

# Specific recommendations on Tibetan Buddhism and religious freedom in Tibet

(From 'The Communist Party as Living Buddha', April 2007)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

1. Release the Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima, from state custody and allow him to pursue the religious education necessary for assuming his legitimate position as a religious leader.
2. End the official policy of State intervention in the identification and training of Tibetan reincarnate lamas.
3. Disband the Democratic Management Committees at religious institutions.
4. End those practices targeted at Tibetan Buddhist institutions which threaten to erode the Tibetan religious culture, such as:
  - the ban on religious construction without government permission;
  - the strengthening of Party dominance through Democratic Management Committees;
  - limits on the number of monks and nuns per monastery;
  - the screening for admission of monks and nuns on the basis of their political views;
  - government restrictions on travel between counties, prefectures and provinces, for the purpose of religion study; and
  - 'patriotic education' which includes the denunciation of the Dalai Lama.
5. Allow Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns to interact freely with their co-religionists abroad.
6. Repeal laws, regulations, and other provisions that violate the right to freedom of religion, in accordance with international standards that protect the right to freedom of religion.
7. Protect in law, the right of all children to obtain religious education, with the consent of their parents or legal guardians, and to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
8. Release all Tibetan prisoners who have been detained for religious beliefs or practices but have been charged with political offenses.
9. Allow monks and nuns who have been imprisoned on political charges to return to their religious institutions upon completion of their sentences.
10. Ratify immediately the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and ensure that its protections are extended to Tibetans, including the right to profess and practice their own religion.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

1. The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief should include travel to Tibet when making a fact-finding visit to China.
2. As recommended by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to the government of the People's Republic of China, an independent expert should be allowed to meet with the Panchen Lama, and the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief must now make it a priority to engage the Chinese authorities on this recommendation by seeking a visit with the Panchen Lama as soon as possible.
3. The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief is urged to reflect the situation of religious freedom in Tibet in reports on China to the UN Human Rights Council.
4. The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief should work with other thematic mandates of the UN Human Rights Council, including the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance, to gain access to the Panchen Lama.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENTS AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

1. Hold the government of the People's Republic of China accountable for breaching several Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in its abduction and prolonged detention of the Panchen Lama, and

press that he be released from state custody and restored his rights to a religious education so that he can assume his legitimate position as a religious leader.

2. Foster the development of freedom of religion in China by encouraging the government of the People's Republic of China to recognize that this freedom includes the right of Tibetan Buddhists to freely express their religious devotion to the Dalai Lama.