



Statement of the Kashag on the 22nd Anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize to His Holiness the Dalai Lama

10 December 2011

Today, we have gathered here to commemorate the 22nd anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize to His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1989. On this auspicious occasion, the Kashag extends warm greetings to fellow Tibetans in and outside Tibet and all friends of Tibet and supporters of human rights around the world.

The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded in the name of scientist Alfred Nobel to honor leaders who have made outstanding contribution to “fraternity between nations, abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace.” His Holiness the Dalai Lama was recognized by the Nobel committee for his “consistent resistance to the use of violence in his people’s struggle to regain their liberty.” This recognition enhanced, in an unprecedented way, the international visibility of the issue of Tibet and for this reason we remain eternally grateful to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and re-affirm our steadfast commitment to non-violence.

This year His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in his own words, “voluntarily, happily and willingly” devolved all his political powers to a democratically elected leader, thereby fundamentally transforming the 369-year-old institution of the Dalai Lama. His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s vision is of a secular democratic Tibetan society, which can stand on its own feet, strengthening and sustaining the movement. This magnanimous decision to separate political and spiritual authority sends a strong message of true leadership. This gesture of the great 14th Dalai Lama is all the more respected around the world and has further strengthened his place among the pantheon of world’s great leaders.

The Kashag fully supports the historic statement issued by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his reincarnation on 24th September 2011. The Kashag believes, in the eyes of Tibetan people and the world, the Chinese government has no legitimacy, credibility and authority with regard to reincarnation. Tibetans have absolute faith and loyalty to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and we believe he alone has the right and authority to determine his reincarnation, which is reinforced by the resolutions adopted during 11th Bi-annual Conference of Buddhist leaders in September 2011.

Today, as we also mark the 63rd Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is unfortunate that conditions in Tibet have significantly worsened in recent times. The Chinese government continues to violate the most basic human rights of Tibetans enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Due to the occupation of Tibet and the crackdown that ensued the 2008 peaceful protests, civil and political rights of Tibetan people are repressed, not to mention economic marginalization, social inequality, cultural assimilation and environmental destruction. The human rights situation in Tibet has deteriorated so significantly that Tibetans are resorting to desperate and unprecedented acts. In 2011 alone, twelve Tibetans are known to have committed self-immolation out of which seven have died.

Kalon Tripa in his first official visit to the USA and Europe briefed prominent leaders and officials about the tragic situation in Tibet. They were greatly disturbed and expressed deep concern for the suffering of the Tibetan people and the urgent need to resolve the Tibet issue through peaceful dialogue. Accordingly, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that USA was “alarmed by recent incidents in Tibet of young people lighting themselves on fire in desperate acts of protest.”

During these visits, Kalon Tripa reiterated His Holiness the Dalai Lama's unequivocal and long-standing position that as a Buddhist, life is precious and thus, he has always discouraged drastic actions inside and outside of Tibet, as he did during the peaceful protests in 2008 and several unto-death hunger strikes in exile. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is also deeply concerned about these tragic developments. Similarly, Kalon Tripa appealed Tibetans to end their unto-death hunger strikes in May this year in India, because we need to live and lead our movement. In the long-term interest of the Tibetan cause, we urge Tibetans to focus on secular and monastic education to provide the necessary human resources and the capability to strengthen and sustain our movement.

As a gesture of mourning for the self-immolators and their families, the Kashag organized a day-long prayer on Wednesday, October 19, which was graced by the presence of His Holiness Dalai Lama and other important lamas. The Kashag urges Tibetans everywhere to recite mani or other prayers every Wednesday for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the victims of human rights violations in Tibet, including the self-immolators and their families. On Wednesday, January 4, 2012, during the Kalachakra teachings in Bodh Gaya, where the Buddha attained enlightenment, the Kashag will also organize a mass prayer so that the truth may prevail in Tibet.

Human Rights Day is a time for people and governments to reflect about the meaning, importance and need for basic rights. To the government of China, we want to say that the only way to bring about real peace and stability in Tibet is by respecting the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people. We call upon China to release all political prisoners who are sentenced under various pretexts without fair trial and to stop all repressive policies currently being implemented across Tibetan areas, and to resolve the Tibetan issue peacefully through dialogue.

We would like people and governments everywhere to recognize and reward the long-standing and genuine commitment of Tibetans in democracy and non-violence. Such expression of support will go a long way in encouraging other movements and freedom struggles to follow suit, thereby paving a path to a more democratic and peaceful world for the 21st century.

Lastly, we urge the United Nations and the international community to send fact-finding delegations to Tibet and assess the gross human rights violations and ground situation firsthand.

Independent media and liberal Chinese intellectuals should also be allowed access.

As always, we take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the government and people of India for their hospitality and generosity to Tibetans for more than five decades.

May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live long and may all his wishes be fulfilled.