

INTRODUCTION TO
THE NATURE, EVOLUTION
AND ACHIEVEMENT
OF THE MIDDLE-WAY
POLICY

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FOREWORD

Immediately after the Chinese communists seized absolute power in 1949, they launched the military invasion of Tibet leading, eventually, to the imposition of the *17-Point Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet* in 1951. This agreement reduced the whole of Tibet to a status of national regional autonomy within the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the local government of Tibet made every possible effort with a sincere motivation to maintain the autonomy as promised in the agreement, but to no avail. Consequently, the government and people of Tibet were left with no option but to rise up in a popular uprising in 1959. The brutal suppression of the Tibetan uprising led to the exile of His Holiness the Dalai Lama as well as his government and people.

After this, for some years His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration held a policy of restoring Tibet's lost independence. But, with the passage of time, we adopted a policy that was in keeping with the actual prevailing international and domestic situation. Under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a series of discussions and consultations were held among those who formed a part of the decision-making body of the Tibetan democratic administration, including the Kashag as well as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Ultimately, in 1974, it was resolved to work towards the realisation of a meaningful autonomy for all Tibetans belonging to the three traditional provinces of Tibet. This effort on the part of the Tibetans to seek a *modus vivendi* with the Chinese government has, later, become popular across the globe as the "Middle-Way Policy".

Since we had already decided upon this policy, it placed us in a comfortable position to respond immediately when the Chinese paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, proposed dialogue to His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1979. Albeit a number of gradual changes have since been made in the specifics of the Middle-Way policy, the overall framework of not seeking separation — or the position that changes should be brought about in the current conditions in Tibet — remains the same to this day since it has the majority support of the Tibetans in and outside Tibet as well as the unanimous support of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Our holding on firmly to this policy has won the strong support of not only the international community but also the general Chinese public. The Middle-Way policy has, thus, proven to be of great advantage to us. Therefore, the Kashag remains immensely grateful to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for coming out with such a policy and is also appreciative of the great wisdom displayed by the larger Tibetan community in supporting it.

However, there exist a small number of people who are not fully aware of some of the recent developments with regard to the Middle-Way policy. Some even pretend to be ignorant about these developments. As a result, there is much speculation, misrepresentation and scepticism about the Middle-Way policy among the general Tibetan populace. Clarification to all these has already been offered through the subsequent statements of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Kashag as well as through the parliamentary procedure of the executive requiring to be responsible, answerable and accountable to the legislature. But as the Tibetan saying goes, “What is important must be emphasised through reiteration,” the Kashag is issuing this detailed note on the Middle-Way policy called *Introduction to the Nature, Evolution and Achievement of the Middle-Way Policy* so that the general

Tibetan public could have a clear understanding of the nature and evolution of the policy as well as the changes that have been made in its specifics.

We hope this will serve as a useful material for the exile Tibetan community to understand the reality of what the Middle-Way policy stands for, thus enabling those who support or reject it to make decisions by understanding the true meaning of this policy and not by acting in the proverbial manner of those who “shoot in the dark”.

The Kashag
15 August 2010

THE NATURE, EVOLUTION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MIDDLE-WAY POLICY

1) Background

The Middle-Way policy is a mutually-beneficial policy that is based on the principles of justice, compassion, non-violence, friendship and in the spirit of reconciliation for the well-being of entire humanity. It does not envisage victory for oneself and defeat for others.

In 1959, led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, over 80,000 Tibetans were forced to come into exile. During the initial few years of our exile, we were engaged with the immediate and urgent tasks of catering to the educational needs of young Tibetans, preservation of Tibetan religion and culture as well as rehabilitation of the Tibetan refugees. Therefore, we were not able to formulate a definite policy that concerns the future political status of the Tibetan people. However, from 1967/1968 onwards, His Holiness the Dalai Lama — taking into consideration the prevailing situation in the world in general, and China in particular — held a wide-ranging and series of discussions with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies, the Kashag, others who were part of the decision-making body at that point of time and wise and experienced friends of Tibet. As a result, an internal decision was made in 1974 to pursue a policy of securing a meaningful autonomy for Tibet — and not independence — when the opportunity arises for a dialogue with the Chinese government. So, in 1979, when China's paramount

leader Deng Xiaoping proposed dialogue with us, we could immediately establish contacts as we were then fully prepared to respond to them.

Since then, we have made unceasing and continuous efforts to resolve the issue of Tibet by steadfastly holding on to the Middle-Way policy. The leaders of the People's Republic of China have, however, not responded positively to these efforts. Moreover, the situation inside Tibet has been deteriorating over the years. The peaceful protests by the Tibetan people between 1987 and 1989 were brutally suppressed and in the ensuing days the Chinese government not only placed strict restrictions on the Tibetan people in general and monks and nuns in particular, but also launched several harsh and unbearable measures like the 'Patriotic Education' campaign. Driven by these, the Tibetans from across the length and breadth of Tibet rose up in a popular and peaceful uprising in 2008, which was again brutally crushed resulting in many Tibetans being killed, tortured, beaten and imprisoned. Such inhuman acts continue to be carried out to this day. Moreover, nine rounds of talks with China since the resumption of direct contact in 2002 after nine-year hiatus has not produced any meaningful outcome.

Due to all these reasons, the Tibetan people in Tibet and Tibetan communities in exile are growing more impatient with and less hopeful of the Middle-Way policy. An increasing number of Tibetans who have doubts in their minds about the Middle-Way policy suggest that it is better to explore alternative means to resolve the issue of Tibet.

The Central Tibetan Administration, however, continues to uphold the Middle-Way policy with full confidence, as this

policy has not only received overwhelming majority support during the 2008 Special Meeting, but the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile has also adopted a unanimous resolution to this effect on 20 March 2010. Given the reality of the situation inside Tibet and the behaviour of the Chinese authorities, it is understandable why many of our Tibetan brothers and sisters are growing impatient. However, if one were to take a holistic view of our situation, then the Middle-Way policy has produced positive results. A time has, therefore, come to once again introduce the nature, evolution and achievement of the Middle-Way policy to the general Tibetan populace.

2) Ideological Foundation of the Middle-Way Policy

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama teaches the importance of universal responsibility across the globe and urges that whatever problems we face should be solved through mutual consent in a friendly atmosphere. He also advises that even if the past century was a century of war and struggle, we should strive to make the present 21st century a new era where conflicts are resolved through dialogue. In his 10 March 1984 statement, His Holiness the Dalai Lama stated, “Irrespective of varying degrees of development and economic disparities, continents, nations, communities, families, in fact, all individuals are dependent on one another for their existence and well-being. Every human being wishes for happiness and does not want suffering. By clearly realising this, we must develop mutual compassion, love and a fundamental sense of justice. In such an atmosphere there is hope that problems between nations and problems within families can be gradually overcome and that people can live in peace and harmony.”

While he provides such an advice to the global community, he believes, at the same time, that the Tibetan struggle for greater freedoms in Tibet should also be conducted in conformity with this advice. If we strive for Tibet's independence, there is neither a possibility for a dialogue nor of mutual agreement. Therefore, it is necessary for us to adopt a mutually-beneficial approach if the issue at hand should be resolved through dialogue in a spirit of reconciliation.

3) Nature of the Middle-Way Policy

The nature of the Middle-Way policy to realise the cause of Tibet is that it neither seeks the separation of Tibet from China by restoring Tibet's independence nor accepts the present conditions of Tibet under the People's Republic of China. In an effort to resolve the issue of Tibet in a manner that benefits both the parties concerned, it treads a middle path between these two extremes. This is what we call the Middle-Way policy.

For resolving the issue of Tibet, each and every provision of autonomy as stipulated in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and its Law on National Regional Autonomy should be genuinely implemented by the Chinese government and the entire Tibetan people must be brought under a single autonomous administration. Moreover, non-violence should be the only means by which to achieve these objectives. These are the inviolable principles of the Middle-Way policy.

As regards Tibetan history, no one can rewrite the past. Particularly, one cannot accept a version of history that has been distorted or misrepresented for political purposes. However, the

distinctive feature of the Middle-Way policy is that history should not be an obstacle in seeking a mutually beneficial common future within the People's Republic of China.

4) Need to Adopt the Middle-Way Policy

a) Today's world is such that there is no way one can make a policy that is not pragmatic, or consistent with reality.

b) Gone is the time when countries only pursued their individual rights. In pursuit of their common interest, many countries are now foregoing some of their individual sovereign rights by joining federations like the European Union. Moreover, the reality today is such that a country cannot live in isolation without depending on others.

c) There are many nations that allow high degree autonomous arrangements based on race, culture and language. These autonomous arrangements are not only well-established but they contribute in strengthening the stability and integrity of the respective nations.

d) Even with a mere six-million Tibetans, most of the areas in eastern and north-eastern Tibet have gradually been sliced off from under the Gaden Phodrang government and in 1951 when Tibet lost its independence, the area of Tibet was not more than the area of today's so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). So even if independence is restored based on Tibet's recent history, there is no way we could get more than the TAR area. Because of this, for both the short and long-term benefit of the Tibetan people and in view of the fact that more than 50% of the Tibetans live outside

TAR, is it not better to have a meaningful autonomy for all Tibetans rather than independence for one part of it? This needs a serious consideration by all the Tibetan people.

e) Tibet is a land-locked country. Therefore, it has to rely on its powerful neighbours for its economy and modern material development. In fact, Tibet remaining within the People's Republic of China will gain more material benefits.

f) In order to continue the large-scale activities for the cause of Tibet, it is necessary to garner the support of governments and other organisations to carry out our struggle at the global level. It is also indispensable to sustain the Central Tibetan Administration until the eventual resolution of the Tibet issue.

g) A way has to be found out, particularly, to save Tibetan culture, environment and national identity from the urgent situation of being completely destroyed inside Tibet.

5) The Middle-Way Policy was Adopted through a Democratic Process

a) Although the Middle-Way policy was conceived by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he has not directly formulated this policy. The Middle-Way policy was adopted democratically — through unanimous agreement — after holding extensive discussions with the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies, the Kashag, all other organisations and individuals representing Tibetan people. Subsequent to our numerous meetings with the Chinese government, a need was deeply felt to have a complete and clear proposal. Therefore, in 1987 His Holiness the Dalai Lama

announced his long-term vision for Tibet called the Five-Point Peace Plan at the US Congress and in 1988, while elaborating on the fifth point of the Five-Point Peace Plan, he announced the Strasbourg Proposal at the European Parliament. Since this was the first proposal explaining the Middle-Way policy, a four-day special political meeting was organised in Dharamsala from 6 to 9 June 1988 before making it public. This conference was presided over by the Kashag and attended by the members of the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies, public servants, NGOs, autonomous bodies, newly-arrived Tibetans, special invitees and others representing the exile Tibetans. They held a thorough discussion on the text of the proposal and finally endorsed it unanimously. This was the first time such a policy was adopted through democratic process by not only consulting the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies and the Kashag, but also directly soliciting the views of the delegates representing the Tibetan public.

b) After Sino-Tibetan contacts were broken in 1993, His Holiness the Dalai Lama proposed in his 10 March 1996 and 1997 statements that the Tibetan people should decide on the best possible course of action to resolve the issue of Tibet through referendum. Accordingly, as a preliminary to such a referendum, the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies and the Kashag provided the Tibetan people with four alternatives to debate and vote on. However, more than 64 percent of the Tibetan people inside and outside Tibet expressed the opinion that there was no need to hold a referendum and that they would support the Middle-Way policy, or whatever decisions His Holiness the Dalai Lama took from time to time in accordance with the changing political situation in the world. To this effect, the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies adopted a unanimous resolution on 18 September 1997, stating that His Holiness the Dalai Lama

should decide on the issue of Tibet, from time to time, in accordance with the changing political situation in China and in the world. It was further resolved that whatever decisions His Holiness the Dalai Lama takes will be regarded by all the Tibetan people as no different from a decision arrived through a referendum. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, when informed of this decision made by the majority of people and unanimously by the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies, responded through his 10 March 1998 statement that he would continue his Middle-Way policy. This was the second time such a policy was adopted democratically by the majority of people and unanimously by the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies.

c) Even after seven rounds of talks with China since the resumption of direct contacts in 2002, no meaningful outcome could be achieved on the fundamental issue of Tibet. Aside from that, there were widespread peaceful protests all over Tibet in 2008 and there was a sense of urgency within the exile Tibetan community as well. So, in accordance with the article 59 of the Charter of Exile Tibetans, a six-day Special Meeting was held from 17 to 22 November 2008 in Dharamsala. Out of the views solicited from nearly 600 representatives who attended the meeting and the written opinions of their respective communities as well as opinions collected from among the Tibetans in Tibet, more than 80% of them expressed support for the Middle-Way policy. This was the third time for the Tibetan people to adopt such a policy through a democratic process.

d) Similarly on 20 March 2010, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, after having discussed the text of the Motion of Thanks on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Message, adopted a unanimous resolution supporting the Middle-Way policy once again. This

is the fourth and the latest decision arrived through a democratic process.

Thus, for 36 years from 1974 to 2010, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, time and again, solicited the views of the people and the great majority of them expressed their strong support for the Middle-Way policy at different points of time. They took these decisions independently by relying on their intelligence. Particularly, many experienced people who have devoted several years to work for the well-being of the Tibetans inside Tibet, as well as those Tibetan scholars and activists from across the three regions of Tibet who are currently working for their well-being, have repeatedly expressed strong support for the Middle-Way policy.

6) Gradual Changes in the Specifics of the Middle-Way Policy

During the Sino-Tibetan dialogue process that took place between 1979 to 1988, there was only a broad outline of the autonomous status we are striving for, but no details were explained. The Strasbourg Proposal of 1988, however, asked for a self-governing democratic political entity that comprised of all the three regions of Tibet founded on a separate basic law of its own. In other words, the local Tibetan government should have exclusive power for all other matters, except for defence and external relations. Such a self-government, it is further stated in the proposal, would remain in association with the People's Republic of China.

The Strasbourg Proposal was rejected by the Chinese government, saying that it demanded “independence, semi-

independence or independence in disguise”. Besides attempting to distort Tibet’s history and the actual situation prevailing there, it said that the proposal did not recognise China’s sovereignty over Tibet, or that the latter was an inalienable part of the former. Particularly, the then Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang told the media that the Dalai Lama must stop working for the independence of Tibet if he wanted to return to China. He further said, “However, I don’t see any sign that he is prepared to do so”. On 21 September 1988, the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi informed the Kashag, through a three-point communication, that the Strasbourg Proposal cannot be considered the basis for talks, because it has not abandoned the concept of the “independence of Tibet”. A press statement to this effect was issued on 22 September. Again on 18 November 1988, the Chinese Embassy in Delhi said: “The Central government reiterates that the Strasbourg Proposal cannot be the basis of talks. The precondition for holding talks is for the Dalai Lama to accept and support the unity of the motherland”.

The Chinese government has, thus, responded to us at different times that there is no way for them to hold talks on the Strasbourg Proposal. Consequently, His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced through his 10 March statement of 1991 that if the Chinese side failed to respond positively to his proposal in the near future, then he would consider himself free of any obligation to abide by it. The following year, in 1992, His Holiness the Dalai Lama declared the Strasbourg Proposal as having become null and void through his annual 10 March statement and his address at the Yale University, USA.

Since then until 2008, no new proposal or further detailed explanation has been made on the Middle-Way policy. In the period following the revival of contacts in 2002 and the conclusion

of the seventh round of talks, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration — taking into consideration the reality of the international situation, the position of the Chinese government and the aspiration of the Tibetan people — articulated their desire, or willingness, to work towards resolving the problem of Tibet according to the constitutional provisions of the People's Republic of China in a spirit of accommodation. The 10 March statements of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Kashag's statements issued during this period bear testimony to this. Moreover, in the course of these exchanges, we have stated that His Holiness the Dalai Lama stands ready to issue a new explanation on the Middle-Way policy at an appropriate time.

During the seventh round of talks in 2008, the Chinese side asked us to clearly define the autonomous status that we are aspiring for. As such, we provided a detailed explanation in the memorandum that we submitted for the Chinese government's consideration on how the national regional autonomy provisions as enshrined in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China could actually be implemented for all Tibetans. In it we sought that the Chinese government should respect the integrity of the Tibetan nationality and its aspiration. We have also identified and explained the basic needs of Tibetans (eleven subject matters of self-government), application of a single administration for the Tibetan nationality, the nature and structure of the autonomy, and the way forward for the Chinese and Tibetan peoples. There is a great difference between this memorandum and the Strasbourg Proposal. The memorandum was drafted with the main purpose of bringing the entire Tibetan people under a single autonomous administration based on the provisions of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and its Law on National Regional Autonomy.

However, the Chinese side misinterpreted and distorted the contents of the memorandum. As a result, we had to present, during the ninth round of talks on 26 January 2010, a Note on the Memorandum in which we offered clarifications on Chinese distortions. These are two latest documents expounding on the Middle-Way policy.

Our memorandum has been hailed by many governments, parliaments, institutions/organisations and individuals as being very reasonable and legitimate. They are surprised that the Chinese government should find it unacceptable to them. As well as condemning this inappropriate behaviour of the Chinese government, they emphatically urged them to engage in a productive dialogue with us on the agenda of this document.

7) Achievement of the Middle-Way Policy

Implementation of the mutually beneficial Middle-Way policy has many achievements to its credit and some of these are:

a) Successive fact-finding delegations and representatives have visited many Tibetan areas since Sino-Tibetan contacts were established in 1979. These visits not only brought out strong emotions among Tibetans as if their loved ones had come back from the dead, but also boosted the inner strength of the Tibetans inside Tibet.

b) The contacts allowed Tibetans in Tibet and in exile to pay visits to each other and see their relatives. It has also allowed more than 10,000 students, monks and nuns to avail themselves of the opportunities to study in exile.

c) Many high lamas, geshe and scholars from all the religious traditions in exile have been able to visit Tibet and carry out spiritual and cultural activities there.

d) The position of the Central Tibetan Administration has received endorsement and solid support from a large number of educated Tibetans in Tibet. Take the case of a senior Tibetan leader Baba Phuntsok Wangyal. He said, “[Observers think that] the Dalai Lama’s ‘Middle-Way approach’ of ‘seeking only a meaningful autonomy for Tibet rather than independence’, in the present historical context, is an expression of the great responsibility he takes in giving serious thought over the fundamental interests, future and fate of Tibet and the Tibetans as a whole. It also shows that he takes great responsibility in understanding the issues concerning both sides and in carefully studying the changing circumstances. Furthermore, it is a thinking that is based on reality and foresight.”

Another scholar has said, “As well as serving as a mutually-beneficial medicine that can bring about a new situation where Tibetans will be happy while ensuring the well-being of the Chinese, the Middle-Way approach is the only one that can be applied to resolve the issue of Tibet once and for all. Speaking from the perspective of Tibetans inside China, in particular, it transcends the boundaries of the problems and doubts emanating from an equivalent-to-independence struggle. Theoretically speaking, the Middle-Way approach has brought about a thought liberation by ensuring the participation of the general public [in the political processes] and allowing them to demonstrate their individual and innovative skills. Practically speaking, it has broadened the areas of engagement and enriched its substance.”

e) Chinese scholars, democracy activists, media personalities and writers as well as many other justice-loving people have been able to take part in activities supporting Tibet. For example, in recent years some 900 articles have been written by Chinese scholars in support of the Middle-Way policy. Some of these are *Federalism is the Best Way to Resolve the Issue of Tibet*, *The Dalai Lama is the Key to Resolving the Tibet Issue*, *The Middle-Way Approach is Panacea for Curing the Disease of Ethnic Animosity*, *The Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach is the Right or Perfect Way of Resolving the Issue of Tibet* and *Middle-Way Approach is a Golden Advice*. Similarly, as a result of improved understanding and co-operation with the general Chinese populace, we have been able to establish Sino-Tibetan friendship associations in many places.

f) His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been able to carry out his spiritual and temporal activities all over the world without any hindrance. Moreover, the Central Tibetan Administration has been able to lead the international community to invest their collective energy towards resolving the issue of Tibet.

g) Ever since the adoption of the Middle-Way policy, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been receiving many international awards and recognitions including the Nobel Peace Prize, as well as meeting with important national leaders. Furthermore, many parliaments have been adopting resolutions and establishing parliamentary support groups for Tibet. In short, we have been receiving open support from the governments and parliaments across the world.

h) The Central Tibetan Administration and its activities aimed for the realisation of the cause of Tibet have not encountered any legal and political hindrance across the world. In fact, many

governments are taking keen interest in the Sino-Tibetan dialogue and in order to bring about a substantive negotiation, more and more of these governments are willing to play a meaningful role in facilitating it.

i) Many governments consider the Middle-Way policy and the dialogue process pursued by the Central Tibetan Administration as a constructive effort to find a mutually-acceptable solution. As such, they are doing their utmost for the resolution of the issue of Tibet. For example, during the US Congressional Gold Medal ceremony in honour of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, President Bush said, “ ... I will continue to urge the leaders of China to welcome the Dalai Lama to China. They will find this good man to be a man of peace and reconciliation.” Similarly, the statement issued by the spokesperson of the Obama White House stated, “The President commended the Dalai Lama’s ‘Middle Way’ approach, his commitment to non-violence and his pursuit of dialogue with the Chinese government.” Likewise, the President of Taiwan, Mr. Ma Ying-jeou, expressed his support for an autonomous Tibet and for His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s efforts to engage in dialogue with China. He publicly said, “That is the only way to resolve the issue of Tibet.”

j) We were able to clearly understand Chinese government’s doubts, concerns and position because of our several rounds of talks with them.

k) We were able to demonstrate that our aspirations are based on reality. As a result, we could convince the world that our aspiration is not only just and valid but also appropriate and reasonable, which in turn exposed the Chinese government’s intransigent and inappropriate position to the world.

1) By presenting the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People to the Chinese government, we have firmly established the basis of our future negotiations.

8) Appeal to the Exile Tibetan Populace

Since the vast land of Tibet came into existence, it had been a nation with splendid civilisation and culture. That the empire of the Three Religious Kings of Tibet spread to four directions can only be attributed to the Tibetan people's bravery and unity.

Since the ninth century, Tibetan unity suffered and internal conflicts became the order of the day. This led to Tibet's disintegration into many principalities, thus paving the way for its gradual conquest by the Mongol rulers.

After this, having regained independence, Tibet once again began to be ruled successively by the Sakyapas, Phagmodrupas, Rinpungpas and Tsangpas. Since the change in these ruling dynasties took place in a short span of time, the nation could not consolidate its sovereignty. The reason for this was the lack of unity among the general Tibetan populace of the time and failure on the part of the powers that be to adopt a policy of non-discrimination.

The emergence of Gaden Phodrang government brought some stability to the faltering Tibetan nation. However, Tibet was once again embroiled in internal feuding — this time among the Kalons and between the U and Tsang regions. This naturally ushered an era of foreign influence over Tibet and by the 19th century, the image of Tibet's sovereignty became so pale that it has not been

able to refurbish it to this day. All this happened, once again, due to the lack of unity among the Tibetan people. A modern Tibetan scholar was speaking the truth when he said: “Conflict in our constitution leads to the loss of energy and strength// Conflict in perception leads to the loss of the virtues of the path// Conflict among the chieftains led to the loss of Tibetan history// This conflict is the cause of all losses.”

Hence, it is very clear that unity is indispensable for realising the short and long-term interests of the Tibetan people as a whole.

Thanks to His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s meritorious service across the globe, the critical period brought about by the Chinese communists’ repression of the Tibetan uprising and the free democratic system that we have been able to put in place, there is presently no such partisan feelings based on religion, province or region within the exile Tibetan community and the Tibetans enjoy a level of close bonding and unity that was never before seen in the long history of Tibet. Proud as we should be of this, there is still a need to further improve this bond of unity among the Tibetan people. Given the enormity of the Chinese incitements to sow seeds of discord within the Tibetan community, we cannot be negligent of the fact that there is today a far greater threat to our unity than ever before.

Reposing great faith in and remaining committed to democratic values, the Central Tibetan Administration led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama has — during the last over 50 years — created opportunities for the Tibetan people to freely initiate, maintain and propagate their varied ideologies and viewpoints. Plurality of political thought or ideology in a mature democracy

is an asset and will never harm the unity of the people. Keeping in view the ulterior motives of the other side, we must be aware of the danger of their creating discord within our community in the name of different ideological backgrounds. Therefore, the Kashag would like to issue these two points of clarification and appeal to all of you:

a) In a democratic society, there is always a fierce debate among the proponents of different ideologies and approaches, each opposing the other through arguments and counter-arguments. The main thing by which to ensure that this does not harm the unity among these different ideological groups is each of these groups develops a sense of understanding, respect and tolerance for one another. If one does not believe in a reason-based investigation, then one cannot develop this sense of caring for, or accommodating, others. Hence, whatever political ideologies one may follow, one should be able to gain certainty about that particular ideology through reason; one should never follow hearsay and blind-faith, as well as be prejudiced, gullible and be more reliant on “individuals than the doctrine”. In short, it is very essential that without undertaking a proper and thorough investigation on one’s own, one should not blindly follow what other people say.

Let us give an example here. Whatever guidance His Holiness the Dalai Lama provides — be it religious or secular in nature — he would never say that all should accept, or agree with, him. On the contrary, he asks the people to investigate what he preaches by using their intelligence and judiciously applying the Buddhist concept of “Four Reliances”, and never, ever accept them as being his wishes or words. In this respect, he always quotes this verse of the Lord Buddha: “Bikshus and scholars!// Like gold is

subjected to the three tests of burning, cutting and rubbing// Investigate my teachings thoroughly//Do not accept due to your respect for me.”

In the same vein, the Middle-Way policy has been put forward by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a mere suggestion, after he found this to be the best possible future political option for the Tibetan people through his own investigation. He has never said that all should agree with his line of thought. The Central Tibetan Administration has also thus far not issued any statements to this effect, both verbally and in writing. Neither does it intend to issue one in the future. Hence, if any of those organisations and individuals who support the Middle-Way policy try to propagate this policy by saying that it is the expressed wish of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and so all should accept it, then they are simply spreading disinformation. We consider this as absolutely inappropriate and undesirable.

As mentioned earlier, this policy has been laid down through a democratic process by referring it to the general Tibetan populace not just once but several times. Even so, there is no denying the fact that this policy was first conceived and proposed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Hence, in order to describe the fact that this is a policy being upheld by His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself, it is not at all inappropriate to say he has suggested this policy. In fact, it behoves us to say so. This, however, should not be misconstrued as pressure being exerted upon the public.

Due to the reasons cited above, we would like to emphatically urge those who agree with, support and practise the Middle-Way policy that they should be able to gain certainty about their belief by relying on their independent faculties to

carry out an investigation to that effect. Simply having blind faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama will not do. The same rule should also apply when you go about advocating this to others.

b) For those who uphold different stance than the Middle-Way policy, there are no stumbling blocks erected on the way of their freedom to propagate their respective ideologies. Some put the blame of their own failure to do so on the Central Tibetan Administration, saying that it is influencing them. Others allege that those who speak about independence are acting against His Holiness the Dalai Lama's advice. These are nothing but baseless talks. We should not only refrain from spreading such disinformation but, more importantly, the general public should be careful not to be swayed by these.

In the entire process of the Tibetan people deciding upon the Middle-Way policy as a means to resolve the issue of Tibet, those holding different stance than this policy were given no less opportunity to present their points of view. In the future also, no restrictions will be placed on their freedom to do so. The people cannot be faulted if the reasons provided do not satisfy them. Thus, when they are accused of blind faith, incapable of independent thinking or shirking responsibilities for the only reason of their having complete faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the accusers are not just showing disrespect to these people but also making evident the dereliction of their own responsibilities.

In a democratic society, it is the fundamental freedom of the people to decide on their own whom they want to trust, believe in, or follow. Nobody can trample upon this freedom. Similarly whether you want to depend upon His Holiness the Dalai Lama or not, it is within your freedom to do so. The freedom of those

who depend upon His Holiness the Dalai Lama cannot be taken away. All of us should be capable of identifying the bounds of our democratic freedoms and equality.

Unfortunately some people try to create an impression that His Holiness the Dalai Lama tacitly agrees with and support those organisations and individuals who advocate independence. These people go to the extent of misrepresenting His Holiness the Dalai Lama's championing of the cause of compassion as well as his statements to support their claim. This is a grave lie or falsification of his real intentions. There are others who say that the Middle-Way policy was not adopted by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Pursuant to the Tibetan parliament's pledging to respect whatever policy decisions he makes as a decision arrived through a referendum, His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced that he would continue to abide by the Middle-Way policy. The unanimous resolution adopted by the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile on 20 March 2010, aside from re-affirming the above resolution, states that it will wholeheartedly support whatever policy decision His Holiness makes. Hence it is very clear this policy has been adopted by the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile. What further evidence does one need to prove so?

Therefore, it would be more beneficial if those upholding ideologies other than the Middle-Way policy could put their aspiration before the public in a legitimate manner after having carefully recognised the bounds of their democratic freedoms and the duties that these entail — rather than just resorting to such desperate actions as hurling baseless accusations against others and insulting them. Moreover, they should see to it that their avowed ideologies do not remain as a mere wishful thinking or as a protest rally slogan that will serve nothing more than the media

to quote as sensational news headlines. Instead, they should come out with a detailed plan of action to accomplish the stated goals of their respective ideological standpoints, as well as to garner support towards that end. Only then will they win the admiration of people with wisdom.

9) Conclusion

The mutually beneficial Middle-Way policy, which first came in the form of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's suggestion, has been repeatedly approved by the Tibetan people inside and outside Tibet through democratic process. Hence, this policy is in keeping with the aspirations of the Tibetan people. Should a time come in the future when the Tibetan aspiration undergoes a change freely due to some reason, then the Central Tibetan Administration will certainly accept it. We never intent to hold on to this policy stubbornly or thrust it upon the general public. Those who favour the Middle-Way policy should — after having based their understanding of the policy on reason and gained certainty about it — agree with this policy and practise it. Those who object to this policy should also tread the path of honesty and reason by refraining from making baseless allegations and playing with people's sentiments. This is what the Kashag expects from the people.

Jai Jagat! Sarwamangalam!

Note: This has been translated from the Tibetan original.

Reference documents

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