped we would yield on our position regarding the distribution of the photographs and precious pills.

Ren said, "One: What we are saying about the Dalai Lama's photos is nothing new. This is something that was decided earlier. One of the things checked at the Nepal–Tibet border [Tib: Dram; Ch: Zhangmu] are pictures of the Dalai Lama. Even those individuals who come to visit relatives may not bring in the Dalai Lama's pictures because this is linked with politics. Your purpose is to see what changes are taking place in the Tibetan areas.

"Two: Regarding the precious pills, you cannot distribute them without them first being inspected. The Tibet Medical Centre in Tibet also makes these precious pills and these have shown great benefits for the body. We have had previous discussions with the Indian Embassy about distributing them overseas, but we did not come to any agreement because they did not give their permission."

Kundeling replied that the duration of the visit did not matter much. The important thing was for the Chinese side and His Holiness to have a mutual agreement. If the local authorities had any issue, with proper discussions we would have no problem returning as and when necessary. "This delegation is important, and we have spent a great deal of money on it. In spite of many difficulties, His Holiness has sent this delegation. If the Chinese side and His Holiness can come to a resolution, the duration of this visit is insignificant. But more important for now

are the precious pills and His Holiness' pictures. This is becoming problematic. Two of us have duties to ensure the success of this visit and if we don't think carefully, we will fail to carry out our responsibilities."

Ren explained to Alak Jigmé that the Dalai Lama's photographs and religious freedom were unrelated. "The Dalai Lama's pictures have political connotations. In olden times, precious pills used to contain lama's urine and hair. I hope these pills do not contain such items," Ren commented snidely.

Alak Jigmé held his ground. "If these precious pills are harmful, it is the Tibetan people who will be harmed. This is something that His Holiness will never ever do. His Holiness' pictures are purely for religious purposes."

After Kundeling and Alak Jigmé told us about these exchanges, we discussed what would be the best course of action to take if the Chinese side refused to allow our visit to continue. We even considered returning to India if the Chinese officials did not listen to our demands. By the time our discussion ended it was 2:00 a.m.

DISCUSSIONS ON THE VISIT'S DURATION

At 9:00 in the morning of 17 July, officials from the Chinese Government and provincial officials from Tso Ngön held a joint meeting with us. Ren told the meeting that we would discuss with the local officials about whether we would be able to visit places arranged by them. Zhuran Tseten from Tso Ngön's Department of Nationalities Affairs said, "We welcome you. Six officials from the Tso Ngön Province will accompany you. As per the directive we have received from the United Front Work Department, the duration of the visit is one month. You will visit twenty different places in seventeen days. Depending upon whether the visit goes over more than thirty days, five days will be spent in seven places in Xining [capital of Qinghai], including Kumbum. The visit will be from 17 July to 11 August."

"I want to thank you for these arrangements from all sides," Kundeling replied. "I am happy to learn that responsible officials will accompany us. Because I am not familiar with these places, I cannot comment on them. His Holiness has sent three people with intimate knowledge about these places, so I will request my colleagues Dra'u Pon, Kalden and Alak Jigmé to share their thoughts."

Alak Jigmé then asked if it was possible to arrange a visit to villages in Malho in the itinerary. Because of issues brought up in earlier discussions, he light-heartedly remarked that he had no intention to sit on thrones and collect money from the people. Kalden added that His Holiness the Dalai Lama had sent us not to just glance at places but to see them properly, so we needed more time.

"The initial plan for the visit was two months, which has now been reduced to just one month. Hence, you need to consider this," I said. "It should have been us who pointed out which places to visit, but on the contrary, you have already decided the areas for us to see. How did we come to this situation?" I asked.

“This delegation must see the whole of Tso Ngön. It seems that we are visiting the places the previous delegations have already seen,” Dra’u Pon added.

“You give more than one month for individual lamas. As the Dalai Lama’s representatives we should be allowed more time. Otherwise, what will people think? I know Ren and other officials may face some challenges, but irrespective of these you must allow us more time,” Thubten Samphel argued.

I said that it would be great to give effect to the original plan to see the whole of Tso Ngön so that we would have intimate knowledge of the entire province.

“I have no problem,” said Ren. “But you have only two months to be in China and your time started on the day you embarked on this journey in India. It seems that our embassy in India did not inform you about this,” Ren said. He further said that there was no question of extending the duration since everything had to be completed within two months’ time. The one-month visit to Tso Ngön was arranged as per the decision by the central authorities. The routes are the same as for previous delegations, as it will also be in future. As guests, your responsibility is to comply with the host’s arrangements. But of course we can talk. Perhaps a few days extension can be given,” Ren said.

Tseten said that by visiting the places decided for us by the Chinese Government, we would learn about Tso Ngön Province because these locations included cities, factories in villages, farmers, nomads, monasteries, Muslims and other minorities.

“If the Chinese Government says we have only ten days, we have no choice but to say yes.” Kundeling answered.

Alak Jigmé said that it would be good if we could gain something out of these discussions, while Kalden said that if this was the case it was pointless to talk with

them. “From today onwards, you tell us what to do and what not to do. We will abide by this. We should not waste time like this,” Kalden concluded.

Ma Pu Zhang said the visit was arranged based around three of the delegates (Dra’u Pon, Kalden and Alak Jigmé) and that we would see three of the six Tibet autonomous areas. “We made the arrangements according to the weather and also thinking about the roads. It is imperative that the birthplaces of the three of them be included in the tours. But of course, we can help each other and discuss.” Ren concurred with Ma and said that we could see whether things were satisfactory. He said that some of them had to attend the session of the National People’s Congress and local problems also had to be considered.

“If that is the case then something is wrong in the way you were talking,” observed Kundeling. Ren replied that discussions could be held with the local authorities.

The meeting ended with my request to include the birthplace of Panchen Rinpoché and the Tso Ngön People’s Publishing House.

Alak Jigmé’s request was to include areas around Rebkong and Dra’u Pon asked to visit not only his birthplace, but the surrounding areas as well.

INTRODUCTION TO AMDO (CH. QINGHAI) PROVINCE

In the afternoon, Ma Pu Zhang from Tso Ngön's branch of the United Front Work Department gave an introduction to the province.

I welcome the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation. Three of your comrades would know that there has been a great change in Tso Ngön's situation. In the last thirty years, over one hundred million Yuan were given to Tso Ngön for its development. There have additionally been hundreds of millions more Yuan invested and the region has over 1,300 factories, including a milk powder manufacturing plant in Golok from which powdered milk is being sold in Beijing, Hong Kong and other cities.

Before liberation, the region had only about 600,000 animals, whereas today there are over three times more with a tenfold increase in the production of cooking oil, which is being exported to Hong Kong. The per capita income in 1949 was about thirty or forty Yuan and today it is 274. There are overall healthcare facilities in all areas, with the Tibet Medical Centre located in Xining.

The province has over 14,000 students. Nangchen in Kyegudo and Pema in Golok are two of the poorest areas in this province. We have provided 700,000 Yuan for assistance to these two places. There are seventy *shangs* (townships) or *shens* (counties).

With regard to the policies of the Communist Party, he said, “The law on national regional autonomy has been ratified, which was widely announced—particularly in nomadic areas. There are over 20,000 officials from the minorities. The district has 580 staff and areas with regional autonomy have 140 staff. The province of Qinghai has thirteen key officials of which six are Tibetan. The government has allocated four million Yuan for the renovation of religious sites.”

“The quelling of the rebellion in 1958 was good. Monetary compensation was given to those who were harmed in error, including both individuals and estates. In July 1984, as per the petition regarding monks’ religious items, 700,000 Yuan was given, including 300,000 by the province. One hundred and thirty-seven monasteries out of over six hundred in Tso Ngön were given financial assistance and in April of the same year the cases of over two thousand monks were cleared, so that they can enjoy normal religious freedom.”

Kundeling replied, “Thank you for taking the time to tell us about the province. I am happy to hear the government is giving compensation to people who suffered from mistakes. Dead people cannot be brought back and destroyed statues cannot be restored, but giving compensation is a good thing. These things are important. I think and hope we will see this when we visit these places.”

FURTHER DISCUSSION ON PHOTOGRAPHS AND PRECIOUS PILLS

In the evening, Kundeling and Ren talked about the schedule of our visit, during which Ren said that he could not guarantee more than twenty days because the Fifth Session of Tso Ngön Province's representatives, as well as the session of the National People's Congress, were to be held soon.

Ren said, "As Sung said in Beijing, arrangements were already made by the local authorities, but you can give suggestions nevertheless. I hope that the visit will go without any issue. Regarding the distribution of the pictures, I have responsibilities to follow government policies. We consider it important enough to carry out inspections for the Dalai Lama's photographs at the Nepal-Tibet border. I am sure you know well that those who come to visit relatives into Tibet are also not allowed to bring in the Dalai Lama's pictures. This is not an issue about religious freedom. This has political importance. People having religious freedom is not the same thing as distributing photos of the Dalai Lama."

Kundeling replied, "While the Chinese Government offers praise to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on one hand, on the other hand it bans distribution of his photos. This is a blatant contradiction. In the future when His Holiness returns, I hope you will not ban his pictures from being distributed then too."

"You have come here not to distribute pictures but to inspect and see if things have changed. Anyway, distributing Dalai Lama's photos is a political act. I hope this will not happen. Inspection of precious pills before being distributed is also in accordance with the constitution and must be adhered to," said Ren.

On 18 July, we toured a weaving factory in Xining that specialised in manufacturing items including shawls and blankets. Of the 11,850 workers, the overwhelming majority were youths and half were female. When Xining fell into Communist hands on 22 August 1949 it had about 3,000 Tibetan inhabitants.

Tseten told us that Tso Ngön Province had about 800,000 Tibetans. Palden Tsering, the third Tibetan secretary of the province, was in the People's Government. Shabdrung Karpo was in the office of the Standing Committee. The province had 570,000 Muslims, 130,000 Hui and 600,000 other minorities. Over ten thousand inhabitants have graduated from schools. Twenty per cent of the province's staff was Tibetan. Many Muslims could speak the Tibetan language. The province pays two Yuan for half a kilo of wool, which it buys from the locals. He also said the province has over 700,000 sheep and 500,000 other domestic animals.

TSO NGÖN NATIONALITIES' SCHOOL AND PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE

The Tso Ngön Nationalities' Institute was on holiday when we went there for a tour and so we did not meet any students. The school was established at the end of 1949. On the gate was a big signboard printed in giant letters: 'Nurturing Educated Youth to Bring United Strength'. We were told that the school has 1,800 students from seventeen different nationalities, including 800 Tibetans. Out of three hundred teachers, one hundred and one were Tibetans. This was one of the twelve nationalities' schools across China and seven per cent were Han students. Though degrees issued by the school were recognized and valid all over the country, only six Tibetans had actually graduated from it.

On 19 July we went to see the People's Publishing House where the head of the Tibetan section, Dobi Dakpa, welcomed us. Dakpa inquired about the Dalai Lama's health, to which Kundeling responded that His Holiness was not only in great health, but his deeds were expanding across the globe. He then showed us around the facility.

"This publishing house was established in 1953 and since then about three hundred titles have been published annually. Initially it focused on printing textbooks but gradually it expanded to publish Gesar's epic stories⁴¹ and translated books into Tibetan from other languages.

"We have plans to bring out about five thousand new titles in the near future," he told us.

In the afternoon, members of the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation held a meeting to talk about ways to improve relations with the Chinese side and whether we should stop distributing His Holiness' photos and the precious pills to achieve this. After the meeting, Kundeling told Ren that since two issues—distributing His Holiness' pictures and our inability to visit thirty-seven places as agreed upon earlier

—remained unresolved, he was leaving for Beijing to talk with Chinese leaders while the rest of the delegates would go ahead with visits to the Tibetan areas. As Kundeling announced this, Ren turned red in the face and said that he was going to call Beijing immediately to report these issues.

Later Ren got a call from Sung who said that it was pointless for Kundeling to come to Beijing and pointed out three things: One: Beijing was updated about what had happened and distributing the Dalai Lama's picture was not allowed. This was something that the government decided and it was hoped that we would not do so. Two: How could the visit go ahead if Kundeling came to Beijing? Three: The visit should go ahead according to the arrangements the local authorities had made. All places left out this time could certainly be visited in future. The schedule must be left as it is. Kundeling then requested that we at least be allowed to visit Tsonup, Tsojang, Golok and areas in Malho such as Sogpo and Chentsa. This request was left unanswered.

In the evening we went to see a film on the history of Tso Ngön. At the theatre hall we came across about thirty Tibetan students who asked various questions, such as, what was the principal vision of the Dalai Lama? How was the situation in exile? What was the education system like and how many scholars were there? How did we view Dungkar Lobsang Trinlé's books and do Tibetans in exile listen to Tso Ngön Radio, etc.? Most of the questions were addressed to Kalden and Alak Jigmé. There were some teachers present as well, who were very friendly with us. One teacher asked us about His Holiness' health and said, "His Holiness the Dalai Lama and exiled Tibetans are our hope. We, the young people in Tibet, are waiting for you. No matter how well the Chinese treat us, we will not change our heart towards them," she said. Others expressed similar views and many of them cried. This was all happening while the film was showing.

Later, about fifty students and teachers from out of town came to see us. We talked to them about His Holiness' vision, our aim, and the situation of the exiled Tibetans. We also urged them to study the Tibetan language, preserve our culture and fight for their rights while not losing their courage and hope.

We hoped and requested that the Chinese side would arrange a formal meeting with students to discuss many other issues. They said they would try, but nothing happened.

VISIT TO GÖNLUNG MONASTERY OR YOUNING SI

On 20 July we visited Gönlung Monastery, one of the four major monasteries of Jhang (East). Gyalsé Dönyö Chökyi Gyatso built it in 1604 during the time of the Fourth Dalai Lama, Yonten Gyatso. Today it is in the Huzhu Tu Autonomous County, about seventy kilometers from Xining. It was said that three statues of Jampa or Maitreya had appeared from the ground during the founding of the monastery with no human interference, and so it was named Gönlung Jampa Ling. However, when we came to the site, the once flourishing monastery was left with only one section intact. The rest of it had been demolished down to the foundations during the Cultural Revolution.

Upon our arrival, the monks and local people gave us a very warm welcome with parasols and offerings of incense. Many were holding bowls of curd in their hands as an auspicious symbol. There were also many people who greeted us by kneeling, a mark of high respect. We were thoroughly amazed and overwhelmed by their reception.

The monastery used to have over 500 monks before the Chinese takeover, but at the time we visited it had about 170. Many of the monks were from the Hor (Tu in Chinese) nationality and not only did they speak the Tibetan language proficiently, many of their cultural habits were also very similar to Tibetan traditions. We were told the monastery was renovated in 1980 with 30,000 Yuan given by the government. The monks told us that most of the precious statues had been hidden away by local residents when the destruction took place. Later, when the policies relaxed, the people came to offer them back to the monastery.

The monks there practiced both Sakya and Kadampa schools of Buddhism. The monastery had animal herds kept in the pastures and owned a small shop. The senior

monks offered prayers for His Holiness' long life and asked us to request His Holiness to pray for them. The chief spiritual masters and lamas of Gönlung Monastery, Ong Rinpoché, Thupa Rinpoché, Chong Rinpoché and Hachen Rinpoché, all died in prison in Xining during the Cultural Revolution. We were told that the area had 17,000 Tibetans and over 50,000 people of Hor nationality.

We were left with mixed feelings when the time came for us to depart. We'd had a chance to meet the Tibetan people and speak with them about the current situation of the Tibetans in exile and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We were the first delegation to have come to their area and they welcomed us with intense feelings of happiness, reverence and hopefulness. We were able to visit one of the oldest monasteries in Jhang, but at the same time we were greatly saddened to learn about the destruction of the monastery and the many hardships its members had endured. It was with a heavy heart that we left for Xining that night.

KUMBUM MONASTERY (TA'ER)

On 21 July, the anniversary of the Buddha's turning of the wheel of *Dharma*, we went on pilgrimage to the famous Kumbum Monastery. The origins of Kumbum, literally translated as 100,000 Buddha statues, can be traced back to 1378. Tsongkhapa was the founder of the Geluk tradition, also known as the Yellow Hat sect in the West. He was in deep seclusion when his mother, who was advanced in age, sent a message and a lock of her white hair asking him to come and see her. Tsongkhapa, who was twenty-two at the time, did not see much significance in going to visit his mother and instead sent *thangkas* to his mother and sister with a letter and images of Dechok (*Cakrasamvara*). The following year, at his mother's initiative and with the support of many faithful people, a stupa was built from sandalwood grown at the very spot where Tsongkhapa was born. One hundred thousand statues of Gyalwa Senge Ngaro were created and placed inside the stupa as its *zung*—or vital force. A stone fence surrounded the main stupa and a temple with a slate roof were built. Two centuries later, in 1577, a hermit named Rinchen Tsundue Gyaltsen built a new temple housing a large statue of the Maitreya Buddha, hence the resulting complex was named Kumbum Jampa Ling.

We were greeted by the senior-most incarnate lama of the monastery and when we offered him our official letters, gifts and precious pills,⁴² he showed the items to Chinese officials for inspection. We were surprised and a bit annoyed by his action. In hindsight, after years of living under constant surveillance, he could not be blamed.

We offered a thousand butter lamps in front of the stupa and invited five hundred monks to recite prayers. When we requested an audience with other incarnate lamas and tulkus in the monastery we were told that they were all (conveniently) out of town.

It was said that Premier Zhou Enlai was personally involved in protecting Kumbum from destruction during the Cultural Revolution. The monastery escaped with minor damage. The main prayer hall was turned into a grain store during the decade of political purges and later handed back to the monastery without much damage.

At Kumbum we saw many Tibetan, foreign and Chinese pilgrims. We met with Tibetans both young and old who had immense religious faith and respect for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, but I doubt that the monks we saw in the monastery, or the local inhabitants, knew that a delegation from His Holiness was coming to town. They all seemed oblivious and were greatly surprised when we told them who we were and why we had come. An old man named Tsering from Trika sobbed and asked if His Holiness was fine. He also shouted that there was no freedom in Tibet. We talked and consoled him while covertly handing him a photo of His Holiness and some precious pills. After witnessing our reception in Gönlung Monastery, I think keeping people in the dark about our presence was another ploy from the Chinese side.

A Tibetan in Kumbum asked Dra'u Pon, "Is the Dalai Lama the same as America?" Dra'u Pon explained to the person about His Holiness and that the United States was a country in the West. Every Tibetan, both in exile and inside Tibet, knows who the Dalai Lama is, but to confuse him with a country is somewhat ridiculous and requires some explanation. I think the origin of this question was due to the unending political campaigns blaring out on loudspeakers by the Chinese authorities about their arch-enemies—"Dalai Clique and Imperialist America." As a result of such relentless propaganda, ordinary Tibetans in remote areas were inculcated with the idea that Dalai Lama and America were somehow synonymous.

MORE DEBATES ON HIS HOLINESS' PHOTO AND PRECIOUS PILLS

In the evening we met with Rongpo Sertri Tsang, Alak Terton Rinpoché, Nyenthok Pontruk and Dornyin Pon.

After dinner, in the presence of all the delegates, Kundeling and Ren had a discussion that lasted well over three hours, a summary of which is as follows. Ren said that actual official visits would start the next day and that so far it had been a preliminary tour. He also said that we should know that the facilities in rural areas would not be like those in the cities and likewise, food and accommodations would also be different. “You must know this,” Ren advised.

Kundeling told Ren not to worry about these things because we had undergone great challenges after we opposed the Communist Party and had gone into exile. “I too have the experience of living under the Chinese and fought against the Communists until I went into exile. We have faced many harsh living conditions,” he added.

Ren then raised the subject of His Holiness' photographs and the precious pills. “You said that you wanted to go to Beijing due to our discussions over the pictures and the pills. Then we agreed to abide by the decisions taken by the higher authorities, on which you gave your word. However, yesterday at Gönlung Monastery you gave out pictures and blessed threads. Similar items were also handed out at Kumbum Monastery. This was absolutely wrong. From tomorrow onwards this must stop. If this goes on the local authorities will have to stop you. We must talk about this now so that it stops. All the banned items must be put in boxes and sealed in our presence. We will transport them to Hong Kong,” Ren said.

Kundeling was absolutely fuming with rage and asked, “Were pictures given out yesterday?”



*Author tidying the boxes of photographs of His Holiness the Dalai Lama,
blessing cords and Mani pills, Hong Kong, 7 June 1985*

“Not only yesterday but also today as well,” Ren retorted.

“Who gave them to whom? Tell me!” Kundeling shot back, getting frustrated at going through the same routine over and over with no proper resolution being reached. “Giving away His Holiness’ pictures does not need your permission. If the delegates gave them to people they know, then it’s their business. We went into exile because we could not live under occupation. When you first came into Tibet, you claimed you were here to provide facilities to Tibetans. But things got worse and worse until it finally escalated into the 1959 uprising. My name is ‘Reactionary Kundeling’. All of us escaped into exile because we could not live under oppression. There is freedom in exile, but we are here trying to have dialogue with you. If you don’t know why we have bothered to come here, then let me enlighten you.

“In order to placate His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetans, your leaders have initiated a new policy of ‘seeking truth from facts’. We came here because of this. Personally, I have neither faith in nor respect for Chinese policies. But we follow His Holiness’ advice in life and in death. You have made all the preparations for us, but I have been totally miserable since we landed in Beijing. The six of us have a clear conscience that we did not engage in illegal activities. Based on this, we have made our decisions,” Kundeling declared.

“We hoped that the decision regarding the photographs would be relaxed. None of the earlier delegations were barred from distributing pictures. Then why does this happen to us? You have known about these pictures and precious pills since Hong Kong,” Kundeling stated, looking down at the pictures and precious pills. “We did not bring these in secret. If they are not permitted, then how come these boxes have been allowed to be brought here in the first place? And now you are shifting the

blame onto the local authorities, saying that they are the ones trying to stop us. You can do whatever you want. We have already made our decision,” Kundeling stated.

“Not a single picture should be distributed. *Kungo*, I am making it very clear now. You will personally be held responsible for this,” threatened Ren. The mood had turned tense and the rest of us looked on with growing concern as they continued.

“When we were coming from India, we never even imagined this would happen,” Kundeling countered. As he said this, I had a brief flashback to Delhi airport, the six of us standing there with 175 kg of our overweight luggage. “Now you can take the pictures and precious pills and give them to whoever you want,” said Kundeling, getting increasingly more frustrated.

“Today you are using rough language and showing bad expressions,” said Ren, indicating to Kundeling to be more careful with his manners and language.

“With the way you do things, matters can only get worse,” Kundeling replied.

“We know how much your luggage weighs,” Ren threatened, referring to the boxes containing the precious pills and photographs, implying that if they were any lighter upon our departure then they would know we had distributed them.

“Then the fact that you have allowed us to carry them until now was to create this mess. I am not taking any responsibility from today onwards,” Kundeling declared, throwing his hands in the air, exasperated.

Ren, who was only becoming more furious by the minute said, “In that case, from now onwards we will not talk as it will only produce negative consequences.”

“Do as you like. I have only one life. I have already lost my country and everything I owned. I fear no one. Nothing can be worse than what we have already been through. You can put any lock or stick any paper on any of the boxes,” Kundeling retaliated.

“Don’t take these boxes with you,” Ren ordered. “After you have finished with the visit, we will take them to Hong Kong for you. Please don’t get angry. We only have a month and a half to spend together.”

“That is not the main issue,” said Kundeling. “The essence is that there have already been a number of delegations sent by His Holiness to China. Do you think they were allowed to come because your government has an excess of money? Or is it because your government wants to impress His Holiness and his followers? Tell me. His Holiness’ representatives are willing to come at any time, but it is not easy for them to just come. After going through so many difficulties, they journey here. We likewise have passed through a few countries to be here and when we go back we need to report to His Holiness and be accountable to the people. They will know how you have behaved with us and they will judge you. So you must act and behave as per the vision of your leaders. You cannot be so uncompromising,” Kundeling said. “His Holiness the Dalai Lama went into exile for many reasons and not because he could not manage his people here. I have three things to say and you can report them to anyone higher-up.

“One: When you first came to Tibet, claiming to help us we warmly accommodated you but then things worsened, snowballing in the 1959 Uprising.

“Two: Personally, I am someone who is totally opposed to the Communist Party; among my many responsibilities, my greatest achievement was to safely guide His Holiness into a free country.

“Three: After you announced the relaxation in your policies, His Holiness placed some hope in you and your government. We have come here because of that. So even if it is at the cost of our lives we will fulfil his wishes.”

“Your life story was already relayed to us,” Ren said. “Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo and Phuntsok Wangyal were happy when they learned that you would come. We can talk the entire night about whatever we wish, but we must take a five-minute break for now.”

So many exchanges took place so fast and because Kundeling was old, he seemed tired from being so emotionally worked up. When the translator occasionally asked Kundeling to repeat what he said he got a little angry and scolded the interpreter. All of us took a much-needed break. Some of us drank tea and water while others smoked cigarettes to release the tension. When the meeting resumed, both parties seemed more resolute than ever before and neither was ready to relent on the issue.

“Photographs and pills should not be distributed,” Ren ordered again. “This is my final decision as the person in charge.”

“If that is so, you can bring soldiers if you have to and do whatever you want to,” Kundeling countered aggressively. “But when we go back, we will talk to the international community. If I fail to speak to them about this, then I am no longer Kundeling. I have no other thoughts.”

Ren, growing increasingly nervous, said, “That is unnecessary. You shouldn’t say such things.”

“Then, how is it that the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama cannot bring his pictures?” Kundeling demanded. Ren said, “That is the law of this country.”

“Was this law passed before we came to Beijing?” Kundeling asked. Ren responded by saying, “It is not necessary for you take these boxes containing the photos and pills with you for the visit. We will keep them safe and return them when the tour is over. You are here as delegates to see things.”

“But we are not prisoners!” Alak Jigmé interjected. “We are very disappointed.”

Kundeling said he fully concurred with what Alak Jigmé had said and asked what guests would be happy if their host kept complaining and restricting their movement. “We have come from a free country and do not want to live under these harsh dictates. We have been patient with you, but it is our duty to point out things that are not right and we will point them out to you and your government. We are not trying to make new problems. As our saying goes, “I have pointed out the holes in a pelt that is already torn,” Kundeling said.

The meeting ended with these remarks as both sides stated their respective positions, with which neither side was happy to comply.

The official translator, Wangdu, from the United Front Work Department who came with us from Beijing, laughed out loud and said, “Today the two of you have argued a lot.” When Kundeling and Ren argued loudly the translator also raised his voice. When they spoke normally, he followed suit. Later, when I asked Wangdu why he did this he told me that it was a technique employed by translators. “Otherwise the emotions and feelings of the speakers would not come across,” he explained.

When members of the delegation spent a few days in Xining, about sixty nomads from Rebkong came to see us. Likewise, representatives from nomads and farmers from Malho region, the Prince of Nangchen from Kyegudo, Nangra Pon’s son Gyurme, Alak Chutsang, Lhamo Shabdrung Karpo and teachers and students from Tso Ngön Nationalities’ University visited us. After greeting each group, we were told that the new generation was dedicated and had great loyalty to their nationality and that they were ready to sacrifice anything for their own people. Thubten Samphel and I had great problems understanding the Amdo dialect. Sometimes we had to write

in *uchen* lettering and then exchange thoughts and ideas with the groups. On one occasion, we expressed our wish to have clear data on the population in Tso Ngön Province to a group of young people; a few days later a small group of them brought us the information late at night. The information they provided became crucial later when research was conducted in Dharamsala on the population in Tibet.

During the entire visit to the various areas in Eastern Tibet, Alak Jigmé, Kalden and Dra'u Pon met and engaged in talks on important internal matters with local personalities, including intellectuals and religious leaders.

TRANSLATOR DECHEN WANGDU

I noticed that Wangdu was someone who paid great attention to everything. He had a gentle and calm disposition. Although he was proud of being a member of the Communist Party of China, he seemed to have a strong loyalty towards his own people. He claimed that he did not believe in religion but when he was drunk he talked about religion all the time. He frequently mentioned that his mother was a very religious person. Wangdu said that when he had remained jobless for some time, his mother went to a high lama for a prediction. The lama told his mother that it won't be long before good news would come. He got his job a month later. Similarly, when he was a boy, he was ill for a long time. A lama that his mother consulted said that Wangdu, whom he had never seen before, had a mole on his back and he would get better if the family performed certain rites and pujas. Wangdu said that his mother was amazed to find a mole on his back which she had never noticed before. The illness disappeared after the rituals were performed.

Since I was the youngest in the delegation, Wangdu and I had developed a great rapport. Whenever he found free time, he asked me about the situation in exile and the living conditions of Tibetan refugees. I gave him an open and detailed account of the life in exile, including the status of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the refugee settlements and non-government organizations, all of which he listened to with great interest. When I told him about the activities of the Tibetan Youth Congress and their boycott of Chinese goods, and about protests in front of the Chinese embassy and the occasional hurling of stones at the compound, he simply could not believe that such things could happen. Such protests are routine events in any democratic system, but people who live under authoritarian regimes find it extremely hard to believe that such open protests against the authorities can take



Author and translator Dechen Wangdu at Wutai Shan, 1 July 1985

place. In turn, I showed him a scar on my right palm, an injury from a police *lathi* or baton, sustained during a mass protest in front of Delhi's Chinese embassy. As for Wangdu, I could not blame him for his refusal to believe me, because he was tuned to believe only what China told him. That was his sole source of information.

One day he told me that he once let pass an opportunity to work at China's embassy in Nepal. I told him, "In future you must take such opportunities. You will not only learn about the outside world, but also witness first-hand the protests Tibetans carry out in front of the Chinese embassy." He constantly took detailed notes of what we talked about and I made a deliberate effort to tell him all the facts and figures, because I knew he would report them to the Chinese authorities later.

A few months after we returned to India, I learned that Wangdu had been transferred to the Chinese embassy in New Delhi. I believe that the Chinese authorities were satisfied with his work as a translator during our visit and were also most likely happy about his reports about our delegation.

After Wangdu was posted in Delhi, he called me through my office a few times to say that as old friends we should meet and talk. At the time, I was a junior officer in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and had neither enough money nor the courage to meet him and take him to a five-star hotel, as they had done for us during our visit in China.

However, later when I had been posted as His Holiness' Representative in Taiwan, after informing my superiors, I met with Wangdu in Delhi during one of my trips back to India. It was my intention to treat him, so I proudly took him to a Le Meridien five-star hotel, only to have him insist on treating me to dinner in the end. By that time, he had already worked at the embassy's section dealing with Tibetans for a long time, so he had a good understanding of our situation. When I asked him if he had any advice, he simply said that everyone should maintain good relations.

REBKONG

At around 8:00 a.m. on 22 July, we left Xining and reached Rebkong in the afternoon, travelling via Tsegön County. When leaving Xining, no one told us not to take the boxes containing His Holiness' photographs and the precious pills. Neither Ren nor the other said anything, so we too didn't pay much notice and carried the boxes, ironically with some help from the Chinese officials accompanying us. My thinking at the time was that since Kundeling had spoken so strongly with Ren about the pictures and the precious pills the day before, perhaps they thought it better not to create any more issues about the boxes. In retrospect, I think the Chinese deliberately did nothing so that the visit would be a success and show their willingness to engage with the His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In addition, it was also to avoid adverse international publicity as was threatened by Kundeling.

Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture has four *dzongs* or counties. Many traditional Tibetan areas were being occupied by Chinese Muslims, the Hui. While Tibetan nomads lived in the mountains, the fertile valleys were gradually being taken over by the Hui, many of whom could speak Tibetan. Names of many places were already changed into Chinese names. In the high mountain areas there were nomads with flocks of yaks and sheep and prayer flags strung across the peaks. On the way we briefly caught a glimpse of Choné and Jakyung Monastery from a distance.

The people of Rebkong, along with officials from the district, drove about twenty kilometers in three vehicles to welcome us. There were over two hundred people, including Dorjé, the vice-chair of Malho Prefecture, District Commissioner Phunthar Gyal, a Chinese official from the United Front Work Department, representatives from Rongpo Göncen, Rebkong, the Muslim and nomadic communities. We greeted each other and introduced one another. Along the sides of the roads were

people holding khatags⁴³ to welcome us, all the way to the main district office in Rebkong Dzong.

We learned that the local community had made elaborate welcoming preparations alongside the roads. However, the Chinese authorities did not permit large-scale gatherings of people and at some places traditional tents pitched by Tibetans to welcome us were forcefully taken down. Only one *jathab* or “welcome tea kitchen” was allowed. As we were travelling in cars, the Chinese officials almost drove past the stall, thus preventing the people from offering us traditional ceremonial Tibetan tea, wine and Tibetan snacks. Just as the cars were passing by, a Tibetan official named Tongkho from Xining, who was in charge of the reception, shouted at the Chinese official, Ma, to stop the car. It was only after Tongkho personally blocked the car in which Alak Jigmé was travelling that the other vehicles had to come to a stop too.

This was one of the largest welcoming parties we had throughout our visit. There were over two hundred men on horses and hundreds of women singing, as well as many old people and children. Many were crying and pushing forward to get blessings from Alak Jigmé. Since the people did not recognize other members of the delegation, we became lost in the crowd. The Chinese officials accompanying us got mixed up with the crowd and for a moment they too appeared insignificant and lost. The local people had prepared a small throne for Alak Jigmé and we were offered a wide variety of fruits, *momos*, tea, wine and boiled meats. Before Alak Jigmé’s throne was a small altar with a *thangka*, incense and water offering bowls.

The people demonstrated a strong faith and respect for Alak Jigmé because he was one of the highest-ranking Rinpochés of the region. A little later, Alak invited Kundeling and the other members of the delegation into the tent where the throne

had been set up for him. As the local people got to know us, they offered us tea, wine and various foods. Members of the Fact-Finding Delegation and Tibetan officials from the province and local district were inside the tent, but the Chinese officials were not. I thought this was their way of showing their displeasure at the hearty Tibetan welcome. A Chinese videographer recorded the event and then Alak Jigmé made a short speech to thank the people for their very warm reception and to relay the greeting of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

When we reached our destination, a large crowd wanted an audience with Alak Jigmé and threatened that they would not leave until they got it. To get the crowd to dissipate the local authorities had to promise that an audience would be given the next day.

At about 5:00 in the evening, we were introduced to the local officials and then met with representatives from Rongpo Gönphe, who invited us to spend the next day at the monastery. They requested Alak Jigmé to grant a public audience to the local people. An incarnate lama from among the monastery's representatives insisted very strongly and with a very determined face that their request be respected. The Chinese officials did not like the idea and showed their disapproval non-verbally through their facial expressions and mannerisms. After a brief discussion, it was decided to do as the monastery requested. As the evening drew to an end, some people were still waiting outside wanting to have an audience with Alak Jigmé. In the end they were allowed in and Alak gave them his time and blessings.

As I peeped out the window of my room, I saw many people doing circumambulation and touching the cars in which we had arrived. Some folded their hands and offered prayers while standing next to the vehicles. I was entirely amazed

and deeply touched at the depth of the Tibetan people's resilience in maintaining their faith. The Communist Party had tried to stamp out this for decades through numerous political campaigns. I was also deeply saddened because I knew they were not allowed to openly practice this faith and many were subjected to imprisonment for their beliefs.

The reception dinner in our honour that night was jointly from Malho Autonomous Prefecture and Rebkong County.

On the morning of 23 July, in the presence of the six members of the delegation, officials from Beijing and the province and Dorjé, the vice-chair of the Malho government, gave a brief introduction to the region:

"Great progress has been made in the lives of farmers and nomads, and in the fields of science as well as the arts. Today the region has over 200 middle and high schools and about 200 primary schools with a total of over 12,000 students. Furthermore, the region has six nationalities' middle schools, a teachers' training centre and a school for healthcare with over 3,000 students and 1,400 teachers with five crèches. Each village has a cinema hall, a television room, a library and bookshop as well as a building for the creative arts.

"We have over 3,000 science graduates, five technicians, seventy skilled workers and 800 semi-skilled workers, with a science laboratory where tests are conducted on animals and crops. There were many allopathic hospitals and a traditional Tibetan medical training centre set up costing 70,000 Yuan. We also have special hospitals that treat leprosy and HIV/AIDS.

"Following the policies that focus on preferential treatment for nationalities from pool candidates, we have over 3,000 officials from minorities that were selected

based on merit—that is over fifty per cent of the total number of government employees. Three of the six Chuzhangs (high ranking official positions) are Tibetan. As established by law, the minority language can be used in large official meetings, courts and other public forums. We have also allotted salaries for lamas and other dignitaries, as well as giving official positions to individuals whom the general public holds in high regard.”

RONGPO GÖNCHEN CHÖKHOR LING MONASTERY

In the afternoon, we went to Rongpo Göichen for a pilgrimage, where Alak Khasotsang welcomed the delegates with over 200 monks and hundreds of local people holding khatags and incense. This used to be one of the major monasteries in the area, but all that remained at the time of our visit was the prayer hall. Everything else had been destroyed. It previously had three large sections with over 3,000 monks and the prayer hall was said to accommodate 2,000 monks. Some sections were being renovated and a few commissioned images were to be remade. At the time of our visit it had barely 300 monks.

The reception for us was held inside the prayer hall. Alak Jigmé gave a public audience during which even small children prostrated themselves and offered their respects. It was remarkable to witness how deeply religious the people were.

Rongpo Göichen Chökhör Ling was the largest Geluk monastery in the Rebkong area. Lama Samten Rinchen established the monastery in 1342 and much later, Shar Kalden Gyatso extended it.

The monastery had many incarnate lamas such as Alak Trigen, Alak Rigta, Alak Jigmé and many others. The monastery's most precious item was a one-foot-high image of Kalden Gyatso made from bronze. During the Cultural Revolution a monk hid this holy statue underground and sketched a map of its location on a piece of paper. As the monk grew old, he passed the map to another monk just before dying. Similarly, before the second monk died, he passed the map to another monk. The map was passed through a series of six monks before the statue was excavated when the political situation had become a little more relaxed.

When we were in the monastery I needed to use the toilet. A monk forcibly accompanied me although I insisted that I didn't need his help. As we were going

towards the bathroom, he quickly slipped a letter into my hand and I immediately put it into my *chuba* pocket. I encouraged him to write another letter detailing their living standards, their thoughts, the mining happening in their area, whether they had freedom of religion or speech and so on. Later that evening, the same monk came to deliver the letter. It was addressed to young Tibetans in exile and recorded, in detail, the experiences of average Tibetans living under Chinese rule.

After the official briefing, another monk, while pretending to tell me about the statues inside the monastery, told me in secret that some things the head lama had said earlier were untrue. According to the monk, the lama had to say those things due to the presence of Chinese officials. "In reality there is no religious freedom. We are not allowed to display His Holiness' photographs and they have put a limit on the number of monks the monastery can take in. They have also placed an age limit on those who want to become monks. This claim of allowing religious freedom is a Chinese ploy to bring His Holiness back. If His Holiness comes back, the Chinese are bound to arrest him. His Holiness must not come back until Tibet becomes an independent country," he confided to me.

The monk also told me that when he was living in Xining he saw a Chinese document titled the Five-Point Proposal for the Dalai Lama. One point was that the Dalai Lama would make a short announcement after he returned to state that Tibet had always been a part of the Motherland. When I told him that it would be better if he wrote all these things in a letter, he looked at me and said, "Remember my face. I cannot give you my name." He had a particular sign on his face that formed a particular pattern I committed to memory. The next day, he came and secretly gave me his letter.

After we saw inside the monastery, we went to make circumambulation. Kharmi Thar and a group of women were waiting for us with a huge Amdo loaf called *gorey*. They didn't even have proper clothes on their backs but came to us bearing offerings. I was very sad to see this. They offered the bread and khatags and many of them cried loudly. I took out my tape-recorder and Samphel started to video tape them on the camera.

"We live under Chinese rule with immense suffering and total brutality. It was they who destroyed this monastery and repress our religion. They can never be trusted. We want to see His Holiness from the depth of our hearts. But don't trust these Chinese," Kharmi Thar said, pointing her fingers at the Chinese officials. "They are the ones who killed our people, our lamas, our officials and our husbands." This went on for about thirty minutes and they cried with tears running down their faces as they spoke to us about their grievances and concerns. A little later, when I looked around, the Chinese officials had run inside the prayer hall and were nowhere to be seen. It was reassuring to witness the courage of those Tibetan women who told us, in the presence of Chinese officials, about their conditions and not to trust the Chinese, knowing well the consequences they would have to face later.

Both Kundeling and Alak Jigmé praised their courage and assured them that everything they said would be reported to His Holiness. Kundeling also explained to them about the status of exiled Tibetans and asked them to keep up their hope. The fact that this event took place in front of them made the Chinese officials uncomfortable and perhaps some also felt a little guilty, so they had to hide inside the prayer hall. I felt satisfied and confident that this meeting of Tibetans from inside and outside Tibet had led to such spontaneous sharing of information about their



*Welcome reception to Tibetan delegates at Rebkong, 23 July 1985;
L–R: Kalden, Alak Jigmé and Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering*



Traditional Amdo bread presented with a blue khatag to the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation by the women of Rebkong, led by Kharmi Thar, 23 July 1985

real-life situations. It fulfilled the purpose of our mission in going to Tibet. We had been able to find truth from the facts. The faces of the women, the conditions of their dress, their bravery, their cries and words of appeal are something I will never be able to forget for as long as I live.

That evening I went to see Geshé Sherab of Reting Monastery in Lhasa, whom the monastery had especially invited to lecture on Buddhist doctrine. Geshé Sherab said that the Chinese policies were more insidious than ever before. “Earlier it was black and white. Today there are policies which can fool the younger generation,” he said. Geshé la asked me to tell Ganden Tri Rinpoché about him and handed me a khatag and three *sangs* of Tibetan currency to offer to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I also got a copy of Dignaga’s *Compendium of Valid Cognition* from Geshé la. Before leaving for our mission, Samdhong Rinpoché had asked me to look for a copy of this rare scripture. However, I had assumed that Rinpoché wanted a Tibetan version, which was what I got. Alas, it was not much use to Samdhong Rinpoché, who wanted the Sanskrit original.

At night Alak Jigmé visited areas surrounding the monastery and met with many people, talking to them about exiled Tibetans. Since there were so many people wanting to meet him and have audience, I doubt Rinpoché had any time to sleep that night.

On July 24, we went to Alak Jigmé’s birthplace. Chetri was located on the side of a mountain, only half an hour’s journey, but both sides of the road were lined with people holding khatags and incense. They had set up five welcome stalls for us. Sadly, when we went to visit Alak Jigmé’s house, all that was left was a heap of rubble. Near the ruins was a small monastery with an image of Guru Rinpoché. The lunch

was supposedly prepared for us by a group of youths who were related to Alak Jigmé, but I think the Chinese Government paid for it.

Alak Jigmé gave an audience to the local people, who requested him to stay there overnight. When Alak told them he would come back the next day, they insisted that he must spend the night there. As a large number of people strongly insisted, the Chinese officials had to agree and allowed Rinpoché to remain in Chetri that night. I learned that Alak had a relaxed night with his relatives and many other locals to whom he was able to talk at length about His Holiness, the exile government, its leaders and the general situation in exile.

Meanwhile, the rest of us returned to Rebkong where the Malho Dance Troupe performed various dances and songs for us.

NOMADIC COMMUNITY IN REBKONG

At 8:00 a.m. on 25 July, we went to Chisa Monastery in Tsekhog. This monastery was newly established in 1953. Along the route local people had set up a welcome camp, but the convoy drove straight to the monastery without stopping. Upon reaching our destination the Tsekhog County's official, a Tibetan man named Tamdin, other officials and the local people welcomed us with a cavalcade of horses. Monks from the monastery lined up alongside the road holding incense, playing religious musical instruments and holding khatags. We were taken to a tent especially pitched for us where the welcome reception was arranged. Alak Jigmé gave an audience to over 2,000 local people during which he interacted with them at length. The Chinese officials tried their best to scale down the welcome reception, as well as prevent people from attending Alak's audience, but the enthusiastic crowd would not be controlled.

The surrounding grasslands were spacious and lush with green grass and the people looked better, both in their appearance and their clothes. The horsemen galloped along the road shouting "Ki Hi Hi!" and many of the traditional customs seemed very much alive. However, I have heard that many local parents did not want to send their children to school for fear of being brainwashed by the Chinese education system. Tamdin and his people made elaborate preparations for us. Later Tamdin got into trouble with the Chinese authorities over some political issues, especially writing to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He was forced to escape into exile where he worked with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile for over two decades in Dharamsala. He later moved to Australia as part of the resettlement program for former political prisoners.

In his account of the events leading to the visit of the fourth delegation, Tamdin writes that:

A meeting headed by a Chinese official was held during which he read out a secret government document to those who attended the gathering, including Tibetan officials such as Ketho, Chöpather, Tsering Döndrup and myself. We were told that when the Dalai Lama's delegation came to Tsekhog no one was to turn up to welcome them. Setting up welcome camps, making offerings, crying, offering khatags, divulging any information to them on government policies and inciting the general public was not allowed. Particularly, no member of the Communist Party could offer a khatag to express his inner feelings.

Immediately Chöpather, vice-chair of Tsekhog District, asked, "Is this because the delegates are Tibetans? Would you ask us to do the same thing if the visitors were from Taiwan?" The Chinese officials responded that as leaders of Tsekhog they must make these points clear to the people and furthermore, young people must be kept away from the visitors. The young must not even know that a few such visitors have come here.

I said, "We have already talked about the welcome reception and now if you change things, as a member of the Party I will find it hard to trust the Party. Moreover, offering khatags is a Tibetan tradition, and it will be difficult to stop people doing it."

The Chinese official said, "If khatags have to be offered, one person should do it. Chinese officials from Beijing, as well as from the province should receive khatags too." I said that I was going to offer a khatag to one of the Tibetan delegates.

After the meeting was over, the Chinese official called me separately and showed me the secret government document. It said that a large number of security personnel would be deployed during the visit and many of the personnel would be in civilian dress. It said that no one was to outwardly express any happy feelings and the government policies should be upheld. However, on the day the delegates arrived, the local inhabitants extended an elaborate welcome to the delegates, offering them many khatags and setting up welcome camps.⁴⁴

During our visit to Tsekhog, the delegates had some time to explore the area on their own. I went to see a group of tents where nomads were living. An elderly Tibetan (I learned later he was called Samdrup and was a well-known poet) took me into his tent and insisted that I sit on a sort of makeshift throne. As soon as I sat down he started prostrating. I stood up immediately and asked him not to do so because I was neither a monk nor an incarnate person. Nevertheless, he insisted and prostrated three times.

"You are a representative of the All Knowing One and hence it is as if he is here,"

he said, crying. I couldn't say or do anything other than remember His Holiness in my own mind. Then Samdrup brought a bowl of rice and asked me to bless it. Keeping His Holiness the Dalai Lama in my heart and praying, "May all sufferings cease and may Tibetans inside and in exile unite," I scattered a handful of rice in four directions. A little later, he opened a trunk and took out a wad of cash and asked me to offer it to His Holiness.

"We have no freedom. Please don't trust the Chinese," he said. I gave him a number of His Holiness' photos, precious pills and blessed threads, asking him to share them with others. Never in my life had such an incident occurred and it left a deep and lasting impression on me. In the evening I handed the cash over to our accountant Kalden and told him what had happened. Kalden told me that a similar thing happened to him too that same day.

In the two days we spent in Rebkong, we had the opportunity to meet with local officials, retired members of the Party and many young Tibetans. We engaged in talks and shared a great deal of information. I thought it was time well spent by the delegates.

On July 26, we left Rebkong to visit two villages in Senge Shong and a couple of monasteries, Palden Chökhör Ling and Gedan Phuntsok Ling. On the way we took a rest and I offered sweets to the delegation members. We came across a traveller and I offered him some too. He asked where we came from. When I told him we were a delegation sent by



*Tamdin Tsering Shuji of
Tsekhog in his Chinese
military uniform*

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he immediately tucked the sweet into the fold of his chuba with great respect and said, "In that case I will keep this sweet as a token of blessings." Seeing his reaction, I had a great urge to give him something more than just sweets, but as the Chinese officials were also resting with us I could not give any precious pills or His Holiness' photos to this Tibetan traveller. I felt deeply agonized and sorry for this but on the other hand it was the reality of our present situation.

We arrived at Beudo or Bidho Pöntsang, the birthplace of the Tenth Panchen Rinpoché. Beudo is named after a mountain in that area which looks like a *beu* or calf. In the new residence built there for Panchen Rinpoché, we greeted Rinpoché's parents, Gonpo Tseten and Sonam Dolma and offered them khatags.

At the town of Drowa Yan, Pema Dorjé from the United Front Work Department welcomed us. We were told that the town had as many as thirty different nationalities and the Tibetan population was only 3,000. It seemed to be a town of Hui Muslims and the living conditions appeared to be worse than in Rebkong.

On July 27, on our way to Taktser, the birthplace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, there was heavy rain and the cars we were travelling in got stuck on the road. The paved road led only up to the foot of the mountain and from there onward the unpaved road narrowed and red-coloured mud filled the sides of the route. Since the cars refused to move, we got out and started walking. It was difficult going up the mountain on that muddy road; Kundeling and Dra'u Pon could not make it so the other four of us went on by foot to Taktser.

Taktser is a beautiful village with magnificent views of mountaintops. It was said that at one time this place was covered in thick forest with abundant wild animals, including tigers that constantly growled. The name Taktser is derived from *tak*

meaning “tiger” and *tser* meaning “growl.” One of the rooms on the front side of His Holiness’ house had been turned into a school. The rest of the house, including the place where His Holiness was born, had been left in ruins from destruction caused during the Cultural Revolution. I asked one of His Holiness’ relatives to pinpoint the location where he was born and they showed me the place. We all prostrated three times and took a picture to commemorate the visit.

Since Sino–Tibetan relations were established in 1979, the Chinese authorities have built a new house for His Holiness and a family of his distant relatives occupied one of the rooms. Their living conditions were terrible. The room had pictures of His Holiness, his mother and Panchen Rinpoché. I offered 100 Yuan on the altar and the family served us weak black tea and bread. My heart felt heavily dejected on seeing such a sacred place in ruins. This in itself spoke volumes on the Chinese Government’s attitude towards His Holiness.

On 28 July we arrived in Xining and met with many Tibetans, including Nagchen Gyasey Achen, Tulku Tsewang Dechen, Rongpo Tashi Namgyal, Rongpai Pon Togden Tsewang, Rongpo Tashi Namgyal, Nangchen Shongda Pon Karma Jigmé and Tridola Nyepon. We had some time to tell them about His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan community and the functioning of the Government-in-Exile. We also met with about thirty teachers from Sogpo Dzong, Tsekhog Dzong and Chentsa who had come to Xining for a tour, so we exchanged news with them about our mission and the situation in exile. As mentioned earlier, it was Alak Jigmé, Kalden and Dra’u Pon who carried most of the conversation because it was their local area and they knew a few of the people loyal to the Tibetan cause who still lived there.



*The author points with his umbrella at the very blessed spot where
His Holiness the Dalai Lama was born,
Taktser, 27 July 1985*

KYEGUDO

On 29 July we were to go to Kyegudo (Ch. Yushu), which is on the Tibetan Plateau at a higher altitude than Xining. The doctors advised that it would be better if Kundeling did not travel with us for fear of his health, so he remained in Xining. I stayed with him because I was his assistant. The following account is based on the report of the four delegates after they returned from Kyegudo:

They arrived in Chabcha where members of Kalden's family came to meet them and brought them lunch. In the evening, Tamdin and Drotsang Norgye from the United Front Work Department received them in Matö Dzong in Golok. They met with a few local people with whom they exchanged brief conversations.

On 30 July they arrived in Kyegudo where they were welcomed by Jutang Anan, vice-director Phuntsok Wangdak and a few other people related to Dra'u Pon. However, as soon as the gate to the guesthouse was closed no one was allowed in to see the delegates. They later learned that there was a rampant bribe system in the area by which Tibetans had to give large sums of cash to officials to get things done. For example, it was said that a monastery had to pay at least 1,000 Yuan to be issued its official monastery permit.

Although high-level Chinese leaders, including former premier Hu Yaobang, visited Kyegudo, the provincial leaders from Xining visit the town only a couple of times a year because the journey is extremely difficult. The members of the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation who visited Kyegudo noticed that the private houses of officials were grand and exquisite, whereas the government offices were often rundown small buildings with poor basic amenities.

On July 31, the four-member Tibetan delegation had a joint meeting with Chinese officials from Beijing and the province, as well as Pema Trinlé, Chairman

of Kyegudo People's Congress, vice-director Phuntsok Wangdak, Gewa, director of the United Front Work Department, Anan, director of the local Religion Bureau and Topden, director of the local People's Congress.

At the meeting Phuntsok Wangdak said, "I would like to welcome members of the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation. There are six *dzongs* or districts in this region. Yushul, Nangchen and Trindu are semi-nomadic, and Dritö, Zatö and Chumarlep are nomadic areas. This region is about 4–5,000 meters above sea level and covers 26,000 square kilometers."

"In 1984, our population is 205,100 of which ninety-five per cent are Tibetans. We have two middle schools, one teachers' training centre and one medical school with a total of 6,034 students. Each district has a school and there is even a school in the city with 2,126 students. There are sixty-eight primary schools with 6,429 students, 320 junior schools with 3,082 students, forty-seven hospitals with a total of 585 beds and 587 doctors and nurses. Sixty-seven monasteries with 2,500 monks are under renovation."

Later, at a spot where the people of Kyegudo hold picnics, Chuzhang Lobsang Paljor received the delegates and led them to some picnic tents. The people were dressed up as locals, but they learned that most of the people who came for picnics were officials and their family members.

The first of August was China's Military Day. There was a traditional Tibetan horserace to which many army officers, their families and locals came and held picnics. Members of the delegation were introduced to some of the army officials and then taken to a tent where the local people gave them a warm welcome. A Chinese official who was in-charge of the six regions welcomed the delegation in front of a

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION



*Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering welcomed by Tibetans at Kyegudo,
August 1985*

large crowd. After the crowd learned that they were representing His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the people were very happy and even some of the army officials came and offered their respects and greetings. The Chinese officials tried hard to block the local people from interacting with the delegates, but their efforts were to no avail.

It was the thirty-seventh anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army and military officials and soldiers were supposed to be at the centre of attention. However, the appearance of the delegates caused quite the sensation and as a special privilege, they were invited to a cultural performance reserved exclusively for the army.

On 2 August they made a pilgrimage to Kyegudo Monastery. After the monks and the head of the monastery, Gyanak Tulku, welcomed the delegation in a grand traditional way, they were taken to see the ruins of the prayer hall, Dau Labrang, Jokhang, Gyanak Labrang, Jampa Lhakhang and the School of Dialectics. They saw that some parts of the monastery were being renovated and were told it had 144 monks.

The monks collectively sent offerings to His Holiness and tried to offer 500 Yuan to the delegation members who did not accept it. After the tour they had some time to interact, during which the delegation members told the monks to put the money towards the renovations of their monastery and in keeping with His Holiness' vision, to maintain religious harmony.

In the afternoon they visited Damkar Monastery, where Duemo Chöjé Tulku received them. The rebuilding of the monastery was complete and housed seventy monks. Chöjé Tulku and the monks repeatedly requested the delegates to offer their prayers to His Holiness and report to him about their situation. The members of the delegation asked the monks to recite *Benza*, the mantra of Guru Rinpoché and

other prayers like the Vajrakilaya mantra, according to His Holiness' directions. Chöjé took the representatives to his quarters and told them he had been a student of Trijang Rinpoché and Khensür Lhundrup at Sera Je Monastery. Chöjé asked the representatives to request His Holiness to pray for his long life so that he could accomplish meaningful work.

On 3 August the group went to see the ruins of Dra'u Pon's house, destroyed by the Chinese authorities. The local people made grand welcoming preparations and a large number of them came to greet and offer their respects. They also visited the People's Hospital where doctors Gelek and Jiga welcomed and informed them that it was built in 1951 and had 170 Tibetan doctors and nurses. The hospital had 180 beds and carried out heart and brain surgery, as well as treating other diseases.

Later, they visited a traditional Tibetan medical centre where they were received by the head physician, Karma Thubten. Karma told the visitors that the centre was initially built with donations from the local people and had six doctors, including Karma himself. He further told them that he was trying hard to have ancient medical texts reprinted. "Here we have scarcity of medical plants such as saffron and sandalwood. I have heard that in Dharamsala the Tibetan medical centre makes high-quality Tibetan medicines," he commented. The delegates explained in detail the functioning of the Tibetan Medical and Astro-science Institute in Dharamsala.

On 4 August they travelled to Palthang and witnessed the Nampar Nangze temple being renovated. On the way they visited Benchen Monastery and met with its spiritual head, Tulku Chimé, and seventy monks. The monastery was also being rebuilt. The delegates told them that although His Holiness treats all schools of Buddhism equally, occasionally they might have heard rumours of religious



*Alak Jigmé with some local Tibetans at Kyegudo,
4 August 1985*



*Kalden looking at the ruins of Kyegudo,
5 August 1985*

disharmony, about which they should be judicious. “We hope that you have had conversations with Khyentsé Rinpoché since he visited this area recently and you have heard the real situation from him,” the delegates said. “We have indeed learned about the real situation from both Khyentsé Rinpoché as well as Situ Rinpoché who visited here recently. So please do not worry,” they responded.

They then visited nomadic camps in the surrounding areas. The local chairman, Ngawang Phuntsok, told them that the region had seven camps with a total population of 5,500. They had 100 square miles of farms and forty-two officials to administer the region. Palthang has broad expanse of grasslands filled with flowers, rivers and mountains. In 1958 during the chaotic times, the Chinese built an airstrip which then remained unused.

The delegates visited the Queen of Nangchen⁴⁵ and offered her official gifts and a letter. Each of the representatives offered her a khatag and the queen sent a white khatag for His Holiness and requested them to beseech His Holiness to keep her in his prayers.

The delegation members then went to meet with Sakya Tulku Sonam Tsemo, who was highly knowledgeable about many issues and was also held in high esteem by the local people. Tulku warmly welcomed the delegates and they had long conversations on many topics, including His Holiness’ activities around the world. Just as the representatives were about to leave, one of the monks came close to Dra’u Pon and said, “Chinese policies are all ploys. Do not fall for them and please request His Holiness not to come back now. May he live long and may all his wishes come true.”

On 5 August, the representatives left Kyegudo and travelled to Trindu (Chengdu) Dzong where the local people had staged traditional horse-racing. Later, the members

visited Kalsang Monastery, which had fifty monks and was being renovated. The monks told the representatives that the monastery used to have a precious image of Jowo Rinpoché, the same size as the famous Jowo in Lhasa. Unfortunately, the image went missing when the destruction took place during the Cultural Revolution and despite searches and many petitions to the authorities for an investigation, it had still not been found.

In Kyegudo, Samphel had asked Ren why the Chinese authorities wouldn't give Tibet the same status as was being offered to Hong Kong and Taiwan. Ren replied that this would not happen. "But of course, if you have such an idea we can talk about it," he added. This minor incident made Dra'u Pon, Kalden and Alak Jigmé feel a little uncomfortable as the thought had never occurred to them. This demonstrated the gap between the younger and older generation and the difference modern education could make in supplementing political keenness and insight. Unfortunately, no further discussions were had on this subject.

TSEKHOR THANG AND CHABCHA (HAINAN) IN TSOLHO REGION

On 6 August, the four representatives who had journeyed to Kyegudo arrived in Tsekhor Thang in Tsolho, where district leader Benko Wangchen from the United Front Work Department and other representatives welcomed them.

The next day they met with a group of young Tibetans with whom they had wide-ranging exchanges. Later, they went to see a few Tibetan and Chinese families living on the banks of the Machu River. On the way they encountered hundreds of Tibetans gathered near a prayer-hall, waiting to welcome them.

They also went to see a nomadic camp where the hosts had set up separate accommodation for the Chinese officials. As a result, the Tibetan delegates were able to have a relaxed and open conversation with the nomads, who asked the representatives about His Holiness and the exiled Tibetans. They also asked whether it was possible to recognize the reincarnations of Rongpo Kalden Gyatso and Arongtsang. Alak Jigmé explained to the nomads about these issues, making them happy and reassured. That evening they arrived in Chabcha.

While our colleagues went to Kyegudo, Kundeling and I remained in Xining. One day Tseten Zhuran came to see us. “It would have been better for the delegation to come another time. If the situation remains like this, then you will never get to know the real situation the people undergo every day,” he confided. Similar opinions were also expressed by two other officials from Tso Ngön, Tongkho and Gendun.

One evening Kundeling and I offered an official letter and precious pills from His Holiness to Gyayak Rinpoché, Panchen Rinpoché’s spiritual master. The same evening, Alak Trigen came to see Kundeling. Alak Trigen was another example of a Tibetan who returned from exile to live the rest of his days in Tibet in the comforts provided by the Chinese authorities. He also held a personal vendetta against Alak

Jigmé. Trigen pointed out that Alak Jigmé Rinpoché used his lay name in his travel document and not his religious name. He also made a few other complaints against Alak Jigmé, most of which were not true.

The next day was spent shopping. Kundeling and I went to buy gifts for the people accompanying us, which included six officials from Xining and our driver.

I had heard rumours about Tibetan guesthouses in Xining and took some time off to go inspect them. There were guesthouses belonging to each of the Tibetan autonomous prefectures, but the accommodation was badly maintained and the facilities were terrible. I also stopped by the city's biggest bookshop and purchased a number of books in Tibetan that Tashi Tsering, a scholar from the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, had asked me to buy. With guidance from my official protocol officer who accompanied me on my little tour, I was able to procure school textbooks written in Tibetan for classes ranging from Grade 1 to Grade 5. I found the books were written entirely in Tibetan, even for subjects such as science and mathematics, so I hoped they would be helpful. Upon our return, I donated these books to the Department of Education of our exile government but never followed up on whether they were actually useful or not.

During our stay in Xining, I had the distinct pleasure of watching a half-hour program in Tibetan on Xining Television. Although I did not fully understand the Amdo dialect, I thoroughly enjoyed the program for which the presenters wore Tibetan attire and spoke only in Tibetan.

On 2 August, Kundeling filed the following report, by post from Xining, to the Kashag about the delegation's visit so far:

To the esteemed members of Cabinet

We have had some delay in sending our correspondence as we were preoccupied with our visit to Qinghai province. Before we departed from Beijing, the United Front Work Department's Zang Chu Zhang and Sung Jue Zhang, official from the Nationalities Affairs Commission stated the following points:

1. We wish you good health and safe travels for your journey tomorrow. The Qinghai provincial authorities have drawn up a schedule for your visit, please go over it and discuss any issues regarding the matter with them.
2. You are carrying mass quantities of the Dalai Lama's photograph which is strictly against the policy of our country. You are not allowed to distribute them to the public, please observe this and take care to adhere to our policy.
3. You are also carrying large amounts of medicinal pills. Our constitution does not allow for medications to be distributed without prior examination from a doctor and without a prescription.

As this was a direct order made by the higher government people, in Beijing we (the delegates) immediately disputed these issues. As they saw we were determined in our

convictions regarding the matter, they did not pursue it any further for the day and in the end the conversation was concluded with no real outcome being reached. Instead they served us a scrumptious dinner for our farewell party.

As we departed from Beijing and made our way to Shanxi province, we visited the Tibetan Nationalities University as well as monasteries in the capital Xian. We then reached Qinghai province. There we met with the local authorities who, together with the officials from Beijing accompanying us, discussed two issues on two separate occasions. The discussions were so frustrating that at some points we felt as if our heads were splitting. The two issues were as follows:

1. The previously agreed upon areas for visitations by the Chinese Government and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile were reduced. The number of days allocated to the visits was also cut short, so we were demanding we at least get more time to spend at certain locations.
2. The second issue related to banning the distribution of His Holiness' photographs and precious pills. Both sides were adamant on their positions, and it was threatening to derail the purpose of the delegation's visit. The Tibetan government's direction, as well

as Panchen Rinpoché and other supporters' advice to not only maintain good relations but strive to improve it for the long term, guided us in the heat of the discussions.

Keeping all their counsel in heart, for seven days we toured the monasteries near Xining, factories as well as nationalities schools and a publishing house. We spent four days around Rebkong and on the way back we visited the birthplace of Panchen Rinpoché and Taktser. We returned to Xining on 27 July. Then we will visit Kyegudo through Chabcha for eight days and will spend seven days at Chabcha. Our visit of Qinghai province will be completed within thirty days.

On 14 August, we will visit Gansu province and then make our way back to Beijing. Once we have arrived in Beijing we will meet with the Chinese authorities and conclude our visit. Currently it is difficult to estimate how many days will be needed at Beijing. In the present climate, we do not have much ability to resist their pressures and authority. This seems to be the extent of our abilities and so we ask for your guidance.

During our trip to Rebkong, all members of the delegate underwent a physical examination. Everyone is healthy

(except me). I, Kundeling, head of the delegation, am having some problems with high blood pressure and a slight issue with my heart. Through Ren Rin of the United Front Work Department from Beijing, the doctor advised me to refrain from going to Kyegudo as the high altitude could potentially cause further issues with my health. As such, I am staying at Xining along with Tenzin Phuntsok from the Information Office and will take some rest.

The other members of the delegate will be travelling from Kyegudo to Chabcha on 8 August. We will be leaving from Xining as the altitude there is not too high, to join them. I am sending this update for your kind information.

*From Kundeling Woesser Gyaltzen,
Head of the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation
Xining Hotel, 2 August 1985*

Kundeling had previously sent a few similar reports. I do not know if the Kashag in Dharamsala ever received his reports. Frankly, we also did not follow up to inquire on this important question.

On 7 August, Kundeling and I left Xining and arrived in Chabcha. On the same day, the four delegates who went to Kyegudo also reached Chabcha at around 6:00 p.m. I was happy to be reunited with our fellow delegates after what seemed like a very long time, but I noticed that my colleagues' complexions had become dark and

they looked physically weak and tired. Later, I learned from them that the receptions in Kyegudo areas were not good, with most of the Tibetan officials being completely compliant with the wishes and orders of the Chinese authorities, with little or no loyalty towards Tibet and Tibetans. The food was bad and most young people spoke Chinese and dressed in the Chinese fashion, with no knowledge or devotion to their culture. Our colleagues observed that the officials were very well off whereas the ordinary people were terribly poor. They came to know that some of the most senior officials were dedicated and forthright and the ordinary people were honest but lacked the confidence to come forward to meet with the Tibetan delegates. The Chinese officials tried their best to block His Holiness' representatives from meeting the people.

During the meeting with the Queen of Nangchen, they had also met Lingsang Sey, who had returned from a Tibetan settlement in India. Alak Jigmé and Samphel did not know who he was but Dra'u Pon recognized him and asked him when he had come back from India. "About fifteen days ago," he replied.

"You don't seem to look very well, is there any problem?" Dra'u Pon asked. "I have no problem," Lingsang Sey responded.

"Why didn't you stay back in India?" enquired Dra'u Pon confidentially. Sey answered, "I was not allowed to live in Nepal or India, [this is not true] so where else can I go other than to come here? Shinkyong Rinpoché is in Sichuan. He wants to meet you but since the dog [referring to Alak Jigmé] is here, he did not come."

After he had impersonated being a representative of His Holiness, Shinkyong Rinpoché went around praising the Chinese for all the good work they had done in Tibet and carried out pro-Chinese activities during his supposed "fact-finding

delegation” to Tibet. This left the local Tibetans dumbfounded. During their visit, he and his followers were opposed with collective outrage and hostility in the exiled community. At that time, I was a member of the Tibetan Youth Congress and led a protest against their actions, along with other Tibetan associations. We went to Dehra Dun (present capital of Uttarakhand State) and also to Delhi and submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, during one of her public audiences. We issued press releases to all the major news agencies in India about their (Shinkyong and his group’s) deception and denounced their actions. Alak Jigmé was one of the many prominent figures in Tibetan society who strongly opposed Shinkyong Rinpoche’s actions and voiced his differing opinion regarding the matter. This only added to the already strained relationship between the two individuals and their groups.

Much later we learned that before our delegation arrived in Kyegudo, the Chinese authorities made public announcements through loudspeakers. They broadcast our names and said that we had opposed the Five-Point Proposal for the Dalai Lama put forward by the Chinese Government. The authorities announced that no one should wear formal dress, offer khatags, cry or show any form of emotions and gestures that might be deemed as welcoming to us.

CHABCHA (HAINAN)

On 8 August we had a joint meeting with officials from Xining and Beijing. Lobsang, the head of Tik (district headquarter) opened the meeting and department head, Songkho, delivered an introduction on Chabcha.

“I would like to welcome the Fourth Delegation representatives from the Dalai Lama. The correct policies of the Party are being practiced in the fields of science, economy, arts and those relating to minorities. Chabcha comprises 460 square kilometers, 382 large and small-scale animal husbandry units, and forty *shangs* under five districts. The gross income in 1984 from nomads, farmers and factories was 128,000,000 Yuan and the per capita income was 345 Yuan. Chabcha has over ten types of factories producing as many as forty different products.

“We have primary, secondary and high schools. There are also two minority middle schools with a total of 52,000 students. A new college is to be built this year. There are eighty-seven allopathic hospitals and one hospital of Tibetan medicine with a total of 6,564 beds. We have 1,000 qualified doctors.

“Chabcha spent 300,000 Yuan as compensations to those who were wrongly accused in 1958 [of Amdo uprising] and for damages caused. Most of the monasteries have reopened and there are as many as 2,100 monks. We have also paid compensation for the destruction that took place during the Cultural Revolution,” Songkho reported.

After the meeting, we were taken on pilgrimage to Tashi Thekchen Ling in Gonghe (Chabcha) County. Tsultrim Nyandak Gyatso established this monastery in 1902 and one of our colleagues, Kalden, became a novice monk in this monastery when he was a child. In 1958, the monastery had 230 monks, all of whom were forced to go back to their homes and the monastic compound remained empty. It

was briefly reopened in 1965, only to be shut down again and destroyed during the Cultural Revolution a year later. It was renovated and reopened in 1980 and at the time we visited there were sixty-five monks. We were told that the Chinese Government gave 22,000 Yuan for its renovation.

The main hall was used to store grain during the Cultural Revolution and even today we could see the writing or marking on the door of the monastery, made by the Chinese, which designated the area as a storage facility. It pained me to see that most of the monks, especially the smaller ones, looked very pale and malnourished. They also did not have basic materials for their monastic prayers. For example, upon inquiring I found out that they did not even have individual prayer books for Tara, which is considered a basic requisite for monks. I gave them a complete set of Tara prayer books, a different book containing Guru Rinpoché prayers and other Tibetan prayers, and another book that contained the prayers for the long life of His Holiness. There was a momentary frenzy amongst the monks when I was handing out the books, because they were hard to come by and considered very precious. After the visit, I met someone called Ngonglo in town. I asked if he knew anything about the situation of Chabcha and he claimed to know everything about it, past and present. He was, however, reluctant to say anything in front of the Chinese officials who accompanied us. He was especially afraid of a Tibetan girl named Kunchok, whom he knew to be as bad as the Chinese when it came to spying on Tibetans and reporting them to the Chinese officials. I knew she was the daughter of the Zhuran and it greatly saddened me to know that even the children were brought up to become tools who spied on others. It made me a little anxious about the next generation of Tibetans who would grow up under Chinese rule.

In the afternoon, we visited Number Two Tso Ngön Weaving Factory, which had 1,000 workers of whom only 100 were Tibetans. The factory had washing, dyeing and weaving sections with new machines. The employees were paid wages ranging from eighty to 200 Yuan per month. The cost of wool was about three Yuan per kilogram and annually, the factory used over 700 tons of wool.

In the evening, relatives of Kalden invited us for dinner at their home. We learned that a few days before we arrived, the local authorities had quickly constructed a new unpaved road that would allow cars to be driven through the city. The family was also given cash to prepare a good dinner for our reception and their house was also renovated and extended for the occasion. I felt that Kalden's family's standard of living was very moderate and simple. Kalden's visit to his relatives provided much needed material benefits and improvements in their lives, however small.

On 9 August we travelled to Tashi Gephel Ling Monastery in Khyamru, which was about twenty kilometers from Chabcha. Tulku Gonpo, Chöyang and monks of the monastery welcomed us. The monastery was built by Khenchen Gendun Chöjor Gyatso in 1894 and once housed over 300 monks. We were told that the monastery now had seventy-seven monks, although we saw only sixty-four and their living conditions were absolutely terrible. They received no assistance or funding of any kind. I heard there were many other small monasteries in similar condition and that the Chinese were especially tight-fisted with monasteries that would not yield to their demands.

I was beginning to wonder if this was one such monastery. As if to cement my suspicions, the monks handed us a written record of seventy-two million recitations of *Mig-tsema*,⁴⁶ the five-line prayer of Je Tsongkhapa that they had performed for

the long-life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in front of the monastery's holy image of Je Tsongkhapa. Many of the senior monks simply cried during our visit, unable to articulate the complexity and intensity of their feelings. We thanked them for their prayers and good wishes for His Holiness. I was deeply moved by the show of courage and reverence these monks had made in the face of great adversity. Despite their own difficult living conditions, they had prayed for His Holiness' long life and good health. I distributed a few prayer leaflets I had with me which contained the long-life prayer for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. At the time, it seemed like a small repayment for their big sacrifice. I made a mental note that upon our return we should bring this up with the Chinese higher authorities and say that no financial assistance was being made to smaller monasteries, which was simply unacceptable. There was an old airstrip about eight kilometers from the monastery, which was reportedly built for covert operations. It was no longer in use.

In the evening, we were invited to a performance of the epic of King Gesar called *Horling Yulgyé*. Before the performance, the compere welcomed us in front of an over 1,000-strong audience. During the performance, I heard actors shout "Panchen Khyen" and "Gyalwa Rinpoché [Dalai Lama] Khyen!"⁴⁷ at least three times. The word *Khyen*, a mark of high respect, was used as a suffix for people who were all-knowing. The theatre group had eighty-three members, including sixty-eight Tibetans. We met with the Tibetan actors and their instructors a few times. They were all young, highly educated and politically aware.

One member in the theatre group, said that he had heard that we were being banned from distributing His Holiness' photographs. "I wanted to ask you to give me a picture of His Holiness during the performance on the stage and in the presence of

Chinese officials. But then I thought, perhaps it will cause more harm than good,” he said. I also thought it was for the best that he had not asked for the pictures publicly because it would have put many people in an awkward position. He asked for one picture of His Holiness for each of the members of the theatre group. We happily obliged without the knowledge of the Chinese authorities.

On 10 August we visited a hydropower plant in Tsanga Gag or Longyangxia, which was about 100 kilometers from Xining and eighty from Chabcha. The power plant was built on the Machu (Yellow) River, at 2,700 meters above sea level. The hydropower plant was first conceived in 1976 and produced its first electric power in 1979. We were told that a plan was afoot to increase the height of the plant by 178 meters and its width by 396 meters. It employed 1,500 workers. The government was going to spend over 100 million Yuan, including the proposed expenditure of twenty million in the next five years. It was said to be the second largest hydro-powered plant in Asia at the time. After completion the plant would generate enough electricity to meet the demands of Tso Ngön Province, much of southeast China and other regions surrounding Beijing. Panchen Rinpoché had also visited the place earlier. Though the area had soft soil, the power plant was built of cement and four mammoth turbines were installed to produce electricity. We learned that there were as many as fifteen hydroelectric power plants and dams on the Machu River, including five in Tso Ngön, six in Kansu Province and four in Ningxia.

In the afternoon we visited the Tso Ngön Teacher Training School, which was established in 1956. It had 619 students with 119 teachers and staff members. We were told that fifty-nine of the staff were Tibetan, but a teacher named Damchö said there were only twenty Tibetans teaching. This was one of the many instances

I found where the numbers quoted by officials and the numbers we were hearing from locals didn't match up. It made me sceptical about everything the Chinese said when they were providing us with statistics about anything. The school trained 2,305 teachers who were working at various schools operating under the five districts. The library had 500 books in Tibetan. Later I learned that the school had been upgraded to a teachers' training college.

TSO NGÖN (QINGHAI LAKE)

On 11 August we left Chabcha for Tso Ngön (Blue Lake), also known as Kokonor in Mongolian and Qinghai Hu in Chinese. The lake covered an area of 4,583 square kilometers. It is 100 kilometers long and has a width of sixty kilometers. It has five small islands, including Tsonying Riboche which is the biggest. The lake attracts as many 200 species of birds and has many types of fish living in its waters.

We travelled by boat for about three hours to reach Tsonying Island, called Tsonying Mahadeva, which housed the ruins of a monastery. There was a lone thirty-three-year-old monk named Lobsang from Daggyab, Kham. He was on retreat reciting *Mani* mantra. Through us he sent a khatag for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and requested his blessings for reaching nirvana. When we asked him if he had any problems finding food and other necessities, he told us that Tibetan pilgrims brought him provisions all the time. The island had a few yaks which had been brought here by people to be set free.

In full view of the Chinese officials accompanying us, we offered precious pills into the lake and offered our prayers as per our religious traditions. We left Kokonor in the afternoon, crossing the famous Sun and Moon pass (*Nyinda La*) on the way back to Xining, which is about 150 kilometers away.



*The author at the center of Tso Ngön Lake,
known as Tsonying Mahadeva,
11 August 1985*

A MEETING IN XINING

On 12 August we had a day off in Xining. However, we met with Woesser Dorjé, the secretary of King Wang, and students and teachers from Tso Ngön University along with a few other staff members. We had long conversations about many issues.

In the evening of 13 August, we had a meeting to discuss our visit to Tibetan areas. Officials from Beijing and local officials from Xining attended the gathering. Chairman Tseten said we had covered 6,000 kilometers in one month and covered many areas in Tso Ngön. “I would like to apologize for the poor facilities in some places and hope there will be more such visits in future. Please, honestly share with us what you have experienced and witnessed during the visit,” he said.

We expressed our regret that Beijing gave us permission for only a short period of time, which meant that many places we wanted to see could not be visited. We said that many monasteries still had not obtained official permission to carry out renovations. We also clarified that in some cases office buildings have occupied the sites of many destroyed monasteries and hence rebuilding could not take place. We expressed our firm disapproval at the lack of funding being offered to smaller monasteries and asked them to urgently assist those who were struggling. We asked the Chinese side to solve these issues urgently. We urged that they initiate searches for statues and paintings missing from monasteries, which were lost or mostly stolen during the Cultural Revolution. We complained that there was a scarcity of old and holy images in monasteries, whereas in ordinary homes traditional items such as good clothing and jewellery were missing. Furthermore, there were many people who only spoke in Chinese and not in their mother tongue, so there was a danger of losing their language. We complained that we had first-hand accounts of, and official documents about, forced sterilization taking place in Kyegudo and asked them to rectify these policies.

We told them there were new roads, schools, hospitals and electricity provided to many areas and we recognised that these benefited everyone. There were, however, still a few other issues that needed to be addressed. Tibetans in Gansu and Tso Ngön, for example, faced problems in obtaining permission to visit their relatives in India and Nepal. Furthermore, there were strong indications of the lack of basic freedom as ordinary people and even Tibetan officials feared meeting with us.

After we expressed our thoughts, we were told they would take our suggestions into consideration and to continue making notes of any other issues we discovered throughout our visit. A sumptuous dinner was then served on behalf of Tso Ngön Province. We offered each official of the province a wristwatch costing 19.90 Yuan and a khatag. In return, we were presented with a blanket each. Tongkho, the official guide, presented each of us with two bottles of whisky containing caterpillar fungus, an extremely expensive Tibetan herb that is said to have high medicinal and therapeutic value.

XINING TO LANZHOU

At 8:00 a.m. on 14 August, officials from Tso Ngön Province, the United Front Work Department, the Public Security Bureau, some teachers from Rebkong and relatives of Alak Jigmé came to see us off at Xining railway station. We arrived at Lanzhou's railway station around noon, where Choné Dorjé Tsering, the vice-chairman of Gansu Nationalities' Affairs Department, Zhang from the Reception Centre, and a few other officials welcomed us. We were then taken to a huge hotel in Lanzhou.

During Tibet's imperial period, Lanzhou was part of the Tibetan empire for over three centuries, beginning during the seventh century. Historical records clearly state that the Sino-Tibetan border was at Qinshu in the east and the Horlan Mountains in the southeast of Lanzhou at that time.

In the evening we had a round-table conference. In the presence of the officials from Beijing accompanying us, Zhang from Gansu's Reception Centre said, "We have made arrangements for your fifteen-day visit to areas in Gansu Province." Each place we were to visit was mentioned and confirmed. The dinner was jointly served by the Gansu administration, the Political Consultative Congress and the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Present at the dinner were Choné Pema Wangchuk, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Choné Dorjé Tsering, vice-chairman of Gansu Nationalities' Affairs Department, Zhang from the Reception Centre and other officials. After having a few drinks, Dorjé Tsering said with deep emotion, "We miss His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetans." The Chinese officials caught on promptly and quickly concluded the dinner.

NORTHWEST NATIONALITIES UNIVERSITY

On the morning of 15 August, we left for a tour of the Northwest Nationalities' University, where we met with various teachers, including Sangyé, Konchok Tseten and Dorshi. This university was established in 1950 and was said to be the first of thirteen universities in China for different nationalities. At the time we visited it, the university had 600 students and twenty-one Tibetan teachers. The library had over 1,000 Tibetan titles, including the *Kangyur* (translation of Buddhist cannon in Tibetan) and *Tengyur* (Commentary of Buddha's teaching in Tibetan). Since the institution was on holiday, we did not have the opportunity to meet any students. It had departments for Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese, politics, accountancy, medicine, the arts and a teachers' training centre.

It seemed that wherever we visited, our timing always coincided with school holidays. This happened on quite a few occasions, so I thought this was a deliberate move made by the Chinese because it left us always touring an empty school and unable to meet students and interact with them. I don't know if the students were ever notified that delegates representing His Holiness came to their school, or what their thoughts would have been on the matter.

In the afternoon, we went to Bathai Mountain, which is shaped like a Chinese stupa. The tourist guidebook mentioned that during Kublai Khan's reign in the thirteenth century, he built a stupa on this mountain in memory of Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen (1182–1251), the great Tibetan scholar who was his spiritual master.

In the evening, Alak Jigmé had a private meeting with some Tibetan scholars. The scholars told Alak Jigmé that the activism carried out in exile was making a difference, and that in Tibet the younger generation had great interest in the Tibetan language and culture. They also told Alak Jigmé that scholar Mugé Samten's

response to the issue of discrimination and lack of equal opportunity for minority nationalities had a powerful impact in Tibet, although the Chinese authorities did not look on it kindly.

“I have made three copies of Shakabpa’s history book and read it at home,” one of the scholars said to Alak. Alak Jigmé gave him several of His Holiness’ photographs and precious pills and asked him to try to obtain as many historical records as possible on Sino–Tibetan borders and other important issues. Alak Jigmé also explained about His Holiness’ activities, the functioning of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and foreign support and assistance to Tibetan refugees.

PARI OR TIANZHU TIBETAN AUTONOMOUS COUNTY

On 16 August, we left Lanzhou for Pari Autonomous County, which was nearly 200 kilometers from the city. The open road spread out before us and seemed to go on forever. The surrounding landscape was absolutely stunning. We were the first representatives from exile to visit Pari as none of the previous delegations were able to come here. This place came to be known as Pari—*pa* meaning “warriors” and *ri* meaning “clan” or “family”—during Tibet’s imperial period because a large number of warriors were posted there and eventually settled in the area. It is also known as Tendu in Tibetan which is a combination of the word *ten* meaning “holy object” and *du* meaning “seed”. Hortsang Jigmé’s *Great History of Amdo* (volume three) mentions that the Chinese call this place Tenzhou, which is a mispronunciation of the Tibetan word *Tendu*.⁴⁸

This is a Sino-Tibetan border town. It was said that there was a pillar demarcating the Sino-Tibetan border on a hill called Hashang Ri, however the pillar was uprooted and taken away during the Cultural Revolution. Pari Tibetan Autonomous County had a population of 41,000 and about fifty per cent of the Tibetan population had entered into mixed marriages with Han Chinese and Hui Muslims. As a result, most young people and smaller children did not speak Tibetan. It appeared as if the town itself had turned into a mini-Chinatown. We did learn that the situation for Tibetan literacy and culture had improved somewhat after the Panchen Rinpoché visited the town.

Wangchen Döndrup from the Nationalities and Religion Bureau, Dhargyé, head of the Nationalities Affairs Department, Gudak Dorjé, an official from the Nationalities Education Department, and Wangchen Döndrup from the Office of Translation and Publishing came to welcome us.

The main products from the area were coal, leather, cement and farming equipment. Although the area had gold, the mines were mostly small-scale and privately operated, the gold being sold to the government. We were told that ten families were earning over 100,000 Yuan per annum and twenty families were earning 10,000 Yuan from gold mining.

In the afternoon, we went to Tashi Chuglung Thang, a nomadic community about twenty kilometers from the town. However, the weather deteriorated and we could not visit the entire nomadic area. We managed to see one nomad camp where most women wore Chinese-style clothes with only a handful of them wearing chubas. It was disheartening to see our rich culture being slowly eradicated by the Chinese. We also saw prayer-flags on the rooftops and posters pasted on the walls inscribed with religious mantras.

We were told that Pari had thirty-six divisions with 60,000 animals and thirteen monasteries, including Yalung Gön, Chöden Gön, Taklung Gön and Rabgyé Gön. The total number of students was said to be over 10,000.

On the way back to Lanzhou we saw a house built for Panchen Rinpoché when he visited the area. Although the board above the doorframe declared it was “the House of the Second Incomparable Protector”, it had been turned into a bar. We visited the house of a nomad named Phuntsok Tsering and his family of eleven members who owned 150 sheep and five horses. That night a family of musicians from Pari came to the nomadic camp. Kalden recorded all their songs, which were in both Tibetan and Mongolian.

On 17 August we left Pari Dzong for Lanzhou. On the way we visited Yarlung Gön Thösam Ling, which was built by the Sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso. Alak



The author at far right with a Tibetan family, Amdo Pari, 16 August 1985

Shatsang was the master of the monastery in charge of twelve monks. Further up from the monastery there was a large coalmine and a number of cement factories. There was a small school near the monastery. We were told it had been built on the ruins of the monastery and the monks requested us to appeal to the Chinese authorities to return their land. The condition of both the school and the monastery was very poor. We did report to the Chinese officials about the monastery's request to give back the land, although I don't know if our appeal made any difference to the case.

After we returned to Lanzhou that evening, we went to see opera performances of Chungpo Dönyö and Döndrup for which the performers were mostly Tibetans. Tibetan Opera is called “Lhamo” or “Ache Lhamo” in the Tibetan language, meaning “Sister Fairy.” The performance consists of songs, dances, chants and drama to tell stories, with most of its repertoire deriving from Buddhist teachings and Tibetan history. We enjoyed the performance very much because it was based on the story of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Rinpoché as elder and younger brother.

LABRANG TASHI KHYIL (XIAHE)

On 18 August we left Lanzhou, stopping for lunch at a place called Karchu, also known as Nyishar. Karchu is famous for its delicious food and we ate till we were full and arrived in Labrang in the evening. Dolkar Tso, the head of Labrang County, Dolma, head of the local Religious Bureau, Dakpa, chairman of the local United Front Work Department and Kalsang Thogme, a relative of Jamyang Sheypa Rinpoché, welcomed and received us. We were accommodated in a hotel which used to be the residence of Jamyang Sheypa. The local leaders had booked the best room for Ren, the most senior Chinese official accompanying us, but Ren offered his room to Kundeling, who accepted it.

During the dinner served in our honour, Dolkar Tso made some general remarks about why we had gathered, without mentioning even a single word about His Holiness' representatives. I thought this was either a deliberate action by the local leader to please the Chinese officials from Beijing, or they had mutually agreed not to mention the exiled Tibetan delegation on purpose.

Kundeling gave a short speech in which he deliberately mentioned the fact that we were the members of the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation sent by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He also drove the point further by mentioning our goals and aspirations. Before dinner was served, two Tibetan women singers performed a few Tibetan songs to welcome us.

During our reception in Labrang, there was an argument between Kundeling and Dra'u Pon that threatened to dismantle our mission. The dispute developed when everyone was having drinks and it was about whether Dra'u Pon should meet with a man named Dakpa. Dakpa, who had recently returned from the Döndrup Ling settlement in Clement Town in northern India to settle back in Labrang, was

an old friend of Dra'u Pon. Dakpa was also a relative of Gungthang Rinpoché, a high Rinpoché in Labrang. Dra'u Pon told the woman interpreter about his desire to meet Dakpa and the interpreter reported this to Zhang Zhou, who mistook Gungthang Rinpoché for Jamyang Sheypa Rinpoché, another high Rinpoché in the area. He replied, "I don't know. We will see if he will have time tomorrow."

Kundeling, not wanting to be involved in the meeting said, "I don't want to meddle in this issue." Dra'u Pon was angry with Kundeling for this remark. While this was happening, Alak Jigmé tried to explain to Dra'u Pon about what Zhang had said. Dra'u Pon, who was already very heated from Kundeling's reaction said, "I got it. I don't need a translator."

"Isn't Dakpa a Tibetan?" Dra'u Pon asked. Kundeling retorted, "He is a Tibetan, but he gave us [the exiled Tibetan community] shit and came back here."

"We have already met other shit-givers like Alak Trigen and Sögya. Why can't I meet him? I will meet him even if I have to withdraw from this delegation and return tomorrow. I'd have no regrets," said Dra'u Pon.

Kundeling remained silent and the situation became very tense. For what seemed like a very long pause, no one in the room, neither Chinese nor Tibetan, spoke. After some time Dra'u Pon said to Kundeling, "You are my old friend. I trust you and consider you my protector. Even if you beat me I would bear it, but I am very disappointed in you now for not supporting me in my wish to meet Dakpa." I thought things had come to this point because they were all intoxicated. Despite Dra'u Pon's threat of leaving the group, in the end, he did not get to visit his friend because the Chinese did not allow them to meet.

The next day we went on pilgrimage to Tashi Khyil monastery. This is one of the largest and most holy monasteries in north-eastern Tibet, founded by the first

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

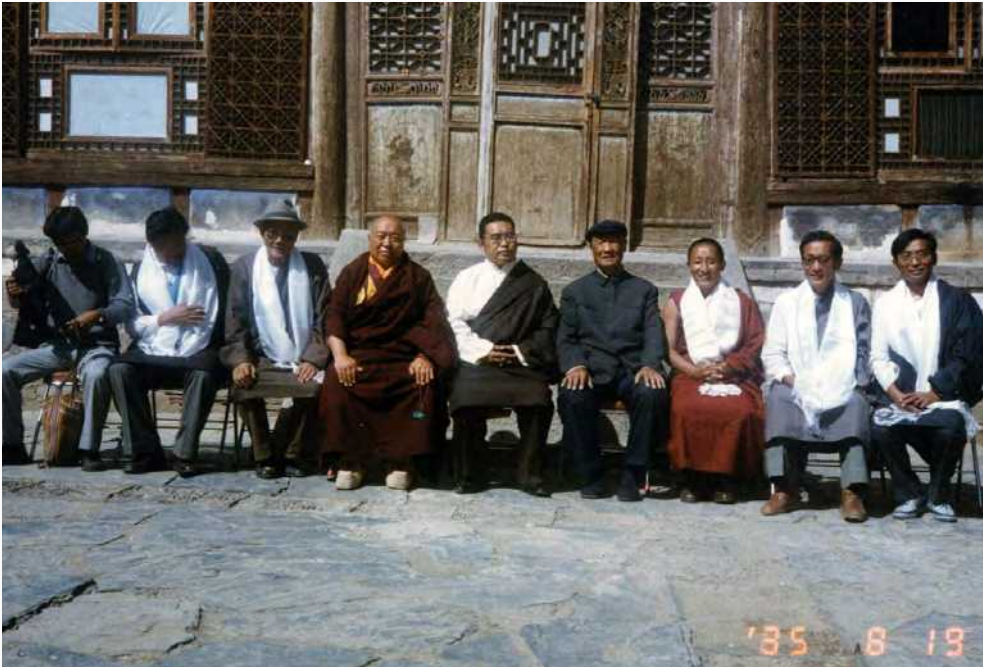


*Welcome reception for Alak Jigmé, deputy head of the Tibetan delegation,
Labrang Tashi Khyil,
19 August 1985*

Jamyang Sheypa, Ngawang Tsundue in 1709. Though Tashi Khyil was the name of the monastery—not the name of Jamyang Sheypa’s personal residence—it popularly became known as Labrang Tashi Khyil. According to Takla Phuntsok Tashi’s book *Mitsei Jungwa Jöpa*, Labrang Tashi Khyil was famous for producing many outstanding scholars. This was because after the Mongol chieftain Lhazang Khan murdered Desi Sangyé Gyatso, his heart was kept in a box at the monastery and prayers were offered daily.

I was extremely happy to see as many as 70,000 scriptures and many precious statues and images of Buddhas and bodhisattvas intact in the monastery. In some of the prayer halls, I saw photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama that foreign tourists had offered as gifts for being allowed inside the temples and prayer halls. I met a tourist from Holland and a reporter from AFP (Agence-France-Presse), with whom I shared information about our mission and things I had witnessed during the visit. I was careful not to criticise the Chinese too harshly, because I knew they would remove the record and our ongoing visit could be jeopardized.

We donated 1,111 Yuan towards the renovation of the prayer hall and offered 500 Yuan for the monks. The monastery had about 300 monks from Sichuan Province who came there for religious studies. I had carried with me a bunch of letters from Wangdak, one of the personal chauffeurs of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to be delivered in his birthplace, Karze. Fortunately, I came across a monk at Labrang who was from Serta in Karze, to whom I entrusted Wangdak’s letters. The monk and his friend took me to their quarters, which accommodated eight monks. I gave them photographs of His Holiness and precious pills and spent some time talking about the situation of exiled Tibetans in India and also learned of their situation living under Chinese rule in Sichuan.



*Delegates with Tibetan leaders, Labrang Tashi Khyil, 19 August 1985.
L–R: Thubten Samphel, Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering, Kundeling Woesser Gyaltsen,
Gungthang Rinpoché, Jamyang Sheypa Rinpoché, Apa Alo, Alak Jigmé,
Kalden and the author*

In the afternoon, we met with the sixth reincarnation of Jamyang Sheypa,⁴⁹ Gungthang Rinpoché⁵⁰ and Apa Alo Lobsang Tsewang.⁵¹ We offered them a khatag, precious pills and letters from His Holiness. We were briefed in detail about the destruction of the prayer hall, which was caused by a fire. Both Jamyang Sheypa and Gungthang Rinpoché thanked us for coming to see them. “These days policies are better and hence you should visit Tibet more often,” they said.

With deep emotion Apa Alo said, “Although His Holiness lives so far away, I know that his heart is here. How I wish to see him!” He asked us to request His Holiness to pray for him. When mentioning His Holiness’ name, Apa Alo could not control his tears. We also could not help but shed tears along with Apa. I remember thinking how lucky I was to have been able to escape to exile to live alongside His Holiness and serve under his leadership. Apa talked about Panchen Rinpoché’s great work towards the protection and promotion of Buddhism and Tibetan culture.

Gungthang Rinpoché and Jamyang Sheypa were the heads of the committee to renovate the prayer hall. They said, “We hope that in three years we can build a prayer hall which will be better than the old one. When the fire broke out, it burnt down most of the precious items in it. However, three entombed bodies and stupas containing the remains of the Fourth and Fifth Jamyang Sheypas miraculously survived the flames. A mattress that was used by both His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Rinpoché during their visits to the monastery also astonishingly remained unharmed. Although the army helped fight the fire, it burned on for fourteen days and afterwards, we were able to salvage over 200 scriptures and old images.”

Remarking on the fire and the fact that many precious and holy items remained unharmed, the Tenth Panchen Rinpoché said, “Looking at the signs, it seems the circle of Dharma is on the rise.”

Gungthang Rinpoché said, “When I was imprisoned for many years, I often thought of dying. But then I did not die, hoping that I might be of some use for the Dharma in future. Now, along with Panchen Rinpoché, I can do some service to protect and promote the Dharma.”

In 1987, in reference to Rinpoché, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, “Gungthang Rinpoché is one of Geluk’s prominent scholars in sutra and tantra. In 1955, I met the present Rinpoché during my visit to Labrang Tashi Khyil. Since there were Chinese officials present it was not possible to have extensive conversation. However during our talk, I learnt about his firm stand on Tibetan-ness and his determination to uphold Tibetan Buddhism. For this I appreciate and salute Rinpoché from the bottom of my heart.”⁵²

After the meeting we toured the burnt-down hall and a few other nearby temples. The local people now knew about our visit. When they saw us, many of them came running to greet us and some shouted slogans such as, “May the wishes of Gyalwa Rinpoché come true!” and “Long Live Dalai Lama!” Some covertly asked us about His Holiness’ health and whether he had any plans to return to Tibet. Dolkar Tso, the head of the county, tried her best to block people from coming to see and meet with us.

In the evening Dra’u Pon went to have a private meeting with Gungthang Rinpoché. Later, Dra’u Pon told me that he told Rinpoché about how he and Gungthang Tsultrim started a Tibetan performing group aimed at promoting the Tibetan struggle, called the Amdo Cultural Association. He also told Rinpoché that it was not the Kashag that murdered Gungthang Tsultrim in 1978, as had been rumoured, but some other unknown individuals. Gungthang Tsultrim, the secretary of the Association of Thirteen, was shot dead on 18 June 1978 at his residence in

Döndrup Ling, a Tibetan refugee settlement in northern India. Rinpoché replied, “You don’t have much time so I will tell you something. I know everything. Although he was my follower, now I don’t have any dispute with anyone. Now I merely offer prayers for him. There are only a handful of Tibetans in India, so it’s a shame that there is internal discord among them. The important thing is that we have unity. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Rinpoché having to live in two different countries is beneficial. Panchen Rinpoché is a true patriot, who has both a name and a position. He uses these for our benefit and no one can find fault with him.

“My hope is,” Rinpoché told Dra’u Pon, “for His Holiness to come back once and at a large public gathering to talk about the importance of unity. Only His Holiness can bring everyone together. Recently in Ngaba, as many as fifteen people were killed when an old dispute resurfaced. I was able to solve the dispute finally, but after this incident I developed a heart problem. It is rather easy for a person to die. It will take less than five minutes. But it is difficult to become a good person. Buddhism is over 2,500 years old. Today, when there is some semblance of the Dharma, I work hard to promote it. I want to send a letter to His Holiness, but it has to go through Chinese hands unless I give it to you secretly. Since the Chinese are carefully scrutinizing my activities and yours no doubt, they will check everything anyway so there is not much point.

“If we are united, no one can touch us. Please do not listen to rumours, such as that it was Kirti Rinpoché who did black magic to cause the fire in Labrang. I also don’t listen to any of these and work with my own mind. We must maintain this relationship with China and make sure that the visiting door is not shut. When the situation continues to be difficult a delegation like this is of great benefit. This must continue. On my behalf, please report these matters to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.”



*The author with some local monks at Labrang area,
August 1985*

Around this time Kalden met with two elderly Tibetans who asked him, “Is it true that people are talking about the need for Tibetans to be united?” Kalden told them that this was indeed true. This was a big change of attitude from previous notions, where people from the three different provinces gave importance to their own provinces individually.

We met a few Tibetans who were coming back from a scholars’ conference in Xinjiang, where they had discussed the Dunhuang historical documents and the relationship between Xinjiang and Tibet. We were told there were about 2,500 Tibetans in Xinjiang. These Tibetan scholars covertly advised us it would be useless for His Holiness to return under the conditions set out in China’s Five-Point Proposal, so it is important to consider the offer carefully.

On 20 August we went to the Gengya Drakar grasslands, about thirty kilometers from Labrang. It was a beautiful, vast, open space filled with flowers and greenery. Beri Monastery, located on the grasslands, had twenty monks. We visited a few holy places around the grasslands, including a cave in which the famous Drupchen Kalden Gyatso meditated for a long time. Dungri Khandoma received us and hosted us.

After we came back from the grasslands, I rode out on a bicycle and once again met the monks from Karze. I spoke to them at length about the exile government and the Tibetan community in India and what all of us could do for Tibet’s struggle for freedom. On the same day, I met Lobsang Tenzin, a former member of the exiled Tibetan parliament, who had returned to meet his family. He told me that before our arrival, the Chinese authorities made public announcements telling people not to meet us or go to the hotels where we would stay. However, if we initiated the move and went to meet people, the announcement declared, it would be okay.



*The author and Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering, Labrang Tashi Khyil,
19 August 1985*

Kalden asked an elderly Tibetan man from Dzorge about his livelihood and his situation. The man pointed his index finger to his horse and said, “Our situation is like that horse that is unable to eat grass beyond the fence, even if it is hungry. This is what you have to keep in your mind.” Kalden saw a man in his thirties and an eleven-year-old boy who were overjoyed to hear him talk about His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Their eyes brimmed with tears, but they could not say a word.

During our stay in Labrang, although Alak Jigmé made arrangements to meet Gungthang Rinpoché, nothing materialised because of the Chinese. We were all surprised by this and I am sure Alak was terribly upset.

TSÖ

On 21 August, we left Labrang for Tsö, the capital of Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Area (Gannan). Tsö had signs of being a bustling settlement. In 1953 there was a dispute between Apa Alo and the King of Choné, both of whom wanted the capital of the autonomous area in their locality. The Chinese authorities resolved the conflict through their own Middle Way Approach by establishing the capital in Tsö, a town between Apa Alo's residence and Choné. Tsö had about 20,000 Chinese and 20,000 Tibetans living there. It claimed to have as many as 1,000 government offices and the local radio station had three daily bulletins in Tibetan. Kanlho has seven counties: Labrang, Machu, Drugchu, Thebo, Choné, Watse and Luchu.

After our arrival at Tsö, Gen Nyima from Tsö Monastery received us and took us on a tour of his monastery. It used to have 700 monks, but when we visited there were only about 100. We were told the number of monks the government approved was only sixty-four. A monk who had returned to Tibet from Drepung Gomang monastery in South India asked me why the proposed visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama did not materialise. I had the chance to explain to him in detail about the various reasons behind it.

Tsö monastery had invited a teacher from Rebkong and the monks were being taught various schools of Buddhist philosophy. There was a famous Tsö Sekhar Guthog which was totally destroyed and the Chinese constructed buildings on its ruins. The monastery was hoping to get the place back from the Chinese.

Generally, monastery permits are formally given to big and famous monasteries. The government also provides small grants for the restoration work of the damages caused in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution.

However, the primary condition imposed is that they have to renovate the

monastery on the ruins of the old so that there will be no evidence left of their desecration. This is a deliberate policy. For small monasteries, only permits are given and no aid provided in the restoration process. In some places like Kyegudo, the officials have to be bribed in order to get the permits. After a monastery is issued a permit, local people contribute their money as well as volunteer work in an effort to renovate it. The locals also return precious images and scriptures that they had hidden away during the Cultural Revolution.

One day a monk from the monastery came and talked to me. Pointing his finger at the mountainside, he said, “During the early years of occupation, the Chinese forces massacred thousands of Tibetans and buried the dead bodies in mass graves on that hillside. Even today, if you dig up the hillside you find human bones.”

In the afternoon, we toured a milk-processing factory that was inaugurated on 1 July 1957. The factory employed 240 people and received its milk supplies from Luchu, Machu, Labrang and Choné. The factory made ice-cream, milk powder, curd and other dairy products. Sometimes, when the supply of milk ran out, we were told the employees were free and lounged around.

We also visited a leather factory, which was a part of Labrang’s factory. In 1967, it was moved to Tsö and was employing 286 workers of which eighty-four were Tibetans. Twenty people lived in one room provided by the factory. The heads of the leather factory were Tibetans and in 1980 the gross income was 54,000 Yuan, which by 1985 had increased to 174,000. The government provided 122,000 Yuan for the factory and made a profit of about 18,000 Yuan. We were told that in 1980, the factory tanned 300 sheepskins per day. Though the aim was to tan 1,200 skins, the daily quota in 1985 still remained at 500 skins a day. It had plans to mechanise

the plant by 1987 to increase productivity. Each worker was paid between sixty to seventy Yuan a month. Only a few earned over 100 Yuan. When we told them about His Holiness the Dalai Lama and our experiences, they listened with great attention and many of them—particularly the girls—sobbed a lot.

After the tour of the factory, about twenty girls came out to meet us. We told them about His Holiness' activities and his health. When a girl asked if His Holiness wished to return to Tibet, they all wept, unable to contain their emotions. This left a deep impression on us. A few older people came along with a girl and an elderly Tibetan said that although all the girls were Tibetans and spoke of Tibet, they preferred to dress like the Chinese because of the surrounding environment. "We wait for His Holiness with great hope," he said.

At the dinner held in our honour were the local government head Shingso, the local vice-leader, Dzorge Jinpa, the vice-chairman of the local Political Consultative Committee, Choné Yang Finan, secretary of the local government, Lobsang Tenzin, the head of the local United Front Work Department, Phagpa Tsering, head of the local Religious Bureau and Setsang Lobsang Palden Rinpoché, a teacher at the Nationalities School. We had a good discussion about the situation inside Tibet and in exile. Setsang Rinpoché requested that in the event of the Dalai Lama returning to Tibet, His Holiness should visit his monastery, Terlung Göñ. We offered him a few books on Tibetan history and at the same time encouraged him to collect as many books on Tibetan history as possible.

PILGRIMAGE TO GYALMO GÖN AND DEMO THANG

We left Tsö on 22 August and travelled for about thirty-five kilometers to Gyalmo Göñ, which was established by Gelek Chödar some 300 years ago. Gyalmotsang, the chief spiritual head of the monastery, told us that the new monastery was constructed about fifty years before at a location some distance away from the ruins of the original one. It once had 500 monks but today it has only 200. A geshé from Labrang was invited as a religious teacher to instruct the monks about various schools of Buddhism and their philosophical traditions. Gyalmotsang requested that if the Dalai Lama returns to Tibet, His Holiness might kindly make a visit to Gyalmo Göñ.

Panchen Rinpoché visited the area in 1983 and held a round-table conference during which the vice-chairman of the Culture Bureau, Jamyang Lodro, suggested the creation of an Eastern Tibet Autonomous Region. This suggestion went unheeded by the Chinese.

On our return journey from Gyalmo Göñ, we stopped to visit Amchok Demo Ganden Chökhör monastery, established by the First Jamyang Sheypa. The monastery was completely destroyed in bombing raids by the Chinese air force in 1958, like Batang and Lithang in 1956. When we arrived at the location, only the prayer-hall had been rebuilt. In comparison to other monasteries we had visited, it seemed particularly neglected and underdeveloped. There were about 150 monks. The locals told us that they wait each day in the hope that His Holiness will return.

LUCHU AND MACHU

That evening we left Tsö and travelled to Luchu County or Luqu Xian on a new and very well-built highway. It could easily fit two cars side by side in one lane and the road was smooth all the way through. The road cut across a wide expanse of grassland studded with flowers and dotted by nomadic camps. It was an extremely beautiful sight to behold. The tents had prayer-flags hoisted on them and for a moment it seemed like I was looking at the real Tibet.

We were told that Luchu County had 28,000 Tibetans and about 10,000 Chinese living in seven townships: Shingtsang, Lhamo, Samtsa, Ala, Kahey, Mange and Lari. Konchok, head of the county, Yen Putang, the head of the local United Front Work Department, and the head of the local religion bureau welcomed us. They brought along an elderly Tibetan man, who told us he was in the first group to go to Lhasa in 1951 to set up the Chinese office in the Tibetan capital. “After travelling for over five months we arrived in Lhasa on 1 November 1951,” he recounted. I believe the Chinese were trying to showcase how much progress had been made in the way of infrastructure and other amenities since then.

Luchu is rich in natural resources, including coal and natural gas. I have heard that at a place called Kyangtsa, on the border with Sichuan Province, there is also a large uranium deposit.

We spent the night at Luchu Dzong and next day went on pilgrimage to Ganden Shedrup Ling, established by the Third Jamyang Sheypa. The monastery had about 159 monks who were in a debating session when we arrived. The monastery seemed very well off and everyone looked happy. It was located on the banks of the Luchu River and on the other side of the river were hills covered with thick forests. The monastery is over 200 years old and was renovated in 1980. We met a monk who

claimed to be the chant master of the monastery, but to our great surprise he didn't seem to read or write Tibetan very well, which left us a feeling a bit dumbfounded.

The local offices served a lunch in our honour. Due to heavy rain, we cancelled our afternoon programme and consequently met with—and had some time to talk with—Gonpo Kyab, the county leader, Karkho, the vice-county leader, Konchok from Taktsang Lhamo, Labrang Zinpu, the head of the local People's Congress and Labrang Ongtruk, the vice-secretary. We applauded their dedication and diligence and urged them to continue their good work.

We left Luchu on 24 August, crossing many kilometers of grassland dotted with nomadic camps and flocks of animals and arrived in Machu County. In the evening, we went on pilgrimage to the Tsendok Tashi Chöling monastery. Kundeling did not join us. The monastery was led by Gen Zöpa, who had lived in Rajpur near Dehra Dun in northern India. The monks welcomed us with khatags and incense and we were told that the monk population was exactly 100. The prayer-hall and temple of the monastery had images of *Mahakala*, *Chenrezig*, *Vajrapani*, *Kalachakra* and other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Although Gen Zöpa had come to the area to visit his relatives, the monks of Tashi Chöling requested him to stay back. They also asked us to request His Holiness the Dalai Lama to grant permission for Gen Zöpa to continue to stay with them, which we promised to relay. We also visited another monastery, Shergön Shedrup Dhargyeling, which had around 150 monks.

In the evening, we had a round-table conference with Jamyang, the head of the standing committee of the county people's government, Labrang Gonpo Tseten, director of the local United Front Work Department, Choné Zhang Zhin Tu, leader of the county, Phurba, director of the local Religious Bureau and Gompas, and the



*A welcome reception for the head of the Tibetan delegation,
Kundeling Woesser Gyaltsen, the deputy, Alak Jigmé
and delegate Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering, Luchu,
23 August 1985*

head of the of Nationalities Affairs office. We talked about our experiences and things we had witnessed during our visit, and how to best address the people's grievances.

During our visit to Machu we noticed a Muslim officer from Tso Ngön Province travelling with the group. I saw he had a tiny tape recorder in the pocket of his jacket and we guessed that he was there to record our conversations in the car. To counter his actions, we started talking in Hindi for the rest of the road journey. Just to make fun of the man, Kalden mouthed a lot of invectives and bad words in Hindi. We were feeling very satisfied with ourselves for having found out about the man's secret mission and laughed a lot when Kalden cracked jokes. Looking back, it was rather childish. Since we found out about this man's purpose we were very careful in what we discussed and said amongst ourselves.

On 25 August we went to visit Nyima Göñ Ganden Rabgyé Ling. The 200-year-old monastery once had over 100 monks but today it housed only thirty-seven, who mainly practiced *Kalachakra* and *Mahakala* rituals.

TAKTSANG LHAMO (LANGMUSI)

We left Machu Dzong and went to Taktsang Lhamo, which was established in 1748 by Gyaltsen Senge, the fifty-third holder of the Ganden Throne. The prayer hall was being renovated when we visited. To fulfil the monks' requests, we gave them precious pills, mani rilbu, and blessed threads. There were 300 monks engaged in rigorous studies of Buddhist philosophy. We witnessed the monks engage in lively and often heated debating sessions.

We were also taken to see the sacred remains of the fifth Kirti Rinpoché Tenpai Gyaltzen. The monk guide told us that during the Cultural Revolution, this embalmed body naturally became invisible and disappeared into the ground. Later when the political situation was slightly relaxed, the mummified body of the holy Kirti incarnation spontaneously appeared out of the earth. The Kirti reincarnation began in 1374; the present Eleventh Kirti Rinpoché is Lobsang Tenzin and resides in Dharamsala. He served as the Kalön for Religious and Cultural Affairs of the exile administration and continues to fight for Tibet's cause with great determination and devotion.

During these visits we handed out precious pills, pictures of His Holiness and holy threads to people without the knowledge of the Chinese officials accompanying us. Each time we had the opportunity to meet people, we made it a point to tell as much as we could about our work, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetan community. Most of the monks in each of the monasteries we visited told us that it was only after the Panchen Rinpoché visited these areas that the renovation and reopening of their monasteries was made possible.

Luchu and Machu regions had large populations of nomads who lived on wide expanses of grassland. Nomads had large numbers of sheep, *dri*, yaks and horses; a sheep was worth forty Yuan, a *dri* was 250 and each yak was worth 500 Yuan.

Initially, when the commune system was abandoned and the animals redistributed, each person was allotted only fifteen animals.

At each location where we stopped or were taken to visit, huge crowds gathered shouting slogans, sobbing and many were prostrating. It was heartening to see and interact with many of them.

In the evening, Alak Jigmé, Dra'u Pon and I went to see a woman who was related to Amdo Chöden in Dharamsala. Her family told us about Alak Trigen who, they said, wrote in a newspaper that the exiled Tibetans did not have anything to eat and that the Chinese were telling the people that Alak Jigmé was no longer a monk. We explained to them that Alak Jigmé was indeed still a monk. Alak Jigmé then tried to arrange a meeting with Alak Trigen to try and reprimand him for the lies he had told and the mess he had made, but nothing materialised. Despite our numerous attempts to meet him, we were told that Alak Trigen was out of town. Alak Jigmé then said that there would come a time when His Holiness would return to Tibet, and at that time both Alak Jigmé and Dra'u Pon would be included in His Holiness' entourage. I noticed Dra'u Pon was nodding his head in agreement and smiling happily at being included in the entourage of His Holiness. If such a time were to come, in the depths of my heart, I was not sure if either of them would be included as a part of the entourage.

During our stay in Luchu Dzong, I listed the names of all the Chinese offices I could find. At that time, there was no internet or other such facilities, so I walked around town looking for the offices' sign boards and noting down their names in my notebook. By the end of my exercise, I had listed forty-three offices, which I thought would be helpful for us when we returned for cross-examination. Looking back,

I think the Chinese officers assigned to me would have probably had a good laugh wondering what I was doing, but the information proved to be useful regarding what sort of Chinese offices are operating in Tibetan areas, so it was time well spent.

On the afternoon of 26 August, we left Luchu and travelled via Karchu to reach Lanzhou. The next day, we went to a market to buy gifts for the Chinese officials accompanying us. For the officials we bought wristwatches, each costing fifteen Yuan and for the drivers we bought bags, each costing eleven Yuan, plus a packet of cigarettes each. When we visited a monastery in the afternoon, we learned that people who came to meet us in Labrang had been interrogated.

A ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE ON GANSU VISIT

On 28 August, we held a round-table conference on our visit to Gansu Province. The head of the Gansu Nationalities Affairs Office, vice-director Choné Dorjé Tsering, an official of the United Front Work Department who was accompanying us, and officials from Beijing and Gansu Province attended the discussion.

The head of Gansu Province said, “Recently you have travelled over 3,000 kilometers across Gansu during your visit. You must frankly tell us what was wrong, and what mistakes were made.”

“During our visit,” reported Kundeling “we were not given any information about the province and each county, hence we did not find out anything we had hoped to learn. We only visited many monasteries, which were mostly being renovated. These monasteries either do not get any assistance, nor have they succeeded in getting back their own land. You must solve their problems. We were very concerned about the fire at Labrang, but now the renovation is underway, so we are happy. We are also happy that there is some gender equality in the appointment of officials and staff.

“We were unable to meet ordinary people, which did not help us to learn clearly about their situation. We hope that monasteries, which now look as if they suffered from some horrible disease, would be restored entirely to their past conditions,” he added.

Dra’u Pon said, “You must make sure that officials on the ground carry out their responsibilities. If there are statues, images and paintings which had been taken away from monasteries, these should be returned. There used to be a tradition of not allowing women to join a retreat of the monks during summer. It would be nice to respect this and other religious traditions.”

“I am not sure how much benefits hospitals and schools bring to the general

public,” said Kalden. “Though the local officials tried to block people from meeting us, some of those who found ways to make contact were very happy to meet us. It was a common sight for most of them to cry when they see us. The actions of the local officials in preventing local communities from meeting us proved what we have heard in exile. It is also unacceptable to interrogate the people who have met us. I hope that this will not happen again and the people you have interrogated will come to no harm.”

Thubten Samphel said, “The fact that we could not go to nomadic areas is because of Ma Pu Zhang. It is not enough to just have monasteries. There should be monks living within them who can engage in religious studies. For example, Labrang Monastery has merely become a museum to show to foreign tourists. In some areas, we notice that there are also no schools. Schools are important.”

“I am sad that we were given no information on the provinces and counties,” I commented. “In the twelve monasteries we visited, we noticed that high-ranking lamas do not live in them. Lamas must live in the monasteries. Unless there are important meetings in places such as Lanzhou, which the lamas have to attend, it is crucially important for the lamas to be in the monasteries and give teachings.

“The head of Labrang County’s religious office is a woman named Dolma. I don’t know what her qualifications are, but I find it strange that despite this famous monastery having numerous highly qualified lamas and *tulkus*, the head of the religious office had to be this woman. Some of the children we met don’t know the Tibetan language. Schools must impart Tibetan language education. This is in tune with the modernization policy. As Kalden said, the local officials blocked ordinary people from seeing us. I do not believe that this is the policy of the government. But

the fact of the matter is that people were prevented from going to meet us and this proves there is no basic freedom for them.”

The head of the United Front Work Department said that the government would be giving 17,100 Yuan for the renovation of Labrang’s prayer-hall and the province would give about 40,000 Yuan. “Tibetans living abroad do not have to worry about this. We will build an even better prayer-hall than the one before. You must announce this to the world,” he said.

He further said that forty per cent of Gansu’s population was made up of the minorities who occupy forty per cent of the province’s total area of 19,000 square kilometers. “Han brothers and minorities are inseparable. We must make efforts to build a new relationship between the nationalities. It is not right to have inequality of nationalities. We have five different religions in the province. The population of people believing in Buddhism is 30,000,” he added.

Tseten Dorjé, a Tibetan official said, “Based on the Five-Point Proposal, we hope as many Tibetans from abroad as possible can come to visit Tibet. We hope that many of them will stay here. We also hope that the Dalai Lama will come to visit. We will, of course, applaud if he stays back. We hope that delegations like this will come again and again.

“As of now we have six families who have come back from abroad. We have given animals to some and jobs to others. On special occasions, officials visit them to extend help.”

From the perspective of the Tibetans in exile as well as Tibetans in Tibet, neither group looks kindly upon these families because they are considered traitors for having turned their backs on the Dalai Lama and going into the embrace of the

Chinese. We also heard accounts about some of these families and the treatment they receive upon their arrival. At first, the Chinese are very welcoming, accommodating and helpful, but after using the families for their propaganda, after a few months they do not pay any attention to them. The families live out the rest of their lives being scorned by the Tibetans and ignored by the Chinese, so they live miserably.

“The societal disease brought about by the Gang of Four in this country is slowly healing. It is impossible for the destroyed houses and other things to be rebuilt like they were before. Although the leaders have paid attention to them, there have been no good results. But 60,000 holy scriptures at the *Kalachakra* Temple in Labrang Monastery were saved,” Tseten Dorjé continued.

“Since 1958, misfortunes have happened in some minority areas. This is past history. Because of that as many as 10,000 Tibetan comrades have gone abroad. Now, when progress in history is taking place, we must all put in special efforts. We must work hard to bring about progress for the country and the nationalities. It is our responsibility to work for the country and the people. Tibetan people are living here in peace and happiness. We miss the Tibetans who are living abroad. Please convey *Tashi Delek* to them. Thank you all for sharing your open and frank opinions on your visit. We hope that in future you will visit again,” Tseten concluded.

The meeting lasted from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. and each time one of us aired a frank criticism, I observed the expressions of the Chinese officials changing from disdain to rigid refrain to outright abhorrence. Contrary to the words they were saying, their facial expressions said they did not welcome any complaints or negative criticisms.

LANZHOU TO BEIJING

On 29 August, we left Lanzhou for Beijing on the Number One train. There, I came across a tourist from Australia with whom I shared information on Tibet. This seventy-three-year-old man was wise and learned in the ways of the world and had travelled to over sixty countries. He said that he worried the younger generation of Tibetans growing up in India and western countries would lose their interest in Tibet and involving themselves in the struggle. “The Tibetan freedom struggle is a difficult one,” he said. I explained to him that the exiled youth are increasingly aware and involved in the struggle and that his worry is misplaced.

On the train, I learned that Ren called Alak Jigmé and talked with him for over two hours about Rinpoche’s thoughts and views on the visit. Ren particularly asked Alak Jigmé about the opposition in India to China’s Five-Point Proposal and requested Alak to make positive public announcements about the visit. Ren then called Dra’u Pon and talked about the policies of the Communist Party. He said the Dalai Lama should be informed about them and requested Dra’u Pon give positive feedback to the public announcements around India.

Ren then called Kalden and said the same to him. Ren told Kalden to inform the Dalai Lama that it was not enough to just verbally tell Tibetans not to protest against China, he had to actually stop them from doing so.

It was clear from Ren’s interactions why the Chinese Government did not fly us from Lanzhou to Beijing, because making us travel by train gave more time for Ren to talk to the representatives one-on-one and ask them to do what the Chinese Government wished to be done. The question still remained, why were the three of them interviewed one-on-one? Perhaps the Chinese thought that being able to visit their respective birth places and meet their relatives invoked a certain “gratitude” for

the Chinese which might steer them to act according to their wishes. This, of course, is just a guess on my part.

We arrived in Beijing on 30 August and were accommodated at Minzu Fandian (Nationalities Guesthouse) where we rested from 1 to 3 September. We discussed and prepared ourselves for the meeting with the Chinese officials and deliberated on which points were most important and needed emphasising.

ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE IN BEIJING

On 4 September, we had a round-table discussion at the Hall of People's Arts and Culture Centre. Zhang Chu Zhang, Sung Chu Zhang, Ren, Gao and Yang from the United Front Work Department and the official translator, Wangdu, also attended the meeting.

Zhang Chu Zhang said, "You have been sent by the Dalai Lama to see the real situation and conditions of the general public. We are pleased to see the conclusion of the successful visit and that you are all well and hearty. Generally, are you satisfied with the visit? You must tell us frankly all that was wrong and what mistakes were made."

Kundeling responded by saying, "We thank you for honouring and giving respect to the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation. In fact, after each visit, each of the delegates expressed our opinion frankly to the officials like a family member. The Chinese officials accompanying us know all the details. Our visits to monasteries were good, but we did not have much time to spend with nomadic and farming communities. This was due to two important reasons: the duration of our visit was cut short and the local officials created obstacles. The fact that ordinary Tibetans were very afraid of meeting with us was not good. There is also a problem of forced sterilization. The delegate members are welcome to air their own views."

Sung Chu Zhang responded, "If you are talking about the family planning policy, it is practiced only in cities and not in villages and nomadic areas. Specifically, this policy is not enforced in minority areas. The principle aim in reducing pregnancies is to increase the quality of life for the populace. However, it is possible that in some areas it is being carried out. We will initiate an investigation on it."

Alak Jigmé said, "It would be good if statues and other artefacts confiscated

during the Cultural Revolution were returned to their monasteries. Any land that was previously owned by monasteries should also be returned because it is needed for their development. There is also need of using Tibetan language in Tibetan areas as often as possible.”

Dra’u Pon said, “I fully support Alak Jigmé on monastic matters. Some of the monasteries still did not get permits for renovation. Give them permission as soon as possible. Tibetans have no freedom. They are scared. Whether it is because of the local officials or not is hard to understand. You need to investigate these carefully. I am happy to see the development of new roads, schools and electricity. Since there is no end to education, further progress is needed. There is a big problem of forced sterilization in Tso Ngön. As previously mentioned, please investigate it.”

Zhang repeated, “The principle aim in reducing pregnancies is to increase the quality of life for the populace.”

On another note, I said, “I can fully understand the importance of the Chinese language. For example, Samphel and I encourage the young monks to learn Chinese language in addition to their religious studies.”

Kalden said, “There appears to be a clear sign of progress in the field of people’s wellbeing, monasteries and economic progress. If the Tibetan language is used in an official capacity, it will automatically enhance the intelligence of the people. The public needs freedom. Right now people are greatly frightened. Looking at this I wonder how minority policies are carried out. Whether people are genuinely happy or not depends on the freedoms they enjoy.”

Samphel said, “Ren told us that we are just guests and they are the host. However, when we visited the places it was totally opposite. All the fertile lands are owned by

the Chinese. All the hard work is done by the Tibetans. It looks like Tibetans are feeding the Chinese. We saw announcements of forced sterilization policy being undertaken in Tibetan areas. We have seen big posters on sterilization pasted on walls in big letters. Since we are a minority this policy is extremely dangerous.”

I said, “Without proper education of the minorities it is impossible to become equal and contribute to the development of the country, even though the Central Government’s policies on minorities are to practice equality. Therefore, strengthening of education among the Tibetans is highly important.”

Zhang said, “Right now what you said is good. In reality Tibet is lagging behind. Without education equality is impossible.”

Ren said, “I wanted to know your views on the Publishing Houses and cultural performances.”

Alak Jigmé said, “It is evident that there is a progress in the cultural field. The quality of publication is excellent. We also bought some books.”

Ren said, “Our reception at Xining and Kyegudo was not up to standard, for which we apologize.”

Zhang said, “Ren has accompanied many delegations and told me that this time he received good cooperation from you. Your visit to Qinghai and Gansu province was not that long. What you have heard prior to your visit and what you have witnessed through your visit should be different.” Kundeling commented he was happy that Ren did not report that we were the worst group of the delegations.

Finally Zhang said, “I am very happy that the visit has been carried out with great success and everyone is satisfied. I hope that in the future such visits will continue, for which we will give an even better reception. Our Party policy is good, but while

putting it into practice there is still deficiency and mistakes. Some of the Tibetans living abroad are saying wild things, such as that Tibetans are being persecuted. Now that you have visited Tibet, you can tell the truth. Our policy is to bring progress to all minorities equally. For Tibetans, it is clear that they have contributed greatly towards the development of the Motherland. I hope this will also happen around the world.”

He continued, “You have said that some of the officials on the ground did not behave properly. I know this is true. Unlike before, now the people have much power. Many people worry that Tibetans will disappear. However, please tell people they don’t have to worry. There may be people who worry about whether the present policies are sustainable and will continue. But these policies are welcomed by the people and cannot be changed by anyone. I am happy that regarding our religious policy you did not say that there is no freedom of religion.”

“Coinciding with the anniversary of the Tibet Autonomous Region, some Tibetans living abroad have carried out some bad activities. Tibetans in India organized protests in front of the Chinese embassy and hurled stones. They did not think for the welfare of the people and their activities are erroneous. These activities create obstacles in the relationship between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama. It is not good for some people to hate what hundreds of thousands of people like. Such protest activities are against the Dalai Lama’s wishes and are also harmful to the relationship between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama. Please tell them that such things are very bad. As you have seen, our policies are for the good of the Tibetan people,” said Zhang.

Sung said, “We hope that there will be more visits in future. This is the policy of the Communist Party.” After the meeting, a sumptuous dinner was served.

INDIAN EMBASSY

On 4 September, Nancy Nash, the same American woman who came to the airport to receive us, arrived from Hong Kong. She was incredibly helpful and useful for us in everything. But in hindsight, I think she might have had her own agenda.

On 7 September, A. P. Venkateswaran, the Indian ambassador, invited us for a dinner at his residence. With two important Indian officials present, Councillor Shyam Saran and Chakravati, we reported in detail about freedom of religion, renovation of monasteries, the status of the lamas and the thinking of the Chinese officials. He listened with great interest to everything we said and remarked it was good that we were able to make the journey. This was our first opportunity to have Indian food after many days, so all of us enjoyed the dinner.

For me personally, as soon as I walked through the gates of the Indian embassy I had the feeling of being home and was immediately relaxed. This was partly because we were not accompanied by Chinese officials and so did not have to be guarded in our words or actions. I realised then how crucial freedom was to a human being. Even though the denial of freedom was only partial for us and was for a short period of time, it took a toll on the mind and the soul. For Tibetans living in Tibet, the denial of freedom is constant, at all times. It goes without saying how terrible and unbearable this must feel each day for Tibetans living under Chinese rule.

In the Indian embassy, we met an official, a tall gentleman from Kangra. As Dharamsala falls under the Kangra district, it was a surprisingly delightful encounter and we felt as though we were meeting a family member. A. P. Venkateswaran was previously the Indian ambassador to the United Nations and had also worked in Russia and many other countries. He went on to become the Foreign Secretary for India in 1986, retired from the civil service in 1987 and continues to be one

of the strongest supporters of the Tibetan struggle. He often came to Dharamsala to have audiences with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. On one occasion, I had the opportunity to be his protocol officer in Dharamsala. I sought his counsel on how to keep the Tibetan struggle alive and enduring. He advised, “You must work hard so that people in both the US Congress and Senate, who support Tibet, continue their good work. The US is a powerful country and can have positive international influence on Tibet’s struggle.”



Former Indian Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to Beijing, A. P. Venkateswaran and the author’s son Tenzin Thutop, with the author and his wife, Tsering Dolma, Bir Suja Tibetan School, 1992

MEETING WITH MINISTER OF THE UNITED FRONT WORK DEPARTMENT

At 4:00 p.m. on 9 September, we had a final grand meeting with the Chinese officials from the United Front Work Department. It was attended by Yang Jingren, the minister for the United Front and the Nationalities Affairs Commission. The vice-minister for Nationalities Affairs and the United Front, Jiang Ping and Tang Ju Trang were also present. Sung Ju Tang from United Front and two other officials from Nationalities Affairs, the secretary of the United Front, Ren and Gao Chuzhang also flanked the assembly. The six of us went to the meeting accompanied by Dechen Wangdu, the official interpreter.

Without consulting the Chinese officials, I recorded the proceedings of the meeting by putting my tiny tape-recorder in front of me on the table. I found the courage to do so because we were to leave Beijing the next day, so there was no possibility of the trip being cut short and for the time being we did not have to deal with them anymore. The following is a transcript of our final meeting as delegates.

Yang Jingren was born near Lanzhou to a Hui family. He joined the Communist Party when he was very young and in 1949 he was in Gansu Province carrying out covert operations for the Party. After the Communist takeover of China in October 1949, he moved to Beijing and worked in various capacities with the Nationalities Affairs Commission. He was the minister for both the United Front and the Commission. He was also appointed as a vice-minister in the State Council.

Yang said, "The Chinese Government sent a large delegation for the twentieth founding anniversary of the Tibet Autonomous Region, including Hu Qili as the chairman, the Panchen Rinpoché and Li Peng. They took with them two large dance troupes. The Panchen Rinpoché and Hu Qili visited various monasteries and gave them money. The Tibetan people joyously welcomed the delegation.

“Tibet has undergone many great changes. Early this year, comrades from neighbouring inland provinces extended assistance for forty-two construction projects, out of which thirty-four projects have been completed. Other projects are to be completed within the next six months. We published reports on the founding anniversary in newspapers. I am sure you know about them.

“Most of the monasteries destroyed during the Cultural Revolution have been rebuilt and renovated. We have plans to restore a few others in future and are confident that we can rebuild all of them. Living conditions in Tibet are good now. We have built a large guesthouse that can accommodate over 1,000 people. We have opened Tibet to outsiders and foreign media and even tourists can visit Tibet.

“During the founding anniversary of TAR, news media from Hong Kong and Oman visited Tibet and published reports on the anniversary. This time you have visited Tibetan areas in Gansu and Tso Ngön Province. You can share your experiences and opinions in this meeting,” Yang said.

Kundeling, as the head of the Fourth Fact-Finding Delegation said, “The duration of our visit to Gansu and Tso Ngön was only one month and sixteen days. The conditions we saw in most places are almost the same as in others. Officials from the United Front and Nationalities Affairs accompanied us, and we were received at each place by the local authorities as per instructions from the government. We would like to thank you for this. We have talked frankly about our experiences and shared our thoughts with officials at each place. If you want to know in detail, you can ask Ren and Gao who were there with us. After arriving here in Beijing, we have already talked with two officials. We are happy to meet you here in person.”

Yang said, “We are also very happy because we are from one family. Our

government already made a Five-Point Proposal earlier. There is no change to that. We have to look at the behaviour of the Dalai Lama and his followers. More importantly, we have to look at what they say and do.

“From one side the Dalai Lama has sent many representatives to improve relations with the government. On the other hand, some Tibetans living abroad carry out activities to split the country. In recent times particularly, these activities have increased and not decreased. In August, over 1,000 Tibetans carried out activities and tried to enter our embassy in India. They thought they could enter and protest inside our embassy.

“Again, on 1 September, over 500 Tibetans carried out various protests in front of our embassy. Some of them staged a hunger strike to protest against the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Such actions were also carried out in other countries. But these protests will not harm the great deeds of our Motherland. These only bring harm to the Dalai Lama’s prestige, not to the Motherland. These actions cause great anger in the hearts of the people of our country and particularly in the hearts of Tibetans.

“Our hope is that the Dalai Lama thinks clearly and with a calm mind. He must carry out his work, make decisions and carry out his actions with a clear mind. For many years we have been one big family. Conditions in the country are extremely good. We have opened our doors to the outside and are trying to use our ancient skills. One billion people have enough to eat and wear and the situation is great. Other countries cannot bring about such change. It is difficult. In five years’ time, the changes will be even greater than today.

“The time for imperialists to colonize our country is over. Our national security

is strong. I am sure that you have seen the military parade during the thirty-fifth anniversary of the founding of our country. We have weapons that can reach over half the globe.

“Comrades, please think this over. If we don’t have strong arms and naval power, the imperialists will attack us. But these are for the nation’s security only. Today both the policies and the system are good. Our citizens are proud of us because we have become very strong now. In earlier times, Chinese people were looked down upon and considered second class.

“In Taiwan there is a brutal system. Although people are blocked from watching sports on TV, they love to watch them covertly. In the Olympic Games held in Los Angeles, we won fifteen gold medals and a number of silver and bronze medals.

“Tibet and China are like one family. It was like this before. It is like this now and in future too it will be like this. This is the evolution of history. No one created this. During the Yuan Dynasty the Emperor was a Mongolian. The Mongolian government was the Chinese Government. All of China was encompassed by it. All Chinese people accept that the Sung, Yuan and Qing were all dynasties of China. Foreigners accept this too. The leaders of the Kuomintang, who came after the Qing, were also Chinese.

“To say that Tibet’s relationship with the Yuan and Qing dynasties was equivalent to a country-to-country relationship is wrong. The relationship then was that of central and local governments. All were a part of China. We have to accept this historical development. Otherwise it won’t be good. This was the historical relationship between Tibet and China. Today too we are like one family. We have to know all these historical developments. No one can change these.

“When you return to India, please offer greetings to the Dalai Lama from the head of the United Front Work Department and Jiang Ping. Both Jiang Ping and I were in the group that welcomed the Dalai Lama in 1954. We know him.

“A Chinese–Tibetan dictionary is almost ready. About ten scholars have been working on this. We have many Tibetan scholars in our country. There are many Chinese scholars too. We also have many Tibetan research centres in the country that have made great progress,” said Yang.

Jiang added that a college for research into Tibetan culture and the arts had been started and there were many researchers and intellectuals there. Kundeling then said, “You have spoken in detail about many issues. I hope that both sides will think them over. I have noted some of them in my head and some of them I have jotted down in words. We are representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and what you have both said just now will be clearly reported to him. Likewise, we will also offer your greetings to His Holiness.

“We are also a little sad over the protests at the embassy in Delhi about which you talked. But these are some of the things that happen in the world. Good and bad always go together. If you are really thinking about the unity of the nationalities, then you should not think too much about these protests.

“The way His Holiness the Dalai Lama thinks is like this: His Holiness treats gaining freedom for Tibet and harmony between people as the most important things. His Holiness never talks about his personal prestige or demands anything for himself. These are not even in his mind. You have to know that he thinks about the harmony of the nationalities. We live in India where, unlike in China, there is great freedom. There is the freedom to protest. There is a feeling of deep hurt in the hearts

of exiled Tibetans and that is why they protest. If you think with an open mind and continue the relationship in accordance with the vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, I think it will be good,” Kundeling added.

Yang said there was no change in the Five-Point Proposal.

Kundeling continued, “We have come here primarily as a Fact-Finding Delegation and not to discuss the Five-Point Proposal. The other day, Jiang explained to us about this proposal. But the Tibetan people do not agree with it.

“Ren handed us the Tibetan translation of the proposal to read. We told the Chinese side that His Holiness the Dalai Lama did not seek any personal rights and yet the proposal was mainly about the Dalai Lama’s status and privilege. We opined that since there was a huge difference between the Five-Point Proposal and His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s vision, it would be wise to debate this separately.

“As you have said, we are one family. We also consider you as family and believe that it is important to point out where you are going wrong. We made it very clear that in order for the relationship to move forward, there was a need for a new path or policy.”

Yang Jingren said, “We know you came here as a Fact-Finding Delegation, but you have expressed some opinions on the proposal. This proposal is the policy of the Chinese Government. You can consider the proposal as you wish. These days it is not like in the 1950s. Things have changed. I have been to Tibet twice. Earlier, one had to fly from Beijing to Gormo and then travel to Lhasa after waiting in Gormo for a few days. Now you can reach Lhasa in four hours, irrespective of weather conditions. There are also three major roads to Tibet.

“Ulanfu is the leader of Inner Mongolia. These days he lives in Beijing as

chairman of the National People's Congress. As you become older, you climb up the ranks of the ladder and younger leaders take over responsibilities in their regions. The leader of Xinjiang is also young." Yang was obviously hinting that should His Holiness return, he should stay in Beijing.

Yang continued, "I am currently the chairman of the Hui autonomous region in Ningxia. During the Cultural Revolution I came to Beijing to become the head of the United Front Work Department and vice-chairman of the Political Consultative Committee. It is not that you cannot accomplish anything in Beijing. There are many things you can do. Within hours you can visit Ningxia and other regions and return here. There are many young leaders these days, including Secretary Hu and others, who are only in their forties and fifties. In Tibet, Dorjé Tseten is only in his fifties. It is not good for elderly leaders to remain unyielding, which makes it difficult to nurture younger leaders. Huge changes have taken place regarding the appointment of leaders and in the future there will be more changes. If a situation does not change then it cannot become a reality.

"When you discuss and think on the proposal, you must keep the larger issue of our Motherland in your minds. Without thinking like that you cannot accomplish big things. The main thing is that one cannot withdraw from the bigger purpose of the nation," Yang said.

At this point and with little hesitance, I whispered to Thubten Samphel that our leader, Kundeling, did not raise or explain anything about Tibet's history and asked him whether I should speak a little on the subject. Samphel highly encouraged that I should.

I raised my hand and Yang asked me to speak through the translator.

I ventured, “A little earlier, Minister said that perhaps we knew the status of Tibet during the Yuan Dynasty and the relationship at that time was that of central and local government, so we must accept this fact. I am someone who is interested in history. In Tibetan historical accounts, I have never seen any mention of Tibet being under the Yuan dynasty or Tibet being a part of the “one big family.” Of course, the situation after 1949 is different. It is important – as the Chinese Government says – to find truth from facts in history. History is history. If you have the time, I will be more than happy to explain our history to you. I have written a small history book – perhaps you have heard of it. It will be good for scholars to discuss and debate about history according to what Chinese, Tibetan and other historians have written.”

I felt Yang Jingren’s face burn with rage and anger, his face actually turned red when he replied, “When we talk about Tibet’s relationship with the Chinese Government, we can discuss our histories in detail. Tibet’s relations with the Yuan, Qing and Ming dynasties were relationships between local and central governments. The international community accepts this. No one can oppose this. Anyone who opposes it is only speaking from his own point of view.” He was implying that anyone who said otherwise was like a frog inside a well that knew nothing of the great ocean. “Tibet’s relationship with China at that time was between local and central governments.”

“Then I certainly have no reservations in speaking from my point of view,” I replied, not caring whether I was considered a frog in a well or not, because I knew the history of my country well. The look of shock on his face made the rebuttal all the more satisfying. “I have never seen a historical document that said Tibet was a part of China. The day I see such a document, things will be different. We have to

seek truth from facts. I hope I will find such a document in future,” I added.

Yang Jingren responded, “We can supply you with documents. Ministers were sent to Tibet during the Yuan Dynasty and at the time the Nationalist government offices were set up [in Tibet]. We will supply you with documents.”

“If you give me such documents, I will certainly research them,” I said.

“You live in India. Our relationship with India is good. Both China and India are considered third world countries. But both have different systems. These days in India there is a problem in the state of Punjab which we hope will be resolved soon. I hope both our countries can co-exist in harmony,” Yang said.

“Furthermore, we hope that Tibetans in India will not carry out bad activities in front of our embassy. We hope that when you return to India you will put a stop to such conduct. Although these activities will have no effect on our great country, they will have a negative impact on the Dalai Lama. You must think about this,” he added.

Alak Jigmé said, “Regarding the issue of whether Tibet was a part of China or not, it would be great to have a committee of Tibetan historians look into the histories of both Tibet and China and investigate.”

Yang’s response was, “There is no need to investigate this. Tibet has been a part of China. As Kundeling just said the Dalai Lama wants to improve his relations with the Chinese Government. If he is actually thinking about this, then I hope our relationship improves further.”

Yang then looked at his wristwatch and said, “It’s already six. I am feeling hungry. Let us eat.” The meeting ended abruptly.

We were quite happy with the way the meeting went. Dra’u Pon said, “I think we



*Final talk between Minister and Vice Minister of the United Front
Work Department and Tibetan Delegation in Beijing, 9 September 1985;
L–R: Dechen Wangdu, Kundeling Woeser Gyaltsen, Minister Yang Jingren
and Vice Minister Jiang Ping*

scored a small victory at the meeting. Like in the battlefield, we shot at the bull's eye."

"Good son of a good father. You did very well," Dra'u Pon said to me, patting me gently on my back. "All the *tingmos* [steamed Tibetan bread] and *dal* [lentil] you have eaten in your school served their purpose. Although Kundeling responded well on issues other than Tibetan history, your response was wonderful. From today onwards you are like my son. As for me, I can't even differentiate between Yuan, Ming and Qing," he said. Later, when we reached Hong Kong, he gave me \$50 and said that I should go out and enjoy. I felt my chest swell with pride.

Other members of the Fact-Finding Delegation were also happy I had responded to Yang's claim that Tibet had been a part of China. It was important for our delegation to make clear that historically Tibet was never a part of China. During the farewell dinner that night we enjoyed the food and had a good amount to drink too. During the entire visit, I did not touch liquor at all. However, the Minister did not join us for the farewell dinner, saying he had other engagements. I think he was not happy with the outcome of the meeting. Not only did we reject the Five-Point Proposal but also directly rejected their claim that Tibet was historically a part of China.

BEIJING, HONG KONG, DELHI, DHARAMSALA

At 8:00 a.m. on 10 September, we left Beijing on flight 105 to Hong Kong. Officials from the United Front Work Department and Nationalities Affairs came to see us off at the airport. We arrived at 10:00 a.m. in Hong Kong where the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Tokyo, Gyari Pema Gyalpo, came to receive us.

At 10:55 p.m. on 13 September, we departed Hong Kong on Lufthansa airways and arrived in New Delhi at 1:00 a.m. Two officials from the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Yarphe and Tsephun, came to receive us at the Indira Gandhi International Airport. Incidentally, at the immigration counter I met S.N. Sharma who was my college classmate in Chandigarh. Sharma had become chief of the Immigration Department of India.

On the morning before we left for Dharamsala, Kundeling assembled us and we weighed our personal luggage individually. The excess fee that was initially paid by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile for any excess luggage on our flight from Hong Kong was recovered from each of us because it was considered a personal expense. I was carrying lots of heavy textbooks and other materials for the Department of Education, which had to be paid for out of my own pocket. Nonetheless, I thought this was all for the Tibetan cause and so did not mind too much. On one hand I thought this was a rather strange phenomenon, but it also made me realise how transparent and accountable Kundeling's principles were and how they were reflected even through these small actions throughout our trip. We left Delhi by Janta Express train on the night of 14 September and the next day arrived in Pathankot from where we travelled to Dharamsala in two cars.

At 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon of 16 September 1985, the members of the delegation made our report to His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the presence of members of the

Kashag, Juchen Thupten Namgyal, Tenzin Geyche and Lobsang Dhargyé along with Kungo Tara, the secretary to His Holiness.

Kundeling spoke briefly about the places we had visited in Eastern Tibet and I was directed to read out a brief account from my notes before His Holiness. This was cut short by Kundeling because I was going into too much detail and he summarised the trip instead. His Holiness was relieved and very happy that our visit went well without too many problems.

His Holiness said, “You did a good job. It would be wonderful to continue with such delegations in the future.”

I felt proud to have been a part of this historic delegation.

At 2:00 p.m. on 17 September, we made a public report at Gangchen Kyishong hall on the visit to the officials of the exile government, including members of exile parliament. Additionally, Kundeling, Alak Jigmé and Dra’u Pon individually addressed the audience about our mission. Dra’u Pon took the opportunity to energetically praise me for defending Tibet’s historical status as an independent nation. At that time, I did not have the courage to address the gathering because I was a very junior civil servant.

In the evening, the Kashag hosted a dinner for us to show their appreciation for our good work. They assigned Alak Jigmé and me to compile the official report which we submitted on 8 November. We compiled a report containing 101 pages with fifteen appendices, copies of our visas, a 186-page diary, 1159 colour photos, 1011 negative slide pictures and many hours of video clips spanning the entire visit. I also submitted a personal letter containing seven suggestions to the Kashag for possible future delegates.

The Kashag informed us that if any of us wished to have a private audience with His Holiness, they would be happy to arrange it. I gratefully took this golden opportunity, during which I informed His Holiness of confidential messages and information I had gathered. During the audience, however, I grew very nervous as His Holiness looked at me straight in the eye with a rather serious expression on his face. The gentle smile that generally rests on his kind face was missing. It isn't an exaggeration to say that I nearly lost my mind and consequently my reports got rather confused and erratic. But His Holiness was patient with me and I managed convey the key points to him. I remembered one of the important points the people in Tibet requested, that I inform His Holiness the names of people, particularly lamas who were speaking ill of His Holiness to please the Chinese authorities.

"You did a good job and keep it up," His Holiness said.

I continued to serve the Tibetan Government-in-Exile under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for another twenty-nine years.

Now from my residence in Canberra, I look forward to the day when China agrees to His Holiness' proposal to resolve the issue of Tibet through the Middle Way Approach—a practical and reasonable policy that has the potential to benefit Tibet, China and perhaps the rest of the world.

EPILOGUE

As I reminisced about this historic experience, I remembered my fear that it would be impossible for the three provinces of Tibet to unite and gain freedom in my own lifetime. I noted with immense sadness that most of the people at the grassroots are at best unaware or do not understand the importance of having unity of the three provinces of Tibet.

This sad conclusion was brought on us after having witnessed the Tibetans we met in Tibet, including Panchen Rinpoché, who classified the members of our delegation based on the region we came from. Kundeling, Samphel and I were given a generic designation of “Tibetan” whereas Alak Jigmé and Kalden were called “Amdowa” and Dra’u Pon was referred to as “Kampa.” This categorization was used again and again by other Tibetans during our entire visit to Eastern Tibet.

There was a special sense of closeness when people met with members of our mission who were from the same region as they were. Regrettably, such closeness and affection did not extend to each of us equally. This is not to say that we were treated badly, just differently. It is, however, incorrect to state that only Tibetans inside Tibet engage in such a practice. In exile too some Tibetans talked of a “Kham Autonomous Region” that was to be separate from Ütsang and Amdo.

However, to my great satisfaction and relief, such a narrow mindset has changed over the years. If we look at the songs, art, poems and novels published in Tibet recently, the longing for a unified Tibet is loud and clear. Especially, in the wake of protests that erupted in Lhasa leading up to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, we witnessed some of the biggest united Tibetan protests throughout the Tibetan Plateau and around the world. These grassroots movements called for unity, setting aside “Khampa”, “Amdo” and “Ütsang” regionalism. They banded together as “tsampa-

eaters” or simply “Tibetans”. A single united voice from all Tibetans demanded the return of His Holiness and basic freedom for Tibetans in all of Tibet.

It is heartening to be able to witness this changing phenomenon in my lifetime. I realise the pivotal role the Tibetan language, culture and spiritual traditions play. As His Holiness said on 2 May 2018, “Even in the past, although Tibet was politically divided into many territories, our language, culture and religion have united all of us as people of Tibet.”

After being forced into exile to India in 1959, despite his young age of 24, His Holiness set up the Tibetan Government-in-Exile with astonishing foresight and planning. The foundation of the government was based on the unity of the three provinces, on implementing democratic principles, by giving equal rights to each region and clearly stated that all Tibetans would endure joy and sorrow together as “Tibetans”. His Holiness works tirelessly for the Tibetan people, but the appreciation is sometimes understated. We must take a moment to acknowledge the fundamental role His Holiness has played in leading the Tibetan people and its struggle under terribly difficult historical circumstances.

In tune with this core principle, His Holiness sent fact-finding delegations to Tibet once in 1979 and twice in 1980; all of them visited Ütsang, Amdo and Kham. However, the fourth delegation was only allowed to visit Amdo and some parts of Kham. Whether this was a coincidence or divine intervention is hard to say.

Around this time, Panchen Rinpoché also extensively visited areas in Amdo and Kham to promote and preserve Tibetan language, religion and culture with great success. As noted earlier, Panchen Rinpoché, Ngabo Nawang Jigmé and Baba Phuntsok Wangyal fully supported a united Tibet with genuine autonomy.

In fact, Panchen Rinpoché told us that “The desire to demand a United Autonomous Region of Tibetan Nationalities is fair, reasonable and legal; this is also in line with the aspirations of the Tibetan people.”

In a letter to Hu Jintao, Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal categorically stated in 2004 that “With regard to the question of establishing a United Autonomous Region of Tibetan Nationalities, some concerned people [Chinese authorities] think that this is a point of view suggested by overseas Tibetans, which is a big misconception since such ideas had already been there in Tibet [since 1951].”

As far as Tibetans inside Tibet are concerned, I can say with authority through my own experience that there is an absolute trust, reverence, admiration, respect and love for His Holiness and his guidance. They are ready to do anything for His Holiness and Tibet.

Therefore, I have deep conviction that a time will come during the lifetime of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, when all Tibetans, including those both in exile and within Tibet, will come together under a single administrative unit through the *Middle Way Approach*.

GLOSSARY OF TIBETAN NAMES AND TERMS

Phonetic Spelling	Wylie Transliteration	Brief Description
alak	<i>a lags</i>	A title equivalent to <i>Rinpoché</i> in Amdo dialect
Alak Jigmé	<i>a lags 'jigs med</i>	1938–2012. Incarnate Lama of Rongpo Göñchen Chökhör Ling, member of Kashag, deputy head of the fourth fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1985
Alak Khangyur Rinpoché	<i>a lag bka' 'gyur rin po che</i>	Reincarnate Lama recognised by Panchen Rinpoché
Alak Khasotsang	<i>a lags kha so tshang</i>	Lama at Rongpo Göñchen Monastery
Alo Chonzé Tsering Dorjé	<i>a lo chos mdzed tshe ring rdo rje</i>	1919–1997. A prominent Tibetan patriot who later caved in to the Chinese
Amchok Demo Ganden Chökhör Ling	<i>a mchog bde mo dga' ldan chos 'khor gling</i>	Branch monastery of Labrang Monastery in Amdo
Amdo	<i>a mdo</i>	North-eastern province, one of Tibet's three provinces: Ütsang, Kham, Amdo
Amdo Kalden / Kalden	<i>a mdo skal ldan / skal ldan</i>	1925–1999. Member of the Tibetan Parliament from Amdo, member of the fourth fact-finding delegation to Tibet, 1985
Amdowa	<i>a mdo ba</i>	People from Amdo
Apa Alo	<i>a pho a lo</i>	1901–1997. Manager at Lhabrang Tashi Khyil who spent 12 years in Chinese prison. His Tibetan name is Lobsang Tsewang
Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal	<i>ba pa phun tshogs dbang rgyal</i>	1922–2014. Founder of the Tibetan Communist Party, who was jailed for over a decade by Beijing
Benchen Monastery	<i>ban chen phun tshogs dar gyas gling</i>	Benchen Phuntsok Dargyé Ling, a monastery in Ga, Kham
Beri Monastery	<i>be ri dgon pa</i>	Monastery near Labrang, Amdo
Beudo Pöntsang	<i>be'u rdo dpon tshang</i>	Birthplace of the Tenth Panchen Lama in Amdo

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Chabcha	<i>chab cha</i>	Town in Amdo near Tso Ngön (Hainan)
Chazotsang Rabten	<i>rab brtan</i>	Rector of the Central School for Tibetans, member of the third fact-finding delegation to Tibet in 1980, Secretary Department of Education
Chenrezig	<i>sbyan res gzigs</i>	Bodhisattva of compassion (Skt. <i>Avalokitesvara</i>)
Chentsa	<i>gcan tsha</i>	County in Malho Prefecture, Amdo (Jiānzā)
Chimé Dorjé	<i>‘chi med rdo rje</i>	Tibetan student at Nationalities University, Beijing
Chimé Lhamo	<i>‘chi med lha mo</i>	Nationalities Affairs Commission official
Chisa Monastery	<i>‘chi sa dgon pa</i>	Monastery in Tsekhog, Amdo
Chöden Göñ	<i>chos ldan dgon</i>	Monastery in Pari, Amdo
Chölka Süm	<i>chol kha gsum</i>	The three provinces of Tibet: Kham, Amdo, Ütsang
Choné	<i>co ne / co ne rdzong</i>	County (<i>rdzong</i>) in Amdo
Choné Göñchen	<i>co ne dgon chen</i>	Monastery founded by Drogön Chögyal Phakpa (1235–1280)
Chönyi	<i>chos nyid</i>	Ngabo Nawang Jigmé’s daughter
chuba	<i>chu ba, chu pa</i>	Tibetan traditional lay dress
Chungpo Donyö and Döndrup	<i>gcung po don yod dang don grub</i>	A Tibetan opera: based on the story of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama as elder and younger brother
Chushi Gangdruk	<i>chu bzhi sgang drug</i>	Organization of Tibetan resistance fighters founded in 1958 at Lhokha, southern Tibet in 1958 (“Four Rivers, Six Ranges”)
Chuzhang		Designation of Chinese official

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Damkar Monastery	<i>dam dkar dgon pa</i>	Monastery in Kyegudo, Amdo
Dapön	<i>mda' dpon</i>	Military commander; general
Demchok	<i>mde mchog</i>	Buddhist tantric deity (Skt. <i>Cakrasaṃvara</i>)
Demo Thang	<i>bde mo thang</i>	A region in Amdo
Dergé Kalsang Wangdu	<i>sde dge skal bzang dbang 'dus</i>	1912–1984. Leader Chamdo delegation, Deputy Director PLA Military Committee Chamdo
desi	<i>sde srid</i>	Regent
Desi Sangyé Gyatso	<i>sangs rgyas rgya mtsho</i>	1617–1682. Regent of the Fifth Dalai Lama murdered by Mongol chief Lhazang Khan
Dobi Dakpa	<i>mdo bis grags pa</i>	Head of the Tibetan section, People's Publishing House (Tso Ngön)
Domé	<i>mdo smad</i>	Another name for Amdo
Dongchung Ngödrup	<i>gdong chung dngos grub</i>	Official with the Department of Security of the exile Tibetan administration who later became its Secretary and Minister
Dotö	<i>mdo stod</i>	Another name for Kham
Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering	<i>grwa'u dpon rin chen tshe ring</i>	1930–present. Founding member Chushi Gangdruk, member of the fourth fact-finding delegation 1985
Drangchar	<i>sbrang char</i>	Tibetan literary magazine (“Light Rain”) established 1981
Drepung	<i>'bras spung</i>	One of the four main Geluk monasteries
Drolwai Gönpö	<i>sgrol wa'i mgon po</i>	1575–1634. Tibetan polymath known by his Sanskrit name Tārānātha, belonging to the Jonang School

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Drotsang Dorjé Chang	<i>gro tshang rdo rje 'chang</i>	Monastery established at Tsongkha, Amdo, in 1392
Drupchen Kalden Gyatso	<i>grub chen skal ldan rgya mtsho</i>	Famous meditator at Gengya Drakar near Labrang, Amdo
Duomo Chöjé Tulku	<i>chos rje sprul sku</i>	Senior Lama at Damkar monastery, Amdo
Dungkar Lobsang Trinlé	<i>dung dkar blo bzang phrin las</i>	Lecturer at Nationalities University, Beijing
dutsi chömen	<i>bdud rtsi chos sman</i>	Blessed medicine
dzasak	<i>dza sag</i>	Manchu Dynasty rank equivalent to administrator or prefect (<i>spyi dpon</i>)
Ganden	<i>dga' ldan</i>	One of the four main Geluk monasteries
Ganden Jinchak Ling	<i>dga' ldan byin chags gling</i>	Beijing temple called “The Place blessed by Tuṣita” also known as “Yonghe Temple” or “Lama Temple”
Ganden Shedrup Ling	<i>dga' ldan shes sgrub gling</i>	Monastery established by the Third Jamyang Sheypa.
Ganden Tri Rinpoché	<i>dga' ldan khri rin po che</i>	Throne Holder of Ganden Monastery, head of the Geluk order of Tibetan Buddhism
Gedan Phuntsok Ling	<i>dge ldan phun tshogs gling</i>	Monastery in Sengé Shong, Amdo
Gelek Chödar	<i>dge legs chos dar</i>	Founder of Gyalmo Göñ Monastery, Amdo
Gendun Chöphel	<i>dge 'dun chos 'phel</i>	1903–1951. Tibetan scholar, artist, writer, linguist, poet
Gesar	<i>ge sar</i>	Gesar, legendary king of Ling, Tibet
geshé / geshé la	<i>dge ba'i gshes gnyen</i>	Spiritual friend (Skt. <i>kalyāṇamitra</i>), title conferred for academic study

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Geshé Lobsang Wangchuk	<i>dge bshes blo bzang dbang phyug</i>	1914–1987. Historian and monk imprisoned in Tibet from 1959 till he died
Geshong	<i>ge gzhang</i>	Valley in Amdo
Golok	<i>mgo log</i>	Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Amdo
Gönkhang	<i>dgon khang</i>	One section of the Temple in Beijing
Gönlung Jampa Ling	<i>dgon lung byams pa gling</i>	Monastery in Gönlung County, Amdo, founded by Gyalsé Dönyö Chökyi Gyatso in 1604.
gorey	<i>go re</i>	Amdo bread cooked in hot sand in the earth
Gungthang Rinpoché	<i>gung thang rin po che</i>	1926–2000. Sixth incarnation, senior religious leader at Labrang monastery
Gyalmo Gön	<i>rgyal mo dgon</i>	Monastery in Amdo
Gyalo Thondup	<i>rgya lo don grub</i>	1927–present. Older brother of Dalai Lama, acted as the Dalai Lama’s unofficial envoy
Gyalsé Dönyö Chökyi Gyatso	<i>rgyal sras don yod chos kyi rgya mtsho</i>	Founded Gönlung Monastery in 1604
Gyalthang Wangdu	<i>rgyal thang dbang ‘dus</i>	Translator for the People’s Printing Press
Gyalwa Rinpoché	<i>rgyal ba rin po che</i>	Title of the Dalai Lama (“Precious One”)
Gyanak Tulku	<i>rgya nag sprul sku</i>	Abbot of Kyegudo Monastery, Amdo
Gyari Pema Gyalpo	<i>rgya ri pad ma rgyal po</i>	1953–present. Dalai Lama’s representative in Japan, member of the second fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1980
Gyayak Rinpoché	<i>rgya yag rin po che</i>	Panchen Rinpoché’s spiritual master
Hor	<i>hor</i>	Region in Kham
Horling Yulgyé	<i>hor gling g.yul ‘gyed</i>	“The war of Hor and Ling,” a chapter in the Central Asian classic on King Gesar

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Jakyung Monastery	<i>bya khyung</i>	Monastery near Choné town
Jamyang Sheypa	<i>‘jam dbyangs shes pa</i>	Lineage of reincarnate Lamas based at Labrang monastery, Amdo
jathab	<i>ja thab</i>	Welcome stall or tea kitchen
Jetsün Jampa Gönpö	<i>rjes btsun byams pa dgon po</i>	Buddha Maitreya
Jetsün Lobsang Trinlé Lhundrup Chökyi Gyaltsen	<i>rje btsun blo bsang chos kyi rgyal mtshan</i>	Personal name of the Tenth Panchen Lama
Jetsün Pema	<i>rje btsun pad ma</i>	1940–present. Dalai Lama’s sister, former president Tibetan Children’s Village, leader of the third fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1980
Jigmé	<i>‘jig med</i>	Pomda’s son
Jokhang	<i>jo khang</i>	Temple in Lhasa dedicated to Lord (<i>jo bo</i>) Buddha
Jowo Rinpoché	<i>jo bo rin po che</i>	Statue of Shakyamuni Buddha in Lhasa
Juchen Thubten Namgyal	<i>ju chen thub bstan rnam rgyal</i>	1929–2011. Member of Chushi Gangdruk, former prime minister, leader of the first fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1979
Kadampa	<i>bka’ gdams pa</i>	School of Tibetan Buddhism founded by Atisha
Kalön	<i>bka’ blon</i>	Minister
Kalön tripa	<i>bka’ blon khri pa</i>	Prime minister
Kalsang Yarphe	<i>skal bzang yar ‘phel</i>	Secretary, Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Delhi
Kangyur	<i>bka’ ‘gyur</i>	The words of the Buddha translated into Tibetan
Kangyur Lhakhang	<i>bka’ ‘gyur lha khang</i>	One section of Temple in Beijing

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Kanlho	<i>kan lho</i>	Prefecture (<i>khul</i>) in Amdo (Gannan). It has seven counties: Labrang, Machu, Drugchu, Thebo,
Karze	<i>dkar mdzes</i>	Prefecture (<i>khul</i>) in Kham (Garze)
Kashag	<i>bka' shag</i>	Tibetan Cabinet
Kasür	<i>bka' zur</i>	Former minister
Katri, Kalön tripa	<i>bka' blon khri pa</i>	Prime minister
Kelsang	<i>skal bzang</i>	Monastery at Trindu, Amdo
Kelsang Gyaltzen	<i>skal bzang gyal mtshan</i>	1951–present. Special and deputy envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Europe and talks with Chinese government
Kham	<i>kham</i>	South-Eastern Province, one of Tibet's three main regions: Ütsang, Kham, Amdo
khatag	<i>dga' dar</i>	ceremonial scarf
Khatok Shinkyong Tulku	<i>ka thog gzhi skyong sprul sku</i>	Falsely claimed to represent His Holiness the Dalai Lama when visiting Tibet
Khenchen Gendun Chöjor Gyatso	<i>mkhan chen dge 'dun chos 'byor rgya mtsho</i>	Founded Tashi Gephel Ling Monastery in 1894
Khensür	<i>mkhan zur</i>	Former abbot
Khyentsé Rinpoché	<i>mkhyen brtse rin po che</i>	Reincarnate Lama in the Kagyü tradition
Kirti Rinpoché	<i>kirti rin po che</i>	The Kirti reincarnation lineage began in 1374, the current eleventh Kirti Rinpoché served as Kalön for Religious and Cultural Affairs
Kumbum Jampa Ling	<i>sku 'bum byams pa gling</i>	Monastery established at the birth place of Je Tsongkhapa (1357–1419). It is called Kumbum (“100,000 images”) because 100,000 statues of Gyalwa Sengé Ngaro were placed inside the stupa

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Kundeling	<i>kun bde ling</i>	Monastery established in Lhasa, 1794
Kundeling Woese Gyaltsen	<i>kun bde ling 'od zer rgyal mtshan</i>	1915–2001. Former prime minister, leader of the fourth fact-finding delegation to Tibet, 1985
Kunzig Panchen	<i>kun gzigs paṇ chen</i>	“All-Knowing” Panchen Lama. Lineage of eleven Geluk incarnate Lamas, second in authority to the Dalai Lama.
Kyegudo	<i>skye dgu mdo</i>	A county in Amdo (Yushu)
Kyegudo Monastery	<i>skye dgu mdo'i dgon pa</i>	Monastery in Amdo
labrang	<i>bla brang</i>	A lama's residence
Labrang	<i>bla brang</i>	County in Amdo (Xiahe)
Labrang Tashi Khyil	<i>bla brang bkra shis 'khyil</i>	Monastery in Amdo founded in 1709 by the first Jamyang Sheypa, Ngawang Tsöndrū
Lama chöpa	<i>bla ma mchod pa</i>	Religious offering (“Offering to the Lama”)
Lamo Dechen	<i>lha mo bde chen</i>	Monastery in Amdo founded in 1682
Lhagon Tulku	<i>lha dgon sprul sku</i>	Member of the third fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1980
Lhakpa Phuntsok	<i>lhag pa phun tshogs</i>	Tibetan student at Nationalities University, Beijing
Lhakpa Tsering	<i>lhag pa tshe ring</i>	Tibetan student at Nationalities University, Beijing
Lhamo	<i>lha mo</i>	Tibetan opera
Lhasa	<i>lha sa</i>	Capital of Tibet (“Place of the gods”)
Lobsang Paljor	<i>blo bzang dpal 'byor</i>	High official (<i>Chuzhang</i>) in Amdo
Lobsang Samten	<i>blo bzang bsam gtan</i>	1932–1984. Dalai Lama's older brother, member of the first fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1979

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Lobsang Tenzin	<i>blo bzang bstan 'dzin</i>	Head of Tibetan Children's Village, Ladakh, member of the third fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1980
Lodi Gyari Gyaltsen	<i>rgya ri blo gro rgyal mtshan</i>	1949–2018. Minister of foreign affairs, journalist, Dalai Lama's special envoy to US and chief negotiator to PRC, founding member Tibetan Youth Congress
Luchu Dzong	<i>klu chu rdzong</i>	Luchu County (Luqu Xian), one of the seven counties of Kanlho in Amdo province
Machu Dzong	<i>rma chu rdzong</i>	Machu County (Macu Xian), one of the seven counties of Kanlho in Amdo province
Malho / Malho Rebkong	<i>rma lho reb gong</i>	Malho Prefecture, Amdo
mani pills	<i>ma ni ril bu</i>	Blessed pills
Martsang	<i>smar tshang</i>	Region in Amdo
Matö	<i>rma stod rdzong</i>	County in Golok, Amdo
momo	<i>mo mo</i>	Tibetan dumplings
Mugé Samten	<i>mu ge bsam gtan</i>	1914–1993. one of the foremost scholars in Tibet, a monk at Labrang Monastery, later imprisoned for counter-revolutionary activity by China
Nampa Nangze	<i>rnam par snang mdzad</i>	Temple in Palthang, Amdo (Skt. <i>Vairocana</i>)
Nampel Tsang Lobsang Jinpa	<i>rnam 'phel blo bzang sbyin pa</i>	President of the Tibetan Youth Congress, member of the second fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1980
Nangchen	<i>snang chen</i>	Town in Kyegudo, Amdo
Nechung Monastery	<i>gnas chung dgon pa</i>	Monastery near Drepung Monastery outside Lhasa, seat of the Nechung oracle
Ngaba	<i>rnga ba rdzong</i>	County (<i>dzong</i>) in Sichuan

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Ngabo / Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé	<i>nga phod / nga phod ngag dbang 'jigs med</i>	1910–2009. Former Minister, Governor of Eastern Tibet, Commander of Tibetan army, who was captured by the Chinese army and was forced to sign the 17 Point Agreement on Tibet.
Ngari	<i>mnga' ris</i>	Prefecture (<i>sa khul</i>) in western Tibet
Norbu Dönden	<i>nor bu don ldan</i>	A monk official at the Office of the Dalai Lama, India
Nyima Göñ Ganden Rabgyé Ling	<i>nyi ma dgon dga' ldan rab rgyas gling</i>	Monastery in Machu Dzong, Amdo
Palden Chökhör Ling	<i>dpal ldan chos 'khor gling</i>	Monastery in Sengé Shong, Amdo
Palden Tsering	<i>dpal ldan tshe ring</i>	Tibetan secretary Tso Ngön province
Panchen	<i>pan chen</i>	Title signifying a great scholar (Skt. <i>mahāpaṇḍita</i>)
Panchen Rinpoché	<i>pandita chen po rin po che</i>	1938–1989. Tenth Panchen Lama Lobsang Trinlé Lhündrup Chökyi Gyaltzen, who met the fourth fact-finding delegation to Tibet in Beijing 1985
Pari Dzong	<i>dpa' ris rdzong</i>	County in Amdo (“Warrior-clan”)
Pema	<i>pad ma</i>	Town in Golok
Phenpo	<i>phan po</i>	Region in central Tibet
Phintso Thonden	<i>phun tshogs don ldan</i>	His Holiness’ former representative in New York
Phunrab Losang Dhargyé	<i>phun rab blo bzang dar rgyas</i>	Former deputy speaker of Parliament, a member of the first fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1979
Phuntsok Wangyal	<i>phun tshogs dbang rgyal</i>	Leader of the Tibetan community in UK, member of the second fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1980
Phunwang	<i>phun dbang</i>	Abbreviated name of Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal (<i>ba pa phun tshogs dbang rgyal</i>)

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Pomda Rabga	<i>spom mda' tshang rab dga'</i>	1902–1974. a controversial figure and one of the founders of the Tibet Improvement Party in India
Potala Palace	<i>po ta la</i>	Residence of Dalai Lama in Lhasa
Pur rgyal	<i>pur rgyal / spur rgyal</i>	Lit. Kingdom of Pu, which is an ancient name for Tibet perhaps referring to the kingdom of Tibetan king Pudé Gungyal
Rabgyé Göñ	<i>rab rgyas dgon</i>	Monastery in Pari area
Rabgyé Ling	<i>rab rgyas gling</i>	Tibetan settlement in Hunsur, South India
Rebkong / Rebkong Gönchen Dzong	<i>reb gong / reb gong dgon chen rdzong</i>	County in Amdo (Ch. <i>Tongren Xian</i>)
Rinchen Drup	<i>(bu ston) rin chen grub</i>	1290–1364. Sakya Buddhist scholar and polymath
rinpoché	<i>rin po che</i>	Respectful title (“Precious One”) usually applied to religious figures
Rongpo Göñchen Chökor Ling	<i>rong bo dgon chen chos 'khor gling</i>	Monastery in Rebkong founded by Samten Rinchen in 1342
Sakya	<i>sa skya</i>	One of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism
Sakya Tulku Sonam Tsemo	<i>sa skya sprul sku bsod nam tshe mo</i>	Lama in Kyegudo, Amdo
Samdhong Rinpoché	<i>zam gdong rin po che</i>	1939–present. Former Speaker and Prime Minister of exiled Tibet; former Vice Chancellor and professor emeritus of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, India
Sangling Tsering Dorjé	<i>zangs gling tshe ring rdo rje</i>	Representative of Dalai Lama in Switzerland, member of the second fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1980

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Sangyé	<i>sangs rgyas</i>	Vice-chairman, People's Publishing House, Beijing
Sangyé Lhakhang	<i>sangs rgyas lha khang</i>	Buddhist temple in Beijing ("Buddha Temple")
Sangyé Yeshe	<i>sangs rgyas ye shes</i>	Chinese functionary (Tian Bao)
Sengé Shong	<i>seng ge gzhong</i>	Valley in Rebkong, Amdo ("Lion Valley")
Sera	<i>se ra</i>	One of the four main Geluk monasteries
Sera Je	<i>se ra byes</i>	A college of Sera Monastery
Setsang Lobsang Palden Rinpoché	<i>se tshang blo bzang dpal ldan rin po che</i>	Teacher at the Nationalities School
Shabdrung Karpo	<i>zhabs drung dkar po</i>	Official at the office of the Standing Committee
Shakabpa	<i>zhva sgab pa (rtsis dpon dbang phyug bde ldan)</i>	1907–1989. The last Finance Minister of independent Tibet; scholar and author of <i>Tibet: A Political History</i>
Sherab Topgyal	<i>shes rab stobs rgyal</i>	Chinese official in charge of United Front Office in Lhasa (Li Tsao-min)
Shergön Shedrup Dhargyeling	<i>shes sgrub dar rgyas gling</i>	Monastery in Machu County, Amdo
shugtri lingka	<i>bzhugs khri gling ka</i>	Park near the Potala Palace in Lhasa, where there used to be a stone throne made for the Dalai Lama, hence the name, Throne Park
Situ Rinpoché	<i>si tu rin po che</i>	Reincarnate Lama of the Kagyu tradition
Sogpo Dzong	<i>sog po dzong</i>	County in Amdo (Qinghai)
sojong	<i>gso sbyong</i>	Bimonthly confession ceremony for the ordained monks and nuns
Takla Phuntsok Tashi	<i>stag lha phun tshogs bkra shis</i>	Former Minister of the Department of Security, member of the first fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1979

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Taklung	<i>stag lung</i>	Region northeast of Lhasa
Taklung Göñ	<i>stag lung dgon</i>	Monastery in Pari, Amdo
Taktser	<i>stag 'tsher</i>	Village in Amdo ("Tiger's Growl"), birthplace of the 14 th Dalai Lama
Taktsang Lhamo	<i>stag tshang lha mo</i>	Monastery established at Taktsang Lhamo ("Tiger's Lair") in 1748 by Gyaltzen Senge
Tashi Chuglung Thang	<i>bkra shis chug lung thang</i>	Place in Pari County, Amdo
Tashi Gephel Ling	<i>bkra shis dge 'phel gling</i>	Monastery established at Khyamru near Chabcha by Khenchen Gendun Chöjor Gyatso in 1894
Tashi Lhunpo	<i>bkra shis lhun po</i>	One of the four main Geluk monasteries, seat of the Panchen Rinpoché in Shigatse
Tashi Thekchen Ling	<i>bkra shis theg chen gling</i>	Monastery established in Chabcha by Tsultrim Nyandak Gyatso in 1902
Tashi Topgyal	<i>bkra shis stobs rgyal</i>	Former secretary of the Home Department, member of the first fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1979
Tashi Tsering	<i>bkra shis tshe ring</i>	Director of culture and history, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives; founding director of Amnye Machen Institute—Dharamsala and a prominent scholar on Tibetan history
Tashi Wangchuk	<i>bkra shis dbang phyugs</i>	Tibetan Communist from Karze, Kham; first Tibetan governor of Tso Ngön (Qinghai)
Tashi Wangdi	<i>bkra shis dbang 'dus</i>	Kalön and representative of the Dalai Lama, Delhi
Tengyur	<i>bstan 'gyur</i>	Collection of Indian commentaries on the words of the Buddha translated into Tibetan
Tenpai Gyaltzen	<i>bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan</i>	Fifth Kirti Rinpoché
Tenzin Dorjé	<i>bstan 'dzin rdo rje</i>	Tibetan student at the Nationalities University, Beijing

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Tenzin Geyche Tethong	<i>bstan 'dzin dge byed bkras mthong</i>	1950–present. Secretary to the Dalai Lama, Former Minister of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile
Tenzin Namgyal Tethong	<i>bstan 'dzin rnam rgyal bkras mthong</i>	1947–present. Former Prime Minister of exile Tibet; leader of the second fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1980
Tenzin Phuntsok Atisha	<i>bstan 'dzin phun tshogs atiśa</i>	1952–present. Former Secretary of the Department of International Relations and member of the fourth fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1985
thangka	<i>thang ka</i>	Traditional Tibetan religious painting mounted on silk brocade
Thubten Samphel	<i>thub bstan bsam 'phel</i>	1956–present. Former Secretary of the Department of Information, member of the fourth fact-finding delegation to Tibet, 1985, and former director of Tibet Policy Institute
Thutop	<i>mthu stobs</i>	Son of Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé
tong chö	<i>stong mchod</i>	An offering of one thousand butter lamps
Tongkor	<i>stong mkhor</i>	Monastery in Karzé prefecture, Domé Province
Trika	<i>khri ka</i>	Place near Kumbum
Trindu Dzong	<i>khri 'du dzong</i>	County in Kyegudo, Amdo (Chengduo)
Tsanga Gag	<i>tsanga gag</i>	Tsanga Dam (Longyangxia), in Tsolho, south of Lake Tso Ngön
Tsegön	<i>tshe dgon dzong</i>	County in Rebkong
Tsekhog	<i>tshe khog dzong</i>	County in Rebkong
Tsekhor Thang	<i>tshe khor thang</i>	District in Tsolho Region
Tsendok Tashi Chöling	<i>bkra shis chos gling</i>	Monastery in Machu County, Amdo

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Tseten Dolkar	<i>tshe brtan grol dkar</i>	Wife of Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé
Tseten Shabdrung	<i>tshe brtan zhabs drung</i>	Influential Tibetan intellectual/leader in Amdo
Tseten Zhuran	<i>tshe brtan</i>	Official from Tso Ngön's Department of Nationalities Affairs
Tsö	<i>gtsos</i>	Capital of Kanlho (Hezuo)
Tso Kawa	<i>mtsho kha ba</i>	A lake in Amdo ("Snowy Lake")
Tsö Monastery	<i>gtsos</i>	Monastery in Kanlho, Amdo
Tso Ngön	<i>mtsho sngon</i>	Province containing Tso Ngön lake
Tso Ngön po	<i>mtsho sngon po</i>	A lake in Amdo (Lit. Blue Lake) known as Kokonor in Mongolian and Qinghai Hu in Chinese, 100 km long and 60 km wide
Tsolho	<i>mtsho lho</i>	Region of Amdo south of Tso Ngön ("South of the lake")
Tsongkhapa	<i>btsong kha pa</i>	1357–1419. Founder of the Geluk order of Tibetan Buddhism
Tsoshar	<i>mtsho shar</i>	Region (prefecture) in Amdo east of Tso Ngön ("East of the Lake")
üchen	<i>dbu chen</i>	Tibetan capital script
Ütsang	<i>dbus gtshang</i>	Central province, one of Tibet's three traditional regions: Ütsang, Kham, Amdo.
Wangdu	<i>dbang 'dus</i>	Member of the third fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1980
Yalung Gön	<i>ya lung dgon</i>	Monastery in Pari area, Amdo
Yangmo Tso	<i>g.yang mo mtsho</i>	Member of the third fact-finding delegation to Tibet 1980

TIBET 1985: THE LAST FACT-FINDING DELEGATION

Yarlung Gön Thösam Ling	<i>yar lung dgon thos bsam gling</i>	Monastery founded by the Sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso
Yeshe Chödak	<i>ye shes chos grags</i>	A monk official at the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India
Yonghe Temple		“Palace of Peace and Harmony” converted into a Buddhist temple in 1789. Also known as Ganden Jinchak Ling

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tenzin Phuntsok Atisha was born in 1952 in Tsakor, a tiny village in Western Tibet. His parents had five children. Atisha was the fourth.

In 1960, his family decided to escape due to growing brutality in Tibet under China. After crossing the Nangpa-la Pass, they arrived in Nepal and eventually made their way to India a few years later.

Atisha went to the Central School for Tibetans in Dalhousie, a small town in northern India, and later received his MPhil in Political Science from Punjab University, Chandigarh. He served as president of both a local Tibetan Freedom Movement and a Regional Tibetan Youth Congress. From 1995 to 1998, he was a member of the Tibetan Youth Congress' Headquarters in Dharamsala.

In 1997, he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and attended the George Mason University in Virginia, US.

His work for the Central Tibetan Administration began in 1982 and he has served it in various capacities and positions. A major turning point in his life was in 1985, when he was appointed as a member of the Fourth Tibetan Fact-Finding Delegation to Tibet.

As the head of the Environment Desk at the Department of Information & International Relations (DIIR) in 1990, he served as a consultant to the World Wildlife Fund and advised it on issues concerning Tibet's environment. In the following years, he was a member of the Tibetan Delegation to the UN Earth Summit in Brazil, the Social Summit in Denmark and the City Summit in Istanbul, Turkey.

In 1999, he was appointed as the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Taiwan during which he organized His Holiness' visit to the country in 2001 when His Holiness met with then President Chen Shui Bian and Vice-President Lu Hsiu Lien. Atisha also campaigned and successfully advocated for the Taiwanese



*My son Tenzin Thutop and daughter Tenzin Norzom at back;
front L–R: Daughter-in-law Dolma Yangzom, oldest son Tsering Palden,
my wife Tsering Dolma and author*

Government to grant visas to the exiled Tibetans on their Identity Certificates (IC) issued by the Government of India.

He served as His Holiness the Dalai Lama's representative to Australia from 2003 to 2009 and twice arranged His Holiness' visits, in 2005 and 2007. These were hugely successful events with over 50,000 people attending his teachings and public talks. During the second visit, His Holiness met with then Prime Minister John Howard along with opposition leader, Kevin Rudd.

Atisha's achievements in Australia include the purchase of a house for the Tibet Information Office in Canberra with generous support from Robbie Wood and the celebration of the Year of Tibet with cultural performances and public talks to raise awareness about Tibet kindly sponsored by entrepreneur Steve Killelea. It was also during his tenure that the Australian Government significantly increased the intake of Tibetans through a humanitarian-based program and he has also raised funds for the Central Tibetan Administration.

In 2010, Atisha was appointed as the Secretary for international relations in the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), and soon after, he was selected as one of the senior assistants to His Holiness' representatives at the Ninth Round of Discussions in Beijing with the Chinese representatives.

Apart from his official responsibilities, Atisha has many interests ranging from environment to history. In 1982, he compiled a brief survey of Tibet's history in English and co-authored a handbook of Tibetan history with key historical figures from 1959 to 1986 in Tibetan. In 1994, along with Tenzin Norbu Nangsal, he compiled a book in Tibetan titled "Introduction to Tibet's environment, its protection and current situation". He also compiled His Holiness' speeches on environment, which were published in English and Tibetan.

Atisha has engaged in many community-based activities and initiatives such as the boycott of Chinese goods and the establishment of the Bharat Tibet Sahayog Manch (Indo-Tibetan Friendship Group) with Indresh Kumar of Bharatiya Janata Party and three other Tibetans.

In 2014, Atisha took an early retirement due to his health. He lives in Canberra with his family.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I respectfully thank His Holiness the Dalai Lama from the depths of my heart for his leadership and for graciously writing the Foreword. Without His Holiness' guidance and inspiration, this book would not exist.

My teacher, Professor Samdhong Rinpoché, has kindly written the Introduction, for which I remain forever grateful.

I would also like to acknowledge my profound appreciation of the writer, poet, translator and publisher, Bhuchung D. Sonam La, for kindly translating the main text from the original Tibetan. The English manuscript would not have seen the light of day without his assistance and enduring support. Similarly, I am grateful to Upasaka Dhawa Döndrup La (Acharya) for kindly translating the Foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Introduction by Prof Samdhong Rinpoché.

I am in debt to Jane Perkins, George Farley, Dr. Anna Alomes, Dr. John Schooneveldt and Paul Bourke for their assistance in editing the manuscript and for their kind encouragement and support. I am especially obliged to Professor Robbie Barnett, and to authors Adele Hulse, Claude Arpi, Dr IJ Coghlan and Matthew Akester for not only editing the draft but correcting the Chinese names and rendering valuable advice in improving the script.

I am also thankful to Chhime Rigzin Chhoekyapa La and Tseten Samdup Chhoekyapa La, private secretaries to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Thupten Samphel La, Former-Director of Tibet Policy Research Institute and Bhuchung K. Tsering La, Vice-President of the International Campaign for Tibet, for reading and giving valuable guidance. I am also thankful to my colleague, Kalsang Tsering Derab La, for his assistance in writing the footnotes. I am indebted to the Tibet Museum for sharing rare photos of our visit to Tibet.

I am thankful to Tsering Wangyal Shawa La of Geographic Information Systems at

the Princeton University library, for kindly drawing the maps depicted in this book. I would like to acknowledge my daughter, Tenzin Norzom, who helped edit and translate documents, notably the letters of Kundeling Woesser Gyaltzen to the Kashag. Thanks also to my son, Tenzin Thutop, for helping design the cover and layout of this book, and to Julie Tanner for designing the final files needed for publication.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to George Farley, the founder of the Australia Tibet Council and the Dalai Lama in Australia Ltd, for graciously sponsoring the publication of this book in Australia. It was under his leadership that the first visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Australia was able to take place in 1982, for which Tibetans will remain ever grateful.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to Steve Killelea, founder and chairman of The Charitable Foundation, Australia, and a long-time friend and sponsor of the Central Tibetan Administration in India. It was his generous donation that enabled the publication of this book in Tibetan and English in India.

Sincere thanks to Adele Hulse and George Farley who kindly assisted me in seeing the book through to the end and to Catherine Dunk for the index.

Thanks to my family for encouraging my writing, especially my wife, Tsering Dolma, for her patience and never-ending support in all my endeavours.

This book has finally achieved realization due to the help and kindness of many friends, many of whom I could not get a chance to name in this short note, but whose advice and remarks have made a great many improvements to my humble narration.

Above all, I wish to express my gratitude to His Holiness for encouraging elder Tibetans to write down their experiences and memoirs so that other interested people and the coming generations can have access to these recollections of their contribution to our struggle for freedom and improved Sino–Tibetan relations.



*L-R: Tenzin Atisha, HE Professor Samdhong Rinpoche and George Farley,
Canberra, 21 February 2006*

END NOTES

1. “A bird encountering a stone” (Tib. *bya rdo lam ‘phrad*) an example of a chance meeting.
2. Gyalo Thondup and Anne F. Thurston, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong: The Untold Story of My Struggle for Tibet* (Random House India; Delhi, 2015), p. 258
3. See <https://tibet.net/important-issues/sino-tibetan-dialogue/important-statements-of-his-holiness-the-dalai-lama/note-accompanying-his-holiness-letters-to-deng-xiaoping-and-jiang-zemin-dated-september-11-1992/>
4. See <http://www.massline.org/PekingReview/PR1984/PR1984-49.pdf>. *Peking Review* No 49, December 3, 1984
5. See <https://tibet.net/important-issues/sino-tibetan-dialogue/an-overview-of-sino-tibetan-dialogue/sino-tibetan-dialogue-hopes-and-suspensions-1978-1987/>.
6. Gyalo Thondup and Anne F. Thurston, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong: The Untold Story of My Struggle for Tibet* (Random House India; Delhi, 2015), p. 269
7. Takla Phuntsok Tashi, *Mi tshe’i byung ba brjod pa (An Account of My Life)*, Oral History Series no 2. Vol. 3 (Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. Dharamsala, 1995), pp. 223–4
8. *Sheja* (A monthly Official Journal in Tibetan published by Narthang Press), Dharamsala, January 1985 Issue
9. *Sheja* (A monthly Official Journal in Tibetan published by Narthang Press), Dharamsala, April 1985 Issue

10. Kundeling Woenser Gyaltsen was born in 1915 in Lhasa and joined the Tibetan civil service in 1934. He played a key role in the Dalai Lama's flight to India in March 1959. In exile he took on multiple positions including as Minister of Education and Minister of Religion before becoming the Katri (Prime Minister) in 1975. In 1967, he initiated the establishment of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Saranath, Varanasi. Kundeling met with Chinese Government representatives in 1973, marking the beginning of the Dalai Lama's efforts to initiate a dialogue with them. He lived with his family in Rajpur, India, where he authored an autobiography (in Tibetan) published in 2000. He served the Government-in-Exile for 42 years, retired in 1975 and passed away in 2001 at the age of 86.
11. Kasür Alak Jigmé Rinpoché was born in 1939 in Rebkong. In 1966, he was elected to the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and served as Deputy Speaker and as Speaker of the 5th and 6th Parliaments respectively. In 1980, he was appointed Auditor General and served as the Chairman of the Public Service Commission of the exile government. He was the Minister for the Department of Home. In 1996, having been appointed directly by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he served once again as Auditor General. Rinpoché retired in 2004, after 38 years of service. He breathed his last on 26 July 2012 at the age of 72.
12. Dra'u Pon Rinchen Tsering was born in 1930 at Kyegudo. He was chieftain of Kyegudo with 18 tribal territories under him. He was one of the founding members of Chushi Gangdruk in Tibet. In India, he served as a Gapa Tibetan-Settlement Officer in Kumrao, Himachal Pradesh. Dra'u Pon was elected for

three consecutive terms as a member of Tibetan parliament representing the Kham province; from 1960–1969 and again in 1976–1979. He was signatory to the controversial “agreement” signed between the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission of the Taiwanese Government and Chushi Gandruk in 1994. He has retired and currently resides at Gapa Tibetan Settlement with his family.

13. Amdo Kalden was born in Chabcha in 1925. He became a novice at the monastery of Tashi Theckchen Ling. He came into exile in 1959. From 1976 onwards, he represented the province of Amdo at the Tibetan Parliament for four consecutive terms. He was also an executive member of the Domé or Amdo Association and was elected as its Vice President. He played an active role as a member of the United Tibetan Association and passed away in 1999 while serving as a member of the Tibetan Parliament.
14. Thubten Samphel was born in 1956 in Lhasa. After coming into exile and he completed his studies at St. Stephens College in Delhi, then joined the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in 1980. He was the recipient of the Fulbright Scholarship from the United States and studied Journalism at Columbia University. He worked at the Office of Tibet in New York and as editor of the *Tibetan Bulletin* for many years in Dharamsala. He later became the Information Secretary of the Department of Information and International Relations. He served as spokesperson of the CTA and in 2012 became the first Director of the Tibet Policy Institute of the CTA. He authored *Falling Through the Roof* and was co-author of *Dalai Lamas of Tibet*. He served the CTA for nearly forty years and retired in 2019.

15. Juchen Thubten Namgyal, *Ju chhen thub bstan gyi sku tshe'i lo rgyus* (*Autobiography of Juchen Thupten Namgyal*), Vol. 11 (Juchentsang, 2014), p. 316
16. According to Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché (as quoted from Wikipedia):
 “The mantra *Om Mani Padmé Hum* is easy to say yet quite powerful, because it contains the essence of the entire teaching. When you say the first syllable *Om* it is blessed to help you achieve perfection in the practice of generosity, *Ma* helps perfect the practice of pure ethics, and *Ni* helps achieve perfection in the practice of tolerance and patience. *Pä*, the fourth syllable, helps to achieve perfection of perseverance, *Me* helps achieve perfection in the practice of concentration, and the final sixth syllable *Hum* helps achieve perfection in the practice of wisdom.
 “So in this way recitation of the mantra helps achieve perfection in the six practices from generosity to wisdom. The path of these six perfections is the path walked by all the Buddhas of the three times. What could then be more meaningful than to say the mantra and accomplish the six perfections?”
17. This mantra “carries the entire blessing of the twelve types of teaching taught by Buddha, which are the essence of his eighty-four thousand Dharmas. Therefore to recite it, is equivalent to the blessing of reciting...or practicing the whole teaching of the Buddha.” According to Dilgo Kheyentse Rinpoché quoted from: Sogyal Rinpoché *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (Random House, London, 2002), p. 395
18. Juchen Thubten Namgyal, *Ju chen thub bstan gyi sku tshe'i lo rgyus* (*Autobiography of Juchen Thupten Namgyal*), Vol. 11 (Juchentsang, 2014), p. 318

19. Blessing cords are lengths of string or fabric which have been blessed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Usually people will tie the string around their neck and consider that the string provides protection. The protection comes mainly from the fact that by wearing the string we are reminded of the qualities of the gurus and the Buddhas, and in that way we encourage ourselves to develop those qualities ourselves.
20. *Mani* pills are small herbal pills which are made by the monks of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's personal monastery, Namgyal Monastery, in Macleod Ganj, India. The pills are kept in the centre of the main temple during the annual Mani Prayer Festival, when hundreds of monks, nuns and lay people congregate to recite the mantra *Om Mani Padme Hum* for a few days and nights. This is the mantra of *Chenrezig* in Tibetan (*Avalokiteshvara*), who is the manifestation of enlightened compassion. So it is believed that these pills are imbued with that energy. See also note 39.
21. These are pills with different ingredients and rituals related with Guru Rinpoché and made by monasteries.
22. Juchen Thubten Namgyal, *Ju chhen thub bstan gyi sku tshe'i lo rgyus* (*Autobiography of Juchen Thupten Namgyal*), Vol. 11 (Juchentsang, 2014), p. 319
23. Takla Phuntsok Tashi, *Mi tshe'i byung ba brjod pa* (*An Account of My Life*) Oral History Series no 2. Vol. 3 (Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. Dharamsala, 1995), p. 269

24. Known as *Khampa Gya'u* ("Bearded Khampa") in Tibetan, George Patterson was a Scottish engineer doing Christian missionary work in China and eastern Tibet at the time of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950. Later he alerted the international media to the situation there. In 2011, the International Campaign for Tibet awarded him their Light of Truth Award for his work on Tibet.
25. Jetsun Pema: *Tibet My Story: An Autobiography* (Element Books Ltd, Australia, 1997), p. 152
26. Lhasang Tsering, Dongchung Ngödup, Ngawang Choephel, Thupten Samphel, Jeshong Lobsang Tsultrim (Uncle), Tsewang Phuntsok, Gyurme Samkhar and me.
27. Guru Puja (*bla ma mchod pa*) lays the whole path to enlightenment on our mindstream, connects us more strongly to our teachers, and allows us to quickly and effectively accumulate merit and purify negative karma. The practice consists of making offerings to and requesting inspiration from the Spiritual Teacher. The guru is seen as the embodiment of the Three Jewels (*Buddha, Dharma and Sangha*), in order to prepare our minds to generate realizations.
28. Tongchö (*stong mchod*) is an offering of one thousand butter lamps.
29. Sojong (*gso sbyong*) is the bi-monthly practice of confession observed by members of the monastic communities.
30. Takla Phuntsok Tashi, *Mi tshai byung ba brjod pa (An Account of My Life)* Oral History Series no 2. Vol. 3 (Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala, 1995), p. 140

31. Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé's formal address delivered to the Second Session of the 5th National People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region on 31 July 1989 (*Tibet Daily Newspaper*, Lhasa), pp. 20–3
32. Jampal Gyatso, *Slob dpon chhenpo panchhen rinpoche (Great Master Panchen Rinpoché)*, (Research & Analysis of Department of Security, Dharamsala, 1997), p. 172
33. Yin Fatang was born in 1922 at Feicheng in the Shandong province. He enrolled in the PLA in 1938 and the same year joined the Communist Party. In 1950, he participated in the “Liberation” of Tibet. In 1980, he was nominated Party Secretary for the Tibet Autonomous Region. He served the post till June 1985. (Claude Arpi, *Will Tibet Ever Find her Soul Again? India Tibet Relations 1947–1962, Part 2*, Vij Books India Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, India), p. 166
34. A thangka is Tibetan Buddhist painting on cotton or a silk applique usually depicting a Buddhist deity, or a *Mandala*.
35. The Official Biography of His Holiness the Dalai Lama: *Mdzad rnam rgya chhen snying rje'i rol mtsho (Broad Compassionate Ocean)*, Vol. 4 (Norbulinka Institute, Dharamsala, 2009), pp. 161–2
36. Glorious Wisdom's Excellent Qualities; Tibetan: Gang gi Lodre
37. Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal, *Witness to Tibet's History* (Paljor Publications, New Delhi, 2007), pp. 69–70
38. Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal, *Witness to Tibet's History* (Paljor Publications, New Delhi, 2007), p. 70

39. These *Mani* rilbus or pills are extremely rare and precious as they carry the blessings of the lineage lamas. Commonly inserted into statues and stupas as holy items, these rilbus are excellent for anyone seeking efficacious healing, powerful protection and general blessings. This is also the most commonly gifted offering by His Holiness to the Buddhist devotees. Other Precious Pills are made by Tibetan Medical and Astro-science Institute according to strict medical texts and they are in eight different forms. See footnote number 42 for more information.
40. The earlier letters are not translated here.
41. Gesar Epic Tradition is arguably the longest epic in the world. It prevails not only among the Tibetan, Mongol, Tujia, Naxi, Pumi and Yugu people, but also in neighbouring countries including Bhutan, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Mongolia and Russia. In 2009, it was inscribed into UNESCO world intangible heritage.
42. Precious Pills are made by Tibetan Medical and Astro-science Institute in Dharamsala. There are eight different types of pills. Precious pills represent a special kind of Tibetan drug that once was and still is, highly sought after by Tibetan, Chinese, and Mongolian patients. Such pills are generally taken as a potent prophylactic remedy and can be used to cure various diseases.
43. A khatag is a traditional ceremonial scarf in Tibetan Buddhism. Khatags are usually white and symbolize the purity of heart of the giver. It also symbolizes a blessing if given by High Lamas. It originated from India and these days there are khatags of different colors symbolizing different meanings.

44. Dorjé Wangchuk, *Bka' Zur Alags 'Jigs med Rin po che Sku Tshe'i Byung ba Brjod pa (Biography of Alak Jigmé Rinpoché)*, Vol. 2 (Dengyab Writer's Club, Dharamsala, 2014), pp. 135–6
45. Since disintegration of Tibet from the 13th century there originated a few sovereigns in Kham and Queen Ngachen is one of them.
46. Five Line prayer to Je Tsongkhapa: Source of all attainment, the Buddha Vajradhara, Great treasury of non-referential compassion, Avalokiteshvara, Powerful lord of flawless wisdom Manjushri, and destroyer of all the hosts of Mara, Vajrapani, lords of secrets, Crowning glory amongst all the learned masters of the land of snows, Tsongkhapa Lobsang Drakpa, at your feet I pray.
47. Meaning All-knowing One.
48. Hortsang Jigmé, *Mdo smad lorgyus chhenmo (The Greater History of Amdo)*, Vol . 3 (Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala, 2009), p. 588
49. Lobsang Jigmé Thubten Chokyi Nyima, born in 1948.
50. Gungthang Rinpoché was one of Tibetan Buddhism's most popular leaders. As the second most senior religious leader at Labrang monastery, Gungthang Rinpoché spent more than 20 years in prison for his refusal to cooperate with Beijing after Chinese troops took control of Tibet in the 1950s. After his release from prison in 1979, he travelled to Tibetan communities in north-western China, raising funds to rebuild monasteries destroyed during the 1966–76 Cultural Revolution and setting up schools.

51. Apa Alo (Hung Zhengqing) was a paramount leader and popularly known as a strong man of Lhabrang Tashi Khyil. He was the older brother of the 5th Jamyang Sheypa. He fought many battles with Kuomintang forces and was said to have a private army of around 10,000 soldiers. He rebelled against the Chinese Communist forces and suffered immensely. He was imprisoned for 12 years, 3 of which he spent in solitary prison with all his limbs shackled day and night.
52. Tibetan United Association: *Chhol gsum chhig bsgril tshogs p'i lo rgyus dngos bden byung rim deb ther drang srong dgyes p'i mchhod sprin (Factual History Book of Tibetan United Association)* (Tibetan United Association, Central Executive Committee, Dharamsala, 2005), pp. 112–3

INDEX

A activism, 165. *See also* demonstrations
 AFP (Agence-France-Presse), 174
 alcohol, 21–2, 34–5, 56
 Alo Chonzé, 50, 223
 Amchok Demo Ganden Chökhör monastery, 186, 223
 Amdo bread, 125, 127(pic), 227
 Amdo Chöden, 192
 Amdo Cultural Association, 177
 Amdo dialect, 113–14, 147
 Amdo Kalden. *See* Kalden, Amdo
 Amdo province (Tso Ngön/Qinghai), ix(map), 1, 6, 23, 54, 56, 62, 96–7, 169(pic), 223; *See also* Tso Ngön province; Qinghai province
 Amdo uprising, 154
 America (the US), 18–19, 39, 55, 68, 70, 106, 205
 Apa Alo (Lobsang Tsewang/Hung Zhengqing), 11, 175(pic), 176, 183, 223, 254n51
 Arongtsang, 146
 Asia Hotel (Hong Kong), 18
 Atisha, Tenzin Phuntsok (author), xxi, 3, 28–29, 213–14, 239–42
 pictures, vi–vii, 49, 53, 58, 66, 89, 108, 116, 127, 136, 161, 169, 175, 179, 181, 205, 240
 autonomy, 55, 59, 73–4, 76, 97

B Bathai Mountain, 165
 Beidaihe, 63, 87
 Beijing, 20–22, 150, 220
 pictures, 49, 53, 57, 58
 Beijing Hotel, 37
 Beijing People's Publishing House, 36
 Benchen Monastery, 141, 223
 Beri Monastery, 180, 223
 Beudo, 134, 224
 biographies of teachers, xv
 Bir Suja Tibetan School, 205(pic)
 blessing cords, 12, 17–18, 30, 61, 80, 107, 108(pic), 191, 249n19
 bombing, 186
 boycott on Chinese goods, 28–9, 115
 brainwashing, 85, 130. *See also* propaganda
 bribes, 137, 184
 butter, 6, 54

C caves, 67, 180
 Central Government (China), 45, 72, 74, 213
 Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), xx. *See also* Tibetan Government-in-Exile
 Chabcha (Hainan), 38, 137, 150, 151, 154–9, 224
 Chakravati (Indian official), 204
 Chamdo delegation, 73

- Chen Yi, 74
- Chenrezig mantra, 249n20. *See also Om Mani Padme Hum*
- Chenrezig thangka, 58–9
- Chetri, 128–9
- Chimé, Tulku, 141
- Chimé Lhamo, 20–21
- Chinese citizenship, 13–15
- Chinese Embassy (Delhi), 94, 115–16, 117, 203, 208
- Chinese Identity Cards, 14
- Chinese language, 6–7, 162, 201
- Chinese–Tibetan dictionary, 210
- Chisa Monastery, 130
- Chöjé Tulku, Duemo, 140–41
- Chölka Süm, 23, 224
- Choné, 118
- Choné, King of, 183
- Choné Dorjé Tsering, 164, 194
- Choné Pema Wangchuk, 164
- Chong Rinpoché, 104
- Chönyi (Ngabo's daughter), 68
- Chöpathar (official), 131
- Chöyang, 156
- Chushi Gangdruk, 16, 224
- Chutsang, Alak, 113
- CIA operations in Tibet, 18–19
- clothing, 125, 130, 162, 168
- communism, 72–3
- Communist Party of China, 33, 38–9, 44–5, 50, 52–4, 65, 83, 97, 107, 111, 121, 131, 198, 206
- Compendium of Valid Cognition*, 128
- compensation, 97
- construction projects. *See* development projects
- Cultural Revolution, 29, 36, 48, 53, 67, 103, 104, 106, 123, 135, 145, 154–5, 162, 167, 183–4, 191
- culture, Tibetan, 35, 36, 55, 56, 75, 85, 130, 152, 165, 168, 202, 221
- D** Dakpa (friend of Dra'u Pon), 171–2
- Dalai Lama, the, v(foreword), vi–vii(pics), xix–xxi, xxiii–xxiv, 11, 40–41, 60, 221
- audiences with delegates, 6–7, 217–18, 219
- birthday celebration in Beijing, 68–9, 87–8
- birthplace, 134–5, 136(pic)
- and Dra'u Pon, 3–4
- and Five Point proposal, xxvii–xxix, 47–8
- and Geshé Lobsang Wangchuk, 26
- and Labrang Tashi Khyil, 176, 177, 178
- long-life prayers for, 156–7
- and Ngabo, 32–3, 34, 61–2
- and Panchen Rinpoché, 56, 59, 68–9, 76, 77, 170

- and Phuntsok Wangyal, 71, 72, 78
- propaganda about, 106
- visit to India (1956), 70
- Damchö (teacher), 158
- Damkar Monastery, 140–41
- Davies, Derek, 18
- Dehra Dun, 153
- Delhi, 16–17, 28–9, 153
- Demo Thang, 186
- democracy, 115, 221
- “Democratic Reform” campaign, 85
- demonstrations, 2, 55, 115–16, 198, 203, 208, 210, 214, 220
- Deng Xiaoping, xxv, 18, 39, 40, 71, 72
- Department of Education, 71, 147, 217
- Department of Information and International Relations, 8–9
- Desi Sangyé Gyatso, 174, 225
- development projects, 48, 96, 207
- Dharamsala, xxv, 204, 205
- Dhargyé (Panchen Lama’s assistant), 68
- Dergé Kalsang Wangdu, 73, 225
- discrimination, 166
- Dobi Dakpa, 100
- documentation, historical, xvi, xvii, xix
- documents, confidential, 41–2
- Dolkar Tso, 171, 177
- Dolma (Labrang County), 171, 195
- Dolma Yangzom, 240(pic)
- Domé. *See* Amdo province
- Döndrup Ling, 178
- Dongchung Ngödrup, 3, 225
- Dorjé (official), 90
- Dorjé (vice-chair Malho Prefecture), 118, 121–2
- Dorjé Tseten, 50, 212
- Dornyin Pon, 107
- Drangchar*, 9, 225
- Dra’u Pon Rinchen Tsering, 1, 3–4, 22, 141, 192, 246–7n12
- and Atisha (author), 216, 218
- comments in Beijing, 41, 83, 201
- and Dakpa, 171–2
- on Gansu visit, 194
- and Gungthang Rinpoché, 177–8
- and Lingsang Sey, 152
- pictures, 58, 89, 126, 139, 175, 181, 189
- and Ren Rin Zhuran, 198
- and Tashi Wangchuk, 61
- Drepung Monastery, 76, 183
- Drotsang Norgye, 137
- Drowa Yan, 134
- Drub, Rinchen, xvi
- Drubchen Kalden Gyatso, 180

- E** Eastern Tibet Autonomous region (proposed), 74, 186
- education, 85, 130, 202. *See also* Department of Education
- equality, 44, 166, 196, 202, 221
- exile, 115, 127, 221
- F** facial expressions, 41
- fact-finding delegations, xxv–xxvi, 24, 37, 45, 47, 73, 221
- factories, 38–9, 68, 70, 96, 98, 156, 184–5
- family planning policy. *See* sterilization
- farms, 38, 39, 121, 144, 154, 200
- fire at Labrang Monastery, 38, 176–7, 178, 194, 196
- Five-Clause Agreement (1951), 33
- Five-Point Proposal (1981), xxvi–xxx, 124, 153, 180, 196
- and Alak Jigmé, 41
- and Jiang Ping, 39, 41
- and Kashag, 11
- and Kundeling, 40, 211
- and Ngabo, 33, 47–8
- and Panchen Rinpoché, 52
- and Phuntsok Wangyal, 44, 72, 73, 78
- and Sung Jue Zhang, 79–80, 82
- Four Modernizations policy, 38–9, 79
- freedom, 19, 25–6, 50, 55, 106, 113, 133, 163, 196, 198, 201, 204, 210
- Freedom of Information Act (US), 19
- G** Ganden Jinchak Ling, 226. *See* Yonghe Temple
- Ganden Monastery, 2, 76
- Ganden Shedrup Ling, 187–8
- Ganden Tri Rinpoché, 128, 226
- Gandhi, Indira, 153
- Gang of Four, 197
- Gannan (Kanlho) Autonomous Prefecture, 10, 38, 54, 74, 183
- Gansu Nationalities' Affairs Department, 164, 194
- Gansu province, 23, 52, 150, 163, 164, 194–7
- Gansu Reception Centre, 164
- Gao Chuzhang, 89
- Gao Tuo, 25–7
- Gedan Phuntsok Ling, 133
- Geluk school, 105, 123, 177
- Gen Nyima, 183
- Gen Zöpa, 188
- Gendun (official), 90, 146
- Gendun Chöphel, xvi–xvii, 226
- Gengya Drakar grasslands, 180
- Gesar's epic stories, 100, 157, 226
- Gewa (director United Front), 138
- gold mining, 168
- Golok, 38, 96, 137
- Gönlung Monastery (Youning Si), 103–4, 107

Gönpo, Drolwai, xv–xvi
 Gonpo, Tulku, 156
gorey, 125, 127(pic), 227. *See also* Amdo bread
 Government-in-Exile. *See* Tibetan
 Government-in-Exile
Great History of Amdo, 167
 Great Wall of China, 43
 Grunfeld, Tom, 18–19
 Gudak Dorjé, 167
 guesthouses, 147
 Gungthang Rinpoché, 11, 38, 172, 175(pic),
 176, 177–8, 182, 253n50
 Gungthang Tsultrim, 177–8
 Guru Rinpoché mantra, 6, 140
 Gyalmo Göñ, 186
 Gyalmotsang, 186
 Gyalo Thondup, xxv, xxvi, xxviii, xxx, 15, 44,
 47, 52, 72, 78, 80
 Gyalwa Senge Ngaro, 105
 Gyanak Tulku, 140
 Gyari Pema Gyalpo, xxv, 217, 227
 Gyari Trinlé, 17
 Gyayak Rinpoché, 146
 Gyurme (Nangra Pon's son), 113

H Hachen Rinpoché, 104
 Hainan (Chabcha), 38, 137, 150, 151, 154–9, 224
 Han migration, 6, 31, 167
 Hashang Ri, 167
 Hindi, 190
 His Holiness. *See* Dalai Lama, the
 historiography, xv–xvii
 history, Tibetan, xv–xvii, 6–7, 11, 26, 33, 35,
 166, 180, 185, 209, 212–14, 216
 holy pills, 80. *See also* *mani* pills
 Hong Kong, 17–19, 39, 55, 96, 145, 207, 217
 hope, 36
 Hor (Tu) nationality, 103, 104
 Horlan Mountains, 164
Horling Yulgyé, 157, 227
 Hortsang Jigmé, 167
 hot spring, 86
 Hu Jintao, 73–5, 222
 Hu Qili, 206
 Hu Yaobang, xxvi, 44, 45, 52, 71, 72, 79, 137
 Hui Muslims, 99, 118, 134, 167
 Huzhu Tu Autonomous County, 103
 hydroelectric power, 158

Identity Certificates (ICs), 13
 imperialism, 39, 106, 208–9
 independence, 12, 44, 55, 59, 71, 76, 82, 124
 Indian Embassy (Beijing), 35, 60, 85, 91, 204
 Inner Mongolia, 23, 24, 211
 interrogation, 193, 195

J Jakyung Monastery, 118
 Jamyang Lodro, 186
 Jamyang Sheypa Rinpoché, 11, 38, 171, 172, 175(pic), 176, 186, 187
 Jeep Cherokee, 70
 Jetsün Pema, xxvi, 25, 77, 80
 Jiang Ping, 37–9, 41, 68, 69, 80, 206, 210, 215(pic)
 Jigmé, Alak (Alak Jigmé Trinlé Lhundrup), 1, 2, 3, 16, 41–2, 64, 246n11
 and Alak Trigen, 146–7, 192
 comments in Beijing, 40–1, 200–1, 214
 in Lanzhou, 165–6
 and Panchen Rinpoché, 76–7
 and Phuntsok Wangyal, 78
 pictures, 58, 66, 89, 126, 142, 173, 175, 189
 in Rebkong, 119–20, 123, 128–9, 130
 and Ren Rin Zhuran, 91–2, 94–5, 113, 198
 and Shinkyong Rinpoché, 152–3
 and Sung Jue Zhang, 82, 84
 in Tsolho, 146

Jimmy's Kitchen, 18
 Jokhang, the, 29
 Jowo Rinpoché, 145
 Juchen Thupten Namgyal, xxv, xxviii, 3–4, 5, 6, 7–8, 10, 15, 25
 Jutang Anan, 137, 138

K Kadampa school, 103
Kalachakra Initiation, 7–8
 Kalden, Amdo, 1, 3, 76–7, 93, 94–5, 133, 137, 154, 156, 180, 182, 190, 247n13
 comments in Beijing, 201
 on Gansu visit, 194–5
 pictures, 58, 66, 89, 126, 143, 175
 and Ren Rin Zhuran, 198
 Kalden Gyatso, 123
 Kalsang Monastery, 145
Kangyur, 165
 Kanlho (Gannan) Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, 10, 38, 54, 74, 183
 Kao Suren, 37
 Karchu, 171
 Karma Thubten, 141
 Karmi Thar, 125
 Karze, 174, 180
 Kashag (Tibetan Cabinet), xxviii, 10, 11–12
 Kasür Lodi Gyari, 21

- Kelsang Gyaltzen, 21
- Kelsang Yarphel, 17. *See also* Yarphel
- Kham Autonomous Region (proposed), 220
- Kham province, viii–ix (maps), 16, 23, 56
- Khampa dialect, 18
- Khangyur Rinpoché, Alak, 59, 223
- Kharmi Thar, 125
- Khasotsang, Alak, 123, 223
- khatags, 131–32, 252n43
- Khatok Shinkyong Tulku, 50
- Khyamru, 156
- Khyentsé Rinpoché, 144
- Kirti Rinpoché, 178, 191, 229
- Ko Chu Zhang, 37
- Ko Wu, 20
- Ko Xing, 25
- Koh Chin Teh, 20, 23
- Kublai Khan, 165
- Kumbum, 53
- Kumbum Monastery (Ta'er), 29, 105–6, 107
- Kunchok (daughter of Zhuran), 155
- Kundeling Woesser Gyaltzen, 1, 2, 3, 14–15, 16, 90, 217, 218, 246n10
and Dalai Lama's birthday, 68–9, 87–8
and Dra'u Pon, 171–2
final comments, Beijing, 200, 207, 211
and Gansu, 194
and Jiang Ping, 37–8, 40, 41
letters to Kashag, 87–8, 147–51
and Ma Pu Zhang, 97
and Ngabo, 31, 35
and Panchen Lama, 51, 56, 77
at People's Publishing House, 36
and Phuntsok Wangyal, 71–3
pictures, 57, 58, 66, 89, 175, 189, 215
in Rebkhong, 125
and Ren Rin Zhuran, 23–4, 91–2, 98, 100–101, 107–113, 171
and Samphel, 27
and Sung Jue Zhang, 81–3
- Kunga Gyaltzen, Sakya Pandita, 165
- Kuomintang, 34, 71, 76, 77, 78
- Kyangtsa, 187
- Kyegudo (Yushu) region, 38, 96, 137–45, 150, 151, 152, 153
pictures, 139, 142, 143
- Kyegudo Monastery, 140
- Labrang, 53, 171, 179 (pic), 193
- Labrang Tashi Khyil Monastery, 38, 172–7, 194, 195, 196, 197
pictures, 173, 175, 181
- lamas, 195
- Langmusi (Taktsang Lhamo), 191

language. *See* Chinese language; Tibetan language

Lanzhou, 164

leftist influences, 74. *See also* ultra-leftists

Lhamo Shabdrung Karpo, 113

Lhasa, xxv, 2, 56, 60, 211, 220

Lhazang Khan, 174

Li (official/guide), 86

Li Tsaomin (Sherab Topgyal), 69–70

Li Xiaonan, 72

liberal policies, xx, 44, 54, 76

Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 9

Lidang Hills, 86

Lingsang Sey, 152

Lobsang (head of Tik), 154

Lobsang (monk from Kham), 160

Lobsang Paljor, Chuzhang, 138

Lobsang Samten, xxv, 25, 47

Lobsang Tenzin, 180, 191

Lobsang Wangchuk, Geshé, 26

Lodi Gyari Gyaltsen, xxviii, 21, 48, 231

Long March, 62

Luchu County (Luqu Xian), 187–8, 189(pic)

Luchu Dzong, 192–3

Luchu River, 187

luggage, 17–18, 108(pic), 217

M Ma Pu Zhang, 90, 95, 96–7, 119

Macau, 39

Machu County, 188–90

Machu (Yellow) River, 146, 158

Maitreya Buddha, 103, 105

Malho Dance Troupe, 129

Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, 118, 121

mani mantra, 6, 248n16

Mani Prayer Festival, 249n20

mani pills, 12, 30, 108(pic), 191, 249n20, 252n39

Manjushri, 65

mantras, 6

Mao Zedong, 58, 70, 83, 90

Marxism, 72–3

Marxist-Leninist ideology, 72

massacre, 184

Matö Dzong, 137

media, 26–7, 32–3, 55, 207. *See also* Xinhua News Agency; AFP

Middle Way Policy/Approach, xx, xxi, 18, 59, 183, 219, 222

Military Day, 138–40

Ming Dynasty, 65, 213

Ming emperors' tombs, 43, 86

mining, 6, 124, 168, 187

minorities, 20, 36, 39, 44–5, 54, 97, 99, 121–2, 134, 166, 196, 197, 200, 202
 Minzu Fandian (Nationalities Guesthouse), 199
Mitseï Jungwa Jöpa, 15, 69, 174
 modernization, 195. *See also* Four Modernizations policy; progress
 monasteries, 12, 48, 54, 65–7, 75, 76, 97, 156, 162, 183–4, 194, 195, 201
 monastery permits, 137, 183, 184, 201
 Mongolia, 209. *See also* Inner Mongolia
 Mongolian–Tibetan Affairs Commission (Taiwan), 4, 5, 72
 Mongolians, 20, 29, 30. *See also* Ulanfu
 Mount Wutai Shan, 63, 65–7, 66(pic), 87, 116(pic)
 Mugé Samten, 165–6, 231
 Muslims, 20, 99, 118, 134, 167

N Namgyal Shastri, 7–8
 Nampar Nangze temple, 141
 Nampeltsang Lobsang Jinpa, xxv, 3, 8
 Nangchen, 96
 Nangchen, Prince of, 113
 Nangchen, Queen of, 144, 152
 Nash, Nancy, 17, 18, 19, 204
 National People's Congress, 61–2, 95, 98, 164

National Uprising (1959), 32, 111
 Nationalities Affairs Commission, 20, 21, 25–7, 37, 206
 Nationalities University (Beijing), 35
 Nationalities University (Tso Ngön), 100, 113
 Nechung Monastery, 16, 231
 negotiations with China, xx, 21, 48
 Nepal–Tibet border, 91, 98
 Ngaba, 178
 Ngabo Ngawang Jigmé, xxix, 2, 11, 31–5, 38, 47–50, 49(pic), 62
 Ngawang Phuntsok, 144
 Ngonglo (of Chabcha), 155
 Ningxia, 212
 Ninth Round discussions (2010), 21
 nomads, 38, 113, 118, 130–33, 138, 144, 146, 168, 187, 191–2, 200
Noodle Maker of Kalimpong, xxviii
 Norbu Dönden, 8
 Northwest Nationalities University, 165
 Number One Hotel, 90
 Number Two Tso Ngön Weaving Factory, 156
 Nyenthok Pontruk, 107
 Nyima Gön Ganden Rabgyé Ling, 190

- O
- occupation of Tibet, 75
 - offices, Chinese, 192–3
 - Olympic Games, 209, 220
 - Om Mani Padme Hum*, 6, 248n16
 - One Country Two Systems, 39
 - Ong Rinpoché, 104
 - opera, 170
- P
- Palden Chökhör Ling, 133
 - Palden Tsering, 99
 - Palthag, 141, 144
 - Panchen Lama/Rinpoché, xxix, 11
 - audiences with delegates, 51–9, 76–7
 - on autonomy, 45, 75
 - birthplace, 134
 - and Dalai Lama, 68–9, 170
 - and Gyalmo, 186
 - and monasteries, 176, 177, 178, 191, 206
 - and Ngabo, 34
 - visit to Pari, 167, 168
 - pictures, 53, 57, 58
 - on unity, 222
 - Pari Tibetan Autonomous County, 167–9
 - Patterson, George N., 18–19, 249–50n24
 - Peaceful Talks, 73
 - Peking duck, 45–6
 - Pema, 96
 - Pema Dorjé, 134
 - Pema Göñ monastery, 65
 - Pema Trinlé, 137–8
 - People's Hospital (Kyegudo), 141
 - People's Liberation Army, 35, 140
 - People's Publishing Houses, 36, 95, 100
 - Phintso Thonden, 43
 - photographs of the Dalai Lama, 12, 60, 61, 80, 82–3, 86, 91–2, 98, 107–112, 108(pic), 118, 148–9, 157–8
 - Phunrab Lobsang Dhargyé, xxv, 6
 - Phunthar Gyal, 118
 - Phuntsok, Tenzin (Atisha). *See* Atisha, Tenzin
 - Phuntsok (author)
 - Phuntsok Tsering, 168
 - Phuntsok Wangdak, 137, 138
 - Phuntsok Wangyal, Bapa, xxviii, xxix, 2, 11, 44–5, 50, 64, 68, 71–3, 78, 222, 223
 - Phuntsok Wangyal (UK), xxv–xxvi
 - pills, 12, 61, 80, 108(pic), 148. *See also* mani pills; precious pills
 - place names, 11, 118
 - Political Consultative Congress, 164
 - political system, Tibetan, xix. *See also* democracy; Tibetan Government-in-Exile
 - politics, 79, 82
 - posters, 26
 - Potala Palace, 29, 76

prayer books, 155
 precious pills, 12, 17–18, 83–4, 91–2, 98, 107,
 109–11, 118, 149, 160, 252
 progress, 28, 36, 38–9
 propaganda, 7, 29, 106, 197
 protests. *See* demonstrations
 public, speaking to, 61, 81, 194, 195–6, 200

Q Qing Dynasty, 86, 209, 213
 Qinghai Lake (Tso Ngön), 160, 161(pic)
 Qinghai province, 23, 24, 87, 96–7, 149, 150.
See also Amdo province; Tso Ngön province
 Qinshu, 164

R Ragdi, 50
 Rebkong, 53, 95, 113, 118–22, 150
 pictures, 126, 127
 Red Army, 62
 regionalism, 220
 religious freedom, 34, 55, 77, 80, 81, 83, 97, 98,
 121, 124, 203
 Ren Rin Zhuran, 89(pic)
 and Alak Jigmé, 92, 113, 198, 202
 and Dra'u Pon, 198
 and fact-finding delegations, 20, 23–4, 63,
 68, 79, 94, 202
 and Kalden, 198

and Kundeling, 91, 98, 100–101, 107–13, 171
 and Thubten Samphel, 145
 renovation of monasteries, 183–4
 report, 218
 Reting Monastery, 128
 Rigta, Alak, 123
 Rin Chu Zhang, 37
 Rinchen Tsundue Gyaltsen, 105
 Rongpo Göichen Chökhör Ling Monastery,
 118, 120, 123–4
 Rongpo Kalden Gyatso, 146
 Rongpo Sertri Tsang, 107

S Sakya school, 103, 144, 165
 Samdhong Rinpoché, xv–xxii(introduction),
 8, 75, 128, 233
 Samdrup (poet), 132–3
 Samphel, Thubten, 1–2, 26, 27, 28, 94, 145, 195,
 201–2, 247n14
 pictures, 49, 66, 89, 175
 San Wingham, 17–18
 Sangay (People's Publishing House), 36
 Sangling Tsering Dorjé, xxv
 Sangyé Yeshe (Tian Bao), 74
 Saran, Shyam, 35, 60, 204
 Sera Monastery, 76, 141

Setsang Lobsang Palden Rinpoché, 185
 Seventeen-Point Agreement (1951), xviii, 32, 33
 70,000-Character Petition (1962), 34, 57, 77
 Shakabpa, 166, 234
 Shanxi province, 65
 Sharma, S.N., 217
 Shatsang, Alak, 168–9
 Shenyang hotel, 68
 Sherab, Geshé, 128
 Sherab Topgyal (Li Tsaomin), 69–70
 Shergön Shedrup Dhargyeling, 188
 Shinkyong Rinpoché, 152–3
 shopping markets in China, 28
 Shugtri Lingka, 59, 76, 234
 Si Yi Ting, 20
 Sichuan province, 23, 174
 Sino–Tibetan border, 164, 166, 167
 Situ Rinpoché, 144
 socialism, 22, 73, 81
 Sonam Tsemo, Sakya Tulku, 144
 Songkho (department head), 154
 Soviet Union (USSR), 39, 55
 speeches, 61
 statistics, 159
 sterilization, 162, 200, 201, 202

students, 85–6, 101–2, 113, 121, 165
 stupas, 105, 165
 Sung Chu Zhang, 200, 203
 Sung Jue Zhang, 79–84, 101, 148
 Sung Yungting, 25

T Ta'er. *See* Kumbum Monastery
 table manners, 22
 Taitung, 67
 Taiwan, 4, 5, 18, 39, 71, 72, 76, 77, 117, 145, 209
 Takla Phuntsok Tashi, xxv, xxviii, 15, 23, 25, 47, 48, 69, 174
 Taklung, 10
 Takster, 134–5, 136(pic)
 Taktser Rinpoché, 45
 Taktsang Lhamo (Langmusi), 191
 Tamdin Tsering Shuji, 130–32, 133(pic), 137
 Tang dynasty, 86
 Tara prayer books, 155
 Tashi Chuglung Thang, 168
 Tashi Gephel Ling Monastery, 156–7
 Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, 76, 78
 Tashi Thekchen Ling, 154–5
 Tashi Topgyal, xxv, 25
 Tashi Tsering, 9, 235
 Tashi Wangchuk, 24, 61–2

- Tashi Wangdi, 2, 16, 26
- Task Force (2010), 21
- taxes, 33
- “Temporariests”, xviii
- Tendu, 167
- Tengyur*, 165
- Tenpai Gyaltsen, 191
- Tenzin Geyche Tethong, 6, 236
- Tenzin Namgyal Tethong, xxv, 236
- Tenzin Norzom, 240(pic)
- Tenzin Thutop, 205(pic), 240(pic)
- Terlung Göñ, 185
- Terracotta Warriors, 86
- Tersey Tsultrim, 2
- Terton Rinpoché, Alak, 107
- textbooks, 147, 217
- thangkas, 58–59, 68
- Third Plenary Session (Communist Party), 38, 39, 48, 53
- Thubten Samphel. *See* Samphel, Thubten
- Thubten-la, 47
- Thupa Rinpoché, 104
- Thupten Namgyal, 48, 52
- Thutop (son of Ngabo), 31, 50
- Tian Bao (Sangyé Yeshe), 74
- Tianzhu (Pari) Tibetan Autonomous County, 167–9
- Tibet, viii(map), xv, xxv. *See also* history, Tibetan; political system, Tibetan
- Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), 23, 34, 53, 54, 73, 203, 206–7, 208
- Tibet Medical Centre, 91, 96
- Tibetan Autonomous Counties and Prefectures, 23, 74
- Tibetan Communist Party, 2
- Tibetan Government-in-Exile, xxv, xxx, 9, 12, 16, 33, 71, 72, 76, 77, 78, 221
- Tibetan language, 6–7, 30, 35, 36, 56, 76, 99, 122, 162, 165, 167, 195, 201, 221
- Tibetan Medical and Astro-science Institute (Dharamsala), 141, 252n39, 252n42
- Tibetan medicine, 141
- Tibetan Nationality Institute, 85–6
- Tibetan Opera, 170
- Tibetan Youth Congress, 8, 16, 28, 51, 115, 153
- toasts, 21–2
- Tongkho (official), 90, 119, 146, 163
- Topden (director), 138
- tourism, 31, 174, 195, 207
- translations, xv
- travel documents, 13–15, 16
- Trigen, Alak, 123, 146–7, 172, 192
- Trindu (Chengdu) Dzong, 144
- truth, seeking from facts, 41, 54, 69, 81, 109, 128, 213–14

Tsanga Gag, 158
 Tsekhog County, 130–33
 Tsekhor Thang, 146
 Tsendok Tashi Chöling Monastery, 188
 Tsering (teacher), 86
 Tsering (from Trika), 106
 Tsering Dolma, 205(pic), 240(pic)
 Tsering Dorjé, 50
 Tsering Palden, 240(pic)
 Tsering Phuntsok, 17
 Tseten (chairman), 162
 Tseten Dorjé, 196–7
 Tseten Shabdrung, 11
 Tseten Zhuran, 90, 94, 99, 146
 Tsö, 183–5
 Tsö Monastery, 183
 Tso Ngön Lake (Blue Lake), 160, 161(pic)
 Tso Ngön Nationalities' School/University,
 100, 113
 Tso Ngön People's Publishing House, 95, 100
 Tso Ngön province, 23, 38, 52, 54, 94, 114, 163.
 See also Amdo province; Qinghai province
 Tso Ngön Teacher Training School, 158–9
 Tso Ngön University, 162
 Tso Ngön Weaving Factory, Number Two, 156
 Tsolho Region, 146

Tsongkhapa, Je, 105, 156–7, 253n46
 Tsonying Island (Tsonying Mahadeva), 160,
 161(pic)
 Ulanfu, 24, 211–12
 ultra-leftists, 44–5, 53–4
 United Autonomous Region of Tibetan
 Nationalities (proposed), 74–5, 222
 United Front Work Department, 20, 24, 37,
 65, 206
 unity, 11, 12, 33, 73–5, 79, 83, 84, 178, 180,
 210, 220–21
 uprisings, 32, 111, 154
 US (America), 18–19, 39, 55, 68, 70, 106, 205
 USSR (Soviet Union), 39, 55
 Ütsang province, 23

Vajrakilaya mantra, 6, 141
 Venkateswaran, A. P., 204–5, 205(pic)
 video camera, 77
 Vijay, Mr, 60, 85

- W** Wang, King, 162
 Wangchen Döndrup, 167
 Wangdak (chauffeur), 174
 Wangdu, Dechen, 20, 23, 25, 112, 113, 115–17
 pictures, 89, 116, 215
 Wangdu Jigmé, 68
 welcome tents, 119–20, 128
 Wooser Dorjé, 162
 world peace, 39, 40
 Wu Chung Tsin, 34
 Wu Di Chao, 19
 Wutai Shan, Mount, 63, 65–7, 66(pic), 87, 116(pic)
- X** Xiahe. *See* Labrang Tashi Khyil Monastery
 Xian, 85, 89(pic), 149
 Xinhua News Agency, 17–18, 19
 Xining, 10, 90, 96, 113, 135, 146–7, 162
 Xining Television, 147
 Xinjiang, 23, 24, 180
- Y** Yang Jingren, 41, 80, 206–216, 215(pic)
 Yarlung Gön Thösam Ling, 168–9
 Yarphe, 80–81, 217. *See also* Kelsang Yarphe
 Yellow Hat sect. *See* Geluk school
 Yeshe Chödak, 8
- Yin Fatang, 44, 52, 251
 Yonghe Temple, 29–30, 226, 238
 Youning Si (Gönlung Monastery), 103–4, 107
 youths, Tibetan, 56, 76. *See also* Tibetan Youth Congress
 Yuan Dynasty, 209, 213, 214
 Yunnan province, 23
- Z** Zhou Enlai, 29, 33, 106
 Zhang (Gansu Reception Centre), 164
 Zhang Chu Zhang, 37, 148, 200–203
 Zhang Jingwu, 70, 83
 Zhang Zhou, 172

“This book will be of interest to readers in general and for researchers of Sino–Tibetan history. It deals with the periods of friendship and of conflicts between Tibet and China.”

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

“The desire to demand a United Autonomous Region of Tibetan Nationalities is fair, reasonable and legal.”

Kunzig Panchen Rinpoché

“This book is an invaluable service to Tibetan polity, for which I rejoice and express my admiration.”

Professor Venerable Samdhong Rinpoché

“Atisha takes us on a fascinating journey through parts of China and Tibet in 1985. It’s rare to get hold of a first-hand report on how the Chinese authorities dealt with Tibet in those days. Atisha is scrupulously honest in what he records and is by no means anti-Chinese. He concludes with ‘... interested people and the coming generations can have access to these recollections of ... our struggle for freedom and improved Sino–Tibetan relations’. I learned a lot by reading this book and highly recommend it.”

George Farley, Founder and Past-Chairman of Australia Tibet Council and Dalai Lama in Australia Ltd



Please visit Australia Tibet Council at www.atc.org.au/tibet1985 to download a full version of this book.

