CHHODHI TASHI LHUNPO CULTURAL SOCIETY

Patron - His Holiness Dalai Lama & Panchen Lama

OFFICIAL STATEMENT
TO CELEBRATE THE 33rd BIRTH ANNIVERSARY
OF HIS HOLINESS THE 11th PANCHEN LAMA
JETSUN TENZIN GEDUN YESHI THRINLEY PHUNTSOK PALSANGPO

Today, the 25th of April, 2022, marks the 33rd Birth Anniversary of His Holiness the 11th Panchen Lama in Tibet. He is the impeccable Jetsun Tenzin Gedun Yeshi Thrinley Phuntsok Palsangpo, a spiritual teacher of singular quality and a patriot. On this blissful and auspicious day, we the monks and devotees of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, within and without Tibet, with gratitude and devotion coupled with pain and sadness, take part in his Birthday celebrations.

For hundreds of years, successive throne holders of the Panchen Lama lineage, have contributed immensely to the welfare of sentient beings and spiritual traditions of Tibet. Above all, the great 10th Panchen Lama's significant contribution to the cause of the political and spiritual struggle, especially at a time of critical danger of being wiped out by the Chinese regime cannot be ignored. Pushing aside his own personal safety issues, and for the sake of the Tibetan people's racial identity and language, spiritual practice and survival of the unique way of life, he struggled fearlessly and unrelentingly for their preservation and promotion. In sum, he devoted his entire life for the cause of the Tibetan people and passed away a true patriot!

Furthermore, around the mid 20thCentury, when Tibet was completely occupied and the Tibetan people were suffering as in hell on earth, without any protector, the great 10th Panchen Lama, took upon himself the armor of a Bodhisattva. Sacrificing all his personal safety, he devoted his attention and energy for the protection and preservation of the Tibetan people's culture and racial identity in Tibet. Especially, when there was a deliberate and systematic design of uprooting the same off the face of the earth. The landmark - 70 thousand character Petition - to the Chinese government for the immediate cessation of their design cost him his life! He was mercilessly beaten, tortured and imprisoned for years.

When the 10th Panchen Lama was released from a prolonged prison sentence, just as the adage, "Others Before Self, Tibet Before Others", he travelled the length and breath of Tibet – Kham, Amdo and Utsang – to alleviate the suffering of the people. With renewed energy, he

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Tibetan Settlement, P.O. Bylakuppe - 571 104, Distt Mysore, Karnataka State, INDIA
Tel : +91 (O) 8223 252601 / 254282 Email : office@tashilhunpo.org Web : www.tashilhunpo.org

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took upon himself the crucial task of re-constructing, revitalizing and building Tibetan cultural roots and way of life. He built new temples, schools, hospitals. He encouraged traditional Tibetan Arts and crafts. He supported the nomadic way of life and paid special attention to environmental protection. Above all, he pressed for the preservation and promotion of Tibetan language and culture in the laws of the land. Furthermore, he worked tirelessly for a genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people. The imprint and impact of his efforts in the 80s on the preservation and promotion of Tibetan culture, the practice of the Buddha Dharma, Tibetan language and literature are visible today for all to see.

Today in Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in India, as per the vision of HH the Dalai Lama and HH the Panchen Lama, we leave no stone unturned to bring about vibrancy and quality in the learning of the monks in the monastery through various curriculum programs. Every effort is made to ensure that the central curriculum of study and practice of Buddha Dharma, especially in the field of analysis and reasoning is foremost in our endeavors. Other educational programs to enrich the curriculum currently going on are: Encouraging writing and research work, with a plan of starting a research center at the earliest; inviting all Tibetan schools & colleges to participate in Art & Drawing Competitions on the life of the Panchen Lamas during the Birth Anniversary Celebrations of the 11th Panchen Lama; Essay and Calligraphy Contests for school children on the Life and Achievements of the Panchen Lamas. And, the latest addition to such expansion of educational opportunities is the Online Study Program of Buddhism and Tibetan language to the future seeds of Tibet across the world.

When the 10th Panchen Lama passed away in 1989, the monks and devotees of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery – within and without Tibet – as per their aspiration supplicated HH the Dalai Lama for the recognition of the genuine reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama as per the reports of the search party. As per the close and unique traditional links of recognizing each other's reincarnation, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, after scrutinizing the reports of the search committee for six years, finally, on May 14, 1995, declared the child Gedun Choekyi Nyima of Mr. Kunchok Phuntsok and Mrs. Dechen Chodon from Nagchu Lhari Zong of Tibet, as the genuine reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama.

On May 17, 1995, to our shock, within three days, the Chinese government, captured the 11th Panchen Lama Gedun Choekyi Nyima – just 6 years old - from his home in Tibet with total

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disregard to our religious rights and freedoms. Along with him, his father and mother, the head of the search party Venerable Jhadrel Rinpoche were also imprisoned. To this day, after 27 long years, no one knows how he looks and, above all, whether he is alive or dead! Even after 27 years of their disappearance, we still have no idea of their whereabouts!

To this day, for the last 27 years, Tibetans and devotees, inside and outside Tibet continue to put pressure on the Chinese government for the release of the Panchen Lama and his family and Jhadrel Rinpoche. Even after vigorous and continuous pressure on China by governments sensitive to human rights, UNO Human Rights Special focus on the Panchen Lama, human rights groups, NGOs and concerned individuals, the Chinese Government has turned a deaf ear. To the leaders around the world, NGO representatives and individuals who have met Chinese leaders to demand the release of the Panchen Lama, the Chinese government always parrots that he is well and living comfortably. And the pressure to release the Panchen Lama is relentless and continues!

In 2013, the Kashag of Tibetan Central Administration CTA, Dharamsala, India, has declared **May 17** every year as the Day of Seeking Support and Solidarity Worldwide for the release of the 11th Panchen Lama.

In 2020, the former Sikyong of CTA, Dharamsala, has raised funding from the US Government to enable the Abbots of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery to accompany the Sikyong to meet government representatives and parliamentarians to seek support for the release of the Panchen Lama and others.

Currently, the present Sikyong continues this program started as mentioned above. Today, he is in contact with concerned officials of USA, Canada and some EU countries on the Panchen Lama issue. For these kind efforts of the Sikyong, CTA, we are extremely grateful. And, we request him and CTA for continued support towards the release of the 11th Panchen Lama.

For a long time, we have continued our efforts for the release of the Panchen Lama. And, we are determined to continue, despite the stone-walling by the Chinese government. This total disregard of religious freedom for millions of people is causing untold suffering and is shocking. Therefore, on the occasion of this 33rd Birth Anniversary of the 11th Panchen Lama, we have the following urgent appeal to the Chinese government:

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1. We demand the immediate release of the 11th Panchen Lama. We demand to know where the 11th Panchen Lama and his parents are and how they are doing.
2. We demand the immediate release of Jhadrel Rinpoche, the head of the search party and Administrator of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery.
3. We demand access to the 11th Panchen Lama and Jhadrel Rinpoche by an International and Tashi Lhunpo Monastery representatives to have clarity on their actual whereabouts and welfare.

To have a clear and complete picture of the above three points, we trust and hope that United States Government, Human Rights Organizations, Rights for Religious Freedoms, governments and people who cherish democracy and freedoms, concerned individuals across the world, will support us for this noble cause.

For release of the 11th Panchen Lama, Jhadrel Rinpoche and all the political prisoners of Tibet, spearheaded by CTA, Dharamsala and supported by concerned governments, organizations, individuals, who have directly and indirectly showed support, we express our deepest gratitude. Until we resolve these crucial issues of Tibet, we fervently hope for your continued and unwavering support.

In conclusion, we offer our heartfelt prayers for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and 11th Panchen Lama Gedun Choekyi Nyima, along with all the lineage holders of Tibetan Buddhism. May all their wishes to benefit sentient beings be fulfilled! May the Tibet issue be resolved! May the Father and Son, in union, grace the Potala Palace and may the day come when all Tibetans enjoy the freedom in Tibet.

Office of the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery
&
Central Association for the Panchen Lama

25th of April, 2022

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