

Xi Jinping Tours Amdo (Qinghai) as US Delegates Meet Tibetan Leaders in Dharamshala: Response or Coincidence?

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མོང་ཁབ་ཅོ་ཁེན་དར་རྒྱལ་གླིང། (Hongjue Temple) Xining, capital city of Qinghai. (Xinhua)

President Xi Jinping visited the Amdo (one among the 3 Cholkas of Tibet) Region of Tibet (Qinghai) in Xining (མེ་ལིང།) on 18-19 June, while a US congressional delegation led by Representative Michael McCaul were also visiting Dharamshala and New Delhi in India on the same dates. During his visit, Xi Jinping emphasised that Qinghai should fully implement CPC Central Committee decisions, adhere to the new development concept, strengthen strategic positioning in national development, leverage local advantages, deepen reforms, prioritise ecological and green development, promote ethnic unity and prosperity, and advance ecological protection and high-quality development on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The goal is to achieve Chinese-style modernisation in Qinghai. Xi visited schools, religious sites and cultural centers in Xining, Capital of Qinghai.

Coinciding with President Xi's visit, a high-level US delegation also visited to Dharamshala, India on 18 and 19 June. This delegation was led by US Representative Michael McCaul, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and included Representative Nancy Pelosi, Speaker Emerita. The delegation's itinerary included a significant audience with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama at his residence, དགལ་ལྷན་ཡོ་གླང། Gaden Phodrang. In addition to this historic meeting, the US delegates engaged with key dignitaries of the Central Tibetan Administration (commonly and popularly known as the Tibetan Government in Exile), including members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. The US delegation's visit underscored their strong support for the Tibetan cause and highlighted their commitment to the success of the recent Resolve Tibet Act. During their discussions with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, they reaffirmed their resolve to advocate for Tibet's cultural and political autonomy and to uphold the principles of human rights and religious freedom.



This diplomatic engagement was a clear demonstration of USA's ongoing support in resolving the Tibet-China dispute through their efforts to foster dialogue and peaceful resolution in the region. This is significant because the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" also known as Resolve Tibet Act in short refers to Tibet that includes regions of Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces as a Tibet apart from Tibet Autonomous region. Xi Jinping's visit to Amdo (Qinghai), the birthplace of the 14th Dalai Lama, is likely a response to the Act, not a coincidence.

Meanwhile, On the afternoon of the 18th June, Xi Jinping had a cordial exchange with the students when he observed the ideological and political course on the theme of "New Era, New Hometown" in the senior class 1 of Guoluo Xining National Middle School (ཀོའའི་ཟེ་ལིང་རྒྱལ་ཡོངས་འབྲིང་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ།) This is a boarding middle school or colonial boarding middle school affiliated to Guoluo Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture which was invested and built by the Shanghai Municipality.



Guoluo Xining National Middle School, Xining ཀོའའི་ཟེ་ལིང་རྒྱལ་ཡོངས་འབྲིང་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ། (Xinhua)

At this colonial boarding school, President Xi Jinping stressed on building a strong sense of one community of Chinese nation གྲུང་རྒྱལ་རིགས་གཅིག་མཐུན་འདུས་སྲུབ་གྱི་འདུ་ཤེས། all in accordance with the central conference on ethnic affairs, which emphasises that forging a strong sense of one community of Chinese nation is the main line of the country's work on ethnic affairs. He likewise promoted the concept of building a community for the Chinese nation. Such programs often contradict Beijing's perennial claims that Tibet enjoys a high degree of autonomy, stability, and prosperity. If this were indeed the case, then such intense ideological struggle directed at the ethnic region would be unnecessary. It also suggests that Beijing has not achieved the desired level of stability and loyalty in the Tibetan region, which was expected from the Western Development Project. The assumption was that economic development would ensure Tibetan loyalty towards party; however, this has not come to fruition. As a result, there is a shift towards ideological transformation from mere materials development to secure stability and loyalty under Xi Jinping's era.

Such colonial boarding school is Beijing's leading plan in Tibet region to eradicate the Tibetan language, culture and history from the age of young and it is part of a wider assimilation policies exist in the Tibet region. Around a million children of the Tibetan minority were being affected by Chinese government colonial boarding school policies aimed at assimilating Tibetan kids culturally, religiously and linguistically through a residential school system, said UN experts. In residential schools, the educational content and environment is built around majority Han culture, with textbook content reflecting almost solely the lived experience of Han students.

Children of the Tibetan minority are forced to complete a ‘compulsory education’ curriculum in Mandarin Chinese (Putonghua) without access to traditional or culturally relevant learning. The Putonghua language governmental schools do not provide a substantive study of Tibetan minority’s language, history and culture.



Guoluo Xining National Middle School, Xining གོ་འཁོར་གྱི་ཡིང་རྒྱལ་ཡོངས་འབྲིང་རིམ་སློབ་ཤྱ། (Xinhua)



Guoluo Xining National Middle School, Xining གོ་འཁོར་གྱི་ཡིང་རྒྱལ་ཡོངས་འབྲིང་རིམ་སློབ་ཤྱ། (Xinhua)

The fact that the President of the People’s Republic of China visited such particular boarding school demonstrates and indicates firmly that even the top leadership in China are aware of its significance and the centrality of these colonial boarding schools in realising thier illegal assimilation drives. These actions are in direct violation of Articles 4, 5, and 46 of the Chinese Constitution (ཐྱིན་གཞུང་གི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་འཇམ་ལུང་།) and Article 10 of the Law on Ethnic Autonomy Regions (LEAR, མི་རིགས་རང་སྐྱོང་ས་ཁུལ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་འཇམ་ལུང་།) 第十条 民族自治地方的自治机关保障本地方各民族都有使用和发展自己的语言文字的自由，都有保持或者改革自己的风俗习惯的自由All of this occurs despite their constant rejection of the existence of such colonial boarding schools, where they conveniently provide excuses of a lack of educational facilities in rural areas. But Xi Jinping visiting them and a recent viral video of a Tibetan women named Dechen Shak-Dagsay in Switzerland taking part in a conference organised by the China Society for Human Rights Studies (CSHRS) at the University of Geneva, where she sings praises of such schools is an indication of Beijing defending their colonist driven polices.



Subsequently, President Xi Jinping then visited ཙོང་ཁ་བཙེ་ཆེན་དར་རྒྱལ་གླིང། Tsongkha Tsechen Dhargyaling (Hongjue Temple) in the Chengzhong District of Xining City. He cited this thousand-year-old institution as a bridge enhancing the connection between the central government and the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism. However, this portrayal distorts historical truth and was a basis for the recent United States Resolves Tibet Act, which aims to counter such false historical claims.



ཙོང་ཁ་བཙེ་ཆེན་དར་རྒྱལ་གླིང། *(Hongjue Temple) in the Chengzhong District of Xining City (Xinhua)*

During his visit to ཙོང་ཁ་བཙེ་ཆེན་དར་རྒྱལ་གླིང། Tsongkha Tsechen Dhargyaling, Xi Jinping urged monks to foster a sense of national community, promote unity and progress, learn from past revolutionaries, and enhance the party's united front, ethnic, and religious work in the new era to contribute to national rejuvenation. All in line with ‘sinicising Tibetan tradition of Buddhism with Xi Jinping’ thought’. In reality, Tibetan monks and nuns for decades have faced targeted harsh security and religious policies by the Chinese Communist Party. Pervasive securitisation has led to persistent resistance from the monastic community, prompting harsher repression under the guise of maintaining “stability” and “public order.” In 2015, China Daily reported that 6,575 cadres from various party and government levels worked in 1,787 monasteries in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), averaging three to four cadres per monastery in Tibet autonomous region.



Entry gate of ཙོང་ཁ་བཙེ་ཆེན་དར་རྒྱལ་གླིང། *Hongjue Temple Xining City (Qinghai Tourism)*



Repression has intensified under President Xi Jinping, focusing on ideological control and the "Sinicization" of all religions to support his vision of national rejuvenation. Initiated in 2015, reaffirmed in 2016, and declared at the 19th Party Congress in 2017, this policy places the United Front Work Department in charge of religious policy implementation.



Monks welcomes Xi Jinping at མོང་ཁ་བཅོལ་ཆེན་དར་རྒྱལ་གླིང་།, Xining City (Xinhua)

This aligns with Order Number 19, released on 31 July 2023, This regulation requires religious institutions such as temples, monasteries, and mosques to obtain official permission for any religious activities and aimed at strengthening Chinese nationalism. Article 27 of Order No. 19 requires that members of religious site management must be "loyal supporters of the Chinese Communist Party" and "mainland residents with Chinese nationality." Under this regulation, Tibetan monasteries that refuse to denounce the Dalai Lama face heightened risk of crackdowns by Chinese authorities. With Order number 5 "Management measures for the reincarnation of living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism" (being passed at the administrative affairs conference of the State Administration of Religious Affairs on July 13, 2007, and implemented on September 1, 2007) clearly stating that the sole authority of reincarnation is subjected to the approval of Communist party of China despite communism being the atheist. In Chinese it says that "controlling one Tulku (reincarnated lama) is equivalent to controlling one monastery and thereby one region in Tibet," as Tibetans social life is deeply linked with the nearby religious institution.



Xining City, Capital of Qinghai (Xinhua)



On the morning of the 19th, Xi Jinping listened to the work report of the Qinghai Provincial Party Committee and the Provincial Government and affirmed the achievements of Qinghai's various work:

1. Xi Jinping pointed out that Qinghai undertakes the important mission of maintaining ecological security, and industrial development and strive to cultivate a modern industrial system that reflects local characteristics and advantages.
2. Xi Jinping stressed that the ecosystem of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is rich and diverse, but also very fragile, and strengthening the protection of the ecological environment and maximising ecological functions is the main task of this region.
3. Xi Jinping stressed Qinghai's status as a province with a significant concentration of ethnic minorities in China. He underscored the importance of continuing to excel in ethnic and religious affairs, fully implementing the Party's policies, fostering a strong sense of onel community of Chinese nation, promoting unity and progress among all ethnic groups, and advancing the Sinicization of religion while strengthening the lawful management of religious sites.
4. Xi Jinping further stressed the importance of rigorous party discipline education, promoting reform and innovation on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, encouraging party members to embrace new ideas and responsibilities, and fostering a clean political environment with effective anti-corruption measures and grassroots reforms.

CONCLUSION

The two-day visit by the President of China to the Tibetan-inhabited region, particularly Amdo or Qinghai, is unlikely a coincidence. This area has seen significant Tibetan protests, including self-immolations, and the recent US Resolve Tibet Act recognises not just the Tibet Autonomous Region (བོད་རང་སྐྱོང་ལྗོངས།) but also Gansu, Yunnan, Sichuan, and Qinghai as parts of Tibet. This challenges and dismisses the Chinese narrative of the Tibet Autonomous Region as being Tibet and also their claim of Tibet being part of China since antiquity. President Xi Jinping's visit to Qinghai, the birthplace of the 14th Dalai Lama, seems a deliberate response, asserting these regions as integral to China, regardless of external legislation. The visit underscores the significance of the Resolve Tibet Act. In a nutshell, it appears like when the western winds touch the Dhauladhar ranges, the earth trembles in the Yellow River civilisation.



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