

Tibet Watch (1) has obtained background details of a video (2) released by official Chinese media on 22 September of Galden Jampaling Monastery in Chamdo, central Tibet (3).

The video shows an orchestrated event consisting of thousands of Tibetan monks praying to, and voicing their loyalty to, the People's Republic of China and the ruling Chinese Communist Party.

Part of the choreography shows clearly that this event is to mark the upcoming 70th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949.

In the effort to demonstrate widespread Tibetan support for the CCP and its rule, authorities in Tibet have been holding a series of events to mark the anniversary. One of these events is a competition and exhibition held at various monasteries, schools and institutions across Tibet on the theme of "Me and the Motherland". Tibetans have been encouraged to display or express gratitude for CCP and endorse the official CCP narrative that the Party has brought development, prosperity and liberation to Tibet.

Coerced

In the video, thousands of monks can be seen singing together in one voice while waving Chinese flags. The lyrics of the song are: "Me and my motherland, unable to be separated for a moment; Long live the Motherland".

Tibetan monks can be seen hoisting a Chinese flag on the rooftop of the monastery and also hanging thangkas with images of five Chinese leaders on the monastery wall. This official effort to replace images of the Buddha and Dalai Lama with those of CCP leaders has been a constant theme in occupied Tibet this year. At the start of the year, Free Tibet revealed that CCP authorities had instructed Tibetans to place such pictures in their homes, rather than displaying images of Tibetan lamas (4).

A banner with the line "May the great Communist Party last ten thousands of years" can be seen hanging above the main entrance door of the monastery main building. A huge banner,

which says "celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China" can also be seen in the video.

At an event to mark the celebration and release of the video, Tsering Norbu, Secretary of the Party Committee of Jambaling Monastery's Management Committee, said that all monks "should be grateful, feel the party, listen to the party and go with the party" reiterating official policy, which promotes patriotism and conformity among Tibetans.

He also demanded that all monks adhere to the leadership of the CCP and the socialist system, work for unity and stability and implement Xi Jinping's vision of Tibetan Buddhism.

Tsunglo-Shamba Khedu, the vice-chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region and abbot at the Jampaling Monastery, also attended the event and told those monks present that "the party's kindness is deeper than the ocean and heavier than the mountain", that they should "bravely stand up and expose the 14th Dalai Lama's reactionary thoughts", and that monks should be a model of patriotism and love for the party.

Despite the words of Tsering Norbu and Tsunglo-Shamba Khedu, Tibetans have reportedly been compelled to participate in the anniversary events.

John Jones, Campaigns and Advocacy Manager at Free Tibet, said: "Amid the celebrations, the smiling faces and the waving of flags in this propaganda video, there is another story. That is the CCP's assault on Tibetans' culture, religion and history. The Tibetan monks in this video will have been compelled to carry out these celebrations by a regime that refuses to accept differences in identity and opinion.

The Chinese flag flying from the roof of the monastery, the pictures of CCP leaders hanging from the walls and the choreographed routine involving hundreds of monks may represent a show of strength by the CCP, but they do nothing to demonstrate Tibetans' loyalty to the Party or acceptance of its rule. Rather than using monks for public show, the CCP should leave them alone to practice their religion and live their lives in peace."

Notes:

1. www.tibetwatch.org
2. The video can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NR8mMe6BO4&feature=youtu.be>
3. Location: Chamdo (Ch:Qamdo, Tibet Autonomous Region)
4. freetibet.org/news-media/na/chinese-government-orders-tibetans-worship-xi-jinping-and-party-leaders