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Change in Bilingual Education Policy to Drastically Sideline Tibetan language

There have been wide-spread protests by students across Tibetan areas in present-day Qinghai Province at a time when the Bilingual Educational Policy is about to be changed because this will result in completely sidelining Tibetan as the medium of education. In addition to putting

Beijing University students also protested.

The reasons given by the Qinghai Provincial Government for changing the Bilingual Educational Policy and imposing Chinese as the medium of education are:



Tibetan students protest at Rebkong

up banners and posters; students have taken out peaceful protests across the province. In support of the grievance of the students; more than a hundred teachers have submitted a petition, students of

i) Firstly; if Tibetan is maintained as the medium of education Tibetans will always remain backward;

ii) That the Tibetan people will not be able to benefit from the new job opportunities arising from China's economic development;

iii) What is more; that Tibetan students will not be able to benefit from the higher educational opportunities; all of which are in Chinese;

iv) And finally; that using Chinese as the medium of education will benefit all Tibetans in the long term.

In addition to the above reasons from imposing Chinese as the medium of education the government has also stated that this policy will be implemented only in a phased manner.

However; the reasons why Tibetan students are protesting against the imposition of Chinese as the medium of school education are:

i) That Tibetan language will immediately be reduced to the status of a second language because all other subjects will be taught in Chinese;

ii) Secondly because there will be few job opportunities in learning Tibetan; that even if it is taught as a second language there will be little or no interest in learning a language for which there is little or no practical use;

iii) Thirdly; and most importantly; at a time when the Tibetan people are struggling to preserve their culture; not keeping Tibetan as the medium of school

education could ensure the demise of Tibetan culture because one's mother tongue is what gives both unity and identity to culture.

For the above reasons; the Tibetan students are urging the Government of China to respect their right to the freedom of language and culture which are enshrined in the Constitution of China. In fact, all that the Tibetan students are requesting is for the Government to respect the laws enshrined in the Constitution of China regarding the rights of Minorities to preserve their separate language, culture and identity.

What is more; it is not only in the Constitution; even in the more recent 'White Paper' the Government of China has again stated clearly that it recognizes the right of 'minorities' to preserve their language, culture and identity.

And it is not just the Constitution and the recent 'White Paper' China's specific policy on 'Regional Ethnic Autonomy' recognizes the rights of all 'minorities' within the People's Republic of China to preserve their culture, language and identity.

This includes not just Tibetans but also people of East Turkistan, Southern Mongolia and Manchuria.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Development (TCHRD) urges the concerned local officials not to impose the 'one-language' policy and to heed to the wishes of the students and to continue with the current 'two-language' policy which has worked so well thus far. Most of all; TCHRD would like to appeal to the leaders of the Government of China

in Beijing to respect the Constitution; the current policy and laws "all of which recognize the right of 'minorities' to preserve the respective language, culture and identity and to give the necessary directives to the officials in the areas concerned so that peace can be restored and also that the Tibetan people in these areas can continue to preserve their language and culture free from fear.

Rebkong Students Rise Against Sinicization of Education

On 19 October 2010 in Rebkong (Chinese: Tongren) county in Malho "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" "(TAP)" in Qinghai province, thousands of Tibetan students came out in the streets to protest against the education reforms and the inequality faced by the Tibetans.

The meeting on education reform by the Education Department of Qinghai province, the local Communist Party Secretary and Chairman ordered that all subjects are required to be taught in Mandarin and all textbooks to be printed in Chinese and except for Tibetan and English language classes.

Rebkong's First National Middle School students rallied through the county joined by students from different schools, the Tongren County Yifu Nationalities Middle School, the

Tongren District Residential School, the Tongren Modern Medicine College, the Malho National Teacher Training Institute, and the Malho Nationalities Middle School, till they reached the main square of the Rebkong County Government and Malho Prefecture Government gate.



Recent protest at Rebkong

The students were joined by the public and monks from Rebkong Monastery in support of the rally which mainly voices out for the “Equality for Nationalities and Freedom for Language.” The demonstration was not political in nature and demanded for the respect and protection of Tibetan culture.

The protest started from morning and continued till afternoon, a source said that the police came but did not arrest anyone.

This protest is the result of the continuous partiality by the Chinese government and their attempt to mitigate the Tibetan culture and language.

Note: Pictures of the demonstration in Rebkong is available on our website www.tchrd.org

Heavy sentences for Drepung Monks

The Lhasa Intermediate People’s Court has sentenced two Drepung monks to heavy sentences in June 2010 for their activities in March 2008 according to confirmed information received by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD). The monks, Jampel Wangchuk and Kunchok Nyima, were sentenced to life imprisonment and 20 years prison term respectively.

On 10 March 2008, around 350 monks from Drepung Monastery started a protest and went on towards Lhasa City. Police stopped them on their way and barricaded them, due to which the monks went on to observe hunger strike. Some of the monks were detained and others sent back to the monastery. The police deported monks belonging to Sichuan and Qinghai Provinces to their area of origin.

On 11 April 2008, Jampel Wangchuk and Kunchok Nyima were arrested from Drepung Monastery and since then no information was available until recently. Around June 2010 the Lhasa Intermediate People’s Court sentenced Jampel Wangchuk to life sentence and Kunchok Nyima to 20 years in prison. Although their sentences were informed, however, their whereabouts have not been disclosed till date.

Jampel Wangchuk, lay name Tsephel, is 51 years old and originates from Tsotoed Township, Phenpo Lhundup County. He became a monk in 1982 and mastered in scriptures. At the time of arrest, he

was the disciplinarian of the monastery. Kunchok Nyima, 41 years old, belongs to Zari Township, Dzoge County, Sichuan.



Jampel Wangchuk

In spring 2008 monks in huge number were arrested from Drepung monastery and out of them around 40 were known to have been given various prison terms. The whereabouts of Ngawang Chonyi, Ngawang Sertho and a cook nicknamed as Gyakpa (Tib translation: Fatso), etc is still unknown. A monk, Gyalpo, died in prison due to torture in August 2009.

Drepung Monastery is still under heavy vigilance by the Chinese authorities. A 60-member work team led by high officials, deputy level, from the government of “Tibet Autonomous Region” (“TAR”), “TAR” National People’s Congress and People’s Political Consultative Conference, conduct daily political and legal classes for the monks. A team of People’s Armed Police (PAP) has been stationed in the monastery under the pretext of maintaining “firefighters”.

Congratulations to Mr. Liu Xiaobo for winning the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) congratulates Mr. Liu Xiaobo on being conferred this year's Nobel Peace Prize. The Centre is deeply moved at the recognition given to him for he embodies the views and courage of the Chinese people. The nation of China deserves this award for the millions of people who strived for freedom, dignity and human rights.

It is extremely encouraging to learn that the Nobel Committee defied the threat issued by the state of People's Republic of China against awarding this prestigious prize to Mr. Xiabo. In recognizing him a strong message has passed through the hearts and minds of the Chinese people that the movement for human rights and freedom in China is highly respected by the international community.

With the rise of China as a global power with enormous economic prosperity in the last three decades, it is about time the state allows genuine civil and political rights for the Chinese people. The Tibetans imprisoned for their expression of opinion and beliefs will be highly encouraged that Mr. Xiabo who has also advocated strongly for freedom in Tibet has won the Nobel Peace Prize which His Holiness the Dalai Lama won in 1989.

Pangri-Na Nun Released in Unstable Mental Condition

One of the peaceful protesters from the Pangri-Na Nunnery, Sonam Choedon, 36, from Lhoba Township, Kardze County, Kardze "Tibet Autonomous Prefecture" "TAP" Sichuan, has been released in

Rinpoche was also arrested. And on 22nd September 2009 in Kandze prefecture the intermediate court sentenced him for 8 years and 6 months. Right now he is in Sichuan



Sonam Choedon

unstable mental state after being repeatedly tortured in detention centre. According to information received by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), she has now become unable to control herself because of being hit by the butt of a gun. Due to which she is released and taken to her family. Now she is mentally unstable and continues to cry and needs constant care.

On 14 May 2008, around 200 nuns from Pangri-Na Nunnery and Yangteng Nunnery staged a peaceful protest against the Chinese Government in Kandze County, during that time the PSP and PAP held them and arrested lots of nuns. That time the head of these two nunneries Tulku Purbu Tsering

province in Meyang Prison. His condition is very critical as of now.

Out of the arrested nuns from the nunnery, the nuns from Pangri-Na, Sonam Lhatso sentenced for 10 years, and Bhumo for 9 years, Sokha and Yangchen Khando for 3 years, Tashi Lhamo for 2 years. Most of the other nuns have been released but they were send out of the Nunnery and were made to return back to their homeland.

Nun Sonam Choedon has been hit by the butt of the Gun and has received a severe injury on the head and thus she couldn't control herself and became mad. The Chinese police on 15 September 2008 had to take her back to home. She continues to cry and shouts and has to be taken care throughout the day.

Release of Intellectuals

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) received the news that, Kalsang Tsultrim, pen name Gyitsang Takmig from Kanlho "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" ('TAP'), Gansu Province, who has been arrested on 27 July 2010 on the ground of committing Political Error, has been released on 15 October 2010.

He composed and distributed VCDs on the history of Tibet and the lack of freedom in Tibet. The VCDs has been widely distributed in many Tibetan areas in Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan Province.

In September around 40 friends and family members went to ask about his whereabouts to the local officials, to which they were told to go back and that they would ask the leaders and inform them. He has been taken to different prisons since his arrest and was released from Kanlho Prefecture prison.

On 15 October 2010, Kalsang Tsultrim was released on the condition that he would not participate in any politics related work.

On 14 October 2010, writer Shogdung has also been released on bail.

Related information here:

A video appeal from a Tibetan inside Tibet to the International Community

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is organizing a press conference at Lhakpa Tsering Hall, Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) on the fresh videotaped information received from Tibet that appeal to the

Tibet. Kalsang Tsultrim took a great personal risk of recording and distributing video testimony giving detail account of Tibetan history since the flight of Dalai Lama into exile, lack of human rights in Tibet, suffering of Tibetan people, struggle, hopes, aspirations of Tibetan people inside Tibet and his appeal to the outside world. The hour long video testimony



Kalsang Tsultrim

International communities to act swiftly on behalf of the Tibetan people who are victims of human rights violations in Tibet.

Kalsang Tsultrim also known by pseudonym of Gyitsang Takmig is a monk of Gyitsang Gaden Choekorling Monastery in Sangchu County (Ch:Xiahe), Kanlho "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" ('TAP'), Gansu Province, one of the main focal points of last year's protests in

was recorded on 18 July 2009 and was later edited with the input of related video footages and snaps for the final version in a VCD that was widely distributed in many Tibetan areas in Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan Province. Kalsang is well versed in writing essays, composing lyrics etc. He had even authored a book.

According to the source who delivered the video testimony

told the Centre that, “ Kalsang Tsultrim wishes to distribute this video as widely as possible inside Tibet notwithstanding a great personal risk involved so as to educate primarily the illiterates and general Tibetan public who were fed with daily dose of government-sponsored propaganda with the true history of Tibetan struggle for freedom, the Dalai Lama’s call for the genuine autonomy through middle way approach, human rights situation in Tibet. He dealt in length with the Tibetan people’s hope and aspiration of the Dalai Lama’s return to rightful place, lack of human rights including religious freedom that led to the flight of many religious leaders including Karmapa, Arja Rinpoche and others who could have easily chosen luxury and privileges under the Chinese government rather than coming into exile.”

Kalsang Tsultrim video testimony also touches many recent events in Tibet and Chinese government policies which led to the displacement of a large number of Tibetan nomads in the name of development, and thereby completely altering their nomadic way of life, extraction of Tibet’s natural resources, destruction of fragile environment, economic marginalization and social exclusion of Tibetans, lack of freedom etc. He further elucidates on recent farming boycott movement in Tibet, self-immolation bid by Lobsang Tashi a.k.a Tapey of Kirti Monastery, suicide by a monk of Ragya Monastery, arbitrary arrest,

detention of thousands of Tibetans post 2008 March protests in Tibet.

The video message also appeals to the United Nations and International communities that they have moral obligation to speak on behalf of the Tibetan people inside Tibet who are living in constant fear and under severe repression.

Kalsang went on to retort the Chinese law on National Regional Autonomy by saying, “the laws on national regional autonomy stipulated under the Chinese Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights of minorities including Tibetans. But in reality it is a completely different scenario where our fundamental rights are not being respected at all. Tibet is governed as just another territory or region in the People’s Republic of China, but nothing is done to build the harmonious society that the government promises.”

“We do not have freedom of religion and politics because most of the religious and political websites are full of propaganda that distorts the situation. We do not hate the Chinese, but we respect truth and justice. We were protesting against Chinese rule because the local authorities are not acting according to China’s Constitution and autonomy laws. The Premier of the People’s Republic of China said that China respects truth and justice. But Tibetans don’t have equal religious, political, and

economic rights. So, many Tibetan people sacrificed their lives to protest against Chinese rule [over the past year], including myself here today, because we want equal human rights and freedom. We will never give up our fight for freedom and truth until Chinese policies change regarding the implementation of the Constitution,” Kalsang concluded.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) consider the video message and view conveyed by Kalsang Tsultrim purely as general exercise of the fundamental freedom of expression and right to opinion enshrined in the Chinese constitution and other major international covenants that China is party to. The Centre believes that the message and views conveyed by Kalsang is widely shared by people inside Tibet. Kalsang’s outburst is a sign of China’s continuing repression inside Tibet and a manifestation of widespread human rights violations. His initiative in this expose under such risky circumstances indicates the deep seated helplessness that pushes Tibetan people’s endurance to the very edge of human capacity.



TCHRD ACTIVITIES

Bulletin

Geshe Sonam Phuntsok's biography

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) published the biography of Geshe Sonam Phuntsok in October 2010. The book is available in Tibetan language only.

Tibetan literature to monks from 35 different monasteries. He also recorded historical descriptions of 13 monasteries in Kardze "TAP". Geshe was based at Dhargay Monastery in Rongbatsang District but often

Geshi Sonam Phuntsok was passed way on 5 April 2010 after failed to recover from his prolong health problems due to being tortured to prison.

Centre talk

On 18 October 2010, Mr. Jampa Monlam, Assistant Director was invited to give a talk on current human rights situation in Tibet, organized by campaign for Middle Approach at TCV Day School, Dharamsala India.

Around 150 local people from different walk of life attended the event and Mr. Jampa Monlam answered all the pertinent questions from the audience.

Workshop on Digital Security

Mr. Lobsang Tsultrim Yardrong, Field Officer, attended four day workshop on Computer Digital Security, organized by Students for Free Tibet (SFT) at annex hall of Library of Tibet Work and Achieve (LTWA), Ganchen Kyishong, Dharamsala.

More than 50 people representing from various Non -Governmental Organization NGOs, Government and other individual computer geeks attended the four day workshop.



Geshe Sonam Phuntsok

Background

Geshe Sonam Phuntosk was born in 1951 in Choesa Village, Shusar Township, Ronbatsang District, Kardze County. Early in his childhood, he was ordained as a monk and at the age of 18 he received sacred initiation and other religious teachings from eminent Buddhist masters. In the 1980s he taught

traveled to monasteries and remote villages throughout Kardze County to conduct religious ceremonies and teachings. In 1996, Geshe travelled to India to visit holy places for pilgrimage. He met with the Dalai Lama as part of his pilgrimage during that time. Geshe Sonam Phuntsok returned to Tibet and continued to conduct religious ceremonies for nearly three years thereafter.

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The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is an independent centre which aims to promote and protect human rights and a democratic polity for Tibet. It attempts to educate Tibetans on human rights principles and to work with other human rights and democracy groups as part of a worldwide movement towards these ends. TCHRD is registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act 21 of 1860 in 1996.

If you would like to subscribe to TCHRD's monthly Human Rights update or to order one of our publications, please send your name and postal details (including e-mail) to our office.

Partial list of TCHRD publications:

•The Next Generation: *The State of Education in Tibet Today* (1997) • Behind Bars: *Prison Conditions in Tibet* (1998) • Closing the Doors: *Religious Repression in Tibet* (1998) • *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • *Democracy: An Education Booklet* (1998) • Fearless Voices: *Accounts of Tibetan Former Political Prisoners* (1998) • *Human Rights: An Education Booklet* (1998) • *A Guide to Human Rights* (1999) • *A guide to Democracy* (1999) • *Tales of Terror: Torture in Tibet* (1999) • *Briefing paper for travellers to Tibet* (1999) • *Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet* (2000) • *Racial Discrimination in Tibet* (2000) • *Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy* (2000) • *Destruction of Serthar Institute : A Special Report (2002)* • *Dispossessed: Land and Housing Rights in Tibet* (2002) • *Strike hard Campaign: China's crackdown on political dissidence* (2004) • *State of education in Tibet: A human rights perspective* (2004) • *Kuxing: Torture in Tibet* (2005) • *Death Penalty in China* (2005) • *International Bill of Human Rights* (2005) • *TCHRD 1996-2006: A Decade of Human Rights Research* • *Railway and China's Development Strategy in Tibet: A Tale of Two Economies* • *Prisoners of Tibet* • *Annual Report : Human Rights Situation in Tibet* (1996 - 2008) • *Uprising in Tibetan 2008* • *Briefing paper for travellers to Tibet*

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