

Tibetan Elections in Exile:  
From Theocratic Monarchy to a Developing Exile Democracy, 1959-2009

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A thesis submitted to the Department of History for honors  
Duke University  
Durham, NC  
April 2009

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## Acknowledgements

This thesis is the culmination of a year and a half experience that began with my time abroad in India, Nepal, and Tibet where I participated in a Tibetan and Himalayan studies program run by the School for International Training. That semester inspired me in many ways that I am still learning to appreciate. I'd like to thank my fellow program participants for making it such a memorable experience and of course our Academic Directors, Pamela Novak and Manuel Lopez for their support and guidance.

Naturally, the abiding inspiration for this project is the Tibetans I've met who have been so friendly and open in sharing their stories and experiences. I am grateful to the warmth and hospitality shown to me, and am awed by the resilience and dedication embodied in the exile community.

This has been both a personal and academic pursuit in which I have tried to honor the Tibetan tradition while developing a useful approach for grappling with some of the electoral and political issues facing the exiles. It has been a privilege to listen and to learn.

I'd like to thank Palmo Dorjee for undertaking the first English translation of the *Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act*, as well as the history department at Duke for generously funding the project and making it possible for me to interview Lobsang Sangay. This assistance allowed me to fully access sources that have served as crucial components in my work.

A special shout out to all of my classmates in the Monday afternoon thesis seminar for reviewing my many outlines and drafts, and for helping me clarify my thoughts along the way.

Most importantly I'd like to thank my adviser—and thesis seminar instructor—John French, for the countless and unending hours he put into this project. I am deeply indebted to him for his invaluable support, working as a sounding board, offering feedback and guidance, and keeping me on task as necessary. I cannot begin to quantify his role in making this project a reality. Thank you.

Lastly, to everyone who stopped by and visited me in Perkins, I couldn't have done it without you.

This year in Dharamsala, next year in Lhasa!

བོད་རང་བཙན།

## Glossary of Tibetan Names and Terms

*Chemey Yungdrung*: President of the National Democratic Party of Tibet

*Chitue*: Elected legislature

*cholka*: Region

*Cholka sum*: The three provinces of Tibet

*Kalon*: Government minister

*Kalon Tripa*: Executive head of the CTA, prime minister

*Karma Choephel*: Speaker of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies

*Kashag*: Executive body of the CTA, comprised of the prime minister and cabinet

*Lobsang Sangay*: Research Fellow at Harvard Law School

*Lodoe Sangpo*: Candidate for Dharamsala Welfare Officer in the Nov. 29, 2007 election

*mangtso*: Rule by the majority

*Rangzen Lakhdeb*: Annual "voluntary freedom tax" contributed to the Central Tibetan Administration by exiled Tibetans

*Samdhong Rinpoche*: The first popularly and directly elected *Kalon Tripa*

*Sonam Shosur*: Dharamsala Welfare Officer and Regional Election Commissioner

*Tashi*: Dharamsala election pollworker, November 17 and 29, 2007

*Tashi Phuntsok*: CTA Central Election Commissioner

*Tenzin Namdul*: Doctor, *Men Tsee Khang* Research Department

*Tenzin Dorjee*: Young Tibetan woman, resident of McLeod Ganj, India

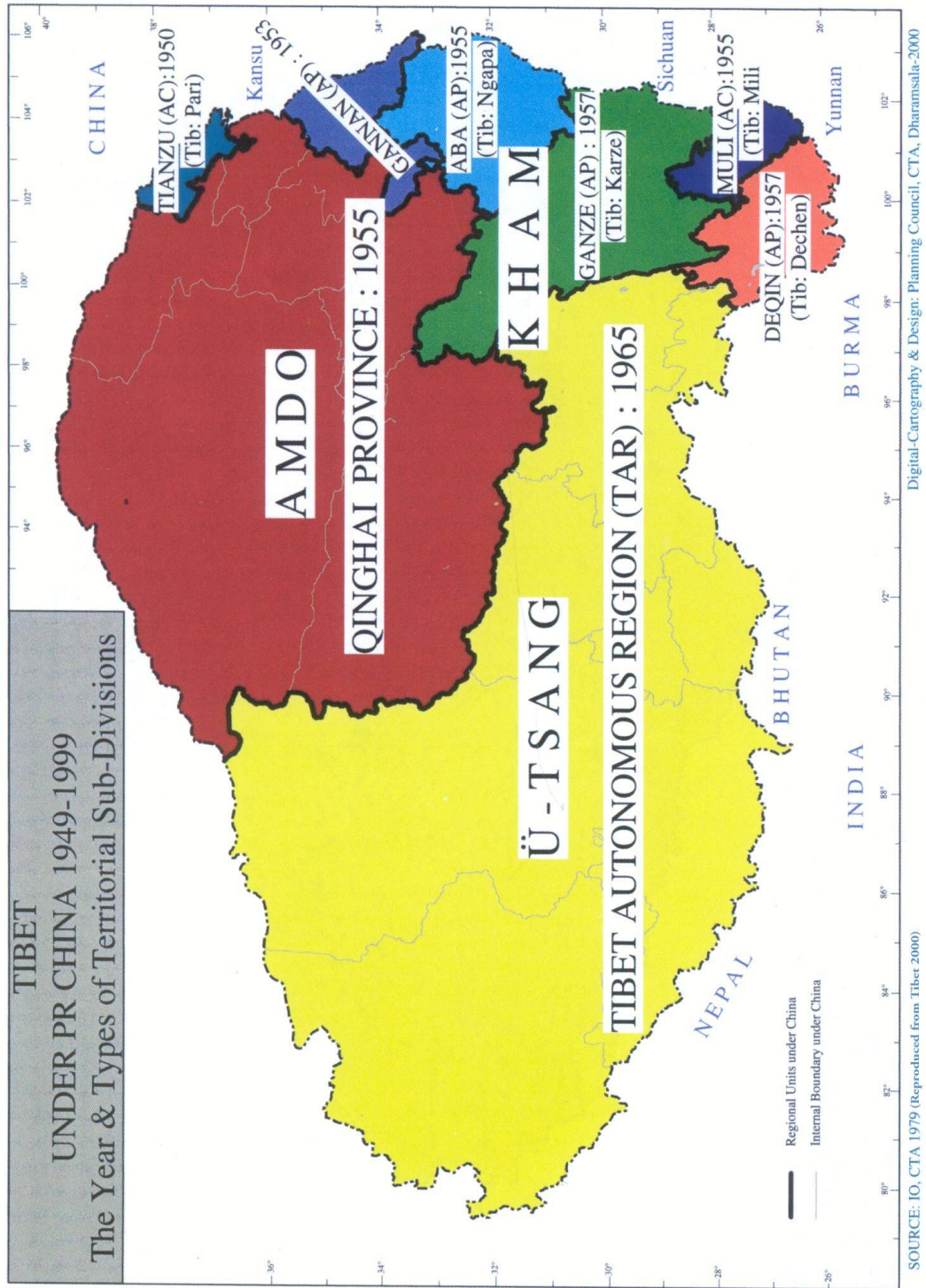
*Tsering Phuntsok*: Candidate for Dharamsala Welfare Officer in the Nov. 29, 2007 election

*Tsuglagkhang*: The temple of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama located in McLeod Ganj, India

## **Glossary of Acronyms**

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| ATPD    | Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies             |
| CENTREX | Executive Committee of the Tibetan Youth Congress |
| CTA     | Central Tibetan Administration                    |
| CTPD    | Commission of Tibetan People's Deputies           |
| NDPT    | National Democratic Party of Tibet                |
| NWC     | National Working Committee                        |
| TPPRC   | Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre  |
| TWA     | Tibetan Women's Association                       |
| TYC     | Tibetan Youth Congress                            |

# Map of Tibet<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Taken from the Central Tibetan Administration website, <http://www.tibet.net/en/image/tibet-map.jpg>.



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## Introduction

November emergency meeting.

581 delegates descend on Dharamsala.

Tibet at crossroads.

“Talk is brewing of kicking off the world’s next separatist movement.”<sup>2</sup>

Headlines splashed across papers from New York to Bangkok spoke of a meeting in India of Tibetan exiles from around the world, answering the call of the Dalai Lama.<sup>3</sup>

However, few news reports paid attention to the elected Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the Tibetan government-in-exile, which claims to speak for all Tibetans, both in Tibet and abroad. A November 20, 2008 *Los Angeles Times* article provides a clear illustration:

The six-day meeting was called by the Dalai Lama here in the home of *his* government in exile to consider fundamental questions: Should Tibetans maintain *his* “middle way” approach, which acknowledges China’s sovereignty over their land...Or should they adopt a more hard-line approach favored by many younger Tibetans advocating a struggle for independence?<sup>4</sup> (emphasis added)

This type of international media coverage situates the Dalai Lama in the middle of the exile community, while the CTA is best understood peripherally as *his* government, with *his* decisions ultimately determining the course of events. For many, this Tibetan exile narrative is easier to understand precisely because it overlaps with an imagined community comprised of a homogenous, Buddhist, non-violent, and rosy-cheeked Himalayan people.

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Wong, “At Exile Meeting, Tibetans Debate Independence,” *New York Times*, 21 Nov. 2008; Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/22/world/asia/22tibet.html?scp=1&sq=Tibetans&st=cse>, accessed 22 Nov. 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Associated Press, “Dalai Lama Urges Exiles to be Prudent,” *New York Times*, 23 Nov. 2008; Available at [http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/world/AP-AS-India-Tibet.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/world/AP-AS-India-Tibet.html?_r=1), accessed 24 Nov. 2008. “Frustrated with stalled talks with China, the Dalai Lama called the weeklong gathering of Tibetan exiles from around the world to discuss the future of their movement.”

<sup>4</sup> Mark Mangier, “At the Dalai Lama’s urging, hundreds of Tibetans converge to discuss their future,” *Los Angeles Times*, 20 Nov. 2008; Available at <http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-fg-tibet202008nov20,0,7374692.story>, accessed 22 Nov. 2008.

However, the Dalai Lama did not even attend the six-day meeting in Dharamsala, which was in fact officially organized by the CTA. Even reporters seem unaware of the CTA's laws, functions, and procedures, glossing over the government and thus disregarding the complexities and intricacies of Tibetan exile politics. Despite being a landless entity, the CTA is still a functioning government and includes Departments of Religion and Culture, Home, Finance, Education, Security, Information and International Relations, and Health. It provides a variety of services to Tibetan exiles, administers over 80 Tibetan schools, and runs its own printing house. Additionally, many do not understand that the CTA is not only a government-in-exile, but also one whose legitimacy derives from constitutionally-mandated elections that date back almost fifty years. The politics of the Tibetan exile community are the focal point of this thesis which outlines the evolution of this developing exile democracy while examining how individuals are elected to positions ranging from the *Kalon Tripa*<sup>5</sup> (prime minister) to the local CTA welfare officer.

Over the last fifty years, however, the government—and the Dalai Lama's position in it—have changed dramatically from an absolute theocratic monarchy in Tibet to a community-in-exile governed as a constitutional monarchy that has become increasingly democratic. However, journalists, in conflating the Dalai Lama, the CTA, and Tibetan exiles (and often all Tibetans, even those inside China), reflect the general confusion about the exile leadership, whether out of ignorance or convenience. I shared many of these misconceptions until I spent a semester abroad on a Tibetan and Himalayan Studies program that took me to India, Nepal, and Tibet. It involved Tibetan language study, a seminar on Tibetan Buddhism, and a clearing house seminar on Tibetan history, society, culture, and politics. My

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<sup>5</sup> See page iii for a Glossary of Tibetan Names and Terms.

experience culminated in a five-week, field-based independent research project on the contemporary Tibetan electoral system in Dharamsala, India, which resulted in a paper entitled “Democracy and Identity: The Dual Role of Tibetan Elections in Exile.” During my research I watched Tibetan elections at the grassroots level, including both the preliminary and final rounds of the local election of the Dharamsala Welfare Officer in November 2007. I also had the opportunity to interview the Chief Election Commissioner and the Speaker of the Tibetan parliament, while conferring with pollworkers and local residents. What I saw reflected the rise of a Tibetan government-in-exile that embodied the transition from theocracy to democracy in the wave of democratization that has increasingly swept the globe over the last several decades.

A November 2008 *New York Times* article quoted Lobsang Sangay, chair of a 34-person committee at the November 2008 meeting, as saying: “I see this meeting as a symbolic transition from a Tibetan movement led by His Holiness to a Tibetan movement led by Tibetan people.”<sup>6</sup> However, without contextualizing his quote, it implies little more than a transfer of leadership, rather than foregrounding a long and ongoing process of internal political and social changes that generally remain invisible to the international media and Tibetan sympathizers alike. For over three hundred years the Dalai Lama had been the center of political and religious life for Tibetans. Today, many observers continue to superimpose this past structure on the current exile situation. However, Tibetan exile politics is far more than the Dalai Lama: it is a mixture of deference to a supreme spiritual figure, the election of politicians, a complex struggle for the homeland, and the functioning of a government without a state. The transition from a pre-exile theocratic monarchy to a developing exile

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<sup>6</sup> Wong, “At Exile Meeting,” *New York Times*.

democracy, and the relatively rapid development of a democratic tradition in fifty years points to a complex narrative centered around a changing basis of legitimacy, authority, and principles.

This thesis first addresses the development of Tibetan democracy in exile since the Dalai Lama's flight to India in 1959. It begins by examining the Tibetan government prior to 1959, providing context for that changes that followed. It next explores the problematic nature of legitimacy as it relates to the CTA, the Tibetan community at large, and within an international context, highlighting change over time. It then follows a progression from the past to the present to engage some of the issues currently in play, and finally brings these narratives together to offer some thoughts on the current state of Tibetan democracy.

### **The State of the Debate**

While Tibetan exile democratization has been underway for fifty years, scholarly attention has only recently begun to focus on the Tibetan exile system of governance. This shift can be attributed in part to a greater recognition of the CTA as it becomes more firmly established and assumes a greater role; However, the advancing age of the Dalai Lama has more likely spurred the increased interest in the CTA's constitutional mechanics and functions, including elections.

One of the earliest studies of the Tibetan exile government was written by Rebecca R. French for a 1991 book titled *Governments-in-Exile in Contemporary World Politics*. Mostly descriptive, she begins with the increasingly hostile relationship between China and Tibet that ultimately sparked the Dalai Lama's decision to flee to India. She attributes the success of the Tibetan exile community to the role of the Dalai Lama, the Indian Government's openness, the community's ability to fundraise, and "the cohesion and

flexibility of the government-in-exile as an administrative unit.”<sup>7</sup> French lauds Tibetans for successfully “preserving their own identities and cultural heritage”<sup>8</sup> but does not evaluate the practices that form the foundation of the government in exile. Overall, French highlights the unique role the Dalai Lama plays in the Tibetan community while focusing attention on the possibility of returning to the homeland. However, that possibility is attributed primarily to questions about internal Chinese politics and the “condition of world politics,”<sup>9</sup> with little focus on the exile government itself.

Jane Ardley, a lecturer in politics at the Keele University School of Politics, International Relations and the Environment, has authored a number of articles and books on the Tibetan exile community and its struggle for independence. Her 2002 book *The Tibetan Independence Movement: Political, Religious and Gandhian Perspectives* offers a political analysis of the Tibetan independence movement and its tensions with Buddhist tradition. Although she does not focus on elections, her work does address the role of the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC)—founded in the early 1970s—whose policies on independence have conflicted with the “Middle Way” approach advanced by the Dalai Lama.

A 2003 book by historian Helen R. Boyd was the first to focus on “the emergence of the modernizing force of democracy.”<sup>10</sup> *The Future of Tibet: The Government-in-Exile Meets the Challenge of Democratization* begins with the historical significance of the institution of the Dalai Lama in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and its continued importance today. Boyd also discusses the structure of the CTA, the relationship between Buddhism and democracy,

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<sup>7</sup> Rebecca R. French, “The New Snow Lion: The Tibetan Government-in-Exile in India,” in Governments-in-Exile in Contemporary World Politics, ed. Yossi Shain (New York: Routledge, 1991), 192.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Helen R. Boyd, The Future of Tibet: The Government-in-Exile Meets the Challenge of Democratization, (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), ix.

and the influence of the Indian government on the CTA. In her coverage of democratic developments since the CTA's founding, Boyd addresses the role of the educational system as well as tensions that arose between the TYC and the CTA. Although Boyd points to some of the inadequacies of the Tibetan exile government, she rightly notes that no other government has achieved the ideal system either. However, she does not address elections, only mentioning the composition of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD) and its associated constituencies.

The first English-language scholarly contribution by a Tibetan was written by Lobsang Sangay, currently a Research Fellow at the East Asian Legal Studies Program at Harvard Law School where he earned a master's degree and a Doctorate in law in 2004. Having organized numerous conferences between Chinese and Tibetan scholars, Sangay is an expert on Tibet, international human rights law, democracy, and conflict resolution. His 2003 article "Tibet: Exiles' Journey," published in *Journal of Democracy*, sketches out some of the general themes that he expands upon in his 2004 thesis. He reviews the internal political situation in Tibet prior 1959, and the transitions that occurred in exile. He also highlights the rise of the Dalai Lama as an international figure and his contributions to internationalizing the Tibetan cause. Finally, he mentions the first election of exile representatives and deals with some of the controversies that ended with the direct election of the *Kalon Tripa* in 2001.

Ann Frechette published a 2007 article in *the Journal of Asian Studies* entitled "Democracy and Democratization among Tibetans in Exile." A research associate at the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research at Harvard University, Frechette's article was based on fieldwork conducted in the Nepal and Dharamsala in 1994 and 1995. As with others,

Frechette places Tibetan exile democracy in the larger context of other Asian democratic systems, noting “how democracy is reinterpreted within different social and political contexts.”<sup>11</sup> Overall, she argues that the “transition resembles much more of a ‘muddling through’ than a linear progression”<sup>12</sup> and ultimately turns her attention to the Dalai Lama as the driving force behind democratization. “Given the position of the Dalai Lama and the limitations of the exile context,” she concludes, “it is fair to say that Tibetan exile society has not yet become fully democratic, even in its own terms”<sup>13</sup> and that “the political process falls short of Western liberal ideals.”<sup>14</sup>

The most important published work on the CTA was written in 2008 by Stephanie Roemer, a political scientist who received her Ph.D. from the Free University Berlin. Her 2008 book, titled *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile: Politics at Large*, provides a detailed and up-to-date account of the structure of the Central Tibetan Administration. Roemer first provides a historical account of the political state of Tibet between 1900 and 1959. She builds on her discussion of pre-exile structures by tracing the institutional departures in exile. She then uses a theoretical model of exile governments to establish a framework to analyze “the efforts of the Tibetan government-in-exile in creating a base for its exile struggle to free the homeland.”<sup>15</sup> While discussing how the CTA fosters its claim to be the sole representative of all Tibetans, she follows the resettlement process of Tibetans in exile and the subsequent communities that formed. In doing so she also addresses the role of Tibetan

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<sup>11</sup> Ann Frechette, “Democracy and Democratization among Tibetans in Exile,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 66, no. 1 (Feb. 2007): 101; Available through [http://proxy.lib.duke.edu:2473/download.php?file=%2FJAS%2FJAS66\\_01%2FS0021911807000022a.pdf&code=dc047064c6e03393bcc11dafcdd37ae9](http://proxy.lib.duke.edu:2473/download.php?file=%2FJAS%2FJAS66_01%2FS0021911807000022a.pdf&code=dc047064c6e03393bcc11dafcdd37ae9), accessed 13 Nov. 2008.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Stephanie Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile: Politics at Large* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 58.



NGOs. Roemer ends with how CTA policies “contribute to an exile government’s mobilization of national loyalty and international support.”<sup>16</sup> She discusses different approaches to mobilizing support, including religion, inclusion, and a rights based approach. She suggests that not only was the transition to a more democratic form of government in exile required by the host country, but that it also provided a compelling contrast to Chinese rule, and has proven popular in the international arena.

While Roemer has proven indispensable to this thesis, it is curious that her 2008 book uses Lobsang Sangay’s short 2003 article “Tibet: Exiles’ Journey” but does not cite his 2004 Harvard Law thesis.<sup>17</sup> This doctoral dissertation by a leading Tibetan intellectual figures most centrally in this honors thesis, which can be seen as a dialogue with both Sangay’s written work and an interview I conducted with him in spring 2009 in Cambridge, Massachusetts.<sup>18</sup> Entitled “Democracy in Distress: Is Exile Polity a Remedy? A Case Study of Tibet’s Government in Exile,” Sangay examines both the role of the Dalai Lama and the state of the Tibet exile polity through the lens of the law. Above all, he seeks to answer the questions: “Can there be democracy in exile? If so, can the democratic experience be replicated in the homeland? Finally, does the religious legitimacy of the Dalai Lama make the democratization of the Tibetan government in exile unique?”<sup>19</sup>

His work is part of a larger theoretical and normative study of democracy, exile, and culture. Sangay draws on the theories of Max Weber to discuss the institution of the Dalai Lama, while touching on the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. He also reviews the factors that

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>17</sup> In fact, a Google scholar search returns only one citation of his 2004 dissertation, in a 2008 dissertation entitled, “Harmony ideology and dispute resolution: a legal ethnography of the Tibetan Diaspora in India.”

<sup>18</sup> Interview: Lobsang Sangay, Harvard Scholar, 6 March 2009, 1:00pm, Rangzen Restaurant, Cambridge, MA, USA.

<sup>19</sup> Lobsang Sangay, “Democracy in Distress: Is Exile Polity a Remedy? A Case Study of Tibet’s Government in Exile,” (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2004), 2.

influenced the Dalai Lama's choice of a democratic system. These included his recognition of the weaknesses of the traditional Tibetan government, his desire to create an alternative to the Chinese Communist system, and his exposure to the democratic system both in India and the wider international community. Sangay uses political science terminology to explore the role of the Dalai Lama and the electoral system in overcoming the challenges faced by Tibetan exile democracy. He also uses a number of other country case studies to talk about parallel leadership structures, and the positive and negative implications of introducing democracy from the outside. Sangay examines different leadership styles, citing specific popular and authoritarian examples. His thesis also stands out for its examination of various controversies and other scandals that arose in the 1970s and 1980s, that are seldom (if ever) discussed by the media or even by many scholars.

For the purpose of this thesis, Sangay's work is of greatest interest because he is one of the only scholars to address the question, "How does the Tibetan Diaspora Elect Leaders?"<sup>20</sup> While theoretically classifying the system as "loose consociationalism,"<sup>21</sup> his section on elections offers a general outline of the representation provided by the elected legislature as well as the role of the Dalai Lama. While the secondary literature has increasingly addressed Tibetan exile democracy in broad terms, few have stressed, like Sangay, the importance of elections as a "public display of recognition by its people of its exile government thereby giving its government some legitimacy."<sup>22</sup> As an emerging exile democracy, the CTA is important to Sangay because of the hope that it will one day be the homeland government of Tibet. Thus "the fact that the Tibetan electoral system continued

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., "How does the Tibetan Disapora Elect Leaders?" 1.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 10.

for more than forty years affirms the central thesis of the dissertation that not only can there be democracy in exile, but that democracy and the national freedom movement can be reconciled.”<sup>23</sup>

## Sources

While many of my secondary sources focus on exile democracy as a means to return to the homeland—or as a way of rallying support for the Tibetan cause—this thesis will focus on the specific nature of the Tibetan polity, based on elections, as it exists in an exile context. Although the reason for an exiled existence cannot be ignored, my main focus will be on the constitutional mechanisms and practices themselves, rather than viewing them as a tool to achieve other ends. To do this I use a wide variety of secondary works, as well as government publications, newspaper articles, and nine interviews with Tibetan leaders and scholars in India, North Carolina, and Massachusetts. I also reflect on my own experiences observing Tibetan elections in 2007, the lens through which I became interested in this emerging democracy.

My primary sources include government documents such as the 1963 *Constitution of Tibet*, and the 1991 *Charter of the Tibetans in Exile*, as well the first English translation of the *Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act*, which was commissioned for this thesis and paid for with departmental research funds. I also draw on an array of newspaper and web sources from the United States, India, and elsewhere. Given the turbulent events of 2008, many mainstream newspapers have printed articles discussing the Tibetan exile situation, the protests in the Tibet Autonomous Region, coverage of the 2008 Olympic Torch Relay, and the November emergency meeting of Tibetan exiles. However, most are superficial, and

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 52.

their understanding and discussion of the complexities of current events is not illuminating. A few Indian news sources offer more in-depth and complete reporting. Additionally, some local North American newspapers occasionally discuss events within their local Tibetan communities such as festivals, elections, and other cultural happenings.

In contrast to other scholarly accounts, I make extensive use of the *Tibetan Review*—a monthly English-language publication founded in 1968<sup>24</sup>—to construct a full picture of the functioning of the exile polity, the development of elections, and an emerging universe of exile political discourse among the educated. All of my main secondary sources reference the *Tibetan Review*, which underlines its importance as a source. However, none have systematically exploited the wealth of information contained in the volumes. Below is a table that lays out the *Tibetan Review*'s frequency of use in my main secondary sources, breaking it down by the period of time each article is drawn from.

| <b>Source</b>  | <b>Before 1979</b> | <b>1980-1989</b> | <b>1990-1999</b> | <b>2000-present</b> |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| French 1991    | 0                  | Vols 1988, 1989  | 0                | 0                   |
| Ardley 2002    | 4                  | 0                | 1                | 3                   |
| Frechette 2002 | 4                  | 0                | 0                | 1                   |
| Boyd 2004      | 18                 | 0                | 5                | 13                  |
| Sangay 2004    | 12                 | 5                | 4                | 3                   |
| Roemer 2008    | 28                 | 4                | 3                | 17                  |

While French cites the 1988 and 1989 Volumes of the *Tibetan Review* in her bibliography, she does not cite any specific articles. Additionally, many of the articles cited in other secondary sources do not actually bear on my topics—elections or democracy—as is

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<sup>24</sup> A full description of the *Tibetan Review* can be found in Chapter 2.

the case with those cited by Ardley, which instead address the independence movement. I use the *Tibetan Review* in two respects: 1) to paint a fuller picture of the foundations of the CTA and the rise of elections in the exile community, and 2) to examine an ongoing political discourse within the educated sector of the Tibetan community. Thus, this thesis will offer the first systematic use of the 41 years of the *Tibetan Review* as a means to better understand the Tibetan community and its internal politics. [I have accrued over 100 pages of notes on 255 separate items, listed individually in the bibliography in chronological order. Below is a table comparing my use of the *Tibetan Review* to that of my main secondary sources.] As a publication unaffiliated with the CTA, it is the Tibetan political story as told by Tibetans and has proven most illuminating.

| <b>Source</b>   | <b>Before 1979</b> | <b>1980-1989</b> | <b>1990-1999</b> | <b>2000-present</b> |
|---|--------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| French, 66<br>Ardley, Boyd,<br>Roemer, Sangay,<br>Frechette | 9                  | 13               | 37               | 7                   |
| Lehman 255<br>2009  | 64                 | 84               | 93               | 78                  |

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Chapter one will discuss the formation of the exile community and the beginnings of an exile polity. It will also examine the emergence of new voices, including the *Tibetan Review* and the Tibetan Youth Congress, which marked the rise of Tibetan exile civil society. The second chapter then discusses the conflict between these new voices and traditional forms of authority whose influence severely limited the ability of CTA institutions to function in a democratic manner. These conflicts culminated in further democratic changes

in the 1990s, including modifications to the electoral system that paved the way for democratic maturation in the new millennium.

## Chapter 1

### **A People in Flight and the Founding of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile:**

#### **The Beginning of Electoral Forms of Constitutional Politics, 1959-1990**

Democracy has a vast and varied history; one of its more unique narratives is the exiled government of Tibet currently located in Dharamsala, India. Founded by the fourteenth Dalai Lama after his flight from Chinese-occupied Tibet in 1959, he immediately began developing an infrastructure that would form the basis of the democracy that exists today. The government in Tibet prior to the Chinese invasion was a theocracy where ultimate temporal and spiritual power rested with the Dalai Lama. Considering the original motivation behind China's "liberation" of Tibet from its feudal oppressors, it is ironic that "today, Chinese and Tibetans inside Tibet live under totalitarian Chinese rule, while Tibetans who fled into exile have developed a thriving democratic form of government."<sup>25</sup> The development of democracy came at a time when exiled Tibetans were struggling to make sense of the new world they had entered and their place in it.

Although Tibetans had no experience with democracy prior to 1959, it was quickly adopted by the Dalai Lama and Tibetans have slowly begun to make it their own. The last 50 years have been marked by key developments in Tibetan exile democracy that have had a profound impact on the electoral system. Upon his arrival in India, one of the Dalai Lama's first tasks was to establish a Tibetan government in exile (Central Tibetan Administration, CTA) as well as a parliament constituted in 1960. On September 2, 1960, the Commission of Tibetan People's Deputies (CTPD, whose name was later changed to the Assembly of

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<sup>25</sup> Eva Herzer, "Testimony at the Congressional Human Rights Caucus Briefing on Tibet," 6 Dec. 2001, Washington D.C. p. 1; available at <http://www.savetibet.org/news/newsitem.php?id=120>, accessed 21 Nov. 2007.

Tibetan People's Deputies, ATPD) took the oath of office, and has since been celebrated annually as "Democracy Day" among Tibetan exiles. The first constitutional government in the history of Tibet, albeit in exile, marked "a first concrete step toward the democratization of the Tibetan community."<sup>26</sup> Not long after, in 1961, the Dalai Lama took a second important democratic step by distributing a draft of a new constitution of Tibet, the final version of which he promulgated on March 10, 1963. Although technically intended to govern an independent Tibet, it nevertheless established a simple framework for the functioning of the exile government and parliament, including elections.

This chapter will examine the process by which the new government, and elections, was implemented, and the difficulties faced between 1959 and 1990. As many have observed, the exile government functioned in a variety of capacities, but Tibetan democracy is generally acknowledged to have been "more nominal than real."<sup>27</sup> This chapter also explores the emergence of new voices, such as the *Tibetan Review* and the Tibetan Youth Congress, which began to create civil society organizations that challenged established institutions and practices of pre-exile Tibetan society. The influence of a Tibetan civil society and the integration of elections facilitated the integration of democratic norms in the Tibetan exile community.

### **When Worlds Collide: The Role of the Dalai Lama**

1949-50 marked the Chinese invasion of Tibet. Given the mounting pressures of world events and the need for strong leadership, the Tibetan government and the national

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<sup>26</sup> Central Election Commission, "Election Commission" pamphlet (Dharamsala: Central Tibetan Administration: 2001).

<sup>27</sup> Lobsang Sangay, "Tibet: Exiles' Journey," *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 3 (July 2003): 122; available through [http://proxy.lib.duke.edu:2161/journals/journal\\_of\\_democracy/v014/14.3sangay.html](http://proxy.lib.duke.edu:2161/journals/journal_of_democracy/v014/14.3sangay.html); accessed 13 Nov. 2008.



assembly decided in 1950 that Tenzin Gyatso, the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, would assume full political and religious power at age 15, three years before he reached the standard age of majority.<sup>28</sup>

Lozang Gyatso, the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (1617-1682), unified Tibet after defeating both the rival Kagyu school of Buddhism and the secular ruler of the time. For the next three hundred years the Dalai Lama (or his Regent) would rule Tibet. The Dalai Lamas were recognized and selected through reincarnation: After the death of each Dalai Lama, his successor was found through a series of clues and signs left by the previous Dalai Lama, referencing where he would be born next. The 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama established an administrative structure that was divided between specially trained monks and lay nobility, with each making up half of the 350 officials. This structure laid the framework for “the duality of religion and politics,”<sup>29</sup> that continues in Tibetan politics today. At the time, the union between politics and religion was represented by the shared responsibilities of the monastic and lay communities; however, it is ultimately “reflected in the succession of leadership: the concept of reincarnation.”<sup>30</sup>

March 10, 1959: National Uprising Day. Tens of thousands of Tibetans surrounded Norbulingka palace in order to protect the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama by preventing him from attending a performance being hosted by the Chinese. Rumors were rampant that he was to be kidnapped and taken to Beijing (or worse) if he attended. Tensions were already high as many Tibetans from the east had converged on Lhasa to escape the conflict between Tibetan

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<sup>28</sup> According to Tibetan tradition a baby is considered one year old when s/he is born, which accounts for the age discrepancy in certain accounts.

<sup>29</sup> Jane Ardley, The Tibetan Independence Movement: Political, religious and Ghanaian perspectives (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 11.

<sup>30</sup> Stephanie Roemer, The Tibetan Government-in-Exile, 20.

guerilla fighters and Chinese soldiers that had begun in 1956, as well as other popular revolts across the plateau. The population of Lhasa—which prior to the Chinese invasion “never had more than forty thousand inhabitants”<sup>31</sup>—swelled, placing pressure on natural resources that were incapable of handling such large and concentrated populations. Pushed to the brink by the possibility of their leader’s seizure, March 10 sparked riots that ripped through the city and whose effects echoed across the plateau.

On March 17, 1959 the Dalai Lama and his family escaped from Lhasa under the cloak of darkness. For two weeks the world had no news of the Dalai Lama. There was speculation that he had been killed in the Chinese crackdown which had followed the uprising and claimed tens of thousands of lives. These fears were heightened by news of an 800-artillery shell bombardment of Norbulingka, where he had been staying.<sup>32</sup> However, by the end of March his party had reached India safely. India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru granted the Dalai Lama asylum, and a mass exodus of Tibetans followed. In the years immediately following his flight, an estimated 80,000 Tibetans went into exile. Since then, a steady stream of two to three thousand Tibetans have crossed the Himalayas into Nepal, Bhutan, and India each year.

Since 1959 the Dalai Lama “has been the leader and spokesman for the country and people of Tibet from his home in exile in Dharamsala.”<sup>33</sup> Simultaneously, “Hundreds of reporters were sent to photograph the religious leader, the ‘God King,’ in his refugee camp,

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<sup>31</sup> Per Kvaerne, “Tibet: The Rise and Fall of a Monastic Tradition,” in The World of Buddhism, ed. Ian Sutton (New York: Thames and Hudson, Ltd.: 1984), 253.

<sup>32</sup> BBC on This Day, “1959: Dalai Lama escapes to India,” BBC News, 31 March 1959; available at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/31/newsid\\_2788000/2788343.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/31/newsid_2788000/2788343.stm); accessed 30 Nov 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Roemer, The Tibetan Government-in-Exile, 197.

and they delivered to the world a political statement telling the Tibetan side of the story.”<sup>34</sup> Tibet, which had been almost completely isolated from foreign contact because of its natural geographic borders, was suddenly flung open. A snapshot of history, of tradition, and of mysticism was suddenly offered to the public. “The Dalai Lama’s sudden availability to the Indian and international public, as well as to refugee Tibetans, created both an immediate sensation and a new audience, which has widened in the intervening years.”<sup>35</sup>

The role of religion is crucial to understanding life as a Tibetan exile. “Tibetan culture is totally dominated by Buddhism, the religion of Tibet. Buddhism permeates every aspect of Tibetan society: art, dance, literature, medicine; even politics.”<sup>36</sup> As a result, tens of thousands of ordinary Tibetans “devoted both to Buddhism and to their religious leader left the plateau.”<sup>37</sup> Many Tibetans who followed the Dalai Lama indicated freedom to practice their religion as one of their primary motivations. Although not all Tibetans are Buddhist—there are small Christian, Muslim, and Bon (a pre-Buddhist, indigenous faith) minorities—any discussion of the Tibetan situation cannot exclude the cultural and historical centrality of Buddhism. Within the Tibetan tradition the Dalai Lama is important because he is the highest spiritual leader of the Gelugpa sect. However, his position as temporal leader adds another layer of complexity.

In Tibet prior to the Chinese invasion, “monks accounted for a large proportion of the adult male population.”<sup>38</sup> Even today, many Tibetans see life without their spiritual leader as

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<sup>34</sup> French, “The New Snow Lion,” 190.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ardley, The Tibetan Independence Movement, 9.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>38</sup> Kvaerne, “Tibet: The Rise and Fall of a Monastic Tradition,” 235.

unfulfilled, and make the arduous trek across the Himalayas to see the Dalai Lama, take his teachings, and receive his blessing before they die. Rebecca R. French explains it thus:

To every Tibetan, on the plateau or in exile, he is the living god Chenresdzig who is the patron deity of their country, he is the head of their nation, he is the reincarnation of their leaders for the past 300 years, he is a trained monk of the highest rank of learning, and he is a wise, compassionate, and honest human being.<sup>39</sup>

It is impossible to validate French's sweeping claim of "every Tibetan" as there are surely those who do not recognize the leadership of the Dalai Lama. However, in speaking of majorities—and looking at Tibetans "voting with their feet,"<sup>40</sup> uprisings and protests within Tibet, as well as the continued existence of an exile government—the authority of the Dalai Lama is remarkable and long-lasting. While in Tibet, I was asked on numerous occasions by different individuals if I had a photograph of the Dalai Lama, despite the fact that the Chinese government has outlawed his image. My experience was not unique: "Obviously the reverence and affection in which he is held has been transferred to the younger generation of Tibetans in territories still controlled by China."<sup>41</sup>

The Dalai Lama is the "executive and religious head of the diasporic nation,"<sup>42</sup> and this meeting of power is extremely potent. A reincarnation of Avolokiteshvara, he is the bodhisattva ("enlightened being") of compassion, and as a religious leader he commands supreme allegiance. But at the same time, this presents a series of problems. The influence of the Dalai Lama both within the Tibetan community and in the international arena cannot be understated. While India was flexible in permitting Tibetans to reside in the country without assimilating or seeking citizenship, the same was not true for Bhutan: "the King of

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>40</sup> Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile*, 61.

<sup>41</sup> Boyd, *The Future of Tibet*, 18.

<sup>42</sup> French, "The New Snow Lion," 192.

Bhutan, fearful of the power of the Dalai Lama over Tibetans as a separate force within his country, demanded that Tibetans take Bhutanese citizenship.”<sup>43</sup>

### **The Dalai Lama Finds an Exile Government and Parliament**

On April 29, 1959, less than a month after his arrival in India, the Dalai Lama made use of this publicity and officially proclaimed the Central Tibetan Administration.<sup>44</sup> But from the outset it was clear that the Government of India would recognize neither the Dalai Lama nor the Central Tibetan Administration as the legal and legitimate representative of Tibet. However, Prime Minister Nehru also refused to submit to the Chinese demands, and proved extremely accommodating to the large influx of refugees. Although Tibetans successfully appealed to the United Nations and had three resolutions passed in 1959, 1961, and 1965 regarding the situation in Tibet, they all dealt with human rights violations, rather than with issues of sovereignty. No government came to the political aid of the CTA and no country has ever recognized the Central Tibetan Administration. India, in deference to the Dalai Lama and for matters of practicality, worked with the CTA, giving it further political legitimacy within the exile community. Many NGOs, donor agencies, and the Government of India have found the CTA useful for distributing aid. It became clear that the Government of India “would deal with it as a *de facto* administrative unit within the Indian government and allow refugees to remain without acquiring citizenship.”<sup>45</sup> Money for CTA projects and refugee assistance came from an array of foreign donors as well as from the Dalai Lama’s own treasury—which as a precaution had been moved to Sikkim prior to 1959.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>44</sup> Roemer, The Tibetan Government-in-Exile, 65.

<sup>45</sup> French, “The New Snow Lion,” 193.

Although the Government of India agreed to house the Tibetan exiles, it had reservations about clustering them together in the north where they might create an international crisis. Instead, the Government of India agreed on a settlement system that would scatter groups of Tibetans around the country, and would, they hoped, make unified political mobilization more difficult.<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, the CTA asked that Tibetans be settled into “large homogenous communities”<sup>47</sup> despite the fact that exile Tibetans hailed from different geographical, social, and religious backgrounds. However, this was done with the hope that it would help cultivate a strong national sentiment in exile that would provide momentum to the freedom movement. The CTA was able to position itself in its new environment and proved relevant, perhaps not for its representativeness at the outset, but for its ability to efficiently and succinctly provide services to new arrivals. Reception centers aided new arrivals in finding employment, education, and lodging while also gathering information and first hand accounts on what was happening in Tibet from political prisoners, monks, and nuns.

The CTA quickly rose to prominence as representative of the exile community (but not as a political entity) because of its relationship to the Dalai Lama. But it was not the first exile organization. On the contrary, the Tibetan Welfare Association (TWA) was founded in the early 1950s by Tibetans who left prior to 1959. Those Tibetans “organized themselves into the Tibetan Welfare Association which carried out the first Tibetan political activities from an exile base between 1954 and 1959.”<sup>48</sup> However, the TWA was short-lived and

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<sup>46</sup> Roemer, The Tibetan Government-in-Exile, 69.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 63.

“disappeared from the political stage”<sup>49</sup> with the Dalai Lama’s arrival in India and the declaration of the CTA. Ironically, the Dalai Lama could be said to have eclipsed the type of grassroots civil society movement that he would later toil so hard to foster.

In February 1960, eleven months after his arrival in India, the Dalai Lama announced the birth of Tibetan democracy at Bodh Gaya, where the Buddha attained enlightenment. The wheels turned quickly and on September 2<sup>nd</sup> of that year the Commission of Tibetan People’s Deputies took an oath of allegiance to the Dalai Lama, and conducted a long-life prayer. Thirteen members constituted the new CTPD, including one representative from each of the four traditional Buddhist sects—Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu, and Gelug—and three representatives from each of the three traditional regions—U-Tsang, Dhotoe (Kham), and Dhomey (Amdo). Serving until February 19, 1964, the first CTPD is described by Sangay as resulting from the actions of “the leaders of different regions and sects...[who] were asked to hold elections for the parliament in the respective settlements.”<sup>50</sup> However, Sangay does acknowledge inherent limits in “the first ‘election.’”<sup>51</sup> For example, Tibetans living in Nepal and Bhutan did not participate, and “having never experienced an election, the four Buddhist sects didn’t conduct a conventional election with ballot boxes.”<sup>52</sup> Because Tibetans from the U-Tsang province did not have regional organizations, they “came closest to adopting conventional election procedures,” but still “there were no competitive secret ballots,” and instead there were “group discussions with people consenting or disagreeing through show of hands and nods.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Sangay, “Democracy in Distress,” “How Does the Tibetan Diaspora Elect Leaders?” 12.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

| Body                  | Dates Served                | No. of Representatives |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> CTPD  | Sept 2, 1960 – Feb 19, 1964 | 13 representatives     |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> CTPD  | Feb 20, 1964 – Sept 1, 1966 | 17 representatives     |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> CTPD  | Sept 2, 1966 – Nov 24, 1969 | 17 representatives     |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> CTPD  | Nov 25, 1969 – Dec 24, 1972 | 16 representatives     |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> CTPD  | Dec 25, 1972 – May 4, 1976  | 16 representatives     |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> CTPD  | May 5, 1976 – Sept 1, 1979  | 17 representatives     |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> ATPD  | Sept 2, 1979 – Sept 1, 1982 | 17 representatives     |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> ATPD  | Sept 2, 1982 – Sept 1, 1987 | 12 representatives     |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> ATPD  | Sept 2, 1987 – Sept 1, 1988 | 12 representatives     |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> ATPD | Sept 2, 1988 – May 11, 1990 | 12 representatives     |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> ATPD | May 29, 1991 – May 28, 1996 | 46 representatives     |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> ATPD | May 29, 1996 – May 30, 2000 | 46 representatives     |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> ATPD | May 31, 2001 – May 30, 2006 | 46 representatives     |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> ATPD | June 2, 2006 – June 1, 2011 | 43 representatives     |

**Table 1.1** Above, is a list of the Tibetan exile legislative bodies from 1960 to the present, their dates in office, and the number of representatives.

Prior to 1959 the government of Tibet had functioned in a minimal capacity. In general, government revenues were low and mostly used for religious affairs and festivals: “Sir Charles Bell...stated that the annual budget of the clergy in 1917 was twice as large as that of the government and eight times larger than that of the Tibetan army.”<sup>54</sup> The population was not particularly concentrated—many Tibetans were nomadic, although there were a few relatively “large” cities—thus there were few services for the government to provide. Moreover, prior to the Chinese invasion, Lhasa’s control did not extend to the regions of Kham and Amdo, which remained largely independent, and “fell under the local control of monasteries or secular leaders.”<sup>55</sup> However, the Central Tibetan Administration widened its traditional claims, and advocated for a united Tibet including all of U-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo. “Therefore, there may have been some reservations among the Khampas and Amdowas about the newly founded CTA, which portrays itself as the legal and sole

<sup>54</sup> Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile*, 13.

<sup>55</sup> Ardley, *The Tibetan Independence Movement*, 11.



successor of the pre-1959 Lhasa administration and claims to represent all people living in the area of Cholka Sum.”<sup>56</sup> This however, does not discount the historical and cultural relationships between the three provinces. For example, when fighting broke out in Kham and Amdo, many of the displaced Tibetans went to Lhasa seeking relief. And on his journey from Lhasa to the Indian border, the Dalai Lama was accompanied by hundreds of Khampa guerillas.

The nature of Tibetan life and government changed dramatically in exile. Not only were populations suddenly concentrated, but the stable and institutionalized social hierarchy—based on monasticism and land-holdings—that had existed in Tibet suddenly had no basis in exile. A new existence in exile created new social spaces, because in India, all Tibetans were refugees. “The absence of entrenched landholding interests in exile, for example, enabled new structures of governance to emerge.”<sup>57</sup> Tibetans had entered exile with virtually nothing and were concentrated in select areas which meant that there was both a need for welfare services, and the feasibility for a government to intervene. The CTA established four councils between 1959 and 1960: religious affairs, home, foreign relations, and education (the first Tibetan schools in India were established in 1960). Other smaller offices included information, civil series welfare, and finance. Settlements and educational and cultural institutions were developed almost immediately to deal with the tide of new arrivals. However, for the most part the government was starting from scratch. It had almost no experience providing these types of services in its own country, much less in exile. Members of the CTPD had little working knowledge of the newly created departments and

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<sup>56</sup> Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile*, 60.

<sup>57</sup> Frechette, “Democracy and Democratization,” 99.

were thus assigned to different departments to learn about the workings of the administration and to gain experience. This practice continued until the fourth CTPD.

However, there were still different statuses in exile and “differing opinions on the exile Tibetans’ social heritage. The CTA and a few scholars point out that the exiles came from all social strata. The CTA even specified that approximately 60 percent of the Tibetans at this time had been either farmers or pastoral peasants.”<sup>58</sup> Despite the common difficulties in exile, “the traditional social stratification was still in existence and, moreover, limited the interaction between the different social strata.”<sup>59</sup> At least one Tibetan recalled that “the sons and daughters of Tibetan aristocracy and wealthy Tibetans, studying in colleges or working around Darjeeling, did not come to help us. Perhaps they were ashamed of us.”<sup>60</sup> Moreover, citing studies from different Indian scholars, Tom Grunfeld found that Tibetans were “resettled according to their social and economic status.”<sup>61</sup>

Grunfeld’s findings highlight the importance of the pre-exile context, specifically the social stratification of Tibetan society and its lasting consequences. Thus, exile did not mean that there was sudden equality for all Tibetans. Roemer argues that the initial CTA structures mirrored those in the homeland, with the old elites of the Lhasa government becoming the new exile officials and politicians. As she suggests, it was 45 lay and 80 monk officials of the Lhasa government who—in addition to members of the Tibetan Women’s Association and young aristocrats with useful language skills—formed the base for the CTA, which had 35 officials in 1959 and 102 by 1965.<sup>62</sup> Roemer thus argues that in the early years of the CTA,

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<sup>58</sup> Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile*, 59.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

many Tibetans saw the exile leadership succession as “a natural part of the aristocracy’s role in Tibetan society.”<sup>63</sup>

Yet as early as March 10, 1961, the Dalai Lama made it clear that the “government structure will also have to undergo far-reaching reforms so that the people are more intimately associated with the policies of the government and the administration....The task and responsibility of establishing improved political and religious institutions lies upon all of us.”<sup>64</sup> Monastic communities that had previously relied on the income of their large estates, for example, now found that they “needed to be actively involved in economic activities to secure [their] own livelihood.”<sup>65</sup> And the traditional ranking of government officials was ended in 1965 when the CTPD was given the authority to abolish the hereditary titles and privileges of civil servants that had existed under the Lhasa government. Further shifts would become evident over the following decades as Tibetans began moving within the subcontinent and eventually fanned across the globe.

The role of elections in the 1960s, it is clear, remains an area of dispute that has not yet been resolved. Sangay recognizes that electoral participation was not highlighted in this period as new arrivals instead dealt with “disease, death, and the difficulties of adapting to tropical weather.”<sup>66</sup> But his 2004 thesis differs quite sharply from the claims advanced by Roemer in her 2008 book when she wrote that the thirteen deputies of the first CTPD were not “elected but rather descended from the Tibetan aristocracy and political elite of the pre-

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 88-9.

<sup>64</sup> His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the Second Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day,” 10 March 1961; Available at <http://dalailama.com/march10/2ndMarch10.html>, accessed 22 Jan 2009.

<sup>65</sup> Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile*, 67.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 21.

1959 administrative structure.”<sup>67</sup> In his examination, Sangay suggests that “except for one reincarnated lama, the monastic representatives were from ordinary backgrounds, an outcome indicating a large socio-political shift.”<sup>68</sup> Similarly, although traditional leaders of the Kham and Amdo regions appointed their representatives, he reports that “four of the six representatives were low-ranking tribal chieftains and the other two were from ordinary backgrounds.”<sup>69</sup> As for the three U-Tsang representatives, they “were men from ordinary backgrounds” who “were neither aristocrats, nor high-ranking monks.”<sup>70</sup>

The process that produced the first 13 deputies was imperfect, Sangay emphasizes, but “the selection/appointment of representatives from ordinary backgrounds marked the re-arrangement of traditional socio-political structures.”<sup>71</sup> More importantly, it signaled “the beginning of participation of ordinary people in government institutions,”<sup>72</sup> a prerequisite for democracy. Sangay also notes that the second CTPD “‘election’ followed similar rituals as the first one,”<sup>73</sup> but this time with the inclusion of a female representative from each province, another innovation. And the first truly volunteer independent candidate to run for office would be elected to the sixth CTPD in 1976.

### **1963: The Dalai Lama Gives Tibetans a Constitution**

Despite the rapid induction of a legislative body, it was not until March 10, 1961 that the Dalai Lama announced the formulation of a draft constitution which would be the foundation of the first Tibetan democracy. The origins of this constitution are still uncertain: John Kenneth Knaus claimed it was written by American Ernest Gross following the U.S.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>73</sup> Sangay, “Democracy in Distress,” “How Does the Tibetan Diaspora Elect Leaders?” 20.

model, while others purport it was carved out by Indian lawyers, citing how it “closely followed the constitution of India, though not without a few uniquely Tibetan twists.”<sup>74</sup> Whatever the truth, on October 10<sup>th</sup> the constitution—which included an article providing for the impeachment of the Dalai Lama—was circulated among exiled Tibetans for their feedback and possible amendment. Representatives, deputies, and civil servants all unanimously pledged to follow the new draft constitution, “but expressed their inability to accept the articles relating to curtailing of the powers of His Holiness”<sup>75</sup> such as impeachment. This was the first time the Dalai Lama tested the water by proposing plans to limit his own power. Only his “personal intervention kept it in. Years later, when asked how the constitution was adopted, one veteran of the first legislative assembly observed simply: ‘The Dalai Lama said so.’”<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, the constitution also specified that “Nothing in this Article shall be deemed to alter or affect in any manner the power and authority of His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the Supreme Spiritual Head of the State.”<sup>77</sup> In that spirit, the new constitution was promulgated by the Dalai Lama on March 10, 1963 and included 10 chapters with 77 articles, making structural changes to many government institutions. While making reforms of his own initiative, he simultaneously set the tone for a time when the “final shape will be given to the Constitution in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the National Assembly.”<sup>78</sup>

The document, intended to eventually govern an independent Tibet, “takes into consideration the doctrines enunciated by Lord Buddha, the spiritual and temporal heritage of

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<sup>74</sup> Sangay, “Tibet: Exiles’ Journey,” 121-2.

<sup>75</sup> “Parliament in Exile,” Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre (2003), 19; available at [http://www.tpprc.org/publication/parliament\\_in\\_exile-2003.pdf](http://www.tpprc.org/publication/parliament_in_exile-2003.pdf); accessed 20 Aug. 2008.

<sup>76</sup> Sangay, “Tibet: Exiles’ Journey,” 121-2.

<sup>77</sup> Central Tibetan Administration, Constitution of Tibet, Chapter V, Article 29(3), 10 March 1963; Available at <http://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/tibet/tibet2.html>, accessed 10 Dec. 2007.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, Foreword.

Tibet and the ideas and ideals of the modern world.”<sup>79</sup> Being “founded upon the principles laid down by the Lord Buddha”<sup>80</sup> the constitution officially renounces war as a foreign policy tool and binds the government to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>81</sup>

Nevertheless, executive power was vested in the Dalai Lama (upon the age of 18) who then appointed the *Kalon Tripa* (prime minister) and the *Kalons* (ministers) who served as members of the *Kashag* (cabinet). Furthermore, all ministers would take the oath of office from the Dalai Lama, emphasizing his centrality within the power structure. The legislative authority of the National Assembly<sup>82</sup> would be “subject to the assent of His Holiness the Dalai Lama,”<sup>83</sup> who was also endowed with the power to promulgate ordinances just like the National Assembly, but with additional veto power over legislation.<sup>84</sup> The Dalai Lama’s reach also extended into the judiciary, as he was to appoint the supreme court judges who “hold office during the pleasure of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.”<sup>85</sup>

The constitution enunciated important links between Buddhism and the government, although it was not entirely clear what role each was to play. For example, the Regency Council that would head the government after the passing of the Dalai Lama and until his successor reached majority would be elected by the National Assembly.<sup>86</sup> Additionally, the constitution called for an ecclesiastical council “to administer the affairs of all monasteries

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., Chapter I, Article 2.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., Chapter I, Articles 3 and 6.

<sup>82</sup> The membership of the National Assembly would be divided as follows: 75 percent elected based on territorial constituencies, 10 percent elected by monasteries and religious institutions, 10 percent elected by regional and district councils, and 5 percent appointed directly by the Dalai Lama. Chapter VI, Article 38.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., Chapter VI, Article 38.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Chapter VI, Article 59(2), Article 60.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Chapter VII, Article 62(2).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., Chapter V, Article 35(2).

and religious institutions under the direct authority of the Dalai Lama.”<sup>87</sup> While the constitution also provides for freedom of religion, this is problematic in that it does not address the potential for conflicts between different sects or the secondary status afforded to religious minorities, including Tibetan Muslims, Christians, and members of the Bon faith.

The constitution also called for elections in the first time in Tibet’s history. However, the composition of the National Assembly—designed to function in Tibet itself—was not practical in exile because the criteria for selecting some members depended on regions and districts that could not be replicated in the exile context. Thus, the exile parliament included representatives from each of the four main Buddhist sects and the three regions of Tibet. Unlike the executive branch, members of the National Assembly were to take the oath of office from the Speaker (who would be elected by the body from amongst their ranks).

As the Central Tibetan Administration presented a seemingly unified and constitutional front to the outside world, it was nevertheless affected by internal political disputes. In 1965, less than two years after the constitution was adopted, a group called “13 Settlements” was founded by “individuals and regional groups from eastern Tibet under the leadership of 13 chiefs and religious dignitaries. These Tibetans were only partly willing to accept the organizational schemata of the CTA resettlement process.”<sup>88</sup> Again, most of eastern Tibet was not directly administered by the Lhasa government prior to the Chinese invasion; thus Roemer argues that the chiefs resisted CTA control in exile in an attempt “to secure their traditional leadership within their communities.”<sup>89</sup> Additionally, looking at the

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., Chapter V, Article 37(1).

<sup>88</sup> Roemer, The Tibetan Government-in-Exile, 72.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 73.

regional distribution of the exile population, 70 percent were originally from southern and central Tibet while only 5 percent hailed from Amdo, and 25 percent from Kham.<sup>90</sup>

The under-representation of eastern Tibetans in exile is often attributed to the relatively long distance separating the eastern regions and southern borders.<sup>91</sup> However, the hesitation to become a minority in exile as opposed to being a minority in China can be seen as a possible motivation for creating special interest groups. Moreover, Roemer suggests that eastern Tibetans created their own interest group in order to secure their role in any future negotiations between the CTA and China “based on the old fear of abandonment, i.e., that one day the Tibetan government in exile might enter into negotiations with China and sell out Amdo and Kham in order to gain independence for Central Tibet.”<sup>92</sup> However, as most aid was being channeled through the Central Tibetan Administration, these leaders found it increasingly difficult to legitimize their role without the economic power to support it. The 13 Settlements opposed the CTA’s social, economic, and religious reforms in 1965, and as a result they were separated from the rest of the exile community and left to settle elsewhere.<sup>93</sup> In 1971 members of the 13 Settlements applied for Indian citizenship, an act typically discouraged by the CTA in order to maintain a unified front.<sup>94</sup> Ultimately, the leader of 13 Settlements was shot on June 16, 1978 by an unidentified person, and died two days later.

A pamphlet, supposedly printed by members of the 13 Settlements following the murder, was circulated and named the three individuals (all Tibetans) allegedly responsible for the murder as well as their motives. Additionally, it claimed that the CTA was run by

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>91</sup> This imbalance has shifted somewhat in recent years as Tibetans from Amdo have fled to India in increasing numbers.

<sup>92</sup> Roemer, The Tibetan Government-in-Exile, 73.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 73.



“influential Lhasa politicians who made the Dalai Lama an ‘ornamental head’ living as a prisoner in...Dharamsala.”<sup>95</sup> The document also alleged that top positions in the administration were given to those associated with “the influential and monied people from Lhasa.”<sup>96</sup>

After the murder and the subsequent publication of the pamphlet, 150 people from the 13 Settlements turned up in Dharamsala to discuss their complaints with the CTA.<sup>97</sup> At the end of a series of meetings, leaders of the group signed a document declaring that the pamphlet had not been written by a Tibetan. Additionally, it clarified points which, in effect, seemed to craft a more united front for the entire Tibetan exile community. These points included recognizing that the three provinces of Tibet have always been part of one nation, that the Dalai Lama is the supreme religious and temporal leader of all people of Tibet, and that there is only one true and legitimate government. This concession lends credence to the idea that the struggle for independence trumps all other exile concerns. While the case has never been solved, mystery and speculation remain that “the murder came from within the exile Tibetan community.”<sup>98</sup>

As this suggests, regionally-based politics and conflict played a pivotal role in the emerging exile polity, despite the fact that it is widely downplayed. And it was only in the 1980s that many Khampa and eastern Tibetan exiles began to pay the *Rangzen Lakhdeb* (“voluntary freedom tax”) to the CTA. Before that, their refusal had served “to demonstrate their disagreement with official exile politics.”<sup>99</sup> Similarly, in March 1977, the Bon

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<sup>95</sup> “Gungthang Tsultrim—a Political Victim?” *Tibetan Review* 13, no. 8 (1978): 7.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile*, 73.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

community in Ochghat, India appealed directly to the Dalai Lama, seeking representation in the parliament. “The Dalai Lama at once issued his consent and asked the community to send a representative selected by themselves to sit with the rest of the members of the Commission till its term expires,” with the expectation that the next time parliamentary elections were held, their representative would be elected as well.<sup>100</sup>

The interpretation of these conflicts, and their relationship to democratization, divides existing scholars. For Ardley “the democratization process is not characterized by conflict between old elites and new political agents, but rather by discord between those who hold traditional notions of the place of religion in Tibetan society and those who recognize the need for change and, perhaps, secularization.”<sup>101</sup> However, the prominence of exile political disputes rooted in regionalism—such as the controversy with 13 Settlements—is evidence of old political elites attempting to maintain traditional power structures. Because regionalism is just that: conflict between old elites and new political agents. Sangay characterizes the conflicts of the 1960s even more specifically, pitting the “old guard”—government ministers—and the “new guard,” led by the Dalai Lama’s elder brother.<sup>102</sup> While Ardley correctly highlights the centrality of religion and the role of the Dalai Lama, her argument oversimplifies the complex factors at work in the Tibetan exile polity. Moreover, it removes agency from emerging new voices in the community in the late 1960s, represented by the founding of the independent *Tibetan Review* in 1968. Looking back at the 13 settlements controversy and pamphlet, a *Tibetan Review* editorial in August 1978 was perhaps not entirely unhappy when it noted that “never before has the suppressed grievances of various

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<sup>100</sup> “Bonpo in Tibetan Commission,” *Tibetan Review* 12, no. 10 (1977): 8-9.

<sup>101</sup> Ardley, *The Tibetan Independence Movement*, 3.

<sup>102</sup> Interview: Lobsang Sangay, 6 March 2009.

Tibetan groups against each other been voiced so openly; never before has the existence of factions with divergent interests in the Tibetan community been made so widely known.”<sup>103</sup>

For this new group, democratic politics was an opportunity to open space for disagreement rather than to merely affirm consensus, which accorded a free and independent press a key role.

### **The Founding of the Tibetan Youth Congress in 1970: The Beginnings of Political Dissidence**

The “First Tibetan Youth Conference” was held October 7-14, 1970 and drew 250 delegates from various universities, Tibetan schools, and other organizations. The gathering spawned the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) which was sanctioned and supported by the Dalai Lama.<sup>104</sup> The organization was officially founded by Lodi G. Gyari, Sonam Topgyal, Tenzin N. Tethong, and Tenzin Geyche Tethong, who was elected to run the central office.<sup>105</sup> The organization grew quickly, establishing 13 regional working committees in India—and electing appropriate leadership—in the first year.<sup>106</sup> From the very beginning, the TYC led by example, and democratically elected its leadership. The group was founded with the aim to “instill a sense of unity and purpose among young Tibetans, to promote interest and identification in Tibetan culture, and to strive for the independence of the homeland.”<sup>107</sup>

French attributes a central role to the Tibetan Youth Congress in creating an atmosphere conducive to democratic functions because it has “confronted the cabinet and on occasion gone outside of the Tibetan administrative system to negotiate on its own for changes vis-à-

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<sup>103</sup> “Editorial: Politics of Sorrow,” *Tibetan Review* 13, no. 8 (1978): 3.

<sup>104</sup> “First Tibetan Youth Conference,” *Tibetan Review* 4, no 8 (1970): 2.

<sup>105</sup> “New Direction for Tibetan Youth,” *Tibetan Review* 4, no. 11 (1970): 5.

<sup>106</sup> “Tibetan Youth Congress Gathers Momentum,” *Tibetan Review* 5, no 2 (1971): 5.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

vis the Indian government.”<sup>108</sup> As a result, she argues that the community’s perspective on authority has shifted from “acquiescence to inquiry, and slowly democracy has grown through the processes of enfranchisement, representation, and accountability.”<sup>109</sup> The TYC also served as a breeding ground for new political leaders, and many key members went on to hold positions in the CTA. It was not long before the TYC was mobilized and in November 1973 they issued their first set of “bold and concrete ‘demands’.”<sup>110</sup>

The TYC began advocating for electoral reform as early as 1971, but with little effect. However, at the third general TYC conference in October 1977, they passed a unanimous resolution calling for changes to the CTA electoral structure. They wanted the representatives from the different religious sects transferred to the Religious Council and wanted to afford every Tibetan the right to vote for the representatives of all three regions. The *Tibetan Review* noted that “one of the admirable features of the Tibetan Youth Congress is that it is not an organization of young Lhasawas or young Khampas, but that of young Tibetans.”<sup>111</sup> The TYC claimed their suggestions were in the interest of balancing “the nationalistic feelings toward the deputies and turn[ing] the Commission into a purely political body.”<sup>112</sup> At the ninth annual administration-wide CTA conference, the president of the TYC announced that the organization and its membership (then 5,000 strong) would boycott the upcoming parliamentary election unless their suggestions were adopted.

Their suggestions were met by “strong and stiff opposition specifically from the sectarian deputies. They explained in the meeting that regionalism and sectarianism are the

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<sup>108</sup> French, “The New Snow Lion,” 194-5.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> “Youth Demand Democratization,” *Tibetan Review* 8, no. 11 (1974): 5.

<sup>111</sup> “Editorial: The Enemy Within,” *Tibetan Review* 16, no. 5 (1981): 3.

<sup>112</sup> “Youths Want Election System Changed,” *Tibetan Review* 13, no. 4 (1978): 10.

natural part of any society. Some of the deputies casually explained away the TYC as ‘an association of children who though educated have no knowledge of what Tibet was really like.’” TYC representatives responded by claiming that the election system was “out of touch with the reality of [the] present and future Tibetan situation,”<sup>113</sup> setting the stage for an inter-generational conflict.

At the time, all changes to electoral law had to be made by the National Working Committee (NWC)—which consisted of the *Kashag*, the members of the CTPD, and a representative from each of the CTA departments—which “is the ultimate decision making body, subject only to approval of the Dalai Lama.”<sup>114</sup> As the NWC had not yet begun to discuss the possible changes, it was ultimately decided that because preparations were already underway for the election of the seventh parliament, it would be carried out under the previous policy (with the addition of the Bon representative). The National Working Committee informed the TYC of their official decision via letter. The TYC leadership was silenced “at the moment perhaps because the NWC decision was sealed with the consent of the Dalai Lama.”<sup>115</sup> After receiving the NWC’s response, the seventh annual TYC general assembly meeting decided that they would not boycott the election. “The decision was influenced by the Dalai Lama’s advice to the Delhi Tibetan youths last month that the current situation of the Tibetans in exile is not favorable to drastic reforms in the election system yet.”<sup>116</sup>

Unlike the CTA, the TYC has always maintained a pro-independence stance. However, the group also makes its allegiance to the Dalai Lama explicit, despite the fact that

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> “No Change in Election System,” *Tibetan Review* 13, no. 6 (1978): 5.

<sup>115</sup> “Election System to Remain Unchanged,” *Tibetan Review* 13, no. 9 (1978): 8.

<sup>116</sup> “Youths Will Not Boycott Election,” *Tibetan Review* 13, no. 10 (1978): 7.

it disagrees with his current reconciliatory policy toward China as well as his non-violent approach. Lodi Gyari wrote: “As founder and former president of the Tibetan Youth Congress I can firmly state that there has never been any question of challenge to the leadership of His Holiness both as a supreme spiritual head as well as our political head from any section of the Tibetan community. I need not assure that the Tibetan youth have always had the highest esteem for His Holiness and will continue to look forward to his leadership and do his bidding at all times, even at the risk of their lives.”<sup>117</sup>

Despite recognizing the authority of the Dalai Lama, TYC members have made it clear that they are willing to use violence to achieve an independent Tibet,<sup>118</sup> in direct opposition to the non-violent approach enunciated by the Dalai Lama. A January 1976 editorial in the *Tibetan Review* addressed many of the complexities in the debate over a non-violent struggle and the nature of leadership in the Tibetan community. While lauding “a sizable section of the youth [that] has at least summoned enough courage to challenge the heaven-ordained policies of their leader,”<sup>119</sup> it was also critical of the fact that “there has been no actual demonstration of sacrifice for the national cause by any youth. There have been no hijackings, no bomb outrages or spectacular kidnappings.”<sup>120</sup>

For the *Tibetan Review*, the failure of a Tibetan armed struggle rested with the “peculiar nature of the Tibetan leadership.”<sup>121</sup> While criticizing the “preponderantly spiritual nature of the Tibetan leadership” it stopped short of criticizing the Dalai Lama himself, and instead focused on an unspecified “leadership”: a “leadership that does not seem to take stock

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<sup>117</sup> Lodi Gyari, “Youths React,” *Tibetan Review* 12, no. 10 (1977): 23.

<sup>118</sup> “Young Tibetans Advocate Acts of Terrorism,” *Tibetan Review* 11, no. 1-2 (1976): 5. Reprinted from the Indian Express, 21 Jan 1976.

<sup>119</sup> “Editorial: Armed Struggle in the Offing,” *Tibetan Review* 11, no. 1-2 (1976): 3.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

of the changing situation, a leadership that does not dare to take risks, a leadership that believes in survivalism.”<sup>122</sup> However, the editorial doubted that any alternative leadership was possible while the Dalai Lama was around, and claimed that armed resistance would only be successful was if the Dalai Lama led it himself—extremely unlikely given his position as the bodhisattva of compassion. The debate over the commitment to non-violence spurred by the *Tibetan Review* was not limited to the youth, and they opened their pages to both sides of the issue. In a letter to the *Tibetan Review*, one reader explained that the “Dalai Lama along with a part of his people came in exile not merely to save their lives and bread but to save and preserve the real freedom of Tibetan race, culture and religion. Freedom will be meaningful only with the pre-protection of these things.”<sup>123</sup>

Nevertheless, the TYC’s movement toward armed struggle was not without precedent. While Tibetans in exile both struggled and succeeded in their new environment, resistance in Tibet also continued. From 1951 to 1974 Tibetans trained by the United States Central Intelligence Agency led a resistance movement against Chinese soldiers in Tibet. These guerillas remained a serious threat to Chinese control until 1971, when Nixon’s visit to China, coupled with Nepal’s crackdown on the soldiers who had been operating out of Mustang, succeeding in quelling the movement. However, military solutions under the auspices of the TYC had none of the success of the CIA-backed guerillas.<sup>124</sup>

Ardley maintains that the TYC as an “organization is seen as being the *de facto* opposition in the Tibetan polity, mainly because they are radical and disagree with the Dalai

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>123</sup> Karma Gelek, “Letters: Ideal Leadership of Dalai lama and Lama Teachers,” *Tibetan Review* 11, no. 10 (1976): 36.

<sup>124</sup> French, “The New Snow Lion,” 191.

Lama's policy of total non-violence."<sup>125</sup> Yet the TYC was founded with the support of the Dalai Lama so it is perhaps not surprising that by the mid-to-late 1970s key TYC leaders were recruited to serve as ranking officials in the CTA, which sometimes lead to conflicts in which they gave up their role in the TYC.<sup>126</sup> Under these circumstances, the TYC at times acted in contradictory ways, both criticizing the CTA and, in another instance, calling for the government take-over of the *Tibetan Review* since "some of the contents of the journal are 'anti-social'" and "should be censored and kept secret until Tibet becomes independent."<sup>127</sup> Through this space of conflict, a new civil society began to emerge within Tibet's exile polity, and would continue to grow in the following decades.

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<sup>125</sup> Ardley, *The Tibetan Independence Movement*, 190.

<sup>126</sup> "Youth Leaders Wish to Resign," *Tibetan Review* 12, no. 1 (1977): 7.

<sup>127</sup> "Youths Demand Control on 'Review'," *Tibetan Review* 14, no. 4 (1979): 6.



## Chapter 2

### The Tibetan Exile Polity as Seen by the *Tibetan Review*:

#### The Dalai Lama and the Origin of the Constitutional Reforms of 1990-1991

Tibet was lost to the Chinese, it has been argued, because of its failure to modernize, its powerful monastic opposition to the government, and continuing internal quarrels between different factions and regions of the Tibetan elite.<sup>128</sup> Looked at in this fashion, the adoption of the 1963 constitution and the establishment of a more modern government structure in exile represented an attempt to learn from these mistakes. But the 1980s showed that this was far harder to achieve than it looked in the face of parliamentary stalemate under the 1963 constitution due to regional rivalries. In 1988, after appointing two Assemblies at the request of the government, the Dalai Lama would remind deputies that its members should to be elected directly by the people and not appointed by him. Clearly, this continued reliance on the monarch to make decisions highlighted the weakness of the fledgling constitutional system and would lead, in 1990-1991, to a major reform in which a new *Charter of Tibetans in Exile* replaced the 1963 constitution that governed the election and functioning of the Tibetan government in exile.

The dimension of the crisis of the Tibetan exile polity in the 1980s was best captured by a 1981 editorial entitled “Democracy in Exile Society” in the *Tibetan Review*, a strong independent, intellectual, and political voice in exile:

The simplest and generally agreed upon definition of democracy is ‘government by the people.’ By this criterion, almost all systems of government in the world claim to be a democracy, since they all have different interpretations of this phrase. Whether the Tibetans in exile have a democratic system of government is even more difficult to determine.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile*, 31.

<sup>129</sup> “Editorial: One Man’s Democracy,” *Tibetan Review* 16, no. 9 (1981): 3.

The editorial in the most important English-language publication in the exile community went on to ask whether “our government is merely a symbolic institution”<sup>130</sup> since most Tibetans want democracy but “still have only the vaguest notion of what it is or how they have benefited from it.”<sup>131</sup> And “on the rare occasion that members of the public dared to question a certain policy decision just announced,” the government responds by “saying that you have no faith in a decision made by the Government ‘of His Holiness?’ End of conversation.”<sup>132</sup>

Now in its 41<sup>st</sup> year of publication, the *Tibetan Review* has served as a medium for an evolving dialogue not only within the Tibetan community, but also about the Tibetan exile situation. A critical player in the exile community, both foreign and Tibetan scholars routinely cite the *Tibetan Review* on various issues.<sup>133</sup> Yet none have used the *Tibetan Review* to discuss the themes and evolving debates within the Tibetan intelligentsia (including non-Tibetans) about internal political challenges and their effects on the larger Tibetan struggle. Thubten Samphel, the spokesperson of the exiled Tibetan government argues that “[t]he most important role of the *Tibetan Review* was that of galvanizing the young exiles with fresh ideas and perspectives that went beyond the confines of their refugee community.”<sup>134</sup> The *Tibetan Review* provides a unique and under-examined point of access to these debates which played a profound role in shaping democratic development in the exile community.

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 4

<sup>133</sup> According to WorldCat, 77 libraries worldwide hold the *Tibetan Review*.

<sup>134</sup> Thubten Samphel, “Virtual Tibet: The Media,” 27 Dec 2007, [Tibet Writes](http://www.tibetwrites.org/?Virtual-Tibet-The-Media); available at <http://www.tibetwrites.org/?Virtual-Tibet-The-Media>; accessed 13 Feb. 2009.

The *Tibetan Review*'s developing critique challenged the accumulation of problems the CTA faced and raised questions about the nature of the Tibetan polity. The *Tibetan Review*, while reflected critically on the CTA, its structures, and its procedures, also incorporated other organizations like the TYC and the Tibetan Women's Association into the discussion. Additionally, it entertained unpopular and (by Tibetan standards) radical ideas. This chapter traces the major themes, criticisms, and suggestions included in, and proposed by, the *Tibetan Review* about the role of the Dalai Lama, the nature of the Tibetan polity, the role of elections, and an ongoing criticism of the exile parliament. Ultimately, it reflects the turmoil that led the Dalai Lama to initiate major constitutional reforms in 1990 leading to the adoption of the 1991 *Charter of Tibetans in Exile*, which restructured the CTA and Tibetan exile elections.

### **The *Tibetan Review*'s Role in the Exile Polity and the Suspension of Tibetan Exile Elections in the 1980s**

Founded and edited by Tenzin N. Takla in 1968, the *Tibetan Review* was “a publication of news and features on Tibet and the Tibetans,”<sup>135</sup> until September 1978 when it became “the *only* monthly publication of news and features on Tibet and the Tibetans,”<sup>136</sup> (emphasis added). Prior to 1968, the *Voice of Tibet*, published by Lodi G. Gyari, was the only English language publication in the Tibetan exile community, but it was incorporated into the *Tibetan Review* upon its founding.<sup>137</sup>

In January 1971, Tenzin N. Tethong took over editing the *Tibetan Review*, and due to financial need, turned to the CTA for help. For a brief time, the *Tibetan Review* was housed

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<sup>135</sup> *Tibetan Review* 2, no. 1 (1968): 2.

<sup>136</sup> *Tibetan Review* 13, no. 9 (1978): 2.

<sup>137</sup> “Our Own Tenth Anniversary (Or How We Run the Review: Part II),” *Tibetan Review* 12, no. 7 (1977): 5.

and printed in Dharamsala (having been moved from Darjeeling) under the Information Office—the predecessor of the Department of Information and International Relations.<sup>138</sup> In June 1972, “[t]he controversial Dawa T. Norbu”<sup>139</sup> took control, “secured a guarantee from the Information Office that it would give him full editorial independence,”<sup>140</sup> and transferred the *Review* to New Delhi. Tsering Wangyal assumed control in 1976 and served as editor for 20 years, until September 1996, when Pema Thinley assumed the position.

By 1977, the *Tibetan Review* had only one regular correspondent in Dharamsala, and received submissions from other individuals around the world, including “readers who send us press clippings and other information related to our work with the diligence and regularity of paid staff.”<sup>141</sup> In addition to articles, readers also sent in donations, “some so embarrassingly large sums that they leave us feeling quite guilty and uneasy.”<sup>142</sup>

Except for the editor and circulation manager, the *Tibetan Review* “has never had any other regular or paid staff.”<sup>143</sup> A self-described “one-man show,”<sup>144</sup> the *Tibetan Review* has benefited from contributors who allow their work to be printed for free. The *Tibetan Review* has accepted contributions “from scholars, research workers, and others on all fields of Tibetan studies, including those having a bearing on the current situation in Tibet and on the Tibetan question in its world context.”<sup>145</sup> In 1990 the *Tibetan Review*, seeking to expand, but lacking the budget for additional staff, added a board of advisers who were tasked with

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<sup>138</sup> Samphel, “Virtual Tibet: The Media.”

<sup>139</sup> “Our Own Tenth Anniversary,” *Tibetan Review* 12, no. 7 (1977): 5.

<sup>140</sup> Samphel, “Virtual Tibet: The Media.”

<sup>141</sup> “Our Own Tenth Anniversary,” *Tibetan Review* 12, no. 7 (1977): 5.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> “*Tibetan Review* Board of Advisers,” *Tibetan Review* 25, no. 7 (1990): 7.

<sup>145</sup> *Tibetan Review* 2, no. 1 (1968): 2.

helping “by utilizing their own contacts and resources.”<sup>146</sup> When it was created, the advisory board was composed solely of former *Tibetan Review* editors.

An average issue ranges from 15 to 25 pages, topping out on occasion in the mid to low-thirties. It opens with a one to two-page editorial and is followed by sections of news and updates from inside Tibet, coverage of the exile community, reprints of articles pertaining to Tibet (or Tibetans) from various Indian and international newspapers, and special features and content “on various aspects of Tibetan life and culture.”<sup>147</sup> The *Tibetan Review* also includes book reviews from time to time and reprints documents such as resolutions passed by different governments on Tibetan issues, speeches, and official Chinese government statements. Although letters were absent in the first few volumes, they soon became a prominent feature and contributed to the *Review*’s stated goal of providing “a forum for free and frank discussion of the question of Tibet and the various problems of the Tibetan people.”<sup>148</sup> The *Tibetan Review* sometimes includes images, usually photographs that accompany articles, and occasionally political cartoons.<sup>149</sup>

Originally, the *Tibetan Review* sought “to present to the world the aspirations and just demands of the Tibetan people.”<sup>150</sup> However, in the September 1978 issue, this section of its self-description was dropped.<sup>151</sup> Dawa T. Norbu and Tsering Wangyal are credited with creating “a whole new generation of Tibetans: the *Tibetan Review* generation, born in Tibet, educated in exile and using the forum provided by the *Review* to discuss how to redeem their

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<sup>146</sup> “*Tibetan Review* Board of Advisers,” *Tibetan Review* 25, no. 7 (1990): 7.

<sup>147</sup> *Tibetan Review* 2, no. 1 (1968): 2.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> For examples, of reprinted political cartoons from the late sixties, see *Tibetan Review* 2, no. 5 (1968): 6, 9, and 12.

<sup>150</sup> *Tibetan Review* 2, no. 1 (1968): 2.

<sup>151</sup> *Tibetan Review* 12, no. 9 (1978): 2.

lost inheritance.”<sup>152</sup> However, the *Review* was not always universally popular among Tibetans. At the end of his time as editor, Dawa T. Norbu wrote, the “*Review* since mid 1972 has been essentially in opposition and this had made co-operation from the Tibetan refugee side extremely difficult. There used to be times when his friends were afraid to walk with the editor in public in Dharamsala.”<sup>153</sup>

In 2007, Thubten Samphel highlighted the important role the *Tibetan Review* played in both the international and the Tibetan community: “The impact of the Tibetan Review was planetary. It became a forum for Tibetans from all four corners of the world and their friends to throw up new ideas and inspirations to strengthen the worldwide Tibet movement. It contributed to creating a global Tibetan émigré community.”<sup>154</sup> As an English-language publication, it proved to be “an increasingly credible tool in persuading an ill-informed international community to see the appalling situation in Tibetan from the Tibetan exile perspective.”<sup>155</sup>

Yet the *Tibetan Review* also served as voice for internal criticism within the exile community during the 1980s as second generation exiles—raised and educated exclusively in Tibetan exile schools and having never set foot in Tibet—began to fill CTA posts and other community leadership roles. Christiane Labisse, an anthropologist, further elaborated that the *Tibetan Review* “informs, educates and provokes thought: thus contributing to forming readers’ opinions. It helps mentalities to change, and the Tibetan people to adapt to the

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<sup>152</sup> Samphel, “Virtual Tibet: The Media.”

<sup>153</sup> Dawa T. Norbu, “Acknowledgements” *Tibetan Review* 11, no. 9 (1876): 33.

<sup>154</sup> Samphel, “Virtual Tibet: The Media.”

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

changing world without losing their cultural identity.”<sup>156</sup> For its admirers the “*Tibetan Review* has to play a valuable part,” and is “an inspiring tool in genuine democrats’ hands.”<sup>157</sup> The discontent captured in the 1981 *Tibetan Review* editorial, for example, contributed to the decision of the National Working Committee at the end of December 1981 to announce “sweeping changes in the composition and election procedure”<sup>158</sup> of the eighth ATPD. The statement decreed that the number of regional deputies would be halved—from twelve to six (two deputies from each region)—but that the number of sectarian deputies would remain unchanged. In a significant step, it also reported that the TYC was successful in lobbying for change, as the National Working Committee announced that every voter would “be entitled to nominate and vote in all the three *cholkas* [regions]. This means each Tibetan voter will vote three times and choose six regional deputies to the Assembly.”<sup>159</sup> The *Tibetan Review* applauded the proposed changes, but seemed “to believe this will further antagonize people from the Kham and Amdo regions.” Thus, it was skeptical, arguing that “a Tibetan will have to learn to think of himself as a Tibetan, and not as a Khampa or Amdo or Lasawa. When that miracle takes place, a system of election based on equal division of the refuge population as suggested above will have a strong chance of working.”<sup>160</sup>

The stage was set for controversy from the start as the *Tibetan Review* reported that, “if the reported walk-out of a few deputies from the NWC the day the changes were finalized is any indication, [an] uncomfortable trend in exile polity might surface.”<sup>161</sup> And they were right. The majority of the opinions published in the *Tibetan Review* supported the electoral

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<sup>156</sup> Christiane Labisse, “*Tibetan Review*: Shaping ideas in an evolving democratic society – II,” *Tibetan Review*, 38, no. 1 (2003): 16.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>158</sup> “New Election Procedure for Tibetan Deputies,” *Tibetan Review* 17, no. 1 (1982): 4.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> “Editorial: Regional Xenophobia Continues,” *Tibetan Review* 17, no. 1 (1982): 3.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

changes, and felt that a shift “in the composition and election procedure of ATPD has been long overdue.”<sup>162</sup> By reducing the number of regional deputies, it was estimated that the CTA would save 30,000 Indian Rupees, a hefty sum.<sup>163</sup> This was fine by most accounts, particularly because “many of the present deputies, even those that are supposedly modern [and] educated, shamelessly indulged in divisive regional politics and unbecoming conducts.”<sup>164</sup>

However, the Dhotoe public expressed their preference for the previous electoral system, and insisted, Sangay reports, “they would only give up their electoral rights to the Dalai Lama.”<sup>165</sup> Prior to 1959, the Lhasa government did not exercise control over all areas of U-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo and “[l]ay commoners—as well as, so some sources say, the Lama himself—had little or no power, almost all of which lay in the hands of the entrenched monastic establishment and the landowning nobles.”<sup>166</sup> However, in exile, the Dalai Lama’s political power became almost absolute as he served as a rallying point, and the call for a united Tibet became a battle cry. “While in the historical context,” Roemer notes, “the power of the Dalai Lama was sometimes rather weak, the exile situation describes a totally new situation with new challenges and the need for a strong political leadership.”<sup>167</sup>

As a result, for the election of the eighth Assembly, the Dalai Lama was asked to select the members from those put forth in the preliminary round. Again, they turned to the Dalai Lama because he is someone that all Tibetans expect to lead with nothing but the best intentions. Accordingly the eighth ATPD members (who served from 1982 to 1987) were

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Sangay, “Tibet: Exiles’ Journey,” 124.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>167</sup> Roemer, The Tibetan Government-in-Exile, 95.



selected by the Dalai Lama from a list of candidates produced in the primary election.

Furthermore he halved the number of representatives from each region from four to two, and once again nominated a representative of his own accord, for a total of twelve deputies. In something of a paradox, the Dalai Lama consented to this petition, seen as deference to his position, while at the same time being forced to make these selections against his preference, thus simultaneously undermining his authority.

However, another explanation for the Dhotoe request is that there are fewer Dhotoe voters, so moving to a popular vote would take away the electoral advantage that the region held. Thus, when individuals from Kham and Amdo came out against the new system and were able to have it changed, the *Tibetan Review* condemned the move. When the Election Commission first announced the election of the deputies for the ninth ATPD in 1984, the Dhotoe public once again expressed reservations, which led to a meeting with the representatives from the provinces, the TYC, and new arrivals from Tibet. It was decided that until a unanimous decision could be reached, the Dalai Lama would appoint the ATPD members. In the meantime, in 1985 after completing its third year in office, the tenure of the eighth assembly was extended from three to five years and was formalized as the term for future assemblies.<sup>168</sup>

Nevertheless, the Dalai Lama used his influence, and “[w]hen the eighth ATPD took office last year, he told them that their term will only last one year and their specific task during this time would be to set the mechanism of election rolling again.”<sup>169</sup> This ultimately proved unsuccessful, and in 1987 the Dalai Lama appointed the members of the ninth ATPD under the same agreement that had been reached in 1984. “However the Dalai Lama himself

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<sup>168</sup> “Tibetan Deputies’ Terms in Office Extended,” *Tibetan Review* 20, no. 7 (1985): 9.

<sup>169</sup> “Election returns to Tibetan society,” *Tibetan Review* 23, no 9 (1988): 4.

is not happy with this system,” and again “asked the ninth Assembly to make it their first priority to devise a new way of reinstating free elections. He has told them that they should submit such a proposal within six months to a year.”<sup>170</sup>

His appointment of the ninth ATPD turned out to be “an interim measure,”<sup>171</sup> as the ninth ATPD served only one year (September 2, 1987 – September 1, 1988) until the election of the tenth ATPD was announced. In his annual March 10 address in 1988, the Dalai Lama told Tibetans that “we must work harder to make our institutions more effective and more democratic.” He told them that “when elections to our parliament-in-exile, the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies are once again held in July of this year, the people must take their right to vote seriously and choose the candidate who best represents their interest. It is not good to rely on me for all the major decision. It is for the Tibetan people to assume that responsibility.”<sup>172</sup> Elections were finally reinstated in 1988, after a six year hiatus, to select the tenth ATPD. Nevertheless, representatives from Kham and the Nyingma sect could not

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<sup>170</sup> “New Tibetan MPs in Office,” *Tibetan Review* 22, no. 9 (1987): 8.

<sup>171</sup> “Parliament in Exile,” Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, 16.

<sup>172</sup> His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the Twenty-Ninth Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day,” 10 March 1988; Available at <http://dalailama.com/march10/29thMarch10.html>, accessed 22 Jan. 2009.

be selected because of a lack of candidates. However, new preliminary elections were scheduled, and the representatives joined the parliament later.<sup>173</sup> At the conclusion of the 1980s election drama, the sarcasm was thinly veiled when a *Tibetan Review* article observed, “So the Tibetan election system, after several modifications over the years, has now reverted to its original form.”<sup>174</sup>

With the return of elections, the *Tibetan Review* noted that, “if the new Assembly does nothing more than come to a proper understanding of its role in society and educates the people accordingly, it will have done more than all its predecessors put together.”<sup>175</sup> The

**Image 2.1** Below, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile building, in Dharamsala, India houses the semiannual parliamentary gatherings. (Photo by author)



*Tibetan Review* thought the ATPD could serve as a source of alternative leadership, but lamented “that the Assembly has been plagued with incompetent and semi-literate members and in recent years it has tended to behave more like a department of the government rather than the representatives of the

<sup>173</sup> “New Tibetan MPs in Office,” *Tibetan Review* 22, no. 9 (1987): 8.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> “Editorial: For the People, Bye the People,” *Tibetan Review* 23, no. 9 (1988): 3.

people.”<sup>176</sup> The *Tibetan Review* continued to berate the Assembly throughout the 1980s, and in 1988 noted that “A Tibetan MP would never dream of criticising the government on any policy matter. His speeches to the people invariably turn into a public relations exercise for the government.”<sup>177</sup>

The *Tibetan Review* characterized regionalism as “the main disease afflicting the Tibetan society in exile,” and found it “difficult to see what special profit or pleasure one can derive from describing oneself as an U-pa, a Khampa or an Amdo rather than as a plain Tibetan.”<sup>178</sup> However, the *Tibetan Review* did not accuse all Tibetans of indulging in regionalism; rather, it blamed “one or two small groups which form a negligible percent of the exile population.”<sup>179</sup> Tibetan scholar Lobsang Sangay has offered similar criticism of these exile quarrels, which he characterized as “much ado about nothing”<sup>180</sup> while the vast majority of Tibetans still live under Chinese occupation.

While the *Tibetan Review* criticized the divisive role of regionalism, it also condemned a general apathetic attitude within the Tibetan exile electorate. The *Tibetan Review* was vocal in its frequent criticisms of the Tibetan polity and suggested that as far as “the average Tibetan is concerned, the Dalai Lama *is* the Tibetan government.”<sup>181</sup> While lamenting the shadow cast by the Dalai Lama and its implications, the *Tibetan Review* did not directly call into question the authority or the role of the Dalai Lama. Given their modern, secular education, many were willing to walk a fine line that distinguished between the spiritual role of the Dalai Lama and his role as the leader of an exiled nation. In calling

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<sup>176</sup> “Editorial: Empty Resolutions,” *Tibetan Review* 21, no. 12 (1986): 3.

<sup>177</sup> “Editorial: Wild Bill Hiccup,” *Tibetan Review* 23, no. 2 (1988): 3.

<sup>178</sup> “Editorial: The Enemy Within,” *Tibetan Review* 16, no. 5 (1981): 3.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> Sangay, “Tibet: Exiles’ Journey,” 124.

<sup>181</sup> “Editorial: One Man’s Democracy,” *Tibetan Review* 16, no. 9 (1981): 4.

Tibetans to action, some perceived this to be an attack on the position of the Dalai Lama. In an October 1984 letter to the editor, one reader answered back:

When you state that HH the Dalai Lama has no ‘personal knowledge of the good and bad points of all 100,000 Tibetans in exile,’ you have to prove your stand and, if you are really upright, you may mock at us millions who utter the six-letter mantra. Nor is His Holiness a puppet approver. It is a folly to imitate the so-called scientific positivism and disbelief in superhuman abilities such as omniscience, etc.<sup>182</sup>

This type of response typified much of the exile community’s feelings as they made their way under a government in exile they hoped would lead them in their fight for independence, but which was constrained by the international norms it subscribed to.

While the *Tibetan Review* continued to disparage a perceived general apathy within the Tibetan community, it also reported on the more activist segments. Such activities generally included protests—often against visiting Chinese dignitaries—hunger strikes, and other campaigns. For example, on June 26, 1981 an estimated 2,000 Tibetans and Indians demonstrated against visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua.<sup>183</sup> The *Tibetan Review* frequently covered the activities of the Tibetan Youth Congress, arguably because they were one of the largest and most active organizations in the exile community. Nevertheless, most exile political activity seemed to be directed toward the return to Tibet, rather than the democratic processes being established in exile.

Many of the *Tibetan Review* writers saw a need for political parties, as they could create common interests beyond regional and sectarian affiliations. Thus, the *Tibetan Review* covered the founding of a Tibetan Communist Party (in exile) in May 1979, which was believed to have been in existence for a number of years prior. Its founding was discussed

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<sup>182</sup> L. Dhadon, “Letters: New Election System,” *Tibetan Review* 19, no. 10 (1984): 26.

<sup>183</sup> “Demonstration Against the Visiting Chinese Foreign Minister,” *Tibetan Review* 16, no. 7 (1981): 5.

extensively, and received support in the *Tibetan Review*, if not for its principles, then at least for the exercise of its principles. Needless to say, the three members of the party were not welcomed warmly in Tibetan exile society. Although the Dalai Lama told reporters in June 1978 that “he has ‘blessed a Tibetan Communist Party recently founded by some exile Tibetans,’”<sup>184</sup> in his support did not sway Tibetans. The party disbanded on March 10, 1982 after less than three years. An official statement from the party declared that it

‘has become the unintentional source of political nuisance and dissenting influence against the harmonious effects of the Tibetan Kashag (Cabinet) and Assembly of the Tibetan People’s Deputies in leading and guiding the destiny of Tibet. Not only are the existing regional parties and sectarian associations dominating the exile Tibetan political scene united in their opposition of the TCP, but subversive and biased propaganda has gradually projected a notorious image of the TCP to the Tibetans in general.’<sup>185</sup>

Although the short-lived party “didn’t influence practical and institutional changes,” Sangay argues that the party “provoked traditional-minded Tibetans and opened up space for passionate debate.”<sup>186</sup> In more general terms, Ardley also sees “the lack of opposition within the Tibetan polity” as a “major impediment on the path to Tibetan democracy.”<sup>187</sup>

### **The Dalai Lama: The Solution and the Problem?**

The Dalai Lama has served as the greatest advocate of the Tibetan cause, bringing it to the international stage. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for his search for a non-violent solution to the Sino-Tibetan issue. Ironically, independence rallies led by monks and other Tibetans simultaneously cropped up in Lhasa and other parts of Tibet, leading Beijing to impose martial law on the Tibet Autonomous Region in March 1989. With an

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<sup>184</sup> K. Dhondup, “Controversy Over the Tibetan Communist Movement—A Personal View,” *Tibetan Review* 15, no. 4 (1980): 14.

<sup>185</sup> “Tibetan Communist Party is Dissolved,” *Tibetan Review* 17, no. 2-3 (1982): 5.

<sup>186</sup> Sangay, “Democracy in Distress,” “How Does the Tibetan Diaspora Elect Leaders?” 29.

<sup>187</sup> Ardley, *The Tibetan Independence Movement*, 87.

international platform, the Dalai Lama was able to make official changes to CTA policy heard around the world, as was the case when he delivered the Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet to the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus on September 21, 1987 and the Strasbourg Proposal to members of the European Parliament on June 15, 1988.

Domestically, the Dalai Lama has attempted, through gentle prodding, to wean the Central Tibetan Administration. As early as 1973, the Dalai Lama said, that “in political and other fields there are many young Tibetans who can shoulder the work. By concentrating wholly on Buddhist philosophy I may be able to render wider and better serve to my people...It doesn't mean that I would give up the Tibetan cause, but in my opinion the other thing is much deeper and important.”<sup>188</sup> By emphasizing his desire to be a monk first and foremost, the Dalai Lama opened the door for new leadership. However, separating his role from the administration was, and continues to be a difficult task, as the Dalai Lama's power and legitimacy derive from a number of sources. His legitimacy as the leader of the Tibetan people stems from Tibetan mythology which links all Tibetans to the Dalai Lama.<sup>189</sup> Moreover, the process of reincarnation means that the charisma of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama also rests on the collective charisma of his thirteen predecessors. However, his position as a religious leader is also important:

For Tibetan people, regardless of their belonging to a social strata, geographical heritage or religious affinity, the Dalai Lama is the *divine* leader of their nation. Whatever he says will not be criticized by anyone—a tradition that has become ingrained for all Tibetans since the institution came into existence.<sup>190</sup> (emphasis added)

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<sup>188</sup> “Interview: Dalai Lama on Lhasa Uprising,” Tibetan Review 8, no 4 (1973): 9.

<sup>189</sup> Roemer, The Tibetan Government-in-Exile, 21.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 23.

It is this very idea that the Dalai Lama has been slowly trying to remove from Tibetan political life. The ability of the Dalai Lama to inspire and to lead is indisputable. Although it is impossible to remove Buddhism from Tibetan politics, or any other aspect of Tibetan life, the Dalai Lama is trying to remove the role of the institution of the Dalai Lama from the political structure. Yet as he struggles to divide his political and religious roles, it is increasingly difficult to separate the two. As a supreme religious leader, he should also be an infallible political leader. His encouragement of political dissidence is seen by some of his followers as a threat to his spiritual supremacy, the fundamental basis for Tibetan society. Nevertheless, the Dalai Lama encourages more independent activity since, as he said in 1969, “when the day comes for Tibet to be governed by its own people, it will be for the people to decide what form of government they will have. The system of governance by the line of the Dalai Lamas may or may not be there. It is the will of the people that will ultimately determine the future of Tibet.”<sup>191</sup>

The one thread that has remained constant from pre-exile and pre-invasion Tibet to the present day is the Dalai Lama. When it first began, the Central Tibetan Administration was legitimized by the role and position of the Dalai Lama. But once it was established, the Dalai Lama began to deliberately remove himself from its operation. While he originally lent it status, his continued role as an unquestioned leader would ultimately only hurt the argument that Tibetans were seeking self-determination, rather than Dalai Lama determination. For the time being he is able to provide a stable structure and unite opposing factions of the Tibetan community. But if there are no plans for what happens when he is

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<sup>191</sup> His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the Tenth Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day,” 10 March 1969; Available at <http://dalailama.com/march10/10thMarch10.html>, accessed 22 Jan. 2009.



gone, and without a plan for someone else to assume his past responsibilities, his vision will be lost, and with him, Tibet. The Dalai Lama has highlighted the compatibility of democracy and certain aspects of Buddhism. His embrace of this perspective is important, because the prominent role of Buddhism is unlikely to wane. Similarly, Karma Choephel observed that, for the most part, “our system goes on quite fairly, I think basically thanks to our religion which teaches us morals and to be honest and to be true.”<sup>192</sup> The Dalai Lama wants democracy to succeed him in the Tibetan community. That does not mean religion will be replaced by politics but rather that Tibetans will be able to exercise the choices they find appropriate.

On May 6, 1989 the Dalai Lama again emphasized the need for further democratic reforms, and in August of that year the *Kashag* convened a conference of over 230 participants including ATPD members, government officials, individuals working with NGOs, and others. The conference attendees developed five points for discussion and feedback among Tibetan exiles: (1) whether there should be a prime minister within the existing government structure; (2) if the ministers should be elected or appointed by the Dalai Lama; (3) if a political party system should be introduced to form the government; (4) if any changes should be made to the number of ATPD members and their responsibilities, and; (5) what other democratic changes could be made. These proposals received almost 300 suggestions from Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet.

As part of the effort to further democratize the Tibetan exile community, the Dalai Lama addressed a Special People’s Convention on May 11, 1990: “we have to see that during

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<sup>192</sup> Interview: Karma Choephel, Speaker of the Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies, 16 Nov. 2007, 2:30pm, His office, Central Tibetan Administration, Dharamsala, India.

our period in exile, democracy is fully practiced.”<sup>193</sup> To that effect, he suggested that the 1963 constitution “be revised so that we can have a total democratic set-up,”<sup>194</sup> and appointed a Constitutional Review Committee which was tasked with drafting a new democratic charter for the Tibetan exile community. His list of suggestions was extensive and covered the election procedure for the ATPD as well as its composition, the practicality of establishing a working committee, and representation for women. He also discussed the creation of a judicial branch and the possibility of an elected prime minister. While there were possible changes he left open for discussion in the community, like the possibility of two legislative bodies, there were others he was clear about having implemented.

For example, with the resignation of all the current *Kalons* on May 9, the Dalai Lama declared “an end to the term of the Dalai Lama-appointed Kalons.”<sup>195</sup> Instead, future Assemblies would be empowered to appoint the *Kalons*. Addressing previous problems with electing deputies, the Dalai Lama acknowledged that although “elected by the people,” the “final selections were done by me.”<sup>196</sup> However, he stated clearly that “this practice has to change. From now on, the people’s decision will be final. I feel that the Dalai Lama should have no role here.”<sup>197</sup> Thus, elected ATPD members would no longer require “the Dalai Lama’s seal of approval.”<sup>198</sup> Furthermore, the Dalai Lama stressed the “need to change the functions and composition of the Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies,” and hoped that the next Assembly would be elected within a year so that it could “scrutinize the draft by-law prepared for our exile Administration. The next Assembly will perhaps be a legislative

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<sup>193</sup> His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “Address of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Special Congress,” 11 May 1990; Available at [http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php?id=d\\_tpie&rmenuid=1](http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php?id=d_tpie&rmenuid=1); accessed 22 Jan. 2009.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

body.”<sup>199</sup> To that effect, he dissolved the tenth Assembly, “which has come up through the old procedure,” and called on attendees to “immediately begin the work for the election of the next Assembly.”<sup>200</sup> At the end, he reassured attendees that he would “readily contribute my service whenever we are faced with heavy odds,” but that “it is important that people are able to act on their own through democratic processes without relying on the Dalai Lama.”<sup>201</sup> An interregnum ensued from May 12, 1990 to May 28, 1991 during which many of the changes the Dalai Lama called for were implemented.

However, the interregnum embodied the problems plaguing Tibetan elections. The 369 delegates at the Special People’s Convention included Dharamsala government officials, members of the outgoing ATPD, representatives of Tibetan communities and organizations from around the world, as well as representatives of recent arrivals from Tibet. They were tasked with electing the ministers who would serve until elections for the new ATPD were carried out. The attendees were split into groups, and each group cast secret ballots to constitute a list of the 21 candidates earning the highest number of votes.<sup>202</sup> As reported by the *Tibetan Review*, “suddenly drama came into the proceedings with eight of the 21 in the list announcing their decision of not running. These included Samdhong Rinpoche, Director of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Varanasi, who had come second with 234 votes; and the following four members of the outgoing cabinet: Tashi Wangdi, fourth with 207 votes; Juchen Thubten, eighth with 144 votes; Tenzin G. Tethong, tenth with 114 votes; and L.T. Shewo, twelfth with 84 votes.”<sup>203</sup> Other candidates were added, and more

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> “Tibetan government heads towards real democracy,” *Tibetan Review* 25, no. 6 (1990): 7.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

withdrew. Eventually the candidate list was left at 19. Ultimately, only three candidates passed the 70% threshold needed to be elected. “So, as per instructions of the Dalai Lama, the three previously elected were declared the only members of the interim cabinet,”<sup>204</sup> and on May 17, 1990 he administered the oath of office. Although marred, it nevertheless marked the first time that ministers were elected (although they continued to function as the cabinet of the Dalai Lama). It also marked “another first in the history of the Tibetan government”<sup>205</sup> as Jetsun Pema became the first female cabinet minister.

### **Democratic Reform and the 1991 Charter of Tibetans-in-Exile**

The new *Charter of Tibetans in Exile*, adopted on June 14, 1991, embodied many of the sweeping changes the Dalai Lama had suggested. While the 1963 constitution was intended to govern an independent Tibet, it was also adapted for use in exile. However, as its name implies, the 1991 *Charter of Tibetans in Exile* was specifically written for the exile context, and the “Charter shall be binding and enforceable to all Tibetans under the jurisdiction of the Tibetan Administration in-Exile.”<sup>206</sup> As such, it includes provisions for governing settlements and electing local bodies to represent the different communities, but notes that Tibetans should respect the laws of their respective host countries.<sup>207</sup> Additionally, and in an important shift, the charter refers to the government as the “Tibetan Administration in-Exile,” rather than the government of Tibet.

Much more comprehensive than the 1963 constitution, the charter establishes the three pillars of democracy—a judicial, legislative, and executive branch. The charter

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Central Tibetan Administration, *The Charter of the Tibetans in Exile*, Chapter 1, Article 2, Unofficial English translation, 14 June 1991; Available at <http://www.tibet.com/Govt/charter.html>.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., Chapter 1, Article 6.

continues to illustrate the complicated relationship between religion and politics, as the *Kashag* and the ATPD are to elect the Council of Regents, who will be responsible for maintaining the responsibilities of the Dalai Lama and finding his reincarnation.<sup>208</sup>

The 1963 constitution had been promulgated on the authority of the Dalai Lama; signaling another important shift, the 1991 charter states that, “the Eleventh Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies do hereby take over Legislative powers, promulgate and legalize this Charter of the Tibetan in-Exile as their fundamental guide.”<sup>209</sup> The charter was passed by the 11th Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies after 15 days of debate, which was its first business after taking the oath of office at the end of May 1991.<sup>210</sup> This shifting basis of authority was indicative of other changes that accompanied the Charter.

Given the increasingly diasporic nature of the Tibetan exile polity, the charter provides for a standing committee, so that all representatives need not reside in Dharamsala year round. The standing committee rotates on a yearly basis and is composed of two representatives from each region, one from each religious denomination, and one of the representatives selected by the Dalai Lama.<sup>211</sup>

The charter outlined the composition of the ATPD, which included 10 members from each of the three regions of Tibet (U-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo), two members from “each religious denomination: Nyingma, Kagyud, Sakay, Geluk and Yungdrung Bon” a representative elected by Tibetans living in Canada and the U.S., two members elected by Tibetans living in Europe, and “1 to 3 members directly nominated by His Holiness the Dalai

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., Chapter 4, Article 31(2).

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., Preface.

<sup>210</sup> “Tibetan Parliament Passes Charter,” *Tibetan Review* 26, no. 7 (1991): 6.

<sup>211</sup> Central Tibetan Administration, *The Charter of the Tibetans in Exile*, Chapter 5, Article 42(1).

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., Chapter 1, Article 6.

Lama.”<sup>212</sup> Additionally, the selection of members from each of the regions is to be done “without discrimination of sex” and therefore “there shall be at least 2 elected women members from each region to represent that region’s constituency.”<sup>213</sup>

As a rebuttal to past criticisms that the ATPD was powerless in comparison to the *Kashag* since it had no real ability to check executive power, the charter specifically states that “in general it [the *Kashag*] shall be accountable and answerable to the Tibetan Assembly.”<sup>214</sup> Nevertheless, legislation still required “the assent of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to become law.”<sup>215</sup> On the other hand, while *Kalons* were previously appointed by the Dalai Lama, the new charter specified that they would be elected by the ATPD, and that the *Kalon Tripa* would be elected by the *Kalons* themselves.<sup>216</sup>

In the event that *Kalons* cannot be elected by the ATPD, “the matter shall be presented to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and decided thereon in accordance with His advice.”<sup>217</sup> However, the charter makes it possible for the ATPD to deal with the situation independently, outlining a number of channels that are to be pursued before turning to the Dalai Lama as arbiter. “The *1991 Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile* provides,” Roemer notes, “the Dalai Lama with controlling mechanisms to intervene in every governmental affair, reaching from the appointment of key positions within the CTA structure to the requirement that every political decision has to be signed by him before implementation.”<sup>218</sup> The “14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama is vested to make the final decision about any assembly decision and policy recommendation. All papers need to be signed by him to become an Act. Until spring 2003,

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid., Chapter 5, Article 37.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., Chapter 4, Article 29(1).

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., Chapter 5, Article 36.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., Chapter 4, Article 23.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., Chapter 4, Article 21.

<sup>218</sup> Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile*, 94-5.

the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama refused to sign only once. This was in 1991, when the position of the Dalai Lama within the CTA structure was discussed in the draft of the *Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile*.<sup>219</sup>

While the new charter governing life in exile was being adopted, the Dalai Lama sought to clarify certain aspects of the political future of a free Tibet in his *Guidelines for Future Tibet's Polity and the Basic Features of its Constitution* in 1992. The document reflected on what had passed in exile and set forth his goals and expectations for what is yet to come. The significance of this document lies in its outline of what *he* hopes would happen when Tibet is a self-governing entity. In order to transition to a new government system, an interim government would be established whose goal would be to create a constituent assembly responsible for drafting Tibet's new constitution. After this is done, elections would be held for the government under the new framework. The crux of the document, however, is that the Dalai Lama would hold no role in the future government of Tibet. Under this outline, the establishment of the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of government would leave no political space for the institution of the Dalai Lama.

Although standing on technical aspects of building a new government, much of the document reads like a wish list of peace and prosperity embedded in spiritual values. For example, the Dalai Lama desired that the "Tibetan polity should be founded on spiritual values and must uphold the interests of Tibet, its neighbouring countries and the world at large."<sup>220</sup> The government would adhere to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "be a zone of peace based upon the principles of nonviolence, compassion

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>220</sup> Dalai Lama, Guidelines for Future Tibet's Polity and the Basic Features of its Constitution (Dharamsala, India: Central Tibetan Administration, 1992), 12.

and protection of the natural environment,” and would “not resort to war for any reason”<sup>221</sup>

Although the new constitution would be drafted by the government, through his suggestions and outlines, the Dalai Lama also attempted to leave his legacy, and ideas to remember.

The *Tibetan Review* dubbed the *Guidelines for the Future Polity of Tibet* the least controversial of the documents issued by the Dalai Lama concerning the future government of a free Tibet. “The outline of a constitution formulated in 1961, the draft constitution in 1963, and last year’s charter for the Tibetan people all met with opposition from sections of the government as well as the people. The reason was understandable. All of them contained a provision whereby the Dalai Lama could be divested of his powers if the National Assembly decided that would be in the best interest of Tibet.”<sup>222</sup> The latest document lacked such a provision, it noted, but was not met by “noisy public gatherings or anonymous wallposters accusing individuals or groups of having influenced the leader.”<sup>223</sup> But in talking with groups of people who have “pored over the document more diligently,” the *Tibetan Review* went on, “it seems that even they are not bothered much by the prospect of a Tibetan government without the Dalai Lama at the top. I suspect that they, as well as the people, think that there is no use belaboring this point with the Dalai Lama yet again. When the time comes he is bound to see that without him at control, everything will be in chaos, they seem to reason.”<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> “Editorial: Homeward Bound,” *Tibetan Review* 27, no. 10 (1992): 3.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.



## Chapter 3

### Elections Under the New Constitution:

#### Continuity and Democratic Change, 1991-2009

The Dalai Lama continued to encourage the government to stand on its own: In 1993, he “again stressed the need for distancing his name from the administrative process. He said he is fed up with hearing that any decision is carried out ‘in accordance with the wishes of His Holiness.’”<sup>225</sup> While the Dalai Lama began the democratization process, it is his hope that the younger generation of Tibetans will be the ones to carry it forth, even after he is gone, answering the question, “After Tenzin Gyatso, who?”<sup>226</sup> The reforms of 1990-1991 allowed the Dalai Lama to relinquish some of his temporal power, in an effort to create a system that allows Tibetans themselves to plan for their future. Thus voting—which will be discussed in this chapter—is important because it ensures that individuals are invested, and the higher the turnout, the more legitimacy the election gives to government leadership.

The *Tibetan Review* continued to be vocal throughout the 1990s, criticizing elements of the new charter, and expressing disappointment with elections, the exile administration, and the elected parliament. However, after 2000, there was a marked decline in the number of articles that pointed out flaws or made suggestions to improve exile democracy. Lobsang Sangay argues that the new millennium has been the most important turning point for Tibetan democracy, as has characterized it as a period of “accelerated democratization.”<sup>227</sup>

This chapter discusses the residual problems of the 1990s highlighted in the *Tibetan Review* that were often the continuation of previous and longstanding conflicts. It then

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<sup>225</sup> “Dharamsala has new 6-member cabinet,” *Tibetan Review* 28, no. 3 (1993): 6.

<sup>226</sup> Shobhan Saxena, “Chinese checker: Dalai’s new succession plan,” *Sunday Times of India*, 25 Nov. 2007, p. 8.

<sup>227</sup> Interview: Lobsang Sangay, 6 March 2009.

discusses the impact of the leadership of a directly elected *Kalon Tripa* as well as the man himself. It also reviews the details of the Tibetan exile election laws and includes a review of the grassroots practice, based on my observations of a local Tibetan election in India to argue that the 2000s were in fact, a period of “accelerated democratization.”

### **Too Little Change: The Views of the *Tibetan Review* in the 1990s**

The first elections under the new charter were held in 1991 with voting taking place in India, Nepal, Europe, and North America, and included “the first ever political debate in the Tibetan community,”<sup>228</sup> organized in Switzerland. The election saw a 62 percent participation rate amongst regional voters, and 53 percent amongst religious denominations,<sup>229</sup> while only 26% of eligible Tibetans in North America were reported to have voted.<sup>230</sup> The election was more contested, however, with 85 candidates running for 43 seats in the 46-member 11<sup>th</sup> ATPD. Yet even at the beginning of this new stage of Tibetan democratic development, the *Tibetan Review* complained that “unfortunately, our elections will once again be fought on the basis of faces and provincialism. The Election Commission had the opportunity of overhauling the entire system, but it chose not to.”<sup>231</sup> As it had done in the past, the *Tibetan Review* asked, “How can Buddhism and Bon suffer if the various sects are not represented in our parliament? Does someone imagine that an all-lay parliament will pass legislations undermining the religious institutions?”<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Sangay, “Democracy in Distress,” “How Does the Tibetan Diaspora Elect Leaders?” 37.

<sup>229</sup> “Tibetan Parliamentarians Elected,” *Tibetan Review* 26, no. 5 (1991): 9.

<sup>230</sup> The conduct of the US elections did leave at least one letter-writer disappointed. Writing in the *Tibetan Review*, he complained about the “very unprofessional way the candidates were presented to us by our Election Commission. This election was very dull and almost meaningless. We still don't know why these people were elected. The election had no issues, no long and short term goals, no debates, no conventions and of course no real contest among the candidates opposing each other on issues.” Jigme Topgyal, “Letters: Calling our new parliamentarians,” *Tibetan Review* 26, no. 6 (1991): 20.

<sup>231</sup> “Editorial: Divided We Stand,” *Tibetan Review* 26, no. 2 (1991): 3.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

Meeting on May 29, 1991, the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly marked the first time that Tibetans residing in Europe and North America<sup>233</sup> were represented by elected officials, although not in exact proportion to population. Representation for women also expanded with two of each of the 10 seats allotted to the three regions filled by women, making for at least six female members in the Assembly. To these elected officials one must add the three appointees of the Dalai Lama: the director of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, a highly respected scholar, and “a recent arrival from Tibet arrival from Tibet who traces her ancestry to an important royal family of Amdo.”<sup>234</sup> The new ATPD appeared ready to really legislate and pass acts detailing parliamentary procedures, election laws, administrative rules and regulations, and budgetary processes. Efforts were made to make the CTA more transparent and accountable and the ATPD even began to investigate allegations of corruption in executive agencies, which would force several officials to resign.<sup>235</sup>

Although the new and expanded 11<sup>th</sup> ATPD was armed and ready to legislate, it hit its first stumbling block early: it elected only two of the seven cabinet ministers required after three rounds of polling, leading an article in the *Tibetan Review* to comment that the parliament “did not quite come out with flying colours in handling its first assignment.”<sup>236</sup> The election of cabinet ministers continued to be plagued by the disinterest of nominated candidates, when over half of those selected declined to participate in the first round. Of the 14 candidates who participated, no one won the 70% of the votes required in either the first or second round. Finally, in the third round, when the percentage requirement was reduced

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<sup>233</sup> Special provisions for 1,000 Tibetans to immigrate to the United States were included in the 1990 Immigration Act which came into effect in October 1991. Tibetans were relocated in ten cluster sites around the country. This act opened the door for future Tibetan immigration, which had previously been almost non-existent.

<sup>234</sup> “Tibetan Parliament Passes Charter,” *Tibetan Review* 26, no. 7 (1991): 7.

<sup>235</sup> Sangay, “Tibet: Exiles’ Journey,” 125.

<sup>236</sup> “Tibetan parliament manages to elect only two ministers,” *Tibetan Review* 26, no. 8 (1991): 6.

to 55, two were able to pass the threshold.<sup>237</sup>

Even then, the two men elected were Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama’s older brother, and Kesang Yeshe, a minister in the interim cabinet. Unable to decide how to proceed, the Election Commissioner decided to refer the matter to the Dalai Lama. Meanwhile, there was “disagreement within the ranks of the ATPD regarding the way the elections were held.”<sup>238</sup> Ultimately, the Dalai Lama appointed three more ministers, bringing the total membership of the *Kashag* to five, in what Sangay characterized as “a setback for democracy.”<sup>239</sup> Two of the Dalai Lama’s selections fell short of being legitimately elected by the ATPD by one and two votes, while his third selection had withdrawn her name after being nominated.

Gyalo Thondup was elected from amongst the *Kalons* to serve as *Kalon Tripa*, a title that would be annually passed by rotation.<sup>240</sup>

*The Tibetan Review* continued to critique the cabinet, particularly the selection of the *Kalon Tripa*, which was intended to be a rotating post. Although Gyalo Thondup’s one-year term had expired, the ministers were not

| Name              | Round I | Round II | Round III |
|-------------------|---------|----------|-----------|
| Kirti Tulku       | 46.74   | 28.28    | 0         |
| Gyalo Thondup     | 60.97   | 65.85    | 75        |
| Lhamo Tsering     | 48.78   | 51.21    | 5         |
| Tenzin N. Tethong | 58.58   | 48.78    | 52.58     |
| Tashi Wangdi      | 56.09   | 56.09    | 56        |
| R. Chazotsang     | 46.43   | 42.46    | 0         |
| Kesang Yeshe      | 46.34   | 68.29    | 60        |
| Tempa Samkhar     | 4.78    | 2.43     | 0         |
| Karma Chopel      | 21.95   | 14.63    | 0         |
| Chime Namgyal     | 34.24   | 24.39    | 0         |
| Karma Gyatso      | 26.83   | 36.58    | 0         |
| Dorji Damdul      | 36.58   | 26.82    | 0         |
| Paljor Tsering    | 46.34   | 36.58    | 25        |
| Lithang Atar      | 21.95   | 9.75     | 0         |

**Table 3.1** The 11<sup>th</sup> ATPD was tasked with electing the new executive cabinet in 1991. The table above breaks down the percentage of votes each candidate received in each of the three rounds of polling. (Source: *Tibetan Review* 26, no. 8 (1991): 6.)

able to select another leader as Thondup was unable to attend the scheduled elections (which

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Sangay, “Democracy in Distress,” “How Does the Tibetan Diaspora Elect Leaders?” 38.

<sup>240</sup> “Dalai Lama appoints three more ministers,” *Tibetan Review* 26, no. 9 (1991): 7.

required all ministers to be present), and therefore the cabinet had no official chairman. When all the ministers finally gathered together, Thondup was reelected.<sup>241</sup> The editorial criticized Thondup for acting as a prime minister, rather than the cabinet spokesman, and commented that the proceedings “make one look at the Tibetan democratic process with renewed doubt.”<sup>242</sup>

After serving for 18 months, the entire cabinet resigned and fresh elections were held following an ATPD amendment to Article 21 of the charter, which pertains to the election of ministers. After the debacle that ensued from the requirement that candidates secure 70% of the votes, the new policy had the ATPD elect seven members from a minimum of 14 nominations put forth by the Dalai Lama, without a minimum percentage required.<sup>243</sup> The Dalai Lama in turn asked all CTA employees to forward their own nominations to him, from which he would make at least 14 recommendations.

With the resignation of the cabinet and the subsequent election of new ministers, “the stage was truly set for a new era in Tibetan democracy. But the outcome was the biggest anticlimax we have ever seen,”<sup>244</sup> as the ATPD ended up re-selecting every member of the previous cabinet. A *Tibetan Review* editorial was indignant that the whole purpose of fresh elections was undermined because all the ministers were returned to their posts. The *Tibetan Review* wrote, “we can’t, in the privacy of our own rooms, seriously think of our society as a practicing democracy without bursting into hysterical fits of laughter.”<sup>245</sup> One of the new ministers immediately resigned his post, and his resignation was accepted by the Dalai Lama.

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<sup>241</sup> “Gyalo Thondup reelected cabinet head,” *Tibetan Review* 28, no. 2 (1993): 7.

<sup>242</sup> “Editorial: Backdoor of Democracy,” *Tibetan Review* 28, no. 2 (1993): 3.

<sup>243</sup> “Dharamsala has new 6-member cabinet,” *Tibetan Review* 28, no. 3 (1993): 6.

<sup>244</sup> “Editorial: And Now, a New Face of Democracy,” *Tibetan Review* 28, no. 4 (1993): 3.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

His replacement was scheduled to be elected by the ATPD at their July session. The other new addition to the cabinet was the Dalai Lama's sister-in-law. Although she previously served as the president of the Tibetan Women's Association, the *Tibetan Review* was skeptical, and asserted that "she was elected president of TWA for the same reason that she is now elected a member of the cabinet—her marital ties."<sup>246</sup> The *Tibetan Review* went further: "Her election, therefore, leads to some interesting questions: Are we having so much trouble getting a full-size cabinet because the Dalai Lama does not have enough brothers and sisters?"<sup>247</sup> One reader echoed the *Tibetan Review*'s sentiments, writing, "if you belong to the right faction, you will be a minister like Mrs Rinchen Khando Choegyal, and if you belong to the wrong faction, you will be out like Mrs Khando Chazoetsang. Here then lies the essence of democracy as understood in Dharamsala."<sup>248</sup> This discourse demonstrated a general acceptance of criticism of the Yabshi family (the Dalai Lama's family), while direct criticism of the Dalai Lama was still taboo.

The *Tibetan Review* criticized the ATPD, saying that, "although members frankly admit that they are not qualified to be deputies in the Tibetan parliament, people still vote for them. It is an open secret in Dharamsala that many of the assembly members lack modern education and are unversed in various political theories and practices. It is not that we lack qualified people; only that they are not being trusted or their potentials are not being understood."<sup>249</sup> A 1997 editorial in the *Tibetan Review* said, "democracy is not just about periodic elections...What we need are the flesh and blood of efficiency, transparency in [the] decision making process, accountability and a great sense of responsibility from all

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> K. Dhondup, "Letters: 'Ugly' Face of Democracy," *Tibetan Review* 28, no. 5 (1993): 23.

<sup>249</sup> "Time not yet ripe for Tibetan referendum," *Tibetan Review* 32, no. 2 (1997): 21.

concerned,” in order “to make democracy a vibrant living experience, not just a set of sterile institutions.”<sup>250</sup>

The *Tibetan Review* continued to come out strongly against regionalism. When considering some of the 1990 reforms, the *Tibetan Review* “felt that some of the instructions given by the Dalai Lama prior to the election were slightly misunderstood. Regionalism and factionalism—rather than suitability—were strong influences in the choice of candidates. The suggestion was that women should also be considered for the parliamentary candidacy was interpreted as orders to have a number of reserved seats for them. Actually the idea of having reserved seats, as in the cases of backward castes and tribes in India, is an insult to the groups concerned.”<sup>251</sup> The *Tibetan Review* thought that women should contest seats on equal footing as men, and that “anyone should be able to hold any office purely on the basis of his/her suitability and not on account of belonging to a particular group.”<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> “Editorial: Taking Exile Democracy Seriously,” *Tibetan Review* 32, no. 5 (1997): 3.

<sup>251</sup> “Editorial: Power to the People,” *Tibetan Review* 25, no. 6 (1990): 3.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

## TIBETAN REARVIEW: by Losang Gyatso



**Image 3.1** A political cartoon printed in the *Tibetan Review* 27, no. 9 (1992): 5, compares the different takes on regionalism in Tibet and in exile.

Regional disputes continued in the 1990s, as evidenced by the discovery of a secret meeting and agreement between leaders of *Chusi Gangdrug* (a Khampa organization) and Taiwan. As a result, the CTA revoked its recognition of the organization, and three members of the ATPD who were Kham representatives resigned over the scandal. The *Tibetan Review* hoped that “if the next poll for the parliamentarians is characterized by healthy competition and less by petty politics, we would indeed have taken another major step towards real democracy. The Tibetan people cannot offer the Dalai Lama a better present than this.”<sup>253</sup>

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.



However, by the 1990s, exile demographics had changed dramatically from what they

were in the immediate post-1959 period

when almost all the refugees lived in India

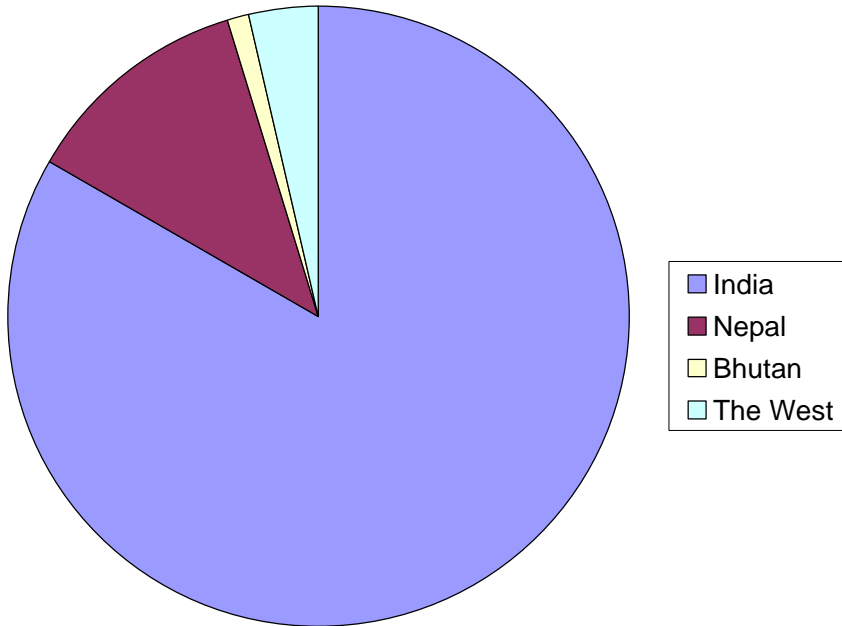
or Nepal. While the majority still lived in

India in 1994, the influence of those

outside the

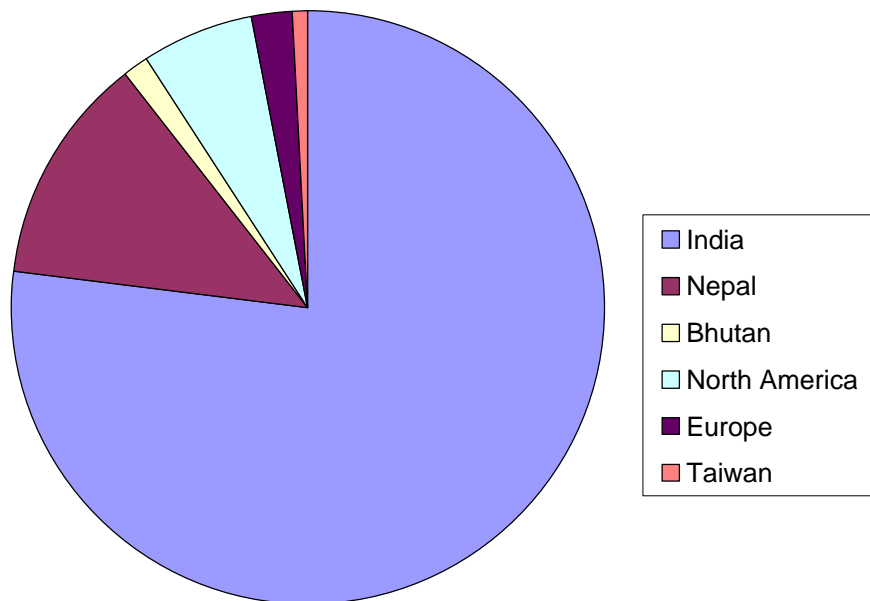
subcontinent was

**Where Tibetans in Exile Live, 1994**



**Where Tibetans in Exile Live, 1998**

important, as was their representation in the ATPD.



**Figure 3.1** The graphs above depict the proportions of Tibetans living in different areas around the world in 1994 and 1998.

For example, Sangay argues that having representatives from the West—one from North America and two from Europe—who were popularly elected by all their constituents helped neutralize the sectarian tilt in parliament.

However, 1991 did not create space for political parties as the *Tibetan Review* had often argued it should. Although parties could serve to create new affiliations in the exile community outside of regionalism and sectarianism, many believed (and still do) that given the precarious position of the Tibetan struggle, they could not afford formal partisan divisions. Nevertheless, the Tibetan Youth Congress undertook an initiative to form a political party after receiving encouragement from the Dalai Lama in 1990. In September 1992 during their General Body meeting, the TYC passed a resolution that would create the National Democratic Party of Tibet (NDPT). The NDPT



**Image 3.2** Karma Choephel, co-founder of the NDPT and current Speaker of the ATPD, has been a member of parliament since 1991. (Photo by author)

was officially founded by Karma Choephel and Karma Yeshe on September 2, 1994. Born of former TYC members, it was not surprising that the NDPT also maintains a pro-independence stance. Membership is open to all Tibetans over the age of eighteen who subscribe to the party's aims and objectives and agree to work within the Constitution of the NDPT and the framework of the Tibetan Charter.

Headquartered in Dharamsala, India, the party claims 2,000 members (as of 2007) in 33 regional chapters throughout Tibetan exile communities in India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

While not as significant in size as groups like the TYC, its purpose and very existence point to a further entrenchment of democratic norms. To carry out its mission statement, the NDPT hosts a variety of events with a particular desire to “instill the ideals of democracy and to keep alive the flame of the freedom struggle in the hearts and minds of our own people—especially the younger generation.”<sup>254</sup> While many of their programs and talks are targeted toward the Tibetan community, NDPT activities also seek to engage international media on Tibetan issues, and to support the struggle with political activities like marches, strikes, and demonstrations. Nevertheless, Sangay found that although the party has “flourished,” it does “not practice conventional political campaigns...hold rallies, or conduct door to door canvassing to get out the vote.”<sup>255</sup>

As with the TYC, allegiance to the Dalai Lama is in the forefront, as the first tenant of NDPT membership is that “Members of the NDPT agree to...dedicate oneself to the task of serving one’s country and people under the dynamic guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; spiritual and Temporal leader of Tibet.”<sup>256</sup> Yet this statement directly contradicts the fifth aim and objective of the party, which is “to struggle for the restoration of Tibet’s rightful independence; even at the cost of one’s life.”<sup>257</sup> The contradiction between the separate (but linked) fundamental beliefs and desires of the Tibetan exile community are evidenced here. While the party demands that its members support the Dalai Lama, its pro-independence stance coupled with its actions to support that belief, are in direct opposition to the reconciliatory Middle Way Approach laid out by the Dalai Lama.

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<sup>254</sup> National Democratic Party of Tibet, “Aims and Objectives”; available from <http://www.ndpt.net/ndpthistory.htm>, accessed 27 Nov. 2007.

<sup>255</sup> Sangay, “Democracy in Distress,” “How Does the Tibetan Diaspora Elect Leaders?” 48.

<sup>256</sup> National Democratic Party of Tibet, “Aims and Objectives.”

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

In his March 10, 1995 address, the Dalai Lama noted that “many Tibetans have voiced unprecedented criticism of my suggestion that we should compromise on the issue of total independence.”<sup>258</sup> As a result, he called for a referendum “to clarify the political course of our struggle,” with the hope that it would result in “a thorough and honest discussion on the various options open.”<sup>259</sup> He acknowledge the limits of such a referendum, in that it would not be possible to poll all Tibetans living in Tibet, but hoped that there might be ways to collect opinions from inside Tibet while holding “the plebiscite among our exiled community.”<sup>260</sup>

In September of that year, the cabinet distributed a 12-page document to the settlement heads, which described the four possibilities for the referendum. They included 1) independence; 2) the Middle Way, seeking meaningful dialogue with China; 3) relying on the international community to bring about meaningful change, and ; 4) Satyagraha, a campaign focused on a “nonviolent campaign emphasizing human, religious, economic and environmental rights, and a halt to China's transfer of Chinese population into Tibet.”<sup>261</sup> However, the *Tibetan Review* was skeptical from the start, stating “the government, having already decided its outcome and made the necessary preparations on that basis, will appeal to the people’s sense of loyalty to the Dalai Lama.”<sup>262</sup> Nevertheless, regional leaders were instructed to explain the four options to their constituents and to “ask them to submit their views on these as well as on any other options they might like to suggest.”<sup>263</sup> Members of

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<sup>258</sup> His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the Thirty-Sixth Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day;” 10 March 1995; available from <http://dalailama.com/march10/35thMarch10.html>, accessed 22 Jan. 2009.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Jeffrey Bowe, “The Tibetan referendum—a loaded dice?” *Tibetan Review* 31, no. 5 (1996): 15.

<sup>262</sup> “Editorial: Uneducating Tibetans,” *Tibetan Review* 29, no. 3 (1994): 3.

<sup>263</sup> Bowe, “The Tibetan referendum,” 15.

the ATPD also traveled to various settlements to describe the options, but “most have not yet been able to organize any meaningful discussion among the people.”<sup>264</sup>

The process was dogged by a lack of communication and clear objectives, leading the editor of the *Tibetan Review* to ask in a special side bar in May 1996, “Is there a Tibetan referendum underway?”<sup>265</sup> as it was unclear if there was to be a referendum or if one was already going on. As a result, the *Tibetan Review* remarked that, “A referendum based on ignorance will be just a futile exercise from which no one is likely to benefit,”<sup>266</sup> and that “if a referendum is to be held then, first and foremost, mass education on the issue is very important.”<sup>267</sup> The point was driven home by a report from the Chauntra settlement, “which was frank and to the point, aptly summed up the situation prevailing in most other settlements. The report reads (rough translation):

‘We the Tibetans living in Chauntra settlement are generally very much lacking in education, exposure and especially in intelligence to decide, leave aside known about that intricacies of international politics. Till now, due to the leadership and guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, happy days are nearing and under such a situation we neither possess the pride nor the ability to decide this and that. So we will support and follow whatever the Tibetan Government-in-Exile led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama decides.’<sup>268</sup>

In September 1997, the 12<sup>th</sup> ATPD passed a resolution noting that a preliminary poll amongst the Tibetan public on the referendum found that “the majority expressed preference for dispensing with the referendum, leaving it to the Dalai Lama to take decisions from time to time in accordance with the prevailing political situation and circumstance.”<sup>269</sup> Ultimately,

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> “Is there a Tibetan referendum underway?” *Tibetan Review* 31, no. 5 (1996): 16.

<sup>266</sup> “Time not yet ripe for Tibetan referendum,” *Tibetan Review* 32, no. 2 (1997): 21.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>269</sup> “Exile parliament puts off referendum, authorizes new initiative towards China,” *Tibetan Review* 32, no. 11 (1997): 7.

the Dalai Lama, “bowing to a unanimous resolution...decreed that the proposed Tibetan referendum for the resolution of the basic aim of the Tibetan struggle and means to achieve it may be put off for the time being.”<sup>270</sup> The *Tibetan Review* lamented that, “despite the fact that the future of our nation is at stake, Tibetans are woefully uninformed on the issue of the referendum. Nobody seems to attach any importance to it—or perhaps they don’t know why it is so vital an issue.”<sup>271</sup>

### **Tibetan Exile Elections: Mechanics and Grassroots Practice**

The rules and regulations for conducting Tibetan exile elections are contained in the *Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act*. The act was adopted on August 4, 2000 and specifically outlined the structure and policies of the Election Commission in detail. Amendments require the support of two-thirds of the ATPD, and must then be forwarded to the Dalai Lama for final approval.<sup>272</sup> The act establishes the Chief Election Commissioner as the head of the Central Election Commission, and defines a five-year term and an upper age limit of 65 years for the post.<sup>273</sup> The Chief Election Commission is responsible for publishing the final list of candidates and disseminating the information to regional election commissions, whose responsibility it is “to explain to its residents about the candidates,”<sup>274</sup> and place pamphlets in visible locations around the community. From the original act, however, changes were adopted that transferred power from the Dalai Lama to other organs of the government.

In 2000, the Chief Election Commissioner was appointed directly by the Dalai

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> “Time not yet ripe for Tibetan referendum,” *Tibetan Review* 32, no. 2 (1997): 21.

<sup>272</sup> *The Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act*, Article 85, Unofficial English translation, (Dharamsala: Central Tibetan Administration, 2000).

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., Article 7(1).

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., Article 49(1b).

Lama.<sup>275</sup> But in 2004, an amendment was adopted requiring the Dalai Lama to select the Commissioner from a list of at least three nominees made by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the ATPD, and the *Kalon Tripa*.<sup>276</sup> The exact same change was made for the appointment of the two election officers who support the work of the Chief Election Commissioner during an election cycle. They were originally directly appointed by the Dalai Lama, but an amendment required the same government leaders listed above to nominate at least four candidates for the two posts, from which the Dalai Lama would make his selections.<sup>277</sup> These amendments signaled a shift of power from the Dalai Lama to other important and high-ranking government leaders by having them assume more of the Dalai Lama's day-to-day political tasks, such as political appointments.

Similarly, in the original legislation outlining the direct election of the *Kalon Tripa*, a candidate seeking to withdraw after the preliminary round was required to get approval from the Dalai Lama. But an amendment transferred that power to the Election Commission.<sup>278</sup> One of the more important transfers of power involved a subtle rewording of the relationship between the *Kalon Tripa* and the Dalai Lama following the former's election by popular vote. Prior to being directly elected, the *Kalon Tripa* was "responsible as Senior council Minister [to] His Holiness the Dalai Lama,"<sup>279</sup> whereas after, an amendment was passed which merely had the Dalai Lama bestowing recognition on the *Kalon Tripa*, thus giving more legitimacy to the elected position of the *Kalon Tripa*. Although he is recognized by the

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., Article 5(2).

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., Article 5(2), Amendment 5.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., Article 5(3).

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., Article 67(3b).

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., Article 67(5).

Dalai Lama, he does not serve at his leisure. Today, the announcement of the winner of the *Kalon Tripa* election demonstrates one of the ways in which the Dalai Lama's position in the government has become increasingly ceremonial: the Election Commission forwards the results to the Dalai Lama "for his approval"<sup>280</sup> at the same time that they make the results public.

The law also spells out some rules that are particular to the Tibetan case, supporting the idea that Tibetans have adapted democracy to their specific cultural and situational differences. For instance, it is illegal for any individual, candidate, or agent to instigate "any activity to create dispute and damage the character of any candidate by making false accusation of any matter related to the character and conduct of [the] candidate or its family members."<sup>281</sup> In this way, the law also seeks to create a positive campaign and election environment. Provisions governing campaigns are included and require that they cease two days before the election. Nevertheless, there is still a marked absence of campaigning. Since there are no legal barriers to campaigning, the lack of campaigning must stem from elsewhere.<sup>282</sup> Tashi Phuntsok, the Chief Election Commissioner, explained that campaigning "is not the custom among Tibetans."<sup>283</sup> His statement was supported by Karma Tashi, a Tibetan living in Raleigh, North Carolina, who claimed that Tibetan culture cultivates a sense of humility that does not lend itself to stepping forward and saying, "I am the best."<sup>284</sup> So although Tibetans may want to serve the as elected officials and do their part for the

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid., Article 69.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., Article 24(3).

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., Article 24(7).

<sup>283</sup> Interview: Tashi Phuntsok, Central Tibetan Administration Election Commissioner, 15 Nov. 2007, 2:30pm, His office, Central Tibetan Administration, Dharamsala, India.

<sup>284</sup> Interview: Karma Tashi, Shop owner, 30 Sept. 2008, 12:00pm, Dechen Collections, Raleigh, NC.



community, they might not come forward because of this cultural barrier.<sup>285</sup> Unfortunately, that means the Tibetan population may not have heard of particular individuals who would be qualified candidates. Nevertheless, there has been a slight increase in campaigning in Tibetan communities around the world, compared to previous years.

On that same note, the road for volunteer candidates can be challenging. To start, they must forward their application to their Regional Election Commissioner who must endorse it.<sup>286</sup> They must then submit more documentation and make a deposit of 3,000 Indian Rupees (roughly USD \$68). Regardless of the outcome of the election, the deposit will only be returned if a candidate wins 40% of the total votes cast in his or her constituency.<sup>287</sup> This monetary requirement could serve as a disincentive for individuals who have a desire to hold elected office, especially because “people voluntarily standing for national or organizational elections are generally looked at with suspicion and they rarely win. On the other hand, others who may not be so willing or even competent are frequently coerced to accept nominations or appointments.”<sup>288</sup>

The act includes provisions for the election of the Regional Election Officers. The 2000 version required at least four candidates to stand for election, but in 2004 that number was reduced to two.<sup>289</sup> This modification highlights the difficulty in inspiring individuals to stand for elected office. Although the law requires a minimum of two candidates in order to hold an election, this really says nothing about the actual competitiveness of the election itself.

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> The Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act, Article 42(1).

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., Article 42(3a).

<sup>288</sup> “Editorial: The Long Road to Democracy,” Tibetan Review 35, no. 5 (2000): 3.

<sup>289</sup> The Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act, Article 78(1c), Amendment 5.

The Election Commission has complete authority over matters related to the election, and all appeals are dealt with in the Tibetan exile government.<sup>290</sup> Election disputes can be taken to the Tibetan Supreme Court<sup>291</sup> after being channeled through the regional election commission, and the Chief Election Commission.<sup>292</sup> Furthermore, the document establishes strict punishments for breaking “laws set by the election Commission”<sup>293</sup> and depending on the severity of the breach, an individual can be deprived of their voting rights for three to ten years.

Many sections of the law were designed to specifically facilitate the nature of the exile situation. For example, there are aspects of the law that take into consideration the particular needs of a community with “candidates from remote places where there are no postal services.”<sup>294</sup> Similarly, when individuals whose parents are from different regions reach age 18, they are allowed to select which region they want to be represented by. Additionally, if an individual marries outside their region, they can choose to change their category once more, thus making it possible to only change regional affiliation once.<sup>295</sup> It is therefore not an effective electoral rigging tool because of the limit on the number of changes. It also specifically prohibits Tibetans residing in America, Europe and Canada

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid., Article 8(1).

<sup>291</sup> The Supreme Justice Commission was established in September 1991, but it did not open for public litigation until January 1997. It has particularly served to settle disputes between Tibetans “working under the Tibetan administration in exile, who feel aggrieved by certain administrative decisions, and the administration,” and can serve as “the best check on arbitrary discharge of functions.” (Pema Thinley, “A judicial dimension to Tibetan democracy,” *Tibetan Review* 25, no. 11 (1990): 9.) It was also argued that “The educative role of the judiciary in a democratic political process is inherent and universal.” (Thinley, “A judicial dimension,” 9.) While the court only tries civil cases where all parties are Tibetan, since its inception, it “has ruled on nine cases ranging from a defamation complaint against a popular newspaper to a suit aimed at overturning a decision of the Election Commission. In each instance the parties followed the decision of the SJC even though it lacks a mechanism for enforcement.” (Sangay, “Tibet: Exile’s Journey,” 125.) This respect for the court’s decision affords further legitimacy to the CTA’s claims to govern Tibetans.

<sup>292</sup> The Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act, Article 16(5).

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., Article 23(2).

<sup>294</sup> Article 47(1).

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., Article 46(1).

from contesting elections as a provincial or sectarian representative.<sup>296</sup> On the other hand, if an individual residing in South Asia is nominated by both a region and a sect, the candidate can choose which category to run under.<sup>297</sup> Candidates running for a seat under a religious sect can be “either a layman or a parson,” but the voters “must be monk/nun/lay person belonging to [a] specific monastery or religious organization.”<sup>298</sup>

Due to the diasporic nature of the Tibetan exile community, holding elections is a complex and time-consuming task. Thus, at the conclusion of a parliamentary election, a list of all the candidates who earned 33% of the vote in their respective constituency—but were not successful in winning a seat—is compiled. Then, if a seat in the Assembly falls vacant, it will be filled on the basis of that list, in order of the candidates receiving the most votes, effectively eliminating the need for another election.<sup>299</sup> However, if no unsuccessful candidate receives the 33% of the vote required to hold office, then a by-election will be organized if an Assembly seat opens. This particular article became important as four ATPD members resigned between 2003 and 2004—leaving two Domey (Amdo) seats, one Gelug seat, and one U-Tsang seat open. Although the Gelug seat was filled from an existing reserve list, by-elections needed to be held for the remaining three seats because no one on the respective lists had polled the required 33 percent in the previous election.<sup>300</sup>

Electing the Amdo replacement proved problematic as none of the four candidates were able to secure 33% of the vote in the final round of the election, although one candidate barely fell short, earning 33.22 percent. Only 25% of registered Amdo voters cast their ballot

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid., Article 37(3).

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., Article 47(5).

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., Article 23(2).

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., Article 31.

<sup>300</sup> “One more ATPD member resigns,” *Tibetan Review* 39, no.5 (2004): 14.

in the final round of the election, but in this instance, “the Election Commission does not consider the low turnout of voters as poor public co-operation. The timing of the election in the midst of sweater selling season for the majority of Tibetans, and the month of religious sermons coinciding with the election, could be the reason for the low turnout of the voters,’ the exile parliament’s Chief Election Commissioner said.”<sup>301</sup>

The election law was amended in 2004 to allow the Dalai Lama to appoint one to three members of the ATPD, or none at all.<sup>302</sup> Previously, he had been *required* to appoint one to three members who were distinguished in the fields of art, science, literature, and community service. However, this obligation was a burden, as many gave undue reverence to his appointments, and ultimately it was an exercise that was too political for the “semi-retired”<sup>303</sup> role he was trying to maintain. Thus, after being freed from legal obligation, in 2006 when the next parliamentary election was held, he abstained from appointing any deputies. These three seats have remained vacant, and the number of deputies in the 14<sup>th</sup> ATPD dropped from 46 to 43, and all members were elected.

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<sup>301</sup> “Exile Amdo Tibetans to again vote for vacant Assembly seat,” Tibetan Review 39, no.3 (2004): 16.

<sup>302</sup> The Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act, Article 27(c).

<sup>303</sup> “Exile parliament reverses decision to review Middle Way,” Tibetan Review 39, no. 10 (2004): 11.

The Election Commission is responsible for administering elections in the 130 Tibetan communities in South Asia. The CTA, and thus the Election Commission, communicates with these clusters of Tibetans through Settlement Officers who are sometimes elected, but often appointed. These officers are responsible for liaising between the government and the population they oversee, often simultaneously serving as local



**Image 3.3** A monk holds his Green Book after casting his ballot on November 17, 2007. (Photo by author)

election commissioners, responsible for disseminating information and the conduct of the elections. In the *Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act*, there is an extensive chapter on the conduct of local elections. Dr. Tenzin Namdul, a resident of Dharamsala, suggested that this chapter was stressed so strongly because of the “confusion every time we have an election.”<sup>304</sup> He thought it was much easier to conduct an election

near the seat of government, but that in the settlements where there are higher rates of illiteracy and lower education levels, elections were much more difficult to hold.

Today, suffrage is universal for all Tibetans who have reached the age of eighteen and possess the Tibetan “Green Book,” meaning that they pay the voluntary tax to the

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<sup>304</sup> Interview: Dr. Tenzin Namdul, 21 Nov. 2007, 10:45am, His office, *Men Tsee Khang* Research Department, Dharamsala, India.

CTA.<sup>305</sup> This monetary requirement does not exclude any group from voting for financial reasons, because if a family or individual is unable to pay, they can apply to have the tax waved and can still receive a Green Book. In order to retrieve their ballot on election day, a voter needs to furnish their Green Book number, name, and voter's registration number, all of which are usually contained within the Green Book itself.<sup>306</sup>

Every election, both national and local, always requires two rounds of voting. The preliminary round consists of “throwing up names.”<sup>307</sup> Depending on the type of election, voters write down the name of at least one individual they would like to nominate for the post.<sup>308</sup> In order to hold office, a candidate must be a citizen of Tibet<sup>309</sup> having reached the age of twenty-five. They cannot be declared mentally unsound or bankrupt and must not have been convicted of any criminal offense. They cannot be “enjoying service, status, or economic benefit from another country detrimental to the interest of Tibetan people” or disqualified by any of the election rules and regulations passed by the Tibetan Assembly.<sup>310</sup> After the preliminary vote the ballots are tallied and the individuals receiving the greatest number of votes are then contacted and asked if they would like to remain in the running for

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<sup>305</sup> “The Green Book is a receipt book that details annual voluntary contributions [*Rangzen Lakhdeb*] made by Tibetans living in exile to the Tibetan Government in Exile.” The idea for the Green Book first emerged during a 1972 meeting where “participants recommended that Tibetans living in exile voluntarily provide financial support to the Tibetan Government in Exile.” “Financial contributions to the CTA are now required for ‘fulfilling Tibetan citizenship.’” “Suggested contributions for the Green Book vary according to age and place of residence,” from approximately USD \$0.27 to USD \$96. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, “Responses to Information Requests: CHN101133.E,” 28 April 2006; Available at <http://www2.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=450153>, accessed 6 Sept. 2008.

<sup>306</sup> The Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act, Article 31(2), Amendment 5.

<sup>307</sup> Interview: Karma Choephel, 16 Nov. 2007, 2:30pm.

<sup>308</sup> For an example of a preliminary round ATPD election ballot see Appendix F.

<sup>309</sup> Citizenship is defined in Chapter I, Article 8 of the *Charter of the Tibetans in Exile* as all Tibetans born in Tibet as well as those whose biological mother or father is of Tibetan descent. Exiled Tibetans who have adopted the citizenship of another country can have “dual citizenship” provided they follow the obligations of citizens outlined in Article 13.

<sup>310</sup> The Charter of the Tibetans in Exile, Chapter V, Article 38.

the final round. They are given a designated period in which to respond. After that time, the final candidate list is published and the ballot is drawn up. For the final round, voters once again go to the polls and this time, again depending on the type of election, select at least one candidate for the position. In the final round, voters choose from a list of candidates proposed in the previous round, and each name is assigned a corresponding symbol, unique to the candidate.<sup>311</sup> Finally the votes are tallied and the winner(s) announced.

Secrecy of the vote is provided for,<sup>312</sup> if not always practiced. In the final round of an election, no assistance is allowed in the polling booth for “handicapped or illiterate voters except for the blind”<sup>313</sup> because in that round, a voter needs only to leave a stamp next to the candidate of their choice, whose name and information is accompanied by a symbol assigned to that specific individual.

Nevertheless, the electoral system still left many unsatisfied. Dorjee Tsetan, a student at Lola College in Chennai, India explained that having to travel large distances (often at great expense) was problematic for students. Tsetan recognized that “as the Tibetan youths studying in various colleges form a vital part of our society, their involvement is a must,” and asked, “cannot the exile government address this problem through appointment of special officers or through regional student associations and make sure that they too are able to vote?”<sup>314</sup> Other readers noted the need for modifications, as Ngawanyng Yeshi of Dharamsala called for simplified voting procedures, labeling the current method “bothersome, obstructive, time-consuming, unnecessarily bureaucratic and above all,

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<sup>311</sup> For an example of a final round ATPD election ballot see Appendix G.

<sup>312</sup> The Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act, Article 28, Amendment 5.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 19.

<sup>314</sup> Dorjee Tsetan, “Letters: Left out of exile electoral process?” Tibetan Review 41, no. 1 (2006): 33.

dissuading.”<sup>315</sup> Dawa Dhargye of Kathmandu agreed, noting that after voting in every election for the last 25 years, he was unable to vote in 2001 because he failed to “re-register,” despite having registered for prior elections.<sup>316</sup> Dhargye said, “I love Tibet, please do not drive me away.”<sup>317</sup>

### **The Dalai Lama Passes Executive Power to a Directly-Elected Prime Minister (*Kalon Tripa*)**

In April 2001—at the suggestion of the Dalai Lama—the charter was amended to provide for the direct election of the *Kalon Tripa* by the people. Previously, the *Kalon Tripa* had been appointed by the Dalai Lama before the task was then passed to the *Kashag*, who elected the *Kalon Tripa* from amongst their own ranks. Later, the *Kalon Tripa* was directly elected by the ATPD by secret ballot. Thus the *Tibetan Review* applauded the *Kalon Tripa* election, and noted “that Tibetans in exile will go to the polls to elect for the first time in their lives, and in the life of their nation, a new head of government, the *Kalon Tripa* (Chairman of the Cabinet). By this means we hope to have at least a government that stands on its own popular mandates, rather than one that is a creature of the Assembly...always remaining at it[s] beck and call. Hopefully this will put us on a firm path to real democracy.”<sup>318</sup> Before, the ministers “were hand-picked by the Dalai Lama and assumed supposed accountability only to him, rather than to the Tibetan public,” and “questioning the actions of the ministers was tantamount to questioning the Dalai Lama himself.”<sup>319</sup> The final round of the election

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<sup>315</sup> Ngawayng Yeshe, “Letters: A case for simplified voting system,” *Tibetan Review* 36, no. 5 (2001): 31.

<sup>316</sup> Dawa Dhargye, “Letters: Too many registrations,” *Tibetan Review* 36, no. 5 (2001): 29.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>318</sup> “Editorial: Towards Responsible Governance,” *Tibetan Review* 36, no. 5 (2001): 3.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*



was held in August 2001, and the first popularly and directly elected *Kalon Tripa*, Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, took office on September 5, 2001.

Professor Samdhong Lobsang Tenzin (the 5<sup>th</sup> Samdhong Rinpoche) has a distinguished history in Tibetan exile politics: He served on the Drafting Committee for the *Constitution of the Future Polity of Tibet and Law for the Exiled Tibetans* in 1990; the Dalai Lama appointed him a member of the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (1991-1996), during which he was unanimously elected its Speaker; in 1996 he was elected to the 12<sup>th</sup> ATPD as a representative from Kham, and once again served as Speaker.<sup>320</sup>

However, before the preliminary round of the first *Kalon Tripa* election in 2001, Professor Samdhong Rinpoche—after serving in parliament for a decade—made it clear he wished to retire from political life and would therefore not be available as a candidate. Nevertheless, in the preliminary round of voting he earned eighty-two percent of the votes cast. After a long personal debate, he decided that, “it would not be right for me to withdraw my name,”<sup>321</sup> because “I have always advocated the importance of democracy. To respect the popular will is the core of democracy. Therefore, if I refuse to participate as a candidate in the election, I will be going against my beliefs and my ideology.”<sup>322</sup> In the final round of the 2001 election he won eight-five percent of the votes cast.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> TibetNet, “Profiles of the Present Kalons,” Available from <http://www.tibet.net/en/kashag/profiles.html>, accessed 26 Sept. 2008.

<sup>321</sup> Eva Herzer, “Testimony at the Congressional Human Rights Caucus Briefing on Tibet.”

<sup>322</sup> “Exile Tibetans elect head-of-government,” *Tibetan Review* 36, no. 9 (2001): 12.

<sup>323</sup> Phurbu Thinley, “Democracy Day: Exile Government asks Tibetans to give more importance to ‘duties than rights’,” *Phayul*, 2 Sept. 2008, available at <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=22723&t=1>; accessed 17 Sept. 2008.

At his swearing in, Samdhong Rinpoche reaffirmed his “commitment to strive for a culture of democracy.”<sup>324</sup> He further applauded the Tibetan electorate, noting that “during the recent election of the Kashag Chairperson [*Kalon Tripa*], the voters displayed no indication of sectarian, regional or factional inclination,” and that “this very encouraging trend at the preliminary election was one of the major reasons for my decision to participate in the election.”<sup>325</sup> Most importantly, at the ceremony, the Dalai Lama reiterated that the *Kalon Tripa* “was now the highest leader in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.”<sup>326</sup>

Thus, the *Tibetan Review* was hopeful of what the direct election of the *Kalon Tripa* might bring in that “the scale of the win combined with his own personal charisma and reputed integrity gives him a rare mandate to give the exile government a thorough democratic overhaul.”<sup>327</sup> “He is supposed to make a totally new beginning. Unlike the *Kashag* (Cabinet) in the past, the new government headed by him is not a creature of the Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies.”<sup>328</sup>

Equally important, Samdhong Rinpoche was the first *Kalon Tripa* to appoint his own cabinet, rather than being selected by *Kalons* or the ATPD. Following his election, his first three ministerial appointments—subject to the approval of the ATPD—were all unanimously approved.<sup>329</sup> However, the ATPD did not give free reign to Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, despite his obvious popularity. For example, they rejected an additional nomination for his

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<sup>324</sup> Samdhong Rinpoche, “A commitment to strive for a culture of democracy,” *Tibetan Review* 36, no. 10 (2001): 19.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>326</sup> “New exile Tibetan government takes charge,” *Tibetan Review* 36, no. 10 (2001): 10.

<sup>327</sup> “Editorial: Tasks before the new *Kalon Tripa*,” *Tibetan Review* 36, no. 9 (2001): 3.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>329</sup> “New exile Tibetan government takes charge,” *Tibetan Review* 36, no. 10 (2001): 10.

cabinet in 2004 by a vote of 22 to 15. Interestingly, the candidate was the director of the Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre (TPPRC).<sup>330</sup>

In 2004 key CTA resources, crucial for the survival for the exile community, were bundled under the position of the *Kalon Tripa*, making him “head of a global network, and all information between the Tibetans at home, in Asia and the Diaspora abroad was managed by him.”<sup>331</sup> This shift in power was important, as these resources were then concentrated with an elected individual, rather than the Dalai Lama. The direct election of the *Kalon Tripa* has been the most recent democratic development in the Tibetan exile community. In an important step, the popular election of the *Kalon Tripa* was the first time that the Tibetan exile electorate voted as a single constituency in which everyone voted for the same position, at the same time, with all votes counting equally. Again, this democratic development was at the behest of the Dalai Lama, yet another example of his crucial role in bringing democracy to the Tibetan exile community. With a popularly elected *Kalon Tripa* at the helm of the CTA, the Dalai Lama “reiterated his determination to work for the resolution of the Tibet issue...while reiterating his status as semi-retired.”<sup>332</sup>

“At the time of writing this column, the question that is on everyone’s mind is whether the present Kalon Tripa, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, will ‘run’ again. I am placing ‘run’ in quotes because he was an unwilling candidate for even his first term. If he does consent to be a candidate again, there may not be doubt of him getting the second term.”<sup>333</sup> To his credit, “he may be the only Tibetan ‘political leader’ (other than His Holiness) in

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<sup>330</sup> “Exile parliament passes budget, rejects new ministerial candidate,” *Tibetan Review* 39, no. 5 (2004): 14.

<sup>331</sup> Roemer, 103.

<sup>332</sup> “Exile parliament reverses decision to review Middle Way,” *Tibetan Review* 39, no. 10 (2004): 11.

<sup>333</sup> Bhuchung K Tsering, “Our Tibetan democracy,” *Tibetan Review* 40, no. 9 (2005): 25.

exile to enjoy a visible recognition outside of the Tibetan community on his own merit.”<sup>334</sup>

In the preliminary election of the 2006 *Kalon Tripa* election, Samdhong Rinpoche emerged as the clear favorite, securing 82.66% of the votes cast.<sup>335</sup> Fifty-one percent of the 72,771

| Candidate               | No. Votes | % of Votes |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche | 30,934    | 82.66      |
| Juchen Thupten Namgyal  | 2,604     | 6.96       |
| Gyalo Thondup           | 488       | 1.3        |
| Jetsun Pema             | 477       | 1.27       |
| Lodi G. Gyari           | 368       | 0.98       |
| Tulku Ugyen Topgyal     | 177       | 0.47       |

**Table 3.2** Above are the top six candidates in the preliminary round of the 2006 *Kalon Tripa* election, the number of votes each candidate received, and the percentage of votes received. (Source: Rinchen, “Samdhong Rinpoche Dominates,” [Phayul](#).)

registered voters participated in the first round.<sup>336</sup>

In preparation for the upcoming election, the Election Commission organized a “debate” between the two *Kalon Tripa* candidates. It turned out to be more of

a public forum than an exchange of views, as “the two candidates do not differ either on policy or method on any issue.”<sup>337</sup> The discussion was broadcast live over a local cable network and carried by the Voice of America in its radio broadcast as well as its live internet stream. One observer remarked that “history was sort of created” as it was the “first ever public forum between the two *Kalon Tripa* candidates,” and that “the winner was the nascent democratic system of the Tibetan people.”<sup>338</sup> The lack of true debate can also be attributed to the fact that,

Officially running against the Rinpoche is...a former cabinet minister in the Tibetan government in exile, but he is campaigning more as a supporter of the incumbent than an opponent. “I have no interest in holding any office at this age but I am participating to help the democratic process that we have started in exile under the leadership and guidance of

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> “16 new faces in 14th exile Tibetan Parliament, No Dalai Lama-appointed yet,” [Tibetan Review](#) 41, no. 5 (2006):14.

<sup>336</sup> Kalsang Rinchen, “Samdhong Rinpoche Dominates Preliminary Elections,” [Phayul](#), 10 April 2006; available at <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=12320&t=1&c=1>; accessed 6 April 2009.

<sup>337</sup> “Kalon Tripa election ‘debate’ broadcast live,” [Tibetan Review](#) 41, no. 6 (2006): 10.

<sup>338</sup> Bhuchung K Tsering, “The *Kalon Tripa* debate,” [Tibetan Review](#) 41, no. 7 (2006): 33.

his Holiness the Dalai Lama,” he said. Of six candidates who were elected for the final polls, four withdrew from the contest.<sup>339</sup>

If Juchen Thupten Namgyal had withdrawn like the other candidates, leaving only Samdhong Rinpoche in the fray, according to the rules, the election process would have had to begin afresh, as legislation requires that there be a minimum of two candidates in the final round. Thus the participation of the second candidate in this situation was merely a formality to ensure the proper functioning of the electoral procedures. Analysts predicted that the election would be “a one man contest with the former academic...enjoying a strong majority of voters and the Dalai Lama’s confidence.”<sup>340</sup>

However, even Samdhong Rinpoche, the incumbent, was reluctant to run for a second term because he felt that “‘A younger person should come forward so that he can lead the Tibetans for a longer time,’... ‘but if I am asked by His Holiness, I will have to abide by his wishes.’”<sup>341</sup> At the time, Samdhong Rinpoche was 66, while his opponent was 77. Polling was conducted at 53 stations in India, Nepal, Bhutan, North America, Europe, Australia, Japan, and Taiwan. In the final round he received 90.72% of the votes.<sup>342</sup>

When he assumed office for his second term, Samdhong Rinpoche announced that he would continue to keep a small cabinet in an effort to minimize costs, and for practical terms, as the ministers did not oversee the day to day operations of each department.<sup>343</sup> However, only four of his five cabinet nominations were approved. At least one member of the ATPD raised objections concerning every candidate put forth, at which point voting commenced.

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<sup>339</sup> Tashi Dhondup, “Tibetan exiles to vote for premier,” *Agence France-Presse* 2 June 2006, 1. Available through [http://proxy.lib.duke.edu:2158/iw-search/we/InfoWeb/?p\\_theme=newcat](http://proxy.lib.duke.edu:2158/iw-search/we/InfoWeb/?p_theme=newcat); accessed 23 Nov. 2007.

<sup>340</sup> Kalsang Rinchen, “Samdhong Rinpoche Dominates Preliminary Elections,” *Phayul*, 10 April 2006; available at <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=12320&t=1&c=1>; accessed 6 April 2009.

<sup>341</sup> “Samdhong Rinpoche reluctant for second term as *Kalon Tripa*,” *Tibetan Review* 41, no. 3 (2006): 11.

<sup>342</sup> “Samdhong Rinpoche re-elected as *Kalon Tripa*,” *Tibetan Review* 41, no. 8 (2006): 14.

<sup>343</sup> “Samdhong Rinpoche, accepts mandate with regret, vows to continue policies,” *Tibetan Review* 41, no. 9 (2006): 13.

His youngest candidate was rejected, receiving only 19 of the required 21 votes.<sup>344</sup> Despite his initial desire to keep the cabinet small, in 2007 Samdhong Rinpoche nominated three more cabinet members, all of whom the ATPD unanimously approved. All three new appointees had previously served the government for between 23 and 34 years. Thus the cabinet was brought to capacity—eight ministers, including the *Kalon Tripa*—for the first time in Samdhong Rinpoche’s tenure.<sup>345</sup>

His current term will end in 2011. It will also be his final term as *Kalon Tripa*, because a candidate for the office cannot have served as a *Kalon*, including the *Kalon Tripa*, for two consecutive terms.<sup>346</sup> This two term limit in the cabinet seeks to create space for new political actors, preventing a continuous recycling of well-known and recognized figures. With Samdhong Rinpoche’s second term coming to an end, the next question is who will follow him, and there is one man is trying to answer it.

Thubten Samdup is shaking up Tibetan politics. A former member of the ATPD, he is leading the hunt to find the next *Kalon Tripa*. In fall 2008 he began his campaign by developing a website <[www.kalontripa.org](http://www.kalontripa.org)> where he hopes to publish biographies of potential candidates, general election information, and other relevant information. Although the election is still two years away, Tibetans are spread across the globe, and as a result, disseminating voter information and conducting an election both take time. Additionally, qualified candidates aren’t often known or recognized by those outside of their respective communities. In announcing his project, Samdup made it clear that:

This new candidate must assume a greater load. The next *Kalon Tripa* must be someone with strong leadership skills, capable of leading the

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<sup>344</sup> “Exile parliament approves new kashag,” *Tibetan Review* 41, no. 11 (2006): 11.

<sup>345</sup> “Exile parliament approves three more government ministers,” *Tibetan Review* 43, no. 11 (2007): 17.

<sup>346</sup> *The Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act*, Article 63.

government, and bringing a clear vision that is bold and vibrant enough to also seize the interest and imagination of the young.<sup>347</sup>

The next *Kalon Tripa* will serve from 2011 to 2016, and because of this timing, will have the opportunity to define the Tibetan exile movement and emerge as a new leader. Due to a number of factors, the current exile community is on the cusp of wide sweeping change. Within this framework, the *Kalon Tripa* post can emerge as a new and heightened leadership position. The *Kalon Tripa* has particular legitimacy as a universally elected leader, working for the entirety of the Tibetan population, rather than a particular region or sect. Moreover, without being looked to as both a spiritual *and* temporal leader, like the Dalai Lama, the *Kalon Tripa* can avoid potentially conflict roles and focus on representing Tibetans in a political arena.

However, Samdup's project, so far, has not met with tremendous success. In March 2009, Samdup wrote, "four months ago a website launched to facilitate the nomination process for the next Kalon Tripa generated considerable excitement through out the Tibetan diaspora. Despite this initial enthusiasm, Tibetans have taken little to no concrete action with regards to the actual nomination process; no contributors have stepped forward, no candidates have been submitted."<sup>348</sup> The announcement of the website "met with a profusion of phone calls and email messages, all declaring overwhelming support for the project,"<sup>349</sup> but was not followed by any concrete action. Samdup asked Tibetans to "treat this matter seriously and discuss it among your friends and in your community meetings," and urged

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<sup>347</sup> Thubten Samdup, "Electing the Next Kalon Tripa: The Urgency of New Leadership"; available at [www.kalongtripa.org](http://www.kalongtripa.org); accessed 10 Oct. 2008.

<sup>348</sup> Thubten Samdup, "Time to Walk the Talk," *Phayul*, 22 March 2009. Available at <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?article=Time+to+Walk+the+Talk+-+Thubten+Samdup&id=24258&t=1&c=4>; accessed 6 April 2009.

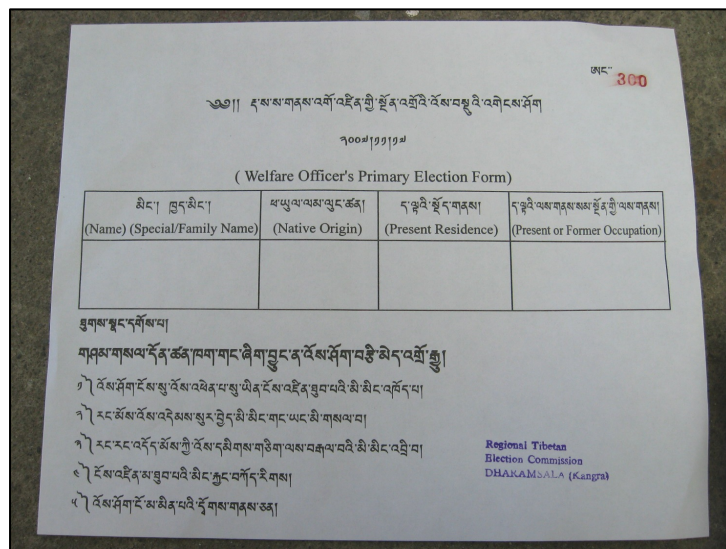
<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*

them not to “entertain fuzzy beliefs that would leave our democratic development to some ill-founded notions of ‘fate’ intervening for us: hoping unrealistically that ‘something good’ is going to happen. The next step is clearly that of working as a community to find the Kalon Tripa’s successor.”<sup>350</sup>

### Current Elections: A Local Case Study

The Dharamsala Welfare Officer was elected by the people for the first time in June 1992. This marked a departure from previous protocol, as “all welfare officers used to be appointed by the Home Affairs department of the Tibetan government.”<sup>351</sup> Four candidates were produced in the first round, and three contested the final round, “in which Dawa Tsering emerged as the clear winner.” Tsering was described as a “young man who has been doing a lot of voluntary social work in the town.”<sup>352</sup> Fifteen years later, I had the opportunity to witness the same election.

I observed the preliminary and final elections for the Dharamsala Welfare Officer on November 17 and 29, 2007, respectively. This election encapsulated both the continuity and the changes in Tibetan democracy, highlighting the successes and the struggles of



**Image 3.4** A preliminary round ballot for the 2007 local election of the Dharamsala Welfare Officer. (Photo by author)

<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

<sup>351</sup> “Dharamsala Welfare Officer elected,” Tibetan Review 27, no. 8 (1992): 9.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.



Tibetan elections in exile.

On November 17 I visited the *Tsunglagkhang* Temple polling station, one of many set up in and around the Dharamsala area. The voting procedure for the election was as follows: first a voter provided their Green Book, from which a pollworker recorded their name, Green Book number, and voter's registration number. They then stamped the Green Book, gave a ballot to the voter and marked their left thumb nail with black ink to prevent double-voting. The voter then entered the polling room—an open room containing writing utensils, low tables, and ground cushions—to make their selection. Two men guarded the entrance doors, but for the most part they made small talk amongst themselves and with voters. In the room, individuals voted by writing down the name of one candidate for the position of Welfare Officer, including as much information about the individual as possible so as not to confuse possible candidates.

Pollworkers were also on hand to assist illiterate or disabled individuals in writing their candidate of choice. Once completed, the voter came outside and deposited their ballot in the ballot box. From what I observed, the polling station was never particularly crowded, the queue was always short (usually non-existent) and the environment was relaxed. A total of 818 voters went to the polls that day.

That afternoon I was sitting with two Tibetan women as they gossiped about the day's election. They believed the position of the Welfare Officer was very important and reflected on a situation in which there had been a fight between local Indians and Tibetans. The altercation apparently resulted in a second incident involving the beating of a young Tibetan father who was uninvolved in the first situation. The women seemed dissatisfied with the way the Welfare Officer had handled the situation. Their discussion highlights the fact that

Tibetans do care about the decision making process and want to participate in selecting the best candidate, one who will represent not only the individuals who actually voted for the candidate, but also the community at large. For example, Tashi, an election pollworker, believed the Welfare Officer should be fluent in English, Tibetan, and Hindi and thus able to communicate with the police, Indians, and the local community. He believed this election was very important so that the community could select a good leader.<sup>353</sup>

I sat down with the (then) Welfare Officer of Dharamsala—Sonam Shosur—three



**Image 3.5** Sonam Shosur, pictured above, served as the Dharamsala Welfare Officer and Regional Election Commissioner from 2005-2007.  
*(Photo by author)*

days after the preliminary election. He explained where his office was in terms of the current election: After the preliminary votes were tallied, the candidates receiving the most support were contacted by letter and had until the 21<sup>st</sup> to respond, accepting or declining a spot on the final round ballot. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> his office began publicly announcing the candidates for the final round. From the original list of twelve nominees, two were placed on the ballot. During the preliminary round

Tsering Phuntsok had received 228 votes while Lodoe Sangpo received eighty-eight.<sup>354</sup>

<sup>353</sup> Interview: Tashi, Election Pollworker, 17 Nov. 2007, 11:00am, *Tsuglagkhang* Temple, McLeod Ganj, India.

<sup>354</sup> TibetNet, “Final Poll for Tibetan Welfare Officer Today,” [Phayul](http://www.phayul.com/News/article.aspx?id=18697&t=1&c=1); Available at <http://www.phayul.com/News/article.aspx?id=18697&t=1&c=1>, accessed 29 Nov. 2007.

Nevertheless, Sonam Shosur was appointed Welfare Officer by the CTA when the 2005 Dharamsala Welfare Officer Election failed to produce a democratically elected winner. After the counting of the preliminary ballots, twelve candidates were contacted to see if they wished to stand as candidates for the final round. However, of those twelve, not a single one wanted to contest the election, resulting in an election flop. In the final round a candidate for Welfare Officer must obtain fifty-one percent of the total votes cast in order to be elected but the 2005 election didn't even make it that far. Many local Welfare Officers continue to be appointed by the government, despite the fact that community members have the right to elect him or her, but choose not to.<sup>355</sup>

Between the preliminary and final rounds of voting there was no visible campaigning, posters or otherwise. I spoke with one young Tibetan woman, Tenzin, who said that she learned who the final candidates were from her mother who heard it from someone else. Clearly, word of mouth plays a very important role in staying informed in the Tibetan community. On November 28, 2007, in the midst of our conversation on how she found out who the candidates were, Tenzin paused, set down her tea and walked outside. After listening to a man with a megaphone walk by she came back in and relayed the information being announced, "Tomorrow, 8:30 at the Temple is the final selection of the Welfare Official." That man—who turned out to be Tashi, the pollworker I spoke with on both election days—and his megaphone are one of the ways the administration communicates with the constituency. When asked, Tenzin was able to name the two candidates, Tsering

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<sup>355</sup> Dharamsala is one of the few Tibetan communities to elect their Welfare Officer: "At the moment, there are few settlements who have elected their heads. All the other settlements have requested Dharamsala Administration to directly appoint their Heads and their assistants as in the past." Central Election Commission, "Introduction to the Election Commission," 2008. Available at <http://www.tibet.net/en/cta/bodies.html#1>, accessed 18 Sept. 2008.

Phuntsok and Lodo Sangpo, as well as their occupations as an “ex-Army man” and the owner of a restaurant, respectively. She had a ready opinion on who was the superior candidate, basing it mainly on qualifications and previous community involvement; although she speculated that the other candidate might win based on popularity and being better known in the community.<sup>356</sup>

On November 29, 2007 I went back to the *Tsuglagkhang* Temple to observe the final round of voting. One nun, two monks, and two election officers were working at the check in table. Two men stood next to the door leading into the voting area but the most action they saw was shooing Indian tourists away from the polling room. Tashi, the election pollworker I’d spoken with during the preliminary election happily greeted me when I arrived. He described the two symbols representing the candidates on the ballot: Tsering Phuntsok was the prayer beads while Lodo Sangpo was the elephant. To no one in particular Tashi jested, “Who is going to win, the *mala* or the elephant?” In the midst of our conversation, one older Tibetan woman, unable to read, approached Tashi and asked him which name corresponded with which symbol.

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<sup>356</sup> Interview: Tenzin Dorjee, 28 Nov. 2007, 4:15pm, Peace Café, McLeod Ganj, India.



**Image 3.6** Two pollworkers stand outside the polling booth area at the *Tsuglagkhang* Temple polling station on November 29, 2007. (Photo by author)

For the most part voting preceded much like it had during the preliminary round. One man, before placing his ballot in the box, touched it to his forehead. As Tibetans would come up the stairs, Tashi would yell at them to get in line at the registration table. This time, instead of writing the candidate, voters would use a stamp to mark their choice. However, if the stamp went astray, their ballot could be declared invalid. During the slower periods, the pollworkers themselves cast their votes. Ultimately, Tsering Phuntsok was elected the new Dharamsala Welfare Officer with 69.39% of the 866 votes cast. Only three were nullified.<sup>357</sup> In accordance with the legislation, he will hold the office for three years.

### **What Changed: The ATPD and the Tibetan Review after 2001**

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<sup>357</sup> TibetNet, “New Tibetan Welfare Officer of Dharamsala elected,” Phayul; Available at <https://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=18723&t=1&c=1>, accessed 3 Dec. 2007.

In the final round of the 2006 election for the 14<sup>th</sup> ATPD, 88 candidates competed for 43 seats. In each category there were at least double the number of candidates for each open position. However, there were only two independent voluntary candidates, one each for the U-Tsang and Dotoe provinces.<sup>358</sup> The final round coincided with the preliminary election of the *Kalon Tripa*, and took place at 53 polling stations. More than 82,000 of around 100,000 eligible exile Tibetans registered to vote, although only 52% of registered voters

participated.<sup>359</sup> Certain groups, such as Youth for Better MPs, distributed candidate lists for the three provinces, but the *Tibetan Review* still categorized the election as “lackluster,” and “devoid of any issues or substantive over campaigns.”<sup>360</sup> However,

| Constituency   | No. Candidates | No. Seats |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|
| Provinces      | 63             | 30        |
| Buddhist Sects | 20             | 10        |
| Bon            | 4              | 2         |
| Europe         | 4              | 2         |
| North America  | 2              | 1         |

**Table 3.3** The table above breaks down the candidates for the 2006 ATPD election by constituency and the number of seats available. (Source: *Tibetan Review* 41, no 2 (2006): 11.)

it did observe “some last-minute proposal of candidates by some groups opposing old-style parochial politics and supporting Tibet’s independence.”<sup>361</sup>

Ultimately, sixteen new individuals were elected to the parliament, and the majority of who were between age 25 and 45.<sup>362</sup> Waiting lists for unsuccessful candidates were constructed in accordance with procedure, which included one candidate in each of the following constituencies: U-Tsang, Kagyu, Nyingma, and Gelug. There were two candidates in both Dotoe and Bon, while North America and Domey had none.<sup>363</sup>

<sup>358</sup> “88 candidates for 43 parliament seats,” *Tibetan Review* 41, no. 2 (2006): 11.

<sup>359</sup> “16 new faces in 14th exile Tibetan Parliament, No Dalai Lama-appointee yet,” *Tibetan Review* 41, no. 5 (2006): 14.

<sup>360</sup> “Exile Tibetans vote to elect new gov’t, lawmakers,” *Tibetan Review* 41, no. 4 (2006): 11.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>362</sup> “16 new faces in 14th exile Tibetan Parliament, No Dalai Lama-appointee yet,” *Tibetan Review* 41, no. 5 (2006): 13.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

The 14<sup>th</sup> ATPD faced its first challenge as it struggled to elect a chairman. Karma Choephel and Penpa Tsering continued to split the votes evenly, neither one earning a clear majority. “The election had its fair share of drama with Mr Karma Choephel threatening to withdraw from the race just before the fifth frustrating round of voting,”<sup>364</sup> referencing some posters that had been pasted around the CTA complex criticizing his candidacy. Ultimately, the tenure of the chairmanship was split between the two men evenly, with Choephel assuming the post first. The decision to rotate the post was passed by 21 deputies and opposed by 16, with 6 abstaining. Luckily, Mrs. Dolma Gyari was elected the deputy chairperson without incident.

Nevertheless, new changes did not end the demands by some religious groups who sought greater legislative representation. For example, “the Jonang sect has been claiming to be distinct from other sects and has been demanding separate religious seats for themselves, while Tibetans living in Australia have also been seeking ATPD representation for themselves.”<sup>365</sup> However, when the Dalai Lama addressed the 14<sup>th</sup> ATPD in October 2006, he “urged the deputies to fully commit themselves to the common good of all Tibetans and not to talk of different provinces and religious denominations on the ATPD platform.”<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> “Two to take turns as ATPD chairman,” Tibetan Review 41, no. 7 (2006): 11.

<sup>365</sup> “Modest turnout in exile Tibetan pre-poll,” Tibetan Review 40, no 12 (2005): 11.

<sup>366</sup> “Deputies urged to represent all Tibetans,” Tibetan Review 41, no. 11 (2006): 15.

Criticisms continued to appear in the *Tibetan Review* in the 2000s, particularly those related to Tibetans hindering the



Dalai Lama’s call for democracy by

**Image 3.7** In Loten Namling’s 1993 political cartoon, the Dalai Lama is seen exerting himself on behalf of Tibetans on the road to “democracy,” while his passengers are busy revering him and praying. (Source: *Tibetan Review* 36, no. 6 (2001): 31.)

failing to engage in the process. Tenzin Tsundue, a Tibetan poet and activist, wrote, “No people in the world are as fortunate as us, to have a living Buddha to guide and parent them. But have we lived up to his guidance? No. We handicapped ourselves, falling dependent on His Holiness.”<sup>367</sup> The same sentiment can be found in Loten Namling’s 1993 political cartoon, reprinted in the *Tibetan Review* in 2001 and shown above, in which the Dalai Lama is seen exerting himself towing Tibetans toward the sign labeled “democracy.”

Although the *Tibetan Review* did continue to criticize the CTA, elections, and the legislature in the 2000s, such criticisms were less frequently than in the past, showing that something had in fact changed. “Gone are the days when the Assembly served as an avenue for ‘personal attacks’ or when the proceedings were hijacked by hare-brained, piety rows aimed at smearing the character of an individual deputy. Now are the days when solid, hard-

<sup>367</sup> Tenzin Tsundue, “Mangtso: Our Democratic Vision,” *Tibetan Review* 39, no. 9 (2004): 14.



core issues are being tabled for debate—debates that are open and unfettered, carried with an unmatched zeal.”<sup>368</sup> One might hypothesize that this less vocal and less consistently critical attitude might be related to changes in the size and composition of the CTA. In 1965 there were 103 CTA officials;<sup>369</sup> the CTA presently employs more than 3,000 officials, and only one percent have ties to the traditional hereditary aristocracy.<sup>370</sup> In addition to personnel changes, there were also important leadership shifts.

Today, more than 95 percent of scholars and students from the Tibetan exile community who have studied in the U.S. have returned to hold posts in the exile government and their “influence is only likely to grow, and with it the importance of democratic ideas for the future of Tibet.”<sup>371</sup> More than 60% of the current deputies are under 50, leading one Tibetan to observe that “the Assembly draws its strength from a harmonious blend of the rich experiences of the seniors and the knowledge and new ideas of the younger generation.”<sup>372</sup> Bhuchung Tsering, a frequent contributor to the *Tibetan Review*, also noted that “This Kalon Tripa has attempted to make the political reality clear to the Tibetan public as never before,” and that the “Dharamsala Administration today has changed much under the Kalon Tripa.”<sup>373</sup> Thus, for the most part, qualified, educated Tibetans have assumed leadership roles in the exile administration, the type of demographic that also subscribes to the *Tibetan Review*. They, along with their criticisms, have been incorporated into the CTA.

Similarly, in an effort to communicate with his constituency, the North American

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<sup>368</sup> Dhundup Gyalpo, “World’s Smallest Democracy,” *Phayul*, 6 Oct. 2004. Available at <http://www.phayul.com/news/tools/pring.aspx?id=7878&t=1>, accessed 9 Sept. 2008.

<sup>369</sup> Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile*, 88.

<sup>370</sup> Sangay, “Tibet: Exiles’ Journey,” 120.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>372</sup> Dhundup Gyalpo, “World’s Smallest Democracy,” *Phayul*, 6 Oct. 2004. Available at <http://www.phayul.com/news/tools/pring.aspx?id=7878&t=1>, accessed 9 Sept. 2008.

<sup>373</sup> Bhuchung K Tsering, “The Next *Kalon Tripa*,” *Tibetan Review* 38, no. 6 (2003): 23.

ATPD representative outlines the bills and amendments he has introduced on his website. His commitment to keeping his constituents informed of his work indicates his desire to make a favorable impression, and increase his likelihood of being reelected to office. Additionally, in February 2004, in an effort to improve communication and transparency, the CTA began holding a “monthly briefing for the Tibetan media” with an open invitation “to all the Tibetan media persons based in Dharamsala.”<sup>374</sup> Beginning in 2005, the semiannual parliamentary sessions were broadcast “uncensored and unabridged”<sup>375</sup> on a local cable channel (and relayed across the world) keeping Tibetans outside of Dharamsala abreast of current proceedings. One Tibetan remarked that “it was startling to see a political meeting that took place in Dharamsala...broadcast on YouTube.”<sup>376</sup> This accountability is just the type of progress that the *Tibetan Review* has called for. Therefore, many sources of suggestion finally had a productive outlet.

Today, suggestions for improvement often come from individuals within the CTA itself. For instance, Karma Choephel, the current chairman of the ATPD, noted “a little narrow-mindedness” in the parliament, with individuals not thinking on the larger scale, but meditating only on the fact that their right to represent “their” people would be lost.<sup>377</sup> Similarly, Tseten Norbu, the former Tibetan Youth Congress President, topped the U-Tsang list in the 2005 preliminary poll, and was elected to the 14<sup>th</sup> ATPD.<sup>378</sup> The rise of leaders like Karma Choephel—one of the founders of the NDPT—and TYC leadership in the exile government illustrate the political space that has opened up in the CTA; in the 2000s there

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<sup>374</sup> “Exile gov’t to hold monthly briefing for Tibetan media,” *Tibetan Review* 39, no. 3 (2004): 13.

<sup>375</sup> Dhundup Gyalpo, “World’s Smallest Democracy,” *Phayul*, 6 Oct. 2004. Available at <http://www.phayul.com/news/tools/pring.aspx?id=7878&t=1>, accessed 9 Sept. 2008.

<sup>376</sup> Samten G. Karmay, “Tibetan Religion and Politics,” *Phayul*, 13 Sept. 2008; Available at <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=22803&t=1>, accessed 12 Feb. 2009.

<sup>377</sup> Interview: Karma Chophel, 16 Nov. 2007.

<sup>378</sup> “Modest turnout in exile Tibetan pre-poll,” *Tibetan Review* 40, no 12 (2005): 11.

were actual *internal* criticisms, rather than just those from the *Tibetan Review* and its associated readership. Furthermore, Tibetans in twenty-five countries participated in the direct election of the *Kalon Tripa*,<sup>379</sup> and with Samdhong Rinpoche as the head of government, he stressed that “reform was at the heart of his efforts since taking office in 2001... [and that] the Dalai Lama’s emphasis on it as well as the Tibetan people’s interests encouraged his government to ‘dare to think, dare to speak, and dare to act.’”<sup>380</sup> This is not to say that the *Tibetan Review* was entirely pleased with exile democracy, as many young deputies “do admit that they need to have more of the qualities usually attributed to the younger generations—new, free and independent of heritage.”<sup>381</sup> However, the government had finally assumed (at least) partial responsibility for reforming itself. This integration demonstrates that things are finally working better, supporting the argument that the 2000s have been a period of “accelerated democratization.”

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<sup>379</sup> Sangay, “Democracy in Distress,” “How Does the Tibetan Diaspora Elect Leaders?” 51.

<sup>380</sup> “Exile parliament reverses decision to review Middle Way,” *Tibetan Review* 39, no. 10 (2004): 11.

<sup>381</sup> Gyalpo, “World’s Smallest Democracy.”

## Conclusion

In 2008, turbulent events rocked the exile community and echoed around the world. The March uprising in Tibet, protests against the Olympic torch relay, and the expectation of another round of fruitless dialogue with Chinese leadership led the Dalai Lama to convene the first emergency general meeting under Article 59 of the 1991 charter, “feeling that the time has come to seek mandate from the people on this issue once again.”<sup>382</sup> As a testament to the strength of this emerging diasporic democracy, the CTA brought together 581 delegates in Dharamsala in November 2008 to discuss the future of the Tibetan community. While the Dalai Lama himself did not attend, the meeting included those holding government posts along with leaders of NGOs and other organized groups as well as important personalities from Tibetan exile society, among them Lobsang Sangay. In many ways, the 2008 meeting provides a useful point of departure to review the broader questions that have been posed in the scholarly literature regarding the practice of democracy among Tibetan exiles.

As Tibetan scholar Lobsang Sangay argued in 2004, the rise of civil society was an important contributor to the process of democratization. It ultimately allowed “the practice of elections [to have] significant spillover effects,”<sup>383</sup> as going through the motions began to integrate “rule by consent”<sup>384</sup> into Tibetan exile society. Chapter one of this thesis examined the emergence of new voices—including the *Tibetan Review* and the Tibetan Youth Congress—that signaled the birth of a Tibetan exile civil society. The second chapter then

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<sup>382</sup> The Kashag, “Kashag Statement on December 10, 2008,” 10 Dec. 2008, [Phayul](http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?c=2&t=1&id=23385&article=Kashag+Statement+on+December+10%2c+2008); Available at <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?c=2&t=1&id=23385&article=Kashag+Statement+on+December+10%2c+2008>; Internet; accessed 2 Jan 2009.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

examined the conflict between these new voices and aristocratic, regional, and sectarian forms of personal authority that rendered the CTA and its institutions increasingly unable to function in a constitutional or democratic fashion. These conflicts set the stage for dramatic change in the 1990s—including a new constitution in 1991—that that are the focus of chapter three, which examined a key structural modification in the new century—the direct election of the *Kalon Tripa*—that reshaped the ever-changing exile political situation into a more democratic and well-functioning system of elective constitutional monarchy.

In 2004, Sangay posed three important questions: “Has democracy truly displaced feudalism, or is this a ploy to win the support of host country India and the West? Is it all just to make the Chinese look bad? How do internal, regional, and sectarian divisions within the exile community reflect and correspond to this nascent democracy? What is the Dalai Lama’s role?”<sup>385</sup> While perhaps initially an innovative strategy, the rise of a “modern, plural society,”<sup>386</sup> signals that Tibetan exile democracy has displaced feudalism. Moreover, as Tenzin Tsundue noted in 2004, “Tibetan youth do not wish to carry the baggage of regional and sectarian identities. It is seen as a source of communal discontent.”<sup>387</sup> While some traditional affiliations remain in the exile community, historian Warren Smith also points out that “China’s occupation of Tibet was profoundly destructive, and yet it actually created Tibetan nationalism,”<sup>388</sup> which has been both cultivated and demonstrated by exile democracy.

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<sup>385</sup> Sangay, “Tibet: Exiles Journey,” 120.

<sup>386</sup> “Editorial: Towards Sectarian Harmony and National Unity,” *Tibetan Review* 11, no. 9 (1976): 3.

<sup>387</sup> Tenzin Tsundue, “Mangtso: Our Democratic Vision,” *Tibetan Review* 39, no. 9 (2004): 19.

<sup>388</sup> Gaby Naher, *Wrestling the Dragon: In Search of the Boy Lama who Defied China* (Australia: Vintage Books, 2004), 213.

In 2008, Roemer declared that “the progress of the democratic transformation process of the exile Tibetan political system during the last decades is still questionable and not yet finished.”<sup>389</sup> Roemer is correct in pointing out that the democratization process is unfinished, although as Boyd notes, Tibetan exile democracy is not alone, as no other nation has completed the process. However, this thesis has demonstrated that the democratic change since 1959 is anything but questionable. Instead, it has provided proof that what has unfolded, in the words of a *Tibetan Review* contributor, has “indicate[d] a careful but consistent line of progressive thinking,” that leads “to a future decided by the Tibetan people themselves.”<sup>390</sup>

Although the secondary literature tends to agree that Tibetan democracy “seems to be headed in the right direction,”<sup>391</sup> scholarly opinion has been divided on the degree to which it should be praised. Roemer has taken the most severe approach in arguing that, “in summary...the introduced democracy in the exile political system is not fully developed yet and, moreover, not accepted by large parts of the community.”<sup>392</sup> While Tibetans still struggle to further democratize the community, the rise of numerous Tibetan exile NGOs and the rate of participation in exile elections signals that in fact, substantial proportions of the exile community are embracing democracy. Although less critical, Frechette suggests that Tibetan exiles “are in transition toward a more democratic system,” but that “the political

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<sup>389</sup> Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile*, 101.

<sup>390</sup> Phintso Thonden, “Dalai Lama on the Future of Tibet,” *Tibetan Review* 9, no. 9-10 (1974):19.

<sup>391</sup> Boyd, *The Future of Tibet*, 3.

<sup>392</sup> Roemer, *The Tibetan Government-in-Exile*, 167.

process falls short of Western liberal ideals.”<sup>393</sup> In summary, she concludes that “it is fair to say that Tibetan exile society has not yet become fully democratic, even in its own terms.”<sup>394</sup>

The key to Frechette's judgment lies in “the position of the Dalai Lama” within the Tibetan exile polity.<sup>395</sup> In this regard, she agrees with Ardley who believes that “until the religious and political roles of the Dalai Lama can be separated, not necessarily in reality, but certainly in perception, . . . true democracy in the Tibetan polity will be very difficult to achieve.”<sup>396</sup> This thesis has shown that grappling with the difficulties and confusion surrounding the conflicting roles of the Dalai Lama has proven a challenge to the Tibetan exile democracy. Yet as one Tibetan observed in 2002, “it is worth recalling that in March 1959 Tibetans respectfully disobeyed the Dalai Lama’s many appeals not to take up arms against the Chinese occupation army.”<sup>397</sup> But we must ask where a search for “true democracy,” or perhaps better put, a truer democracy necessarily demands the end to the constitutional role of the Dalai Lama. In 1976, a *Tibetan Review* editorial argued strongly that “it is not necessary to abolish the institution of the Dalai Lama altogether in order to usher democracy or [even] socialism in Tibet.”<sup>398</sup> Similarly, Sangay envisions the Dalai Lama stepping aside to “let a secular system flourish,”<sup>399</sup> with an elected prime minister as head of the government, while still functioning solely as a spiritual leader. As in England, the removal of the political powers of the Dalai Lama need not lead to a republican form of government or the total secularization of Tibetan exile governance. It might simply

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<sup>393</sup> Frechette, “Democracy and Democratization,” 124.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> Ardley, *The Tibetan Independence Movement*, 173.

<sup>397</sup> Jamyang Norbu, “After the Dalai Lama,” *Alternative tibetaine*, Oct. 2002. Available at [http://www.alternative-tibetaine.org/articles/0106/EN\\_jnorbu17.htm](http://www.alternative-tibetaine.org/articles/0106/EN_jnorbu17.htm), accessed 9 Sept. 2008.

<sup>398</sup> “Editorial: The Last Dalai Lama?” *Tibetan Review* 11, no. 3 (1976): 4.

<sup>399</sup> Sangay, “Tibet: Exiles’ Journey,” 126.

strengthen the unique qualities that have allowed democracy among Tibetans to mature and develop as has been shown in this thesis. In other words, the continued existence of the institution of the Dalai Lama need not curtail democracy but may express the will of many Tibetans, including those who contribute to the *Tibetan Review*, who suggest that “after all, the current Dalai Lama is only the 14th in a line of reincarnations that we want to see continue forever.”<sup>400</sup>

In the end, this thesis agrees with the judgment of Boyd who concluded that “the fact that there is a democratic experiment going on in exile gives credence” to the idea that “this microcosm of a future democracy has some real potential.”<sup>401</sup> As Sangay has noted, only “when the time comes for [the Dalai Lama] to leave the scene,” will it be determined “whether the democratic institutions and convictions that he and his fellow Tibetan exiles have fostered will be enough to sustain the Tibetan national movement.”<sup>402</sup> In thinking about this challenge, it is important to recognize that we are dealing with a nation in exile, not just a government. With 50 years of experience, Tibetan democracy has a strong foundation from which to build on now in exile, and one day, in Tibet itself.

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<sup>400</sup> “Editorial: Resolving Tibetan democracy's paradox of reincarnation,” *Tibetan Review* 42, no. 12 (2007):

3.

<sup>401</sup> Boyd, *The Future of Tibet*, 3.

<sup>402</sup> Sangay, “Tibet: Exiles’ Journey,” 128.





Above, a protester in Washington D.C. marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the March 10, 1959 Tibetan National Uprising.  
*(Photo by author)*



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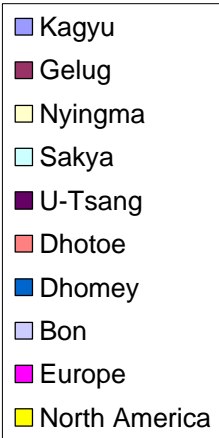
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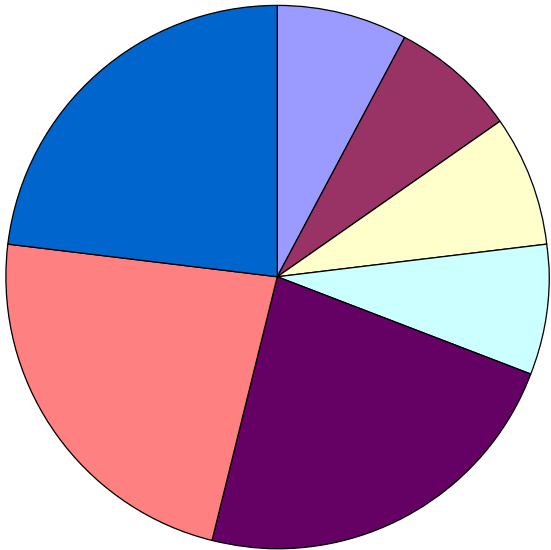
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**Appendix A: Graphic Depiction of Proportions of Constituencies Represented in Each Exile Parliament**

**1st CTPD Representatives**

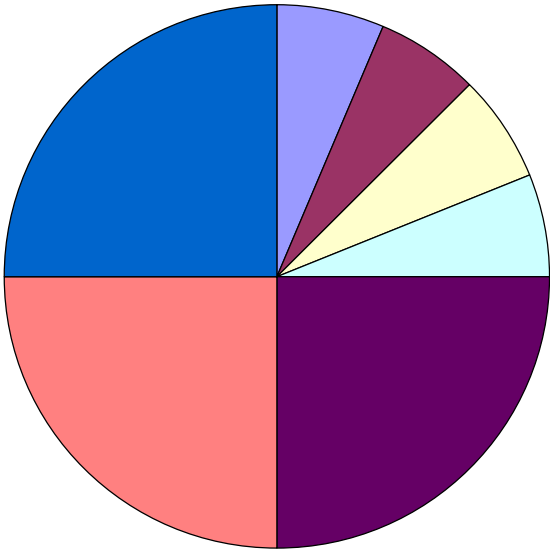
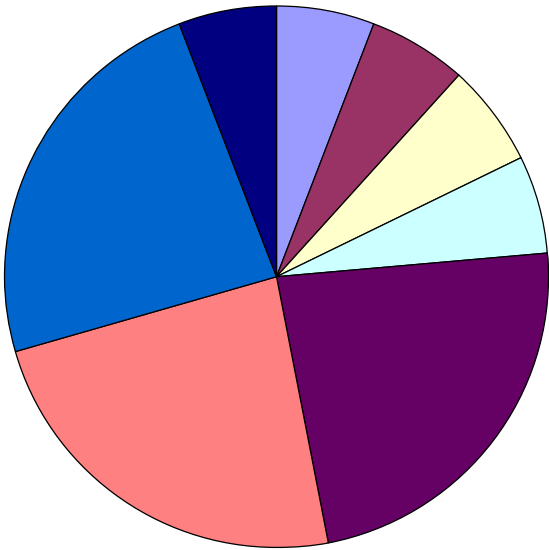


**Color Key**



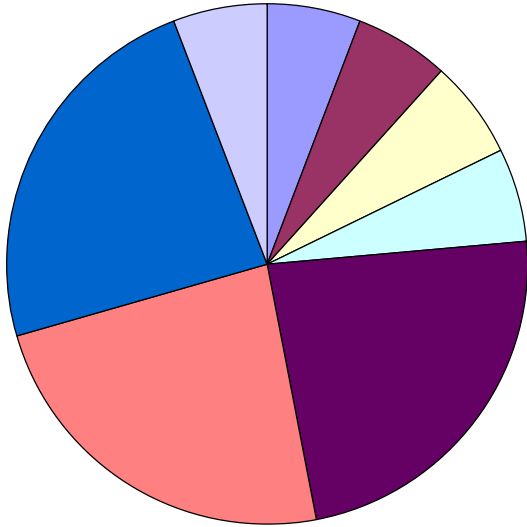
**2nd & 3rd CTPD Representatives**

**4th & 5th CTPD Representatives**

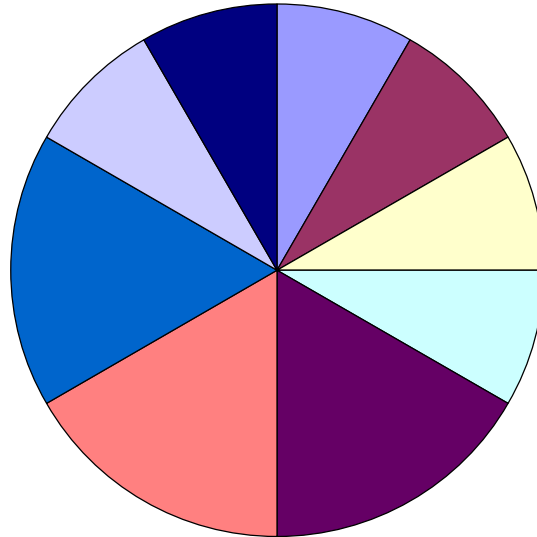


**6th CTPD\* & 7th ATPD Representatives**

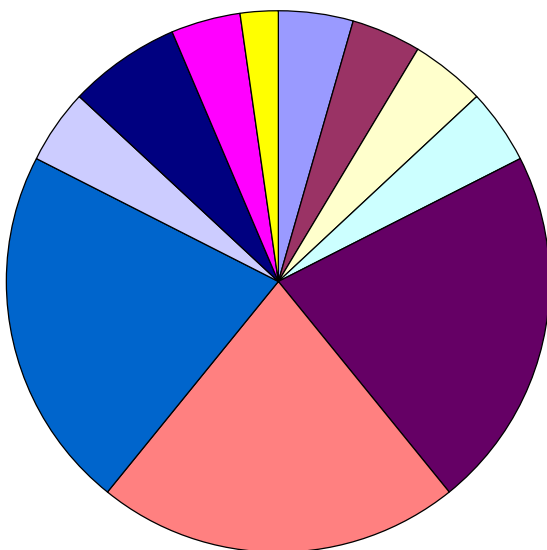
*\*the Bon representative was added on October 5, 1977,  
in the middle of the 6th CTPD term*



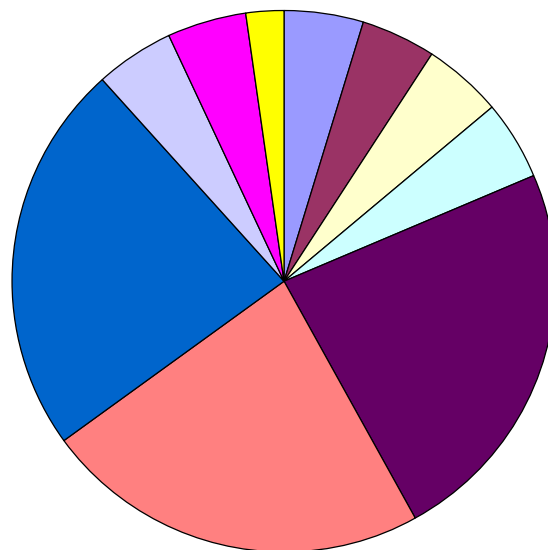
**8th, 9th & 10th ATPD Representatives**



**11th, 12th & 13th ATPD Representatives**



**14th ATPD Representatives**



Appendix B: Data from the 2006 ATPD Election, Final Round (in Tibetan)

ཨ་མི་མང་གི་འཕུལ་སྐབས་ཀྱི་འཕུལ་སྐབས་ཀྱི་དངོས་གཞིའི་འོས་བསྐྱུ་གྲུབ་འདུས་གནས་སྟངས།

| ཐོབ་ཐོང་སྐབས།                                     | དབུ་གཙང་ | མཐོང་སྟོན་ | མཐོང་སྟོན་ | མཐོང་སྟོན་ | སྐྱོང་མཁུ་ | བཀའ་བརྒྱུད། | ས་རྒྱ། | དགོ་ལྷགས། | པོ་ན། | ཨ་མི། | ལོ་རྒྱུ་ | བསྐྱེད་སྐྱོང་ |
|---|----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------|-----------|-------|-------|----------|---------------|
| མིང་གཞུང་དྲེབ་པོ་དང་།                             | ༤༩༤༦༦    | ༤༩༤༦       | ༩༩༤        | ༩༩༤        | ༩༩༤        | ༩༩༤         | ༩༩༤    | ༩༩༤       | ༩༩༤   | ༩༩༤   | ༩༩༤      | ༩༩༤           |
| དངོས་སྐྱོང་སྐབས་ཀྱི་འོས་བསྐྱུ་གྲུབ་འདུས་གནས་སྟངས། | ༩༩༤      | ༩༩༤        | ༩༩༤        | ༩༩༤        | ༩༩༤        | ༩༩༤         | ༩༩༤    | ༩༩༤       | ༩༩༤   | ༩༩༤   | ༩༩༤      | ༩༩༤           |
| བརྒྱུ་  | ༩༩༤      | ༩༩༤        | ༩༩༤        | ༩༩༤        | ༩༩༤        | ༩༩༤         | ༩༩༤    | ༩༩༤       | ༩༩༤   | ༩༩༤   | ༩༩༤      | ༩༩༤           |

**Appendix C: English Translation of 2006 ATPD Election Data, Final Round<sup>403</sup>**

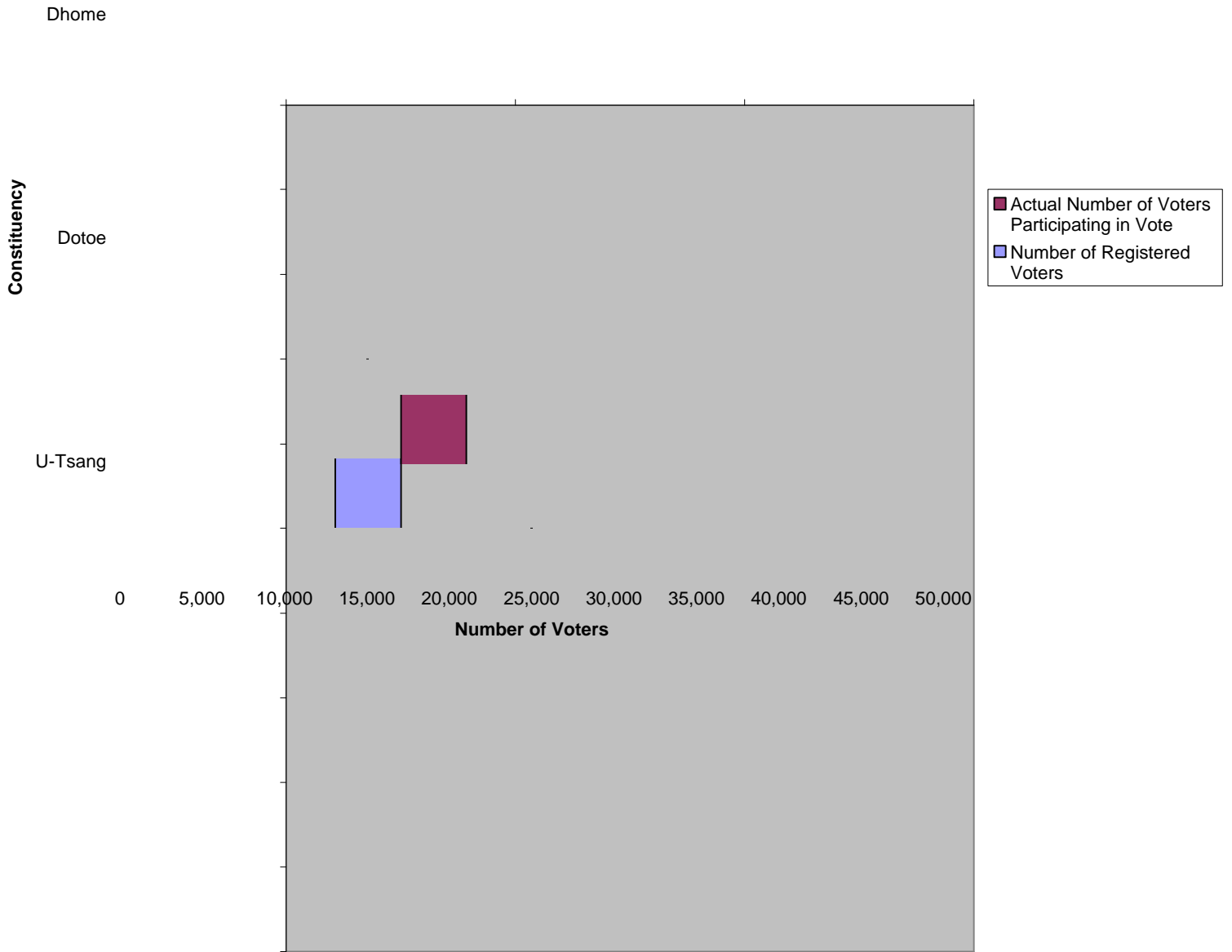
| <b>Constituency</b>  | <b>No. Registered Voters</b> | <b>Actual No. Participating Voters</b> | <b>Rate of Participation (%)</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>U-Tsang</b>       | 42,868                       | 22,899                                 | 53.42                            |
| <b>Dotoe</b>         | 18,420                       | 10,149                                 | 55.1                             |
| <b>Dhome</b>         | 4,156                        | 2,003                                  | 48.2                             |
| <b>Nyingma</b>       | 1,919                        | 1,376                                  | 71.7                             |
| <b>Kagyü</b>         | 1,303                        | 798                                    | 61.24                            |
| <b>Sakya</b>         | 819                          | 597                                    | 72.89                            |
| <b>Geluk</b>         | 7,790                        | 3,171                                  | 40.71                            |
| <b>Bon</b>           | 289                          | 213                                    | 73.7                             |
| <b>North America</b> | 2,804                        | 1,272                                  | 45.36                            |
| <b>Europe</b>        | 2,253                        | 1,272                                  | 36.59                            |
| <b><i>Total</i></b>  | 82,620                       | 43,302                                 | 52.41                            |

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<sup>403</sup> Unofficial translation provided by Tenzin Tinley.

# Participation in the final round of the 2006 Parliamentary Election by Tibetan Region

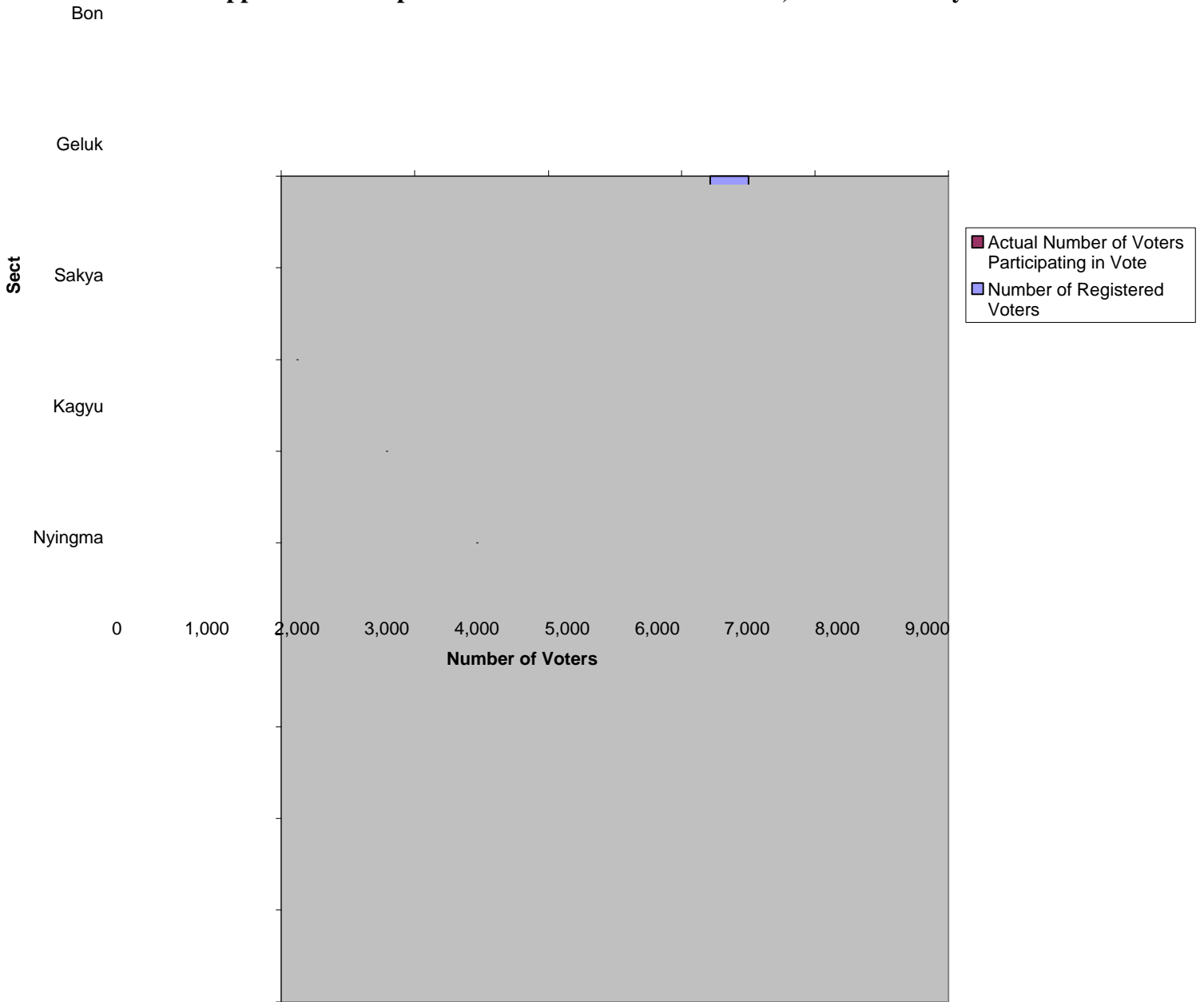
## Appendix D: Graph of the 2006 ATPD Election Data, Final Round by Region






**Participation in the final round of the 2006 Parliamentary Election by Sect**

**Appendix E: Graph of the 2006 ATPD Election Data, Final Round by Sect**



Appendix F: Copy of Dhome Ballot for the Preliminary Election of the 14<sup>th</sup> ATPD

བོད་རྒྱལ་ལོ་ ༡༩༩༦            ལྷོ་ལོ་ ༢༠༠༥

༡༡། བོད་མི་མང་སྤྱི་འཐུས་སྐབས་བརྒྱ་བཞི་པའི་སྤྱི་འཕེལ་ལོ་ལོག་གི་

སྤྱི་ཚུལ།

No.....00418

**པོ་མོ་ཁྱད་མེད་འོས་དམིགས་བརྒྱད།**

| ལང་། | མཚན་དང་། རྒྱ་མི་མང་སྤྱི་འཐུས་མིང་ཡིན་པ་གསལ་ལ་འགོད་དགོས། | ལོ། | མ་ཡུལ་ལམ་ལུང་ཚན། | ད་ལྟོ་ཕྱིན་གནས། | དབུ་ཕྱེད་ལག་དྲེལ་མང་དང་། ལྷུ་ལུ། |
|------|---|-----|------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| ༡    |   |     |                  |                 |                                  |
| ༢    |   |     |                  |                 |                                  |
| ༣    |   |     |                  |                 |                                  |
| ༤    |   |     |                  |                 |                                  |
| ༥    |   |     |                  |                 |                                  |
| ༦    |   |     |                  |                 |                                  |
| ༧    |   |     |                  |                 |                                  |
| ༨    |   |     |                  |                 |                                  |
| ༩    |   |     |                  |                 |                                  |

**ལྷན་མེད་རྒྱུང་པའི་འོས་དམིགས་གཉིས།**

| ལང་། | མཚན་དང་། རྒྱ་མི་མང་སྤྱི་འཐུས་མིང་ཡིན་པ་གསལ་ལ་འགོད་དགོས། | ལོ། | མ་ཡུལ་ལམ་ལུང་ཚན། | ད་ལྟོ་ཕྱིན་གནས། | དབུ་ཕྱེད་ལག་དྲེལ་མང་དང་། ལྷུ་ལུ། |
|------|---|-----|------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| ༩    |   |     |                  |                 |                                  |
| ༡༠   |   |     |                  |                 |                                  |

**ཕྱགས་སྤྱོད་གསལ་བཤད།**

- ༡) འོས་འཕེན་པ་རེ་རེ་ས་པོ་མོ་ཁྱད་མེད་བརྒྱད་རེ་དང་། ལྷན་མེད་རྒྱུང་པ་གཉིས་བཅས་ཁྱོད་འོས་གཞི་མི་གངས་བརྒྱུ་ལམ་མང་བ་གདམ་མི་ཚོག་
- ༢) གལ་ཏེ་བརྒྱུ་ཚུལ་གདམ་རྒྱ་མེད་ཚེ་རང་མོས་ཡིད་པ་འི་ཡིད་བཞོན་འཕྲིས་རེ་འོས་སྤོང་པ་འཛོག་འཇུག་
- ༣) འོས་གཞི་བརྒྱུ་ལམ་བརྒྱུ་ན་འོས་ཤོག་ཅིས་མེད་འགྲོ་རྒྱ།
- ༤) གོང་གསལ་རེ་འོས་གཞི་ཚུལ་ཁག་གསལ་ཁམས་དང་ས་འཛིང་ས་དགོས། གལ་ཏེ་དབུ་ཕྱེད་ལག་དྲེལ་མང་དང་། ལྷུ་ལུ་འོས་གཞི་ཚུལ་མི་ཚོག་ལྷན་པོ་མཚན་དང་། མ་ཡུལ། ད་ལྟོ་ཕྱིན་གནས་བཅས་མིང་འདྲ་གཞན་དང་མི་ནོར་ཚེད་ཁག་གསལ་འགོད་དགོས།
- ༥) རེ་འོས་གཞི་ནང་འོས་གཞི་ལེ་མཚན་སོགས་ཤིས་གསུབ་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱར་འདྲི་བྱས་པ་སོགས་དོགས་གནས་རེ་གསལ་བཞེད་ཚེ་འོས་ཤོག་ཅིས་མེད་འགྲོ་རྒྱ།
- ༦) དབང་པོ་ཕྱོད་ཅན་དང་། ཡིག་ཚིང་ས་རྣམས་ནས་ཡིག་འདྲི་རང་ཉིད་ཀྱི་འདོད་མོས་ཡིད་པ་ཞིག་ལ་རོགས་བཅོལ་ཚོག་ དེ་འདྲའི་རོགས་རམ་གཅིག་ནས་འོས་འཕེན་གཅིག་ཕྱོག་རོགས་པ་ལྟེད་མི་ཚོག་ འོན་ཀྱང་ཁྱིམ་ཚང་འདོད་གཅིག་ཡིན་ན་ནང་མི་སུ་ཞིག་ནས་རང་ཁྱིམ་ནང་མི་དབང་པོ་ཕྱོད་ཅན་དང་། ཡིག་ཚིང་ས་འི་ཡིད་པ་ཡིག་འདྲི་རོགས་པ་ལྟེད་ཚོག་





### Appendix H: Compiled Data from National Elections

| <b>Election</b>                     | <b>No. Registered Voters</b> | <b>No. Votes Cast</b> | <b>Percent Participation</b> | <b>No. Invalid Votes</b> | <b>Percent Invalid</b> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1991 ATPD                           |                              |                       |                              |                          |                        |
| <i>U-Tsang, Dotoe, Domey</i>        | 47,736                       | 28,148                | 61.92                        | 1,414                    |                        |
| <i>Religious Sects</i>              | 6,158                        | 3,209                 | 53.88                        | 109                      |                        |
| 1996 ATPD Preliminary               | 52,127                       |                       |                              |                          |                        |
| <i>India, Nepal and Bhutan</i>      | 49,433                       |                       |                              |                          |                        |
| <i>U-Tsang, Dotoe, Domey</i>        |                              |                       | 59.56                        |                          |                        |
| <i>Religious Sects</i>              |                              |                       | 58.36                        |                          |                        |
| <i>The West</i>                     | 2,694                        |                       |                              |                          |                        |
| <i>Europe</i>                       |                              |                       | 38.47                        |                          |                        |
| <i>North America</i>                |                              |                       | 39.96                        |                          |                        |
| 2001 ATPD Preliminary               | 69,151                       |                       |                              |                          |                        |
| <i>India, Nepal and Bhutan</i>      | 65,321                       |                       |                              |                          |                        |
| <i>Europe</i>                       | 1,500                        |                       |                              |                          |                        |
| <i>North America</i>                | 2,330                        |                       |                              |                          |                        |
| 2001 ATPD Final                     | 73,714                       |                       |                              |                          |                        |
| 2001 <i>Kalon Tripa</i> Preliminary | 66,000                       | 38,580                | 58.45                        |                          |                        |
| 2001 <i>Kalon Tripa</i> Final       | 60,000                       | 30,000                |                              |                          | 4                      |
| 2005 ATPD Preliminary               | 82,231                       | 40,324                |                              | 5,885                    | 14.6                   |
| <i>India, Nepal and Bhutan</i>      | 77,175                       |                       |                              |                          |                        |
| <i>Europe</i>                       | 2,252                        |                       |                              |                          |                        |
| 2006 ATPD Final                     | 82,620                       | 43,302                | 52.41                        |                          |                        |
| <i>U-Tsang</i>                      | 42,868                       | 22,899                | 53.42                        |                          |                        |
| <i>Dotoe</i>                        | 18,420                       | 10,149                | 55.1                         |                          |                        |
| <i>Domey</i>                        | 4,156                        | 2,003                 | 48.2                         |                          |                        |
| <i>Nyingma</i>                      | 1,919                        | 1,376                 | 71.7                         |                          |                        |
| <i>Kagyü</i>                        | 1,303                        | 798                   | 61.24                        |                          |                        |
| <i>Sakya</i>                        | 819                          | 597                   | 72.89                        |                          |                        |
| <i>Gelug</i>                        | 7,790                        | 3,171                 | 40.71                        |                          |                        |
| <i>Bon</i>                          | 289                          | 213                   | 73.7                         |                          |                        |

|   |        |        |       |  |  |
|---|--------|--------|-------|--|--|
| <i>North America</i>                    | 2,804  | 1,272  | 45.36 |  |  |
| <i>Europe</i>                           | 2,253  | 824    | 36.59 |  |  |
|   |        |        |       |  |  |
| 2006 <i>Kalon Tripa</i><br>Preliminary  | 72,771 | 37,421 | 51.42 |  |  |
|   |        |        |       |  |  |
| 2006 <i>Kalon Tripa</i> Final           |        | 32,315 |       |  |  |
|   |        |        |       |  |  |
| 2004 U-Tsang<br>Preliminary By-Election |        | 10,600 | 26    |  |  |
|   |        |        |       |  |  |
| 2004 Domey Preliminary<br>By-Election   |        | ~2000  | ~46   |  |  |
|   |        |        |       |  |  |
| 2004 U-Tsang Final<br>By-Election       | 30,000 | 11,100 | 37    |  |  |
|   |        |        |       |  |  |
| 2004 Domey Final<br>By-Election         | 4,000  | 1,100  | 27.5  |  |  |

**Appendix I: North American Population Data, 1994<sup>404</sup>**

| <b>No</b>                    | <b>Community</b>        | <b>Population<br/>(approx)</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Canada (600)</i>          |                         |                                |
| 1                            | Alberta                 | 100                            |
| 2                            | British Columbia        | 100                            |
| 3                            | Ontario                 | 300                            |
| 4                            | Quebec                  | 75                             |
| 5                            | Winnipeg                | 25                             |
| <i>United States (1,970)</i> |                         |                                |
| 1                            | Albuquerque, NM         | 40                             |
| 2                            | Amherst, MA             | 50                             |
| 3                            | Austin, TX              | 20                             |
| 4                            | Boise, ID               | 20                             |
| 5                            | Boston, MA              | 90                             |
| 6                            | Boulder/Denver, CO      | 35                             |
| 7                            | Burlington, VT          | 25                             |
| 8                            | Charlottesville, VA     | 20                             |
| 9                            | Chicago, IL             | 100                            |
| 10                           | Connecticut             | 30                             |
| 11                           | Ithaca, NY              | 30                             |
| 12                           | Los Angeles, CA         | 150                            |
| 13                           | Madison, WI             | 120                            |
| 14                           | Minneapolis/St Paul, MN | 200                            |
| 15                           | Missoula, MT            | 20                             |
| 16                           | Ohio/Michigan           | 20                             |
| 17                           | New York/New Jersey     | 300                            |
| 18                           | Portland, OR/SW WA      | 150                            |
| 19                           | Salt Lake City, UT      | 80                             |
| 20                           | San Francisco, CA       | 150                            |
| 21                           | Santa Fe, NM            | 30                             |
| 22                           | Seattle, WA             | 100                            |
| 23                           | St. Louis, MO           | 20                             |
| 24                           | Washington, C           | 70                             |
|                              | Others (USA)            | 100                            |
| <b>Total</b>                 |                         | <b>2,570</b>                   |

<sup>404</sup> "Tibetan Communities in North America," Tibetan Review 29, no. 10 (1994): 16.

# **THE TIBETAN IN EXILE ELECTION COMMISSION ACT**

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|             |  |    |
|-------------|--|----|
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# **The Tibetan in exile Election Commission Act**

## **Chapter One – Preliminary to the Act**

### **Article 1: Title of the Act**

This constitution may be cited as “Tibetans in exile Election Commission Act 2127 (*Tibetan Year*) or 2000 (*English year*)”.

### **Article 2: Foundation of the Constitution**

This constitution is formulated, base on the Section 4 and 5 of Article 97 of the Act.

### **Article 3: Commencement**

This Act shall come into force forthwith from 04/02/2127 as per Tibetan Calendar and 08/04/2000 as per English Calendar. (*dd/mm/yyyy*).

### **Article 4: Purpose**

This Act is applicable to the election of:  
Senior Council Minister and Tibetan Members of Parliament President and Vice president, Regional Representative Committee’s members, its President and Vice President, Regional Settlement Officers and their assistance, Regional BRDL (Bod Rawang Dhenphel Legul - Tibetan Freedom Movement) Committee’s members and its President and Vice President, Any government related election for the essential purpose of nation. (1)

## **Chapter 2: Election Commission and Election Curriculum**

### **Article 5: Policies of Election Commission**

1. The Article 4 of this Act states, “There should be an independent Election Commission to manage and control any election activities”.
2. This Election Commission must have one Chief Election Commissioner. The Chief Justice from the Supreme Court, Member of Parliament’s President and Vice President and Senior Council Minister shall recommend the list of not less than double of the required three candidates and forward it to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. His Holiness the Dalai Lama shall then appoint the Chief Election Commissioner from the list, under the name of His leadership. (2)

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1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4  
2. 2004/04/08 additional amendment no. 5

3. From the date of election of “Senior Council Minister and Members of Parliament” is announced and until the result of the election is declared, there will require two Election Officers along with the Chief Election Commissioner. The Chief Justice from the Supreme Court, Member of Parliament’s President and Vice President and Senior Council Minister shall recommend the list of not less than double of the required three candidates and forward it to His Holiness The Dalai Lama. His Holiness the Dalai Lama shall then appoint the additional two election officers from the list, under the name of His leadership. (1) (2)
4. The Chief Election Commissioner must discuss with the Council Ministers regarding the number of personnel he would require. The Council Ministers finalizes and appoints the personnel after conferring with the Election Commissioner.
5. Under the administration of Election Commission, each Tibetan settlement must have their own Regional Election Committee who will ensure the fair and efficient election in their respective settlement.

#### **Article 6: Chief Election Commissioner and Assistant Officer’s Qualifications**

1. Must be a citizen of Tibet
2. Above 35yrs of age
3. who is not declared insane or unsound mind
4. Who is not declared insolvent or bankrupt and who is not anyone who has not cleared a loan from the government.
5. Who is not convicted as a criminal under any laws
6. who is not a member of any political party
7. Who is not anyone who works for the interest of other nation to harm Tibetan identity for personal monetary or professional gains

#### **Article 7: Terms of the Chief Election Commissioner and its Assistant Officers**

1. Article 99 section 1 state, “unless there is transfer or termination, the tenure of the Election Commissioner is 5 years from the date of his appointment and retires at the age of 65.
2. The tenure of the Assistant Officers begins when the date of election of the Senior Council Minister and the Members of Parliament is announced and terminates after the result is declared. (3)

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1. 2004/04/08 additional amendment no. 5
  2. 2001/03/27 additional amendment no. 2
  3. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4

#### **Article 8: Authority of the Election Committee**

1. Article 4 of this Constitution states that the Election Commission has complete authority over all the regular and additional matter related to the election.
2. The Election Commission has a complete authority to investigate and settle any dispute related to the election as and when arises. In case if there is any disagreement or opposition over the decision made by the Election Committee, the case cannot be raised in other courts except the Tibetan in Exile's Supreme Court.
3. The Election Commission must make a draft of general election structure or if there is need for any changes in the old structure, the same must be put into draft and forward it to the Member of Parliament.
4. If there is need to make or amend any specific act to the particular election matter, the same must be put into draft and forward to the Member of Parliament.
5. If there arises a sudden need of supplementary election in addition to the regular prepared and alerted election purpose, the same election must be hold within the time frame mentioned in the Constitution.
6. Each Regional Election Commission must appoint their own Election Commissioner and Commissioner's Assistant.
7. In case the Regional Election Commission is aware that certain member of its Committee is not eligible to be its member pursuant to the prevailing laws, the respective Election Commission shall issue an order to expel such members from the Committee immediately.
8. If any members or the officers of any Election Commission or Regional Election Commission, becomes or plans to participate as a candidate in election, he/ she must take leave from his/her post until the completion of that particular election. In the meanwhile, new temporary member must be appointed on his position within the framework of laws of election mentioned in Article 5-Section 2 & 3 and Article 12 and 13 of this Constitution. (1)
9. Apart from the election affairs mention in the Code of law and its structure, the Election Committee does not need to interfere in other matters that are not related to election such as number of vacancies or duration of candidates, etc.

### **Article 9: The Election Commission's Responsibilities**

1. The Chief Election Commissioner and its Officers must take their own responsibility to send their activities report to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Members of Parliament.

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1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4

2. The Chief Election Commissioner must take responsibility over the control of the Committee's regular accounts and its annual accounting and auditing

report. If any of the assistant Officers is transferred to other Government Bodies, he/she must get approval from Chief election Commissioner and put forward his work report. In case if the Chief Election Commissioner of the Election Commission is transferred to any other government bodies, he/she must seek his approval from His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

3. The Chief Election Commissioner of the Election Commission has equal right to the general holiday as per the government employees beside casual leaves. In case of Paid Leaves and leaves for going out of Dharamsala (*where current office is based*), he/she must seek approval from His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

### **Article 10: Conditions of making resolution by the Election Commission and Regional Election Commission**

1. Any issues or disputes related to election matters.
2. Scrutinizing the candidates in election
3. Counting of primary and final elections.
4. At the time of labeling the election box, it is mandatory to have each Regional Election Commission's Officers and its two assistants along with three pairs of witnesses of each respective region. (1) (2)

## **Chapter Three**

### **Regional Election Commission and Phases of Election**

#### **Article 11: Regional Election Commission**

The Chief Election Commission must establish a Regional Election Commission to each Tibetan Settlement for the election of Chief Council Minister, Members of Parliament, Regional Assembly of Delegations members, its President and Vice President, Settlement Officers and Officer's Assistance and BRDL Committee's President and Vice President. (3) (4)

#### **Article 12: Regional Election Offices' Officer and its Assistants**

The Election Commission must appoint the respective Regional Election Officer and its Assistants who is a bonafide employee of government offices. In case if there is no any government employees in the particular

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1. 2000/09/13 additional amendment no. 1
  2. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  3. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  4. 2001/03/27 additional amendment no. 2

region, The Election Office must appoint a temporary personnel who is a bonafide residence of that particular area or decide on the better alternative looking at the circumstances. (1)

## **Article 13: Members of Regional Election Commission**

1. Membership criteria
  - a. One regional Election Commission's Commissioner and Commissioner's assistant
  - b. From each region, there should be one representative from each three provinces, one representative from four major religion sects and one from Bon religion sect. Each of these representatives must be a permanent residence of that particular region. (2)
  - c. The Election Commission in Europe, USA and Canada elect minimum five members irrespective of provinces and religion.
2. Base on the number of permanent residents in each region given by Collection Department of Regional Election Commission, each region can increase their number of Representatives of each provinces or religious sects from one to two. It is not mandatory to have representative of each provinces or religious sect in the particular region if there are no voters for the specific position. (3)
3. Base on the required number of candidates fixed by the Regional Election Commission, the permanent residents of each particular region must vote for their own Representative/s. The candidate whoever wins the majority of the vote from its respective voters, must submit his/her application mentioning brief self history to the Regional Election Commission for their approval and must take the responsibility from the time he gets the approval.
4. The permanent residents of particular region must elect one witness each from each provinces and religious sect. The person who wins the majority of the vote for the witness must put forward his application along with brief self-history to the Regional Election Commission. (4)

## **Article 14: Requirements of the members of Regional election Commission**

If any members or officials who are part of the Regional Election Committee as

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1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
2. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
3. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
4. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4

mentioned above either plans to contest in the election of Member of Parliaments volunteer candidate or is selected as a candidate to contest by the



government, Or if they do not possess the essential characteristics to be a part of the election Commission, Or if they fall under any controversies which are proved true by the court, the Election Commission is not allowed to appoint any of such person as its members/officials. If incase any of the members or officials of the election Commission falls under the above criteria, such individual has to resign from his/her position within one week of receiving the statement issued by the Election Commission to the respective Regional Election Committee. The temporary supplementary has to be appointed as per the laws mentioned in Article 12 and 13. Incase if the individual doesn't accept the laws, the Regional Election Committee must not count all the votes the individual has won during the election.

### **Article 15: The Tenure of the officials of Regional Election Committee**

Unless any of the officials or the witnesses becomes disqualified due to one of the above reasons, the tenure of the officials and the witnesses is 5yrs.

### **Article 16: The functions of Regional Election Committee**

1. The Regional Election Committee must appoint their own Regional Election Officer from the members of its Committee and any additional assistance can be appointed directly by the Election Committee as and when needed.
2. The Regional Election Committee has the responsibility to conduct, supervise, direct and control the election procedures as per the Election Constitution to ensure the safe and efficient election process in their respective region.
3. The regional Election Committee must prepare the ballot for the election of regional Committee members, Regional officers and BRDL committee of its respective region.
4. The Regional Election Commission must prepare the list of Electoral Roll as per Index "A" and keep the record permanently.
5. If any disputes related to the regional election commission arises, it is the responsibility of the Regional Election Commission to inspect and settle the disputes of it respective region. If the Regional Election Commission is not able to solve the disputes, the case has to be forwarded to the Chief Election Commission and still if the dispute is not settled, then the case has to be filed to the Supreme Court. (1)
6. The Regional Election Commission must make sure that the election process in their respective region is carried out smoothly and successfully within the timeframe issued by the Chief Election commission, without any delay despite any holidays.

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1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4

### **Article 17: The Regional Election Commission's Officials, their job description and responsibility.**

1. The Regional Election Commission has to appoint their main important officials among the members of its Commission and any required additional officials can be appointed as and when needed. However, the Chief Regional Election Commissioner has to direct and control the overall activities of the election commission and should not hinder the roles of the other officials. <sup>(1)</sup>
1. **The Chief Regional Election Commissioner:** As mentioned in Article 12, the Chief Regional Election Commissioner has the main responsibility to control, supervise, direct and manage the overall election activities in its region to ensure that the election procedures are carried out smoothly and successfully as per the Constitution of Election Commission.
2. **Electoral Roll Officer:** An Electoral Roll Officer is the person who maintains the records of the list of citizens who are capable of casting their vote in each respective region. He/she should keep the record of such list with clearly mentioning each voter's provinces/Sects. However, it is not mandatory to keep a record in provinces/Sects each voter belongs in places like Europe, USA and Canada.
3. **Electoral Roll Officer's assistant:** The Electoral Roll Officer's assistance is the person who assist the electoral Roll Officer to carry out the activities efficiently and successfully. Base on the size and population of each region, the Electoral Roll Officer can appoint his assistants and additional staffs he requires after seeking the approval from the Regional Election Commission. <sup>(2)</sup>
4. **Polling Officers:** The Polling officer is the person who supervises and controls the polling activities of their respective regional election commission depending on the population and allotment of provinces/sects each electoral candidate belongs. Such officers are considered as member of the respective Regional Election Commission.
5. **Polling Booth supervisor:** The polling booth supervisor is the person who is appointed to maintain secrecy of the number of polling booths available for each section. The polling officers appoint the polling booth supervisor after getting the approval from their respective regional election commission.

#### **Article 18: Procedures of maintaining the Electoral Roll record**

1. As per Section 3 of Article 17, after appointing the respective Regional Electoral Roll Officer, he/she must verify the former record of citizens of their respective region or start registering new record immediately. Depending on the size of the region and its population, the Electoral Roll

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1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4

2. 2000/09/13 additional amendment no. 1

Officers may appoint the additional assistance to assist in registering the names of electoral roll in each polling section after getting approval from their respective Regional Election Commission. <sup>(1)</sup>

2. As and when polling venue and dates are fixed, the Regional Election Commission must inform all the residence of its respective region and start registering the names of all the voters, who have fulfilled all the requirements in addition to their age limit to cast the vote.
3. a. Each individual must be registered in sequence starting from no.1. For efficient search of required individual record, each of the must be recorded according to their house number.  
b. After the registration of each voter, their BRDL must be checked to ensure that the voters have paid their tax to the government after which The Regional Election Commission must put their stamp and below it the Electoral Roll Officer must put their respective registration number. (2)
4. **The voters rights and requirements:**
  - a. Must be a citizen of Tibet who has reached the age of 18.
  - b. Who has no
  - c. Whose name is enrolled in the Electoral list.
5. **An individual who doesn't have the right to cast the votes or is not allowed registering in the Electoral roll.**
  - a. Who is not a citizen of Tibet. Who has not reached the age limit to cast their vote
  - b. Who does not have sound mind or good conscience
  - c. Whose electoral rights have been refrain for not abiding the laws of Election Commission
  - d. Who has not paid their government tax?

#### **Article 19: Rights to the handicapped or illiterate Voters**

If any voter, being unable to vote by himself owing to physical disability or any other reasons, requests for the permission to be accompanied by any person whom he believes, the polling officer shall allow person accompanied by the Voter to enter into the polling compartment. However at the time of final election, no helper is allowed with such handicapped or illiterate voters except for the blind. There can be only one helper of their choice to each blind voters and the helper can be of his/her own family members if the voter chooses to do so. (3)

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1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 6
  2. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  3. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4

#### **Article 20: Duration to add or reduce the Electoral Roll**

1. After completion of registering the electoral roll, if there is any omission or errors in registering the names or origin of the voters in the electoral roll, such errors must be brought into notice within 14days by the respective voter. However, such voters must be an eligible voters and their name should be registered already in the register book of electoral roll.
2. For the above mention cases, the regional election committee must verify their matters with the past record and announce the final decision made by the Regional Election Commissioner within the given period of time.
3. Any officers of the Election Commission, especially the Electoral roll Officers and its assistance are strictly prohibited from making any changes by themselves in the list of electoral roll.
4. The electoral roll has to be put together at the Regional Election Commission office and any voters can examine or copy the electoral roll on approval of Regional Election Commissioner.
5. None of the officials or the staffs is allowed to take any documents belonging to the election commission to their home or lend to others.
6. Until and unless there is an order from the Chief Election Commission, the regional election commission must keep all the documents related to the election commission in their custody.

#### **Article 21: Resolution of Electoral roll primary register book**

1. The final electoral record book must be prepared after making all the necessary changes including omission or addition of the voters as necessary, within the given period of time.
2. The regional election commission can make the necessary addition or the omission of the voters in the primary record book after verifying their cases and need not keep registering again and again for every election.
3. a. During the election of the Members of Parliament, each of the voters must be categorized according to their Province/Sects base on the record book of primary electoral roll as per Index B.  
b. The regional Election Commission must send the copy of their electoral roll to the Chief Election Commission, which shows the number of voters each region has. Base on the number of voters each region consists, the Chief Election commission sends the required number of ballot paper to each regional election commission.
4. During the election of Regional committee members and its officers and BRDL committee, the Regional Election Committee must prepare the ballot paper for the voters as per Index C base on the primary record book of the electoral roll without any distinction of sects or provinces.

## **Article 22: Residence of particular region:**

1. As per Article 7, a residence means the people who are residing permanently in that particular region.
2. If migrated from other region,
  - a. should have stayed for more than 5yrs in the particular region
  - b. Should have given up all facilities of previous region.
3. If brought as a bride/bridegroom as per the wedding tradition.

## **Article 23: Disputes related to candidates to contest in election**

1. Either if any of the candidates volunteer or a selected from his /her region in the election contests of Tibetan Members of Parliament, has been convicted of an offence relating to the Election, the Regional Election Commission must intervene and settle the dispute. If the case still couldn't be settled, the case can be forwarded to the Chief Election Commission..
2. Though the candidates can be either a layman or a parson, the voters voting from the religious sects must be monk/nun/lay person belonging to specific monastery or religious organization.

## **Article 24: Instigating ways of bribery in election**

1. Either the election candidate or its party or any individual has accepted or given bribe in order to:
  - a. Instigate someone from allowing, not allowing, withdrawing, or not withdrawing from participating in election contest.
  - b. instigate any voters of its category to vote or not to vote
2. Or, threatening or forcing to any voters or candidates from participating or withdrawing from the election, exercising or refraining from his/her right to vote.
3. Or, any person acting on behalf of any party or candidates or his agent, instigates any activity to create dispute and damage the character of any candidate by making false accusation of any matter related to the character and conduct of candidate or its family members, with an intention of prejudicing the election results.
4. On the appeal of any candidate or its party or any individual, any officials especially belonging to the Election Commission uses his power to create unlawful influence to others in matter relating to exercise or refrain from their voting rights.
5. Any of the candidates organizes mass meetings and gives spread pamphlets providing untrue information to the public.
6. Any of the Election Commission or it officials, instead of maintaining confidentiality of the secret matter relating to the election, are not allowed to either disclose such confidential matters or documents outside the election

commission to his family, friends or to organization/ party to whom he/she belongs.

7. Within the laws of election commission, the candidates are allowed to address their opinion and project agenda to the masses, hand out pamphlets, announce their recommendation from their respective provinces, sects and organizations, and recommend any candidate as a nominee in either orally or in written ways. Such activities will not be considered illegal. However, the campaign has to be stopped before two days of election dates announced.  
(1)

### **Article 25: Punishment for breaking the laws of election**

If any of the candidate or its party members, or any individual, or any election officials, or political parties or any organizations have gone against the Laws of election commission as per Article 24, the Election Commission must examine the cases carefully and make the announcement after deciding the punishment.

1. If any of the candidates or its party members are convicted of breaking any of the laws set by election Commission, base on their level of crime, all the votes won by the candidate will be cancelled and will be deprived of participating in election candidate from 3 years to 10 years.
2. If any individual is convicted of breaking any of laws set by the election Commission, depending on the level of his crime, he will be deprived of voting rights for 3 to 10years.
3. If any of the election official is convicted of either misusing his authority or has intentionally disclosed the secrecy of the election commission, such official must be expelled from the election commission

### **Article 26: Right to election, its principles and announcement to the regional public**

1. The elections in all the regions must be completed within the timeframe given Chief Election commission. No excuses will be made on regional holidays.
2. The Regional Election Commission must make the announcement to its public before one week of election
  - a. the timeframe given by the Chief election commission and the venue of election to be held
  - b. the list of candidates for election contest mentioning clearly their

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*1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4*

- a. names, their category (province/sects), signature, BRDL number and place of issue, present residential address and a brief biography.
- c. Must declare the rights of voters, their responsibilities, as per the Charter of the Election Commission along with other rules stated by the Chief

election Commission especially any amendment made in Charter of Election Constitution.

### **Article 27: Division of Election polling stations**

1. The Regional Election Commission shall divide and manage the polling stations as per the following two points.
  - a. The difficulties exist in maintaining fair and efficient election process where the population is large.
  - b. The difficulties exist for the voters to gather at one place where there distance is too long from their respective region.
2. The Regional Election Committee shall publish a list of polling stations specifying the names given to each polling station as prescribed and where each voter belongs and announce the list to the public.
3. Since there must be a polling booths and a ballot box in each Polling section, the Regional Election Commission must bear all the expenses of these requirements and keep these entire ready at the time of election.

### **Article 28: Polling Booths:**

The polling booths means the separate space made either by cloths wrapped around a wooden pillar at four corners or a separate room which is made for the voters in order to provide privacy for each voters to cast their votes. The regional Election Commission shall organize the required number of shifts considering the size of each booths and number of voters in each polling stations.

### **Article 29: Ballot Box:**

Base on the population of the voters in each polling station, the Regional Election Commission shall organize the required number of ballot boxes to each Polling station and at the time of election, these ballot boxes shall be kept near the polling booths that can be seen by public. The Regional Election Commission shall mark these ballot boxes as per Article 10 D. (1)

### **Article 30: casting Votes:**

1. At the time of election, the Regional Election Commission must inform all its residence as per the order from Chief Election Commission.
2. As per the number of candidates fixed, the voters shall cast their votes according to their selection.

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*1. 2000/09/13 additional amendment no. 1*

### **Article 31: Ballot papers and distribution of ballot papers**

1. The Regional Election Committee must take the require number of ballot papers from the Chief Election Commission base on the number of voters listed in the Electoral Roll.
2. The ballot papers shall be distributed to the voters according to the name and registration number listed in the Electoral roll book and simultaneously checking their BRDL book. After giving the ballot paper to each voter, their finger tips must be inked and record their names in the Electoral roll book.

### **Article 32: Polling system and confidentiality**

1. During the election, every voters and staffs shall take their full responsibility to work together in order to ensure the equality, freedom and privacy to the election process.
2. Each voters shall be provided with the ballot papers at the same time, each voters must
  - a. enter the polling booth
  - b. During the primary election, the voters must write the names of candidate of his choice as per prescription of Election Commission.
  - c. During the final election, the voters must put the sign of the candidate of his/her choice as prescribed by election commission.
  - d. The vote must then fold the ballot paper and exit from the polling booth and put their ballot paper in the ballot box kept nearby.
  - e. Two voters are not allowed to enter in one polling booth at one time.
  - f. Unless it is necessary, none of the officials of the Election Commission is allowed to enter or go near the polling booth.
  - g. If any voters are not found acting against the laws of election commission, such voters shall be expelled immediately from electoral list.

### **Article 33: Management of any election related documents by the respective polling officers.**

1. After the completion of election process in each region, the Chief election officer along with other officials must get together and take the oaths not to take or put any votes from or into the ballot box.
2. The Election officer, polling officer and the witness to the Electoral Roll shall make an account of the number of ballot papers they received, numbers issued and the remaining numbers of ballot papers and put their signatures.
3. Likewise, the remaining ballot papers with the names of the voters along with a covering letter must be packed and sealed and put a mark on it.
4. The above-mentioned sealed pack of the remaining ballot papers along with the letter and the ballot box shall be submitted to the Regional Election Commission and shall be kept in the custody of the regional Election



Commission until the date to open these documents set by the regional election commission.

5. On the day of opening these ballot box and the remaining ballot papers, all the members of the regional election Commission must be present. In case if not, then the Chief Commissioner of the regional election Commission along with two third majority of the main members and the witnesses must be present and Chief commissioner shall examine all the ballot boxes and the ballot papers and shall enquire to the respective officials if there is any suspicion. (1)

#### **Article 34: Counting of Ballot paper:**

1. On the day of counting of ballot paper, the chief regional election commission along with all the members must be present. If not, two third of the majority of the officials must be present along with respective elected witnesses of each provinces or religious sects of the voters in the region and open the ballot box and other sealed items. (2)
2. While opening the ballot paper, if any of the following points exists, the vote shall be considered void and will not be counted.
  - a. If any name or sign of the voter is mentioned on the ballot paper that could identify the voter, such votes shall not be counted.
  - b. If any of the sign or the name of candidate is not clearly mentioned
  - c. If more than the required number of candidates is mention
  - d. If it is uneasy to identify the candidate's name or sign to whom the vote is cast
  - e. If the vote is cast on any candidates other then the name prescribed on the candidates list
  - f. If the ballot paper is not the original one issued by the election commission.
3. For all the votes disqualified, the Chief Regional Election Commissioner must state the reason for the disqualification of the votes and put their signature below it.
4. During the election, at any intervals or before and after the office hours, the election officer on behalf of all the election officials shall either seal pack all the materials or lock the office to ensure its safety from being lost, misplaced or damaged. The key and stamp shall not be kept with one person together.
5. During the counting of polls, any of the election officials or the witnesses feels any dissatisfaction or unsure with the count, he/she has full authority to propose for verification or recounting of the votes.
6. **a.** After the completion of act of counting of votes of all the polling stations in

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1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  2. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4

each region, the election officer shall prepare a chart of counting of votes, clearly specifying the number of votes each candidates has won from its respective

group as per mentioned in Table index E. Also the election officer shall prepare a list of number of ballot paper received, how much distributed and the remaining number of ballot papers, the number of votes disqualified and get a signature from Chief Regional Election Commissioner and a stamp of regional Election Commission. The same shall then be sealed and packed and forward it to the Chief Election Commission through post or courier. (1) (2)

**b.** The Regional election Commission shall keep all the sealed and packed ballot papers counted and the remaining ballot papers in its custody. Any unlawful opening of these sealed documents without permission from the election commission shall be punished as per Article 25 section 2. (3)

#### **Article 35: Cooperation to the Regional Election Commission:**

If any assistance is required by the regional election commission related to the election process, the government offices in the respective region shall provide all the necessary assistance to the Regional Election Commission in order to ensure efficient and successful election process in its region. In a region where there are no government offices, the respective region shall assist with whatever required facilities they have. (3)

#### **Article 36: Allowance to the members of Regional Election Commission**

At the time of election of Chief Council Minister or members of parliament, the regional election commission must prepare the rate of allowance to be given to the members for the number of days they worked and forward it to the members of parliament for their approval. (4)

## **Chapter 4**

### **Election of members of Parliament**

#### **Article 37: The Tibetan Members of Parliament's criteria and the numbers**

As per Charter of this Act, Article 37, the Tibetan Members of Parliament's and the maximum number

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1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  2. 2005/04/01 additional amendment no. 10
  3. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  4. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4

**a.** There shall be ten Members of parliament from each three provinces of Tibet as per elected and there shall be at least two women MPs out of one.

- b. Two members of parliament from each of religious sects; Nyingma, Kagyue, Sakya, Gelug and Bon.
- c. One to three numbers of Member of Parliament appointed or not appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama directly shall be confirmed within the given period. (1)
- d. Two members of Parliament from Tibetans residing in America and Canada.
- e. Two members of Parliament from Europe. Total majority number of 44 to 46 Tibetan Members of Parliament is confirmed. The Tibetans residing in America, Europe and Canada are not allowed to contest under any of provinces or religious sects.

### **Article 38: The duration of each term of Tibetan members of Parliament**

As per Charter of Act section 57, unless there is transfer, the tenure of each Members of Parliament is five years from the date of appointment.

### **Article 39: Qualifications of Tibetan Members of Parliament**

The following conditions shall be fulfilled to be eligible to contest in the election of Tibetan members of parliament.

1. Must be a citizen of Tibet
2. Above 25yrs of age
3. who is not insane or unsound mind
4. who is not declared insolvent or bankrupt
5. Who is not convicted as a criminal under any laws
6. who is not a government official
7. Who is not anyone who works for the interest of other nation to harm Tibetan identity for personal monetary or professional gains
8. who has not void the Laws or Acts of Tibetan Member of Parliament
9. who takes full responsibility as a Tibetan citizen
10. Who is not against the laws published in the Tibetan in exile Charter of Act and who is not working for personal monetary or professional gains to destruct Tibetan nationality.

As mention above in No.6, The government official means any bonafide government officials who are either directly appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama or selected by the government. Such government officials if wishes to contest in the election, he/she shall resign from his position.

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1. 2004/04/18 additional amendment no. 5

### **Article 40: Decision on candidates not eligible to be Member of Parliament**

If any of the candidates is convicted as a non-eligible to be Member of Parliament by any government or private bodies, The Chief Election Commission shall settle the case and if still dispute exist, the case shall be forwarded to Supreme Court.

#### **Article 41: Provisions of participation and election of Volunteer candidates**

1. As per this Act of Election Commission and other Charter of Acts, any individual can contest in the election representing his/her sector.
2. To contest in the election of members of Parliament,
  - a. Must fulfill the conditions mentioned in Article 39.
  - b. Must have a recommendation from recognized 25 members of the sector he belongs.
3. Election Commission shall publish the following
  - a. The duration of submission of the application mentioning the biography of the volunteer candidates from its respective regional Election Commission.
  - b. The time limit for the Regional Election Commission to inspect the background of the volunteer candidate and make decision.
  - c. The last date for each volunteer candidate to withdraw from the contest on his own wish.
  - d. The final list of the names of the candidates, their sign, sector, BRDL book and place of issue, present address and their brief biography.

#### **Article 42: Distribution dates and distribution process of Volunteer Candidates' Registration form**

1. Each volunteer candidate shall put forward his application to contest in the election as a volunteer candidate and get recommendation letter from its respective regional Election Commission.
2. As per Index E and F, the volunteer candidate shall fill up the Candidates form without making any mistakes and shall submit his/her form and application supported by the recommendation letter signed by recognized 25 voters from his/her sect, to the Regional Election Commission within given period of time. (1)
3. The volunteer candidates shall submit all the documents along with a deposit of IRs.3000/- to the Regional election Commission.
  - a. For the candidate who has applied as a volunteer candidate to contest in the election of Tibetan members of Parliament, the final total number of votes he/she has won from his/her respective

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1. 2005/04/01 additional amendment no. 10

category shall be added together. The final total number of votes

he/she has won shall then be compared with the final sum of votes won by other candidates. Out of this, if the volunteer candidate has won above 40% of the total vote, the sum of IRs.3000/- which he/she has paid earlier will be refunded fully even if he/she does not win the election. However if the candidate has secured less than 40%, the above IRs.3000/- shall not be refunded.

- b. The Chief Election Commission shall inform the respective volunteer candidates whether he/she is eligible to get the refund through their respective regional election commission. If the amount is to be refunded, such amount shall be paid from the total amount received.

#### **Article 43: Duration to scrutinize the Volunteer candidate**

1. The timeframe to verify whether the information mention in the documents submitted by the volunteer candidates is genuine starts from the next day of the last date of the documents submission by volunteer candidates.
2. As per the announcement by the Regional Chief election Commission, the members of Regional Election Commission and the supporters of the volunteer candidate must get together as per instructed and each information mentioned in the documents of the candidate shall be verified at the meeting. The Chief Regional Election Commissioner must give enough time limits for the complete verification process.
3. In front of all the participants of the meeting, the Chief Regional Election Commission have the full authority to withdraw the name of the candidate if found convicted of any of the following reasons;
  - a. If the candidate is found not eligible as per the laws mentioned in Charter of Act.
  - b. If the application is not received within the given period of time
  - c. if the deposit amount is not given
  - d. if there isn't authentic signatures of the candidate and/or its supporters
  - e. if the candidate has terminated his Tibetan identity by himself or has not submitted the government tax
  - f. if the candidate is against the Laws of Tibetan in Exile or if he/she works for the destruction of Tibetan identity and

#### **Article: 44 Withdrawal from the Volunteer candidate**

1. Any volunteer candidate wishes to withdraw from the election contest, the last for such withdrawal is the second day after the completion of verification process. If any candidate withdraws within this time period, he/she can claim for the refund of his deposit amount
2. Such candidates shall submit and application for his/her withdrawal to the respective regional election Commission. At the same time, the candidate who has withdrawn is not eligible to participate again for that particular term.

#### **Article 45: Submission of the list of Volunteer candidate**

After the completion of verification process and decided on the number of candidates withdrawn, the Regional Election Commission shall submit all the Volunteer candidates' form and their brief biography to the Chief Election Commission.

#### **Article 46: Procedures of selecting the candidates of Members of Parliament**

1. The Regional Election Commission shall publish the terms of selection process to all the residences of its respective region
  - a. According to the names of the voters registered, must ensure not to mix up the category each voter belongs. In case of couple who are from different category, shall decide on the category he/she chooses as per his/her wish and if any of the child reached 18 years old, can choose any of his/her parent's category. If the child gets married to partner belonging to other category, he/she can be given one more chance to change his/her category.
  - b. In order to know whether the candidate each voter has chosen is an eligible candidate under the Charter of Act, the voter must learn the conditions of eligible candidate as per mentioned in the Charter of Election commission Act. If any further explanation is required, he/she shall seek explanation from the Respective Regional Election Commission.
  - c. The majority number of candidates each voter can choose from each category of province or religious sect is ten, out of which there must be minimum two female candidates. The voters belonging to any monastery or religious organization can vote for two candidates belonging to their religious sects. The majority number of candidates each voter can vote in Europe is two and one each in America and Canada.
  - d. During the selection process, each voter must clearly mention each of his/her choice of candidates' name with special name such as province/sects he/she belongs, present address, occupation, family or area name each candidate belong in order to avoid any confusions in identifying the names. (1)

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*1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4*

#### **Article 47: Counting of votes at Chief Election Commission and issue candidates list**

1. Each regional election commission must submit all the list of candidates from their respective region to the Chief election Commission within the time specified by the Chief Election Commission. If within the given period of time,

- the required documents containing the list of candidates from remote places where there are no postal services did not reach, the date of submission can be extended to maximum one week of working days considering the circumstances and the population of such region.
2. The Regional Election Commission shall, after submitting their documents containing the list of ballot papers must keep their own documents in one place until the date of final countdown and are not allowed to open these documents unnecessarily
  3. On the day of counting of the votes, as per Article 10 section C, the list containing the number of votes and other related documents shall be revealed. (1)
  4. At the time of counting of the votes, the chart of name list must be prepared in serial number according to lot votes, clearly specifying each candidates name, age, present address, number of votes won. As a witness, there must be one Member of Parliament from each provinces or religious sects present. (2)
  5. According to the name chart, the majority candidates of not less than double of required number from each provinces and religious sects must be confirmed. If any of the candidates is under two categories, The Election Commission must enquire the candidate without revealing the number of votes he has won and confirm on the one category he/she chooses to be part of.
  6. For the candidates whose names are to be published as candidates, The Election Commission may after scrutinizing each candidates, withdraw the name of any candidate from the final list as per Article 25 section 1 and Article 43 section3 subsection A to F. (3) (4)

#### **Article 48: Designing of Ballot paper**

1. For easy identification of each candidate's provinces or sects, the election commission shall design the ballot paper in different color.
2. On each ballot paper, the names of the announced candidates shall be mentioned alphabetically. In case where there are similar names, the Election Commission must clearly specify each candidate to ensure easy identification of the candidates.
3. The symbol must be given to each candidate.

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*1. 2000/09/13 additional amendment no. 1*

*2. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4*

*3. 2000/09/13 additional amendment no. 1*

*4. 2005/04/01 additional amendment no. 10*

#### **Article 49: Announcement of candidates**

1. Before publishing the final list of candidates, in order to give enough time for the respective candidates to withdraw,

- a. Before 60days of publishing the final list, the primary list of candidates, not less than triple of the actual number of candidates from each provinces and sects shall be published.
  - b. If any candidates listed in the primary list wishes to withdraw, must take the permission directly from Chief Election Commission. Once the final list is published, no one is allowed to withdraw from the list.
2. The regional Election Commission shall verify the biography of the listed candidates belonging to its region and forward it to the Chief election Commission.
3. The Chief Election Commission shall verify the candidates listed in the primary list and finalized the number of candidates withdrawn and then only publish the final list of candidates.
  - a. Before 60days of publishing the final candidate, The Chief election Commission shall finalize the final list of candidates, not less then the double of required vacancy, for each provinces and sects, according to the primary list and publish their brief biography with their respective sign on a new page.
  - b. The Chief Election Commission shall send the information of the final candidates to each Regional Election Commission. It is the duty of the Regional Election Commission to explain to its residence about the candidates and also stick the pamphlet to the places where more residences would gather.
4. Even after publishing the final list of candidates, if any of the candidates is convicted as not eligible candidates due to whatsoever reason, such candidates shall be withdrawn from the list according to the laws. Incase if all the candidates in the list are found ineligible, then reelection shall be done. Incase if any one of the candidates is withdrawn or die, depending on the number of candidates left, shall make the decision.

#### **Article 50: Final Election:**

The final election shall be according to the laws mention in Article 31, 32, 33 and 34. At the time of distributing the ballot paper, if anyone comes from other places who is not in the list of both the primary and final record, however if he has brought along his BRDL book updated with necessary stamps and signature, such individual shall be allowed to vote and his name, registration number of electoral list and BRDL book number shall be registered following the last serial number clearly specifying his category of provinces or sects. For the election of Senior Council Minister, the name shall be recorded serially as per the name list in C with clearly specifying the BRDL book number. (1) (2)

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1. 2000/09/13 additional amendment no. 1
  2. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4

#### **Article 51: Computation of counting of Votes**



Base on the Article 34, the counting of votes shall

- a. If any candidates has secured above 33% of the votes from their respective category, out of them, ten highest scorers shall be listed according to the percentage of lot votes irrespective of gender. Out of this, there must be minimum two female candidates, two candidates from Religious Sects, two from Europe and one each from USA and Canada for the election of Tibetan Member of Parliament.
- b. If there arises any vacancy in between any term of Tibetan Member of Parliament, the candidates who is next in the waiting list of the selected candidates with highest votes above 33%, shall be appointed for the seat without any reelection. The list of the above mentioned highest candidates shall be kept safely with the Chief Election Commission and the witnesses with their signature.
- c. If the required number of candidates from each category have not secured above 33%, the reelection shall be carried out under the directives of election Commission without need to follow the time duration mentioned in the Act 49 Section 1a and section 3a. (1)
- d. Unless the reelection is required as mention above in number 3, the election process shall be completed before 30days of Oath taking Ceremony of the newly elected members of Parliament. (2)

#### **Article 52: Publication of the result and notifying the selected candidates**

1. The Election Commission shall publish the names of the elected candidates of Tibetan Members of Parliament, with their photographs, present address, number of votes won by each of them and their brief biography.
2. The Chief Election Commission shall send a notice to all the selected candidates through post, clearly specifying the dates of Oath taking ceremony for which all of them must be present.

#### **Article 53: The time duration for the election of Senior Council Minister and members of Parliament**

From the day the Chief Election Commission sends the directives to the regional election Commission, the election procedure of the member of Parliament shall be started and when the final result of the election or if there was any reelection as per Act51 Section 3, the final result of the reelection is declared, the procedures for the election of Members of parliament is considered completes.

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*1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4*

*2. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4*

Like wise, after receiving the directives from the Chief election Commission, the regional election Commission shall start the election process fro the election of Senior Council Minster and when the final result is declared after getting approval

from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the election process for the election of Senior Council Minister is considered completed. (1)

## **Chapter 5**

### **Election of President and Vice President of Member of Parliament**

#### **Article 54:**

The Tibetan Members of Parliament are the only voter for election of the President and Vice President of the Members of Parliament.

#### **Article 55: Procedures of election:**

As per Article 45, there must be one President and one Vice President for the Tibetan Members of Parliament. First, the election of President and then Vice president shall be carried out accordingly. However if all the members of the parliament have the mutual agreement on one specific member for the post, the election Commission shall, after scrutinizing the process, publish the notice of the candidates for the post who is mutually selected by the Members of the Parliament.

#### **Article 56: Primary Candidates**

1. On the sealed ballot form issued by the Election Commission, each members of the Parliament must confidentially select not more than three candidates of their choice.
2. The Election Commission shall announce the three candidates with highest votes to the Members of parliament. If any of candidates wishes to withdraw must confirm its withdrawal within three hours of the announcement and incase if the candidate is out of the town, the candidates shall withdraw within one week of the announcement and reelection must be done for the replacement.
3. If there are more than three candidates with equal number highest of votes, the reelection of the three candidates shall be done, out of these the three candidates with highest vote shall be selected, and their name must be published as final candidates. (2)

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*1. 2001/03/27 additional amendment no. 2*

*2. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4*

#### **Article 57: Final Election**

Out of the three candidates elected by the Chief Election Commission, each Member of Parliament shall confidentially vote for one candidate out the three candidates listed on the sealed ballot paper published by the Election Commission.

#### **Article 58: Invalidity of the ballot paper**

During the counting of ballot paper, as per Article 34 section 2 or if any of the ballot paper doesn't bear the stamp or signature of the Election Commission will be considered invalid and will not be counted. In addition, if there is more ballot papers in the ballot box than the total number of voters, all the ballot papers will be considered void and shall require reelection.

#### **Article 59: Announcement of final elected President**

The Election Commission shall announce the final elected candidate as a President after completing the final counting of votes.

#### **Article 60: Election of Vice President**

The procedure for the election of Vice President shall be according to the laws prescribed in Article 56 to Article 59.

#### **Article 61: Oaths to be taken by President and Vice President**

After announcing the result of the election of President and Vice President, The Election Commission shall get the approval from His Holiness the Dalai Lama and fix the date for the Oath taking ceremony.

### **Chapter Six**

#### **Election of Senior Council Minister**

#### **Article 62: Voters for the election of Senior Council Minister**

Any Tibetan who is above 18yrs shall vote confidentially for the Senior Council Minister.

#### **Article 63: Qualifications for Senior Council Minister (1)**

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*1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4*

1. Must be a citizen of Tibet
2. Above 25yrs of age

3. who is not insane or unsound mind
4. who is not declared insolvent or bankrupt
5. Who is not convicted as a criminal under any laws
6. Who is not elected as a non eligible candidate by more than two third of the majority of the members of Parliament.
7. Who is not a Council of Minister for continuously two terms.
8. Who is not transferred under conditions mentioned in Article 3 &4 of this Charter of Act.
9. Who works for the interest of other nation to harm Tibetan identity for personal monetary or professional gains

#### **Article 64: The term of Senior Council Minister**

According to the Articles stated in Tibetan in exile's Charter of Act, unless there is transfer before the expiry of term, the actual term for the Senior Council Minister is five years from the day of Oaths taking ceremony. (1)

#### **Article 65: Announcement of the candidates for the Senior Council Minister:**

For the election of Council Minister, as per the Tibetan in exile Charter of Act Index C, after completion of preparing the primary record book of the electoral roll, the Regional Election Commission shall submit the copy of the primary list to the Chief election commission. Base on this electoral list, the Chief election Commission shall publish the ballot paper. If any correction is required on, the electoral list must be completed within the given period for the election of Council Minister.

#### **Article 66: Preparing ballot paper for the election of Senior Council Minister**

1. The Chief Election Commission shall prepare the ballot paper for the election of Senior Council Minister.
2. it shall be according to the Article 48 section 2 of the Tibetan in exile Charter of Election Commission Act.
3. The election Commission shall prepare the primary ballot paper as per Index G. (2)

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1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  2. 2005/04/01 additional amendment no. 10

#### **Article 67: Implementation of primary and final election of Senior Council Minister**

1. Any Tibetan aged above 18 years is entitled to one ballot paper each. Unless there is a special name for easy identification, to avoid any confusion on similar names or others, each voter must clearly specify according to the serial number mention on the chart to cast their vote. (1)
2. After the completion of election process, the regional election Commission shall submit all the documents to the Chief election Commission within the given period as per Article 34. (2)
3. Before the announcement of final list of candidates, in order to give time for the candidates who would like to withdraw,
  - a. The primary list of not more than six candidates shall be announced before twenty days of publishing the list of candidates.
  - b. If any candidates wish to withdraw from the primary list, shall get the approval from the Election Commission. However, after publishing the final list, no one is allowed to withdraw. (3)
  - c. After publishing the final list, if the election commission were acquainted with any of the candidate convicted as a non-eligible candidate according to the law after careful investigation, the convicted candidates or all the candidates if required shall be dismissed from the list. In case if all are dismissed then reelection shall be started. If any of the candidates has to withdraw suddenly or dies, the decision shall be made base on the number of candidates. (4)
4. The election Commission shall, after careful securitization and finalizing the list of withdrawals, the final candidates not less than two for the Senior Council Minister must be announce.
5. After announcing the final list of candidates, the public shall vote confidentially for one candidate and whoever has the maximum votes shall be appointed as Senior Council Minister by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. (5)
6. If two of the candidates have equal number of highest votes, the public shall do reelection.
7. The Election Commission must complete the election procedure for the election of Senior Council Minister within 130 days from the date of announcement.

#### **Article 68: Computation of total vote**

1. The counting and totaling of the votes of primary as well as final election

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1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  2. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  3. 2001/06/08 additional amendment no. 3
  4. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  5. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4

shall be held on the day announced, in presence of the Chief Election Commissioner and his assistant along with one Member of Parliament from each sects and provinces as a witnesses. (1)

2. After opening each ballot paper counting shall be done and if any of the following circumstances arises, the vote shall not be counted
  - a. If there is any name of the voter on ballot paper or any symbol that could lead to his identification
  - b. If the name or symbol of the candidate chosen to vote is not clear
  - c. If more than one candidate is selected
  - d. If any name of the candidate who is not in the list of candidate is mentioned
  - e. If the ballot paper is not authentic.
3. On all the ballot paper not counted, The Chief election Commissioner shall briefly mention the reason behind it with his signature in front of the witnesses.
4. During the counting and totaling of votes, on all the intervals, the Chief Election Commission shall seal all the documents related to the election or lock the office in order to prevent misplace or damages to the documents. The key and stamp both should not be in the hand of one individual. (2)
5. During the counting and totaling of votes, if The Chief Election commissioner or any of the witnesses feels uncertain or not satisfied with the counting, he/she can demand for verification or even recounting of the votes and same shall be carried out. (3)

#### **Article 69: The announcement of elected Senior Council Minister**

After completion of counting and totaling of votes, The Chief election Commissioner along with the witnesses shall sign on the result of the election and The Election Commission shall forward it to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his approval on the result and announce the result and at the same time, the final elected candidate shall be informed. (4)

### **Chapter 7**

#### **The Regional Committee Members' election**

#### **Article 70: Source of the Regional Representative Committee Members and the Voters**

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1. *2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4*
  2. *2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4*
  3. *2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4*
  4. *2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4*

As per Charter of Act article 78, there shall be one Regional Representative Committee Members to each region where Tibetans resides.

1. a. The source of the Members of the Regional Representative Committee can be any male or female who is the permanent residence of the region as per Article 22. (1)
- b. Or, apart from the Regional Officer and its assistant, any individual who is elected as member of BRDL Committee or leader of certain part of the region, or representative of any religious committee of the region, can be appointed as Regional Committee members under the mutual agreement of the residence.

### **Article 71: The Conditions for the Members of Regional Representative Committee**

1. Must be a citizen of Tibet
2. Above 25yrs of age
3. who is not insane or unsound mind
4. who is not declared insolvent or bankrupt
5. Who is not convicted as a criminal under any laws
6. who is not a government official
7. Who works for the interest of other nation to harm Tibetan identity for personal monetary or professional gains
8. Who has not broken the laws of Election Commission set by the Members of Parliament.
9. Who is not someone who aims to destruct Tibetan nationality through wealth or power.
10. Who is not working directly under Regional Chief Officer
11. who takes full responsibility as a Tibetan citizen
12. Who is not against the laws published in the Tibetan in exile Charter of Act and who is not working for the destruction of Tibetan nationality.

### **Article 72: The number of The Regional Representative Committee members and their term**

1. Base on the population of the region, the number of the Members of the Regional Committee shall be decided with not more than 35 members or not less than 7. The decision must be made after discussing with public.
2. Unless there is transfer of the members, the actual term for the Member of Regional Committee is 3yrs.

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1. 2005/04/01 additional amendment no. 10

### **Article 73: The election of Members of Regional Representative Committee.**

1. The procedures for the election of the members of Regional Representative Committee shall be done according to the laws of Regional Election Commission.
2. For the election of the Regional Representative Committee members, there shall be primary election and final election. Before announcing the final list of candidates, if any candidates listed in the primary list wishes to withdraw, the Regional Election Commission shall give the permission. However after the final list is published, no one is allowed to withdraw.
3. From the list of candidate, if the number of candidates is equal to the required number of members as decided by the public, the direct appointment can be done without election. If there is more number of candidates than the required number of members, then election shall be done and The Regional Election Commission shall announce the final candidates chosen starting according to the lot votes. (1)
4. The Regional Election Commission shall issue a notice to all the respective elected members about the date of Oath taking ceremony for which all of them shall be present. The elected members of the Regional Committee shall take their oaths from the regional lawyer and after that, the president and the Vice president of the members shall take their oaths as per Article 80 Section 2. (2)
5. If there arises any vacancy in the member of Regional Representative Committee during the term, the new candidate shall be elected within 30days as per Charter of Act Article 92 Section 3.

### **Article 74: The President and Vice President of the Members of Representatives of Regional Committee**

1. As per Article 80 of the Charter of Act, at the first conference of the Representatives of Regional Committee members, one President and one Vice president of the Committee shall be selected confidentially by the members of the committee base on the majority of the votes earn by the candidate respectively.
2. The .....procedures shall be done as same as the election of the President and Vice president of the Member of the Parliament as mention in Article 56 to 59 of the Charter of Act.
3. If any of the President or Vice President of the Committee is required to be transferred as per mutual agreement by two third of the majority of the member of Regional Committee, the substitute for the vacancy shall be elected immediately.
4. If the President of the Representative of the Regional Committee wishes to withdraw, he/she shall get approval from the Vice President and if any

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1. 2004/05/18 additional amendment no. 7  
2. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4



of the member wishes to withdraw, he/she shall get the approval from the Regional Committee.

5. If any vacancy arises during the term of respective Committee members, the Regional Election Commission shall appoint the first candidate in the waiting list with the highest vote as per the record book of the election held earlier bearing seal and signature of the Regional election Commission and the witnesses.

#### **Article 75: Meetings and transfer of the members of Representatives of Regional Committee**

1. If the Regional Officer and its two assistants, after discussing with the Presidents, feels the necessity to terminate or transfer all the members of the Representative of Regional Committee, such decision shall be made according to the public opinion base on the majority of the votes by the public.
2. If any of the members is required to be terminated or transferred, the Members of the Committee shall decide base on the majority decision.
3. If all the members are to be terminated or transferred, reelection shall be completed within 30days.

### **Chapter 8**

#### **Election of Regional Chief Officer and its Assistants**

#### **Article 76: Regional Chief Officer and its assistants' origin and the voters**

1. As per Article 22, any individual male or female who is eligible can participate as a candidate for the Regional Officer or its Assistants
2. Voters;
  - a. The voters for the Regional Officer are the residence of the region that has the complete qualifications of the voters.
  - b. The voters for the election of Regional Officer's assistants are the members of the Representatives of Regional Committee. For the election of Chief Officer's Assistants, there must be the mutual agreement by two third of the majority of the members.
3. The Ambassadors of the government need not be elected.

#### **Article 77: The Qualifications of the Chief Regional Officer and its Assistants**

1. Must be a citizen of Tibet
2. Above 25yrs of age
3. who is not declared insane or unsound mind

4. who is not declared insolvent or bankrupt
5. Who is not convicted as a criminal under any laws
6. who is not a government official
7. Who works for the interest of other nation to destruct Tibetan identity for personal monetary or professional gains
8. Who has not broken the laws of Election Commission set by the Members of Parliament.
9. Who is not suspected of carrying out any activities or having wealth or power relation, which is aimed to create disruption in Tibetan nationality.
10. Who is not serving as a Regional Chief Officer for two terms continuously.
11. who takes full responsibility as a Tibetan citizen
12. Who is not against the laws stated in the Tibetan in exile Charter of Act and who is not suspected of carrying out any activities or having wealth or power relation, which is aimed to create disruption in Tibetan nationality.

#### **Article 78: The Election of the Chief Regional Officer and its assistants**

1.
  - a. Base on the population of the region, the public of the region shall elect primary candidates for the post. (1)
  - b. Any candidate who wishes to withdraw must get the approval from the Regional Election Commission within three days.
  - c. From the list of the candidates published by the Regional Election Commission leaving aside the withdrawn candidates, not less than two candidates shall be selected for final election base on lot votes earned.
  - d. To be eligible for the Chief regional Officer, he/ she must secure above 51% of the total votes. (2)
  - e. If not secured above 51%, the action shall be taken according to the Article 74 of this Charter of Act.
2. If any of the members of the Representatives of the Regional Committee, or any regional officials or any officials of organizations are elected as a Chief Regional Officer or its assistants, shall resign from their current post.

#### **Article 79: Announcement of elected Chief Regional Officer**

After completion of counting votes, the Regional Election Commission shall announce the elected Chief regional Officer to the public.

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1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  2. 2004/04/08 additional amendment no. 6

#### **Article 80: The term of Chief Regional Officer**

1. As per article 91 of the Charter of Act, unless there is termination or transfer, the actual term for the Chief Regional Officer and its Assistants is 3years.
2. If there is any vacancy during for the above mention post during the term, the substitute shall be elected within 30days.
3. There is no restriction for the reappointment of Chief regional officer or its assistants. However, the reappointment of respective candidate shall be stopped after serving two terms continuously.

## **Chapter 9**

### **The election of Regional BRDL committee**

#### **Article 81: The members of the Regional BRDL Committee and their Voters**

As stated in Article 22, the permanent of residence of the particular region, either male or female individual can enroll for the candidate list. In addition, as stated in Article 18 Section 1, any residence who has complete qualifications as a voters shall vote for the candidate.

#### **Article 82: Qualifications of Members of BRDI Committee**

1. Must be a citizen of Tibet
2. Above 25 years of age
3. who is not insane or unsound mind
4. who is not declared insolvent or bankrupt
5. Who is not convicted as a criminal under any laws
6. who is not a government official
7. Who works for the interest of other nation to harm Tibetan identity for personal monetary or professional gains
8. Who has not broken the laws of Election Commission set by the Members of Parliament.
9. Who is not someone who aims to destruct Tibetan nationality through wealth or power.
- 10.who takes full responsibility as a Tibetan citizen
11. Who is not against the laws published in the Tibetan in exile Charter of Act and who is not working for the destruction of Tibetan nationality.

#### **Article 83: The number of members required for the BRDI Committee and their term**

1. As per Article 70 Section 1, there must be a minimum 3 members and maximum 11 members elected by the public.

2. As per Charter of Act Article 60 Section 2, unless there is need to merge or recall, the actual term of the membership is 3 years. Nevertheless, there is no restriction for reelection.

#### **Article 84: Election of the Members of BRDL Committee**

1. Base on the size and population of the region, the required number of members must be fixed and all the residents whoever has the right to vote shall cast their vote.
2. In a region where residents are scattered in different parts, the required number of candidates from each part shall be elected in advance in order to become member of Representatives of Regional Committee.
3. Among the primary list of candidates published, according to the lot votes earned by each candidate, the regional election Commission shall announce the result to the public and at the same time inform members of Parliament via Chief election Commission.
4. The selected candidates' members of BRDL Committee shall appoint one President, one secretary and one cashier.
5. If any vacancy arises during the term, the substitute shall be elected within 30 days.
6. If any member of the BRDL Committee wishes to withdraw shall get the permission from the President and if the President wishes to withdraw, he/she shall get the approval from members of Parliament. (1)
7. If any member is unable to abide by the laws mention above, the action shall be taken as per stated in Article 60 section 4 of this Charter of Act.
8. In between the specific term of the Members of BRDL Committee, if there is any vacancy, the next candidate with the highest votes on the waiting list of candidates as per the record of election held, shall be appointed for the vacant seat without any reelection. If the President withdraws win between his terms, the reelection shall be done as per the charter of Act. (2)

#### **Article 85: Amendment of Acts**

If any amendment is required for any of the Articles under this Charter of Act, base on the mutual agreement of two third of majority of the Member of Parliament, such amendment shall be forwarded to His Holiness the Dalai lama and get His approval.

- 
1. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4
  2. 2003/09/29 additional amendment no. 4

## The primary list of Electoral Roll

**Regional Election Commission**

**Index A**

| S.N<br>o. | Name<br>(Special<br>Family<br>Name<br>) | M/<br>F | Date of<br>birth | Father<br>'s<br>Name | BRDL Book           |                      |                  | Category | Voters<br>Registration |      | Remarks. |
|-----------|---|---------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------|------------------------|------|----------|
|           |   |         |                  |                      | BRDL<br>Book<br>No. | place<br>of<br>issue | date of<br>Issue |          | Registration<br>No.    | Date |          |
|           |   |         |                  |                      |                     |                      |                  |          |                        |      |          |
|           |   |         |                  |                      |                     |                      |                  |          |                        |      |          |
|           |   |         |                  |                      |                     |                      |                  |          |                        |      |          |

## The Electoral list of each Category

**Polling station**

**Category**

**Index B**

| S.No. | Name<br>(Special<br>family name) | Registration No. | BRDL Book<br>No. | Signature of<br>the voter |
|-------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
|       |                                  |                  |                  |                           |

### The Electoral list of each Region

| Polling station | Category                         |                  |                  | Index C                   |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| S.No.           | Name<br>(Special<br>family name) | Registration No. | BRDL Book<br>No. | Signature of<br>the voter |
|                 |                                  |                  |                  |                           |

### Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act Article 34 Section 6a Index D (1)

| S.No. | Name<br>(Special<br>family<br>name) | Native<br>Origin | BRDL<br>Book No. | No. of<br>votes | Remarks |
|-------|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------|
|       |                                     |                  |                  |                 |         |

**Tibetan in exile Election Commission Charter of Act, Article 42 Section 2 Index  
E**

**Volunteer Candidates for the Member of Parliament Form (1)**

**Category.....**

**Index E**

Enclosed herewith, the brief biography and the recommendation letter from 25 eligible voters from the region.....

Name:.....Place of Birth..... Date of birth.....

Present Address

.....  
.....

The Voters Registration No..... Term.....

Would like to contest as a Volunteer candidate for the election of Members of Parliament and has all the qualifications required as per the Charter of Election Commission Act.

Volunteer candidate symbol..... for Year.....Month.....Date.....

(1) 2005/Apr/01 amended notice no. 10

**The form to be filled by Regional Election Commission**

This..... Regional Election Commission acknowledges the receipt of the Volunteer candidate name..... to participate in the election of Members of Parliament, and the recommendation letter signed by 25 eligible voters, along with the deposit IRs. 3000/- on Year.... Month.....date.... hour.... The candidate is declared eligible according to the laws after careful inspection of the candidate as per the Article 43 Section 3 Charter of Act.

For the Year...Month...date....from Regional Election Commission Chief Commissioner undersigned here with.....

**Tibetan in exile Election Commission Charter of Act, Article 42 Section 2 Index F**

**The Recommendation form for the volunteer candidate  
To be filled by the Recommender (1)**

Index F

I,.....Place of birth.....Date of birth.....Category.....  
Present address.....  
bearing Electoral Roll No.....BRDL No....., declare that the  
volunteer candidate name.....bearing BRDL no.....  
belonging to sector..... Have all the qualifications to participate as a  
volunteer candidate in the election of Member of Parliament.

For the Year... Month.....date..... from the volunteer candidate's supporter....  
.....Signature.....

**Form to be filled by Regional Election Commission**

The supporter name..... from this region..... of the above mentioned  
Category..... ,supporter of the Contestant of Member of Parliament election as a  
Volunteer candidate name....., is registered in the electoral roll on  
Year.....Month..... date..... and has all the qualifications of an eligible voter as



stated in the Article 18 of this Charter of Act and hence is declared eligible voter pursuant to the laws.

For the Year....Month.....date....from the Regional Election Commission Chief commissioner signature.....

**Tibetan in exile Election Commission Charter of Act, Article 66 Section 3 Index G**

**The Following must be filled completely**

**Senior Council Minster’s Primary Election Form Index G (1) (2)**

| Name<br>(Special/Family Name) | Native Origin | Present Residence | Present or Former Occupation |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
|                               |               |                   |                              |

**Tibetan in exile Election Commission Charter of Act**

**The Regional Representative Committee’s President, Vice president and the Members’ Oath**

My name.....being elected as Regional Representative Committee’s President/Vice President, having firm belief in this Tibetan in exile Charter of Act, promise to accomplish my duty as a President/ Vice President with full determination and loyalty, patience and sincerity, abiding all the rules as per this Charter of Act.

- 1) Swearing by the three precious jewels
- Or
- 2) Accepts all the conditions.

My name....., being elected as a member of Regional Representative Committee, having firm belief in this Tibetan in Exile Charter of Act, promise to accomplish my duty as a Member with full determination and loyalty, patience and sincerity, abiding all the rule as per this Charter Of act.

- 1) Swearing by the three precious jewels  
Or
- 2) Accepts all the conditions.

### **The members of Tibetan in exile Election Commission's Payroll Act**

**Article 1:** The members of Tibetan in exile Election Commission's Payroll Act is made base on Election Commission Act Article 36.

**Article 2:** Besides the primary and final election of The Senior Council Minister and The Members Of parliament, for all other nation related election held, the daily incentives for the members from Nepal, India and Bhutan is Rs.75/day. Otherwise in other parts of abroad, the members shall be provided with a present as a token of thanks.

**Article 3:** Whatever number of days worked shall be recorded with the respective individual signature and the form must be signed by the Chief Officer of the Regional election Commission and submit it to Chief election Commission. Except for the members of the Regional election Commission, others don't have the right to claim these incentives.

**Article 4:** Since the election Commission has to make all the arrangements before the election of the Senior Council Minister or the Member of Parliament, The election Commission shall prepare the entire annual budget for the election related expenses along with the payroll to be provided to each member of regional Election Commission to get the approval.

**Article 5:** for all the regions where there are no government offices such as Ladhakh- Jangthang, Nepal- dhorpatan, Lo Tserok, Baglung, Sher Khumbhu, Bhumdilla- Montawang, Dherang and Bhutan, the budget required for the election in the region shall be approved by the Election Commission as a special priority.

**2000/09/13 Additional Amendment No. 1**

| <b>Article 10 Section D</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| At the time of sealing the Ballot box, there must be two third of the majority of the Chief election Commissioner, the election Officers and the witnesses present.  | At the time of sealing the Ballot box, there must be above two third of the majority of the Regional election Commissioner, assistants and the witnesses present at the Regional Election commission office.         |
| <b>Article 17 Section 1</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| The main duty of the Regional Election Commission members is to appoint the representatives of the commission and not to interfere in all sections of the committee.   | The main duty of the Regional Election Commission members is to appoint the members of the commission and not to interfere in all sections of the committee.   |
| <b>Article 29</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| The ballot box: Polling section.....as per the Article 10, the ballot box shall be sealed by the regional Election Commission  | The ballot box: Polling section.....as per the Article 10 D, the ballot box shall be sealed by the regional Election Commission  |
| <b>Article 47 Section 3</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| On the day of scrutinizing the counting of votes, the list of the votes counted and other related documents shall be scrutinized as per Article 10   | On the day of scrutinizing the counting of votes, the list of the votes counted and other related documents shall be scrutinized as per Article 10 C   |
| <b>Article 47 Section 6</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| The candidates published in the primary list can withdraw from the list according to the Article 25 Section 1 and 2, and Article 43 Section 3 A to G after the necessary verifications from the Election Commission. | The candidates published in the primary list can withdraw from the list according to the Article 25 Section 1 and 2, and Article 43 Section 3 A to F after the necessary verifications from the Election Commission. |
| <b>Article 50</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| The procedures for the final election shall be carried out according to the Article 31,, 32,33 and 34. At the time of distributing the ballot paper, if any voters has come suddenly from other places who is not in the list of this particular region but has the complete updated BRDL Book with seal and electoral roll register number of the other region on it, such individual shall be provided with the ballot paper without any errors of he sector he/she belongs. | The procedures for the final election shall be carried out according to the Article 31,, 32,33 and 34. At the time of distributing the ballot paper for either primary or final election, if any voters has come suddenly from other places who is not in the list of this particular region but has the complete updated BRDL Book with seal and electoral roll register number of the other region on it, such individual shall be provided with the ballot paper without any errors of he sector he/she belongs. |
| <b>Article 70 Section 1 A</b>  |   |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| The origin of the representatives shall be the resident of the region irrespective of gender base according to Article 23.   | The origin of the representatives shall be the resident of the region irrespective of gender base according to Article 22.  |

**2001/03/27 Additional Amendment No. 2**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Article 5 Section 3</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| Whenever the election of Members of parliament is to be held, the Chief Election Commissioner will require two additional assistant Officers, so shall be appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama according to the laws.   | Whenever the election of Senior Council Minister or Members of parliament is to be held, the Chief Election Commissioner will require two additional assistant Officers, so shall be appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama according to the laws.   |
| <b>Article 11</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| <i>Regional Election Commission</i>   | <i>Regional Election Commission</i>  |
| For the election of the Tibetan Members of Parliament, Regional Representative Committee's President and Vice President and the members, Regional officer and Assistants and BRDL Committee's Members and President, The election Commission shall appoint regional election Committee to each residence of Tibetan | For the election of Senior Council Minister, the Tibetan Members of Parliament, Regional Representative Committee's President and Vice President and the members, Regional officer and Assistants and BRDL Committee's Members and President, The election Commission shall appoint regional election Committee to each residence of Tibetan |
| <b>Article 53</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| <i>The duration for the Members of parliament election</i>  | <i>The duration for election of Senior Council Minister and the Members of parliament</i>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>The day on which the Election Commission announces to the Regional Election Commission to start the activities to select candidates for the election of Members of Parliament, is considered as a starting date and when the result of the final election, and reelection if required as per Article 51 Section 3 is declared, the election of Members of Parliament is considered completed.</p> | <p>The day on which the Election Commission announces to the Regional Election Commission to start the activities to select candidates for the election of Members of Parliament, is considered as a starting date and when the result of the final election, and reelection if required as per Article 51 Section 3 is announced, the election of Members of Parliament is considered completed. Likewise, From the day of when the Election Commission announces to the Regional Election Commission to start selecting the primary candidates for the election of Senior Council Minister, is considered starting date and when the final result is declared after receiving approval from His Holiness The Dalai Lama, the election of Senior Council Minister is considered completed.</p> |
|--|---|

**2001/06/08 Additional Amendment No. 3**

| <b>Article 67 Section 3 B</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| <p>If anyone wishes to withdraw from the primary list of candidates shall get the approval from His Holiness The Dalai Lama. Once the final list is published, no one is allowed to withdraw from the list.</p> | <p>If anyone wishes to withdraw from the primary list of candidates shall get the approval directly from the Election Commission. Once the final list is published, no one is allowed to withdraw from the list.</p> |

**2003/09/29 Additional Amendment No. 4**

| <b>Article 4</b>  |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>  |
| <p>This Charter of Election Commission Act is meant for all the elections of Tibetan Members of Parliament's members, President and Vice president, Ministers and Senior Council Minister, Regional Representative Committee's members, President and Vice President, Regional Chief Officer and its assistants, Regional BRDL committee members and President, and any election related to the nation.</p> | <p>This Charter of Election Commission Act is meant for all the elections of Senior Council Minister, Tibetan Members of Parliament's members, President and Vice president, Regional Representative Committee's members, President and Vice President, Regional Chief Officer and its assistants, Regional BRDL committee members and President, and any election related to the nation.</p> |
| <b>Article 7 Section 2</b>  |   |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>  |
| <p>The term for the Election Commissioner's assistants is from the starting day of the election of the members of Parliament till the final result is declared.</p>   | <p>The term for the Election Commissioner's assistants is from the starting day of the election of the Senior Council Minister and the members of Parliament till the final result is declared.</p>   |
| <b>Article 10 Section D</b>   |   |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| At the time of sealing the Ballot box, there must be above two third of the majority of the Regional election Commissioner, assistants and the witnesses present at the Regional Election commission office.   | At the time of sealing the Ballot box, it is mandatory to have two third of the majority of the Regional election Commissioner, assistants and the witnesses present at the Regional Election commission office present.   |
| <b>Article 11</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| For the election of Senior Council Minister, the Tibetan Members of Parliament, Regional Representative Committee's President and Vice President and the members, Regional officer and Assistants and BRDL Committee's Members and President, The election Commission shall appoint regional election Committee to each residence of Tibetan   | For the election of Senior Council Minister, the Tibetan Members of Parliament, Regional Representative Committee's President and Vice President and the members, Regional officer and Assistants and BRDL Committee's Members and President, The election Commission shall appoint regional election Committee to each region where Tibetans are settled in a group.  |
| <b>Article 12</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| The election Commission shall appoint Regional Election Commission Chief Officer and its assistance to each region as required, from any government official residing in the particular region. In cases where there are no government officials, any authorized residence of the region shall be appointed on temporary basis until the election is complete.   | The election Commission shall appoint Regional Election Commission Chief Officer and its assistance to each region as required, from any government official residing in the particular region. In cases where there are no government officials, any authorized residence of the region or whatever is best at that particular situation, shall be appointed on temporary basis until the election is complete.         |
| <b>Article 13 Section B</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| From the residence of the region, one representative each from each provinces, one representative each from each Religious Sects and Bon religion  | From the permanent residence of the region, one representative each from each provinces, one representative each from each Religious Sects and Bon religion  |
| <b>Article 13 Section 2</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| Base on the figure submitted by the polling department under the Chief regional election commissioner, the actual regional representative of the provinces and religious sects of particular region can be increase from one to two. However, it is not mandatory to have representatives from each provinces and religious sects in cases where there is no permanent residence as an eligible candidate in the region. | Base on the figure submitted by the polling department under the Chief regional election commissioner, the actual regional representative of the provinces and religious sects of particular region can be increase from one to two. However, it is not mandatory to have representatives from each provinces and religious sects in cases where there is no permanent residence as an eligible candidate in the region. |
| <b>Article 13 Section 4</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| After electing the witnesses for each provinces and religious sects by the public of the region, the elected witnesses shall submit his name and brief biography to the Election Commission.   | After electing the witnesses for each provinces and religious sects by the permanent residences of the region, the elected witnesses shall submit his name and brief biography to the Election Commission.   |

| <b>Article 16 Section 5</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| Any disputes relating to the election process of the region, the regional election commission shall investigate and settle the dispute. And if there are still disagreements on the decision made by the Regional Election Commission, the case shall be forwarded to Chief election Commission.   | Any disputes relating to the election process of the region, the regional election commission shall investigate and settle the dispute. And if there are still disagreements on the decision made by the Regional Election Commission, the case shall be forwarded to Chief election Commission. If there are still disagreements on decision made by the Chief Election Commission, the case shall be filed to the Supreme Court.  |
| <b>Article 17 Section 4</b>  |   |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| <i>Electoral Roll Officer's assistant:</i>   | <i>Electoral Roll Officer's assistant:</i>  |
| The Electoral Roll Officer's assistance is the person who assists the electoral Roll Officer to carry out the activities efficiently and successfully. Base on the size and population of each region, the Electoral Roll Officer can appoint his assistants and additional staffs he requires after seeking the approval from the Election Commission.  | The Electoral Roll Officer's assistance is the person who assists the electoral Roll Officer to carry out the activities efficiently and successfully. Base on the size and population of each region, the Electoral Roll Officer can appoint his assistants and additional staffs he requires after seeking the approval from the Regional Election Commission.  |
| <b>Article 18 Section 1</b>  |   |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| 1. As per Section 3 of Article 17, after appointing the Election commission, the verification process of the former record of electoral roll and registration of new record shall be started immediately. Depending on the size of the region and its population, the Electoral Roll Officers may appoint the additional assistance to assist in registering the names of electoral roll in each polling section after getting approval from their respective Regional Election Commission.  | 1. As per Section 3 of Article 17, after appointing the respective Regional Electoral Roll Officer, he/she must verify the former record of citizens of their respective region or start registering new record immediately. Depending on the size of the region and its population, the Electoral Roll Officers may appoint the additional assistance to assist in registering the names of electoral roll in each polling section after getting approval from their respective Regional Election Commission.  |
| <b>Article 19</b>  |   |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| If any voter, being unable to vote by himself owing to physical disability or any other reasons, requests for the permission to be accompanied by any person whom he believes, the polling officer shall allow person accompanied by the Voter to enter into the polling compartment to write the name of the candidate he chooses and at the time of final election the helper is allowed to stamp the symbol of the candidate on behalf of the handicapped voter. There can be only one helper of their choice to each blind voters and the helper can be of his/her own family members if the voter chooses to do so. | If any voter, being unable to vote by himself owing to physical disability or any other reasons, requests for the permission to be accompanied by any person whom he believes, the polling officer shall allow person accompanied by the Voter to enter into the polling compartment to write the name of the candidate of his choice. However, at the time of final election, no helper is allowed with such handicapped or illiterate voters except for the blind. There can be only one helper of their choice to each blind voters and the helper can be of his/her own family members if the voter chooses to do so. |
| <b>Article 24 Section 7</b>  |   |

| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
|---|--|
| <p>Within the laws of election commission, the candidates are allowed to address their opinion and project agenda to the masses, hand out pamphlets, announce their recommendation from their respective provinces, sects and organizations, and recommend any candidate as a nominee in either orally or written ways. Such activities will not be considered illegal.</p>   | <p>Within the laws of election commission, the candidates are allowed to address their opinion and project agenda to the masses, hand out pamphlets, announce their recommendation from their respective provinces, sects and organizations, and recommend any candidate as a nominee in either orally or in written ways. Such activities will not be considered illegal. However, the campaign has to be stopped before two days of election dates announced.</p>  |
| <b>Article 33 Section 5</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| <p>On the day of opening these ballot box and the remaining ballot papers, all the members of the regional election Commission must be present. Incase if not, then the Chief Commission of the regional election Commission along with two third majority of the main members and the witnesses must be present and Chief Election Commissioner shall examine all the ballot boxes and the ballot papers and shall enquire to the respective officials if there is any suspicion.</p>  | <p>On the day of opening these ballot box and the remaining ballot papers, all the members of the regional election Commission must be present. Incase if not, then the Chief Commission of the regional election Commission along with two third majority of the main members and the witnesses must be present and Chief commissioner shall examine all the ballot boxes and the ballot papers and shall enquire to the respective officials if there is any suspicion.</p>  |
| <b>Article 34 Section 1</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| <p>On the day of counting of votes, the chief regional election commission along with all the members must be present. If not, two third of the majority of the officials must be present along with respective selected witnesses of each provinces or religious sects of the voters in the region and open the ballot box and other sealed items.</p>   | <p>On the day of counting of votes, the chief regional election commission along with all the members must be present. If not, two third of the majority of the officials must be present along with respective elected witnesses of each provinces or religious sects of the voters in the region and open the ballot box and other sealed items.</p>   |
| <b>Article 34 Section 6a</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| <p>1. After the completion of act of counting of votes of all the polling stations in each region, the election officer shall prepare a chart of counting of votes in format, clearly specifying the number of votes each candidate has won from its respective group. Also the election officer shall prepare a list of number of ballot paper received, how much distributed and the remaining number of ballot papers, the number of votes disqualified and get a signature from Chief Regional Election Commissioner and a stamp of regional Election Commission. The same shall then be forwarded to the Chief Election Commission through post.</p> | <p>1. After the completion of act of counting of votes of all the polling stations in each region, the election officer shall prepare a chart of counting of votes, clearly specifying the number of votes each candidates has won from its respective group as per mentioned in Table index E. Also the election officer shall prepare a list of number of ballot paper received, how much distributed and the remaining number of ballot papers, the number of votes disqualified and get a signature from Chief Regional Election Commissioner and a stamp of regional Election Commission. The same shall then be sealed and packed and forward it to the Chief Election Commission through post or courier.</p> |
| <b>Article 34 Section 6b</b>  |  |



| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
|---|--|
| The Regional election Commission shall keep all the sealed and packed ballot papers counted and the remaining ballot papers in its custody. Any unlawful opening of these sealed documents without permission from the election commission is prohibited.   | The Regional election Commission shall keep all the sealed and packed ballot papers counted and the remaining ballot papers in its custody. Any unlawful opening of these sealed documents without permission from the election commission shall be punished as per Article 25 section 2   |
| <b>Article 35</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| If the regional election commission requires any assistance related to the election process, the government offices in the respective region shall provide all the necessary assistance to the Regional Election Commission in order to ensure efficient and successful election process in its region.                   | If the regional election commission requires any assistance related to the election process, the government offices in the respective region shall provide all the necessary assistance to the Regional Election Commission in order to ensure efficient and successful election process in its region. In a region where there are no government offices, the respective region shall assist with whatever required facilities they have. |
| <b>Article 36</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| At the time of election of Members of parliament, the regional election commission must prepare the rate of allowance to be given to the members for the number of days they worked and forward it to the members of parliament for their approval.   | At the time of election of Chief Council Minister or Members of parliament, the regional election commission must prepare the rate of allowance to be given to the members for the number of days they worked and forward it to the members of parliament for their approval.  |
| <b>Article 46 Section D</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| During the selection process, each voter must clearly mention each of his/her choice of candidates' name with special name, province/sects he/she belongs, present address, occupation, name of family each candidate belong in order to avoid any confusions in identifying the names..                                  | During the selection process, each voter must clearly mention each of his/her choice of candidates' name with special name such as province/sects he/she belongs, present address, occupation, family or area name each candidate belong in order to avoid any confusions in identifying the names..   |
| <b>Article 47 Section 4</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| At the time of counting of the votes, the chart of name list must be prepared in serial number according to lot votes, clearly specifying each candidates name, age, category, present address, number of votes won. As a witness, there must be one Member of Parliament from each provinces or religious sects present. | At the time of counting of the votes, the chart of name list must be prepared in serial number according to lot votes, clearly specifying each candidates name, age, present address, number of votes won. As a witness, there must be one Member of Parliament from each provinces or religious sects present.  |
| <b>Article 50</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>The final election shall be according to the laws mention in Article 31, 32,33 and 34. At the time of distributing the ballot paper, if anyone comes from other places who is not in the list of both the primary and final record, however if he has brought along his BRDL book updated with necessary stamps and signature, such individual shall be allowed to vote and his name, registration number of electoral list and BRDL book number must registered following the last serial number clearly specifying his category of provinces or sects.</p> | <p>The final election shall be according to the laws mention in Article 31, 32,33 and 34. At the time of distributing the ballot paper, if anyone comes from other places who is not in the list of both the primary and final record, however if he has brought along his BRDL book updated with necessary stamps and signature, such individual shall be allowed to vote and his name, registration number of electoral list and BRDL book number shall be registered following the last serial number clearly specifying his category of provinces or sects. For the election of Senior Council Minister, the name shall be recorded serially as per the name list in C with clearly specifying the BRDL book number.</p> |
| <b>Article 51 Section 3</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| <p>If the required number of candidates from each category have not secured above 33%, the reelection shall be carried out according to the Charter of Act.</p>   | <p>If the required number of candidates from each category have not secured above 33%, the reelection shall be carried out under the directives of election Commission without need to follow the time duration mentioned in the Act 49 Section 1a and section 3a.</p>   |
| <b>Article 51 Section 4</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| <p>All the above mention the election process of Member of Parliament shall be completed before 30 days of Oath taking Ceremony by the newly elected members of Parliament</p>  | <p>Unless the reelection is required as mention above in number 3, the election process shall be completed before 30 days of Oath taking Ceremony by the newly elected members of Parliament</p>   |
| <b>Article 56 Section 3</b>   |  |
| <p>if there are more than three candidates with equal number highest of votes, the reelection of the three candidates shall be done and out of these the three candidates with highest vote shall be selected and their name must be announced as final candidates to the Member of Parliament.</p>   | <p>if there are more than three candidates with equal number highest of votes, the reelection of these three candidates shall be done and out of these, the three candidates with highest vote shall be selected according to their lot votes and their name must be published as final candidates.</p>  |
| <b>Article 63</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| <p><i>Qualifications for Senior Council Minister</i></p>  | <p><i>Qualifications for Senior Council Minister</i></p>   |
| <p>The Senior Council Minister must have all the qualifications mentioned in Article 21 Section 3 of this Charter of Act.</p>   | <p>1. Must be a citizen of Tibet</p>   |
|   | <p>2. Above 25yrs of age</p>   |
|   | <p>3. who is not insane or unsound mind</p>  |
|   | <p>4. who is not declared insolvent or bankrupt</p>  |
|   | <p>5. Who is not convicted as a criminal under any laws</p>  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | 6. Who is not elected as a non eligible candidate by more than two third of the majority of the members of Parliament.   |
|  | 7. Who is not a Council of Minister for continuously two terms.  |
|  | 8. Who is not transferred under conditions mentioned in Article 3 &4 of this Charter of Act.   |
|  | 9. Who works for the interest of other nation to harm Tibetan identity for personal monetary or professional gains   |
| <b>Article 64</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| According to the Articles stated in Tibetan in exile's Charter of Act, unless there is transfer before the expiry of term, the actual term for the Senior Council Minster is five years.   | According to the Articles stated in Tibetan in exile's Charter of Act, unless there is transfer before the expiry of term, the actual term for the Senior Council Minster is five years from the day of Oaths taking ceremony.   |
| <b>Article 67 Section 1</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| Any Tibetan aged above 18 years is entitled to one ballot paper each. Unless there is a special name for easy identification, to avoid any confusion on similar names or others, each voter must clearly specifying four serial number mention on the form to cast their vote.   | Any Tibetan aged above 18 years is entitled to one ballot paper each. Unless there is a special name for easy identification, to avoid any confusion on similar names or others, each voter must clearly specify according to the serial number mention on the form to cast their vote.  |
| <b>Article 67 Section 2</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| After the completion of election process, the regional election Commission shall seal and pack all the ballot papers and send it to the Chief election Commission within the given period of time either through post or through a person who is appointed especially for this purpose.  | After the completion of election process, the regional election Commission shall submit all the documents to the Chief election Commission within the given period of time as per Article 34.  |
| <b>Article 67 Section 3</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| After publishing the final list, if the election commission be acquainted with any of the candidate convicted as a non eligible candidate according to the law after careful investigation, the convicted candidates or all the candidates if required shall be dismissed from the list. Incase if all are dismissed then reelection shall be started. If any of the candidates has to withdraw suddenly or dies, the decision shall be made base on the number of candidates. | After publishing the final list, if the election commission be acquainted with any of the candidate convicted as a non eligible candidate according to the law after careful investigation, the convicted candidates or all the candidates if required shall be dismissed from the list. Incase if all are dismissed then reelection shall be started. If any of the candidates has to withdraw suddenly or dies, the decision shall be made base on the number of candidates. |
| <b>Article 67 Section 5</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |

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|---|---|
| After announcing the final list of candidates, the public shall vote confidentially for one candidate and whoever has the maximum votes shall be responsible as Senior council Minister by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.   | After announcing the final list of candidates, the public shall vote confidentially for one candidate and whoever has the maximum votes shall be recognized as Senior council Minister by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.  |
| <b>Article 68 Section 1</b>   |   |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>  |
| The counting of the votes of primary as well as final election shall be held on the day announced, in presence of the Chief election Commissioner and his assistant along with one Member of Parliament from each sects and provinces as witnesses.                                     | The counting and totaling of the votes of primary as well as final election shall be held on the day announced, in presence of the Chief election Commissioner and his assistant along with one Member of Parliament from each sects and provinces as a witnesses.  |
| <b>Article 68 Section 4</b>   |   |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>  |
| During the counting of votes, on all the intervals, the Chief Election Commission shall seal all the documents related to the election or lock the office in order to prevent misplace or damages to the documents. The key and stamp both should not be in the hand of one individual. | During the counting and totaling of votes, on all the intervals, the Chief Election Commission shall seal all the documents related to the election or lock the office in order to prevent misplace or damages to the documents. The key and stamp both should not be in the hand of one individual.  |
| <b>Article 68 Section 5</b>   |   |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>  |
| During the counting of votes, if The Chief Election commissioner or any of the witnesses feels uncertain or not satisfied with the counting, he/she can demand for verification or even recounting of the votes and same shall be carried out.  | During the counting and totaling of votes, if The Chief Election commissioner or any of the witnesses feels uncertain or not satisfied with the counting, he/she can demand for verification or even recounting of the votes and same shall be carried out.   |
| <b>Article 69</b>   |   |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>  |
| After completion of counting of votes, the Chief election Commissioner along with the witnesses shall sign on the result of the votes and forward it to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his approval and announce the result.   | After completion of counting and totaling of votes, The Chief election Commissioner along with the witnesses shall sign on the result of the election and The Election Commission shall forward it to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his approval on the result and announce the result and at the same time, the final elected candidate shall be informed. |
| <b>Article 78 Section 1a</b>  |   |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>  |
| Base on the population of the region, the public of the region shall elect the primary candidates of not more than 35 people to establish committee.  | Base on the population of the region, the public of the region shall elect primary candidates for the post.   |
| <b>Article 84 Section 6</b>   |   |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>  |

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|--|---|
| If any member of the BRDL Committee wishes to withdraw shall get the permission from the President and if any members wishes to withdraw, he/she shall get the approval from members of Parliament.  | If any member of the BRDL Committee wishes to withdraw shall get the permission from the President and if the President wishes to withdraw, he/she shall get the approval from members of Parliament.   |
| <b>Article 84 Section 8</b>  |   |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| In between the specific term of the Members of BRDL Committee, if there is any vacancy, the next candidate with the highest votes on the waiting list of candidates as per the record of election held, shall be appointed for the vacant seat without any reelection.   | In between the specific term of the Members of BRDL Committee, if there is any vacancy, the next candidate with the highest votes on the waiting list of candidates as per the record of election held, shall be appointed for the vacant seat without any reelection. If the President withdraws win between his term, the reelection shall be done as per the charter of Act.   |
| <b>Article 73 Section 4</b>  |   |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| The Regional Election Commission shall issue a notice to all the respective elected members about the date of Oath taking ceremony for which all of them shall be present.   | The Regional Election Commission shall issue a notice to all the respective elected members about the date of Oath taking ceremony for which all of them shall be present. The elected members of the Regional Committee shall take their oaths from the regional lawyer and after that, the president and the Vice president of the members shall take their oaths as per Article 80 Section 2.  |
| <b>Article 8 Section 8</b>   |   |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| If any members or the officers of any Election Commission or Regional Election Commission, becomes or plans to participate as a candidate in election, he/ she must take leave from his/her post until the completion of that particular election. In the meanwhile, new temporary member must be appointed as required. | If any members or the officers of any Election Commission or Regional Election Commission, becomes or plans to participate as a candidate in election, he/ she must take leave from his/her post until the completion of that particular election. In the meanwhile, new temporary member must be appointed on his position within the framework of laws of election mentioned in Article 5-Section 2 & 3 and Article 12 and 13 of this Constitution. |
| <b>Article 18 Section 3</b>  |   |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| After the registration of each voter, the Regional Election Commission must put their stamp and below it the Electoral Roll Officer must put their respective registration number on the BRDL book of the individual.  | After the registration of each voter, their BRDL must be checked to ensure that the voters have paid their tax to the government after which The Regional Election Commission must put their stamp and below it the Electoral Roll Officer must put their respective registration number  |
| <b>Article 8 Section 6</b>   |   |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| Each Regional Election Commission must appoint their own Election Commissioner and Commissioner's Assistant.   | same as old version   |

| <b>Article 9 Section 1</b>   |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| The Chief Election Commissioner and its Officers must take their own responsibility to send their activities report to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Members of Parliament.  | same as old version |
| <b>Article 47 Section 5</b>  |                     |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| According to the name chart, the majority candidates of not less than double of required number from each provinces and religious sects must be confirmed. If any of the candidates is under two categories, The Election Commission must enquire the candidate without revealing the number of votes he has won and confirm on the one category he/she chooses to be part of  | same as old version |
| <b>Article 55</b>  |                     |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| As per Article 45, there must be one President and one Vice President for the Tibetan Members of parliament. First, the election of President and then Vice president shall be carried out accordingly. However if all the members of the parliament have the mutual agreement on one specific member for the post, the election Commission shall, after scrutinizing the process, publish the notice of the candidates for the post who is mutually selected by the Members of the Parliament.. | same as old version |
| <b>Article 56 Section 1</b>  |                     |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| On the sealed ballot form issued by the Election Commission, each members of the Parliament must confidentially select not more than three candidates of their choice.   | same as old version |
| <b>Article 77 Section 10</b>   |                     |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| Who is not serving as a Regional Chief Officer for two terms continuously?   | same as old version |
| <b>Article 80 Section 3</b>  |                     |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| There is no restriction for the reappointment of Chief regional officer or its assistants. However, the reappointment of respective candidate shall be stopped after serving two terms continuously  | same as old version |
| <b>Article 84 Section 3</b>  |                     |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |

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|--|---------------------|
| Among the primary list of candidates published, according to the lot votes earned by each candidate, the regional election Commission shall announce the result to the public and at the same time inform Members of Parliament via Chief election Commission. | same as old version |
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**2004/04/08 Additional Amendment No. 5**

| <b>Article 5 Section 2</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| One Chief Election Commissioner required for the Election Commission shall be appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama under the name of His leadership, as per the Charter of Acts..   | This Election Commission must have one Chief Election Commissioner. The Chief Justice from the Supreme Court, Member of Parliament's President and Vice President and Senior Council Minister shall recommend the list of not less than double of the required three candidates and forward it to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. His Holiness the Dalai Lama shall then appoint the Chief Election Commissioner from the list, under the name of His leadership.   |
| <b>Article 5 Section 3</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| As and when there is election of Senior Council Minister and Member of Parliament, The Chief election Commissioner will need two assistants, which shall be appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as per the Charter of Act. | From the date of election of "Senior Council Minister and Members of Parliament" is announced and until the result of the election is declared, there will require two Election Officers along with the Chief Election Commissioner. The Chief Justice from the Supreme Court, Member of Parliament's President and Vice President and Senior Council Minister shall recommend the list of not less than double of the required three candidates and forward it to His Holiness The Dalai Lama. His Holiness the Dalai Lama shall then appoint the additional two election officers from the list, under the name of His leadership. |
| <b>Article 37 Section c</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>  | <b>New Version</b>   |
| One to three numbers of Member of Parliament is appointed directly by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.  | One to three numbers of Member of Parliament appointed or not appointed directly by His Holiness the Dalai Lama shall be confirmed within the given period.  |

**2004/04/08 Additional Amendment No. 6**

| <b>Article 78 Section 1c</b>   |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| From the list of the candidates published by the Regional Election Commission leaving aside the withdrawn candidates, four candidates shall be selected for final election base on the lot votes earned. | From the list of the candidates published by the Regional Election Commission leaving aside the withdrawn candidates, not less than two candidates shall be selected for final election base on the lot votes earned. |

**2004/05/18 Additional Amendment No. 7**

| <b>Article 73 Section 3</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>  |
| From the list of candidate, the required number of members as decided by the public shall be announced as selected members of the Regional Representatives according to the lot. | From the list of candidate, If the number of candidates is equal to the required number of members as decided by the public, the direct appointment can be done without election. If there is more number of candidates than the required number of members, then election shall be done and The Regional Election Commission shall announce the final candidates chosen starting according to the lot votes. |

**2005/04/01 Additional Amendment No. 8**

| <b>Article 34 Section 6a</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| After the completion of act of counting of votes of all the polling stations in each region, the election officer shall prepare a chart of counting of votes, clearly specifying the number of votes each candidates has won from its respective group as per mentioned in Table index I. Also the election officer shall prepare a list of number of ballot paper received, how much distributed and the remaining number of ballot papers, the number of votes disqualified and get a signature from Chief Regional Election Commissioner and a stamp of regional Election Commission. The same shall then be sealed and packed and forward it to the Chief Election Commission through post or courier. | After the completion of act of counting of votes of all the polling stations in each region, the election officer shall prepare a chart of counting of votes, clearly specifying the number of votes each candidates has won from its respective group as per mentioned in Table index E. Also the election officer shall prepare a list of number of ballot paper received, how much distributed and the remaining number of ballot papers, the number of votes disqualified and get a signature from Chief Regional Election Commissioner and a stamp of regional Election Commission. The same shall then be sealed and packed and forward it to the Chief Election Commission through post or courier. |
| <b>Article 42 Section 2</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |



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| As per Index D and E, the volunteer candidate shall fill up the Candidates form and the recommender form without making any errors and shall submit his/her form and application supported by the recommendation letter signed by recognized 25 voters from his/her sect, to the Regional Election Commission within given period of time. | As per Index E and F, the volunteer candidate shall fill up the Candidates form and the recommender form without making any errors and shall submit his/her form and application supported by the recommendation letter signed by recognized 25 voters from his/her sect, to the Regional Election Commission within given period of time. |
| <b>Article 47 Section 6</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| For the candidates whose names are to be published as candidates, The Election Commission may after scrutinizing each candidates, withdraw the name of any candidate from the final list as per Article 25 section 1 and Article 43 section 3 subsection A to G.   | For the candidates whose names are to be published as candidates, The Election Commission may after scrutinizing each candidates, withdraw the name of any candidate from the final list as per Article 25 section 1 and Article 43 section 3 subsection A to F.   |
| <b>Article 66 Section 3</b>  |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| The election Commission shall prepare the primary ballot paper as per Index D.   | The election Commission shall prepare the primary ballot paper as per Index G.   |
| <b>Article 70 Section 1a</b>   |  |
| <b>Old version</b>   | <b>New Version</b>   |
| The origin of the Members of the Regional Committee can be any male or female who is the permanent residence of the region as per Article 23.  | The origin of the Members of the Regional Committee can be any male or female who is the permanent residence of the region as per Article 22.  |

### Old Version

## Tibetan in exile Election Commission Charter of Act, Article 42 Section 2 Index D

### Volunteer Candidates for the Member of Parliament Form

**Category**.....

**Index D**

Enclosed herewith, the brief biography and the recommendation letter from 25 eligible voters from the region.....

Name:.....Place of Birth..... Date of birth.....

Present Address.....  
 .....

The Voters Registration No..... Term.....

Would like to contest as a Volunteer candidate for the election of Members of Parliament and has all the qualifications required as per the Charter of Election Commission Act.

For the Year.....Month.....Date..... From Regional Election Commission Chief Commissioner Signature.....

**The form to be filled by Regional Election Commission**

This..... Regional Election Commission acknowledges the receipt of the Volunteer candidate name..... to participate in the election of Members of Parliament, and the recommendation letter signed by 25 eligible voters, along with the deposit IRs. 3000/- on Year.... Month.....dates.... hour.... The candidate is declared eligible according to the laws after careful inspection of the candidate as per the Article 43 Section 3 Charter of Act.

For the Year...Month...date...from Regional Election Commission Chief Commissioner undersigned here with.....

**Amended Version**

**Tibetan in exile Election Commission Charter of Act, Article 42 Section 2 Index E**

**Volunteer Candidates for the Member of Parliament Form**

**Category.....**

**Index E**

Enclosed herewith, the brief biography and the recommendation letter from 25 eligible voters from the region.....

Name:.....Place of Birth..... Date of birth.....

Present Address

.....  
.....

The Voters Registration No..... Term.....

Would like to contest as a Volunteer candidate for the election of Members of Parliament and has all the qualifications required as per the Charter of Election Commission Act.

Volunteer candidate symbol..... for Year.....Month.....Date.....

### **The form to be filled by Regional Election Commission**

This..... Regional Election Commission acknowledges the receipt of the Volunteer candidate name..... to participate in the election of Members of Parliament, and the recommendation letter signed by 25 eligible voters, along with the deposit IRs. 3000/- on Year.... Month.....date.... hour.... The candidate is declared eligible according to the laws after careful inspection of the candidate as per the Article 43 Section 3 Charter of Act.

For the Year...Month...date...from Regional Election Commission Chief Commissioner undersigned here with.....

### **Old Version**

### **Tibetan in exile Election Commission Charter of Act, Article 42 Section 2 Index E**

#### **The Recommendation form for the volunteer candidate To be filled by the Recommender**

I,.....Place of birth.....Date of birth.....Category.....  
Present address.....  
bearing Electoral Roll No.....BRDL No....., declare that the  
volunteer candidate name.....bearing BRDL no.....  
belonging to sector..... has all the qualifications to participate as a volunteer  
candidate in the election of Member of Parliament.

For the Year... Month.....date..... from the volunteer candidate's supporter....  
.....Signature.....

**Form to be filled by Regional Election Commission**

The supporter name..... from this region..... of the above mentioned Category..... ,Contestant of the election of Member of Parliament as a Volunteer candidate name....., is registered in the electoral roll on Year.....Month..... date..... and has all the qualifications of an eligible voter as stated in the Article 18 of this Charter of Act and hence is declared eligible voter pursuant to the laws.

For the Year....Month....date....from the Regional Election Commission Chief commissioner signature.....

**Amended Version**

**Tibetan in exile Election Commission Charter of Act, Article 42 Section 2 Index F**

**The Recommendation form for the volunteer candidate  
To be filled by the Recommender**

Index F

I,.....Place of brith.....Date of birth.....Category.....  
Present address.....  
bearing Electoral Roll No.....BRDL No....., declare that the  
volunteer candidate name.....bearing BRDL no.....  
belonging to sector..... has all the qualifications to participate as a volunteer  
candidate in the election of Member of Parliament.

For the Year... Month.....date..... From the volunteer candidate's supporter....  
.....Signature.....

**Form to be filled by Regional Election Commission**

The supporter name..... from this region..... of the above mentioned Category..... ,Contestant of the election of Member of Parliament as a Volunteer candidate name....., is registered in the electoral roll on Year.....Month.....

date..... and has all the qualifications of an eligible voter as stated in the Article 18 of this Charter of Act and hence is declared eligible voter pursuant to the laws.

For the Year....Month.....date....from the Regional Election Commission Chief commissioner signature.....

**Old Version**

**Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act Article 34 Section 6a Table Index I**

| S.No. | Name<br>(Special family name) | Native Origin | BRDL Book No. | No. of votes | Remarks |
|-------|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------|
|       |                               |               |               |              |         |

**Amended Version**

**Tibetan in Exile Election Commission Act Article 34 Section 6a Index D**

| S.No. | Name<br>(Special family name) | Native Origin | BRDL Book No. | No. of votes | Remarks |
|-------|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------|
|       |                               |               |               |              |         |

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**Old version**

**Tibetan in exile Election Commission Charter of Act, Article 66 Section 3 Index D**

**The Following must be filled completely**

**Senior Council Minster's Primary Election Form Index D**

| Name<br>(Special/Family<br>Name) | Native Origin | Present<br>Residence | Present or Former<br>Occupation |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
|                                  |               |                      |                                 |

**Amended Version**

**Tibetan in exile Election Commission Charter of Act, Article 66 Section 3 Index G**

**The Following must be filled completely**

**Senior Council Minster's Primary Election Form Index G**

| Name | Native Origin | Present | Present or Former |
|------|---------------|---------|-------------------|
|      |               |         |                   |

| (Special/Family Name) |  | Residence | Occupation |
|-----------------------|--|-----------|------------|
|                       |  |           |            |