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TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

## Monthly Translation and Analyses Digest

*The Electronic Monthly Digest is a compilation of selected stories from Chinese state media that are related to human rights situation in Tibet. It provides translation and analyses of Chinese government propaganda publications that are otherwise available only in Chinese and Tibetan language.*



Front page image: A resident of 'Auspicious Four Seasons Village' with mandatory portraits of Chinese party leaders in the background

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## China increase party presence in caterpillar fungus harvesting areas in Chamdo

Local party authorities in Chamdo (Ch: Changdu) City, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) have established 470 temporary party cells to 'maintain stability' in caterpillar fungus harvesting sites. The party branches assess and review the role of the grassroots party organisations in maintaining stability in the harvesting areas of the prized herb, which is a crucial source of income for local Tibetans particularly nomads who are increasingly losing their land and nomadic livelihood sources.

The major responsibilities of the party branches include, among others, "vigorously carrying out

patriotism, anti-separatist struggle, national unity and ecological environmental protection education". So far, the temporary party branches have carried out more than 780 mass education campaigns in which 78,000 people were made to participate.

In Pashoe (Ch: Basu) County, before harvesting caterpillar fungus, 14 inspection groups were sent to "conduct on-the-spot investigations, classify harvesting areas, and review the number and distribution of party members in these areas." A total of 54 meetings were organised for farmers and nomads as part of the "mobilisation and deployment of the grassroots party building organisations." So far, 37 temporary party branches have been created in Pashoe County.

In Jomda (Ch: Jiangda) County, local party authorities deployed 13 "mobile propaganda groups" to organise 27 mass study sessions for local people to "study the party's policy guidelines and legal education" and distributed more than 1,600 publicity materials to 'educate' more than 3,000 people.

In Markham (Ch: Maerkang) County, small groups consisting of 350 staff each from the villagers committees and party village committees along with leaders of the local 'advanced double linked households' act as stability maintenance units in the harvesting areas.

The Advanced Double Linked Household system was set up throughout TAR in 2013 to gather sensitive information from ordinary citizens and conduct thought control programs to enforce mass political

compliance and administer social benefits. Local authorities in Markham reported that "more than 60 road signs had been set up in accident-prone routes and more than 110 mobile inspections conducted to properly resolve 27 hidden dangers".

Local authorities also reported that the grassroots governance stability was achieved through the deployment of 10 party members service vanguard teams in the *yartsa gunbu* harvesting sites in Riwoche (Ch: Riwoqi) County. The 44 county-level government departments in Riwoche jointly established 10 party volunteer service teams to carry out the stability maintenance programs.

In recent years, harvesting caterpillar fungus has emerged as one of the major source of livelihood for Tibetan rural communities whose residents are deprived of their nomadic livelihood through grazing bans and land expropriation, forced to live in concrete barracks built by the government in the outskirts of urban towns.

Academic studies have shown that without caterpillar fungus, many former nomads would have found themselves in penury struggling to meet both ends meet. With the voracious appetite for the prized herb in Chinese markets, more people are resorting to harvesting caterpillar fungus to feed growing demands. Recent studies however provide evidence that the effects of climate change and global warming will make the availability of the herb uncertain in future. Perhaps the worst consequences of the nomadic relocation policy will become more apparent when this source of livelihood no longer becomes available.

## ‘Four Loves’ propaganda campaign incorporated into state education institutions



Tibetan nomads in Amdo County attending ‘four loves’ propaganda campaign sessions

On 12 May, the Amdo (Ch: Anduo) County Education and Sports Bureau in Nagchu (Ch: Naqu) City organised a mobilisation meeting of the ‘four loves and four emphases’ propaganda education. All relevant cadres of the local education bureau, directors and principals of kindergarten schools, primary and secondary schools, as well as 60 representatives of students attended the event.

The ‘four loves’ propaganda campaign has been carried out since 2016 and in 2018 was incorporated into the overall school curriculum system through the introduction of the "Implementation Plan for the Four Loves and Four Emphases Educational Practice Activities in the Education System of Amdo County". The campaign requires schools to include the



Local authorities lead a ‘four loves’ propaganda campaign in Amdo County “four loves educational practice activities” in their daily work agenda, and direct teachers, students and parents to learn, publicise, and practice them.

Local leaders at the meeting emphasised the importance of party members, cadres, teachers and students in “actively promoting the campaign activities to achieve targeted results,” the most important of which is to “hold firmly the correct political positions, directions, principles and paths by closely uniting around the Chinese Communist Party with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core.”

The campaign requires party members, cadres and ordinary people at all levels to “maintain a high degree of consistency, always feel gratitude to the party, listen to the party’s words, and follow the party.”

A similar meeting was held on 11 May to mobilise the local nomads and farmers living in Gangnyi (Ch: Gangni) Township in Amdo County. The meeting was organised by the ‘village-based cadres’ and presided over by the village party branch secretary. About 97 people attended the meeting.

At the meeting, the head of the village-based cadres team pointed out that the “implementation of the ‘four loves’ education practice activities is to further strengthen the ‘four consciousnesses’: consciousness of the ideology, the whole, the core and the line, and to ideologically and politically act in deference to the party with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core.” The ‘four consciousnesses’ basically require everyone to “consciously maintain a high degree of consistency with the CCP Central Committee, with Xi Jinping as the core, in thoughts, politics and actions.”

## **Party building ‘grassroots fortresses’ in new poverty alleviation resettlement villages**

In the name of poverty alleviation and environmental conservation, Chinese authorities are relocating millions of Tibetans in ‘new socialist villages’ as a tool to enforce political stability all over Tibet.

The ‘Auspicious Four Seasons Village’ resettlement village, with a total area of about 68,000 square meters and 1300 residents, is located alongside the highway in Chushur (Ch: Qushui) County, 24 km west from Gongkar airport in Lhasa. The village is divided into four sections based on the four seasons and the total number of household is 365 reflecting the number of days in a year. The houses in the village are painted in four colors: green, red, white and blue, reflecting the four seasons. There are 12 main roads in the village symbolizing 12 months of the year.

The innocuously modern architecture of the village belies the ways in which a state attempts to artificially create the material environment to mould and alter the traditional sense of identity and culture.

Tibetan nomads and farmers are moved to the outskirts of urban towns or in new resettlement villages. The residents in new resettlement villages hail from different nomadic and farming communities in a clear attempt to crush organised forms of groupings based on traditional ties and kinship.



An aerial depiction of the 'Auspicious Four Seasons Village'

A 42 year-old Tibetan man named Tsering Dorje was relocated from Gonjo (Ch: Gongjue) County, Chamdo (Ch: Changdu) City, 1,046.7 km from Lhasa.

Before the villagers were relocated, the County Party Committee and the County government dispatched young cadres to form a temporary party branch in order to “build a strong grassroots party organisation in the new village and regulate its orderly development so that the village can play its role as the party’s battle fortress.”

After the relocation was done, the temporary party branch and the resident village cadres ('village based-cadres'), under the direction higher party authorities, established a general party branch office and four sub-branches for each of the four groups of households in the resettlement village. In addition, the party members and cadres appointed the leaders of the villagers committee, resident village cadres and advanced double-linked households, etc.

The official *China Tibet News Network* reported that the village party general branch office takes a key role in organising activities in which "villagers learn the Chinese national anthem and other patriotic songs followed by political propaganda campaigns of the 'two studies and one work' and the 'four loves' mass education practice activities. During holidays, the party organises a series of "theme activities such as the traditional Tibetan circle dance, volunteer services, collective labor, celebration of the Tibetan New Year and the 'March 8 Women's Day'." These initiatives are aimed at "strengthening unity among the village residents."

Since the party plays a dominant role in the overall construction and development of the village, the party general branch strictly controls the quality of the party members through training, written examinations, and interviews to guarantee recruitment of patriotic individuals into the party as part of the overall drive to strengthen and expand grassroots party organisations.

The construction of the village began in August 2016 and relocation began in December the same year. On 1 July 2017, the village party committee and the villagers committee were inaugurated and the village was officially opened. One of the activities held at the event focussed on village party building, which made clear that it is the party that will "play a major role in improving the work and service capacity of the 'two committees' of the village and promoting the development of the whole village."

Suolang Yangji, secretary of the village said the party general branch of the village will "unite and lead the village so that the cadres and the masses can work hard to make the village achieve high quality development." In contrast to the farming and nomadic background of the relocated residents, the new resettlement village relies on industrial development, while still claiming to achieve poverty alleviation.

Chinese authorities hailed the village as "a model village for the poverty alleviation and relocation of Lhasa and the whole county. The villagers have all achieved poverty alleviation at the end of 2017. The surrounding areas are full of industries, and the surrounding forest coverage rate is 80%. The four seasons auspicious village is a village suitable for settlement, ecological civilisation, simple folk customs and rich folk customs."

Australian development specialist Gabriel Lafitte had showed how the collective rights of Tibetans, especially their social and economic rights, is undermined by failure to seek and obtain free, prior and informed consent to the relocation of the so-called rural poor,

who have little choice but to comply with official quotas and directives. Framing it a case study in internal displacement, Lafitte pointed out that within the red lines, grazing is banned, and in some areas all human activity, on paper, is permanently banned, but in practice, miners move in.



White colored resettlement houses at 'Auspicious Four Seasons Village'

The 1994 regulations governing the creation and administration of nature reserves authorise a governance regime predicated on the model of nature reserves as areas of special beauty, biological diversity and outstanding qualities. In keeping with this model, the Regulations require that there be a science-based classification, within each nature reserve, into core zones, buffer zones and outer zones. The core zone, to be policed most strictly, is the zone from which all human activity is prohibited, even scientific research and visitors, in order that what is most precious is given best opportunity to flourish unimpeded by human presence of any sort.

In keeping with this strict regime of human exclusion from the purity of nature, the

regulations are sweepingly comprehensive as to which human activities are banned, including both customary and modern uses of land: *"Article 26. In nature reserves, such activities as felling, grazing, hunting, fishing, gathering medicinal herbs, reclaiming, burning, mining, stone quarrying and sand dredging, shall be prohibited unless otherwise stipulated by relevant laws and regulations."*

Because traditional practices such as grazing domestic animals and medicinal herb gathering are criminalised, these enforceable rules, as is often the case in

China, are deeply ambivalent about the human beings whose home has always been those lands now declared to be nature reserve.

## **Special Four-month rectification campaign against mobile educational apps**

A special nationwide rectification campaign against illegal mobile educational applications (apps) was enforced from January to April 2019. The National Network Office, the Ministry of Education, the National Anti-organised Crime Office and other relevant departments conducted the campaign.

Based on the clues reported by netizens, the domestic education mobile application information service organization monitored and investigated

more than 20 apps that had been spreading “obscenity and other illegal information”. The National Network Office has shut down application services with “serious violations of laws and regulations, interrogated some of the program operators, and ordered the removal of more than 55,000 articles with “bad and unrelated learning contents”. Some 12,100 social media apps used mainly by young people have been shut down.

The National Network Information Office called on “all sectors of the community to work together to create a positive and healthy online learning environment for young people” and said it will “continue to work with relevant departments to increase the management of mobile educational applications, maintain a high-pressure situation for mobile applications providing bad education, and urge the operators of the procedures to strengthen content management, standardise market operations, actively accept social supervision, and accept complaints in a timely manner.”

## **China continues with flawed policy of ‘reducing livestock to grow more grass’**

The Tsekhog (Ch: Zeku) County Party committee and the county government in Malho (Ch: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture announced the enforcement of a countywide regulation to crack down on illegal land use and development activities from April to May 2019. Provisions of the regulation were publicised in advance.

The regulation is aimed at towns and outskirts of the county town. It prohibits land tenure rights and land development activities without official permission and bans sand mining and digging. The offenders will be tried under the violations of PRC urban and rural plan regulations, PRC

grassland law, PRC natural resources regulations, and PRC’s administrative permit letter.

On 27 May 2019, the Qinghai Province Development and Reform Committee announced the allocation of 360,0000 yuan for the implementation of *tuimu huancao* policy by the forestry and grassland bureau in 2019.

The policy is ostensibly aimed at reviving degraded grassland and improving grassland ecological environment. At the same time, it claims to raise the living standards of the local nomads.

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The amount will be used to carry out the policy in more than 100,000 mu (1 mu is equal to about 666.6 sqm) of grasslands, weeding of more than 200,000 mu of grassland, and reforms will be initiated in more than 2.8 million mu of grassland, in addition to improving conditions in more than 280,000 mu of land, forests, and plains in the Sanjiangyuan (Tib: ma dri dza sum jhung yul) and the Qilian Mountains (Tib: Dola Riwo) region.

## Tibetan Buddhist instructors attend political education session in Medrogungkar County

On 6 May, Chinese authorities held the first phase of political education session for Tibetan Buddhist faculty members in Meldrogungkar (Ch: Mozhugongka) County in Lhasa. The six-day training course had 60 participants mostly staff and instructors from 14 monasteries and nunneries such as Drikung Thil Monastery in the county as well as representatives of the county United Front Work Department and the cadres of various Monastery Management Committees.

Reporting on the training session, the *Lhasa Evening News* cited organisers as saying that the **training** was part of the TAR government's efforts at "steering the thoughts and practices of the faculty and staff towards patriotism, obedience and law" and "actively guiding Tibetan Buddhism to adapt to the socialist society." The training, the organisers added, "requires the participants to firmly support the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government, profoundly understand the connotation of 'stability is blessing, separatism is a curse', and enhance the consciousness of safeguarding the motherland's reunification and national unity." Alluding to the political objectives of the training session, the report further noted that the training session is "effectively invested in strengthening and innovating the temple management system in accordance with the law, and actively contributing to the

maintenance of national unity, social stability, the reunification of the motherland, and the building of a new socialist Tibet."



A front facade of a house in 'Auspicious Four Seasons Village'

## Opinion: The Dubious Development in Chamdo\*

Chamdo, once an integral part of the Tibetan nation, is now a prospering city full of economic development, but at what cost?

According to the party mouthpiece *People's Daily*, Chamdo's GDP has increased by 9.7% to a whopping 8.449 billion yuan in the first half of 2019. This in part has been fuelled by the increased tourism, alleged success of the poverty alleviation program and the creation of new jobs.

Again we see the mention of the success of poverty alleviation resettlement policy, an iceberg solution. The poverty alleviation resettlement camps are

intended to improve living standards of the underprivileged in Tibet, but the clumping of people together and the access to resources present a different idea to the outside world.

Chamdo has reportedly been improving and the cleanliness of the city has been attributed to pollution prevention programs, but how accurate can that be when 56 industrial projects have also started.

Knowing the industrial waste and high levels of chemical output that factories produce especially the many unregulated ones in China, we cannot know for sure if pollution levels are decreasing without knowing what these industries are producing and data on the types of particles in the air and their quantities in Chamdo.

Moreover, 18 special job fairs were held this year that have created over 5,000 jobs, in what sectors we do not know. Incomes continue to grow as disposable incomes of the average citizen in Chamdo have increased by 10.4% ensuring that they have their basic necessities, but what about the protection of culture and tradition, about which there is no clear information. Local authorities also highlighted that the rural community of Chamdo's disposable income is 5.003 times less than the urban community making it known to the Chinese media that the rural communities are very poor in Chamdo, which in turn helps the government to justify poverty alleviation programs. At the same time, livestock is predominantly maintained by the rural communities yet they saw their production of vegetables, milk and meat reach 11.8 million (6% increase), 1716 (4% increase) and 3788 tons (3.3% increase) respectively.

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***It is highlighted that the rural community of Chamdo's disposable income is 5.003 times less than the urban community***

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With these statistics, it does not make sense how rural families' income only increased by about 13.5%, with such high outputs of milk, meat and vegetables, it should be that they should be earning much higher yields especially since China's tax is run on progressive income taxes.

Furthermore, Chamdo has seen a 26.88% increase in the tourism industry, receiving over a one million tourists. While a flourishing industry in tourism may be beneficial for economic growth, what must be prioritised is to ensure that Chamdo's citizens reap the most benefits, especially those who are living in poverty such as the rural population.

\*The author of this article is Kunsel Subramanyam, an intern at TCHRD.

## **Note on sources**

All information in this publication is based on Chinese government news media and independent analyses by TCHRD. All photo credits in this publication goes to Chinese government media.

TCHRD, May 2019