



COLLECTION CONSERVATION CONNECTION

Concern Over Changes to Tibetan Representation in French Museums

We are writing to express our deep concern and disappointment regarding the recent decision taken by the Musée du quai Branly and the Musée Guimet in France, which have replaced the term "Tibet" with "Xizang Autonomous Region" in their catalogues and exhibitions. This decision, reportedly made under the influence of Chinese state pressures, is an alarming distortion of history and a denial of Tibet's cultural and historical identity.

According to a recent article in Le Monde, these institutions have succumbed to external political demands, with the Musée Guimet even renaming its Tibetan exhibit spaces as the "Himalayan world." These changes, criticized by leading scholars including Tibetologists and sinologists, represent a grave act of cultural erasure. By adopting the Chinese term "Xizang," these respected French museums not only rewrite Tibetan history but also align themselves with an ongoing propaganda campaign designed to legitimize China's claim over Tibet.

In a joint letter, scholars have rightly pointed out that such actions reflect a "concerning level of weakness" and that scientific and cultural institutions must resist the influence of undemocratic foreign regimes. This renaming is part of a broader effort seen at the 7th International Seminar on Tibetan Studies in Beijing, where scholars such as Professor Wang Linping pushed for the adoption of "Xizang" as a way to reframe Tibet's identity on the global stage. This is not merely a linguistic preference but a political tactic, part of China's long-standing campaign to reshape the world's understanding of Tibet, just as it has done with other occupied regions like East Turkestan (rebranded as "Xinjiang").

Such interference undermines the integrity of our cultural institutions, which should stand as guardians of truth and history, not as tools for geopolitical agendas. As a museum dedicated to preserving Tibet's rich heritage, we urge the Musée du quai Branly and the Musée Guimet to reverse these decisions immediately and restore the proper representation of Tibetan culture and identity in their exhibitions.

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