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The Future of Tibet

Tibet 2040: 4 Scenarios on the Future of Tibet

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BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	BRICS is an intergovernmental organization comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates.
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CTA	Central Tibetan Administration
EU	European Union
FoT	The Future of Tibet Initiative
HHDL	His Holiness the 14 th Dalai Lama
TPIE	Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile
USA	United States of America

Terms

- *Cholka sum U-Tsang, Dhotoe, and Dhomey*: the three regions constituting historic Tibet.
- *Cholug*: Tibetan Buddhist school – there are four (Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug)
- *Kashag*: The cabinet of the Central Tibetan Administration
- *Gaden Phodrang*: Currently, “Gaden Phodrang” refers to the private office of the Dalai Lama, based in Dharamshala, India. Historically, the Gaden Phodrang was the Tibetan government established by the 5th Dalai Lama in 1642, operating until the Chinese occupation of Tibet in the 1950s, with Lhasa as the capital. It was later re-established in Dharamshala, India, until the Dalai Lama relinquished his political leadership to the democratically elected Tibetan political leader, the “Sikyong.”
- *Green Book*: The Green Book serves as a receipt book documenting the voluntary monetary contributions made by Tibetans in exile to the Central Tibetan Administration. It acts as primary documentary evidence indicating one’s membership of the Tibetan exile community.

Summary

The four envisioned scenarios for Tibet in 2040 have been meticulously crafted over a yearlong series of Future of Tibet events and workshops, commencing in April 2022 and concluding in November 2023. These collaborative sessions engaged members of the Tibetans-in-exile alongside recent arrivals from Tibet, spanning three continents, and were exclusively drafted by Tibetans themselves.

Within these scenarios, the interplay of the internal and external environments is pivotal, delineating the challenges and opportunities that will define the future landscape of Tibet for its inhabitants both within the region and across the diaspora.

The four distinct scenarios are: “A New Hope,” where both the external and internal environments are favorable; “Final Chapter,” depicting a future characterized by bleakness in both external and internal spheres; “Crushed Opportunity,” where the external environment is positive while the internal environment is negative; and “Hanging-in-There,” presents a scenario with a positive internal environment but a negative external one. Additional details regarding these four scenarios are elaborated in the scenario matrix opposite.

4 Scenarios

	Strong China	Weak China
Tibetan unity	<p>Hanging in There</p> <p>China’s economy remains strong and repression of Tibetans continues inside Tibet, while India reduces support to Tibetans.</p> <p>Tibetans both inside and outside stay united. Exile Tibetans, led by the young generation, manage to reform exile institutions, focus on technology, and adapt to new realities.</p>	<p>A New Hope</p> <p>The Chinese economy is weak and the CCP struggles with internal and external conflicts. India prospers and becomes the world’s third largest economy.</p> <p>Tibetans both inside and outside stay united. Exile Tibetans are a global example of a successful democracy thereby gaining international recognition.</p>
Tibetan disunity	<p>Final Chapter</p> <p>China’s economy rebounds and becomes the strongest in the world. The repression of Tibetans intensifies inside Tibet. India becomes subservient to China and reduces support to Tibetans.</p> <p>Failed succession process of HHDL, distrust in exile between leadership and diaspora which leads to the collapse of exile institutions. Distrust between Tibetans in Tibet and exile. The sinicization of Tibetans is almost complete.</p>	<p>Crushed Opportunity</p> <p>China faces economic challenges and internal disputes raising a window of opportunity for Tibetans which is lost due to internal Tibetan conflict.</p> <p>The absence of cohesive unity among exile institutions and within the diaspora exacerbates the challenge of pursuing a shared goal, as competing self-interests impede progress. This fragmentation not only leads to chaos but also diminishes Tibetan hope, both within Tibet and in the broader diaspora community.</p>



The Future of Tibet is an initiative led by active members of the Tibetan civil society and aims to initiate a structured discussion on the future of the Tibetans in exile and inside Tibet. The first cycle of five gatherings has taken place between 2022 and 2023 in the following order: Washington D.C. (USA), Paris (France), New York (USA), and the most recent ones in Delhi and Dharamshala (India). This initiative was solely funded by crowdfunding donors and a grant from the Giuseppe Kaiser Stiftung. The Future of Tibet initiative collaborated with The Foundation for Non-Violent Alternatives (FNVA) during the Delhi conference. FNVA is an India-based not-for-profit, non-partisan, public policy organization, established to undertake the objective study and analysis of India's security that is directly linked with developments in contemporary China and Tibet.

Putting a sharp focus on a multidisciplinary and multigenerational approach, but also openness, these gatherings have brought together community leaders, activists, scholars, students, professionals, parliamentarians, artists, religious leaders and monks, and many other Tibetans from different fields and all ages. Every voice had a say and no one particular person was given a privileged space.

From the Paris Conference onwards, a series of scenario planning workshops started with the consultancy of Reos Partners, a social impact company striving to help multi-stakeholder groups design and facilitate innovative strategies to work together and address the challenges they face. Inspired by the early 1990s Mont Fleur scenario exercise – which brought together diverse leaders to envision South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy – the Future of Tibet initiative strives to generate insights, relationships, and strategic actions for the future of Tibet. It does so by opening a creative process where a multigenerational and multidisciplinary group of Tibetan participants bring their contributions and concerns about what Tibet will look like in 2040.

Scenario planning workshops took place during the Paris, New York, Delhi, and Dharamshala conferences and the present report is the culmination of all ideas and discussions shared thus far, building on the final phase of the workshops in Dharamshala.

The 5th conference of the Future of Tibet initiative took place at the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in Dharamshala from November 5 to 10, 2023. Approximately 90 participants, panelists, and volunteers from seven different countries attended the conference. Throughout the conference, experts and participants deliberated on the Tibet issue's past, present, and future aspects, and participants dedicated the final two conference days to the Future of Tibet's scenario building.

This first cycle of conferences was an invitation for Tibetans to participate in a creative, methodological, and intellectual exploration of the future of Tibet.

Scenarios are structured, well-considered stories describing a small set of possible future contexts and how they might come about. Scenarios are not visions, options, preferences, or proposals. The Future of Tibet's scenarios are stories about what could happen in the future of Tibet within a given time frame from 2023 to 2040. Over 60 participants, divided into four groups and four subgroups, explored relevant, plausible, clear, and challenging scenarios that may become a bitter or sweet reality in the coming two decades. This report is a combination of the four subgroups' core stories from each group, which was presented by scenario writing teams on the second last day of the conference. For the sake of authenticity, we have kept each group's original stories and concerns and have not edited the contents. This explains why the tone and writing style of each story varies significantly.

Each group is tasked with four core stories:

1. "A New Hope" (a positive and hopeful future is emerging. It is not perfection or heaven, but in the right direction);
2. "Hanging in There" (limited opportunities for improvement. Conditions are not ideal, but survivable. Some things have become worse, while others have improved);
3. "Crushed Opportunity" (conditions for improvement are present. However, possibilities and hope are unrealized);
4. "Final Chapter" (everything is going very poorly. There are very few sources of hope).

The composition of the participants was diverse, with participants coming from six different countries including a strong group of university students pursuing different fields of studies in India. Our efforts throughout this initiative to include the perspective of Tibetans from inside Tibet reached its culminating point in Dharamshala with the active participation of 5 young Tibetans, who had just arrived in India from Tibet a month before the conference.

As such, the Future of Tibet initiative is committed to creating a dedicated space for the Tibetan public debate and civil society to thrive. In a time when the Tibetan community is scattered all around the world, with growing difficulty in maintaining connections between Tibetans in exile and Tibetans inside Tibet, we believe such spaces are crucial to prepare ourselves for the challenges ahead.

This first cycle of conferences was an imperfect first attempt as well as an invitation for Tibetans to participate in a creative, methodological, and intellectual exploration of the future of Tibet.

Presenting the Declaration of the Dharamshala event

in November 2023 to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

མེས་པོའི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་གསལ་བའི་གངས་རིའི་ཞིང་།

In the snowy realm where our forebears' legacy stands bold,

།ཕྱགས་བསྐྱེད་དུས་སུ་སློན་པའི་གངས་ཅན་མགོན།།

Where the guardian of Snow Land's aspiration tenderly unfolds.

ཕྱག་ན་པུནྟའི་ཕྱགས་ཇེའི་གྲིབ་བསེལ་འོག

Beneath Avalokiteshvara's serene and watchful gaze,

།གངས་ཅན་པ་རྣམས་ནམ་ཡང་འཚོ་ཞིང་གནས།།

May Gangchenpa thrive in eternal grace.

The declaration issued at the Future of Tibet Conference held in Dharamshala.

Given the present conditions both inside and outside Tibet, coupled with the advancing age of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the rapidly evolving global and Chinese political landscapes, it becomes evident that the Tibet issue has reached a critical juncture. It is imperative that we reflect on the past and contemplate the future. The time is ripe for us to take appropriate and effective measures to safeguard Tibetan identity, language, culture, and the future political landscape. With this in mind, a group of dedicated volunteers has urgently initiated the Future of Tibet Initiative. Since April 2022, we have organized four conferences in Washington DC, Paris, New York City, and New Delhi, engaging in discussions on a wide array of issues crucial to the future of Tibet.

The fifth conference took place at the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamshala from November 5 to 10, 2023. His Eminence the 7th Ling Rinpoche and His Eminence the 13th Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche graciously delivered speeches for the conference participants. Approximately 90 participants from seven different countries attended the conference. Throughout the conference, participants deliberated on the Tibet issue's past, present, and future aspects and unanimously agreed on the following points:

Tibet boasts a rich history spanning several thousand years, establishing itself as one of Asia's significant powers. Despite global historical transformations, Tibet has successfully maintained its sovereignty. In the early 20th century, British India and the Manchu-led Qing Dynasty sought to influence Tibet but were unsuccessful in their attempts. Even amidst the upheavals of two world wars, Tibet retained its status as a crucial source of major Asian rivers and a spiritual center.

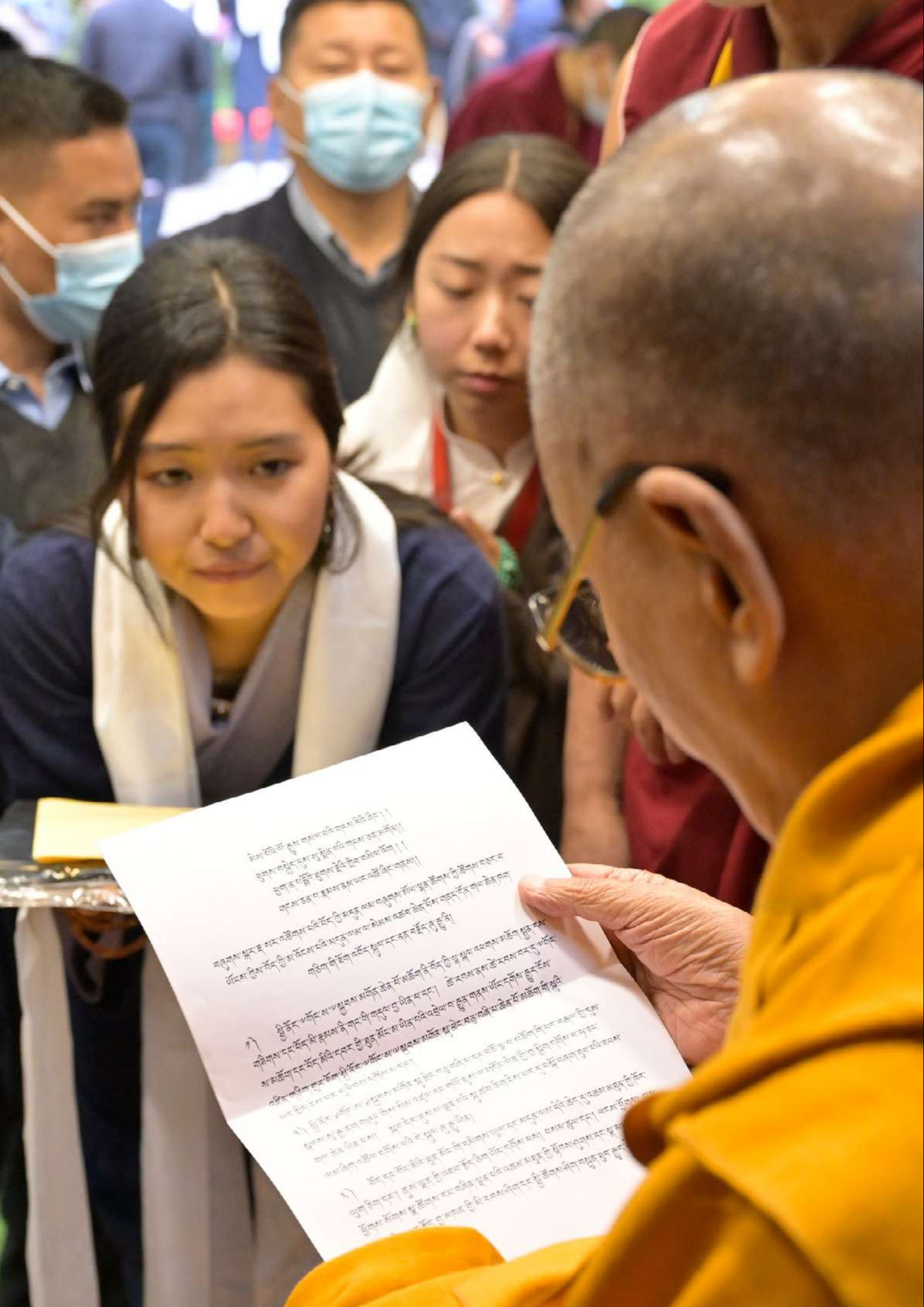
In 1950, the Chinese Communist Party initiated its invasion of Tibet, culminating in the defeat of the Tibetan army in 1959, leading to His Holiness the Dalai Lama fleeing and seeking refuge in India. Despite the adversities, under His Holiness's guidance, Tibetans successfully established the Tibetan government-in-exile as a continuation of the former independent Tibetan government. Guided by His Holiness's vision, this government-in-exile embarked on a

democratization process. Under His Holiness's leadership, Tibetans also aspired to create a democratic future for Tibet, envisioning it as a zone of peace in Inner Asia. His Holiness played a pivotal role in internationalizing the peaceful struggle of the Tibetan people. Above all, His Holiness's visionary leadership fostered a new generation equipped with both traditional and modern education, instilling strong hope for the future of Tibet.

Since 1959, the Communist Party of China has systematically invaded and subjugated the entire region of Tibet, leading to the systematic destruction of the Tibetan language, culture, and natural ecosystem. The Chinese government persists in violating the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people. Under the current leadership of Xi Jinping, approximately 1 million Tibetan children have been forcibly enrolled in colonial-style boarding schools in Tibet. The erosion of Tibetan identity and culture has noticeably accelerated under Xi Jinping's leadership.

During this conference, we, the participants, express our urgent appeal that is inherently connected to the future of Tibet:

1. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the human manifestation of the protector deity of Tibet, Avalokiteshvara, and Tibetans are his disciples. This unique bond between The Dalai Lamas and the Tibetan people should last for eternity. Therefore, we strongly urge His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, to consider reincarnation.
2. During the interlude between the fourteenth Dalai Lama and his successor, the fifteenth Dalai Lama, the Chinese government will likely employ various strategies. We must be thoroughly prepared for these challenges. Therefore, it is imperative to establish an authoritative representative capable of addressing these uncertainties. Therefore, we strongly urge the establishment of a precise mechanism for appointing a representative during this period.
3. It is crucial for the collective future of Tibetans that the Tibetan struggle fosters a united and amicable environment where diverse perspectives from individuals with varied backgrounds and professions can thrive. As conference



- participants, we pledge to uphold this principle and urge all fellow Tibetans, united by the same heritage and lineage, to join us in embracing this approach.
4. To bolster the effectiveness and timeliness of our Tibet advocacy and leverage all available opportunities, it is crucial to closely monitor the swiftly evolving global geopolitical landscape, with a specific emphasis on China and India. Remaining vigilant, we must seize every opportunity that proves advantageous to the Tibetan cause.
5. The unbreakable connection between Tibetans inside Tibet and those in exile is indelible. Individuals in exile, from leaders to the common people, should empathize with their Tibetan counterparts' challenges and aspirations. It is imperative to foster a tolerant atmosphere within our exile community. We must collectively identify a common adversary and refrain from any actions that might dishearten our fellow Tibetans inside Tibet.
6. The younger generations of Tibetans and those who have enjoyed a good education, particularly those living in Western countries, should enhance their efforts for the Tibetan cause. They should actively contribute to the successful passage of resolutions on Tibet in their respective nations and at the United Nations.
7. Until the Tibet issue is resolved, we must persist in our ongoing protest against the unlawful Chinese occupation of Tibet. In this endeavor, it is essential to form alliances with freedom fighters from other regions, including East Turkistan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, to strengthen our collective protest. We should engage in additional protest and advocacy initiatives to amplify our voices and garner support for our cause.

Signed by all participants of the fourth
Future of Tibet Conference
On Tibetan Water-Rabbit Year 2150
November 10, 2023



Participants in Washington DC, United States (2022)



Participants in New York, United States (2023)



Participants in Paris, France (2022)



Participants in New Delhi, India (2023)



Participants in Dharamshala, India (2023)



Validation Speech by His Eminence Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche



Video Message by His Eminence the 7th Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche

4 Scenarios on the Future of Tibet

A New Hope

A positive and hopeful future is emerging. It is not perfection or heaven but in the right direction.

In the world of "New Hope"

There is clarity in the exile political roadblock and a resolution for the polarity among the elected representatives. Tibetans in exile are rigorously engaged in democracy; a higher voter turnout in elections of the government is recorded, and with more vigilance for disinformation on the internet, Tibetan democracy has become robust and matured. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has given clear guidance on the reincarnation process; in China, there is instability among the citizens with the economy at an all-time low; there is an increasing youth unemployment, and the market crashes. Externally, other superpowers in Asia have been rising and a global shift of powers has risen. A new hope in the Tibet-China dispute has reignited. Huge global support for Tibet. Tibetans are unified more than ever.

Timeline

↓ 2023 – 2025
Post-COVID Trust Crisis
and Tibetan Identity Focus

Following the pandemic, global trust in the Chinese Communist Party eroded, leading to shifts in party leadership dynamics due to prominent leaders' deaths. Tibetans prioritize preserving their identity through language, exploring AI for language preservation. Charter review ends the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile roadblock, but regionalism issues persist.

↓ 2026 – 2030
New CTA Leadership
and Reincarnation Clarity

New CTA leadership emerges after the 2026 elections. At 90 years old, His Holiness provides clear guidance on reincarnation, gaining international support from countries like India, the United States of America, the European Union, and allies through statements and legislation.

↓ 2031 – 2034
CCP Internal Struggles, Border
Disputes, Unity among Tibetans

CCP faces internal power struggles as its chairman Xi ages; CTA elections bring experienced exile government; Sino-Indian border disputes escalate; the Belt and Road Initiative faces challenges, and unity strengthens among Tibetans inside and outside. Cross-movement alliances increase.

↓ 2035 – 2037
Tibet's Global Presence and
Demographic Shifts

Tibet gains global attention through AI language tools and Buddhism. Chinese Buddhists' support for Tibet emerges. BRI encounters setbacks, India's youth population surges while China's declines.

↓ 2038 – 2039
Xi Jinping's Demise, India's Rise

Xi Jinping passes away and China repeats the post-Mao era; India becomes an Asian superpower and the world's third-largest economy.

↓ 2040
Increased International Support
and Democratic Movement in China

International support for Tibet grows, and the democratic movement gains momentum in China. New avenues open for dialogue between China and the Tibetan leadership to resolve the Tibet-China dispute.

Key concerns

Tibetan parliament/CTA	<p>Mature and experienced democracy: The CTA stands as a beacon of mature and experienced democracy in the Tibetan community. With a strong foundation, it aspires to gain international recognition through visionary leadership and collaborative efforts. The leadership is forward-thinking, aiming to make necessary amendments to enhance the global acknowledgment of the CTA's legitimacy.</p>
HHDL succession	<p>Clarity on the reincarnation issue: The issue of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation has been resolved with clear guidance from the 14th Dalai Lama. The international community has rallied behind this decision, issuing statements of support for the Tibetan cause. This clarity on the spiritual leadership front has provided concrete backing for Tibet in its ongoing struggle.</p>
Economy	<p>China's economic challenges and India's rise: China grapples with economic instability stemming from political unrest, the shifting strategies of international companies, the failure of its Belt and Road initiative, and a decline in demographics, particularly in the working class. In contrast, India has experienced a remarkable ascent, becoming the third-largest economy globally by 2038. This shift is attributed to research by the Centre for Economic and Business Research, marking India's emergence as a superpower in Asia.</p>
International support	<p>Pressure on China and legislative actions: China faces mounting pressure from its neighboring countries, with clear expressions on geopolitical conflicts, border disputes, and ecological disruptions. Additionally, international organizations are vocal in condemning China's human rights violations and disregard for international laws. In response, like-minded nations, especially India and the United States, have enacted various legislations and policies in support of Tibet.* This concerted effort signifies a united front against China's actions and stands as a testament to global solidarity for the Tibetan cause. CTA gets both moral and financial support from the international community.</p>

* This was written before the Resolve Tibet Act was passed into law in the USA.

CCP	<p>The leadership within the CCP has undergone a transition, leading to the emergence of a new power dynamic. Internal conflicts have resurfaced as China advocates for human rights and democracy, resulting in a political vacuum following reported challenges to Xi Jinping's authority.</p> <p>China's economy has been impacted by land and border disputes with neighboring nations and economic rivalries with Western countries. Consequently, public dissent has intensified, leading to the delegitimization of the CCP's leadership. The economic strain, coupled with geopolitical issues, has contributed to internal challenges within the party.</p>
Unity	<p>There is a notable unity prevailing among Tibetans inside and outside Tibet, as well as among various oppressed groups under Chinese rule. Charter amendments and lessons learned from past events have played a crucial role in bridging polarized views among Tibetan exiles, fostering a spirit of unity within Tibet. The aging factor of His Holiness the Dalai Lama has further emphasized the urgency for Tibetans to unite and work towards common goals.</p> <p>China's assertive behavior and its authoritarian regime have prompted a stronger alliance among oppressed groups, including Taiwanese, Hong Kongers, Tibetans, Uighurs, Southern Mongolians, and Chinese dissidents. The continuous challenges posed by China have forged a robust cross-movement alliance among these groups, emphasizing shared concerns and a collective commitment to addressing issues of oppression and human rights violations.</p>



Hanging In There

An environment with limited opportunity for improvement. Conditions are not ideal, but survivable. Some things have become worse, while others have improved.

In the world of “Hanging In There”

Internally, there’s a palpable shift occurring within the Tibetan tech sphere, merging with the ethos of global Buddhist technological advancements. This fusion has amplified the relevance of Tibetan Buddhism within the AI landscape, infusing it with unique perspectives and ethical considerations. The emergence of a younger generation within Tibetan politics signals a promising trajectory, with a focus on assuming ownership and responsibility. A reinvigorated Tibetan parliament-in-Exile, backed by a new charter, promises dynamism and adaptability to navigate contemporary challenges. Furthermore, efforts toward economic self-reliance within the Tibetan diaspora are gaining traction, fostering resilience and sustainability. His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s succession process runs smoothly, giving a sense of reassurance within the Tibetan community inside and outside Tibet.

Externally, however, there are concerning trends. International support, both politically and economically, appears to be waning, posing challenges to the Tibetan cause. The relationship with India, historically a crucial ally, is strained due to dysfunction within the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and the Tibetan parliament-in-Exile. This rift threatens to undermine solidarity and cooperation. Additionally, the dispersion of Tibetan youth across the globe risks diluting the cohesive Tibetan community, potentially eroding cultural ties and collective identity over time. Navigating these external challenges will require strategic diplomacy, internal cohesion, and proactive measures to engage and retain Tibetan youth within the community.

Timeline

↓ 2023 – 2026

Challenges and Progress:
Tibetan Democracy at a Crossroads

TPiE repeats its dysfunctional nature. HHDL turns 90 years old and provides clear guidance on his reincarnation and guides Tibetans to improve democracy and take more ownership/responsibility. There is an increase in the participation of a younger, educated generation in the Tibetan democratic processes, enhancing the CTA's institutions. The Indian government focuses more on economic development rather than its foreign policy vis-à-vis China and international supporters lose confidence in Tibetan democracy and the exile community.

↓ 2026 – 2031

Charter Amendment Amid
Shifting Sino-Indian Relations

The new Tibetan parliament in 2026 constituted a charter review committee and successfully passed a charter amendment in 2031. China's economy is strengthening. China and India's alliance in BRICS against the West becomes stronger. India has started to create difficulties for CTA to function smoothly. International funding for CTA is reduced significantly.

↓ 2031 – 2035

Tibetan Tech Boom and Diaspora
Investments in the CTA

There is a rise of a Tibetan tech power in the diaspora, instigating a large investment into youth tech talent. Tibetan businesses/entrepreneurs invest more in the social and economic development of the diaspora. The crowdfunding of CTA by the Tibetan diaspora helps to reduce the gap of financial requirements.

↓ 2035 – 2040

HHDL's move to the US and Tibetan
Buddhism's Global Expansion

HHDL passed away, but clear guidance from 2025 facilitates a smooth process in finding the 15th Dalai Lama. Due to strong India creating difficulties for Tibetans, HHDL residency is moved to the United States. Tibetan Buddhism is spreading and advancing with technology.

Key concerns

Tibetan parliament/CTA

Dynamic and representative parliament from the global Tibetan community in North America, Europe, Australasia, and Asia based on the new charter from 2031.

HHDL succession

His Holiness the 15th Dalai Lama is 5 years old, residing in the United States because India is creating difficulties for Tibetans in India and his education is going well. Tibetan people both inside and outside are supporting him.

Economy

The CTA budget is reduced by half. Due to demographic changes, the CTA is decentralized and works partly as a virtual government across the continents. CTA funding is mostly crowdfunded by the Tibetan diaspora, including more importance of Green Book funding. Tibetan businesses/entrepreneurs are supporting social development. India makes it difficult for the CTA to function due to its strong relationship with China. China's economy becomes very strong and all countries are increasing trade with China, including India.

International support

International support for Tibet is much reduced due to a majority of countries dependent on trading with China and seeking good relations with China. India has become the world's third-largest economy partly because of strong trade with China and other developing countries. India has become a key member of the BRICS alliance against the West.

CCP

Xi Jinping still holds power at 88, support from the elites continues and China's economy prospers.

Unity

Strong youth participation in Tibetan democracy from all over the world. More competent, educated and qualified politicians are leading the CTA. The Tibetan society grows more liberal and tolerant which reduces cholka/cholug divisions.



Crushed Opportunity

An environment where conditions for improvement are present. However, possibilities and hope are unrealized due to internal conflict.

In the World of “Crushed Opportunity”

By 2040, China’s potential internal disputes and economic challenges could create opportunities for Tibetans. However, internal divisions and competing self-interests within the Tibetan community, along with the lack of cohesion in the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and among exiled Tibetans, have worsened the situation, causing chaos and diminishing hope. The uncertainty surrounding the 14th Dalai Lama’s reincarnation and the CTA’s unclear direction have further eroded trust. Any effort to seize the moment and capitalize on China’s potential decline must address these internal challenges and foster a united front among Tibetans to effectively navigate the future.

Timeline

↓ 2023
Decline of both China and the CTA

China’s image in the world has worsened and increased Chinese migration to the West. The 17th TPIE dissolves due to two successive unsuccessful holdings of the parliament. Experienced CTA staffers are resigning and moving abroad.

↓ 2025
Reignited Tibetan Cause Falters Amid Leadership’s Narrative Struggles

As HHDL reaches 90, there is a resurgence of interest in the Tibetan cause within the international community. But the Tibetan leadership cannot develop a suitable narrative authority on his reincarnation and we lose the chance to grab international attention and supporters. China creates its narrative about HHDL’s future succession.

↓ 2026
Hope Dims as Vested Interests Mar Elections for the 18th TPIE

International supporters hope for the formation of a better 17th Kashag & 18th TPIE. Individuals with vested interests stand for election, leading to the wrong leaders being elected. The majority of Tibetans are losing hope in the CTA.

↓ 2027
CCP Strife, Decline of Tibetan Hope and International Support

The CCP’s 21st Congress brings internal strife within the CCP leadership. Tibetans inside Tibet are losing hope in the exile community. The CCP gears up to stop the international support for Tibet.

↓ 2030
China’s Economic Downfall and Rising Tibetan Insecurity

There is a decrease in the working population in China, the unemployed population has reached a new high. China’s economy is facing a downfall. Western countries are slowly cutting their economic ties with China. Tibetans feel insecure both in Tibet and in exile.

↓ 2032
CTA Paralysis

The 18th Kashag & 19th TPIE election could not commence due to internal divisions causing a political impasse, similar to the situation in 2021. The CTA is paralyzed.

↓ 2035
Centennial of HHDL Spurs Revolt in Tibet Amidst China’s Economic Chaos

China’s economy is still in a state of chaos. His Holiness the Dalai Lama reaches 100 years, people in Tibet become more eager than ever for his return. These circumstances lead to a mass revolt throughout Tibet due to China preventing the return of His Holiness. An international spotlight on His Holiness and Tibet is revived. Without a common goal and unity, Tibetans in exile cannot respond in a proper way.

↓ 2038
Tibetan Hope Dashes as Exile Community Grapples with Disunity Amid Turmoil in China

With drastic changes in China’s politics, Tibetans in Tibet put a high hope towards the exile community. A revolt breaks out in China, Xi gets assassinated and the CCP is on the verge of collapsing. Revolts are happening among China’s illegally occupied territories as well. The situation in the exile community hits rock bottom, people seek a concrete solution yet they don’t believe in the CTA. The leadership is still stuck with the disunity issues. The Tibetan people and the CTA are playing blame games.

↓ 2040
Tibetan Struggle Persists Despite Unfavorable Circumstances

People in Tibet are still fighting for their freedom. People and leaders slowly come back to their senses. A new government body is rising in China, but it refuses to see an independent Tibet. Tibetans could not garner enough international support for independence.

Key concerns

Tibetan Parliament/CTA	Whether they can fulfill their duties and foster a mutual understanding of a common goal.
HHDL succession	Whether the CTA and the Tibetan people in exile can gain the international spotlight on the reincarnation of HHDL and portray our narrative.
Economy	With the Chinese economy facing challenges, will we be ready to realize and grab the opportunities?
International support	While the international mainstream lacks sincere and official support towards the Tibetan issue, and with the ongoing internal Tibetan affairs, will we be able to grab the support needed?
CCP	With the uncertain rise and fall of the CCP leadership and government, we Tibetans in exile are not prepared enough to face any of the consequences.
Unity	What happens if disunity within the Tibetan community reaches a point of no return, and Tibetans in Tibet lose faith in the exile community?





Final Chapter

An environment where everything is going poorly. There are very few sources of hope.

In the world of "Final Chapter"

In the world of the Final Chapter, a series of events unfold, commencing with the collapse and dysfunction of the Central Tibetan Administration. This critical turning point resulted in disunity and disharmony among the exiled Tibetan community, leading to a significant reduction in international support for the cause.

As the years pass and His Holiness the Dalai Lama ages, the situation of the exiled Tibetans becomes increasingly precarious. Capitalizing on these developments, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) seizes the opportunity to further its agenda. Gradually, Tibetans living inside Tibet begin to lose hope in the cause, and the CCP intensifies its efforts to promote the Sinicization of Tibetans. This campaign takes a toll on the very identity and spirit of Tibetans, both inside and outside Tibet, and the fervor for the Tibetan movement wanes as many individuals find themselves assimilating into the broader Chinese and Western culture, resulting in the loss of the Tibetan Identity.

Timeline

↓ 2023
The Steep Decline

Conflict in the Tibetan community-in-exile is rising along political ideology, regionalist and religious lines (among cholka and cholug). There is no possibility of convening the 17th TPIE's 7th session. The CCP continues to force Tibetans inside Tibet into colonial boarding schools to Sinicize Tibetan Language, culture, and religion

↓ 2024 – 2025
CTA - Eh?

Members of the Parliament-in-exile, i.e. Chitues, are unable to come to a common ground and are not able to finalize the March 2024 budget session leading to the closure of the CTA. Communal division among Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet is increasing, while China continues to take advantage of it. The CCP continues to collect Tibetan DNA and make targeted policies with the data collected. Indian national elections are coming up, as border aggressions and scuffles increase, leading to the worsening of the Sino-Indian relationship.

↓ 2028
Guru Disowns the Chela

The Indian government discontinues its support for the Tibetans in exile amid foreign funds being reduced. We have very poor leadership of Tibetans in exile and fewer Tibetan children in Tibetan schools in exile. Tibetan Children's Village changed to Himalayan Children's Village. Tibetans are more interested in building personal/professional lives in the world rather than showing interest in the Tibetan cause. It is harder than before for Tibetans in India to live with more restrictions from the Indian government. China is increasing aggression against Taiwan.

↓ 2030
Call of War

All the Tibet support groups are discontinued. Tibetans-in-exile who escaped from Tibet years ago are losing hope in their exile community and are finding ways to return to Tibet. China is preparing for nuclear warfare against India and is recruiting/preparing Tibetans in Tibet to fight the war. The Sino-Indian diplomatic relations are on the verge of breaking.

↓ 2033
On Survival Mode

China and India are becoming super powers and the whole world is depending on them. Tibetans in exile are dispersed and are being assimilated into different countries. The CCP increases its efforts to Sinicize Tibetan Language, culture, religion, and identity. Sino-Indian diplomatic relations worsen.

↓ 2035
Unending Monsoon

Tibetans both inside Tibet and in exile are concerned about the declining health of HHDL due to his old age. The Sino-Indian conflict is getting worse, there are border clashes from Ladakh to Uttarakhand, from Bhutan to Arunachal Pradesh, and with no more channels of communication, it leads to both nations severing their diplomatic ties. China is doubling down its efforts in rebranding Tibetan Buddhism as Chinese Buddhism through propaganda.

↓ 2038 Heartbreaking Era

The global Tibetan community is grieving the loss of HHDL. Unfortunately, internal divisions and a lack of cohesive political leadership among Tibetans are contributing to a further dispersal of the community and a fading focus on the Tibetan issue. As China's economy continues to ascend, there's a noticeable global shift toward pro-China sentiments. This, coupled with China's efforts to assert control over Buddhism, is amplifying concerns. Inside Tibet, there are reports of China actively recruiting Tibetans into their government, aiming to erode their cultural identity and assimilate them into the broader Chinese identity. It's a challenging time for Tibetans as they grapple with both internal and external pressures.

↓ 2040 Games for the Throne

Five Dalai Lama reincarnations are announced, one each from Ladakh, Sikkim and Mon, Arunachal, one from China and one from Gaden Phodrang creating more confusion between Tibetans both inside Tibet and in exile and overall Buddhist communities in the world.

Key concerns

Tibetan parliament/CTA	The CTA becomes totally dysfunctional and collapses.
HHDL succession	With 5 major interested parties with their agenda. They take an active role in the selection of the 15th Dalai Lama, each party appoints its own Dalai Lama to further its own agenda
Economy	The Chinese economy bounces back and becomes a superpower having good ties with other countries.
International support	Collapse of CTA and disunity among the Tibetans-in-exile, international support, and foreign aid to Tibetans dwindles to none.
CCP	The CCP is stronger than ever before. It has succeeded in implementing its campaign in Sinicizing the whole of Tibet and now faces no objections and rebellion.
Unity	Collapse of CTA, demise of HHDL, and internal conflicts among Tibetans. The void in leadership directly results in disunity among Tibetans.



Epilogue: Reflections on Scenarios

Following the conference in Dharamshala (November 2023), there were several online meetings with the participants, facilitators, and the organizers of the Dharamshala conference to reflect on the four scenarios. Below is a summary of the discussions and reflections on the further progress of the Future of Tibet's activities.

About the Scenarios

The authors of the scenarios themselves criticized the fact that the situation in Tibet was insufficiently reflected. Specifically, the question arose as to what the views of Tibetans inside Tibet would be in the case of "Hanging In There"? Could it be imagined in more detail what options would be conceivable?

Our discussion concluded that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has given quite clear instructions about his reincarnation. Therefore, it should be fairly certain that the Tibetans in Tibet would never accept any other reincarnation determined by the Chinese or any other side. However, as far as we know, these instructions are more of a general nature.

The reaction of Tibetans inside Tibet to the passing of the Dalai Lama cannot be predicted. It may depend on the CTA Leadership's ability to manage the expectations of the Tibetans inside. It will also depend on factors such as the repression in Tibet.

It is an open question whether the preparations for communicating will have been finalized by then and whether the steps for ensuring a clear stance of the foreign governments regarding the next Dalai Lama will have been taken by then.

An important point in all scenarios concerned China's future economic development. Future development based on the proposition that China's economy is getting stronger made sense two or three years ago and is especially relevant for the "Hanging in There" scenario.

It is within the realm of the conceivable that the alliance of China and India among the BRICS countries could become stronger and stronger against the West, and that India might be inclined to create difficulties for the CTA in Dharamshala so that Delhi can pursue its strategic goals with Beijing smoothly.

One could have even speculated further whether the difficulties would not lead to HHDL having to relocate to the United States, for example.

However, since the first Future of Tibet conference in Washington in April 2022 and then in Dharamshala in November 2023, there has been a significant shift in the assessment of this issue under the "Hanging in There" scenario. The reason is related to China's unexpected economic weakness, which has changed the overall geopolitical situation. It was also noted by participants during an informal post-Dharamshala session that the perception of China as an efficient and robust political system has suffered at the international level because of its chaotic handling of the COVID-19 crisis.

The eternal concern of the Tibetans that China could pursue common goals hand in hand and the Tibetans could be the first pawn in the process is understandable based on historical experience (keyword: Panchsheel, Nehru/Mao, Non-Aligned Movement), but very unlikely due to current developments. India has an interest in pacifying the entire region. In the long term, and this is equally clear, the current status quo with an unresolved Tibet issue, which could lead to political upheaval at any time, is not a satisfactory solution.

Whether and in what form the international community can keep Chinese leadership's nationalist and militaristic ambitions in check is decisive for all four scenarios. This means for China's neighbors, first and foremost India, whether they are prepared to make security concessions so that China can realize its dream of an overriding geopolitical position in the region. So far, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetans have opposed such a Chinese vision and have declared the long-term goal of a demilitarized and neutral region for the Tibetan plateau.

However, the lack of international support for the Tibetan ideas could lead to a reorientation among the Tibetans (if this is not already the case), which in turn could be to the detriment of India or the Asian countries.

In the case of a Sino-Indian military conflict, these fundamental considerations could become more important in the political and emotional considerations of the Tibetan public and those in positions of responsibility. How should one behave if Tibetan sol-

diers had to fight on both sides? Or does it make sense for the Tibetan side to continue to campaign for integration in the Chinese system or for a cultural autonomy solution within China that threatens India and also poses a security problem worldwide?

What does the further process look like?

The development of scenarios can and should have a psychologically liberating effect on our community, which is sometimes intimidated and disorientated due to the age of the Dalai Lama and the incredibly rapid changes in today's world. The appeal to the Tibetan will to persevere, to unify and the proclamation of simple guiding principles are important but not sufficient for a successful path into the future. The scenario development method can be a way to empower people and organizations, giving them a positive sense of agency. In our five conferences, there were always moments in which the participants confirmed this. We are on the right track.

However, we are aware that the process is far from complete. We need to continue this discussion and are preparing for the next round of talks in South India and North America.

We are also aware that there are gaps in our scenarios or that they may not be sufficiently differentiated. Therefore, we invite the Tibetan public to join us in filling these gaps. The first gap concerns the further involvement of people living in Tibet. We partially achieved this but we need to keep learning about how Tibetans in Tibet see their future and keep including them in our debate.

The question of identity is of great importance. There is an attitude that Tibetan identity and especially the language will soon be eradicated due to the Sinicization policy inside Tibet. But there is also another point of view. Especially in the age of digitalization and the virtualization of the Tibetan language, there are new opportunities to create and preserve cultural identities. We need to pay more attention to this view that we Tibetans are well equipped to take the next civilizational step toward artificial intelligence.

In our future debates, we also need to further discuss Tibet's position in the geopolitical context and its correlation with international support. The international support depends on the perception of Tibet's geopolitical importance in a changing world, which Tibetans themselves can influence by describing their contribution to Asian security and peace.

This process - which includes a diversity of views - and a verifiable methodology are the key factors for long-term impact. Those who reflect on the future own the power to shape it.



Artists' Statement

We are a group of five Tibetan artists who have forged a strong collaboration over the course of several weeks leading up to the Future of Tibet Dharamsala Conference, 5-10th November 2023. Art has been a vital element of the Future of Tibet Conference, Dharamsala, from our artwork on the walls of the venue to our continued presence at the conference, a performance art happening in real time.

As artists, we are always trying to do something new and, in a sense, we are always living in the future. Our art piece reflects many hours of discussions about our ideas of our collective future and how we wish to approach it. Tibetans these days are like seeds spread across the world. Even though we all are separated from each other by distance and time, we are growing ever more unified. This is symbolised in the piece by the seeds from Tibet on the canvas.

The woman in the painting represents the Tibetan people and is looking to the future through futuristic goggles while riding the Snow Lion. Here, the Snow Lion represents our ancestors's wisdom and strength that is infused in our culture and traditions. These qualities are empowering us on the way to our future while also being up to date with modern technology and wisdom.

We chose the Snow Lion as an emblem of Tibet as it may not exist at the present time but it can evolve in the future and, like our land, will eventually return to us.

Signed by Artists:

Karma Sichoe
Kesang Lamdark
Ngoshi Choedon
Tashi Nyima
Tenzin Melak

The Future of Tibet Conference,
Dharamsala, 9th November, 2023



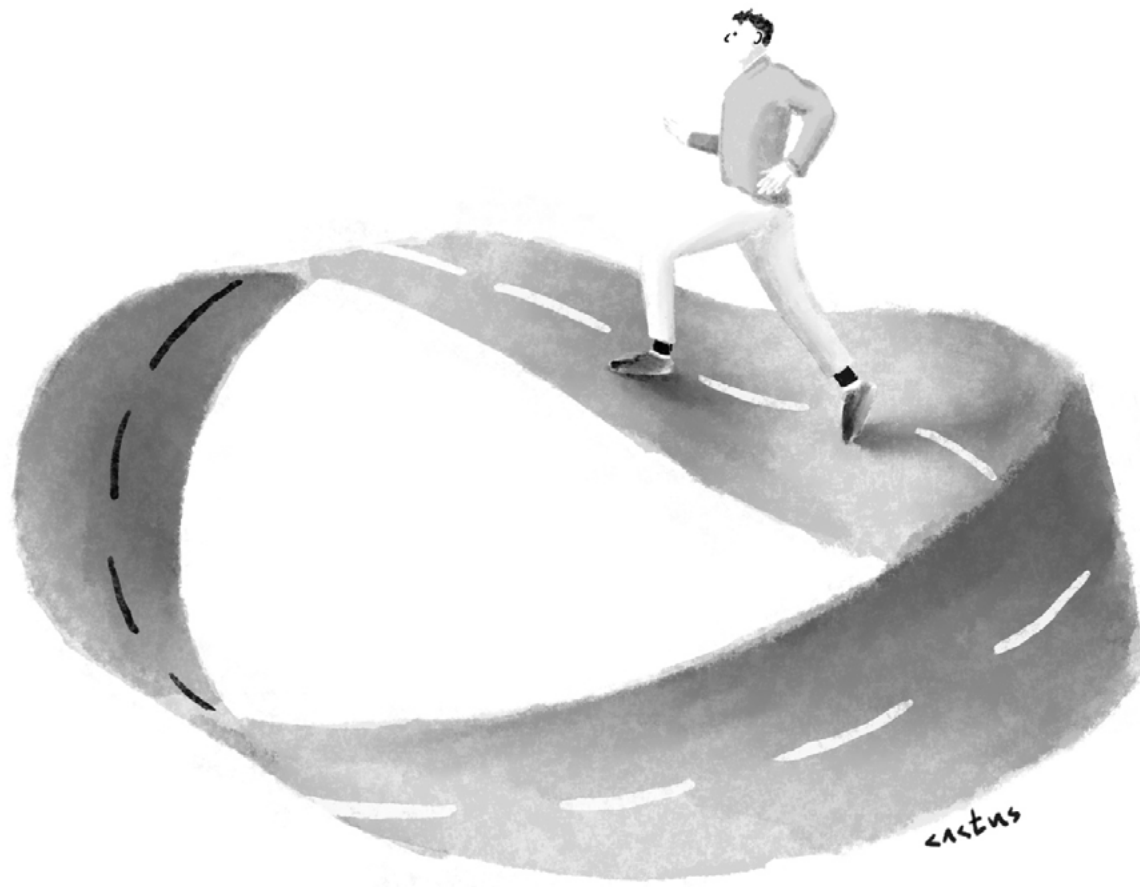
Future Seeds of Tibet

Seeds have long been used in art as symbols of new beginnings and hope. They have been used to represent the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. Tibetans in exile also use seeds as a motif and symbol, for example, describing children as the “future seeds of Tibet” (མ་འོངས་བོད་ཀྱི་སོན་མྱེས་པ་).

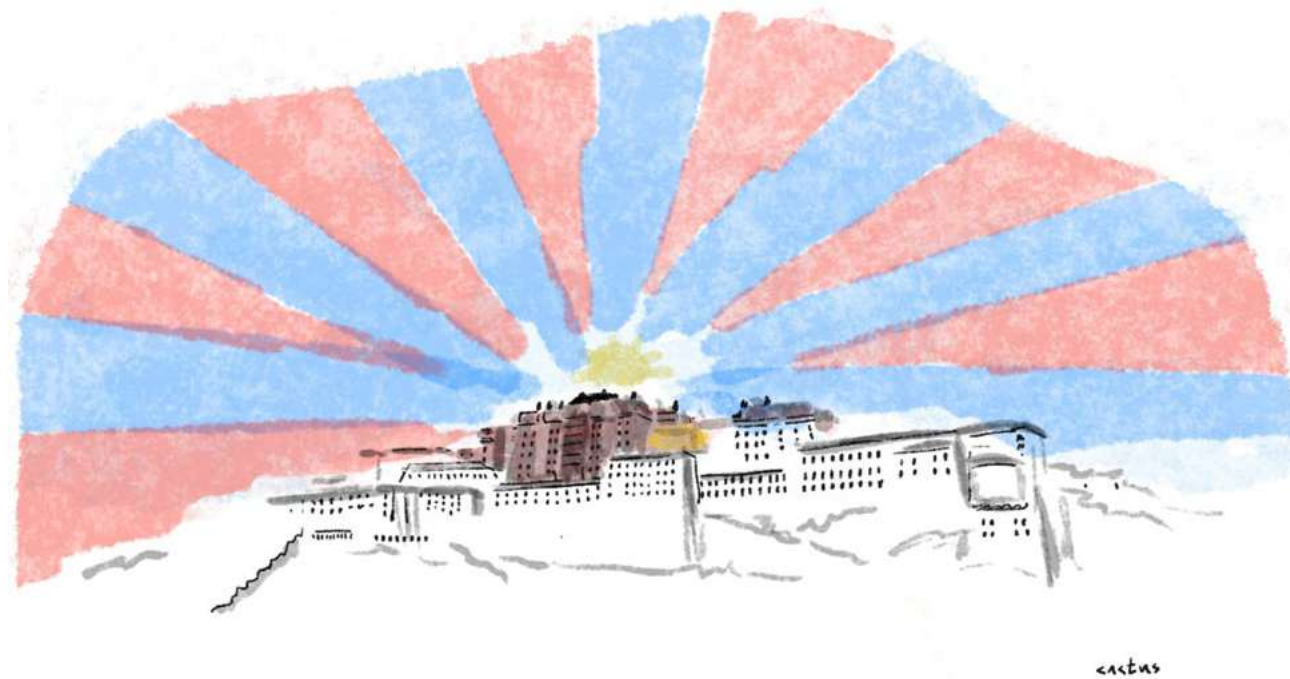
Upon conclusion of the conference in Dharamshala, participants were given flower seeds from Amdo and Kham in Tibet. The initial plan was to offer seeds from all three Cholka but unfortunately it was not possible to acquire seeds from U-Tsang. These flower seeds were also offered to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Seeds that come from Tibet have a special meaning for us and we can use them in a positive and inspiring way. They can connect us to our shared homeland while symbolizing what is still to come. The artists in Dharamshala added a packet of seeds to their art piece, reflecting the potential of seeds to shape and transform the future which we will all be a part of and play a role in.



Future that Never Arrives

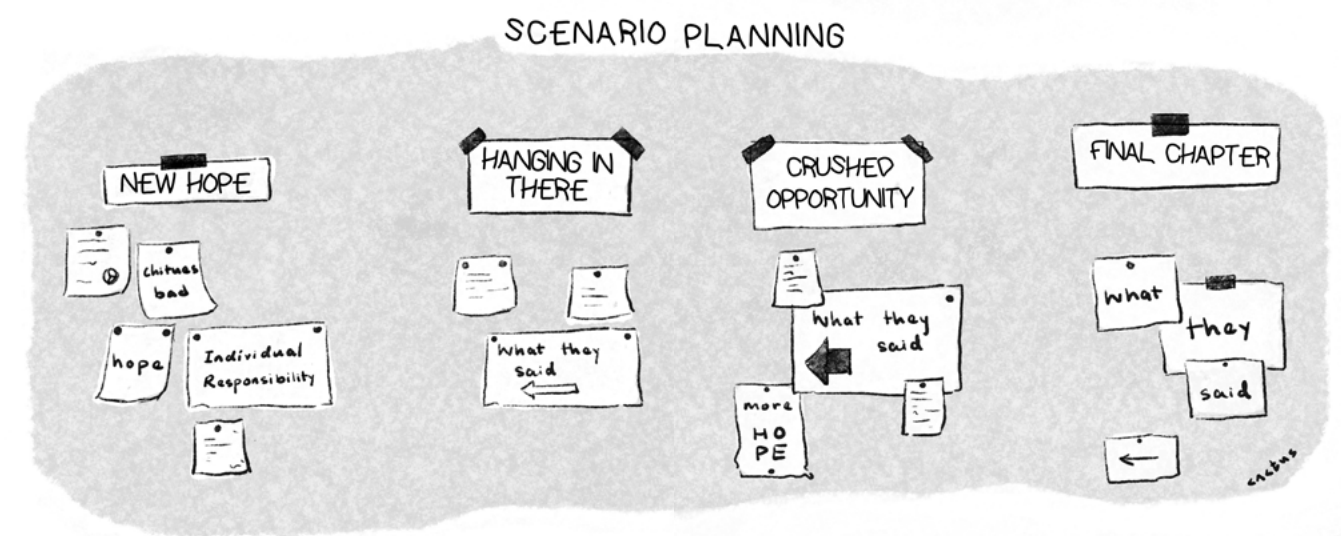


The Future We can All Paint a Picture of



Cartoons by Cactus

We invited Cactus, a young India-based Tibetan illustrator and cartoonist, to attend and observe discussions and scenario planning in Dharamshala. His satirical commentary on Tibetan society and politics has garnered attention in many spheres of the Tibetan world, particularly among the younger generations. He produced a total of 14 illustrations which we then showcased on our social media.



Four Scenarios on the Future of Tibet in 2040

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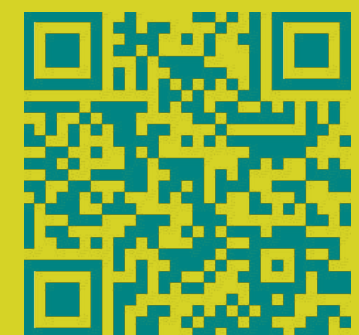
Artists in Dharamshala: Kesang Lamdark, Karma Sichoe, Ngoshi Choedon, Tashi Nyima, Tenzin Melak;

Cartoonist Cactus in Dharamshala;

Photographers and videographers in Dharamshala: Tenzin Tsewang, Tenzin Leckphel, Phuntsok Dorjee, Tenzin Dakpa;

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Find out more about us here!

