

Attempts to Divide the Australian Tibetan Communities



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Tibetans cannot be divided simply by using the same outdated Chinese Communist Party tricks and methods of winning over opportunists.



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In 1959, after a massive uprising against Chinese Communist occupation of Tibet, Tibetans were brutally suppressed by its military forces. Under the leadership of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the Tibetan government officials and over 80,000 Tibetan people escaped across the Himalayas and rehabilitated in exile in India, Nepal and Bhutan. The Tibetan government was then established in exile. Many Tibetans travelled even further, and today Tibetan refugees are scattered and rehabilitated in more than thirty countries.

The first Tibetan migrants into Australia arrived in 1972. In 1996, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited Australia, the Representative Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which is known as the Tibet Information Office (TIO), and Australian Tibet Support organizations negotiated with the then Australian Immigration Minister and subsequently the Australian government began to accept a few Tibetan refugees and their families under the Special Humanitarian Project (SHP) - an ongoing program. However, the Tibetan Government in Exile, with special consideration, prioritized this opportunity to those ex-Tibetan political prisoners and their families. There are currently about 2,500 Tibetans living in Australia with 1,500 in Sydney, 500 in Melbourne and the rest scattered in other cities.

Despite the small population of Tibetans in exile, our existence and solidarity, influence and good international standing are quite visible wherever there are Tibetan communities. This is mainly due to Tibetan people's unity and strong spirit of working towards Tibet's freedom, and love for our culture and nation. Despite bad conditions and low levels of education, the common experience of political torture by the Communist regime in Tibet makes us strong and determined. It is not easy for any

motivated outsider to penetrate and create disharmony amongst Tibetans in Australia by means of political donation or financial bribery.

So how does the Chinese Communist Party penetrate and divide the Tibetan community?

1. Threatening the safety of their families living inside Tibet

The majority of the families of Australian Tibetans live in Tibet. If Tibetans living in Australia participate in activities such as the Birthday Celebration of the His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the International Day of Human Rights, the Celebration of Nobel Peace Prize Day to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetan Democracy Day and 10th March Uprising Day, it will affect their relatives in Tibet, their admission to work as Tibetan Civil Servant of CTA Dharamsala or their joining the army. Civil Service and Military Recruitment advertisements clearly state: "Those people whose immediate or subordinate relatives serving in Dalai group or participating in free Tibet movements, shall not apply."

2. Refusal to grant visa to visit one's family

The only way Australian Tibetans are able to visit relatives back in Tibet is to obtain a visa through the Chinese Embassy. There are three conditions for granting visas:

First, admitting wrongdoings: being deceived into participating in protests against China as well as escaping to India and later Australia.

Second, promising from now on not to participate in any political activities.

Third, do not join the Tibetan Community Association which is pro-Dalai, and do not give 'freedom donations' to the Tibetan Information Office. Some Tibetans were refused a visa because they teach Tibetan at language schools operated by Tibetan communities. In the case of couples, one was granted a visa

because they were Caucasian, while the other was refused simply for being in the photos with the Dalai Lama while he was giving public teachings and talks.

In the case of a failure to fulfill the above three conditions, many Tibetans have to give up on going back to their homeland to visit their parents, leaving behind huge regrets when their parents pass away.

3. Establishing pro-Chinese Communist Party associations

On 24 November 2013, a so-called Australian Tibetan Friendship Association (澳大利亚藏族同胞联谊会社团) was established in Australia. Initially the motivation was to forge mutual communication between the Chinese people and the Dalai Lama along with the Tibetan Information Office. However, due to being too intimate with the Chinese Embassy and organizing activities with other pro-Chinese Communist Party organizations, many Tibetans realise they have been deceived and misled and have already withdrawn. Although this very small minority has been disgraced in the Tibetan community, they are still quite active with the help of the Chinese Embassy in Canberra. The first reason is that the Chinese Embassy provides a lot of convenience for them. They can enter China freely and often attend events organised by the Chinese Embassy such as China's National Day celebrations. Secondly, if they want to apply for a Chinese visa, their applications will be approved with reference letters issued by the president of this so-called Australian Tibetan Friendship Association Paljor Tsering, and the vice-president Tinley Rinchen. Thirdly, they act as the propaganda channel of the Chinese Communist Party by publicising the three above-mentioned conditions for obtaining a Chinese visa.

Finally, after my arrival in Australia, I witnessed this Association's organization of two events. The first one took

place in Dee Why on the July 10, 2016. It was the first Sydney celebration of Tibet's traditional Sho-ton Festival. I noted most VIPs were of Chinese Han ethnicity and from various Chinese community associations. Although news reported more than sixty Tibetan and Chinese participants, from the photos we can only see Chinese people dressed in Tibetan clothes.

The other event was the Tibetan New Year Forum which took place on March 5, 2017 in Sydney. Approximately ten Tibetans from all over Australia participated in this event. However, what we saw from the report is that apart from Changmao Wu, the President of the pro-Chinese Communist Party Australian Chinese Association, participants included Minister Wei Cai and Counselor Weiming Chang of Chinese Embassy, Vice Consul-General Xuejun Tong and Consul-General Can Wang of the Chinese General Consulate in Sydney. There were no mentions of any specific Tibetans attending this event. This shows that the event was not transparent, because even though there were Tibetans attending, they dared not publish it.

We are willing to talk with all Chinese and Chinese associations. We also know that Tibetan issues can only be resolved through meeting and dialogue between the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and leaders of China. However, Tibetans cannot be divided simply by using the same outdated Chinese Communist Party tricks and methods of winning over opportunists, from people who make up less than 1% of the Tibetan community, to represent Tibetans under the guise of patriotism.

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