

Tibetan uprising: Groups call for Dalai Lama visit

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The Dalai Lama, center, arrives at a Long Life offering prayer at the main Buddhist temple of Tsuglagkhang, near the town of Dharamsala, India, on Feb. 27.

Photo: EPA-EFE

Tibetan advocates yesterday joined New Power Party (NPP) Legislator Freddy Lim (林錫山) in launching a petition to invite the Dalai Lama to visit Taiwan this year, and urged civic organizations, religious groups and the public to help make it happen.

The initiative was announced at the beginning of a march in Taipei to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising.

“This is the best way to show to the world that Taiwan is different from China,” Lim said, adding that he hopes all Taiwanese would join the drive.

“A visit from the Dalai Lama would only focus on religion, as he is the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and the followers of Tibetan Buddhism. He would be coming to promote religious teaching and to interact with other faiths in Taiwan,” he said. “Therefore the petition is based on efforts by ordinary people, non-governmental organizations and religious groups, and is not led by our party.”

Lim said the aim is for the visit to take place before the year ends.

NPP Chairman Chiu Hsien-chih (邱顯智) yesterday urged Taiwanese to support the petition.

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“This can be our collective message to the world, that Taiwanese are standing together with those who are suffering due to the brutality and atrocities committed by the Chinese government,” he said.

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Secretary-General Luo Wen-jia (羅文嘉), who also participated in the march, said: “We welcome the Dalai Lama making a trip to Taiwan. He should have the freedom and the right to go wherever he wants — even to his homeland.”

Tibet Religious Foundation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama chairman Dawa Tsering said he and many Tibetans in Taiwan would be elated if the visit happened.

“However, we do not want to make trouble for the DPP government... It would be up to the government to decide,” he said.

The Dalai Lama has expressed his desire to visit Taiwan again, so it could happen, he said, adding that the Nobel Peace Prize laureate has three reasons for doing so.

First, the Dalai Lama would conduct special blessing ceremonies and solemn dharma services to fulfill the spiritual needs of Tibetan Buddhists in Taiwan, as it has been 10 years since he last visited Taiwan in 2009, Tsering said.

Second, the Dalai Lama wants to foster exchanges with other religious bodies in Taiwan, and bring messages of peace and compassion for all of humanity, Tsering said.

Third, the Dalai Lama has been focusing on encouraging mutual understanding between religious figures and scientists, Tsering said, adding that in November last year, he hosted a conference in Dharamsala, India, to discuss quantum physics.

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At that event, the Dalai Lama presided over a session with Nobel laureate Lee Yuan-tseh (李遠哲), who headed a delegation from Taiwan's science community.

At that dialogue, the Dalai Lama said Taiwan would be the best place for dialogue with scientists from the Chinese-speaking world.

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