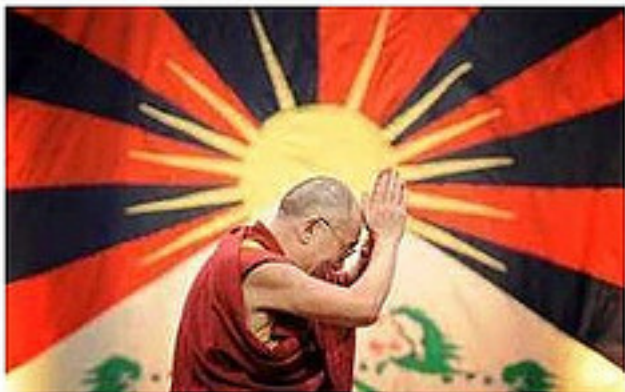


Tibet:A tragedy unnoticed

Written by Arnav ANJARIA

Wednesday, 01 February 2012 12:12



As the Chinese New Year went by..as jubilant fireworks continued to amaze the skies of Hong Kong..an autonomous region within the Peoples Republic of China..the people of Tibet continue to struggle for the same rights that the people of Hong Kong enjoy. Those same right that are actually enshrined within the Chinese constitution.

According to the estimates of the Dharamsala based Central Tibetan Administration, last one year has witnessed more than 15 self immolation's within Tibet. The self immolation's are more or less an indicator of the deteriorating human rights situation within Tibet and the hostility implied upon the Tibetan people by the Peoples Republic of China. The struggle of the Tibetan people dates back to 1959 when China invaded and occupied Tibet and since then has claimed Tibet to be an inalienable part of the Chinese republic. Apparently His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama sought exile in India and has ever since led the struggle for resolution of the Tibetan issue. For a long time the institution of Dalai lamas remained as the political patron of the Tibetan people when until recently His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama decided to transfer his political powers to a democratically elected Prime Minister of the Central Tibetan Administration (formerly known as the Tibetan Government in Exile). The new political leader of the Tibetan people, Dr. Lobsang Sangay, whose charismatic campaign across the refugee settlements in India and Nepal won him a stupendous majority for to be elected as the Prime Minister. Dr. Sanagay faces probably the most severe challenge since his inception-The rising tide of self immolation's, the increasing crackdown by the Chinese government on the Tibetan monasteries

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and the large influx of the Chinese armed forces into the Tibetan areas .The news from Tibet on the actual happenings still remains sporadic, with a massive crackdown on the media reportage within Tibet by the Chinese government. Following the protests within Tibet in the past few months, the Chinese government has also banned foreign travelers from traveling to Tibet. First time opining on the self immolation's in Tibet through a press release, Dr. Lobsang Sangay said that "basic human rights are being denied to Tibetans, the fragile environment is being destroyed, Tibetan language and culture is being assimilated, portraits of His Holiness the Dalai Lama are banned, and Tibetans are being economically marginalized. Tibet is in virtual lockdown. Foreigners have been barred from traveling to Tibet now and the entire region is essentially under undeclared martial law." such a strenuous situation may just help one assert that the self immolation's in Tibet are a manifestation of the rising sentiment of protest and pugnacity. While the Central Tibetan Administration endorses the political stand of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, that is, genuine autonomy within the Chinese Republic. While the case for genuine autonomy for the Tibet people is endorsed from the fact that China follows one country two systems framework. This framework is visible in Hong Kong where the people of Hong Kong enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy. The 2005 proposal of His Holiness the Dalai Lama strongly endorsed the One Country, Two System for Tibet.

Thus the failure of the talks between the envoys of the Dalai lama and the Chinese government has also added to the frustration of the people inside Tibet. While China continues to remain stubborn on not granting genuine autonomy to the Tibetan people, the reaction of the Tibetan people can deeply affect China's image as a soft power in the international community. Self Immolation as a mode of protest is not new to the Mahayana school of Buddhism. Self immolation's happened even in the 1970 and the 80s in Vietnam during the Vietnam war. These self immolation's took place as the means to preserve religion. Within Tibet the Chinese interference into the religious affairs of the Tibetan people has been paramount. The recent announcement by China to appoint the fifteenth Dalai lama by itself has further fueled the grievances of the Tibetan people. The appointment of the new Dalai Lama is a sacred ritual and thus no entity can intervene into the functioning of this system of appointment. China is held responsible by the Tibetans for also kidnapping the third highest religious dignitary within the Tibetan Buddhism- the Panchen Lama. The Panchen lama remains the world's youngest political prisoner who is believed to have been kidnapped by the Chinese and have been replaced by a pro-china Panchen lama. The Tibetan people, disregard the present Panchen Lama and consider him to be a stooge of the Chinese government.

The global Tibetan diaspora in exile claims to stand by the Tibetans inside Tibet and as a measure of protest, the Kalon Tripa, Dr. Lobsang Sangay has requested the Tibetan people to not celebrate the Tibetan New year-Losar which falls on the 22nd February. The days to come shall prove to be the decisive test for Dr. Lobsang Sangay as how he deals with the crisis within Tibet and drawing the attention of the international community in condemning the Chinese atrocities. While china's continued crackdown also exposes its hypocrisy in aspiring to acquire a soft power status. And to conclude, the present crisis is a question of the Tibetan identity which

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is facing the constant threat of annihilation and the present self immolation are probably a message for the oppressive regimes across the globe that under the garb of development and under the threat of the barrel of the gun..the dissenting voices, demanding genuine freedom cannot be suppressed.

Arnav ANJARIA

University of Hyderabad