

## Tibet must be lesson for Taiwan: dissident

Written by Taipei Times

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Chinese dissident and author Yuan Hongbing promotes his book *Shafo* in Taipei yesterday.  
**Photo: George Tsong, Taipei Times**

The 10th Panchen Lama was murdered by former Chinese president Hu Jintao (胡錦濤) and former Chinese premier Wen Jiabao (溫家寶), a prominent Chinese dissident said in Taipei yesterday as he warned that Beijing's cultural genocide in Tibet could serve an example for those Taiwanese who still have false expectations of China.

Citing the findings from his private interviews with Chinese and Tibetan officials, Yuan Hongbing (袁宏斌) told a press conference that the 10th Panchen Lama, Choekyi Gyaltsen, was poisoned to death in January 1989 rather than dying from a heart attack as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) claimed.

Yuan, a Chinese writer who sought political asylum in Australia in 2004, detailed the findings in a book he co-wrote with Tibetan author Namloyak Dhungser titled *Shafo* (殺佛) — killing a Buddha — which has since been published in Taiwan.

The assassination was plotted by former Chinese presidents Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平) and Li Xiannian (李先念), and Bo Yibo (薄一波), father of disgraced Chinese official Bo Xilai (薄熙來), and he was executed by Hu and Wen, said Yuan, who first revealed the allegation in 2011.

However, the reason Taiwanese should pay attention to Tibet is far more than the Panchen Lama's death, he said, as they should understand that Beijing's cultural genocide spanning several decades had caused the death of 1.2 million Tibetans and at least 126 cases of self-immolation in recent years.

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“I would say that Tibet is far away and close to Taiwan at the same time, because what happened and is happening in Tibet could happen in Taiwan in the future,” Yuan said. “When President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) suggested that the cross-strait flights are domestic flights, that told you how close Taiwan could be to becoming the next Tibet.”

The signing of a peace agreement with Beijing in 1951 and the retreat from being an independent country to an autonomous region had both failed to bring Tibetans the peace and religious freedom they deserve, Yuan said, and the CCP was never serious about keeping its promises.

“[Beijing] has never stopped oppressing the Tibetan people in the past six decades. When you realize that, I don’t know what expectations Taiwanese could have of the CCP,” Yuan said.

National Taiwan University Hospital physician Ko Wen-je (柯文哲), who is mulling running in the Taipei mayoral election next year, said Yuan’s book was a reminder to Taiwanese about what they could learn from Tibet.

“It is also important for Beijing to understand that what happened in Tibet was why most Taiwanese still have doubts about China’s ‘peaceful unification’ pledge. Past experiences show that the CCP has not been trustworthy,” Ko said.

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