



HUMAN RIGHTS *update*
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HUMAN RIGHTS

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Ngawang Choephel Released

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy welcomes the release of Ngawang Choephel, a 36-year-old Tibetan musician, on medical parole. Ngawang Choephel served six years and half out of a total sentence of 18 years in Chinese administered prison in Tibet for filming traditional Tibetans arts in Chinese-controlled Tibet. He landed in Washington on 20 January 2002.

"This gesture by the Beijing Government is however not to be understood as China respecting the human rights in Tibet. We recognise this recent move as well-timed to coincide with the US President Bush' state visit to China in a months' time as well as to avert international criticism on human rights in Tibet during the impending 58th United Nations Human Rights Commission scheduled to be held in March 2002 in Geneva", said Norzin Dolma, TCHRD Researcher.

Ngawang Choephel studied ethnomusicology in Middlebury College in Vermont, US, as a Fulbright scholar in 1993 and 1994. In July 1995, the Chinese police arrested Ngawang Choephel from a market in Shigatse in Tibet while he was on a tour to research and film a documentary on traditional performing arts such as Tibetan folk songs and dances. He managed to give his videotapes to a western traveler before he was arrested. The 16 hours of the video footage revealed not even a single scene of political activity.

The Chinese government admitted to his detention on 15 October 1996, a year after his disappearance. He was

subsequently sentenced to 18 years on espionage charges of "spying" for the Tibetan Government-in-exile. Initially detained in Shigatse Nyari Detention Centre, he was transferred to Drapchi Prison on 27 June 1998 and then to the high security Powo Tramo Prison in Pome County, Nyingtri Prefecture, 500 km east of Lhasa, in July 1998. During his imprisonment, Ngawang Choephel endured heightened maltreatment and torture at the hands of prison official, which exacerbated his already frail health.

The landmark visit of his mother and his uncle in August 2000, and the recent release is the culmination of extensive campaigning by various human rights organisations, Tibetan Advocacy Groups, Parliamentarians, Activists, Supporters and several governments. Especially, the lone battle campaign for Choephel's release by his mother, Sonam Dekyi, over the years has played a crucial role.

In the Chengdu General Hospital where Choephel was supposed to have received medical treatment, the doctor described Choephel as suffering from four different ailments. He was denied proper medication when he suffered from severe illness during his prison days. Even while in his thirties, his co-prisoners nicknamed him as *Gyakar Pola* (Indian grandfather) owing to his frail health.

TCHRD would like to thank all the supporters, either individual or organisations, for their active support and campaign for the release of Ngawang Choephel.

In addition, TCHRD calls upon China to release all the political prisoners in Tibet. There are now 253 known political prisoners in numerous prisons and detention centres throughout Tibet for activities deemed to be "endangering state security". Other prominent political prisoners include

- Chadrel Rinpoche, the abbot of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery and Head of the Search Committee to Identify the Successor of the 10th Panchen Lama, who failed to make an appearance after the expiry of his six years' prison term in May 2001

- Geshe Sonam Phuntsok, the respected Buddhist practitioner and teacher, currently serving a five year sentence for conducting a prayer ceremony for the Dalai Lama, due for release 24 October 2004

- Phuntsok Wangdu, a monk serving 14 years imprisonment for instigating political activities, due for release 2 February 2011

- Tanak Jigme Sangpo, nominated by TCHRD for the 2001 Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders, currently serving a cumulative sentence of 28 years for "counter-revolutionary activities", due for release on 3 September 2011 by which time he will be 85 years old

- Ngawang Sangdrol, a nun serving a cumulative sentence of 21 years imprisonment for "separatist" activities, due for release in June 2013.

- Phuntsog Nyidron, recipient of the 1995 Reebok Human Rights Award, a nun who led a demonstration in Lhasa

in 1989, currently serving a cumulative sentence of 17 years and due for release in October 2006.

• According to the San Francisco-based Dui Hua Foundation, Ngawang Choephel was released under a previously unknown Chinese legal regulation allowing medical parole to prisoners who have served at least one third of their sentences and contracted illnesses in prison. These circumstances may apply to many of the Tibetan prisoners. In December 2001 TCHRD received information that Geshe Sonam Phuntsok is currently suffering ill-health as a result of his imprisonment. As he has served more than a third of his sentence, TCHRD therefore calls upon the Chinese Government to also immediately release Geshe Sonam Phuntsok under this legal regulation. ♦

Summary of human rights concern in Tibet during 2001

The events of 11 September 2001 caused a paradigm shift in international concern over human rights. While most states have measures in place to ensure the security of their citizens, others are taking advantage of the 11 September attacks to justify internal repression. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is a distinct case in point.

TCHRD is concerned that China has taken advantage of this global crisis to step up government action against those it labels "separatists": Uighurs, Tibetans and the Falun Gong. China is attempting to seek international justification and political sanction for its actions. Beijing chooses to draw no distinction between "terrorism" and "separatism".

Official manipulation of the new world order became clear at the 27 October 2001 Ninth Session of the 24th Meeting of China's National People's Congress

(NPC), where approval was given to the ruling State Council's proposal that the PRC join the international campaign against "terrorism, splittism and fanaticism". Addressing this meeting, Li Peng, NPC Chairman, said that, "The decision for China to join the global campaign is wise in the wake of 'splittist' activities in China and will be helpful to strike hard against terror created in the country by inside and outside enemies."

TCHRD believes that the events of 2001 make it more vital than ever that the international community — including the PRC — honours the international conventions and universally-recognised laws which specify the rights to which all human beings are entitled. With the global spotlight currently on China, due to its entry into the WTO and its winning bid for the 2008 Olympics, the international community has an opportunity and a duty to increase pressure on Beijing to carry out the obligations under international conventions to which it is a party.

China's widespread human rights abuses were a central feature of international opposition this year to its Olympic bid and its accession to the WTO. Ignoring world opinion, the Olympic selection panel and members of the WTO have in effect sanctioned Beijing's clearly-documented abuses against its own populace and in territories it occupies including Tibet.

In June 2001 the Fourth Tibet Work Forum was held behind closed doors in Beijing. This high-level meeting sets Beijing's upcoming policy on Tibet; this session has placed top down "economic development" and "stability" over all other freedoms and rights of the people. It is evident from the testimonies of refugees fleeing to exile in India that the majority of Tibetans do not believe that they will ever reap the much-vaunted "benefits" from the mammoth "development" projects now being implemented on the plateau.

The White Paper issued on 8 November 2001 by the Information Office of China's State Council — *Tibet's March Toward Modernisation* — is crafted to further promote and enhance

China's image in the global arena. Brushing aside the accepted norms of civil and political rights as "Western notions", China continues to call on cultural relativism to justify its human rights abuses. While still claiming that "economic development" supersedes all other rights, China ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in February 2001. Yet, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) remains to be ratified more than three years after PRC became a signatory to the document.

In his 10 December 2001 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, said that in this new century, "...the sovereignty of States must no longer be used as a shield for gross violations of human rights" and "...peace must be made tangible in the daily existence of every individual in need". He called upon the world to consolidate its resolve to fight against injustice and human rights violations.

TCHRD has relied upon the framework of ICESCR and ICCPR to present and document the human rights situation in Tibet throughout 2001. At the heart of these two international covenants is the right of all peoples to self-determination, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Tibetans are recognised as a distinct people with their own history, culture, language, religion; their own ethnic identity and a strong connection to their own territory. In the context of the Tibetan people, the right to self-determination must relate to the fact that Tibetans are a people under occupation and the cases of human rights violations documented in this report stem from this fact. During the PRC's domination over Tibet's political, economic, social, cultural and religious life for more than half a century, there has been a total disregard for the Tibetan people's right to self-determination.

At the much-publicised September 2001 Durban World Conference on

Continued on Page 4

This is a regular section profiling current political prisoners currently imprisoned in Tibet

Three more years for leading prison protest

Sonam Choephel, aged 29, was born in Damshung County, Lhasa City. He became a monk of Khamang Monastery, in Damshung County, while he was in his early childhood.

On 10 April 1995, Choephel and five other monks went to sacred Jokhang Temple in Lhasa and staged a pro-independence demonstration. Immediately, Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials of the area intercepted the protesting monks and took them to Lhasa PSB Detention Centre. The officials subjected the detainees to prolonged interrogation and torture sessions in the detention centre.

In October of the same year, Lhasa People's Intermediate Court passed sentences on the five detainees on "counter-revolutionary" charges. Their sentence ranged from three to five years. Sonam Choephel was sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment.

At the end of 1995 the six monks were transferred to Drapchi Prison where they were tortured and beaten severely. Sangay Tenphel, one of the six monks, succumbed to Chinese brutality on 6 May 1996 after intensive torture techniques employed by the Chinese officials. Such torture methods are usually employed by Chinese authorities

to extract more confession as well as to dampen the detainee's nationalist sentiment. Tenphel's death is directly attributed to torture that he suffered at the hands of prison officials.

On 1 May 1998, during a Chinese national flag hoisting ceremony in the compound of Drapchi Prison, to commemorate the International Labour Day, the prison inmates staged a major demonstration. Subsequently, the prison officials crushed the peaceful demonstration by mass beatings and torture. The political prisoners and the criminal prisoners were forced to attend a flag hoisting ceremony three days later on 4 May 1998 to celebrate the International Youth Day. Due to the 1 May incident the prison officials have heightened security to avert another similar protest. Yet again the political prisoners led a peaceful demonstration against the Chinese and demanded for independent Tibet and to stop the genocide in Tibet. Sonam Choephel was in the forefront of the demonstration that time.

In the course of demonstration, the ever-vigilant PSB and PAP (People's Armed Police) beat the prisoners mercilessly and quelled the demonstration within minutes. All those who had participated in the demonstration suffered

punishments in various forms such as beatings, sentence extension and confinement in solitary cells.

On that very evening, Lobsang Choephel, a monk from Khamang Monastery, committed suicide by using iron bars of the toilet window to hang himself, unable to bear Chinese brutality. In yet another case five nuns also committed suicide for the same reason. Two other male prisoners died owing to the same incident. This protest incident resulted in total eight deaths, solitary confinement for many prisoners and sentence extension for many more.

Sonam Choephel and four other prisoners were singled out for their initiatives in leading the demonstration and got severely beaten. They were kept in solitary confinement cells for some months. Choephel's sentence was increased by three years for his participation in the May demonstration. In total, he is serving seven years' sentence in Drapchi Prison. ♦

Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, one of the main themes of discussion was economic, social and cultural discrimination based on race. TCHRD gained accreditation to this conference and presented the case that the discrimination suffered by Tibetans inside Tibet has its roots in the fact that Tibetans do not have the right to self-determination and are a race under occupation.

On International Human Rights Day, the UN Human Rights Commissioner, Mary Robinson, reiterated that the anti-discrimination agenda adopted at the Durban Conference should be "an integral part of efforts to safeguard against any erosion of human rights standards that might flow as an unintended consequence of measures to counter terror". Her words of concern reflect on totalitarian regimes and their new-found interpretations of "terrorism".

Based primarily on TCHRD's interviews with recent arrivals from Tibet, and supplemented by secondary sources, this report furnishes clear evidence that during 2001 China has systematically violated the human rights of Tibetans through policies leading to acts and omissions. Additionally, official Chinese sources occasionally provide and publish information that gives insights into the real scale of human rights violations continuing across the Tibetan plateau.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

With its ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights this year, it now becomes obligatory for China to enact domestic legislation implementing the articles of the Covenant. Guided by the ICESCR framework, this report examines the situation regarding rights of Tibetans inside Tibet to education, economic participation, health, housing and livelihood. We have additionally integrated the rights of women and children, as they are two of Tibet's most vulnerable groups under China's colonisation.

Attempting to ensure women's equality,

the PRC has periodically introduced a number of domestic laws pertaining to women's rights. The legislation now covers women's political participation, employment, labour protection, education and marriage, among other concerns. To date, these domestic laws have failed to provide women across China with protection via rights to which they are universally entitled. This leaves Tibetan women little or no options to exercise their basic right to freely determine their futures. Birth control policies continue to deny the reproductive rights of women in Tibet to control the size of their families, decide upon spacing between births and take informed decisions on abortion. Severe penalties are exacted for non-compliance with reproductive policies. The disproportionate discrimination faced by women in Tibet is further examined particularly under *The Right to Health*.

Children are the most vital assets of any society, while also remaining the most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. China has signed and ratified many international conventions guaranteeing children protection from abuse and support for their welfare. Despite this, countless children in Tibet remain deprived of access to basic education and adequate healthcare. This explains why almost half of this year's asylum seekers are under the age of 18. Violations of The Rights of the Child are documented in this report, particularly under *The Right to Education* and *Health* chapters.

The Right to Livelihood

A very high proportion of recent arrivals interviewed by TCHRD revealed that Tibetans, particularly in rural areas, are being denied their right to livelihood. Nomads are facing a programme of excessive taxation and fencing of grasslands which appears designed to destroy a quintessential Tibetan way of life. Tibetans in the urban areas are facing severe discrimination and lack of opportunity in relation to employment and business. One of the greatest threats to traditional Tibetan livelihoods is the

ongoing environmental destruction caused by China's intensive exploitation of resources, from which there are also no benefits that flow back to the Tibetan people.

Under this chapter, TCHRD examines the right to livelihood of Tibetans as well as the policies of the Chinese government that infringe on these rights. The section further examines Beijing's ambitious new economic policies and their impact on Tibetans within the narrow definition of development embraced by the PRC government. With Beijing's emphasis on economic development, reinforced by the 2001 release of its White Paper on Modernisation, the Chinese leadership shows no interest in adopting a holistic approach to development, appropriately outlined in the UN Declaration on the Right to Development, which stresses the indivisibility and inter-dependability of all rights.

China claims to be boosting Tibet economically; however, policies and infrastructure are designed to consolidate Chinese control over the region and benefit Chinese migrants to the detriment of the Tibetan population. Not only is there official neglect of their basic needs, but Tibetans are not consulted on, or meaningfully involved in, any sector of the development of their country. The Chinese government is pursuing a policy of population transfer to suit its economic and political agenda to marginalise Tibetans in their own land. The influx of Chinese settlers further perpetrates racism and discrimination against Tibetans, particularly in the urban areas. This includes a wide-ranging bias in employment with preference given to those fluent in Chinese and preferential treatment of Chinese migrants.

The Right to Education

The NGO Declaration adopted at the Durban Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance states that "...the mono-cultural and hegemonic practices of the Chinese government, through the school system and through other State

institutions, has caused forced integration and assimilation and deprived the Tibetan people of their basic human rights". In real terms, this means that Tibetan children suffer a high degree of discrimination in gaining access to education, and within the curriculum and everyday teaching practices.

China's proclamations over the enormous investment made in developing education has little to show in the way of ground realities in Tibet. In many rural areas there are either no schools or those that exist cater only to those students who can afford the fees. An estimated 85 percent of parents reside in rural areas, with incomes that do not allow their children the luxury of attending schools demanding high fees and located far from their homes. Moreover, Tibetan parents are extremely concerned with the increasing and overt Sinicisation of school curriculae. The all-pervasive Chinese medium of instruction puts those Tibetan children who are able to attend school at a further academic disadvantage. For these reasons, juveniles are increasingly dominating the numbers of refugees fleeing into exile.

The Right to Health

With extremely limited access to healthcare facilities, the wellbeing of Tibet's population is under serious threat, with the levels of malnutrition, tuberculosis and other preventable diseases reaching epidemic proportions. In most remote areas, where the majority of the Tibetan populace resides, adequate healthcare facilities are virtually non-existent. For Tibetans within both urban and rural areas, the cost of available healthcare is prohibitive. Rampant discrimination is yet another inhibitive factor, all of which has led to many preventable deaths and unalleviated physical suffering and distress.

With estimates of up to one million HIV positive persons across China this year, and an annual increase rate of 30 percent, one can clearly extrapolate the incidence of HIV/AIDS in Tibet. The current absence of testing facilities,

treatment and support centres, or education campaigns, exposes once again China's blind refusal to take responsibility for containing the epidemic.

The Right to Housing

The ratification of ICESCR in February 2001 obligates China to now afford "adequate housing to everyone". This means providing housing fit for habitation, in a non-discriminatory manner, and includes the development of laws to protect against unfair evictions and demolitions. It also means introducing national legislation implementing the principles as defined under ICESCR as necessary to the provision of adequate housing. Despite issuing statements on the bare necessities of accommodation, the Beijing authorities had by year's end not enacted specific legislation on housing.

From the testimonies given by recent arrivals in India, it is evident that while discrimination persists against Tibetans over urban housing, there is also a distinct lack of infrastructure and available materials in rural areas as well. Cultural and climatic inappropriateness of new housing is another serious concern. The most numerous, and blatant housing rights violations during the year 2001, however, were the extensive forced evictions of monks and nuns, primarily due to government-enforced ceilings on the number of practitioners permitted in religious institutions. Urban development projects under Beijing's new economic policies also led to evictions and demolition of Tibetan dwellings.

Civil and Political Rights

Under the framework of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, this report primarily documents the lack of freedom of expression that results in arbitrary detention and torture, and the lack of freedom of religious belief leading to the imposition of restrictions on, and in some cases even destruction of, religious institutions. Freedom House, the New

York-based freedom and democracy watchdog, released its annual study of world freedom on 18 December 2001. The study reveals Tibet as one of the worst-rated areas in the world for political rights and civil liberties.

Political Freedoms

TCHRD continues to be highly concerned about the arrest and sentencing of prisoners of conscience and the existence of legislation providing for their detention. Prolonged detentions without trial, inadequate trial procedures, and the absence of legal safeguards to assure a fair and open trial, have been the cases throughout this year. Reported torture and ill treatment of prisoners of conscience — usually in detention centres administered by Public Security Bureaus — and conditions of detention are deplorable. There are currently 254 known political prisoners out of which 37 known arrests took place this year. Ten Tibetans died directly due to torture and ill-treatment.

A major policy development with specific implications for Tibet has been the re-launch in April 2001 of Beijing's "Strike Hard" Campaign, first implemented in 1996. This anti-political activism campaign is targeted towards "achieving the ultimate goal of improving China's public order situation in the future". It legalises heavy crackdowns on drug trafficking, smuggling activities, mafiatric crimes, financial scams and the guiding of asylum seekers across international borders. Under its auspices, local Party Committees are to strike relentlessly against activities that advocate local nationalism.

In Tibet, the campaign's implementation has been primarily against peaceful protest demonstrations and/or the possession of "illegal" materials; this term includes the Tibetan flag, a photo of the Dalai Lama and any materials deemed "political". Furthermore, on 27 June 2001 the "TAR" Higher People's Court stated that the "TAR Strike Hard Campaign will strike against those who endanger national security and those who assist people to illegally cross into foreign countries". As

a consequence of the two-year extension of "Strike Hard", many Tibetans have been arrested for "political activism" during 2001.

At the same time that Tibetans are being denied freedom of speech and expression, China is utilising the full force of its propaganda channels in an all-out endeavour to enhance its own image internationally and also project an image of the "general well-being and happiness" of Tibetans under Chinese rule. China has aspired to extraordinary levels of spin doctoring this year in the utilisation of not only its own State media, but also the international media.

Recently Beijing's propaganda machinery boasted that the number of political prisoners in Tibet has dropped significantly and its media projected a glorified image of prison conditions on the plateau which are, in fact, deplorable and life-threatening. While it may be true that the actual number of political prisoners has dropped, strict vigilance and counter measures have been stepped up to prevent any activities "endangering state security". In addition, the "reform through labour" scheme and detentions are utilised to clamp down on dissent and criticism.

Freedom of Religious Belief and Practice

Lengthy and incessant Communist Party "work team" visits to propagate loyalty to Beijing and Marxist ideology — resulting in the expulsion of many monks and nuns from their institutions — exemplified the suppression of religious freedom over the year 2001. A heightened Dalai Lama denunciation campaign, and stricter control on public expressions of belief and practice, were further widespread violations of the freedom of religious belief. During this year, 9,408 religious practitioners were expelled from various religious institutions and the closure of two major institutions was reported.

Designed to suppress the religious and patriotic sentiments of Tibetans, and in particular of the populace in robes, the ongoing "Patriotic Education" Campaign initiated in 1996 has imposed

ceilings on the number and age limits of those entering religious institutions, leading to many arrests and expulsions. Almost all religious institutions now have a "Democratic Management Committee" manned by Communist Party cadres installed on their premises to control and oversee the working of the institution. Monasteries and nunneries are increasingly perceived as "hotbeds of splittist activity" and tools of the "Dalai Clique".

The game of reincarnation politics now played by Beijing is another official intrusion to control Tibetan culture, identity and the whole traditional way of life and belief. Obvious previous attempts have been Beijing's interference in the search for the reincarnation of not only the Panchen Lama but also, more recently, of Reting Rinpoche. This year has also seen statements on the controversial issue of the reincarnation of the present Dalai Lama. China has made known the key role it intends to play in selecting any future Dalai Lama.

According to a US State Department report on religion released in October 2001, "...repression of religious freedom in Tibet has reached severe levels". Guo Jinlong, Party Secretary of the "TAR", in his interview with the *New York Times* this year, made a peculiar but telling comment that, "...the belief of the Tibetan school of Buddhism is the choice of the local residents and the local Tibetans will have a better choice of religious belief when the economy has well-developed in the region". This reveals the intent behind Beijing's current push towards economic advancement. It also illustrates Beijing's view of Tibetans — and within that, Tibetan religion — as a "primitive, backward and ignorant race".

The Status of New Tibetan Refugees

In addition to this report adhering to the two covenants utilised above, TCHRD draws special attention to the particular plight of the recent Tibetan refugees and their rights under international law, in particular the Refugee Convention. The Centre documents the experiences of

Tibetans who were forced to flee their homeland in 2001 in search of protection against human rights abuses. Fear of persecution and denial of fundamental human rights leading to suppression of their religion, culture and identity, and discrimination faced in every aspect of their life — in particular in education — forces thousands of Tibetans to attempt the arduous trek into exile.

The "TAR's" border security officials detained 2,500 Tibetans trying to cross the border during six months of 2001. Recently-arrived refugees have testified that many of these Tibetans subsequently suffered beatings, arrest, torture and imprisonment — in some cases resulting in death. Additionally, the heightened current political instability in Nepal — the region through which Tibetans must transit to escape occupied Tibet — and the recent declaration of a state of emergency poses an increased threat to the asylum seeker's ability to successfully reach freedom.

While acknowledging the longstanding generosity of Nepal's government to Tibetan asylum seekers, and the existing arrangement between Nepal's Department of Immigration and the Kathmandu-based United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) which allows refugees to pass through Nepal and be processed for third country resettlement, TCHRD is currently gravely concerned about the ad hoc forced deportation of Tibetan refugees and the probability that such cases may be increasingly common along the Nepal/Tibet border. Such forced deportations reflect an absence of understanding of the human rights of asylum seekers by Nepalese border officials, as violation of Tibetan asylum seekers.

(The above summary is the executive summary of the 2001 Annual Report: Human Rights Situation in Tibet, a report released by TCHRD this month.

The report can be accessed at www.tchrd.org, or further copies can be obtained by contacting TCHRD on phone +91 1892 23363/25874, or e-mail dsala@tchrd.org. ♦



Fifth Annual Workshop on Human Rights and Democracy in Dehradun



The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy organised its fifth workshop on human rights and democracy at SOS Vocational Training Centre in Selakui, Dehradun, from 9-13 January 2001. Almost 65 Tibetan students from various colleges and universities all over India attended the workshop.

The resource person for the workshop included Kalon Lobsang Nyandak Zayul, Kalon for the Department of Finance and Health; Mr. Pema Jungney, Tibetan Parliament Member of ATPD; Prof. Jampa Samten (Associate Professor in Tibetan History and Culture), CIHTS, Ms. Nirmla Pandit, Director, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies; Mr. Ashok Aggarwal, a Lawyer based in Delhi; Mr. Migmar, former political prisoner; Ms. Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer, TCHRD; and Mr. Lobsang Tsering, Tibetan Researcher, TCHRD.

Students were exposed to a wide range of topics and concepts such as Future Vision of Tibet, Charter of Tibetan government-in-exile, Youth and Activism, Introduction to United Nations

System, United Nations and Tibet, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Various methodologies including role-plays, simulation exercises, group discussion and video screenings were incorporated into the sessions to enthuse the student participants.

Besides role-play on Tibetan Parliamentarians, the Centre held a quiz competition on human rights and democracy for the students. The participants had a memorable time during a sightseeing tour of Rajpur, Clement Town and Mussoorie in-between the workshop sessions.

The overall response from the evaluation session for the participants revealed the workshop was a great success in terms of imparting knowledge about human rights and democracy in particular and Tibetan issues in general. The participants were extremely forthcoming with queries and suggestion and the level of participation and interaction was good. ♦

Press Conferences

Release of 2001 Annual Report

On the eve of the release of the *Annual Report 2001: Human Rights Situation in Tibet*, the Centre held a press conference at Lhakpa Tsering Memorial Hall on 8 January 2002.

Both the local Indian and Tibetan press attended the press conference, which was conducted by Ms. Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer; Mr. Lobsang Tsering and Mr. Jampa Monlam, both TCHRD researchers.

The report detail human rights violation perpetrated by the Chinese government against Tibetans in the year 2001. ♦

Ngawang Choephel's prison release

The Centre held a press conference on 21 January 2002 in Lower Dharamsala for the local Indian press and Tibetan media people upon having received the news of Ngawang Choephel's release and his subsequent safe arrival in Washington on 20 January 2002.

Mr. Lobsang Tsering and Norzin Dolma (Mrs), researchers, and Mr. Ugyen Tsewang, Information Officer, conducted the press conference. ♦

TCHRD would like to wish all its subscribers, members, supporters and well-wishers a wonderful New Year 2002 and a happy Tibetan Losar. ♦

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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.

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TCHRD's publications:

1996 Annual Report: *Tibet: One More Year of Political Repression* (English and Tibetan editions) • 1997 Annual Report: *China in Tibet: Striking Hard Against Human Rights* (English and Tibetan editions) • The Next Generation: *The State of Education in Tibet Today* (1997) • *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • 1998 Annual Report: *Tibet: Crackdown on Humanity* • *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) • *South East Asia: Human Rights NGO Seminar on Tibet* (Proceedings) (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) • 1999 Annual Report: *Tibet: Tightening of Control* (2000) • *TCHRD Review* (2000) • *Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet* (2000) • *Racial Discrimination in Tibet* (2000) • *Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy* (2000) • *Prisoners of Tibet: Profiles of current political prisoners* (2000) • 2000 Annual Report: *Enforcing Loyalty* (2001).

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Please e-mail us at dsala@tchrd.org or yaukatsang@tchrd.org or write to us on our postal address for further information.



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update

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Chadrel Rinpoche's Release: Another Token Gesture

TCHRD has received reliable information that Chadrel Rinpoche, the 62-year-old former abbot of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery and Head of the Search Committee of the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama, has been released from Chuandong No. 3 Prison, Sichuan Province. The Centre awaits more confirmed information on the exact date on which Chadrel Rinpoche was released.

Even after release, Chadrel Rinpoche continued to be held under house arrest in Shigatse, "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"). No additional information on his exact whereabouts in Shigatse or his state of health are available at this moment.

"This release is yet another token gesture by the Chinese government that strangely coincides with the visit of President Bush. The fact remains that Chadrel Rinpoche continues to be placed under house arrest which is an extended form of detention and that raises serious concern," said Youdon Aukatsang, the Senior Programme Officer of the Centre.

Chadrel Rinpoche was supposed to have been released in May 2001 following a six-year prison term on charges of "plotting to split the country" and "leaking state secrets". Since May 1995, details regarding his prison term had been shrouded with inconsistent official statements.

On 14 May 1995, the Dalai Lama announced the then six-year old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the reincarnation of



the 10th Panchen Lama. Three days later on 17 May 1995, Chadrel Rinpoche disappeared.

Three months after his disappearance, a spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Chadrel Rinpoche was detained but stated he was "ill and in hospital". The first official admission of Chadrel Rinpoche's detention was not made until May 1997, when Xinhua, the government news agency, reported on 21 April 1997, that Shigatse People's Intermediate Court had sentenced Chadrel Rinpoche to six years' imprisonment commencing on 5 May 1997.

Around September 1997, initial reports filtered out of Tibet on Chadrel Rinpoche's

detention places. Previously detained in Trochu County (Ch: Heishui), Chadrel Rinpoche was later imprisoned in Chuandong No. 3 Prison, Tazhu County, Sichuan Province, which held highly sensitive political dissidents. Chadrel Rinpoche was reportedly kept in the top-secret compound, referred to as a "prison within the prison" sometime in late April or early May after the sentencing.

China's Revised Criminal Procedure Law stipulates that the detention period, starting from the day of arrest, is counted in the term of prison sentence. In Chadrel Rinpoche's case, it was blatantly violated because even after expiry of his prison term on May 2001, he continued to be detained.

Prior to his detention, Chadrel Rinpoche held the posts of the Director of the Civil Administration Society and Chairman of the Democratic Management Committee of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. Rinpoche was the member of National Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and Vice-chairman of the "TAR" CPPCC.

By May 1996, Chadrel Rinpoche had been dismissed from all official posts because he had "gone against the basic principles and lost the political stand of a patriot". On 24 May 1996, Radio Lhasa announced that "in doing this, we have purged the CPPCC of bad elements and have made it clean". ♦

TCHRD pays tribute to two former prisoners of conscience



courtesy : Lobsang Wangya

"Faith, Faith kept me going" : An obituary for Ani Pachen

Ani Pachen Dolma passed away on 2 February 2002 due to heart failure following a prolonged illness. She was 69 years old.

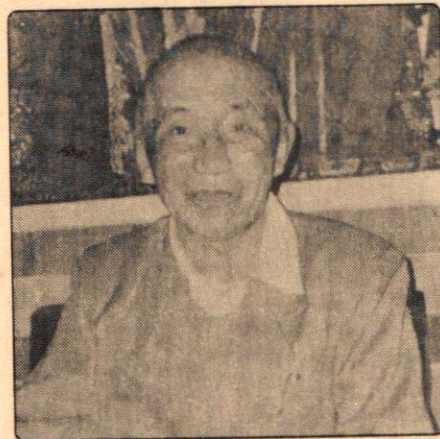
Ani Pachen, as she is more commonly known with her exuberant smile, was a deceptive shield against the memories of the many sufferings she endured in Chinese occupied Tibet. Ani Pachen spent 21 years imprisonment by the Chinese authorities until her release in January 1981. She survived maltreatment in prison, which included solitary confinement, exposure to extreme cold, starvation, beatings, and many other emotional and physical traumas.

Ani Pachen was born in Gonjo in Kham, eastern Tibet, as the only child to the chieftain of the Lemdha clan. Although expected to marry into another chieftain's family, she evaded this role by becoming a nun. When Gonjo was overthrown by Chinese soldiers and with her father's death in 1958, Ani Pachen abandoned her religious responsibilities to lead the resistance against the Chinese occupying force until her capture.

In the late 1980s when Tibet saw

resurgence in political protest, Ani Pachen was actively involved in demonstrations in Lhasa. Fearing re-arrest, she was compelled to flee into exile in India in 1988. She settled in Dharamsala and since then was actively involved in the Tibetan cause. She travelled worldwide and became a well-known figure. Her remarkable life-story was published in a book titled "Sorrow Mountain: the journey of a Tibetan warrior nun" in 2000.

Obituary of Yulo Dawa Tsering



Yulo Dawa Tsering, a former political prisoner, who spent a total of 27 years in prison for advocating Tibetan religious freedom passed away on 16 January 2002 at his home in Lhasa.

Yulo Dawa Tsering was born in 1930 in Gushi Township, Taktse County, Lhasa City. At an early age he was recognised as the reincarnation of Choney Yulo Rinpoche and subsequently ordained in Gaden Monastery, one of the largest monasteries in Tibet. In 1950, Yulo Dawa Tsering was awarded the prestigious degree of the "Doctor of Divinity" and later studied at the Gyuto Tantric School.

In 1959, the Chinese police arrested Yulo Dawa Tsering for participating in the March 1959 Lhasa Uprising. He was eventually sentenced to life imprisonment. With the sentencing, Dawa Tsering was

sent to a hard labour camp in Drapchi Prison. He, however, secured release in 1979.

Yulo Dawa Tsering went on to teach Buddhist philosophy at Lhasa University till 1982. In 1982, he was appointed as a member of the Chinese People Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). He was also a member of the Lhasa Buddhist Association.

At around midnight of 26 December 1987, Yulo Dawa Tsering was arrested along with his friend Ven. Thupten Tsering, a monk from Sera Monastery. They were arrested for giving a video interview with an Italian tourist, Dr. Dallari Stefano.

According to the 10 March 1988 Radio Lhasa Broadcast, "On the afternoon of 26 July 1987, two monks, Yulo Dawa Tsering and Thupten Tsering spread reactionary views, such as Tibetan Independence, to foreign reactionary elements who came to Tibet as tourist. The two monks also viciously vilified the policies adopted by the Chinese Communist Party and the People's government." Yulo Dawa Tsering and Thupten Tsering were charged under Article 102 (2) of the Chinese Criminal Law for spreading "counter-revolutionary propaganda".

After their arrests, both monks were detained in Seitru Detention Centre for one year and seven months. On 19 January 1989, the Lhasa Intermediate People's Court sentenced Yulo Dawa Tsering to 10 years and Thupten Tsering to six years imprisonment. Both were transferred to Drapchi prison.

Yulo was finally released on medical parole on 4 November 1994. Three weeks later, a United Nations Human Rights delegation visited Lhasa to assess China's record on religious freedom and Yulo was allowed to meet with the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, Mr. Abdelfattah Amor. Yulo expressed his concern about the version of Tibet's distorted history that is known to the world and said that he had been

This is a regular section profiling political prisoners currently imprisoned in Tibet

Three times arrest on political ground

A 33-year-old Lobsang Namgyal (alias Lonam), a monk, is originally from Chushul County, Lhasa City. His family used to farm for a living. During his childhood, he went to a local primary school for five years. Later, he got the opportunity to study in Nechung Buddhist College, Lhasa.

In March 1990, Lonam was first arrested for helping a group of nuns from Shugseb Nunnery evade arrest by the Chinese authorities. He helped these "fugitive nuns" disguised in lay women's dresses and took them to their nunnery. These nuns had participated in a political demonstration for three days from 5-7 March 1995.

Soon after his arrest, Lonam was taken to Seitru Detention Centre, Lhasa, where he suffered torture. He was accused of being a "bad influence" and "instigating" the other Tibetan prisoners in the detention centre.

Hence, Lonam was later transferred to Lhasa PSB Detention Centre where also he did not escape Chinese torture. Once, Lonam was "tied face to face with a girl political prisoners named Tsekyi and tortured in this position".

After one year detention, Lonam was released. Before being released, Lonam was ordered to pay for his food for the entire period of his detention at the rate of 3 RMB per day or else he would

not be allowed to leave the prison. It is unknown as yet whether Lonam actually paid the demanded sum.

After release, Lonam was forbidden to re-join his college. So, he lived in Lhasa and did religious services for Tibetan households in Lhasa. He was "still pursuing that occupation when he was arrested in February 1995 without a warrant or any statement of ground".

Lonam was detained in Lhasa PSB Detention Centre for six months. He was later sentenced to three years "reform-through-labour" in Trisam "Reform-through Labour" Camp. During his detention, Lonam endured immense suffering and beatings at the hands of prison officials.

In early 1997, Lonam was released from prison. Even after release, Lonam was kept under constant surveillance and summoned for regular interrogations about his activities.

Since Lonam was highly educated, he used to give tuition to students during his spare time. Except for private tuition, he could never hope to get employment in government-run offices.

In April 2001, with the re-launch of "Strike Hard" campaign by the Beijing Government all over China and Tibet, many arrests took place. While the main mission

of the campaign is to strike hard against criminal activities of varying nature such as smuggling, drug trafficking, mafiatric crimes, murders, the mode of the campaign takes a different dimension in Tibet. The "Strike Hard" campaign in Tibet is aimed solely to crackdown heavily on political activities.

In June 2001, some people were arrested from Lhasa on suspicions of involvement in political activities. Lonam was one amongst them and taken to Lhasa PSB Detention Centre. During his detention, Lonam underwent intensive interrogations and beatings. For many months since his detention, Lonam's whereabouts and condition remained unknown to his family and friends.

It was only around November 2001 that Lhasa Intermediate People's Court passed sentence on Lonam. He was sentenced to four years' imprisonment on charges of "endangering state security". Within ten days of the sentencing, Lonam was transferred to Drapchi Prison where he remains currently incarcerated. ♦

arrested for political reasons.

In 1996 it was reported that Yulo was placed under what is effectively house arrest, apparently as a punishment for those comments to UN officials. Three members of the European Parliament (MEPs) visited Lhasa in early November 1996 and were allowed to meet with Yulo for ten minutes. The meeting took place at an unnamed location, amidst high security, with Chinese officials present and photographs forbidden. A Tibetan-English interpreter was not provided. The MEPs reported that Yulo appeared to be under some kind of restraint and was not the master of his own movements.

In September 1998, Mrs Mary Robinson visited Tibet and was also prevented from meeting with Yulo Dawa Tsering. Until Yulo Dawa Tsering's death on 16 January 2002, he was believed to be under close surveillance by Chinese authorities. ♦

Tibetan Students denied University Education

TCHRD received confirmed information that in 2001 approximately 300 Tibetan students were denied their opportunity for higher education. These courses included specialised fields such as medicine, secretarial studies, banking, accountancy, police force etc.

According to an exclusive bulletin on exam results published on 30 July 2001 by the "TAR" Department of Education, the cut off score was 225. Four days later, a revised higher score was announced on TV causing great distress to the students and their families who had already been celebrating their admittance into university.

Approximately 300 Tibetans including parents and students gathered at the office of the Lhasa City Education Department to present their grievances. Receiving little response from heads of this department, they then proceeded to the "TAR" government office, and protested against

this abrupt and unexplained change. With the evidence of the original published bulletin, they presented their case.

A junior officer of the department tried to explain that this was solely an unfortunate typist error. He then demanded to know who was heading this protest and stated it was "not healthy to do things like this." This intimidated the angry and distressed parents, and the more assertive ones were even singled out for insinuating threats. The junior officer demanded to know who specifically would be responsible if the protest turned political.

This protest, and fears of escalation of unrest, forced the government to attempt to rectify the situation. They offered these students the opportunity of remaining for an additional year in their current class with an exemption of fees. In reality, this is in no manner an effective solution, as it is of no benefit for the students to repeat a year successfully completed, and they then face no guarantee of entrance into university the following year.

According to one of the students, the Chinese government are also falsely claiming that only 200 students were affected due to this discrepancy. Apart from this, these university positions are specifically meant to be allocated to "ethnic minority groups". He stated that Chinese officials take bribes to recruit Chinese students in the reserved seats meant for the Tibetans in the category of "ethnic minority group".

In a nutshell, many Chinese are stealing those few opportunities that are extended to Tibetan students. This speculation is supported by the fact that in 2001, of the 1019 students who qualified for these specifically allocated positions, only 405 were Tibetan and the remaining 515 were Chinese students.

This situation is particularly relevant considering claims by Beijing that enormous investments are made into developing education within the "TAR". These claims are contradicted by the fact that one third of all Tibetans fleeing Tibet each year are children seeking education. In 2001 alone, 750 children below the age of 18 arrived in exile, mostly for educational purposes. ♦

Memorandum to President George W. Bush prior to his recent Beijing visit

TCHRD in its memorandum submitted to President George W. Bush days before his recent two-day China visit urged His Excellency to raise urgent human rights issues relating to Tibet during talks with the Government of People's Republic of China. Following is the content of the memorandum:

TCHRD would like to thank the US Government for its vigilant monitoring of China's human rights record, particularly through the annual State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. We welcome the news that Your Excellency intend to raise human rights issues during this trip to Beijing. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight some pertinent issues relating to human rights situation in Tibet.

While we welcome the recent release of Ngawang Choephel as a positive gesture, we would like to bring to the attention of Your Excellency that China continues to detain at least 252 known Tibetans for alleged political activities, including actions such as peaceful demonstrations and possessing photos of the Dalai Lama or copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We urge Your Excellency to request the Chinese Government to uphold the universal rights to freedom of speech, opinion, assembly and religion; to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and most importantly to release all Tibetan political prisoners.

Of most serious concern is the Chinese Government's failure to produce any information on the whereabouts of the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the world's youngest political prisoner. We ask that Your Excellency persuade the Chinese Government to grant access to the Panchen Lama by a United Nations' representative.

We also draw Your Excellency's attention to the following Tibetan prisoners of conscience:

Geshe Sonam Phuntsok, a respected

Buddhist practitioner and teacher, currently serving a five-year sentence for conducting a prayer ceremony for the Dalai Lama, who is suffering serious health problems and should be released on medical parole

Tanak Jigme Sangpo, nominated for the 2001 Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders, currently serving a cumulative sentences of 28 years for "counter-revolutionary activities", due for release on 3 September 2011 by which time he will be 85 years old

Ngawang Sangdrol, a nun serving a cumulative sentence of 21 years imprisonment for "separatist" activities

Phuntsok Nyidron, recipient of the 1995 Reebok Human Rights Award, a nun who led a peaceful demonstration in Lhasa in 1989 is serving a cumulative sentence of 17 years.

We are also concerned about recent demolitions at, and expulsions from the Serthar Buddhist Institute. Until recently this was Tibet's leading Buddhist institution, drawing students from throughout Asia to learn and practice Buddhism. The harsh restrictions imposed on the Institute are a clear breach of the right to freedom of religious belief and practice. We urge Your Excellency to ask Beijing Government for details on the whereabouts and health of Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, the Institute's chief abbot.

We also urge Your Excellency to raise the issue of population transfer, whereby the Chinese Government provides incentives to non-Tibetans to migrate to Tibetan-majority regions. This population transfer will rapidly accelerate with the completion of railway line from Guangzhou to Lhasa.

The result is that Tibetans are becoming increasingly marginalized and discriminated in their own land.

Finally, TCHRD is concerned that Tibetans are being denied the right to be educated in their own language, a right guaranteed under international and Chinese national laws. The phasing out of the Tibetan language in schools across the Tibetan plateau, and imposition of Beijing Chinese dialect putonghua as the main language of instruction, further exacerbates discrimination against Tibetans in every sphere of life.

The above issues are only some of the human rights violations being perpetrated by the Chinese Government against Tibetans. TCHRD is of course aware that Your Excellency has many issues to raise with the Beijing Government.

In the wake of September 11, it is surely more vital than ever that the international community, including China, honours international conventions and universally recognised laws which specify the rights to which all human beings are entitled. The US has a long history of safeguarding human rights globally, and we urge Your Excellency to use your influence to improve the human rights of Tibetan people. ♦

A police detained for slogan-raising incident

According to a recently arrived refugee from Tibet, a Tibetan police ramed Tsangpa raised "Free Tibet" slogans while he was under the influence of alcohol. Tsangpa was in a bar with several other Tibetans.

Soon after, Chinese police from Dzokhang County, Shigatse, "TAR", immediately detained Tsangpa and kept him in a detention centre for five months. With the completion of five month's detention period, Tsangpa was released, and simultaneously he was ousted from his police post. Afterwards, he returned to his native place in Shigatse, "TAR".

The informant also reported on few cases of racial discrimination. One such incident was a brawl in a theatre between some Chinese soldiers and two local Tibetan guys named Dawa and Tashi. Both parties suffered equal injuries. After their recovery, Dawa and Tashi were put behind bars for a week but no action was taken against the Chinese soldiers. ♦

Crippling government tax

Sonam, a recent escapee from Tibet, reports, "My family consists of three members. We have about 50-60 wheat product on an average annually. We give 500 gyama of wheat each to the government in several forms of taxes. So, each year, fifty percent of the total farm product are paid to the government in the form of tax. This high tax makes a big burden on the already poor living standard and many of the farmers live hand to mouth.

There are 13 families in Nyigo Village with a population of 140 people. Out of this, around 60 people belonging to five families do not have sufficient ration, and they live by borrowing from other families. They grow yartsa gunbu in the fourth lunar month of the Tibetan calendar and repay loans.

Despite poor living condition, the Chinese government hardly give any assistance to the poor. Instead those Tibetans who are little better off would generously give food and clothings to the poor.

There are no hospitals in the township area. To go to the county hospital, it takes one day by horseride. Besides, the hospital fee is very high and the villagers cannot afford the fee. Even the seriously ill patient cannot get adequate medical attention.

Schooling opportunities

Sonam said, "Under the patronage of Drayab Kyabgug Rinpoche who resides abroad, a primary school was built in the township. The students need not pay fees to study in the school. It is said Rinpoche pays the salary of the teacher.

However, after the primary education, the parents cannot afford to send their children to middle school. There are twelve villages under the township and not a single Tibetan has ever attended middle school from this area so far". ♦

Forceful eviction from traditional landholdings

Dorjee Lhundrup, a recently arrived refugee from Tibet, grew up with his parents and two siblings in Gonjo County, Chamdo Prefecture. Dorjee never attended school. Instead he helped his family take care of their land and animals.

Lhundrup reports, "Approximately two years ago, large number of Chinese workers began arriving in the area and started marking all the trees with red paint. They carried out tests on soil and rocks in the area. We were not told of what the Chinese were doing or why they were there. Many rumours began to circulate that the Chinese intended on mining the area or cutting down the trees and that local people would have to move out of the area. Some presume the possibility of setting up a big military camp in the vicinity.

In early 2000, the local Chinese authorities called the 60 families that lived in the area for a meeting. The authorities explained that all of us had to move out of the area as houses were being built for them in another area. Many families responded that they had lived on this land for over one hundred years and did not want to move. The authorities explained that the land actually belonged to the Chinese government who in turn lends the land to the families. It was also explained that Drichu River that flows through the border between the "TAR" and China were flooding too often and causing many problems in China. The authorities gave some flimsy excuses to the effect that our removal would help prevent flood in the area. But if we fail or refuse to vacate the area, we pay 70,000 yuan as fine.

The area chosen for the families to move was to Miling County, Kongpo Prefecture, where the Chinese authorities spent nearly two years building new houses. In December 2001, the authorities told us that the houses were ready for them to move. All the 60 families were then loaded into approximately 100 military trucks and we travelled for five days from Gonjo County to Miling County. Whilst the

to pay for transportation, the families were required to pay for all other expenses on the trip such as food and water.

Every year, hundreds of people circumambulate a nearby sacred mountain called Sangchen Bum. In a large cave lived a Lama called Dhargyal and 15 other monks and nuns. During the period in which the villagers were forcibly removed from their land, rest of the clergy except for the lama were forced to leave along with their families to the new location.

The farming land, to which the families were moved, was of an inferior quality to their traditional land and it is difficult to grow crops. The houses were built in Chinese style and seemed unsuitable for the needs of traditional Tibetan farming or nomadic families. The houses were grouped into two areas with 30 families residing on each side of the area. The houses had three rooms each and no other facilities.

To add to the already growing list of problems for these families, there were not enough houses built with nine out of the 60 families having no accommodation built for them. Apparently, at the meeting in the village the previous year, the families were required to register to have new houses built for them. Unfortunately, some families including mine were not present during the meeting and hence, no houses were built for us.

Four of the families who were without a house sought accommodation with relatives and the other five families including mine went and lived with relatives in Lhasa. The local Chinese authorities told us that the government would pay an amount for three years as compensation but as yet no family has received any salary. My family members are currently living in Lhasa and trying to find employment.

Along with another friend, I decided to escape from Tibet. We reached Tibetan Reception Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 13 February 2002."

"Patriotic education" in Kanchuen Denchen Choeling Nunnery

Choedon reports, "I became a nun of Kanchuen Denchen Choeling at the age of 15. Before that, I used to help my family. I have five family members. I had no formal schooling.

My nunnery had 64 nuns when I first got admission. But today, due to Chinese restrictions, only 20 of us were allowed to remain.

In January 2000, the Chinese authorities banned photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Soon after, "patriotic education" campaign started and we were forced to denounce the Dalai Lama. Some nuns refused to obey the Chinese orders and got beaten. We were made to learn Chinese version of Tibetan history and say that Tibet and China were always one."

Choedon also provides information on taxation in her area of Jupa Township, Nangchen County, Tsongon Province. Every year, the villagers must pay one yak and cheese as tax. In winter, people were taxed meat and two families often combined give a yak, a sheep and a goat to the local Chinese authorities. Choedon laments, "Already the Tibetans are very poor and they are still made poorer by these indiscriminate taxes."

There are many Chinese in the area and they live a better life than the Tibetans. The Chinese civilians need not pay any taxes. A new Chinese policy was to be implemented with effect from 2001 that one person could not have more than five livestock and those that had more would have the excess confiscated. The escapee nun said, "The nomads depend on the livestock for their livelihood and these restriction on numbers will have negative repercussions on their living. There is also a water tax and grass tax which are all paid in cash amounting to 500-600 yuan annually.



Public Talk organised by students for Free Tibet, India

Ms. Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer, and Mr. Jampa Monlam, Tibetan Researcher, were invited by the Student for Free Tibet, India, to give a public talk at the Shankar Lal Hall in Delhi University on February 28, 2002.

Mr. Monlam gave his own personal account as a political prisoner in Drapchi Prison following his participation in the first mass demonstration in Lhasa on 27 September 1987. Ms. Aukatsang briefed the audience, largely Delhi University students, on the current human rights situation in Tibet and the role of support group such as the Students for Free Tibet in the context.

This was followed with the screening of Tibet's Stolen Child, a documentary on the 11th Panchen Lama. ♦

First Asian Tibet Support Group Conference

Upon invitation from the organisers, TCHRD participated in the First Asian Tibet Support Group Conference held in Rewari, Haryana, from February 7-10, 2002. Ms. Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer, represented the Centre at the Conference.

More than 70 participants spanning 10 Asian Countries gathered to chalk out future campaigns and activities of the Asian Tibet Support Group. Not only were

the participants acquainted with the challenges facing TSGs today, but they were also informed on the most pressing issues facing the Tibetans and its supporters.



A draft Programme of Action was drawn up at the end of the conference, which the participants committed to carry out.

This conference was jointly organised by the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre (TPPRC) and Friedrich Naumann Foundation. ♦

Human Rights Defenders' Conference in Dublin

At the invitation of Frontline-the International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Mr. Jampa

Monlam (Jammon), Tibetan Researcher visited Dublin, Ireland, for a three-day visit from 17-19 January 2002.

The conference was attended by approximately 250 delegations representing 70 countries. Eminent personalities such as the Prime Minister of Ireland, Mr. Bertie Ahern, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Mary Robinson, UN Special representative on Human Rights Defenders, Ms. Hina Jilani and Nobel Laureate, Seamus Heaney, were present.

During the first coffee break, Mr. Jammon met the UN High Commissioner and spoke to her about human rights violation in Tibet. Mr. Jamon also presented an oral statement on his personal experience as a former political prisoner.



With Frontline Director, Ms. Mary Lawlor

On his return journey, Mr. Jamon visited the Tibet Information Network (TIN) office in London. While in London, the Tibet Society organised a meeting with some of the parliamentarians of the House of Lords where Jamon briefed them with the human rights situation in Tibet. Jamon also visited the offices of Free Tibet Campaign and the Amnesty International. ♦

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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.

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TCHRD's publications:

1996 Annual Report: *Tibet: One More Year of Political Repression* (English and Tibetan editions) • 1997 Annual Report: *China in Tibet: Striking Hard Against Human Rights* (English and Tibetan editions) • The Next Generation: *The State of Education in Tibet Today* (1997) • *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • 1998 Annual Report: *Tibet: Crackdown on Humanity* • *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) • *South East Asia: Human Rights NGO Seminar on Tibet* (Proceedings) (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) • 1999 Annual Report: *Tibet: Tightening of Control* (2000) • *TCHRD Review* (2000) • *Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet* (2000) • *Racial Discrimination in Tibet* (2000) • *Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy* (2000) • *Prisoners of Tibet: Profiles of current political prisoners* (2000) • 2000 Annual Report: *Enforcing Loyalty* (2001).

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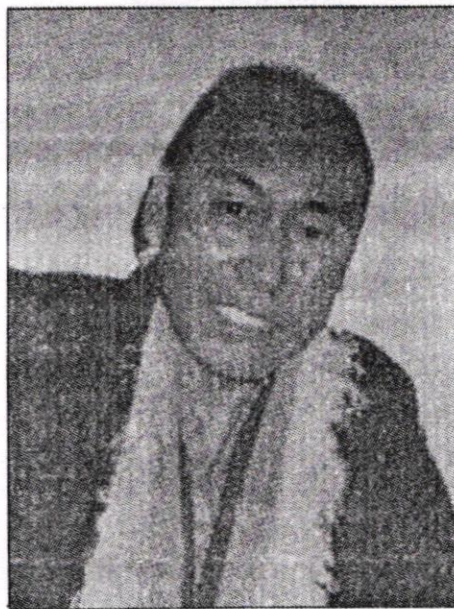
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Geshe Sonam Phuntsok suffering serious ill health

According to reliable information received from Tibet, Geshe Sonam Phuntsok is suffering from serious ill health. Geshe Sonam Phuntsok, a well-known Buddhist practitioner and teacher from Karze County, Sichuan Province, was arrested in 1999 and is now serving a five year prison term for purportedly conducting "illegal" religious activities. Geshe's followers and family in Karze County are gravely concerned about his ill health and suspect that the authorities are not providing him with sufficient medical care.

Reports indicate that on 21 November 2001, Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials from Karze County visited Geshe Sonam Phuntsok's father, Agya Phuntsok, in Rongbachan District, hometown of Geshe Sonam Phuntsok. The officers informed Agya Phuntsok that Geshe was suffering from "high fever" and was "currently bedridden in Tsangtung Chayul hospital".

The officers explained that Geshe caught the fever owing to the hot weather conditions prevailing in his place of imprisonment, reportedly Chuandung Prison #3 in Tsangtung Village, Dartsedo County, Karze "TAP", Sichuan Province (the same prison which held Chadrel Rinpoche until his recent release to house arrest).



After hearing the news of Geshe's illness, Agya Phuntsok left for Tsangtung to see his son and reached there on 4 December 2001. He managed to speak with Geshe for a total of 40 minutes. The two were only allowed to converse on the phone with a large glass partition between them. Prison officials closely monitored their conversation.

Our source said that Agya Phuntsok was shocked to witness Geshe's deteriorating health. Geshe has reportedly become very thin. He could not move properly and seemed to require support while walking.

Geshe reportedly explained to his father,

"Initially, I felt a loss of appetite and I could not eat. I felt dizzy and lethargic. I had diarrhea for sometime and very often I would fall unconscious. This continued for quite a long period until the time that I got seriously ill. The prison officials took me for a blood test in the nearby military hospital. As soon as the check-up was over, I was immediately brought back. On my second visit to the hospital the following day, I was kept in the hospital for seven hours and kept on IV drips. These check-ups and IV drips did not bring much improvement. I feel sick every other day and I would often lose my memory".

TCHRD has now written an urgent appeal to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to intervene in the matter and request the People's Republic of China to secure Geshe's immediate release on medical parole.

Information recently obtained by the Dui Hua Foundation based in San Francisco, USA, reveals the existence of a 1990 Regulation under Chinese criminal laws by which prisoners can be released on medical parole when they have fallen ill while in prison and completed at least a third of their sentence. Geshe has now served two and a half years of his five year sentence, and is clearly ill. He therefore qualifies for being released on

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medical parole.

Geshe Sonam Phuntsok was arrested on 25 October 1999. He was forcibly removed from religious retreat in Karze county and detained in Dartsedo Prison in Dartsedo County, Karze "TAP". Following Geshe's detention, a mass spontaneous demonstration took place in Karze County resulting in detention and imprisonment for many of his followers.

Geshe was in detention for one year and four months before the court pronounced his sentence in March 2001. The court found him guilty of "1) inciting splittist activities among the masses; 2) travelling to India on an illegal document procured from Lhasa, for seeking an audience with the Dalai Lama and for taking photographs with him; 3) illegally conducting religious ceremony in Karze county; and 4) conducting long-life prayer ceremony for the Dalai Lama in Rongbatsang."

Geshe was sentenced to five years imprisonment. During a five-minute speech in the courtroom after the sentencing, Geshe said, "My arrest and court trial belies Chinese high claim of religious freedom in Tibet and this should be made known to the public".

Geshe Sonam Phuntsok is a popular figure in the Karze region. Tibetans revere him as a great Buddhist practitioner and scholar. He had taught Tibetan literature to monks from 35 different monasteries in the 1980s, and tutored monks from Dhargyeling Monastery on Tibetan grammar, Tibetan History and Buddhism. He had also recorded historical description of 13 monasteries in Karze "TAP". ♦

Exile returnees pay heavy price

According to recent information received from Tibet, four exile returnees were detained and subsequently sentenced to six years imprisonment in May 2001. The four detainees are all monks from Rabgya Monastery which is located in Machen County, Golog "TAP", Qinghai Province. The monks were

targeted because they had visited India for pilgrimage or for study. It appears that the act of visiting India was in itself proof of splittist activities.

1) Mathok Damchoe, 27, (father's name Tsering) was a monk at Rabgya Monastery until 1992 when he travelled to India and studied at Sera Monastery in South India. After two years, he returned to Tibet and re-entered Rabgya Monastery, completing his studies in 1997. In 1998, he again came to India and studied at Sarah Buddhist Dialectics School. By the end of 1999, he returned to Tibet and continued his studies in the field of Tibetan medicine. He was arrested in May 2001 and sentenced to six years on charges of engaging in political activities.

2) Sonam Gyatso, 34 (father's name is Woesser) joined Rabgya Monastery in 1996. On 25 November 1993, Gyatso arrived in Nepal, then went on to Sera Monastery in South India. In 1994, he returned to Tibet and continued his studies at Rabgya Monastery. Gyatso was reportedly arrested in May 2001 and sentenced to six years on charges of engaging in alleged political activities.

3) Kunchok Dhargay, 32 (father's name is Jinpa) became a monk of Rabgya Monastery in 1987. Dhargay travelled to Nepal in February 1993, then in 1994 Dhargay went for a pilgrimage tour of sacred Buddhist sites in India. Some time after this tour he returned to Tibet and continued his monastic studies at Rabgya Monastery. In May 2001, he was sentenced to six years for involvement in alleged political activities.

4) Phuntsok, 26, travelled to Nepal in January 1996 on a pilgrimage. At the end of that year, he also went for a pilgrimage tour of sacred Buddhist sites in India. On completion of the tour, he returned to Rabgya Monastery and continued his studies there. In May 2001, he was sentenced to six years on alleged political crimes.

TCHRD awaits additional information about the exact charges against each person, the name of the court that passed sentences, and the names of the detention centres in which these Tibetans are being held. ♦

Heightened security in Lhasa on 10 March

According to reliable information again received from Tibet, pro-independence leaflets were found pasted in various parts of Lhasa on 10 March 2002, the Tibetan National Uprising Day.

This 10 March saw tight security in Lhasa. A large number of security officials both uniformed and in civilian dress were seen patrolling the street, presumably as a preventative measure to curb any political activities.

Despite this, a number of leaflets such as "Tibet is Independent" and "Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama" were found pasted in and around the Barkhor, the circumambulation area around Jokhang Temple. Similar leaflets written in oil paint appeared on the rear walls of the Potala Palace.

Our source commented, "These are clear outlet of discontentment against restrictive policies imposed by the Chinese authorities. Keeping the spirit of freedom alive against all odds, Tibetans inside Tibet have continuously voiced their anger and frustration against the brutal force and atrocities committed by the Chinese government. The repeated and unending call for independence for Tibet is a clear indication that Tibet is an occupied country."

At a time when China is blowing trumpets of having brought economic prosperity into Tibet, Tibetans throughout Tibet are opposing the Chinese government through a variety of protest measures.

Such display of opposition has resulted in intensification of security measures during major Tibetan festivals and events in Tibet. Large deployments of security officials and heightened security measures in Lhasa, particularly on national highways, have restricted freedom of travel for Tibetans and tourists alike. ♦

This is a regular section profiling political prisoners currently imprisoned in Tibet

Ex-political prisoner re-arrested

Lobsang Dhargyal is originally from Machen County, Golog "TAP", Tsongon (Ch: Qinghai) Province. He was born to Shergyam and Tsodon in 1962. Shergyam, his father, committed suicide in 1970 to evade arrest by Chinese authorities for his involvement in many "reactionary" activities in the aftermath of the Chinese invasion of Tibet.

Dhargyal helped his mother in nomadic works and studied Tibetan language. At 22, he became a monk of Rabgya Monastery. He undertook the responsibilities of security personnel in Rabgya Monastery, as well as serving as caretaker of Tamding Monastery.

Lhasa witnessed a surge of pro-independence demonstrations in the late eighties. When this news spread to Golog, Lobsang Dhargyal and his two friends, Lobsang Palden and Yeshe Gyaltsen, planned to initiate political activities in their area. They printed about 40,000 pro-independence leaflets. The four wrote and printed the leaflets on wooden block prints. The leaflets contained slogans such as "Free Tibet" and "Chinese Quit Tibet" and had the stamp of the Tibetan national flag on the back. They had Tibetan national flags with them as well.

A grand enthronement ceremony for the then 13-year-old Shingsang Tenzin Choekyi Gyaltsen Rinpoche was scheduled to be held at Rabgya Monastery on

15 November 1992. Shingsang Rinpoche, head of Rabgya Monastery, and the XXth reincarnation of the mother of Jetsongkhapa, the founder of Gelug School, is considered one of the leading lamas in Tsongon Province.

The night before the ceremony, Dhargyal and his companions pasted and distributed the leaflets in 20 strategic places, such as national highways, busy street malls, and the circumambulation area around the monastery's stupa. They hoisted a Tibetan national flag on the rooftop of the assembly hall of the monastery and pasted a smaller paper flag on one side.

Consequently, Public Security Bureau officers from Machen County and Golog "TAP" arrived in the evening of 15 November 1992. An intensive interrogation session followed for all the monks. On 25 November 1992, Lobsang Dhargyal was arrested while his companions could make their escape. The officers ransacked his room in the monastery for political evidence and discovered the wooden block prints.

Lobsang Dhargyal was detained in Golog Prison for almost a year. In 1994, the Golog Intermediate People's Court sentenced Dhargyal to two and half years in Golog Prison and an additional deprivation of political rights for two years. He was handcuffed and his feet manacled during his imprisonment. He even lost his two

front teeth when he was beaten severely. Despite all the sufferings, his dauntless spirit always remained high.

On 25 May 1995, Lobsang Dhargyal was released. Though he was forbidden to rejoin his monastery, he still continued to contribute to the Tibetan cause in whatever way he could. The Tibetan Youth Congress based in Dharamsala, awarded Lobsang Dhargyal, Lobsang Palden and Yeshe Gyaltsen with Martyr's Awards in August 1995, to pay tribute to their courageous deeds and sacrifices.

Unable to bear the various restrictions imposed on Shingsang Tenzin Choekyi Gyaltsen Rinpoche by the Chinese authorities, Lobsang Dhargyal and Rinpoche secretly left the monastery on the night of 2 April 1997. Dhargyal served as the main escort to Rinpoche and they reached Dharamsala on 27 April 1997. Afterwards, they went to Sera Monastery in South India.

In the beginning of 2001, Lobsang Dhargyal was returning to Tibet to visit his aging mother when PSB officials arrested him somewhere near Shigatse, "TAR". He was immediately handed over to Chinese authorities in Golog "TAP". It is reported that Dhargyal was subsequently sentenced to 15 years. However, the prison where he remains detained and his charges are still unconfirmed. ♦

No relief for Tibetans detained in Nepal

The number of Tibetans incarcerated in Nepali jails for being in Nepal without the appropriate travel documents has reached twelve. The latest prisoner, Tenpa Rabgyal, 16 (mother's name Tsering), from Lhasa, "TAR", was arrested last month. Tenpa, was arrested in Durbar Square, central Kathmandu where he had been dropped off by his Sherpa guide. Police approached Tenpa after they sighted him wandering around the Square. He was detained for failing to possess the necessary immigration papers. He was fined 14,000 Nepali Rupees (NRs) and as he cannot afford this fine, he remains in prison.

There are now twelve Tibetans incarcerated in Dilli Bazaar Jail, Kathmandu for being in the country illegally. Three are monks - one of whom was arrested in June 2000 and is already halfway through his five year sentence - eight are students from Amdo, who were returning to Tibet after studying in India and the final prisoner is Tampa. All of the incarcerated Tibetans have clearly stated that they are Tibetan refugees, having escaped Tibet being unable to bear the violations of their civil rights.

In what is already a difficult situation for the detained Tibetans, one of the female student prisoners, arrested in late 2001, gave birth to a baby girl in late February whilst in jail. The woman had been able to conceal the fact that she was pregnant up until labor began; both the woman and her child are both reported to be in good health. Appeals from UNHCR to release the woman for two months into the custody of the Tibetan Reception Centre have been denied by the Justice Department and the woman and her baby remain in jail.

The Tibetan refugees are being treated relatively well, although the conditions, under which they endure, are difficult. The

prisoners told NGO representatives, who recently visited the jail, that the males and females are not allowed to mix and that their exercise periods were restricted. This treatment is different to other prisoners held in the jail. One of the women suffered an emotional breakdown at her sentence hearing and was transferred to the Tibetan Reception Centre for supervised medical care.

The eight student Tibetans have been sentenced under the Immigration Act and a fine of NRs 20,000/- imposed. A total fine of NRs 121,897/25 for living without visa and passport in Nepal has also being imposed. As none of the eight were able to pay their fines, they were sentenced to ten years jails. Two of the other monks were fined US\$2,000 plus 25,000 NRs, which amounted to NRs 200,000 or ten years jail.

The detention of the Tibetan refugees occurred despite an agreement between the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Nepalese Government that enables Tibetan refugees to travel through Nepal on their way to a third country. The informal agreement between the UNHCR and the Nepali Government is a verbal agreement and states that the UNHCR will ensure that all Tibetans are genuine refugees and will not remain in Nepal. In return, the Nepali Government will not return Tibetans to Tibet once in Nepal. Under this agreement, Tibetan asylum seekers who are arrested on Nepali territory are to be brought to the Department of Immigration Detention Centre in Kathmandu. They are then meant to be released to the UNHCR.

Royal clemency for the imprisoned Tibetans was requested during Democracy Day on February 19th, but no clemency was granted. Clemency for the imprisoned Tibetans is now being requested on the Kings birthday in July. Both the Office of

Tibet and representatives from various embassies based in Kathmandu have approached different Nepali government departments, who indicated that the matter was before the courts and as such, it would be inappropriate for them to intercede.

The State of Emergency imposed in Nepal is also making the travel of Tibetan refugees through Nepal more treacherous. Whilst there is no evidence of either the Nepalese security forces or the Maoists targeting Tibetan refugees particularly, the journey out of Tibet and through Nepal to India now has new risks.

It is generally believed by agencies and organisations responsible for Tibetan refugees whilst they are in Nepal that while the UNHCR/Nepali Government agreement still holds, mistakes by the border police in honoring the agreement have been made, resulting in the deportation of Tibetan refugees back to Tibet. Particularly in the Kodari area, there had been increased reports of Tibetan refugees being returned to Tibet.

Some sources go so far as to allege that there was a possibility that some Nepali border police may be acting in collusion with the Chinese authorities up to 30 kms inside Nepal sovereign territory to return Tibetan refugees back to Tibet. It is difficult to substantiate the numbers involved due to the fact that there are few supervisory mechanisms in place, no opportunity to maintain ongoing monitoring in the area and the Nepali Government's suspension of visits by UNHCR personnel to the border regions. ♦

Two-year sentence for pro-independence activities

Damchoe, lay name Wangchen Gyal, 30, was born in Tsodruk Village, Chentsa County, Malho 'TAP', Qinghai Province. He is from a farming family.

Damchoe reported to the TCHRD: When I was seven years old, I went to the village school and learnt Tibetan, Chinese and Mathematics. At 14, I stopped my schooling. For a period of one year from 1987-1988, I did farming on our family field.

In 1989, I became a monk at Kehu Shedup Dhargay Monastery, which was founded by Kehu Jangchub Shonnu in the 15th century. Before 1959 some 500 monks studied at the monastery. During the Cultural Revolution the monastery suffered total destruction. In 1980, some dedicated monks collected donations and re-built the monastery. Currently there are about 130 monks in the monastery, although there is a government ceiling of 80. Lama Lobsang Thupten Wangchuk, a renowned person in the Chinese government circle, is the head of the monastery.

In the past few years, monks of the monastery have shown dissent against the Chinese authorities by pasting pro-independence posters in and around the monastery. No one was arrested as the Chinese authorities had no clues of the people responsible.

In the winter of 1993, I left the monastery along with 19 other monks to pursue education in India and most importantly to seek audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We first went to Lhasa and then left for India. We crossed the Nepal border of Tarapani and finally escaped to India.

In India, I was admitted to the Tibetan Transit School, Dharamsala, where I stayed for one year and ten months. Later I decided to return to Tibet. On my return journey I carried some political booklets, an autobiography of the Dalai Lama, W.D Shakapa's 'Political History of Tibet', 'Guidelines for future Tibet's polity and basic features of the constitution' and audio-tapes containing speeches of His

Holiness the Dalai Lama.

In late 1995 when I made my journey back home alone, I followed my earlier route in the dead of night and later in the day hitched a ride in a truck carrying grass. I hid myself under the grass and reached Lhasa where I stayed for three days and then went straight to my village. Around Tibetan New Year 1996 I reached my home.

In the summer of 1996 I along with some of my trusted friends began distributing the materials that I had brought from India to the students of the minority school in Chentsa County, Malho 'TAP', and in Kangtsa County, Tsochang "TAP", and Tsigorthang County, Tsolho 'TAP'. Many of the materials were given to known people in our county. They were totally unaware of Chinese invasion in Tibet because they were completely kept in the dark for so many years.

During the 1997 Tibetan New Year, I travelled to Lhasa and stayed there for some months doing small business and odd jobs. In May 1997, during the holy month of Saga Dawa (the festival of Lord Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death), I pasted a poster in front of the Jokhang Temple during the night. The poster contained slogans, which called for Tibet's independence, an end to forced sterilization of Tibetan women and mining in Tibet, and various other human rights abuses.

Later I drew a Tibetan national flag in my room and thought of staging protest on 1 July 1997, the Hong Kong hand-over ceremony day. On 13 June 1997, around 7 p.m in the evening, when my wife, two of my friends (identities protected) and I were having a conversation, four armed policemen from the 1st unit of Lhasa PSB barged into our room. They searched our room, leading to the discovery of the hand-drawn Tibetan national flag. On seeing the flag their search became all the more aggressive for further incriminating evidence.

We were handcuffed and taken to the

Lhasa City PSB Detention Centre for interrogation and we were later transferred to PAP (People's Armed Police) Office for four days of interrogation. We were kept without food and water all four days. One of my friends was released after the interrogation but my wife, my other friend and me were taken to Gutsa Detention Centre. After two months' detention my wife was released. My friend and I were detained for five more months, making it a total detention of seven months.

During our detention the Chinese used all their tactics to extract information from us. All of us were interrogated separately. One time, the officer threw a huge bundle of money (approx 50,000 yuan) on the table and said I will be released, given employment and could also take the money if I tell him the whole truth. I told him that I knew nothing of politics, for which I was beaten and tortured severely. Later I became unconscious. The torture continued for four months. Then one day they showed us our sentence papers and told us that we had been sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

My friend and I were then taken to Trisam Prison, Toelung Dechen County, Lhasa Municipality. There were three units in the prison. The first was for the political prisoners, the second for criminal prisoners and the third for the women. At the time when I was imprisoned there were about 20-30 political prisoners.

On 16 June 1999, Sonam and I were released on the completion of our two years' sentence. Our detention at Gutsa had been included in our sentence but still we spent about one year and five months in Trisam Prison.

After my release I stayed for a month in Lhasa. I was constantly watched by the PSB so I had to go back to my village. Even there the PSB frequented my home and constantly asked me

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about my activities. Such constant surveillance got to me and I left for Gade County, Golog 'TAP' where I stayed for more than two years doing jobs and small business.

Regarding schooling in my area, there are two middle schools in the place where I live. In one, most of the students are Chinese and few children of the Tibetan cadres. The students there are smart and very knowledgeable.

The other school has only nomad children and the total strength was around 700. There are about 40 teachers who are mostly Tibetans. But Chinese staff held the top positions in the school administration.

The students in the latter school are required to give about 50 Yartsa Gunbhu (medicinal plant known as Cordyceps Sinensis) on admission to the school and the number increases by 50 each subsequent years.

There is no discipline in the school and the students can do whatever they wish. The students gamble, watch videos and play snooker in the market.

Concerning medical facilities in Gade County, there is one hospital named Gade County People's Hospital. The doctors are mostly Chinese but there are few Tibetan nurses. The Tibetan patients are not given proper care and charged extra fees on the contrary.

There were few death cases caused due to negligence by the doctors. As such people stopped going to the hospital and the hospital had to ultimately close down. Patients started consulting the private doctors.

There are six private clinics in the county. Due to growing demand for the private clinics, the People's Hospital wrote an application to the county authorities for the closure of the private clinics in the county. The authorities in turn ordered that all private clinics would have to close. Despite the official ban, the local people still go to the doctor's residence secretly for consultations. If a patient is serious, he or she is taken for check-up to Pema County, Xining County.

Some people from my village came to Gade county for business purpose and since they knew my whereabouts, I left for

Lhasa in December 1999 fearing that the word might spread in the village and I might be taken back to face further interrogation. In Lhasa I met Phakmo Dhundup and we decided to go to India.

In early 2002 we crossed over the Nepal border and reached the Tibetan Reception Centre in Kathmandu on 20 February 2002. After fifteen days I was sent to Dharamsala, India, reaching there on 11 March 2002. ♦

Drapchi inmates foil propaganda film

TCHRD has received some reports regarding disturbances in Drapchi prison just before Losar, the Tibetan New Year.

According to these reports, on 9 February 2002 government authorities had organised to film a "documentary" in Drapchi prison that would project well-fed, well-treated prisoners living in a well-maintained prison.

However several political inmates made their disapproval of their conditions clear on the day of the filming. Reports indicate that some prisoners were beaten while others were kept in solitary confinement as punishment for their dissent.

There have also been reports of sudden transfers of political prisoners from Drapchi. In some instances, family members have not been told where the prisoners have been moved to.

TCHRD awaits detailed information on both these incidents. ♦

"Work team" visits Shugseb Nunnery

Kunsang Tenzin is an ex-abbot of Shugseb Nunnery, Chushul County, Lhasa City.

At 15, he commenced his religious studies under the tutelage of Khendron Norbu Thupten. At 21, Tenzin joined Serthar Monastery in Karze County, Sichuan Province, where he pursued religious studies for the next eight years.

In 1994 he became an abbot at Shugseb Nunnery.

He arrived in India in 2001 and reported to TCHRD about restrictions imposed on religious activities in Shugseb Nunnery.

"In late 1994, the authorities of Shugseb Nunnery requested my installation as khenpo (abbot) of their nunnery. I was the abbot there until my arrival in India in 2001.

"According to official Chinese statistic, there were 208 nuns when in fact there were 270. Of the 208 nuns, 130 were permanent nuns while approximately 80 attended the nunnery on a temporary basis. There were 20-30 unregistered nuns, some of whom have been expelled from other nunneries. These nuns would disappear during the "work team" visits.

"Due to a fear of political activity, the nuns were restricted to the nunnery grounds. They were not permitted to travel to Lhasa during important anniversaries such as 50 years of Chinese Liberation of Tibet.

"Work team members of 4-20 officials, mainly from the Religious Department, would normally attend the nunnery for one to two months every three to four months. During important official events, a "work team" would be ensconced at the nunnery for the whole duration.

"During the work team visits, the officials would force the nuns to study political history of Tibet. The officials would explain that the nuns are already good in Buddhist studies and should now be able to devote more time to political study.

"I refused to obey their orders and retorted that I could not choose for the nuns what they desired to study. There were other lamas in the nunnery that advised me to counsel the nuns against engaging in political activities. During my six years stay in the nunnery, Shugseb Nunnery had no political activity.

"Once I was subjected to intensive interrogation that lasted for about an hour. The work team officials checked my room for banned portraits of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

"After my departure, it is unlikely that there will be a replacement for the khenpo post at Shugseb Nunnery. ♦



TCHRD ACTIVITIES

Bulletin 23

TCHRD welcomes new Executive Director



Staff members and volunteers of TCHRD welcome Mrs. Tsewang Lhadon who was unanimously selected to head the Centre on 19 February 2002. She joined the Centre on 1 March 2002.

Mrs. Lhadon graduated from Punjab University, Chandigarh, and has experience working as Research Assistant to the Political and Economic Section of the Canadian High Commission, New Delhi. She has also worked as Assistant to the Bureau Chief of South Asia Globe and Mail, Canada, based in New Delhi.

Mrs Lhadon also worked as Manager of Chonor Guest House, Dharamsala, for a period of two years .

The Centre held a formal hand-over ceremony of the post of Executive Director by Mr. Lobsang Nyandak Zayul to Mrs. Tsewang Lhadon on 13 March 2002.

Mr. Nyandak, the former Executive Director of TCHRD, led the Centre from a fledgling organisation to a well-known and internationally recognised non-governmental organisation within a period of six years. TCHRD pays tribute to

his outstanding leadership and wishes him all the very best in his post as Kalon for the Departments of Finance and Health.

At the same time, TCHRD welcomes Mrs. Lhadon and looks forward to working with her. ♦

Swedish Parliamentarian Briefing

On 9 January 2002, an eight-member delegation of Swedish parliamentarians came on a four-day visit to Dharamsala. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) based in Dharamsala, including the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), Tibetan Women's Association (TWA), National Democratic Party of Tibet, and Gu-Chu-Sum held a joint meeting at the office of the TWA.

Open discussion and briefings took place among the parliamentarians and members of Tibetan NGOs.

Mr. Ugyen Tsewang, Information Officer at TCHRD, represented the Centre. He briefed the parliamentarians about the Centre's objectives and its past and present activities. The parliamentarians raised several questions relating to the human rights situation in Tibet, to which Mr. Tsewang gave an overview of the ongoing human rights abuses in Tibet.

In the end, the parliamentarians unanimously agreed that they were not aware of the gravity of the human rights violations going on in Tibet and assured the Tibetan NGO's that they would raise the Tibet issue in the Swedish Parliament. ♦

New TCHRD Staff

Mr. Tenzin Norgay has been recruited as the new TCHRD Field Officer following a written test and oral interview conducted by the Centre on 26 February 2002. He joined the Centre on 1 March 2002.

Mr Norgay has a Masters degree in Linguistics. He originally studied at Delhi University then did his M.A. at M.S. University, Baroda. ♦

Open Discussion Forum for Young Tibetans

On 10 March 2002, the occasion of the 43rd Tibetan Uprising Day, TCHRD co-hosted an Open Discussion Forum for Young Tibetans with Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange Programme. More than 50 young Tibetans turned up.

Among the speakers were Ms. Tsering Yangkyi, Head of the Environment Desk, DIIR, Mr. Tsering Thar, Ex-Mustang Fighter, and Mr. Negan, a recent arrival from Tibet.

Ms. You'don Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer, also provided information on TCHRD and the current human rights situation in Tibet.

During the open discussion session, the participants were divided into four groups and given topics related to Tibet to discuss and strategise on followed with presentations by group leaders. A Forum was also provided to the participants to express their feelings and concerns regarding their identity as Tibetans.

The evening ended with prayers and a candle light vigil led by Acharya Yeshe Phuntsok, President of National Democratic Party for Tibet. ♦

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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.

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.

TCHRD's publications:

1996 Annual Report: *Tibet: One More Year of Political Repression* (English and Tibetan editions) • 1997 Annual Report: *China in Tibet: Striking Hard Against Human Rights* (English and Tibetan editions) • The Next Generation: *The State of Education in Tibet Today* (1997) • *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • 1998 Annual Report: *Tibet: Crackdown on Humanity* • *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) • *South East Asia: Human Rights NGO Seminar on Tibet Proceedings* (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) • 1999 Annual Report: *Tibet: Tightening of Control* (2000) • *TCHRD Review* (2000) • *Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet* (2000) • *Racial Discrimination in Tibet* (2000) • *Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy* (2000) • *Prisoners of Tibet: Profiles of current political prisoners* (2000) • 2000 Annual Report: *Enforcing Loyalty* (2001) • *Drapchi Prison: Tibet's Most Dreaded Prison* (2001) • 2001 Annual Report *Human Rights Situation in Tibet* (2002)

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8 HUMAN RIGHTS update • March 2002

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Please e-mail us at dsala@tchrd.org or norzin@tchrd.org or write to us at our postal address for further information.



Freedom at last for Tibet's longest serving political prisoner

Tanak Jigme Sangpo was released on medical parole on 31 March 2002. The 75-year-old Tibetan served 19 continuous years in prison and a cumulative sentence of 41 years, making him the longest serving political prisoner in Tibet.

Reports indicate that he is currently in Lhasa, Tibet's capital city, under the care of his niece, Pema Chozom, a retired teacher.

While welcoming the news of Tanak Jigme Sangpo's release on 31 March 2002, TCHRD believes that China has used him as a "bargaining chip" in its ongoing negotiation to achieve bilateral dialogue with the United States and also to prevent international scrutiny on its human rights record.

"China is willing to let go of a few well-campaigned political prisoners to save its face from being smeared at international foras. If China is truly committed to upholding international human rights standards, it should release all the other 251 known political prisoners in Tibet", said Ms Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer at the TCHRD.

This latest release came at an opportune time as the 58th United Nations Human Rights Commission was in session in Geneva. China was lobbying hard to avert any resolution regarding the human rights record.

In the wake of the recent releases of Ngawang Choephel and Tanak Jigme Sangpo, China has attempted to



convince the international community for bilateral dialogue on human rights.

According to the verdict issued on 4 April 1992, Tanak Jigme Sangpo was to be released on 3 September 2011 with continuous 28 years' sentence. On his release on 31 March 2002, Tanak has already served 19 continuous years in prison. This figure excludes his previous sentences.

Tanak Jigme Sangpo (b.1926), also known as Jigsang, was reportedly first arrested in 1960 while teaching at Lhasa Primary School. He was charged with "corrupting the minds of children with reactionary ideas". In 1964, he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in Sangyip Prison for making comments

regarding China's repression of Tibet.

In 1970 Tanak was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in Sangyip Prison for 'counter-revolutionary' propaganda. Tanak was caught attempting to send a document reporting Chinese atrocities through his niece, who was trying to flee Tibet. Tanak Jigme Sangpo was released from prison in 1979, and transferred to the 'Reform-Through-Labour' Unit One in Nyethang County in Lhasa Municipality.

The Lhasa City PSB arrested him for the third time on 3 September 1983. According to the 1983 verdict, Tanak was seen at Jokhang Temple in Lhasa on 12 July 1983 pasting a personally written wall-poster which contained anti-Chinese slogans. On 15 July, Tanak was seen wearing a piece of cloth on his chest whereupon the words "self determination for Tibetans" were written. The verdict also said Tanak had shown no sign of reforming as he continued with independence activities. On 24 November 1983, Lhasa City Intermediate People's Court sentenced him to 15 years' imprisonment and five years deprivation of political rights.

While in detention at Drapchi Prison, on 5 October 1987, Tanak went towards the rukhag gate, timing his act when prisoners were being fed. He shouted "Free Tibet", "PRC fooled the Tibetan people" and "Chinese leave

Tibet" reading from a self-prepared poster. Prison guards immediately caught him and after almost a year on 1 December 1988, he received an extension of five years' imprisonment and one year deprivation of political rights.

On 6 December 1991, Tanak shouted slogans in three different languages, Chinese, Tibetan and English, during a visit by Swiss delegation. Other inmates quietened Tanak fearing serious repercussions if caught. After the delegation left, Tanak was dragged from the room and beaten so severely that his body became numb. He was then placed in solitary confinement.

Six weeks later Tanak reportedly held in solitary confinement and suffered a new form of 'cold cell' torture. This cell is lined with sheets that are designed to lower the cell's temperature. Permission to put on extra clothing was denied and average winter temperature in Lhasa is 3.5 degree celsius below zero and can drop as low as 10 degree celsius below. On 4 April 1992, Tanak received an extension of eight years and three years deprivation of political rights. This would have brought his release date to 3 September 2011, at the age of 85. ♦

Leading Tibetan social activist arrested

On the night of 7 April 2002, Tulku Tenzin Delek, popularly known as Ah-nga Tashi, a highly-respected lama in Lithang County, Karze "TAP", Sichuan Province, was arrested by Sichuan PSB officers on suspected involvement in a series of bomb blast incidents at Chengdu. Four of his attendants were also arrested. They are Tsultrim Dhargyal, Tamding Tsering, Asher Dhargyal and Dhondup (lay). The current whereabouts of all five are unknown.



It is reported that his students Tulku Damchoe Nyima and Tashi Phuntsok, Disciplinary-in-charge of Othok Monastery were also detained in the following days. The whereabouts of both these monks also remain as yet.

Followers of Tulku Tenzin Delek believe he has been framed for the bomb blasts due to his so-called "splittist" actions. Tulku is renowned for his active involvement in the restoration of Tibetan culture and religion, social welfare activities and his bold statements about repressive Chinese policies in Tibet. He was vociferous in raising and resolving issues of local concern. Tulku always emphasised the need to resolve issues amicably, to adhere to the teachings of the Dalai Lama, to preserve Tibet's unique culture, and for the salaried Tibetan cadres to lead Tibet into the modern 21st century.

Recent trends in arrest indicate that Beijing authorities seem to target prominent religious figures who had had meetings with the Dalai Lama. Geshe Sonam Phuntsok, a respected Buddhist practitioner, was sentenced in March 2000 to five years' imprisonment on charges of seeking an audience with the Dalai Lama and for conducting long-life prayer ceremony for him. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, chief abbot of Serthar Institute, is reportedly held incommunicado, and most of his well over 8,000 students expelled and approximately 2000 dwellings

demolished in 2001. The Chinese authorities maintained the suspicion that Khenpo might have contacts with the Dalai Lama in both political and religious matters, after his meeting with the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala in 1990. The arrest of Tulku Tenzin Delek is the most recent case. All these three leading religious figures are from the same region of Karze County, Sichuan Province.

Biography of Tulku Tenzin Delek

Born in 1950 to Tsepa Dorjee and Dolma Choezom in Lithang, Tulku Tenzin Delek joined Lithang Monastery at the age of seven. He sought monk ordination from Khensur (former abbot) Shakpa. After the Chinese forceful occupation of Tibet in 1959, Tulku Delek returned to his family.

During the first Tibetan government-in-exile delegation visit in 1970, Tulku Tenzin Delek briefed one of the delegates in detail about the destruction of monasteries perpetrated by Chinese authorities in Tibet.

Soon after the 10th Panchen Lama's release from Chinese custody in 1978, Tulku Tenzin Delek secretly sought an audience with the Panchen Lama at Labrang Tashi Kyil Monastery. He expressed his concerns about the indiscriminate torture inflicted on the local Tibetans by Chinese authorities and sought intervention of the Panchen Lama in securing acquittal for those charged with "black hats". He also stressed the need for restoration and renovation of most of the destroyed monasteries in Tibet, particularly in Lithang.

In 1982, Tulku Tenzin Delek sought an audience with the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala and thereafter stayed in Drepung Tashi Gomang Monastery, South India, for six years. In 1983, the Dalai Lama recognised him as the reincarnation of Geshe Adham Phuntsok and named him as Tenzin Delek.

Exile returnee earns 10 years for poster pasting incident



Nyima Dakpa is a 27-year-old monk of Tawu Nyitso Monastery, which is located in Sichuan Province, Karze "TAP" (Tibet Autonomous Prefecture).

Dakpa went to a local primary school and studied for three years. He then studied a year in County Middle School. Till his admission in Tawu Nyitso Monastery in 1989, Dakpa engaged himself in field works.

Dakpa stayed for one year in Tawu Nyitso Monastery and fled to India in 1990. He stayed in India for three years in South India. In 1994, Dakpa once again returned to his monastery where he stayed until his arrest in 2000.

In the summer of 2000, Nyima Dakpa pasted pro-independence posters of "Free Tibet" on the doors of local Chinese office, bank and Memorial Garden in Tawu

County district. The posters carried slogans such as "Free Tibet", "Tibetans in Tibet have no freedom", "Tibet is not a part of China", and was signed at the end with his name. Many local Tibetans had reportedly witnessed the incident.

The county PSB officials who started investigation the very next day arrested and detained another Nyima Dakpa from the same monastery. The incident led to the flight of Dakpa. While the one under police custody was released after 15 days' detention when the officers realised their mistake.

A police team led by Yeshe, a Tibetan police officer in Tawu Police Station, was set out in nabbing operation of Nyima Dakpa. Finally, the police managed to arrest Dakpa in May 2000 from a village nearby Lhasa on having received information about his hideout.

On account of the "exemplary deed" that Yeshe, the police officer, did in the arrest of Nyima Dakpa, Chinese government gifted him a car. A security post was set up within the vicinity of Tawu Monastery manned by about 15 staff and Yeshe was put in charge of it.

Dakpa was kept in a detention centre in Tawu County, and suffered severe beatings to

extract confession about his alleged crimes.

The court trial for Dakpa was not made public fearing possible protest by the masses. On 5 October 2000, the county court passed sentence on Dakpa who was given ten years' imprisonment in Tawu Prison on charges of propaganda and incitement against the masses. It was only in December 2000 that his family members and relatives were allowed to deliver food and to meet him. His family and friends were denied visitation rights for two months after the sentencing.

It is reported Dakpa was so severely beaten that both his legs were broken and he could not even stand properly on his own. It is said he required support from his fellow prisoners to go to bathroom. Nyima Dakpa reportedly said, "If I am released, I will continue to paste Free Tibet slogans till Tibet get freedom".

Dakpa is physically described as tall. He hails from a farming family and he has a brother named Norbu in Gaden Tilwu Khangtsen in South India. ♦

In 1987, Tulku Tenzin Delek returned to his native place in Tibet. Tulku Tenzin Delek left for Othok Thang Karmar, few kms from Nyagchuka County to carry on with his plans to construct monasteries. But there the regional officials tried to halt such activities. He went straightaway to Beijing and secured official permission from the late Panchen Lama who named the new monastery Kham Nalanda Thekchen Jhangchub Choling.

Between 1991 and 1995, Tulku Delek managed to built seven monasteries and an old peoples home in Nyagchuka County (Ch: Yajiang Xian), Karze "TAP". The seven monasteries are Jamyang Chokor Ling, Delek Choling Nunnery, Golok Thegchen Namgyal Ling, Tsochu Gaden Choeling, Golok Tashi Kyil, Detsa Monastery, and Tsegon Shedup Dhargyal Ling.

During the same period, Tulku Delek met with Lithang county officials to stop afforestation in Nyagchu County when the Forest Department began its work. Tulku said that the forest belonged to the local people and they should have the sole right to decide what they wished to do with their land. Later, he filed a case at the provincial level court.

During the controversial issue of the 10th Panchen Lama's reincarnation in May 1995, Tulku boldly commented, "I only recognise the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama recognised by His Holiness the Dalai and no one else." Once in the presence of county officials, Tulku said, "You people issue orders calling for ban on the display of portraits of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in monasteries. For me, it does not make any difference. Displaying the banned pictures does not deepen my devotion to His Holiness nor the official ban on the portraits lessen my faith. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is my very soul".

In a special meeting held by Karze authorities in 1997, Tulku Tenzin Delek was accused of six different charges in a document titled Angag Tashi. The charges included "endangering state security" and illegal construction of monasteries under the banner of religion. This document was distributed in 18 different counties and Tulku faced dangers of

imminent arrest. Tulku took retreat for five months in a nearby hill. In the meantime, local Tibetans collected approximately 30,000 signatures and sent an appeal letter to the provincial authorities to call off the arrest warrant. The authorities relented on the condition that Tulku would henceforth not indulge in political activities.

Later in 1997, Tulku built a school in Geshe Lungpa Village in Nhyakchuka County, which provided assistance to more than 300 children of poor nomads and farmers. All costs such as food, clothing, teachers' salaries were borne by Tulku himself. However, the local authorities termed the private school illegal and forcefully conducted "patriotic education" sessions in the school, eventually leading to the closure of the school. The old people's home in Nyagchu County was also closed due to pressure from local authorities.

In 2000, Tulku mediated a dispute over ownership of grassland between the regions of Lithang and Mola, which had reportedly led to two deaths. The Chinese authorities accused Tulku of his interference in the matter and were about to arrest him when Tulku once again went into retreat for a period of seven months.

In a letter left by Tulku, he stated, "I have never committed any political crimes. I received a phone call from the Chinese authorities saying that I should come to the de'ention centre alone as they have something to tell me. If you people could clear my charges through legal procedures, I shall come out".

For the second time, approximately 20,000 locals signed and appealed to the central authorities at Beijing to consider Tulku's case. The central authorities said that Tulku was henceforth banned from conducting any religious activities, and his freedom of movement was restricted. He was only permitted to live a life of an ordinary monk. It is believed that the Beijing government viewed Tulku Tenzin Delek in the same light as Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, chief abbot of Serthar Institute; they are "splittists" who "endanger state security". ♦

TCHRD commemorates 13th birthday of the XIth Panchen Lama



The XIth Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima observed his 13th birthday on 25 April 2002, seven years after he and his parents disappeared.

On 14 May 1995, His Holiness the Dalai Lama recognised Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the reincarnation of the Xth Panchen Lama. The Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) declared the announcement invalid and illegal. A few days later Gedhun Choekyi Nyima disappeared. After a few months, the PRC government appointed its own Panchen Lama, a boy named Gyaltsen Norbu. In May 1996, the PRC admitted to holding Gedhun Choekyi Nyima "at the request of his parents" for "he was at the risk of being kidnapped by separatists and his security had been threatened". It is strange that the Chinese authorities would go to such lengths to provide "security" for someone they considered just an ordinary boy.

In the years following this announcement, the PRC ordered that only the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama was to be recognised in Tibet, while monks, nuns and ordinary Tibetans were ordered to denounce Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. Reports from refugees fleeing Tibet, and from western

travellers, are that pictures of the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama are displayed prominently in the main monasteries and tourist hotels of Tibet. On the other hand, pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Gedhun Choekyi Nyima are banned throughout Tibet.

Many UN representatives and delegations from governments have expressed concern over the Panchen Lama's continued detention, and called for the Chinese authorities to allow access to the boy by an independent figure acceptable to the Chinese government and Tibetans to verify his health and living conditions. However the PRC continues to deny any outside access to the child and his parents. In October 2000 a British delegation was told by Chinese authorities that the boy was well and attending school. They said that his parents did not want international figures and the media intruding into his life. Two photographs claimed to be of the Panchen Lama were shown to the British delegation showing a boy of approximately the right age. However it was impossible to determine the boy's identity or location, and the British officials were not given the photos to take with them.

In August 2001, a Polish Parliamentary delegation visiting Lhasa was told in response to repeated questions that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was healthy; the delegation was promised photos of the boy within six weeks but never received them. Just recently the Polish Government received a letter from the Chinese embassy in Warsaw stating that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his parents did not want their peaceful life disturbed by strangers, and that the Chinese government "respects freedom of choice for its citizens and hopes that the Polish people would understand that too."

In March 2002, a government delegation from the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) met with a European Parliament delegation and once again said that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima did not wish to be disturbed. The TAR delegation refused to answer questions about photographs promised to the Polish delegation.

In the light of a refusal to provide

photographs which positively identify Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, or to allow independent access to the boy and his family, the Tibetan people can only fear the worst. The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy is appalled at the Chinese government's continued detention of a 13-year-old boy. We once again call on the PRC to allow an independent figure to visit Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and verify his health and living conditions.

The continued disappearance of the second highest lama in the Tibetan hierarchy completely contradicts China's claim to respect religious freedom in Tibet. While we applaud the concerns of countries around the world regarding the Panchen Lama, TCHRD fails to understand why this year no country had the courage to table a resolution against China's human rights record at the UN Human Rights Commission. Without international condemnation, China will continue to detain important religious figures and deny religious freedom in Tibet. ♦

Film footages smuggled out of Tibet

In March 2002, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy received smuggled film footages from Tibet showing the destruction of one of Tibet's leading religious centres, Serthar Buddhist Institute. The Centre made a 10-minute documentary to generate awareness about the actual situation inside Tibet

Serthar Institute, also known as Larung Gar, is located in Karze "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture", Sichuan Province. Until last year it was Tibet's largest Buddhist Institute. Serthar's non-sectarian academic teachings by Khenpo (abbot) Jigme Phuntsok attracted Buddhist scholars from all around the world, including students from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Korea.

It was also home to a large number of Tibetan monks, nuns and lay-people. Total population before the current crackdown was well over 8,000.

In 1999 Chinese Communist Party "work team" visited the Institute and ordered that only 1400 residents were permitted to study there. First to be expelled were students from other Asian countries. Then in June 2001 fifty trucks and jeeps arrived at the Institute and, under the protection of thousands of security officials who camped on the outskirts of the Institute during the demolition, began to destroy the residential area.

The documentary shows Chinese authorities overseeing the demolition of buildings, while monks and nuns retrieve their possessions from the wreckage. It also contains interviews with two ex-residents of Serthar Institute who are now in exile. Of particular concern to former residents of the Institute is that Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok and his niece, herself a senior religious instructor, are being held incommunicado in Chengdu. Another major concern described by a nun interviewed in the documentary is that hundreds of nuns in particular are now homeless.

In the last seven years, TCHRD has recorded the eviction of almost 19,000 monks and nuns from religious institutions across Tibet; the closure of 24 religious institutions; and the arrest of thousands of monks and nuns who are often guilty of little more than expressing their opinion or refusing to denounce their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer of TCHRD said "The documentary completely contradicts China's claim to respect religious freedom in Tibet. China may have escaped condemnation on their human rights record at the Human Rights Commission this year, but with evidence such as this, the world can no longer turn a blind eye." ♦

A young Tibetan escapee sexually assaulted for months

An escapee from Tibet reported to TCHRD, on conditions of anonymity, her harrowing experiences during escape across the Himalayan mountains.

The informant reported to TCHRD:

I went to primary school when I was ten years old. After completing my primary education, I attended a middle school in Gyaltsé County for three years. I did not pass the exams and therefore, I had to quit school. I stayed at home for a year and worked at my aunt's restaurant in Lhasa.

In January 2002, I made plans with my companion to flee from Lhasa to Dram. We hired a guide and paid him 4,500 yuan each to help us escape safely.

We reached Dram without any major problems and stayed there for two days. Then, the guide handed us over to a Nepali guide called Sundra. So, along with another guide who was escorting three other escapees including an elder woman, we walked along the mountainous terrain. After walking for several days, we ran out of food. The two guides on the pretext of getting food for us ran away. But, they sent two young boys to help us. We requested one of them to go and bring back the guides. So, one boy went in search of the guides while the other though not so familiar with the terrain, took us ahead for a considerable distance and then he also ran away. With the boy also gone, we lost our track but arrived at Tatopani, the border town of Nepal. There, we met a group of Nepali men and they told us that they would guide us to Kathmandu individually.

A Nepali called Matang took me and I was separated from my companions while they went on their own. After passing Tatopani, Matang took me to his cousin Sherpa Norbu's house where I was kept. He asked me to be his wife and against my will, he forced and raped me. I was completely strange to the place and didn't know a word of Nepali. I was feeling helpless and I could not run away.

I was confined inside the room for the whole day, and was kept locked inside for the following two months and 15 days.

During that time, I was repeatedly used as his wife against my will.

There was another sherpa called Tsering. I requested him to take me to the Tibetan Reception Centre in Kathmandu. Without Matang's knowledge, I escaped from his cousin's house with the help of Sherpa Tsering. I hid in Sherpa Tsering's house for ten days before making it to Kathmandu. There, I met two Tibetans from Amdo and they gave me 2000 NC. I had 400 yuan with me. I gave all the money to Sherpa Tsering. Matang's wife and Sherpa Tsering took me to the Tibetan Reception Centre on 21 March 2002."

The informant underwent a medical check-up at the Tibetan Reception Centre in Nepal. Now she wants to study at a Tibetan school run by the Tibetan government-in-exile in India. ♦

Destruction of old Lhasa

In late April 2002, reports were received from Tibet concerning evictions and demolitions of buildings contained within a World Heritage protected site in Lhasa.

Reports indicate that around 24 or 25 April 2002, demolitions began on a building on the southeast corner where Dekyi Shar Lam (Ch: Beijing Dong Lu) and "Snow Land Street" meet. Apparently, the Beijing government's plans are to demolish the entire block around this building complex, including an old residence called Samding. The area concerned is the block beside (immediately north of) the well-known tourist hotel "Snowlands," including a French restaurant opposite (east of) the Pentoc Hotel and the Xiangbala Hotel. This block contains some important old

aristocrat buildings, such as Phunkhang and Ganglha Metok and is one of the few remaining centres of traditional Tibetan buildings. The area is approximately three minutes walk from Jokhang Square, which is the historic centre of Lhasa.

These demolitions are just part of the Chinese authorities' ongoing destruction of Lhasa's traditional Tibetan character. Many traditional Tibetan-style buildings have disappeared due to Chinese Government's determination to turn Lhasa into a "modern" Chinese-style city.

Tenants of one of the buildings are reported to have been evicted around 24 April with only five days' notice. According to reports from ICT, the residents have been offered accommodation in the new buildings replacing their old homes, but the rent is expected to be much higher and the size of the apartments much smaller. Because of this, many of the Tibetans who rented in this area will be forced to move to another part of the city where rents are cheaper. Chinese settlers who come to Lhasa for work and business opportunities are more likely to be able to afford the new rents. Once again, a "modernisation" project in Tibet will benefit Chinese people rather than Tibetans.

These evictions and demolition contravene numerous international laws. Among them is the right not to be forcefully evicted which is an important principal to the right to adequate housing, contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The destruction of culturally significant buildings also breaches the protection granted by the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) World Heritage status.

TCHRD joined NGOs from around the world in calling on the United Nations to investigate the demolitions and evictions and order Chinese government authorities to comply with international law. ♦



Press conference on documentary "Destruction of Serthar Institute"

The Tibetan Centre of Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) held a press conference at Foreign Correspondent's Club in New Delhi on 18 April 2002.

At the press conference, TCHRD screened for the first time a 10-minute documentary showing the massive destruction of Serthar Buddhist Institute in Sichuan Province in Tibet. The documentary was made from film footage smuggled out from Tibet by ex-residents of the Institute.

As many as 50 press correspondents from foreign, national and Tibetan news agency encompassing print, radio and television came to a packed hall to cover the event. There were also officials from various embassies.

Two former residents of Serthar Institute, Khenpo Tenkyong and Paldrup, were present at the press conference to field questions from the journalists. Ms. Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer, and Mrs. Norzin Dolma, English Researcher, acted as interpreters. The event received wide media coverage in the following days. ♦

TCHRD campaign activities on the Panchen Lama's 13th birthday

On 25 April 2002, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy held

activities to mark the 13th birthday of Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, who has been missing since May 1995. TCHRD sent urgent appeals to Ms. Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other United Nations bodies such as the Committee on the Rights of Child, and Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance prior to his birthday. The appeals urge the UN to increase pressure on China to allow an independent figure to meet the child and see that he is well.

Amid heavy rain and windy weather, an information stall was held at the busstand in McLeod Ganj, attracting many Tibetans and tourists alike. The Centre disseminated reports and booklets free of cost and answered queries concerning human rights in Tibet. Hundreds of signatures were collected for a petition urging the release of Gendhun Choekyi Nyima and message charts for the abducted child were also displayed.

Meanwhile in the community hall, an exhibition of pictures by Tibetan schoolchildren and quilt-making project attracted some brave souls who dared risk the rain and wind. The pictures depict student's understanding of human rights and their perspective on human rights situation inside Tibet.

Other Tibetan organisations, including the National Democratic Party for Tibet, the Regional Tibetan Women's Association, the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, and Students for a Free Tibet held prayers throughout the day for the IX Panchen Lama. A candlelight procession in the evening then ended at the main Temple, where speeches and prayers were conducted.

Finally, TCHRD screened two documentaries, "Tibet's Stolen Child"

and "Destruction of Serthar Institute". It was a premiere screening of the "Destruction of Serthar Institute" in Dharamsala, and for many of the monks and nuns who viewed the documentary, it was clearly shocking to see the Chinese authorities destroying homes of their fellow monks and nuns in Tibet. ♦

Educational talk series in TCV schools

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy successfully concluded its first round of educational talk series in Upper and Lower TCV schools in March and April 2002. The staff members mainly dealt with human rights concepts, democratic principles, United Nations and its various mechanisms, Tibetan democracy and human rights situation inside Tibet.

Ms. Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer; Mrs. Norzin Dolma, English Researcher; Mr. Ugyen Tsewang, Information Officer, and Mr. Tenzin Norgay, Field Officer, took a total of 15 classes in Upper TCV School and 20 classes in Lower TCV School within a period of four days. The classes ranged from VII to IX.

The awareness level of the students concerning Tibetan issue in particular and human rights and democracy in general was very impressive. They raised many pertinent questions on the subject and actively participated in the role-plays. ♦

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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.

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TCHRD's publications:

1996 Annual Report: *Tibet: One More Year of Political Repression* (English and Tibetan editions) • 1997 Annual Report: *China in Tibet: Striking Hard Against Human Rights* (English and Tibetan editions) • The Next Generation: *The State of Education in Tibet Today* (1997) • *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • 1998 Annual Report: *Tibet: Crackdown on Humanity* • *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) • *South East Asia: Human Rights NGO Seminar on Tibet Proceedings* (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) • 1999 Annual Report: *Tibet: Tightening of Control* (2000) • *TCHRD Review* (2000) • *Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet* (2000) • *Racial Discrimination in Tibet* (2000) • *Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy* (2000) • *Prisoners of Tibet: Profiles of current political prisoners* (2000) • 2000 Annual Report: *Enforcing Loyalty* (2001) • *Drapchi Prison: Tibet's Most Dreaded Prison* (2001) • 2001 Annual Report *Human Rights Situation in Tibet* (2002) • 2001 Destruction of Serthar (2002)

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Man sentenced to fifteen years for activism

According to reliable information from Tibet, Dawa Tsering from Khag Township, Markham County has been sentenced to 15 years in Drapchi Prison.

Early in his childhood he attended school where he did traditional Tibetan studies. After some years he joined a co-operative and worked as a driver. He was apparently popular among local people, known as an honest, sincere and patriotic man.



In 1990 Dawa Tsering drove some pilgrims to Lhasa for pilgrimage. In Lhasa he saw Tibetans suffering a lot of hardship under the Chinese. He listened to foreign Tibetan language radio broadcast services and heard speeches of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan community in exile. He realised the need to do something for the Tibetan people. After driving the pilgrims back to their home, he left his job and his family to join the freedom struggle. In Lhasa he joined some other

compatriots and started to give political education to Tibetans. He talked to people about the freedom of Tibet and its history. In the nights he pasted freedom posters on the walls of Chinese offices and along the route of the Lhasa circumambulation. After two years he returned to his hometown when he came to know that the Chinese plan to arrest him on suspicion of involvement in political activities.

Even at his hometown, Dawa talked to young people about the freedom of Tibet and imparted messages of the Dalai Lama. Chinese intelligence officers knew of his activities and interrogated his family and many other families in Khag Township about Dawa's activities. Dawa once again went to Lhasa and continued his activities there.

In the evenings when Dawa listened to the Chinese Radio broadcast service and heard Tibetans referred as the Dalai Clique and Reactionaries', he smashed the radio set in anger.

In 1996 Dawa Tsering was arrested with a friend. They were severely beaten and tortured during interrogations. Once when his friend said, 'I will take the whole of the charges on my head, you go outside and continue with the freedom struggle.' Dawa replied, 'You cannot take my charges, I have sacrificed my family and everything to offer my self for the freedom of Tibet. Since you are young and the Chinese are unaware of your activities, I will take your charges on my head.' He took the whole charges levied against the

group.

When his court trail began, Dawa accepted every charge and even spoke of secret anonymous letters sent to Jiang Zemin, President of China. When asked whether he was behind a bomb-blast of the gate of the government of the "TAR" headquarters, he replied, 'yes'. Finally he was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment and taken to Drapchi Prison.

In Drapchi, the Chinese officials told Dawa, 'Don't be so absurd, just abuse the Dalai Lama and your sentence might be lightened.' In anger Dawa spat on the officer's face, 'Even if you kill me right now, I have only words of praise to offer to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and I will never abuse him.' An old friend came to him and said that he shouldn't be so hot headed, and that he should approach the Chinese in a better way for the benefit of his family members. Dawa said, 'I have given myself for the freedom of Tibet, I don't worry about my family.'

When Dawa's elder son and daughter came to visit him in Lhasa, the Chinese prison officials would not allow them to meet their father. At home Dawa's mother had gone blind and his wife, Rinchen Lhamo, developed stress-related heart disease. She sought medication in her hometown but eventually had to come to Lhasa in search of better medication. She also hoped to see her husband. In Lhasa the doctors diagnosed her disease as incurable. Her request for a visit of her

husband in prison was also rejected.

A month and half after this, a friend of Dawa who held a visit pass was on his way to the prison to deliver food. Dawa's daughter ran to him crying and asked him to take her along. He told the girl to return home as she won't be allowed to go inside and moreover it was raining heavily that night. In anger, she ran to the front-door ground of Drapchi and cried loudly asking for a visit. She rolled on the rain-puddled ground and continued to cry when one Tibetan staff came out to her and enquired why she was crying.

After hearing the girl's story, four officials escorted Dawa to his wife's place for a short meeting. They did not speak much, mostly stared at each other. After a while, Dawa told his wife, "Don't be sad. I have given up my life for the noble cause of Tibet's independence. Pray to the all knowing Dalai Lama for merits in this and the next life. I have only one thing to say to my parents, children, wife and all other near and dear ones that I am committed to the noble cause of Tibet's freedom. The Red-Chinese tortured me throughout and ordered me to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama. But even at such a testing time when I die a hundred deaths, I still shouted, 'Tibet is a free country' and 'Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama.' I have not turned back on my loyalty. I hope that all of you will pray for me to stand this ultimate test of life." Dawa's wife passed away a few days after Dawa's visit.

He was taken back to the prison after the meeting. Dawa remains in Drapchi Prison, not due for release until 2011.

TCHRD accreditation rejected

On 31 May 2002 the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy

(TCHRD) was denied accreditation to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) at the 4th PrepCom meeting in Bali, Indonesia.

China once again used a no-action motion to block discussion on accreditation. 90 countries voted for China's no-action motion, 37 countries against and 10 countries abstained. Interestingly, about 50 countries were absent at the time of voting. Pakistan and Cuba spoke in favour of China's no-action motion, while the USA and Spain (on behalf of the EU) defended TCHRD.

China's objection to TCHRD's application was outlined in a letter addressed to the Secretary General Kofi Annan dated 14 May 2002. The Chinese Permanent Representative to the UN alleged in this letter that members of TCHRD were "separatists" and that "we value and support...participation of those NGOs which have made positive and concrete contributions in close cooperation with China..."

Under ECOSOC Rules, NGOs have a right to respond to objections to accreditation. Therefore on 23 May 2002 TCHRD addressed a letter to the Secretary General Kofi Annan in response to China's allegations. The letter was sent to the Major Groups Program Coordinator of the WSSD Secretariat with a request to forward it to PrepCom members. However it appears from the press release by the United Nations dated 31 May 2002, that while the Preparatory Committee considered China's letter, it did not consider TCHRD's letter.

A joint statement was issued by several NGOs attending the Bali PrepCom supported TCHRD's accreditation. The statement said "China's objection to TCHRD's participation is not based on the merits but rather is a reflection of political animosity towards a human rights organisation. Exclusion of an otherwise-qualified NGO on the basis of politics would denigrate the spirit and objectives of the World Summit." Among the signatories to this statement were Green Peace (International and South Africa); Earth Justice (USA); Centre for International Environment Law (Washington DC); NGOs at the

Indonesian Peoples Forum; International Institute for Sustainable Future Association of World Citizens; and the Earth Island Institute.

China has already used no-action motions to block accreditation to the WSSD for two other NGOs, the International Campaign for Tibet and the Tibet Justice Centre.

Tsewang Lhadon, the Executive Director of TCHRD said, "All we are asking for is the right to participate in a conference. China is so desperate to stop any critical discussion of Tibet in the international arena that it stoops to procedural means to stifle debate. Supporting a no-action motion undermines the basic principles of democracy and freedom of expression."

"TCHRD would like to thank all those countries who voted to support our accreditation. We are also heartened to see that many international NGOs also lent their support," Tsewang Lhadon added.

TCHRD is an independent human rights NGO based in Dharamsala, India. Information gathered from first hand interviews of recently-arrived Tibetan refugees is translated into English and disseminated through reports. TCHRD also publishes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other UN Conventions in Tibetan language.



TCHRD delegate Norzin Dolma at Bali, Indonesia

This is a regular section profiling current political prisoners currently imprisoned in Tibet

Release of village head overdue

Pema Phuntsok is approximately 39 years old. Pema had received no formal education being from a semi-nomadic background. Pema is originally from Mong Sa Nga Village in Karze County, Sichuan Province. He worked on the farm with his parents until the Chinese Commune system was introduced. Pema then worked for three years herding animal for the commune then did farming again. When the commune system was abolished and the land redistributed. Pema was no longer interested in farming. In stead, he dealt with sales of medicinal plants and became a businessman in this field. His dealings were with other bigger businessman or Tibetan hospitals.

A few years later, he was elected as the head of the Mong Sa Nga Village. He was known for being a quiet but trustworthy person. While he was the head he was very efficient and did his villagemen a lot of good. He organised for his village folks to get farming equipment sanctioned by higher county heads. While he was the head, he also organised many religious activities and took care of the expenses. On several occasions he invited Geshe Sonam Phuntsok to grace the occasion and lead the prayer services.

On 25 October 1999 when news of Geshe Sonam Phuntsok's arrest spread across Karze County,

approximately 3,000 peaceful protestors gathered and demonstrated in front of Rongbatsang sub-district office, demanding Geshe's immediate and unconditional release. Pema Phuntsok led the people shouting, "China claims of religious freedom and arrest of Geshe contradicts that. Geshe has not done anything political so you have no reason to arrest him." The people held hostage 15 high-ranking officials including the Head and Deputy Head of Karze County and some policemen. Despite threats of dire consequences and death penalty, the public stood undeterred and demanded the authorities to produce Geshe before them.

At last, the authorities relented and brought Geshe back from Karze Detention Centre at about 10 p.m. Overjoyed, the crowds whistled and wept when Geshe, handcuffed and heavily guarded, finally arrived at the demonstration spot. Geshe then advised the public to disperse. They later released the Chinese officials but held the 10 policemen.

By 9 a.m. the next day, over 10,000 people from two different counties and 10 adjoining sub-districts gathered in front of the Court where Geshe was brought for a closed trial. They started shouting slogans of Geshe's innocence. About 600 PSB and PAP officers threw teargas shells

and fired indiscriminately to quell the mob, but luckily no one sustained serious injury at that time. However, policemen beat the demonstrators with sticks, electric batons, and rifle butts causing injuries to hundreds of people. Twenty people were hospitalised and nearly 100 people were detained in Karze Detention Centre the same day.

The entire incident was being filmed. Pema was prominently captured in the film shouting and demanding an explanation from the Chinese authorities. On 31 October 1999, Pema was apprehended and immediately taken to Karze Detention Centre. During his 15 days' detention there, he suffered severe torture and beatings along with the rest of the detainees. Some of the methods of torture included pouring hot water from a thermos on to his bare back, pinching and lacerating his body with pliers, and forcibly placing his hands and other parts of body on electric heaters. In mid November 1999 Pema was sentenced to two and half years in Menyung Prison.

Some detainees were released after being detained for one to seven months and paying fines ranging from 500 to 5000 yuan. Pema should have been released by 31 April 2002. But to date we have no information confirming his release.

Fourth time lucky for escapee

Tashi, 30, was born in Rishoekha Village, Tewa County, Kanlho "TAP", Gansu Province. At the age of 23 he became a monk and served Lama Hortso for seven years as a personal attendant. In mid-1995, Tashi went to Lhasa on a pilgrimage.

Tashi reported to the TCHRD, "On completion of the tour, I attempted to cross the border three times but was caught on all the attempts. We were around 30 people, all stranger to one another but all having a common goal; to escape to the land of freedom. Unfortunately we were caught at Shigatse and detained for a day there. We were directed to return to our native places following release from detention."

For the second time, Tashi struck a deal with a guide in Lhasa to take him to India. He said, "There were around 40 people. The guide took us in a truck covered with a plastic sheet. We were unlucky again. At a check post we were caught by a group of 30-40 armed police. They detained us in a basement for three days." Tashi was bent on fleeing to India and for the third time gave the thought a try. During his third attempt, there were 16 other escapees in the group. They were approaching the Nepalese border when ill-luck struck them again. Tashi told TCHRD, "We were all taken to a detention centre where we were detained for 26 days. During our detention we were made to flatten a big ground. I suppose it's a football ground." In all the three attempts he was robbed of his belongings and the money that he had arranged for his escape.

Tashi testified, "In total, I was robbed of 50,000 yuan. The first thing that a Chinese police would do is to search your body and luggage for any cash or other valuables. They know that escapees come with money and the first one to lay hands on the cash can claim it to be his. Only on my fourth attempt, I managed to reach India. I got admission into Tibetan Transit School, Dharamsala. The year was 1995. During my two-month stay at the school, I fell ill frequently, as I am not used to the hot climatic condition in India." Around

March 1996, Tashi decided to return to Tibet.

On my return to Tibet, I gathered around 32 booklets dealing with political themes, five audio cassettes containing speeches of the Dalai Lama and three documentary video cassettes containing footages on the invasion of Tibet which are all deemed political. At the Tibet-Nepal border, a friend cautioned me that I might be arrested for possessing these items. I befriended a *Khampa* (Tibetan from Kham Province) trader and requested him to carry the things. The trader was a regular traveller at the border and unlikely to be checked.

I kept a small pack of *Mani Rilbu* (blessed pills of the Dalai Lama), a small portrait of the Dalai Lama and one booklet containing political themes. During the security check at the border, I was apprehended for possessing the items. I was immediately taken to Nyari Detention Centre, Shigatse, 'TAR'. The prisoners there had to do hard labour.

One morning, I saw a Tibetan prison officer severely beating a monk in the prison premises. I pleaded the officer to refrain from such unholy act. Other officers joined the commotion and beat me as well. The prison officials were particularly very harsh and rude to the monk and nun prisoners as they are most active in the Tibetan Freedom struggle. Prison officials hold grudge against them and are separated from other prisoners. On being imprisoned the prison officials brush their fingers on a prisoner's hair to check the length of hair and accordingly decide whether he or she is from a monastic community or not. The monks are made to clean toilets, which is a total disregard of Buddhist monks as they are held in the highest esteem in the Tibetan tradition. In order to evade additional beatings the monk inmates resort to leading a layman's life. I took to smoking and growing my hair in order to avoid arousing suspicion of my identity.

I was detained for a total period of six months in the prison. After my release, I began to lead a lay man's life, as I was

unable to maintain my monastic vows while in prison. I also met with the *Khampa* trader to pick up my things.

In Lhasa, during a casual stroll in the market, a young policeman dragged me to a corner and began beating. I was puzzled by the whole event and questioned the policemen. The police got hold of the embroidered badge on my sweater and asked why I was wearing it. I had unknowingly put on the school uniform sweater that carried the name of my old school in India. After repeated plea of innocence, the policeman let me go but cut the badge and returned the sweater.

From Lhasa I went straight to my native place in Amdo. I began distributing the booklets and the materials that I brought from India.

Once, I went to a rich trader's house and gave him some of the booklets and a small packet of *Mani Rilbu*. The trader refused the present and told me not to come again to his house as it might put him in trouble.

On the night of 28th day of the seventh month (Tibetan calendar) 1997, I was walking when about 6-7 masked men came in two cars and stopped right in front of me. Without uttering a word they began to beat me. I was blindfolded and driven to a dark room and the beatings continued. The masked men interrogated me concerning the whereabouts of the rest of the materials and the person who gave it to me. I replied that I bought the cassettes from a market in Xining city and the rest were hidden in a nearby field. As per their order, I showed them the location where I hid a Tibetan national flag and lied that the rest were missing.

Soon after, I was taken back to my place of detention and kept in a dark solitary confinement cell. I was severely tortured there. My hands were tied to a rope from the ceiling and the room was pitch dark, so much so that I could not even see my own body. They hit me all over my body with the rifle butt and I became unconscious. I completely lost track of time. However, the beatings continued for

months until one day, they blindfolded me again and took me in a car. After several hours drive, I was taken out and they unfolded my eyes. They gave me a paper with Chinese texts and ordered me to return to my home. When I reached the outskirts of my village, I discovered that it was just after 1998 Tibetan new year.

I went back to my home and stayed in the village trying to get back to a routine life. I married and had a child.

In 1999, some policemen came to my house and harassed me saying that I should plead guilty for having engaged in political activities. They also said that if I fail to plead guilty, I will be given three years re-education and face further beatings. They left with this warning note.

I immediately borrowed 28,000 yuan from a relative and left that same afternoon with my wife and baby to flee to India.

At the Nepal check-post, some robbers robbed all my belongings and my wife's jewellery. They even robbed me of my leather coat and blankets.

After much struggle, on 3 January 2000, we reached the Tibetan Reception Centre, Dharamsala."

Obituary of a former political prisoner

According to reliable information received from Tibet, ex-political prisoner Thupten Namdrol passed away in his home in Lhasa on the morning of 17 May 2002. Thupten Namdrol had spent over 27 years in prison being released in 1995. He was 71 years old when he died.

Thupten was born in Gyatsa County, Lhoka, 'Tibet Autonomous Region'. During his childhood he joined Dhagpo-Shedrupling Monastery. Later he became the caretaker of the monastery. In 1959, the Resistance fighters '*Chu-Shi-Gang-Druk*' (four rivers six ranges) and the monastery collaborated to resist the Chinese invasion and destruction of

Buddhism. Thupten became an active member of the group. He was arrested on the charge of 'Counter-revolutionary' activities and sentenced to 20 years in Drapchi Prison. In 1964, he was transferred to Powo Tramo Prison located in Nyintri (Tib: Kongpo) Prefecture. In 1980, he was released on completion of his prison term.)

Thupten returned to his old monastery but later moved to Gaden Monastery and then to Tsuklakhang. In 1986 when the Lhasa Religious Bureau handed the charge of Draklha-Luguk temple to Tsuklakhang, Thupten was sent to Draklha-Luguk temple to be its caretaker. There, along with some other compatriots, he continued to work for the cause of Tibet. During the same year he visited India to meet his relatives.

On his return, Thupten continued his activism and in 1987, he and Tenpa Phulchung, sent documents out of Tibet through tourists. The documents detail the life history of the political prisoners who had died during the two mass protest of 27 September 1987 and 1 October 1987. Thupten and Choeze Metok (deceased) wrote posters containing information of Tibet's independence according to international law, and thanking participants of the two mass demonstrations. Information of the outside world was gleaned through the Tibetans visiting their relatives in India.

In 1987 the PSB raided Thupten's house and discovered many pamphlets and printing blocks. On 16 December 1987, he was arrested on charges of distributing 'Counter-revolutionary Propaganda'. He was detained in Lhasa Municipality branch police station for investigation for a year, then in 1989 he was transferred in Tibet's no 4 prison. Later a separate prison room was made vacant to accommodate Thupten, Tenpa Phulchung, Choezed Metok and two other Chinese prisoners.

On 9 May 1989, Lhasa City Intermediate People's Court described the activities of Thupten Namdrol and Tenpa Phulchung as grave "counter-revolutionary" propaganda activity. Thupten was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment and three years deprivation

of political rights, and Tenpa Phulchung was sentenced to seven years imprisonment and two years deprivation of political rights. Both of them were sent to Drapchi Prison, Unit 4, group no 6 to reform through labour. Thupten fell ill in the prison but the prison officials continued to force him to perform hard labour.

In March 1995, after repeated appeals and pressure from the international community, Thupten and three of the prisoners were released from Drapchi Prison. After release Thupten was placed under virtual house arrest with police doing rounds of his house and restricting his movements. His health continued to deteriorate until his death on 17 May 2002.

In recent years many ex-political prisoners have died following their release from illnesses they report to have contracted while in prison. The Chinese government systematically jeopardises a political prisoner's life. Even after their release the Government ensures that they don't lead a normal life. They are repeatedly subjected to investigation, their movements monitored and their rights deprived.

According to reliable information received, an internal notice has been issued to the Tibetan staff and cadres stating that during the holy month of Saka Dawa (Buddha's birth, enlightenment and Parinirvana), the Tibetan staff and cadres are prohibited from doing circumambulation, offering prayers and butter-lamp lighting. The notice has also called for the expulsion of the concerned staff who infringes the rule.

Since 2002 being the year of the water-horse according to the Tibetan lunar calendar, many pilgrims apply for the official pilgrimage permit pass to go to Mount Kailash. The Tibetan staff and cadres applying for the permit pass are specifically objected and warned with future jeopardy in their career.

The prohibition is seen as the Government's distrust in their Tibetan staff and cadres. The Tibetan staff are totally dissatisfied with the prohibition imposed on them

School encouraged to denounce the Dalai Lama

Tenzin is an 18-year-old student from Chenduo township, Jyekundo County. He arrived in Nepal on 1 April 2002.

Tenzin hails from a farming family with five members. Tenzin attended Chengdu Township middle school which has around 200 students, all Tibetans. Tenzin has to pay Yuan 280 per semester. The students are highly discouraged from attending any religious functions or visiting temples. They are also barred from displaying images of the Dalai Lama.

In 1999, a political incident occurred while he was in the higher middle school in Chenduo Township. In each classroom at the school, there is a television. One day in May 1999, news about the Dalai Lama was broadcast on the Chinese national channel although there was no picture of the Dalai Lama. Tenzin says, "It was reported that what the Dalai Lama was doing was not for Tibet or its people; that he is only working for his vested personal interest in the name of Tibet and Tibetans; that the Dalai Lama is strongly determined for his splittist activities."

This news item evoked a strong reaction from the students. Tenzin said, "We argued with our Chinese politics teacher, named Xiao Su, reasoning that the Dalai Lama has a point in raising the struggle of the Tibetan people who should be granted genuine autonomy. Hong Kong had lived under the British rule for 200 years, and then it was turned back to China, so was Macau. We used these two examples to emphasise the point that the Tibetan people have a right to live separately from the control of Chinese. But the Chinese teacher was still adamant. She asked what has the Dalai Lama done for the Tibetan people's welfare? She believed that the Tibetan people have education, clothing and shelter, all because of the great grace of the government of People's Republic of China. Xiao Su advised us not to be misled by the 'Dalai cliques'.

"This remark drew further reaction from the majority of students in our class, and there was heated exchange between the teacher and students. The teacher could

not control us, and within a moment the classroom turned into chaos with half of the class, shouting at the teacher. The teacher ran out of the class with tears in her eyes.

"The headmaster, learnt about this incident and came to our class the next day. He reprimanded the whole class for our conduct. In a very stern tone, he reminded us of what he had talked about at the meeting with the whole school at the beginning of the semester. He told us again that we must follow the path shown by Chinese communist government with their Marxist and Leninist ideology, and we should not think of anything incriminating. He told us that we should give up the Dalai Lama's misleading preaching of Tibetan's independence, which is simply not attainable. We were warned that if that sort of incident happened again, he would not hesitate to expel the whole class from the school and hand over us to the Public Security Bureau.

"If it was few individuals, we would have been expelled but we were saved by the fact that majority of the class was involved. Though the elderly headmaster was angry, he did not mete out any corporal punishment.

Instead about 20 of us including myself were singled out to write a letter of apology to our teacher, promising we would not repeat the incident again. The letter carried our signatures and names. Thereafter there were no more similar incidents of political significance in our class."

Tenzin dropped out of school in 1999 without completing his final year as his family faced difficulty in paying the school fees for himself and his two brothers. Instead, Tenzin began helping his father in business, which Tenzin at the time enjoyed. However, after a while Tenzin realised he did not do well in business, so he decided to go to India for further education and to help his family financially.

Tenzin went to Dram, the Tibetan border

town, using false travels permits. In Dram he met seven other youngsters also going to India. The group came together with four Nepali guides paying them fees ranging from Yuan 1000 to Yuan 3000. The group bypassed the police checkpoints and after walking over treacherous mountain tracks for a week, they arrived at the Tibetan Reception Centre in Kathmandu on 1 April 2002. Tenzin wishes to join a Tibetan school in India.

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experiences. The nuns addressed a briefing at the UN during the Commission. During that briefing Ms Chokey also made a presentation on the human rights situation in Tibet.

Ms Lhadon and Chokey also made three oral statement in the plenary on item 9, on the question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in any part of the world, item 11, Civil and political rights, including the question of freedom of expression and item

When countries failed to table a resolution on China, TCHRD issued a press release in the UN with two other NGOs, Free Tibet Campaign and International Campaign for Tibet expressing outrage.

Ms Lhadon and Chokey also met with other international NGOs and discussed possibilities of future joint activities. Activities such as briefing at the United Nations, written statements, seminars or workshops and joint reports on country or thematic.

While in Switzerland, they also attended a gathering of the Tibetan Youth Association in Europe. Mrs Lhadon and Chokey both spoke to the young Tibetans about TCHRD's activities and responsibilities of young Tibetans.

They also attended several briefings organised by other NGOs during the lunch breaks where panelists include UN personnel including Mary Robinson, Special Rapporteurs, activists, lawyers etc.



TCHRD staff members attend the 58th Human Rights Commission

The personnel for UN Affairs, Ms Tenzin Chokey attended a six-week training programme organised by the International Service for Human Rights and funded by the International Human Rights Internship Programme.

This course commenced the week preceding the 58th Human Rights Commission. Sessions were held in order to prepare the trainees for the Commission, including a basic introduction to the UN and its components. Extensive reading materials were handed out giving useful tips and background information. Guest speakers were also invited to cover specific topics, including the optional protocol on torture. A special visit and presentation of the International Commission of the Red Cross was also organised.

The course examined specific case studies or countries such as West Papua, Chechnya, Guatemala, Palestine, Bangladesh, Malacus, Peru, Norway, Switzerland, Poland, America, India, Sweden and Brazil. The case studies were discussed in order to develop strategies to strengthen various issues. This session was not only interesting but also informative. Learning about other causes in the world prior to attending the Human Rights Commission was essential.

An interesting aspect of the training was the Expert Meeting on the 3rd World Conference Against Racism. The Expert Meeting was to assess the forum and the conference in such a way as to provide recommendations for future conferences and for bridging the gaps that hampered the NGO negotiation process and follow up measures to combat racism and



discrimination in the future. Several representatives from non-governmental organisations also chipped in their perspectives which were valuable to the discussion.

After the first week, experts on specific issues were invited to speak to us. They included Special Rapporteurs on Torture, Women, Extra Judicial Killings, Adequate Housing, right to food and rights of non-citizens. We also received talks from experts on WTO Laws and ILO. Everyday we had a review of the commission and an analysis of the voting patterns and the progress of the Commission.

The training was ideal considering the fact that simultaneous to the training programme, the Commission on human rights takes place. The opportunity to obtain further specialised knowledge was valuable. Such training is crucial for the work of TCHRD, particularly given that we are the primary human rights NGO with direct access to the enormous number of Tibetan refugees and ex-political prisoners that enter the community in exile every year. An extraordinary number of them have

been subjected to arbitrary detention and severe torture and the international legal rights of these individuals are not adequately represented in international fora.

During the Commission

The Executive Director, Ms Tsewang Lhadon and Ms Tenzin Chokey attended the Human Rights Commission accredited by International Fellowship of Reconciliation. During their attendance, they met with several delegation members including the representatives from USA, Spain, Luxembourg, Finland, Germany and Switzerland. In the first week of the Commission Ms Chokey also addressed a press conference on the human rights situation in Tibet.

During the second week, two nuns who were former political prisoners of Drapchi Prison made a stop over in Geneva during their world tour testifying on their prison

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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.

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.

TCHRD's publications:

1996 Annual Report: *Tibet: One More Year of Political Repression* (English and Tibetan editions) • 1997 Annual Report: *China in Tibet: Striking Hard Against Human Rights* (English and Tibetan editions) • The Next Generation: *The State of Education in Tibet Today* (1997) • *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • 1998 Annual Report: *Tibet: Crackdown on Humanity* • 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) • *South East Asia: Human Rights NGO Seminar on Tibet* (Proceedings) (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) • 1999 Annual Report: *Tibet: Tightening of Control* (2000) • *TCHRD Review* (2000) • *Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet* (2000) • *Racial Discrimination in Tibet* (2000) • *Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy* (2000) • *Prisoners of Tibet: Profiles of current political prisoners* (2000) • 2000 Annual Report: *Enforcing Loyalty* (2001).

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Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok back at Serthar Institute

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy has received information that Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok has returned to Serthar Buddhist Institute at 11 a.m. on 24 June 2002. Khenpo was reportedly given an elaborate reception on his return.

Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, 65-year-old is the abbot of Serthar Institute. He was reportedly held in house arrest in Chengdu, Sichuan's provincial capital, since late autumn 2001. Reports indicated that he recently underwent knee surgery although his heart disease appears to have improved.

Khenpo was held incommunicado for several months. He was being treated by an unknown physician when his health

condition deteriorated. His personal physician, Rinzin, from Barkham military hospital was denied access. Thereafter, no outside visitors were allowed.

Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok founded Serthar Buddhist Institute in 1980 to meet the pressing need for renewal of meditation and scholarship all over Tibet in the wake of China's Cultural Revolution. Serthar Buddhist Institute situated in Karze "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" ("TAP"), Sichuan Province, has recently come under Chinese persecution. This Institute had over the years expanded from a solitary mountain hermitage to a spiritual oasis for approximately 9,000 monks, nuns and lay people drawn from

Tibet, China and South East Asia.

In July 2001, the Chinese authorities labeled the institute "illegal" and ordered its closure. Since then over 2,000 dwellings have been demolished. The most recent reports were of 18 dwellings destroyed late April/early May 2002. Although exact numbers of expulsions are impossible to discern, it appears that over 7,000 were evicted from the Institute.

For more details on Serthar Buddhist Institute, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy has well-documented literature and a documentary about the demolition of Serthar Institute. Visit our website - www.tchrd.org. ♦

Geshe Sonam Phuntsok's continued detention raises concern

According to reliable information received from Tibet, local Tibetans of Rongbatsang District, Karze County, Karze "TAP", Sichuan, are gravely concerned about Geshe Sonam Phuntsok's continued detention in the light of a recent public announcement. Geshe Sonam Phuntsok is revered as a great Buddhist practitioner and scholar in the Karze region.

On 21 May 2002, three high-level Karze officials arrived at Rongbatsang District, hometown of Geshe, to address a public meeting at the Sub-District office.

One of the three officials is Lolong Ta, the second head of Karze County, and the other two are subordinate officials.

The visiting officials addressed the crowd and announced possible release of Geshe Sonam Phuntsok. They said, "when Geshe is released, nobody should show any sign of delight nor resort to any protest measures. Owing to the news, if anyone creates any disturbance, it shall be deemed as protest against the motherland and the culprit shall be accordingly punished."

"It has now been a month since the

announcement was made but Geshe is still not released. We have now come to believe that the announcement was made to fool the general public. It is a well-chalked out plan by the Chinese authorities to create panic amongst the followers and supporters of Geshe. Some people say that the announcement was a deliberate move to test public reaction about the news and to observe their activities as a result of such an announcement. Their intention was not actually to release Geshe," commented one local Tibetan.

This is corroborated by the fact that one of Geshe's close relatives visited Geshe in Chunagdong Prison no. 3 in May 2002. The head of Chunagdong Prison, Yonten, reportedly told the relative that Geshe will not be released because he has a sentence to complete. Unless there is some specific order from higher authorities in Beijing, he could not be released at all.

Reports indicate that Geshe Sonam Phuntsok continues to be interrogated three times a week although it appears that he has recovered slightly from his earlier illness. There is reportedly renewed heightened security arrangement in the prison. Geshe is interrogated with questions such as "What is the basis of Buddhism that you all Tibetans are so devoted to? What were the things you say to your followers when you conduct religious ceremonies before? Do you love the Chinese motherland? How do Tibetans respect the Dalai Lama? What is your personal opinion about the teachings of the Dalai Lama?"

On 25 October 1999, Geshe was arrested and detained in Dartsedo Prison in Dartsedo County, Karze "TAP", for one year and four months.

In March 2001, Geshe was formally sentenced to five years' imprisonment. He was accused of "inciting splittist activities among the masses, seeking an audience with the Dalai Lama and for conducting long-life prayer ceremony for the Dalai Lama" among other charges.

In December 2001, TCHRD received information about Geshe's serious ill health. Geshe, at that time, was suffering from high fever, diarrhoea, dizziness and lethargy. Although on two occasions, Geshe was taken to a nearby military hospital, kept on three IV drips and hospitalised for seven hours, it did not bring about much improvement. In June 2002, it came to be known that Geshe has ulcer and low blood pressure but reportedly out of danger. ♦

Gyaltsen Dolkar Released

TCHRD has received confirmed information from reliable sources that Gyaltsen Dolkar, layname Dawa has been released from Drapchi Prison on 21 March 2002. She is currently at her home in Meldro Gungkar.

Gyaltsen Dolkar is a 31 year-old Garu nun from Meldro Gungkar County, Lhasa City serving a 12 year-prison term. Her expected date of release was 21 August 2002. TCHRD has no confirmed information on the reasons behind her release. Updates will follow upon further inquiries.

Gyaltsen Dolkar is the third nun political prisoner to be released prior to her due date including Ngawang Choekyi and Tenzin Thupten. Unconfirmed reports indicate that Gyaltsen was meant to visit a hospital in Lhasa for treatment but has not done so. Former political prisoners have testified to TCHRD that Gyaltsen Dolkar's health condition has been precarious since an uprising in Drapchi Prison in 1998.

TCHRD believes that Gyaltsen Dolkar may have been released on medical parole. With only few months away from her date of release, TCHRD is concerned that her current health condition may be precarious although nothing is confirmed to date.

On 21 August 1990, a group of 16 pro-independence demonstrators, including seven nuns from Garu Nunnery eight from Michungri Nunnery and one monk from Sera initiated a demonstration disrupting a state-run opera festival. It was the first day of the weeklong Shoton (Yogurt) festival. The group shouted slogans protesting the Chinese settlers and supporting the Dalai Lama. They were immediately arrested and taken away by the PSB of Lhasa City.

Gyaltsen Dolkar was among Garu nuns sentenced on 30 November 1990, for "counter-revolutionary" activities. She was sentenced to four years in prison and deprived of political rights for one year.

In June 1993, while still in prison,

Gyaltsen and 13 other nuns recorded songs and messages to their families and friends on a smuggled tape recorder. Each nun dedicated a song or poem expressing their feelings of hope and aspirations. When prison authorities discovered this "clandestine" activity, the nuns faced severe repercussions. On 8 October 1993, the nuns had their sentences extended ranging from five to nine years. Gyaltsen received an eight-year extension bringing her current total sentence to 12 years. ♦

Chinese land policies restrict nomadic life

Khundrup, 28, from Karze "TAP", Sichuan Province reported to TCHRD, "Being a nomad, my family moved with our herds according to the seasons; in warm weather we go to the higher mountains, in winter we come to lower lands. However, since the late 1970s, the Chinese authorities began restricting the places that we normally go. At certain times of the year the authorities order us to move our herds to a newer pasture even though the seasons may not have changed. If we don't move on as ordered, we were fined 150 yuan per day regardless of whether it snows or rains.

The authorities also demanded that the boundaries of the local areas be fenced. Hence, we had to buy the fencing material from the government and build the fences ourselves. The amount each family had to pay for the fencing was calculated according to the number of animals owned by the family. A bundle of fencing wire costs 1,500 yuan. My family owned 100 animals so we bought six bundles of fencing wire, which is 9,000 yuan.

If we fail to put up the fence within the stipulated time, we were fined 300 yuan per day. As a result, we had to work all day to complete the fences as fast as possible, sometimes until our hands were bleeding". ♦

Behind Bars for supporting a “splittist”

Pema Kunsang is approximately 26 years old. He is a former monk of Kargyu Bhelgay Monastery, which is located in Rongbatsang District, Karze County, Karze “TAP”, Sichuan Province.

Kunsang’s father’s name is Kayung Dorjee. He has seven family members consisting of his parents, three brothers, one sister and himself. His family ekes out their living by farming. Kunsang is originally from Shusar Village, Shusar Township, Karze County in Sichuan Province.

From the age of 11, Kunsang studied in Rongbatsang Chushor School for three years. Two years later, he joined Bhelgay Monastery and stayed for three years. During that period, Kunsang studied Buddhist Dialectics, Tibetan Grammar and basic Buddhist Philosophy in the monastic education centre.

Later he got admission into Karze Nangten Lobling (Karze Buddhist Institute) in Karze County, studying Tibetan Grammar and Art of Healing for six months. The institute had approximately 300 student at the time.

After six months’ study at Karze Buddhist Institute, Kunsang returned to Bhelgay Monastery. He was given the responsibility of caretaker of the monastery which he served for more than five years. He then meditated in Jusong

Meditation Centre in Jatsuka County for three years. On return once again to Bhelgay Monastery, he started doing public service. Gradually, Kunsang became one of the high lamas of the monastery. He started conducting special religious prayers in Tibetan households in the local area.

When Geshe Sonam Phuntsok, the well-known Buddhist practitioner in Karze County, was arrested on 25 October 1999, while he was in a religious retreat in Wakhar Retreat Area, Karze County.

As soon as the news of Geshe’s arrest spread across the town like wildfire, approximately 3,000 peaceful protestors including Lama Kunsang gathered and demonstrated in front of Rongbatsang sub-district office demanding Geshe’s immediate and unconditional release.

Lama Kunsang appealed to many Chinese authorities for Geshe’s release and tried to convince them of Geshe’s innocence in all the allegations that were levelled against him. He strongly criticised the Chinese authorities for having detained Geshe and vociferously supported Geshe Sonam Phuntsok.

Owing to his harsh comments against Chinese authorities, Lama Kunsang came under suspicion. The Chinese authorities accused

him of being one of the ringleaders of the spontaneous Karze demonstration on 25 and 26 October 1999.

In November 1999, Chinese police arrested Lama Kunsang on charges of “mobilising and masterminding” the Karze demonstration, and for opposing the Chinese authorities. It is reported that on a hidden camera he was captured making critical comments about Chinese officials. The video was later used against him as evidence. Opposition to the Chinese authorities is included as one of the charges against him.

Initially, Lama Kunsang was detained in Karze Detention Centre for three months. He suffered severe torture and beatings during his detention.

In February 2000, Karze People’s Intermediate Court passed sentence on Lama Kunsang. He received five and a half years’ sentence. Lama Kunsang is currently serving his sentence in Xinduqiao Prison. ♦

Religious restriction in Gaden Tashi Choeling Monastery

The informant who wishes to remain anonymous reported,

"I am originally from Tsekhog County, Malho "TAP". There are about eight members in my family and all of them are nomads. Tsekhog County consists of ten villages and ten monasteries. Zhabar Monastery has been the most restricted monastery in the county. The Chinese officials always conduct 're-education' campaign in Zhabar Monastery.

I was a monk at Jadar Monastery which is 'originally named as Gaden Tashi Choeling. At the time of my enrolment, there were only 40 monks. Today there are about 120 monks in the monastery. In 2001, the Chinese authorities set the limit for monks at 80 and the rest were ordered to go to other monasteries. The monks below the age of 18 were not permitted to stay in the monastery.

In 1999, the Chinese authorities started 'patriotic education' campaign in Jadar Monastery. They distributed documents to all the monks, which said there is one motherland. There were 15 chapters in the document. It also mentioned patriotism and denouncing the 'separatist'.

From July 2000 and February 2001, the Chinese prohibited pictures of the Dalai Lama. Expulsion was the stated punishment for disobedience. If we keep the banned picture, it is considered as breaking the Chinese Law.

In July 2001, a total of 30 officials came to the monastery including seven "work team" officials and others from both local and county level. Since the monastery is located not far from the county office, the officials would not sleep in the monastery overnight. They only come two or three times to the monastery. The main themes taught were patriotism to the nation and freedom of religion. In reality, we didn't have freedom of religion.

Since 1988, Jadar Monastery has a Democratic Management Committee (DMC). At present five monks manage the DMC and these monks are elected for a period of five years. The chairman of the DMC is Gedun Gyatso and the vice-chairman is Choeyang Gyatso. The

others are Kunga, Zoepa and Lobsang who are their subordinates.

The Chinese authorities always restrain the DMC from increasing the number of monks in the monastery. The responsibility of the DMC is to forestall freedom posters, pro-independence slogans in the monastery, to find those who have connections with the Tibetan government-in-exile, and to eliminate all 'splittist' in the monastery. If any of those happen, the chairman of the DMC is held responsible.

As the Chinese authorities disallowed monk below 18 years of age from studying in the monastery, we tried to set up a school for these small monks. The government rejected the idea. We sent a letter to the County office and township office concerning the matter but we didn't succeed.

Many monks would like to go to India but the returnees say that India is too hot. On the other hand, the Chinese government do not give *shan fein zhang* (Chinese citizenship card) to the monks. Because of this, the monks can never leave the monastery. In February 2001, I went to try and get *shang fein zhang* from the county office but I did not get it because I was a monk.

When the monks need to go to either China or Lhasa, they have to get *Tong xin zhang* (travel permit) from the Religious Department and also you have to return on time. If someone does not return on time, he is not allowed to stay in the monastery any more. Particularly in the case of a lama, he has to have an official who can guarantee in order to get the *Tong xin zhang*. If the Lama does not return on time, the person who has guaranteed would get into trouble. This means that there are lots of restrictions even to go to Lhasa.

Other issues

The informant also talked about conditions in the local area. He said, "Since the division of grassland among

the families was introduced in the 1980s, many disputes have occurred among the people. The water doesn't flow to the fertile lands but where the water flows, no grass grows. This is the main cause for major problems. The Chinese say everything belongs to the nation.

When I was coming to India, the Chinese announced the Western Development Project and they were building roads in the nomads' area. The road construction is very close to my hometown - Tsekhog County. Lots of families are very poor in the county, but the government never spends money on the poor families. They are investing heavily in road construction from Tongren-Tsekhog-Henan-Luchu-Machu-Golog-Sichuan. Now they have constructed up to Tsekhog County. All the workers are Chinese. Although some Tibetans would like to work, the Chinese government forbids them."

The informant also shared information on the murder of a monk, "When I was in Lhasa, I came to know that a monk from Sichuan got killed in Yak Hotel. The monk was trying to escape from Tibet to India. It was said that he had 80,000 yuan, and the guide killed him and took all the money. When police arrested the guide, they confiscated the money which still remains in the hands of the police.

Some people pretend to be a guide and then hand over escapees to the police. Guides have cheated many people so it is really hard to trust the guides. There are more people who have been cheated than there are people who could escape to India.

I also heard that some businessmen from Amdo were detained when we were crossing the border. When they were having picnic in Dram-Nepal border, they burnt incense and shouted, "Long Live the Dalai Lama". Because of this they got arrested after their picnic. I don't know what happened to them later." ♦

Winning Essays on Torture

TCHRD in collaboration with International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) organised an essay contest titled "Together Against Torture" among the Tibetan schools in and around Dharamsala in June 2002.

The United Nations General Assembly officially proclaimed 26 June as the UN International Day in support of Victims of Torture in 1997. Every year, the day is commemorated in support of victims of torture and to eliminate torture throughout the world.

Within the thematic context of torture, the students were given a range of topics

- 1) Why is it important to punish people who torture?
- 2) How can we create a world without torture?
- 3) Torture in Tibet
- 4) How can we help torture victims?
- 5) Could you forgive someone who tortures?

The three best essays of the competition are produced below. TCHRD has maintained the originality of the essays in both its content and style.

First Prize

"Torture in Tibet" by Luesang, TCV Suja

Being a political prisoner, it is good experience how our land colonizer's torturing the people living in Tibet. After spending the few years in prison and suffered under the tragedy periods. A word torture is not so sweet to hear in my ears.

But today, by taking this opportunity and through personal experience, I wanted to share with the people of the world how the people of Tibet were suffering and torturing by the invaders.

Naturally the persons living in prison were lost their life freedom due to the cause of political situation and certain to suffer a lot. When I was in prison at the age of 15 years, I had seen lots of incidents unimage-able. From one of them, during the occasion of the Tibetan New Year, the official of the prison come inside and classified all the political prisoners amount

of prisoners of all. Each one of them tools a prisoners and without any reasons or doing wrong deeds. They played a game by using the different kinds of tools for a human life. Some of we were so harsh body and no teeth presents in mouth and un-able to walk on our own feet. That was a real-drama-play which they have played for their enjoyment. It clearly shows that there was no reality human value and rights. Especially truth, justice and equalities, were very rare like stars in day.

Usually the way of their tortures were so varied but basically included in three types. Physically the prisoner had to works in construction, fields and so on without single day for rest in month and month. Also sometimes full 24 hours had to works. Without proper shoes have to wear. Imagine what would you feel if you were in that situation. Some people say it was impossible, though it was in reality.

Another way of torturing for prisoners were to learn soldiers train during the winter times. It was nothing less than except torturing both prisoners physical and mentally. At that times we got most belt and kicks. Also sometimes there was teaching on communist ideology by forcing and answering the answer in their thought. Without any desire to learn such lesson was absolutely in mentally torture. After all, torture was their goal. There was no fun for the prisoners.

However, what they planned programmes and activities. All these were kinds of torture for prisoner. There was no excuse to I was child, woman, dont know and cant, to say even the causing sickness. Suffering and torturing in my country was not only in prison. But also wide varieties in the society, religoins and economically. etc.

Finally, I hope and request the people of the world loving in peace, justice have to cooperate us and help to cure our disease.

Second Prize

"Torture in Tibet" by Wangdhen Kyab, TCV Suja

Being a human, the most important thing is acceptance of one's self-esteem by the society and obviously, the enjoyment of equal human rights. This is necessary

for the basic human development. Thses basic human needs are completely uprooted in Tibet by the barbaric rule of Communist Chinese. Torture is not only a physical ill-treatment rather it affects mental, economic, political and psychological status of the Tibetan victims. Such inhuman regime by communist Chinese has been going on in Tibet since 1949 and no Tibetan knows how long it will continue. But, they all have hopes to seen an end to this inhuman regime in Tibet soon with the justice and support from the international communities across the globe and fait ful pro-Tibetans.

The tortured Tibetan children have no truned into destitutes with their family members being imprisoned or slain by the Chinese government in response to their bid to raise voice against the communist regime and its injustice. Such destitutes have been increasing at alarming rate. This kind of violation against human rights raise serious international concers with respect to Tibet's future population, its government and the risk of Tibetan's valuable cultura and traditional deterioration. Let us all work to make heard the clarion call of threathened Tibet and its existence in the world map to the ears of our fellow brothers and sisters across the world.

Atmosphere of religion is poiled in Tibet by torture and repression. Before occupation, a considerable percentage of population used to live a life of apiritual devotees (monk and nuns). There were more than six thousand monasterues and nunneries in Tibet. They had full freedom to practise religion at their wish. With the advent of Chinese rule, around 80 per cent or above it of monasteries and nunneries are destroyed: The devotees are done to death and some are expelled from the monasteries or nunneries. Now-a -days, there is hardly considerable percent of spiritual devotees left in Tibet when compared to the pre- Chinese rule ratio. Neverthelss, the few survivals live under the constant fear and torture by the dictatorial armies of China.

Torture of education in Tibet is limiteless and unimaginaire detriment. The world praises Chinese's sacctiarin

and superficial progress made in Tibet in terms of increased educational centres and technologies. But the reality is too harsh behind the veiled Chinese diplomacy over Tibet. There are many schools in Tibet but they are established with the intention to overshadow and uproot the rich Tibetan culture and language by Chinese ideologies and its language. Of these kind of development will prove deterrance to Tibetan culture in small and the world's culture diversity at large.

Our friend let us join hands and work for the liberation of tortured and enthreatened Tibetans from the inhuman Chinese rule. Nevertheless, let us unveil the double standard of Chinese diplomacy to the eyes of United Nations. May justice reign the so far injustice rule by the red Chinese.

Third Prize

"How can we help torture victims?" by Tenzin Tsangyang, Upper TCV

We can help torture victims, firstly by providing them enough of their daily needs and expenditure for their injuries like beaten by electric shocks, beaten by electric rods, fractured bones and any other injuries due to the torturing. Then the torture victim must consult with a counsellor. We must ask them that what are their problems, how can we help them and by helping them in different ways to think that they have someone who is helpful to them in their depressed life. If some torture victims who are so depressed and don't want to communicate with the others in the outside world must have a counselling with a counsellor, this might help the torture victims feel relieved. We also can help them in communicating with others. If any of the torture victims are not interested or do not have enough ability to study in the regular classes with other students must be given other opportunities. For example: If she knows a little tailoring we can send her to tailoring institution and after finishing the tailoring course, she can make a shop where she can stitch other's clothes and live her own life. We should also know whether the torture victim has any talents or interest in them and can help the development of their career. If you afford all the expenditures and

facilities, you can ask for funds from different societies who are helping torture victims. They are many societies who are willing to help torture victims, first you can ask them to help build a mental clinic and some qualified counsellors for the clinic. If you don't get enough help or funds you can raise funds by making a small society yourself and organising fairs, different and interesting game which will attract many people, e.g. tambola, selling lotteries, and giving useful things for the first three who wins the lottery and use the rest of the money for the expenditure of torture victims. If some people who don't know anything about torture, you can tell them whatever you know and tell the reality of torture in Tibet. You can also show the books which is published by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy which is mostly about the situation and torture victims in Tibet. Lastly if you are a person who can think properly help people who have suffered so much and who are poor.

Profile of the 1st prize winner

Luesang, the first prize winner of the essay contest, is a former political prisoner of Tibet. He is currently 23 years old.

Luesang was born in Taktse County, Lhasa City. He became a monk when he was 12. He was arrested on 10 December 1994 when he was 15, after he and four others painted "Free Tibet" and similar slogans on a Chinese official's office. He was detained for four months in Taktse Prison. Luesang was then transferred to Trisam Labour Camp for one year and nine months when he was forced to do manual labour with the adults. He was told by prison officials that he had been tried and sentenced to two year's imprisonment.

When he was released from prison, he was no longer allowed to be a monk. He felt that he could not do anything else so he came to India. Luesang stated, "The worst thing was that we were forced to work for the whole day. We had no opportunity to get a proper education."

Cultural Development Society closed

Tenzin Rabgyal, a recently arrived refugee reported to TCHRD, "In 2002, the Chinese authorities virtually closed the Cultural Development Society in Rebkong County, Malho "TAP", Qinghai Province.

The Chinese are always against anything that promotes Tibetan culture. On the pretext of the society having underlying political overtones, the Chinese authorities ordered for its closure without any prior notice.

Two Tibetan periodicals called Golden Bridge (Tib: Sesang) and The Backward Tibet were merged into one society and named as Cultural Developmental Society. It was a forum for pure cultural exchange through showcase of literary talent. There was no political significance attached to the aims and objectives of the society.

Rabgyal reported a separate incident that he witnessed during his journey, "On 3 April 2002, two Tibetan women pilgrims from Jintsa County, Qinghai Province, were travelling with us. At Amdo County in Nagchu Prefecture, the police checked the pilgrims for *Shan fein zhang* (Chinese citizenship card required for Tibetans from other regions). Since the two women were found without it, the police fined them 50 yuan each. A defaulter's fine on this matter is actually set at 100 yuan. Since the women were with little money, their fine was reduced to half the actual amount. Thousands of Chinese migrate to Tibet but *Shan fein zhang* is never a requirement for them. During travel, it is only the Tibetans who are checked for this card and not the Chinese. Hence, it is clearly a discrimination against the Tibetans".

Tenzin Rabgyal was born in 1980 in Tsolho County in Qinghai Province. He studied in Kenney County Middle School for four years. From 16 to 20 years, he was a monk at Rebkong Monastery. Then he studied in Sera Je Monastery for two years and once again returned to Rebkong Monastery for one year. A year later, he fled Tibet and arrived at Kathmandu, Nepal on 25 May 2002. ♦



4th Preparatory Committee Meeting on WSSD in Bali, Indonesia

Mrs. Norzin Dolma, English Researcher of Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, attended the Asia Advocacy Workshop on Human Rights and Sustainable Development from 22 - 29 May 2002, followed by the 4th Preparatory Committee meeting on World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) from 27 - 7 June 2002 in Bali, Indonesia.

The Asia Advocacy workshop organised by Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs) as part of their global action plan on sustainable development. Seventy-two participants from eleven different countries in the Asian sub-continent participated in the workshop.

At the 4th prepcom meeting on WSSD, Mrs Dolma extensively lobbied both government delegates and various NGOs concerning their support to TCHRD's accreditation.

TCHRD was seeking accreditation as an NGO to the WSSD. China had objected to the accreditation on the basis that TCHRD is "splittist". To China's proposal of No-Action Motion against TCHRD's application for accreditation, 97 member countries voted in favour of the motion, 37 against, 10 abstained and 55 absent on 31 May 2002.

Mrs. Dolma also attended Major Group caucuses and side events for the duration of the prepcom meetings. The caucuses included Women, Youth, Indigenous, Asia, Peace, Human Rights, Environment and Sustainable Development.

The draft political declaration prepared by Peace Caucus and Human Rights, Environment and Sustainable

Development Caucus contains several Tibet languages and human rights references for inclusion in the final Chairman's text.

TCHRD representative established networks with many NGOs and spoke with several local and national media about TCHRD's accreditation in particular and Tibetan issues in general.

TCHRD attend ex-political prisoners' annual picnic

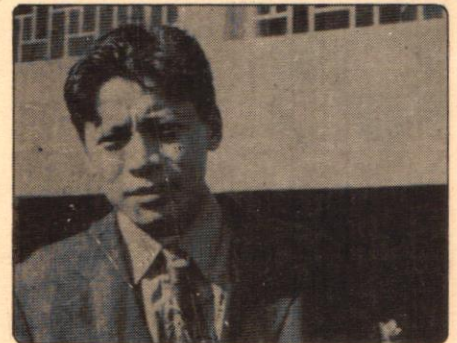
Approximately 25 former political prisoners of Drapchi Prison held an annual get-together at Norbulingka in Sidhpur, in mid June 2002. The gathering concluded with former inmates sharing their past experiences and future vision.

Five TCHRD staff members attended the picnic as a gesture of support and sympathy for all the sufferings these people had endured at the hands of Chinese authorities.

The staff attendees were Mrs. Tsewang Lhadon, Executive Director, Ms. Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer, Mr. Ugyen Tsewang, Information Officer, Mr. Tenzin Norgay, Field Officer, and Mr. Lobsang Geyphel, the Centre's Driver. ♦

Farewell to TCHRD staff

The Centre bids fond adieu to two TCHRD staff members, Lobsang Tsering and Lobsang Geyphel, both of who served the Centre with utmost dedication and sincerity over the years.



Mr. Lobsang Tsering served the Centre in the capacity of a Researcher since 1997. He will now pursue further studies in US under the Fulbright Scholarship Programme for two years.



Mr. Lobsang Geyphel, has been the Centre's Driver since 1999. In July 2002, Mr. Geyphel has joined the Security Department of the Tibetan Government-in-exile as a Driver.

All the TCHRD staff members and vounteers wish both Lobsangs all the very best in their future endeavour. ♦

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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.

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.

TCHRD's publications:

1996 Annual Report: *Tibet: One More Year of Political Repression* (English and Tibetan editions) • 1997 Annual Report: *China in Tibet: Striking Hard Against Human Rights* (English and Tibetan editions) • The Next Generation: *The State of Education in Tibet Today* (1997) • *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • 1998 Annual Report: *Tibet: Crackdown on Humanity* • *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) • *South East Asia: Human Rights NGO Seminar on Tibet* (Proceedings) (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) • 1999 Annual Report: *Tibet: Tightening of Control* (2000) • *TCHRD Review* (2000) • *Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet* (2000) • *Racial Discrimination in Tibet* (2000) • *Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy* (2000) • *Prisoners of Tibet: Profiles of current political prisoners* (2000) • 2000 Annual Report: *Enforcing Loyalty* (2001) • *Annual Report 2001: Human Rights Situation inside Tibet* (2002) • *Destruction of Serthar Insitute : A Special Report* (2002)

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- ✓ Annual membership fee Rs. 100/US \$ 30 for adult members and Rs. 50 /US \$ 15 for students

Please e-mail us at dsala@tchrd.org or norzin@tchrd.org or write to us on our postal address for further information.



HUMAN RIGHTS update
is a monthly newsletter of the
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HUMAN RIGHTS

update

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Recent Information on Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok's return to Serthar Institute

According to reliable sources, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok arrived at Serthar Buddhist Institute on Monday 24 June at 11.30 a.m.

The latest report suggests that Khenpo was treated for his knee, bile and wind disorders in the popular "363", a military hospital in Chengdu, the provincial capital of Sichuan Province. Though he has not recovered fully, Khenpo's condition has improved.

During his house arrest in Chengdu, Khenpo's freedom of movement was restricted and his access to information and visitors were curtailed.

The Chinese authorities recently issued specific orders against any use of government-owned vehicles and attendance of government officials for Khenpo's reception and subsequent celebratory picnic. The local populace, nevertheless, with mixed feelings of happiness and sadness, gave Khenpo a grand welcome. The reception party including some 100 vehicles, motorbikes and some horsemen waited at Bomda Town, located 80 kms away from the Institute.

Khenpo's entourage included Jetsunma Muntso, his niece and abbess of Pema Khandro Duling Nunnery, Tserbrum and Palzod, two other nieces, Medon, his sister, Sog Dhargyal, translator, Pema Delek, bodyguard, Tsepo and A geg, both drivers.

From 25 June 2002, the entire religious community of Serthar Institute organised picnic for six days, during which time there



was much revelry. Many, however, felt bereft of the usual joy and gaiety of the past picnics. While the Tibetans express delight for Khenpo's return, yet they are anxious about what the future might hold for their precious lama.

TCHRD source reported, "In the past, Khenpo frequently gave speeches to the mass during annual picnics. After last year's crackdown at Serthar Institute, his speeches have become very rare. While Khenpo seemed intimidated of the Chinese authorities' response should he speak, he also did not wish to submit to their orders. He appeared to have lost his freedom to speak his mind. Following his arrival at the institute, he did not speak at all"

The source further commented, "It is difficult to say whether Khenpo will be taken away to China again. Khenpo has no choice but to go whenever and

wherever the Chinese authorities order him to go. Moreover, it is difficult to ascertain whether any conditions have been laid for Khenpo's release. Owing to covert and cautious nature of Chinese activities, everything is shrouded in secrecy. If the news is something that could bolster China's image, they propagate it everywhere. If it is not in the interest of the state, the Chinese authorities do everything secretly. That's why they didn't say anything good or bad about Khenpo's release."

The "work teams" from Serthar County stationed at the institute constantly make announcements through loudspeakers that the total strength of the monks and nuns cannot exceed the previously enforced ceiling of 1,400 and no new huts are to be built.

Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok is the founder and abbot of Serthar Buddhist Institute in Larung Valley near Serthar Town, Karze Prefecture, Sichuan Province. This non-sectarian Buddhist academy had expanded from a solitary mountain hermitage to spiritual oasis for over 8,000 monks, nuns and lay students.

After two years of escalating restrictions and propaganda campaigns, the Chinese authorities evicted thousands of monks and nuns, destroyed over 1,000 dwellings and held Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok incommunicado in Chengdu.

For more background information on Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok and on the Serthar Institute, visit our website www.tchrd.org/pubs/Serthar.

Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery faces danger of closure

According to reliable information received from Tibet, Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery located in Dzoge (Ch: Zoige) County, Ngaba (Ch: Aba) "TAP", Sichuan Province, faces danger of being closed. The monks of Kirti Monastery and local populace are gravely concerned about the fate of the monastery.

The danger evolved after the Tibetans of Dzoge County appealed to the local Chinese authorities seeking official permission to allow Kirti Rinpoche based in Dharamsala, India, to visit his native hometown. The appeal, written and submitted by the local inhabitant, was submitted in the wake of recent Chinese government's official announcement that called for the return of exile Tibetans into Tibet without any restrictions.

The appeal was rejected and Kirti Rinpoche was labelled as a well-known "reactionist". Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery was suspected to be instrumental in spearheading the appeal for invitation. Earlier this year, the authorities have banned a book by Kirti Rinpoche titled *Hopes and Aspirations of a Sixty-Year-Old Man* (Translit: drug cu rgan po'i re 'dun), thousands of which have already been distributed amongst the monks and the local people.

Pursuant to the mass appeal, the Chinese authorities made allegations in July 2002 that Rinpoche's book has underlying derogatory message. Furthermore, stern orders were issued stating the closure of the monastery, should they fail to re-collect the books.

Kirti Rinpoche's book, a personal composition, deals specifically with spirituality and delves deeper on the subject of monastic discipline within the spiritual community. The book advises the young monks to hold on fast to their monastic vows and serves as a guideline in their daily life as a monk.

The book first saw publication in December 2001. In early 2002, one thousand photocopies of the book was distributed among the monks of Kirti Monastery and also among the local

masses.

Soon after, Chinese officials from Dzoge County and Ngaba "TAP" Sichuan Province, were deployed in the monastery. They conduct daily classes for the monks on "patriotic education". The monks were also coerced into accepting responsibility for making photocopies and subsequent distribution of Kirti Rinpoche's book.

In 1985, Kirti Rinpoche visited Tibet to meet his relatives but was unable to visit his native hometown. At the time Kirti Rinpoche visited Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery but was able to stay for only five days. Taking into consideration Rinpoche's popularity and huge spiritual followings (approximately 600,000), the Chinese authorities feared that Rinpoche's stay might spur the Tibetans to revolt against the PRC Government. Consequently, Rinpoche had to leave Tibet owing to Chinese pressure.

A local inhabitant lamented, "We, the local populace and the monastic community, are saddened by the fact that Rinpoche was unable to visit his native place. We eagerly wish him to return. It has been over four decades that Kirti Rinpoche fled from his hometown first to Lhasa and then to India in the aftermath of Chinese occupation of Tibet. The elderly people anxiously wait to see their benevolent Rinpoche once before they depart from the world."

The 11th Kirti Rinpoche (more popularly known by this spiritual title), a.k.a. Kirti Trulku Lobsang Tenzin Jigme Yeshe Gyatso, was born in 1942 in the present-day Tewa County, Ganan "TAP", Gansu Province. Kirti Rinpoche resides in Kirti Monastery set up in exile in Dharamsala, India. Over 80 branch monasteries in Tibet come under the umbrella and are affiliated to Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery. ♦

Takna Jigme Sangpo arrives in US for medical treatment

Tibet's longest-serving political prisoner released from Drapchi Prison on medical parole early this year arrived in the United States on 13 July 2002 to seek medical treatment.

Takna Jigme Sangpo, 74, has served 19 continuous years on charges of "counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement" and carried a cumulative sentence of 41 years. Takna Jigme Sangpo's actual release date was 3 September 2011 when he was freed nine years prior to his due date of release on 31 March 2002.

According to Mr. Philip T. Reeker, Deputy Spokesman of the US State Department, "His (Takna Jigme Sangpo) release on medical parole and the recent permission to travel to the United States for medical treatment is the result of active involvement of several Administrations, the Department of State and our diplomats posted in China, Congress, private Americans, and the community of non-governmental organisations."

Takna Jigme Sangpo is in "pretty good health" despite serious high blood pressure and coronary disease, said John Kamm, President of the San Francisco-based Duihua Foundation. He said Jigme Sangpo was "frail but mentally sharp"

Jigme Sangpo was met at Hare Airport in Chicago by a family member and soon after spoke by phone to Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, cabinet head of the Tibetan government-in-exile and Lodi Gyari, Special Envoy of the Dalai Lama. Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche expressed his personal greetings to Jigme Sangpo and urged him to take sufficient rest.

In an interview with RFA's Tibetan Service, Takna Jigme Sangpo said, "To realise my complete freedom - its unimaginable. This time the Chinese did not impose any preconditions for my release and departure. They allowed me to go directly with no special restrictions.

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Tibet activist serving 15-years sentence

Thupten Yeshi (b. 1950) is a farmer from, Dashang Township, Gyama County, Meldrogungkar County in "TAR". His family consists of his wife, five children, his mother-in-law and two brother-in-laws - Tamdang and Sonam Rinchen.

On 24 April 1992, Yeshi put up pro-independence posters on a neighbourhood tree. The slogans written on the posters attacked the socialist system, opposed the socialist ideological education, and encouraged peasants to rebel. Yeshi and a friend had apparently discussed plans to fly a Tibetan flag from local government offices, an offence, which constitutes "spreading propaganda regarding incitement to revolution."

On 30 June 1992, Lhundrup Dorjee, Sonam Dorjee, Sonam Rinchen, and Kunchok Lodroe, disrupted a political "re-education" meeting in the village of Meldro Gyama Trikhang in Meldrogungkar County. They rushed on stage, seized the microphone, and wrestled with the officials shouting pro-independence and anti-Chinese statements while exhibiting a Tibetan national flag. After the four main demonstrators were dragged away and beaten by the People's Armed Police (PAP), approximately 100 villagers began shouting similar slogans. Thupten Yeshi was suspected of being the

"ringleader" of the demonstration although he did not personally take part in the demonstration.

On 6 July 1992, Thupten Yeshi was arrested in broad daylight and was detained in Meldrogungkar Detention Centre for nearly thirteen days. During this time his wife, Tsering Yangchen, was allowed to see him once, but was not allowed to talk. Yangchen was shocked to see her husband in a poor health with bruises and swellings all over his face within such a short period. In the course of his detention, it is believed that he faced severe beatings and torture. He was then secretly transferred to Gutsa Detention Centre (located east of Lhasa), for almost three months.

Meanwhile, the authorities came to know about a painted Tibetan national flag on the front gate of Yeshi's house. Subsequently, high authorities from Lhasa and Gyama Township PSB officers came to interrogate the family at regular intervals. Sometimes, the authorities would even drop in for inspection and interrogation during nighttime. Despite official threats, the authorities have not been able to confiscate his house due to evident public support for the family.

On 20 October 1992, Lhasa Intermediate People's Court sentenced him to 15 years' imprisonment and five years' deprivation of political rights. The

four others who participated in the demonstration were Lhundrup Dorjee, Sonam Dorjee, Sonam Rinchen (Thupten Yeshi's brother-in-law) and Kunchok Lodroe. All four men were sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment with four years' deprivation of political rights. Sonam Rinchen died whilst in Drapchi Prison in January 2000, and Kunchok Lodroe was released on medical parole. Thupten Yeshi, Lhundrup Dorjee and Sonam Dorjee are currently serving their sentence in Drapchi Prison.

A former Drapchi inmate recalled, "I saw Thupten Yeshi when he first came to Drapchi Prison. The new prisoners were ordered to read out prison laws from the books that were given to them but Yeshi refused to do so. Instead, he chanted mantras *om mani padme hun*. This infuriated the prison official who beat Yeshi with electric baton. Yeshi snatched the baton from the official and threw it away. For this crime, Yeshi was kept in a solitary confinement cell for almost five days during which time he was tortured and beaten severely. The prison inmates advised him to apologise to the prison officials as that might bring about a reduction in his punishment. He relented after much persuasion. He is very hard, robust and never easily gives up his stand even after lot of punishment. He is patriotic to the core."

Exile returnee arrested, his whereabouts unknown

According to reliable information received by TCHRD, on 14 May 2002, Dhondup, an exile returnee, was arrested in Lhasa. To date his current whereabouts remain unknown.

The informant, who reached Kathmandu, Nepal, on 1 July 2002 said, "It was around midnight of 14 May 2002. Dhondup, his four-year-old daughter and I were in his rented house at Tromsikhang in Lhasa when three elderly policemen in civilian dress barged into the room. They produced an ID, which I dared not look at carefully. They immediately interrogated me about my place of origin, my relationship with Dhondup and purpose of my stay in Lhasa. Then they turned to Dhondup and told him to follow them as they have something to ask him in private. I tried to join Dhondup outside but then the policemen ordered me to remain inside and to look after the girl. They assured me at the time that Dhondup would return right away. However, I had no news of him since the incident."

"The next day fearing further inquiries and harassment, I decided to flee from Tibet. When I reached Dram (Tibet-Nepal) border, I called up friends in Lhasa for information but to no avail. None of them heard anything about Dhondup nor were they willing to risk trouble for being associated with Dhondup".

Dhondup had been to India twice before and returned to Lhasa in 2001. There were rumours before the actual arrest that police were looking for Dhondup. His room was surprisingly not ransacked for incriminating evidences.

No further details are available at this moment. ♦

Travellers' account of Tibet experience

Two foreign tourists, Yaki Platt and Sinead Ni Ghairbhith, travelled extensively in Tibet in the month of April-June 2002 mainly through the Kham and Amdo regions. Since both of them spoke and understood a little Tibetan, they "got to learn a lot about the current situation in the areas" they visited.

Their account reflect experiences and observations from the places in Tibet according to the route they took: Dartsedo, Lhagang, Lithang, Tawu, Karze, Rongbatsang, Maigango, Derge, Sershul, Jeykundo, Nangchin, Mato, Golok, Tongden, Tsekok, Henan, Machu, Labrang, Siling and Lhasa.

Education

While travelling in Kham and Amdo, we saw few schools, mainly divided into three categories:

Chinese schools (like in Dartsedo) where all subjects are taught in Chinese and no Tibetan subjects are taught, not even Tibetan language although in some cases most of the students are Tibetan.

- Chinese medium schools in which Tibetan language is taught just as another subject and all other subjects (like Chinese, Maths, Science and Chinese History) are taught in Chinese only. Tibetan history, philosophy and arts are not taught in these schools. This is the type of school most prominent in Tibet.

- Tibetan schools which are run mostly in Tibetan. Chinese language is, of course, taught in these schools, but all other subjects are taught in Tibetan. Many of those schools are not getting much funding from the government, if any, and most of the money comes from outside China and foreign funds, Rinpoches in exile etc. These schools are getting threats of closing down from time to time, as it obviously can be a place for political unrest.

The control of schools varies from place to place. In some of them foreign English teachers, who come on voluntary basis, are not allowed to teach. The Chinese flag

and pictures of Mao must be displayed in classrooms and Tibetan history is not allowed to be taught. In these schools, however, the Tibetan spirit is very much alive and the students are much aware of the current political and religious repression.

Students who attend the Chinese schools master Chinese better than those who attend the Tibetan schools. Since a high level of Chinese language is prerequisite for any government job, those who attend the Chinese schools have better chances.

Health

In most major towns that we have been to in Kham and Amdo, there are either Tibetan and allopathic hospitals or clinics. This is great, for those who can afford it! In Lithang in Kham, we met a man who had broken his leg a month before. He had been bed ridden since he could not afford the 400RMB he would have to pay if he wanted to get treated in the hospital there. So you can say there are better health care facilities in Tibet, but there is no free health care and that it has improved, like the roads, in areas populated by Chinese.

While staying with both farmers and nomads we saw that there is little if any awareness of basic hygiene and healthcare e.g. no washing of hands, brushing teeth, and most young Tibetan men smoke, even children as young as five years old in some places, and in front of the parents. Cigarettes are dirt cheap as is beer, which is cheaper than water.

Environment

Obvious mass deforestation in many parts of Kham and Amdo (eastern Tibet now known as Sichuan and Qinghai). Many areas with nothing on the mountain sides but barren land with tree stumps and dead trees still rotting by the rivers edge e.g. outside Tawu (Daofu) Kham on the road to Ganze and between Derge and Manigango. To quote a local farmer in

that area "there used to be many different animals here, when there were trees, now everything's gone.

In Dartsedo (Khanding) Kham there was a big sign on the road sign saying "Plant Trees, Good for Environment", yet Kham Aid Foundation were refused to go ahead with a mass tree plantation in some areas. There are new trees being planted in many areas, but in many cases on land where the farmers used to grow barley (the staple diet in Tibet).

Due to mass rerouting and damming of the major rivers a lot of arable land has become a flood plain and in most of these areas the farmers are forced to plant trees with little subsidy to compensate for the loss of their barley harvest.

For example, we saw on the way to hot springs in Rongbatsang, all the arable land is now planted with trees. At least there were hard woods but not fruit bearing though, this at least would give the farmers some immediate return from the tree planting.

There is a strict policy as regards cutting down trees in these provinces and yet we often saw truckloads of trees coming from the "TAR" area (mostly trees between half a meter and a meter in diameter) e.g. saw at least 20 truckloads on the road leading from Rongbatsang to Manigango around 7 May 2002. Local people suggested that the trucks were coming from inside the "TAR" and also said that they are still used to seeing those trucks loaded with timber. Tibet is not a clean place anymore as there is litter everywhere in towns and in many villages - especially in rivers. Many places look like an ecological disaster - just like any other Third World Country.

Roads

There are road improvements all over these two provinces, with busloads of Chinese being shipped in to live on the roadsides to do the work in Amdo and mostly Tibetans in Kham. However, anywhere that there are still only Tibetans living i.e. really rural remote areas. There are no roads just dirt tracks. The average daily wage varies from 12 to 15 RMB and in Ganze area often where there are both Chinese and Tibetans working on the roads together, the Chinese are paid three times more than their Tibetan counterparts.

Water

While travelling in Eastern Tibet more often than not, the road follows the path of the river. Nearly every river we saw seemed to have been tampered with in some ways, in many cases the riverbed was ten times wider than the existing flowing water. We were there in spring so it seems that it wasn't a case of just being there during a rainfall season. Also we saw many dams and channelling of water through canals, e.g. the river flowing from Derge - Manigango - Kham. In most towns the rivers have become rivers of plastic, mostly blue shopping bags and plastic bottles from fizzy drinks. In many places mass garbage is being dumped in the rivers. It seems that the local population, both Tibetans and Chinese have very little education, if any, about environmental problems.

Culture

As regards folk culture, generally speaking, it seems that in rural areas Tibetans are living the same way as they have been for a long time, eating the same food, wearing the local traditional dress, singing traditional songs and have strong faith in the Buddha's teachings and unquestionable faith in the Dalai Lama.

Of course in any of the towns we have been to, it's a different story. Some Tibetans will even give you their Chinese name (which they are given in school) when you ask them. Here too, especially in border areas such as Dartsedo, young Tibetans seem to have almost completely lost their Tibetan identity. When we asked them why this was so, many times the reply was that their parents just think that it will make for an easier life for their children if they are left to believe what they are taught in schools (where the students are indoctrinated as Chinese) and practically daily by the media.

The spoken Tibetan language in Tibet has adopted many Chinese words. The most popular current singer in Tibet is a Tibetan guy who sings about the beauty of Tibet but in Chinese. In Kham and Amdo, most of the shops, restaurants, offices and hotels have signs only in Chinese and not in Tibetan (most business seems to be owned by Chinese and during

our stay in Tibet we met only one Chinese who spoke Tibetan). Many of the modern Chinese everyday assimilated into the Tibetan way of living such as smoking, playing snooker, popular Chinese music and Chinese TV.

And as for making the Tibetan - Han Chinese, in cities and towns the Chinese are having some success with it while in the countryside it is less evident. In many towns that we have been to, Tibetans have adopted Chinese behaviours of chain smoking. Some Tibetans give you first their Chinese name as that is what they were given in schools; they speak with each other in Chinese.

Interestingly, it seems that Tibetan culture is also developing in its own course. In Lhasa we saw some exhibitions of modern Tibetan painting and also Tibetans dancing traditional dances to modern Tibetan music.

Holy institutions/places

In some monasteries and holy places an entrance fee is charged. It is such a shame for turning holy places into business, completely against the Buddhist spirit. We wanted to go and see a special printing place for Holy Scriptures that is also a pilgrimage site for many. It was sad to see that money has blinded the eyes of people around. They charge 3-7 dollars for entrance fee, even if all the printing house's workshops are closed and what you can see is only bare walls and even if one wanted just to go and see the monastery inside - one has to pay.

In Sang-Chu (Xiahe in Chinese) - the hometown of Labrang Monastery, the place is so shocking. The Chinese have turned the monastery into a tourist's circus. It was so unreal that we decided to skip the guided tour into the "Chinese-Tibetan monastery" which cost a lot of money. Actually people are not allowed to go in without paying a log of money and taking a tour guide. So we circumambulated the monastery for couple of hours and saw some parts of the monastery. The monastery is widely used for Chinese propaganda and it was partly interesting to see how it works,

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partly sad and partly so ridiculous as sometimes it goes to a real low level one.

We visited few temples and monasteries in and around Lhasa. In all of them the foreigners are forced to pay a lot of money and lot of it ends up in the Chinese hands (though some Tibetans charge the money very enthusiastically). For example the entrance fee to the Potala Palace, the former palace of H.H. the Dalai Lama and the former seat of the Tibetan government, is 70 Yuan (about 9\$) and there are some additional fees inside. Some of the rooms in the palace are decorated with propaganda signs that emphasise and demonstrate the "rightful" claim of the Chinese over Tibet. It is sometimes written in such a childish way that I wonder if the Chinese government think that everyone is so stupid to get their low level propaganda as simple as that.

In Kumbum Monastery, by the way, the Chinese still screen a propaganda movie, full of lies, telling how the former Tibetan government and the Dalai Lama himself played a major role in oppressing the Tibetan people and how Tibetans live happily now under the Chinese rule. The Tibetans are not allowed to own pictures of H.H. in their homes (and their houses are searched from time to time) and prayers for his long life are banned. The Chinese government charge money for Potala and Norbulingka - and all the money goes into their pockets. So this double standard is quite obvious but the Chinese don't see any problem with that.

Buddhists, Hindus and Jains consider Mount Kailash holy and that makes it holy to more than one billion people! Many foreigners join the Tibetans to make a pilgrimage to the holy mountain but here they are also charged a lot of money - 50 Yuan for every circle around the mountain and more than 100 Yuan for even pitching up a tent somewhere! Turning the religion into a business is such a waste and harms so much of the purity and the spirit of that path and it is such a shame that many Tibetans take part in this Chinese way - making a shop out of religion. ♦

Chinese monopoly in schools and business

Tsering Yangzo, 17, originally from Tingri County, Shigatse "TAP", reported to TCHRD, "I attended Tingri County Primary School when I was small. There were about 450-500 students. All the students are Tibetan and almost all the teachers are also Tibetan. We don't need to pay school fees. Since 1997, students are even provided with school uniform and those with farming background need not pay 50 yuan for the uniform."

"In the middle school that I attended for two years, all the teachers are Chinese University graduates, and they are mostly from Sichuan. The students face huge problem understanding their lessons that are all taught in Chinese medium. There never was any free Tibet activities in the school. The students pay more attention to Chinese classes, and it is common knowledge that learning Tibetan does not offer much scope in future career."

"I dropped out of the Middle School after two years. There is this prevalent belief that any farmer's children who do not have higher official contact normally can not find jobs even after school. Thereafter, I went to Lhasa and lived with my aunt. There, I worked in a Tibetan restaurant for six months, and I was paid 300 yuan a month. As the business was not doing well, I left the restaurant.

"Concerning population composition, the district head of Tingri County is a Chinese national from Shanghai. In Shekar County, Chinese run most of the shops, restaurants, vegetable grocery, disco, theatre and bars. There are three brothels in Shekar County owned by Chinese with approximately 9-15 prostitutes. The clients are mostly army personnel from the nearby Chinese army camp. I have heard about AIDS while in school, and people say it is incurable disease, but I don't know how it is infected."

"Though the local Tibetan population is far more than the Chinese immigrants, they dominate the major economic outlets.

If any one is gone to India, then his or her family member is not allowed to join Chinese army. Thus, an escapee's family is victimized through limiting their opportunities and rights."

Later, I came to Dram and managed to obtain a working permit in Dram for one month. I worked in the Tibetan-run restaurant at Dram and served beer to the clients. In Dram I also met several of my classmates. They were working in discotheques and bars. As far as I know, not a single student from my school got a decent job after finishing school. (It can be inferred that the Chinese education policy for Tibetans is not encouraging and the availability of schooling opportunity in such area as Shekar is just an eyewash). Education does not guarantee a good employment for us.

I reached Tibetan Reception Centre in Nepal on 7 July 2002. I want to go to a school and learn English. There are many young Tibetan girls who can speak English and they are hired in Lhasa. So, I think if I know English well, I will return to Tibet and work. The employment may not be a problem then." ♦

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I am unsure whether I will be able to return to Tibet after my medical treatment here. My first priority is my health. I cannot say for sure what I will do. I will study the situation as it comes. Since, I now have complete freedom, I hope to live a better life. It is difficult to say what will happen."

The first half of 2002 witnessed releases of several prominent Tibetan political prisoners of Tibet by Chinese authorities. This has led to speculations about improving human rights condition inside Tibet. However, the fact is that these political prisoners as well as those who continue to be incarcerated in Chinese jails have been arbitrarily detained for exercising their fundamental rights. They did not deserve to be held, did not deserve to suffer endless torture and punishments, at times leading to deaths and finally the Chinese government does not deserve to take credit for their release and bolster their image in the international community for "upholding" human rights.



TCHRD ACTIVITIES

Bulletin

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Orientation to Fulbright Scholars

Ms Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer of TCHRD, gave orientation to the Tibetan Fulbright scholars at DIIR Lhakpa Tsering Memorial Hall on 10 July 2002.

Ms. Aukatsang talked about human rights concepts and the current human rights situation inside Tibet. She also gave guidelines to the scholars about how to approach Tibet questions while in US. An interactive question-answer session followed the talk.

These Fulbright scholars are expected to leave shortly to US to pursue further studies.

Adieu to TCHRD staff



Mr. Gaden Tashi, Field Officer at Kathmandu Branch Office of TCHRD, Nepal, resigned in May 2002. Mr. Tashi, had served the Centre since February 1998.

Gaden Tashi, a former political prisoner in Tibet, had participated in the March 5, 1988 demonstration in Lhasa during the Monlam festival and was arrested on the same day and taken to Gutsa Detention Centre. After one month he was transferred to Seitru Detention Centre. After a formal arrest in July 1988 and having been found guilty of "counter-revolutionary" activities, the "TAR" People's Court sentenced him to three years' imprisonment and deprivation of political rights for one year.

At Drapchi, Gaden Tashi formed an independence group with three other prisoners. When the prison authorities discovered some of their pamphlets, his sentence was increased by an additional nine years. His hands and legs were manacled for over a year until he lost all feeling in his legs and was hospitalised in November 1992. He remained in hospital for over 18 months still manacled and was then released on medical parole. He escaped to India in November 1996. Tashi joined the Centre in 1998 as a field officer in our Nepal office.

TCHRD wishes him success and happiness in his future and hope his sense of patriotism and sincerity inspire and spur people into positive action. ♦

TCHRD New Field Officer

TCHRD welcomes Mr. Dawa Tsering who was selected as the new Field Officer of the centre's branch office in



Kathmandu, Nepal. The selection was done after conducting written test as well as oral interview of 17 qualified applicants in early June 2002. Tsering joined office on 15 June 2002.

Dawa Tsering, originally from Lhasa Municipality, participated in pro-independence demonstrations of 1 October 1987, 5 March 1988 and 5-7 March 1989 (for three consecutive days) in Lhasa.

Dawa Tsering was finally arrested on 13 June 1989 and transferred to Sangyib Detention Centre after two months' detention. Later he was transferred to Seitru Detention Centre and was detained for one month. Later, the "TAR" Intermediate People's Court formally sentenced Dawa Tsering to four years' imprisonment in Drapchi Prison.

He was released on 14 June 1993 and escaped into exile in India in September 1993. Since then, he had been studying in Sarah Buddhist Dialectics, Dharamsala, H.P. ♦

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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.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

update

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Chinese authorities closed down a private Tibetan School

Arrested Mother released with her baby from Nepal Jail

According to reliable information received from Tibet, Tsa-Sur school (translit: tsha zur) popularly known as Tsang-Sul school, a private Tibetan school in Lhasa, was reportedly closed by the Chinese government at the end of July 2002.

The school was first founded in 1988 through the joint efforts of three Tibetan individuals to promote and preserve Tibetan language. In its initial years the school was run on voluntary contributions by the students, but later it attracted funding from abroad.

The majority of the teachers were former political prisoners or people with history of political activities. The first principal of the school, Lobsang Yonten alias Tsang-Sul Shangla, was detained for eight months in May 1993 when he attempted to hand over documents to a visiting European delegation in Lhasa. He passed away on 30 October 1994. After Lobsang Yonten's death, Topgyal took over and ran the school up until its closure.

The popularity of Tsangsul School was based on its minimal school fees and high standard of teaching. Upto the Middle School level, similar curriculum was followed as in other schools, except that Tibetan was the main subject, followed by Chinese, Maths, and English. According to one refugee who arrived in 1995, there were 120 students then, with no restrictions or conditions imposed on the students.

In 2002, the school had 500 students;

of whom 60 students-all orphans-received free education while the others, who generally were unable to pay the exorbitant fees asked by other schools, paid a nominal fee of 20 Yuan per semester. There were 12 teachers in the school with Topgyal as the director, administrator and the main teacher.

According to information provided by former students who spoke to TCHRD, the school was progressing well. However since 2001, problems were caused by the local government school, Yuethong School no. 1. Parents started removing their children from the government school to admit them to Tsangsul School, and the authorities of the government school blamed Tsangsul School for their dwindling student population."

Local residents believe that the rising popularity of the school as well as the school's failure to follow the government's demands to collect higher school fees were catalysts for the closure. Government authorities apparently alleged that the school was affiliated with the 'Dalai Clique'.

The school campus and classrooms had been rented from a local family. However, following the recent orders from the government, the landlord was no longer permitted to rent the premise for schooling purposes. All the teachers are unemployed and the fate of the children unknown.

According to reliable TCHRD source, on Friday, 23 August 2002, Tenzin Yangzom and her baby were released from the Dili Bazaar prison in Kathmandu, Nepal. A German physician had been examining Tenzin Yangzom and diagnosed typhoid in conjunction with her already frail physical condition. Recognising the seriousness of her condition, the physician organised to pay the residual fine of NC 121,897 after a reduction NC 25 for each day of internment, which ensured Tenzin's release.

Mother and child are now both under the care of Tibetan Reception Centre's clinic, where the baby boy has recovered from a mild gastric problem. Tenzin Yangzom was extremely weak at the time of her release, and is now recovering under the constant care of the kind physician and the Clinic staff. Tenzin will return to Dharamsala once her health condition improves.

Tenzin Yangzom, along with eight other students from Amdo were returning to Tibet, when they were arrested on 22 August 2001 by Nepali Security Personnel at Thangkot, the largest checkpoint at the Nepal-India border. An exorbitant amount of US \$1,365 per person and an additional penalty of 20,000 Nepali Currency (NC) for illegally crossing the border, totaling NC Rs 121,897.25 per person were imposed on the eight students. Non-payment carried a default sentence of 10 years' imprisonment.

Unable to pay this huge sum, the students have been lingering in prison since August last year. Tenzin Yangzom, 19, gave birth to Tenzin Dhondup while in prison. Her health condition became critical after giving birth. Every effort in the past to get the ill mother and baby out on medical parole failed. Several concerned human rights groups including TCHRD and individuals had been voicing their protests and providing food for both the mother and the child.

Efforts are underway for the release of the remaining Tibetans in the prison, of whom it is reported that one male, Sonam Gyaltzen Lama is in serious ill health.

Affluent businessman flees Tibet

Nyima Tsering is a 32 year-old *thanka* painter from Labrang. He fled Tibet and arrived in India in August 2002.

Nyima was for a brief moment in the Chinese army following which he was assisting his uncle in Lhasa with his business, which did not run well. This prompted Nyima to start his own venture into business by opening a shop in Shigatse in 2000.

"The procedure was lengthy as permits are usually not granted to those from outside 'TAR' and involved heavy bribing to the officials. Additionally the taxes one has to pay per month is exorbitant. To this office (Kunshang) a monthly tax of Yuan 70 should be paid. Every month one has to pay 120 yuan to the tax department. This is excluding the "cleanliness" tax of yuan 80, 300 yuan to the fire department, and 12 to the water."

"The shop was initially dealing with painting furniture and tailoring works. I had at first three apprentices from poor village background. Gradually, I expanded my business and eventually opened a restaurant. I had approximately 86 employees and progress was rapid. The Shigatse TV network even publicised my rise in business as a successful private entrepreneur. My company was named

"Amdo Tailoring Shop". At the height of my success in business, I had property worth an estimated Yuan 6,00,000.

Around 6 August 2001, during one of the infamous random visits, policemen came and confiscated 20 pairs of carpets (approx. cost 4000 yuan per pair) and 12 *thankas* (religious wall hanging scrolls). These inspections are actually meant for surveillance of any unregistered guests. The *thankas* were of *Chenregzig* (god of compassion, the Dalai Lama is very often referred to as the manifestation of *Chenregzig*) and approximately cost Yuan 20,000 each. The next day all the confiscated *thankas* were burnt right in front of my eyes. I was also fined Yuan 6000 although I told them that I did not have the money to pay that sort of fine. When I claimed my innocence they said that I have done them on purpose. They said, "when you draw or stitch snow lions and snow mountains then it is a political offence."

"I was detained, tried and sentenced to three years in Ngamring Prison, Shigatse. Within two months in the prison, I was assigned to draw the Potala Palace by the jail authorities in order to raise prison fund. The drawing took a little over a month. Upon its completion, the prison officials sold it to Shigatse Gagchen shop for Yuan 14,000. As recognition of this contribution, I was to be released well before my prison term. I spent three months in Ngamring Prison. At that time there were about 300 prisoners, all serving up to 3 years' imprisonment. Prisoners serving longer sentences were sent to *Drapchi*."

"Upon my release, I returned to Shigatse however, my restaurant was closed and all the items were confiscated. I was financially completely bankrupt. All my employees had returned to their homes. I was prohibited from continuing my business."

Access to information denied

According to information received from Tibet in early August, local and regional

governments are imposing restrictions on the use of Internet and adopting various methods to jam foreign radio broadcasts. This attempt has created an atmosphere of fear and intimidation for the Tibetan people to listen to the radio broadcast. Reports indicate that the authorities have attempted to install hi tech equipment that would cause disturbances and jam the wave.

According to a testimony from a Tibetan from Ngaba 'Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture', "In Ngaba, an equipment was installed under the pretext of replacing an old duplicate mobile service. Since the installation, the radio broadcasts have been blurred and barely audible. It is the new gadget installed that has directly affected the quality of the broadcast which now sounds distant and jammed with a lot of blaring loud cacophony."

Karmapa's tutor and two assistants arrested

Within a period of six months this year the Chinese authorities arrested Yongzin Nyima, tutor of Karmapa Ugyen Trinley Dorjee, and two other monks namely Thupten and Namla in Tibet.

According to a reliable source, who wants to remain anonymous, monk Thupten was arrested in January while trying to flee Tibet, Namla in March in eastern Tibet; and Tutor Nyima in June in Kongpo. Unconfirmed recent report emanating from Tibet indicates that Tutor Nyima is undertaking a hunger strike as a mark of protest while in custody. TCHRD has not received any confirmed reports about where they are being currently held and their health conditions.

Meanwhile in India, the Karmapa has expressed serious concern for the well being of the three monks. In a recent press statement in August, he appealed for the three monk's immediate release and urged the Chinese authorities not to torture them in prison.

A Tibetan Monk and four others incarcerated since 1994

Lobsang Palden was 27 years old when he was arrested on 29 March 1994 by Pashoe County (situated 45 Kms south west of Chamdo town) Public Security Bureau Officers. Lobsang, a monk of Serwa Monastery was arrested along with four other monks from the same monastery. They include, Chime Dorje (b. 1967), Lobsang Jinpa (b. 1971) lay name Pema Tsering, Jampa Tashi (b. 1968) and Lobsang Tsegyal (b. 1963) lay name Lobsang Tendon.

According to a Tibet TV broadcast on 26 July which was monitored by the BBC, all were convicted of "counterrevolutionary propaganda". The official Chinese announcement said that the prisoners are all from "Rizhi township", apparently a Chinese rendering for Ritri (ri-khrid), a remote township also called Do-ser in the northern part of the country of Pashoe (Ch: Baxoi).

The prisoners were convicted by the Chamdo Prefectural Intermediate Court for offences committed on 29 March 1994. They were paraded at a public sentencing rally.

According to the Chinese language TV broadcast, "At around 20.00 (hours) on on 29 March, the five accused, armed

with their reactionary slogans and the adhesive they had prepared earlier, arrived in the proximity of the township (Ritri) people's government building and Jigme Dorje (Chime Dorje) and Lobsang Tsegye proceeded to put up a poster bearing reactionary slogans on a door to the left of the township people's government building".

Reports received from refugees at the time testify that the fact that the Tibetans removed the name boards from two local offices aggravated the Chinese authorities. The name boards bore the titles "Party People's Government" and "Township People's Government."

According to an anonymous local leader, "They had turned over the address plate of the government building and they moved the address plate of the township party committee branch building to a roadside 90 meters from the township government building, smashed it with a rock and stuck the smashed piece upside down on the roadside to indicate that they were overthrowing the township people's government".

Additionally, the monks put up posters calling for independence



Lobsang Palden

and signed their names with the note, "We are monks from Serwa Monastery."

They then commandeered an official car and drove to the county headquarters at Pashoe where they put up more posters before being arrested.

There were reports that the five were reportedly kept in aerial suspension at the gate of the County PSB by their arms immediately after their arrest.

Lobsang Palden and Jampa Tashi were sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment, while Chime Dorje, Lobsang Tsegyal and Pema Tsering were sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment.

Kalachakra Initiation in Tibet Prohibited

Tenzin Palsang is a 19 year-old monk from Rabten Monastery in Sog County. There were three other monks from the same monastery who escaped to India. They reached Nepal in July.

According to Tenzin, "In March 2001, Geshi Gyalten Rabsel was scheduled to give a Kalachakra initiation in Sog County. Geshi Gyalten Rabsel has a Geshi Lhabrang degree from the Sera monastery and he is currently the abbot of Rabten Monastery. Prior permission from the Sog county officials was already sought and granted, however, two days before the initiation started, county officials arrived and abruptly stopped it. This was on 14th day of the second Tibetan month (Tibetans follow the lunar calendar). Grand preparations had already been made and many expenses already incurred. Everything was ready, and big preparations had been made for it, but all in vain. The officials said that the prohibition order had come from the Central Government. The claim was that the kalachakra teaching is the teaching of the Dalai Lama. A monk from Rabten Monastery went to the officials, produced a copy of the scripture and stated that this teaching was not by the Dalai Lama, but by the Buddha. After a month, he was called to the County office and held in custody for interrogation for five days. He was also fined yuan 200 for questioning the prohibition of the Initiation. Another lay person, called Gatsa Aryang, spoke to the authorities and requested to be allowed to hold the Kalachakra, that he would take personal responsibility for any untoward political incident. The authorities did not listen to anyone. The elder people wailed and spread themselves in front of the official's vehicles. The estimated one hundred thousand people, desperate for the initiation and having travelled great distance waited around for ten days hoping for the permission to come through.

Hundreds of tents were put up and the monastery was supposed to organise the

entire event with financial support from individuals and families. People arrived from other regions, including Chamdo, Penpa and Sog County to listen to the revered lama's teaching. But this was unfortunately banned.

According to Tenzin Palsang, in his area the Chinese now have banned the conducting of the examinations for Geshe Lhabrang degree, effectively preventing the achievement of this level of religious study. The ceremony attracts a large number of Tibetans: relatives who sponsor the event, monks, and the general public. It is this gathering that the Chinese are trying to prevent by the ban.

Education in Marlho

Palden Tashi is a 17-year-old student from Jetsa Marlho County, Qinghai Province. He comes from a farming family of eight. His elder brother Wangchuk Dorjee will complete from Hinan Ethnic Teacher's University in August 2002. Palden throws some light on the problems at educational Institutions in his area. "For the four-year university studies, a total fee amounts to Yuan 36000. But the higher secondary school fee is Yuan 1000 a year. My elder sister Jalmo Kyab remains at home and assists our parents in running the family. I had completed my secondary school in 1997, since my family could not afford to pay fees I remained at home and could not attend further studies. There were around 1100 students in the school I attended and they were all Tibetans. We had to give 400 Gyama of cereals and five Gyama of oil and an additional 400-500 Yuan annually as the school fees. The school headmaster had no concern for the students' welfare. The food we got was very poor and unhygienic. The school headmaster had no feelings for Tibetans. Although the Chinese government ran the school, the condition was quite deplorable. Out of the 150 teachers, 20 were Chinese. The school had neither a library nor

computers. Though the school provided us with textbooks, we had to buy all other necessary stationary. The school had to medical clinic of its own, so when students fell sick the parents were immediately contacted. During my primary education in Jetsa Ethnic Tibetan school, I was too young to think of going to India. But later on I got encouraged and inspired by a letter from a classmate who made it to India.

Photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama were not allowed in the school. So far no "Free Tibet" related activities have taken place in our school. When students gathered around, they would covertly talk about Free Tibet. Most of their view is that getting Free Tibet is quite impossible, because then there are other minorities who would demand the same, and China can not stand for its disintegration.

Halong township Muslims move to Jetsa and took over their business. Since 1995 the Muslims started to come over, coinciding with festivals and ceremony. Such 1st Oct, Tibetan New Year, 1st May - 4th, school sports day. During such big gatherings, the Halong Muslims will set up restaurants, shops and other business outlets. The Muslim population has good contact with the Jetsa police, so the Muslim took over the sites and Tibetans were removed from there. When meeting with police, they will favour the Muslim and Tibetans always end up losing out. Such discrimination happens quite a number of times there.

After consulting with the family, I decided to leave for India. I came with 3700 Yuan and by the time I reached Nepal I had only 200 Yuan left with me. Along with 17 other Tibetans I reached the Tibetan Reception Centre via Solukupo. After 18 days of walking we arrived at Kodari but there the police arrested us and took us down to the Immigration Department in Kathmandu.

Names of four students who came to India in July are Yangchen Lhamo (F); Samten (M); Tashi Dolma (F); Palden (F). They have finished higher secondary school but were unable to afford high school fees. Many people from Jetsa go to India and most them are monks.

"See No Tibet, Hear No Tibet, Speak No Tibet: WSSD Gags Tibetan Voice"

On 3 September 2002, the South African Police arrested Tibetans and Greenpeace activists for an hour and half for holding a silent vigil while the Chinese Prime Minister, Zhu Rongji, was addressing the plenary session of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The vigil was held outside Sandton Conference Centre, the venue of the governmental segment of the WSSD meeting. The posters read, "See No Tibet, Hear No Tibet, Speak No Tibet: WSSD Gags Tibetan Voice".

The Tibetan vigil received more media attention when about 25 South African police-team forcefully pushed and surrounded the Tibetan Delegation and Greenpeace activists. At that time, Senator Bob Brown of Australia was meeting with the members of the Tibetan delegation. All the demonstrators were released but no explanation was provided by the South African Police Department.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Tibet Justice Center and International Campaign for Tibet were denied accreditation to the Summit when the People's Republic of China used a procedural motion called "no-action" during PrepComs II, III and IV of the Summit held at New York and Bali, Indonesia.

While the Chinese authorities blocked Tibetan NGOs from the WSSD process, Beijing has brought more than 40 Government-sponsored NGOs to support its propaganda at the Johannesburg Summit. The vigil was addressing this hypocrisy and insincerity by the member states attending the Summit. "We feel politically discriminated against. It is unfortunate that the majority of member-countries of the G77 played a major role to gag Tibetan organizations at this Summit" said Mrs Norzin Dolma of the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

Since the current wave of UN world conferences began in 1992, the Chinese authorities have always tried to block the

participation of established Tibetan NGOs to ensure that the issue of Tibet is not heard.

Work Team in Yoetri Monastery

Kunga Tenzin a 30-year-old monk from Arwade village, Markham County reached India on 28 August 2002.

On being interviewed, he said: "I am a monk of the Yoetri Monastery, which is located in our Arwade village. The village comprises of 21 families. Our livelihood depends both on agrarian farm and livestock. Yoetri Monastery has a total of 40 monks. The "work team" from the County Religious Department first came to the monastery in 1997. During that visit, the "work team" remained at the monastery for 3 months and 20 days. The primary task carried out by them was to call us for meetings where we were asked to denounce the Dalai Lama".

"The "work team" intruded the freedom of movement of the monks, by prohibiting the monks from visiting India or Lhasa." We were also warned not to convert ourselves from one sect to the another, the continuity of ones own religious sect was emphasized" Kunga continued.

"Out of the 40 monks, only 30 had the permission to stay in the monastery, while the rest were not allowed inside the monastery. When the "work-team" called us for sessions, many monks expressed unwillingness to attend it. Some young monks would manage to escape from attending the meeting by giving excuses but few elderly monks would attend the meetings. The elder monks would often tell the "work team" that the monks have works to do and therefore cannot attend the indoctrination sessions. The "work team" handed out textbooks. But we were mostly unaware of the contents. We were asked to study them and to sit for certain tests. But many monks wouldn't care about doing so. The monks were highly disturbed in their studies and

meditation by the presence of the "work team". Even the monks who were on retreat would be asked to attend the sessions.

Lately the "work team" have been visiting the monastery three times a month and have been staying there for not more than a week during each visit".

"There never was any political incident like putting put "Free Tibet" posters, but among the monks, there was a lot discussion on Tibet's independence. People are hopeful about Tibet's freedom and the Tibetans being more powerful than the Chinese immigrants are. The monks are so distressed in their own monastery that they are all very eager to go to India to pursue religious studies. Right now I am the only monk from our monastery escaping to exile; but I am sure that the other monks would like to join me later on. All monks in our monastery do not wish to remain restricted under the Chinese. All that they want is to seek an audience with HH the Dalai Lama".

"I aspire to be a good Dharma practitioner but under the Chinese domination, it was quite impossible for me to fulfill my aspirations. There were restrictions on the possession of photos of HH the Dalai Lama. Hence our religious studies and peace of mind are negatively affected by the constant intervention of Chinese "work team" visits. I decided to leave Tibet."

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New Report on Land and Housing Rights



The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy releases its latest report on land and housing rights in Tibet, "Dispossessed".

For many years human rights monitors have reported on China's denial of political and civil freedoms rather than focus on economic issues. In return, China often defends its stance on civil and political issues by claiming that its citizens are more interested in economic security than with personal freedoms. With China's ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 2001, the time is ripe for a closer analysis of China's record in relation to specific economic rights.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) has therefore prepared this Land and Housing Rights Report to present to two different forums. The first is the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD), South Africa, September 2002; the second is the United Nations' Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which will assess China's first state report regarding the ICESCR, due in June 2003.

Land rights, housing, and sustainable habitats are economic issues which are crucial not just to individuals' personal

rights, but also to the future of a country. A balance must be struck between affording individuals equitable access to quality land/housing, and ensuring that the settlements in which such housing is located, or the uses to which the land is put, are sustainable. This report therefore examines housing and land issues using a rights framework that embraces the right of a people to sustainable development.

In 1996 the PRC government made a public commitment to the full and progressive realisation of the right to adequate housing. In ratifying the ICESCR in 2001, China has made a legal commitment to recognise this right. Over the past decade, the PRC has also regularly made submissions to the United Nations' Committee for Sustainable Development claiming compliance to sustainable development including the right to land. Despite this public face, there are serious violations of international law and principles currently occurring within Tibet.

In studying Tibet's housing and land rights issues against the framework of both human rights and sustainable development, TCHRD hopes to contribute to the ongoing debate about the links between the two issues. At the time of writing, many human rights NGOs

participating in the Preparatory Meetings for the WSSD were outraged at the exclusion of human rights discourse from the Summit platform. It is to be hoped that the WSSD in Johannesburg will correct the course of international policy development. The fact is no country can claim to be achieving sustainable development if it denies its people their fundamental political, civil, religious, economic, social and cultural rights. Sustainability is meaningless if people are not involved in creating or taking part in its benefits.

It must be stressed that this Report is not a result of fieldwork research. Although China is increasingly permitting NGOs and international academics to conduct research in various regions of China, given TCHRD's background in human rights advocacy, we face insurmountable difficulties entering Tibet to conduct comprehensive research on housing and land conditions. TCHRD very much hopes that in the near future academics and/or international NGOs are able to conduct grassroots research in both the "TAR" and the rest of ethnographic Tibet.

In the absence of this level of access, TCHRD has researched academic papers and Beijing's White Papers for data on China's policies in Tibet. TCHRD has also made use of information provided to the centre by Western travellers. However, our greatest resource is the testimonies of recently-exiled Tibetans whom we have interviewed in India and Nepal since our inception six years ago. TCHRD strongly believes in a people-centred approach to human rights issues and to sustainable development. Tibetans best know what is happening in their country and the information they provide is crucial to understanding the situation on the ground.

This Report is titled "Dispossessed" because the key feature of land and housing in Tibet in the 20th century is the dispossession by the Chinese government of Tibetan land and housing. Even recent reforms which purport to grant households greater tenure over land and housing actually have the effect of further alienating control over land resources from the people of Tibet.



TCHRD ACTIVITIES

Bulletin

Workshops and Educational talk series

BIR Tibetan Settlement:

Ms Youdon Aukatsang and Ms Tenzin Chokey were invited as resource persons to Bir Tibetan settlement for their human rights and democracy workshop on 2 and 3 August 2002. The workshop was organised by the Regional Tibetan Women's Association and extended to the general interested public in Bir. There were approximately 50 participants and the workshop lasted two days. During their stay, they visited the Tibetan Children's Village School in Suja. They took over class nine for a day and had extensive discussions with children on their perception of human rights and democracy.



Tenzin Chokey;TCHRD.

The workshop dealt in detail the UDHR and the International Covenants. Some of the crucial discussions took place while dwelling on the law on regional autonomy for China's national minorities and how

it affects Tibetans; the strategies of Chinese authorities.

The response from the participants was very encouraging. They were urged to apply and impart the knowledge they had gained in their everyday life.

Manali:

Ms Tenzin Chokey attended the human rights and democracy workshop in Manali organised by the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress on 18 August 2002. She took a session on human rights and the United Nations and its relevance to the Tibetan struggle.

Workshop on Human Rights and Democracy:

The Centre successfully concluded its second workshop on human rights and democracy jointly organised with Asian Human Rights Commission based in Hong Kong. The four-day workshop started on 12 August 2002 and was attended by 32 participants from various backgrounds including, governmental, non-governmental organisations and religious institutions.

The Resource persons were Mr Basil Fernando and Mr Bruce van Voorhis; AHRC, Mr Lobsang Sangay; Harvard Law School, Ms Youdon Aukatsang and Ms

Reception to Indian Parliamentarians



The Executive Director Ms Tsewang Lhadon and Senior Programme Officer Ms Youdon Aukatsang received a group of Indian parliamentarians about the Centres objectives and activities. Ms Aukatsang interpreted accounts for two

former political prisoners and attended to various questions from the parliamentarians. The parliamentarians expressed solidarity and agreed to support the cause of Tibet.

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Appeal letter from a Tibetan detainee in Nepal jail

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) has received a letter of appeal from one of the Tibetan detainees incarcerated in Dili Bazaar Jail, Kathmandu. Following is the translated version of the letter dated 13 September 2002.

"I am Dorjee from Amdo Ngaba in Sichuan Province. The very word 'prison' grips everyone's mind with fear and terror. Actually it is frightening and difficult to be in a prison. Communication barrier and discriminatory practices prevalent further aggravates our problems. We sincerely request the world community to support and secure our release."

"I would like to share the prison condition inside Nepal's Dili Bazaar Jail, where 10 of us Tibetans are currently held. In the prison, we are served watery rice and dal (lentil) without any vegetables twice a day. The food provided is unclean and rice uncooked with lots of stones."

"Sonam Gyaltzen Lama, one of our Tibetan jail mates, has been sick for more than a month. The prison doctor is very careless and negligent about his responsibility. He performs medical check-ups and prescribes the same medicine to every sick inmates regardless of their nature of ailments."

"We are surviving this miserable existence with the hope that we will be able to see the light of freedom soon. If we die in prison now, we will die like a dog."

"In a big hall, about 100 prisoners old people, mentally challenged and criminals are all put together. All 10 of us have been in the jail for more than a year now. We face many problems and hardships in the prison. Sometimes other Nepali inmates bully and beat us randomly. None of us dare hit back, as that will worsen the case. Others tell us that even if we were killed nobody would care."

"We were arrested and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for failing to possess travel documents required for commuting between Tibet and India via Nepal. We are not a free citizen. We fled the Chinese government's brutal persecution to come into exile to seek an audience with H.H. the Dalai Lama. We came into exile in India as a refugee."

"Nepal is a transit point and we have to cross through it to go to India. Unfortunately, on our return to Tibet, the Nepali border police arrested us in Thangkot, and demanded a fine of USD 2,000 from each of us. From where and how can we produce that amount of money? If we can pay the fine, we will be released any moment, failing that we will be imprisoned for 10 years."

"The prison condition is so bad, that I cannot imagine how we can survive for 10 years. We are just innocent people returning to our country, Tibet, after having sought an audience with H. H. the Dalai Lama."

Background information

As of September 2002, 12 Tibetan refugees remain incarcerated in various jails in Kathmandu, Nepal, for illegally crossing the border/staying in Nepal without required travel and residential documents.

Ten Tibetans incarcerated in Dili Bazaar Jail are serving 10 years' imprisonment after having failed to pay the exorbitant fines imposed by the Nepali Immigration Department, operative under the Ministry of Home. The fines rang between Nepali Currency (NC)20,000 (USD 260.42) to NC 205, 249.75 (USD 2672.52).

While information on the sentencing of two other detainees in Jiri Jail and Central Jail are not clear, their detention is confirmed.

On 20 August 2001, Nepali police arrested two monks, followed by arrests of eight students two days later. They were subsequently detained in Dili Bazaar Jail, the largest prison in Kathmandu.

The two monks are Sonam Lama and Seycha Lama from Sera Monastery in South India. The eight students, all originally from Amdo in North-Eastern Tibet, are Sangye Dhondup (M), 19; Lobsang Dorjee (M), 19; Dorjee Tashi (M), 21; Drukar M (26); Tenzin Yangzom, (F), 19; and Sheri Tso, (F), 23; and Kyizom (F), 22. (For detailed information, refer September 2001 and March 2002 Human Rights Update).

The two recent detainees, Choeyang Dorjee and Palden Gyatso are also detained in Dili Bazaar Jail. Two other monks, Gendun Samten, (Rebkong monk, Amdo) and Heruka (details of origin unavailable to date) are imprisoned in Jiri Jail and Khar Guard Jail (Central Jail) respectively for similar reasons.

Of the initial 14 detainees, Tenzin Yangzom and Kyizom are both released for medical reasons, making the total number of current Tibetan detainees in Nepal at 12.

Tenzin Yangzom who gave birth to a baby boy in Dili Bazaar Jail was extremely weak at the time of her release on 23 August 2002 (for further details, refer August 2002 Human Rights Update).

Kyizom suffered a nervous breakdown while being interrogated by the Nepali Immigration Officers. Therefore, she was handed over to the care of Tibetan Reception Centre (TRC) in Kathmandu, on the condition that she should return to prison after her condition improves.

Tenpa Rabgyal (not listed in the total 14 detainees), arrested on 28 January 2002, was released on 18 June 2002 after an individual paid his fine of NC 11,000 (USD 143.22).

Tibetan officials from the Office of Tibet and Tibetan Reception Centre in Nepal, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the US Embassy in Nepal are making every effort to intervene with the Nepali authorities to secure release of these 12 Tibetans at the earliest possible date. No one can predict whether or when these prisoners are going to be released. A lawsuit has been filed on behalf of the detained Tibetans and a court case is in process.

As of now, Sheri Tso, one of the girl detainees is sick and a Tibetan doctor has visited and put her on medication.

TCHRD empathise the plight of these imprisoned Tibetans, and we know there are many who would willingly pay the fines to secure their release. However, it is for the sake of all/future Tibetan refugees that the diplomatic process that is underway is given a chance to succeed. ♦

An account of a released detainee

Tenpa Rabgyal, one of the Tibetan detainees in Nepal jail, was released on 18 June 2002 after an individual paid his fines. He was arrested on 28 January 2002. Rabgyal spoke to TCHRD about his experiences during his escape from Tibet.

Tenzin Rabgyal relates, "I am an 18-year-old student from Lhasa. My parents wanted me to escape to India for better and more comprehensive education. I secured travel permit in Lhasa and then came to Dram."

At Dram, the border town of Nepal and Tibet, Rabgyal formed a group with two elderly women who were going to see their children in exile Tibetan schools. Two sherpas agreed to guide the group. The group set off their journey across the mountainous terrain in the night and walked for five days, until they encountered two other sherpas.

Rabgyal continued, "Our initial guides abandoned us at the hands of the other two sherpas who were supposed to be our new guides. The excuse given was that the guides would arrange a taxi for us to be taken to Kathmandu. We already paid 2,000 yuan each to these two new guides. The initial guides fled no sooner than the the new guides took charge."

"We pleaded our new guides to take us to Kathmandu. After escorting us to a certain distance and extorting considerable amount of money, they abandoned us again."

"In that way, we met another two guides and boarded a bus to Kathmandu along with them. We changed several buses, and somewhere along the way, I suddenly realised my bags were missing and so were the guides. I carried on with my journey."

Once Rabgyal reached Kathmandu, he was left on his own to fend for himself. "Being total stranger to the place, I was at a loss not knowing what to do. I was wandering around when I suddenly met two army personnel, who were suspicious of me. They took me to a military place and confined me in a cell that night."

"The next evening around 5 p.m. I was handcuffed and taken to the Nepali Immigration Department where I was interrogated and detained for five days. I could communicate with the officers through my little knowledge of spoken English. During interrogation, the officers noted everything down in Nepali."

"I never said that I could go back to Tibet without any problem which the Immigration Department held accountable for my lengthy detention at Dili Bazaar Jail."

Rabgyal was detained at Nepal's Dili Bazaar Jail for four months and 12 days. Finally, he was released on a bail of NC 11,000 (143.229 USD).

Rabgyal said, "I was not beaten during my detention. But the food was very bad. We were given two meals a day. Sometimes, few Nepali prisoners would bully and beat us at their whim and fancy and when they were in a nasty mood."

Rabgyal express concern for other Tibetan detainees when he said, "I am very concerned for those Tibetans who still remain imprisoned in the jail. The detainees fear that they might be handed over to the Chinese, which some prison mates fear the Nepal government is likely to do." ♦

Four years' sentence for distribution of Dalai Lama's photos

Samdup, a 26-year-old farmer, is originally from Amdo Ngaba in Sichuan Province. He gave first-hand information to TCHRD about his friend Sang Ga who was sentenced to four years for photocopying and distributing the Dalai Lama's photos.

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A physically challenged sentenced to three years term



Anu is a 47-year-old woman from Lhubug in Lhasa. For many years, Anu worked as a tailor at her home in Lhasa. When she was young, Anu met with a terrible accident. A Chinese military truck hit her thus causing her to have her leg amputated. Since then, she has been walking with a support of a crutch.

In the beginning of March 2001, Beijing Central government re-launched "Strike Hard" campaign in Tibet. In China, the campaign is targeted primarily "to curb rising criminal offenses". Subsequent to the launch of the "Strike Hard" campaign, specific orders were issued to concerned authorities in Tibet that the campaign proposed to crackdown heavily on drug trafficking, smuggling activities, mafiatric

crimes, financial scams and guiding people illegally across foreign countries.

It was during this time that Lhasa PSB officers arrested Anu from her home on alleged charges of political activism. She was detained in Lhasa PSB Detention Centre where she was subjected to severe interrogation sessions. Two other suspects (from nearby Lhasa) were also held during the same time.

According to a friend, "Anu's helpful nature could have aroused Chinese suspicion. She is known to be generous and kind-hearted. It is believed that before her arrest, she was very helpful to political prisoners both former and current. She would visit political prisoners incarcerated in jails with food and provide accommodation to released prisoners as well."

Around October 2001, Lhasa Public Security Bureau Detention Centre sentenced Anu to three years' "re-education through labour" in Trisam. She is currently serving her sentence in Trisam.

TCHRD has reported similar cases earlier where Tibetans received prison sentence or earned the wrath of Chinese authorities for assisting political prisoners.

One classic example is that of Ama Lhundrup Wangmo (in her

sixties) from Lhasa City. She is known to be actively involved in visiting political prisoners incarcerated in Lhasa prisons. On 10 August 1998, Lhasa PSB officers took her into police custody on suspicion of involvement in political activities due to her prison visits. She was arrested on two other occasions, once in 1987 and then again in 1993 on political grounds. Though she was released owing to lack of any evidence against her, her dealings and movements are constantly monitored.

Another example is that of Dawa (in sixties) from North Lhasa. For his involvement in political activities, he served two years of his three year sentence in Gutsa Detention Centre before being released on medical parole. He is known to be extremely patriotic and had a sense of responsibility towards all prisoners. He used to visit all the prisons nearby Lhasa to take food for the prisoners once a month. His assistance to political prisoners coupled with his other political activities raised Chinese concern resulting in his arrest just prior to the 1997 Hong Kong hand-over ceremony.

"I have a best friend. His name is Sang Ga. He is approximately 26, originally from Hortsang, Sangchu County (Ch: Xiahe xian), Gannan 'Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture', Gansu Province. A monk from Togden Monastery (a Bon Monastery also called as Topgyal Monastery) in Amdo Ngaba. In July 2001, he photocopied a photo of H.H. the Dalai Lama that was taken during the conferment of Nobel Peace Prize in December 1989, and wrote seven lines below the photograph. The first line stated, "Long live H.H. the Dalai Lama" and rest of the lines contain opposition to the Chinese policy of forced plantation in Tibetan areas in Amdo. The photocopied document was pasted on the walls of popular Tibetan restaurants in Amdo Ngaba and distributed among the local populace. I received two copies myself."

According to Samdup, two weeks later, Ngaba PSB officers came to Topden Monastery and ordered Chepo, disciplinarian-in-charge of the monastery, to show Sang Ga's room. Chepo happens to be the elder brother of Sang Ga. The police raided Sang Ga's room to search for incriminating evidence. The raid resulted in the confiscation of a copy of the Dalai Lama's autobiography. The next day, Sang Ga was detained in Ngaba PSB Detention Centre. For the following three days, he was interrogated and tortured.

Samdup continued, "Despite the interrogation and the use of torture methods, Sang Ga did not confess to his activities. However, the PSB officers told him that they were clearly aware of his misdeeds since their accusation was based on concrete evidences. Some informant seemed to have revealed everything to the police about his activities. Sang Ga told the PSB officers that he borrowed the book from another person. However, they still remained unconvinced and tortured him all the more to extract information about his accomplices. He denied any second person's involvement and claimed sole responsibility for the activities."

"During one such interrogation sessions, Sang Ga even dared to say that whatever he wrote was a true fact. When

he confessed finally, the abbot of Topden Monastery was called and the PSB questioned him about Sang Ga's conduct. The abbot was reprimanded for failing to discipline his student. He was furthermore threatened that he would be held responsible for any untoward incident in the future."

Samdup further told TCHRD, "After 15 days' detention, Ngaba PSB Detention Centre could not decide his case and consigned the case to Barkham County PSB Detention Centre. Thereupon, officers from Barkham arrived at Ngaba County PSB Detention Centre to continue interrogation for another one week. Sometime in late July or early August 2001, Sang Ga was sentenced to four years' imprisonment, and subsequently imprisoned in Barkham County Prison."

"Since Sang Ga is a very close friend of mine, I am very concerned about his condition," lamented Samdup. "I was even told that Barkham PSB put up a circular detailing his misdeeds and subsequent imprisonment."

Samdup said, "As for me, I attended the village primary school for six years. After completing my primary education, I worked on a farm. In 1993, I went to Lhasa for the first time. I was 19 years old. I worked as a sales assistant to a Tibetan businessman called Lhundup. For three years, I moved very frequently between Lhasa and Dram. In 2000, I started my own business and moved between Lhasa, Amdo and Dram. For a whole year from 2000-2001, I stayed in Amdo Ngaba."

"I came to India to seek audience with H.H. the Dalai lama and plan to join a Tibetan school sometime later to learn English language". ♦

A former political prisoner testifies

Chemi Tsering (ordained name Yeshi

Thargyal), a 30-year-old former political prisoner from Tibet, testified to TCHRD. "I am originally from Village no. 7, Namgyal Township, Lhoka Gongkar County. I attended the village primary school for six years. In 1986, I was ordained as a monk in Lhoka Sungrabling Monastery where I stayed till 1988."

Tsering said, "Spurred by the series of pro-independence demonstrations since 1987, a meeting was convened between our monk friends to put up independence posters to commemorate the 10 March Uprising of 1959. The monk friends included Yeshi Tsering, Tsultrim Jampa, (both were my roommates), Yeshi Damdul, Yeshi Ngawang and Paljor Choegyral. That night, we discussed our plan to carry out pro-independence activities. We wrote freedom slogans such as "Chinese get out of Tibet", 'Long Live HH the Dalai Lama', and 'Free Tibet' on eight 2 x3 sized posters. We then pasted these posters next to the gate and surrounding walls near the office of the People's Government of Kyimshe Township at 11 p.m. We also wrote freedom slogans with red paint on the same gate."

"On 15 March 1989, we pasted three posters in the market place of Chideshol Township. Although we managed to get back to our monastery, a patrolman saw what we did. The next day, 'TAR' Chairman, Dorjee Tsering, issued a statement of decree stating that any 'separatists' arrested would be put to death. It was written on a large sheet of paper and put up on the wall. We secretly went to tear the paper down. However, the police caught us in the act and began shooting indiscriminately. We escaped unhurt."

"On 17 March 1989, Lhoka Gongkar County Public Security Bureau officials came to our monastery, ransacked our rooms and found all the equipments used to make the posters. Yeshi Damdul along with five other suspect monks were remanded to police custody. After four days, the same police force took Tsultrim Jampa and Yeshi Ngawang. All of them were held at Lhoka Prefecture Detention Centre."

"One month later on 20 April 1989, Paljor Choegyral, Yeshi Tsering and I was

arrested and held in Lhoka Gongkar County PSB Detention Centre for three days. During our detention, we were interrogated, beaten and hit with whatever they could get hold of. In May 1989, we were formally arrested."

"On 9 August 1989, six of us were taken for trial by Lhoka branch procuratorate. Three of us refused to accede to the charges made. Three days later, we were shifted to Lhoka Prefecture Detention Centre and met with other arrested friends. We learnt that they were compelled to carrying out "Free Tibet" activities, as they were severely tortured. So we had no choice but to confess."

"Subsequently, on 30 October 1989, 'TAR' Lhoka Intermediate People's Court held a trial whereby six of us were charged with "counter-revolutionary' propaganda. The court verdict stated that we had shown disregard to the Constitution of the State by showing allegiance to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and by 'disrupting' peace and harmony by pasting 'counter revolutionary' posters. We were charged with having violated Article 102 of the Criminal Law. Yeshe Ngawang and Yeshe Damdul were sentenced to five years' imprisonment and three years deprivation of political rights. Yeshe Tsering was sentenced to four years' imprisonment and one year deprivation of political rights. Paljor Chogyal and Tsultrim Jampa received three years and I got two years's sentence and one year deprivation of political rights.

"Except for Yeshe Ngawang, the other five were released upon completion of their prison term. On 20 April 1993, at the time of prison visits, Yeshe Ngawang reportedly handed over an entire list of political prisoners and prison conditions inside Drapchi to his visiting family. This was discovered by the prison officials who subjected Ngawang to a month-long solitary confinement. He was charged with 'leaking state secrets' and his sentence was extended by another nine years bringing his total sentence to 14 years"

"On 20 December 1989, I was transferred to Drapchi Prison and placed in rukhag (prison unit) 4. After 15 days, I was replaced in rukhag 5, which was primarily created on 5 January 1990 for the political prisoners. During my two years'

imprisonment, I was involved in other prison activities in Drapchi. When Lhakpa Tsering, a political prisoner died due to severe Chinese torture, we staged hunger strike and created an uproar to demand explanation from the prison authorities. In another incident, when Lobsang Tenzin, a student from Lhasa University, and five others were transferred to Powo Tramo Prison, we protested against their transfer.

Chemi Tsering was released on 19 April 1991. "When I was released after completing my sentence, I could not afford good medication. I was not allowed to rejoin Sungrabling Monastery. After prison release, I had to report frequently to Lhoka Gongkar Police Station about my activities and my freedom of movement was severely restricted. This created unnecessary disturbances to my family members. Hence, I left for Lhasa where I got a job. Because of our activism, we are at a disadvantage in the society."

"When any major anniversary approaches, the ex-political prisoners are the first ones to be closely monitored. The police would call all of us and give endless discourse on not engaging in any political activities again. So during my ten years stay in Lhasa, I have nothing to show, with no proper religious studies and good job. I am still a monk, and have desire to continue my religious studies."

"Sungrabling Monastery had a total of approximately 60 monks. Owing to several cases of political activities and subsequent arrests, the Chinese authorities have introduced 'patriotic education' campaign in the monastery. Many monks left the monastery refusing to obey the official order to denounce H. H. the Dalai Lama."

"China's policy in Tibet is to indoctrinate the mind of youngsters through various means such as discos, theatre, bar, brothels etc. Most of the lucrative businesses are taken over by Chinese immigrants settled in Tibet. There are many school dropouts because they simply could not afford to pay high fees. Crimes such as robbery and theft are on the rise in Lhasa. Moral degeneration is taking place in the Tibetan society."

"I fled Tibet in pursuit of more freedom and religious studies." ♦

An alleged accomplice in Karmapa's escape harassed

Dhundup is a 25-year-old monk. He was born in village # 5, Guru Township, Toelung Dechen County.

On being interviewed by TCHRD, Dhundup recounted, "I joined Tsurphu Monastery at the age of 13. I was 18 years old when the formal recognition and enthronement of Gyalwa Karmapa took place at our monastery. The strength of the monks in the monastery at that time was around 200."

"When I was 20 years old, Chinese 'work teams' began 'patriotic education' campaign in the monastery that went on for an entire month. Thirty Chinese 'work team' officials instructed the monks on politics and socialism."

Dhundup had to leave the monastery when he was 23. He said, "I stayed at the monastery until I was 23. I had to quit the monastery because I was accused of being involved in Gyalwa Karmapa's dramatic escape to India. Although the charges were totally false, I was held under suspicion just because I was related to Gyalwa Karmapa's personal attendant, Drunag. The Chinese officials from Toelung Dechen County interrogated me. One police officer said that since one of Gyalwa Karmapa's attendants was my cousin, I should know about the escape. The policemen ransacked my room and discovered some pictures of H.H the Dalai Lama, which they confiscated. During the course of my interrogation, I was beaten and threatened."

"Two other monks named Shelo and Chugdar were also held under suspicion. All three of us were not allowed to leave the monastery without official permission. While other monks could go to Lhasa and other areas freely, our freedom of movement was restricted for almost three months."

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Refugees encounter hardships while fleeing from Tibet

"Finally during the summer vacation, three of us were allowed to go on a holiday for a month and a half. But the monastery-in-charge, Lobdol, specifically told me that I was not allowed to go anywhere except for my hometown.

"Somehow, I managed to stay in Lhasa for the entire vacation and went on pilgrimage to monasteries like Sera, Drepung and Gaden. On my return to the monastery I came to know that the authorities had learnt about my stay in Lhasa and they had some pictures of mine taken in Lhasa as evidence. The entire scene annoyed me and I finally expressed my displeasure against their treatment."

"I was victimised and kept under strict vigilance for a fault I never committed. I wanted to leave the monastery the same day but my leave was sanctioned only after four days. Thus I left the monastery for good. Since I left the monastery voluntarily, I had to pay 800 yuan as per the monastery's rules. After I left, I learnt that my friend Migma Dorjee was interrogated about me but he claimed to know nothing."

Dhundup further reported that the Chinese 'work team' began their "patriotic education" campaign after Gyalwa Karmapa left the monastery and that a number of monks have left the monastery as a result of incessant interference into their religious studies by Chinese "work team".

Dhundup attempted escape in 2000 but he did not succeed. Giving us an account of his days in the detention centre, Dhondup said, "Shigatse 'People's Armed Police' (PAP) arrested me along with 19 other Tibetans at Dingri County, Shigatse 'Tibet Autonomous Prefecture' (TAP), 'Tibet Autonomous Region' (TAR). We were detained at Nyari PSB Detention Centre for four months."

"During detention, I was hit, kicked and stamped upon by officials from the detention centre. They confiscated 1500 yuan and my wristwatch. After my release, I went back to Lhasa and got engaged in petty business for my living." ♦

Phuntsok Tsering, a 20-year-old monk, is originally from Nyakchuka County, Kandze Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. Tibetan refugees flee Tibet overcoming great risk of heavy security patrolling, freezing winter cold, and payment of huge sums to guides that sometimes leave the escapees in a lurch.

Phuntsok Tsering shared with TCHRD his life in Tibet and escape experiences at Nepal border. "For four years, I was a monk at a local monastery. I come from a nomadic family."

"I left my native place for Lhasa on 9 May 2002 with a monk friend called Khaphel. In Lhasa we stayed for three days with an old Chinese man, who gave us food and shelter. From Lhasa, we came to Saga County in Shigatse Prefecture. The long and tedious journey from Saga County to Mount Kailash began on foot. Overall, it took us one month to reach Mt. Kailash from Lhasa. We stayed for a week in Mt. Kailash and did circumambulation the whole time."

"From Mt. Kailash, we travelled mostly in the night, under the cover of darkness and crossed the border at night. We came through a place called Legmey on the Nepali side of the border. We met a Tibetan couple with four children at a place called Tsangla. They were on their way to Nepal. We formed a group totalling eight people without a guide."

"After walking for five days on foot, we met a group of rebel Maoists. The rebels who did not wear any uniforms were carrying guns. Each of us was asked to pay NC 100 each, failing which we would not be allowed to proceed further. We pleaded them to let us go and told them that we have no money. A local man who could speak Tibetan helped us pay NC 200 to the Maoists, who in turn gave us a receipt and then let us pass."

"After few hours walk, we again met a group of seven armed Maoists. They wore tattered ordinary clothes. When we produced the receipts, they let us pass through without any problem."

"In the afternoon, while we were passing through several huts, suddenly two men called us to stop. They claimed that they were Maoists leaders. We showed them the receipts, but they said it was not enough. We were ordered to return but we refused and pleaded earnestly. They threatened to beat us. I immediately hit one of the men with my walking stick and blood began to ooze from his head. Soon after, both the men ran away."

"As the evening began to close in, we camped besides a big rock, and put up a makeshift shelter. Around midnight, a group of people (more than 20) suddenly descended upon us. Most of them were armed. They lifted up our cover and began hitting us. I was hit on my head with a rifle butt and also stamped on the face. As a result, one of my lower teeth broke. My friend was also hit on the head and both of us bled profusely. The wound was not healed fully even after reaching Tibetan Reception Centre in Kathmandu."

"Amidst the scuffle that ensued, the couple from our group hid their children for fear of being killed. The person whom I hit with my stick in the previous encounter was with the group. Furious at me, he pulled out a gun and was about to shoot me when his friends stopped him. We pleaded that we would give money but to let us to go ahead. We pooled together NC 5,800 and gave the amount to them. Then they left us. We assumed they needed money. They were apparently Maoists, but the receipt that we paid at the first encounter did not help us this time. They told us that they were Maoists and followers of Mao Tse Tung."

"Next day, we met a Nepali police. He stopped us from going ahead. So, we went up to a certain point and then came back from another route."

"I fled Tibet because I want to seek blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I have no other purpose." ♦



TCHRD ACTIVITIES

Bulletin

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WSSD in Jo'burg, South Africa

Ms. Norzin Dolma, English Researcher of the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, attended the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa, 22 August - 4 September 2002.

As part of the Tibet Delegation comprising of members from two other Tibetan NGOs - Tibet Justice Centre and International Campaign for Tibet - and representatives from Tibetan Government-in-exile, TCHRD contributed in generating awareness about Tibetan situation in general and Tibet's environmental concerns in particular.

The Tibet Delegation headed by Mr. Jampal Choesang, Representative of Office of Tibet, South Africa, held two vigils at Nasrec (the NGO Global Forum's venue) and at Sandton (the venue for the official conference) to protest against the denial of accreditation to three Tibetan NGOs from India and United States to the Summit and also to call for China-Tibet dialogue. TCHRD publication "Dispossessed: Land and Housing Rights in Tibet" was released with other publications during Tibet Briefing held on 1 September 2002.

A Tibet Exhibition stall was set up at the NGO forum venue where the delegation displayed pictures and thangkas, and disseminated information about the actual situation inside Tibet, and distributed Tibet publications free of cost.

The delegates spoke to lots of media both TV and print, and managed to raise greater awareness about Tibet and also concerning the denial of accreditation to three Tibetan NGOs. TCHRD also attended several caucus meetings, side events and workshops during the Summit

and lobbied for inclusion of human rights and Tibet-related languages in the political declaration and the programme of commitment adopted by NGOs and governments attending the WSSD. ♦

Law and Language Workshop in Italy

Mr. Tenzin Norgay, Field Officer at TCHRD, attended a two-week Language and Law Workshop in Bolzano, Italy from 26 August - 6 September 2002. The South Tyrol Provincial Government in co-ordination with various other organisations and individuals organised the workshop to educate Tibetan translators in the specific field of legal language translation.

The workshop dealt with theoretical themes of legal system, legal language and legal translation. The first week covered topics such as autonomy, multilingualism and linguistic rights of the minorities. The second week was dedicated to technique centred translation; making translation easier, universal and precise.

Two different Austrian and Italian Television channels covered the workshop program that was telecast in their respective countries. Mr. Norgay gave interviews to the TV crew from the perspectives of a Tibetan NGO.

The workshop participants also met with the President of South Tyrol Provincial Government. The president assured his personal as well as government's support on the Tibet issue. Later, they also met the Parliament Chairperson who also assured

the same. ♦

Human Rights and Democracy Workshop in Shimla

Mr. Ugyen Tsewang, Information Officer at TCHRD, was invited as guest speaker during a three-day workshop on democracy and human rights held from 6-8 September 2002 at Shimla. The workshop was jointly organised by four regional Tibetan organisations in Shimla. Around 50 local Tibetans participated in the workshop.

Mr. Karma Choephel, member and former Chairman of ATPD; Ven. Acharya Yeshe Phuntsok, President of NDPT; and Ven. Lobsang Dhondup, a former political prisoner, were the other guest speakers.

Mr. Tsewang spoke on human rights concepts, Universal Declaration of Human Rights", and human rights situation in Tibet. On the light of current human rights situation in Tibet, the participants were asked to relate the relevant articles of UDHR in corresponding to different form of human rights violations in Tibet. At the end of the workshop, almost all the participants expressed the need to conduct such workshop regularly especially targeting youths. ♦

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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.

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China frees Ngawang Sangdrol

Ngawang Sangdrol, a 24-year-old nun was released nine years early from Drapchi Prison in Tibet on 17 October 2002 reportedly for good behaviour. Sangdrol had spent 12 unbroken years in prison for merely exercising her right to freedom of expression and opinion.

Earlier in October 2001, Chinese authorities had reduced Sangdrol's sentence by year and a half from her total sentence of 21 years thereby bringing her sentence at 19 and half years. She had reportedly shown "genuine repentance and willingness to reform" to earn this sentence reduction.

Sangdrol had remained a high profile prisoner of conscience. She had featured prominently in the list of detainees deserving immediate release during dialogues of Chinese authorities with other government delegations and in campaigns by the international community.

Sangdrol was a juvenile when she was initially apprehended. She was the longest serving female political prisoner and had her sentence increased on three occasions. She had consistently suffered inhumane torture at the hands of the prison authorities, including solitary confinement. At the time of her release, Sangdrol was serving 19 and half years' imprisonment.

TCHRD disproves the claims of Sangdrol's early release due to "good behaviour". An informant from Tibet revealed that Sangdrol continues to receive medical treatment at her home in Tibet.

Another source, Passang Lhamo, a former Drapchi inmates currently in exile in Dharamsala, added, "Sangdrol had



endured extensive beatings and torture during her imprisonment especially for her participation in the May 1998 protest. She suffers multiple chronic ailments such as severe bouts of frequent headaches, stomach, intestinal and heart diseases (could be related to anxiety and stress)". TCHRD believes that Sangdrol may have been released more on medical grounds than for the stated reasons of "good behaviour".

Chinese authorities employ this long-standing strategy of releasing prisoners whose critical health condition is beyond recovery and recuperation. This tactic of late release of critically ill prisoners usually on medical parole is to shun responsibility for their deaths and to avoid criticisms against denial of adequate, timely and effective medical care.

Other speculations include Mr. John Kamms', President of Duihua Foundation. According to Mr Kamms, the release was "due to a regulation that makes prisoner who enter prison as juvenile eligible for early release".

TCHRD would like to express its growing concern that release of prisoners prior to their due date may not be interpreted as the Chinese government's adherence to

human rights standards. In fact, the Centre views these gestures with caution and skepticism. In recent years, the Chinese government has applied the hostage diplomacy tactic in response to the international scrutiny over their deteriorating human rights situation.

China's image building process in the international arena and the recent Jiang-Bush tyrst could also have acted as a catalyst in compelling the Beijing bureaucracy to re-think, review and revamp their policies that are under such intense international scrutiny.

Other factors could include the impending reshuffle in the Chinese leadership, hosting of the 2008 Olympics in China, extensive lobby and campaign activities worldwide for the prisoners' release, and governmental pressure in the form of resolutions passed in both the European Union Parliament and US Congress to recognise Tibetan government-in-exile (TGIE) as the legitimate government of Tibet if China fails to negotiate with the TGIE within next year 2003. However, in the overall human rights situation there has not yet been any obvious improvement.

TCHRD is happy for the release of Sangdrol as she did not deserve to be arbitrarily incarcerated in the first place and suffer all these years of torture and incarceration. TCHRD would also like to draw attention to the fact that there are hundreds more who continue to be arbitrarily detained under appalling prison condition.

TCHRD would like to reiterate that prisoners have spent their prime time behind bars enduring untold punishment and torture. At least 77 Tibetan prisoners

have died due to prison prison beatings and torture. Therefore, it continues to raise serious concern for the remaining political prisoners arbitrarily incarcerated in various prisons in Tibet.

"TCHRD salutes Sangdrol's indomitable spirit and courageous sacrifices. We are happy for Sangdrol and her family", said Mrs. Tsewang Lhadon, Executive Director of the Centre.

Ngawang Sangdrol's case history

Born in 1977 in Lhasa, Ngawang Sangdrol, layname Rigchog, joined Garu Nunnery at a very young age.

In 1987, 10-year-old Sangdrol participated in a peaceful pro-independence demonstration. She was detained for 15 days. On 28 August 1990, she was detained for nine months for participating in another demonstration. A year later, she was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in Drapchi Prison for staging another pro-independence demonstration.

In 1993, Sangdrol and 13 other nuns in Drapchi Prison made a tape-recording of the brutal treatment suffered and of their unfaltering commitment to Tibetan independence. The tape was smuggled out and circulated throughout Tibet. Sangdrol was found guilty of "spreading counter-revolutionary propaganda" and had her sentence extended by an additional six years.

On 31 July 1996, Sangdrol received an additional eight years on her prison term, raising her total sentence to 17 years on alleged charges of failing to clean her room. Actually, she refused to rise to her feet when a communist party delegation visited her cell. Her physical condition deteriorated due to torture and her right leg was seriously injured.

During the May 1998 Drapchi Prison protest, all prisoners were beaten with particular ferocity meted out to Sangdrol. Lhasa Intermediate People's Court extended Sangdrol's sentence. Despite conflicting reports about the length of this sentence extension, TCHRD maintains that Sangdrol received four years sentence extension bringing her total sentence to 21 years. ♦

Three former political prisoners flees Tibet



Soepa

Soepa (ordained name Loden Thupten) is a 30-year old monk and former political prisoner from Tibet. Upon reaching safely in exile, he testified to TCHRD:

"I am originally from Mancho Village, Uyang Township, Dzogang County (Zuagang xian), Chamdo Prefecture. My family engage in farming and nomadic works. I used to herd livestock since I was eight. At 15, I became a monk of Songa Thingcholing Monastery in Dzogang County. Between 21 to 24 years, I studied at Jampaling Monastery in Chamdo."

"In 1995, pro-independence leaflets with a photo of H.H. the Dalai Lama appeared on a wall and an electric pole near the monastery. The leaflets, written in Chinese, English and Tibetan languages, called for 'Free Tibet' and condemned the Chinese Panchen Lama."

"The needle of suspicion pointed towards the monks of Jampaling Monastery. A nine-member Chamdo PSB officers arrived at the monastery and summoned all the monks for a meeting. They photographed each monk, checked handwriting and took our thumbprints. No arrests took place that time."

"In February 1996, I pasted leaflets on an electric pole nearby the Chamdo-Zachu Bridge. The leaflets contained slogans like 'Free Tibet', 'Long Live H.H. the Dalai Lama', and 'China quit Tibet'. In late April 1996, I once again pasted

the leaflets along the walls of the circumambulating path of Jampaling Monastery."

"The next day, about 30 Chinese PSB officers descended upon the monastery and searched all the monks' living quarters. At that time, they took a paper from my room on which my roommate Sonam (now 38 from the same place as myself) had written the names of scriptures in Tibetan. When the handwriting on the paper was matched with that of the leaflets, it was found to be identical."

"On 2 May 1996, Sonam was arrested from the monastery. During the course of the interrogation, Sonam was coerced to disclose my involvement. The next morning on 3 May, I was arrested and taken to PSB Office. Sonam and I were kept in different rooms. The same day, I was interrogated and accused of harbouring venomous thoughts (referring to my pro-independence activities) despite being garbed in a monk's robe."

"I suffered different forms of torture and maltreatment at the hands of the PSB officers. To extract information, I was shocked with electric baton. They poured alcohol on my head and prodded me with the electric baton. The hurt was all the more severe. They put a yoke on my neck and my hands were held up straight in the air behind the yoke. At the same time, I was made to kneel on two sharp-edged stones with a stick at the back of my knee. When I moved a bit unable to bear this cruel position, they step on the stick in the leg. The pain was excruciating. Wangdu, a Tibetan official, was the main person responsible for the torture. That way, I was tortured and interrogated at the PSB office for an entire day. In the evening I was taken to Chamdo Detention Centre.

"At Chamdo Detention Centre, I was interrogated once in every two to three days. Each time I was interrogated, I was beaten and pushed against the wall. My head was banged and I was kicked on the chest. Sonam who was also brought

Saved from the verge of execution

Lodroe Gyatso (born in 1961) is originally from Sog County in Nagchu Prefecture. He was a dance artist and weight lifting champion by profession. Gyatso is known locally for his strong political convictions and patriotism.

In 1993, Gyatso's sister, Lharik, was killed in a car accident. The car was driven by Gayoel, a Tibetan, who is known as a strong Chinese supporter. Though a case was filed against Gayoel, he was pronounced "not guilty" after the case was left pending for over a year.

On 17 January 1993, a fight broke out between Gayoel and Gyatso in a market. It was reported that Gayoel unsuccessfully tried to shoot Gyatso twice. Two policemen who witnessed the conflict did nothing to intervene. However, when Gayoel was stabbed, the police arrested Gyatso.

The "TAR" Intermediate People's Court found Gyatso guilty of attempt of murder and sentenced him to 15 years' imprisonment on 20 April 1994.

On 4 March 1995, Gyatso received permission from prison authorities to make a lone visit to another block to get medicine for a serious blood pressure problem. While walking along the 5th block, 6th, 4th, 2nd blocks and finally in

the courtyard near the 1st block, Gyatso shouted "Tibet is independent", "All Chinese should go back to China", and "Six million Tibetans are united". At the same time, he distributed pamphlets and hung posters that had political message and prayers for the Dalai Lama. He also read out the poster aloud for everyone to hear.

Liu Bao and Zhao, two prison officials, Pema Rinzin, head of the fourth block; Lee Tue Tang of the first block, and one unknown Chinese official from the sixth block snatched away the pamphlets and clamped fist cuffs on Gyatso.

They kicked and beat him with their belts, tied him up with rope, and continued to torture him until he bled from his mouth and nose. Gyatso was taken to a torture cell where he was untied and hit on his genitals and abdomen. Despite having been tortured, Gyatso refused to "confess to his crimes" and instead shouted "Long Live H H the Dalai Lama" and "Free Tibet". He was then strangled and kicked causing him severe neck and mouth injury, until he fell unconscious. Such interrogation sessions continued regularly for one month.

Prison officials and "re-education through labour" Commission subsequently called a meeting, made papers to execute

Gyatso, and forwarded them to the prosecution division. In April 1995, while the Intermediate People's Court order was awaiting the approval of the Higher People's Court, the prisoners of Drapchi were able to smuggle the news of Gyatso's impending death abroad. UN Special Rapporteur on Extra Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions on 18 May 1995 drew an urgent appeal and transmitted the message to China.

On 20 November 1996, Lodroe Gyatso was brutally beaten by prison guards during prison visiting day. Gyatso reportedly walked away from the group awaiting their names to be called out for visitors to get some sunlight. Gyatso was reportedly seen being covered with a black cloth on his head and beaten by prison guards. He was kept in a solitary confinement cell and following his release, he was detained along with criminal prisoners.

The Chinese response stated that no execution sentence had been passed, rather that Gyatso's sentence had been extended by an additional six years starting from 3 May 1995. He had also been stripped of his political rights for three years. Lodroe Gyatso is currently serving a 21-year-sentence in Drapchi Prison. ♦

to the detention centre experienced similar torture and ill treatment."

"There are four other political prisoners in the detention centre, all of them were from Drayab Puegue Monastery. They are Tsering Norbu (30), Tsedo (40), Tsetso (58) and Yeshi Tenzin (14). All four were detained in connection with pro-independence activities. Chamdo Intermediate People's Court sentenced Yeshi Tenzin to five years' prison term while the other three were given three years' 're-education through labour' in Chamdo Detention Centre. After six month's detention in Chamdo Detention Centre, Yeshi Tenzin was transferred to Drapchi Prison."

"Chamdo Tatsa Thang is a big ground where public sentencings are held. On 2 July 1996, Chamdo Intermediate People's Court read out sentences for Sonam and myself at Chamdo Tatsa Thang. I received five years and Sonam got two years."

"There were 11 Tibetan criminal prisoners who were paraded before being executed. I knew only some of these executed prisoners. They were Tsega, in 40s from Chamdo, Tsegyal, 40s from Drayab, Kyipo Nyima, approximately 50, and Jamdo in 20s from Jumda Township."

"After being held for additional three months in Chamdo Detention Centre, I was transferred to Drapchi Prison in October 1996. I stayed in Rukhag 5 (new block) of the prison for three months. I was shifted to Rukhag 6. We were not assigned any tasks but we were made to perform the morning military drill."

"Following the 1 and 4 May 1998 Drapchi Prison protests, the prisoners suffered tremendously and severe restrictions were imposed. Besides, surveillance cameras were installed in the prison cells to monitor the prisoners' activities."

"I was released from prison on 1 May 2001 upon completion of my full prison term. I was ordered not to stay in Lhasa for more than 20 days. Therefore, I left for my native place and lived there for about nine months. I left Lhasa on 30 September 2002 and arrived at Tibetan Reception Centre (TRC) in Kathmandu on 10 October 2002."

Thinlay Ngawang

Thinlay Ngawang (ordained name Ngawang Tendar) reported to TCHRD about his involvement in political activities that subsequently led to his detention. He recounted to TCHRD:

"I am 34 years old. My place of origin is Kyepa Township, Nedong County (Ch: Naidong xian), Lhoka Prefecture. I studied in a village primary school for almost five years. For few years in between, I assisted my family in farming. At 17, I became monk of Woetin Monastery and studied there for six years."

"In February 1993, I wrote pro-independence slogans on four large piece of papers. The slogans said 'Tibet is for Tibetans' and condemned the limited number of monastic strength and enforced birth control policy on Tibetan women. On the night of 25 April 1993, I pasted the papers on both sides of a huge gate named as Yardo Kawa in Lhoka Township. The posters were also posted on the door of a popular old shop where many people used to meet and walk past, and another one on a gate of another shop. All in all, I had eleven such posters with me."

"I feigned sickness and took leave from the monastery to go for check-up. I stayed the night at my grandfather's place. I managed to paste few more posters during the night."

"As soon as I completed my work, I planned to return to my monastery. Unfortunately, my grandfather sprained his ankle and I had to stay back to help him. While going to fetch water, two policemen on the way called me and wanted to know when I left the monastery and when I planned to return. They held me under suspicion because they knew that the previous posters had appeared near my home. Therefore, they not only recognises me but also suspected me immensely. In order to avoid further suspicion, I bought few medicines and left for my monastery."

"Two days later, six policemen came to the monastery and distributed papers to all the monks to write down their personal background. I became doubtful about their motive and wrote my handwriting

differently. After collecting all the papers from the monks, the policemen left."

"On two other occasions, I tried to paste posters. On 8 May 1994, five policemen suddenly came to the monastery and ransacked my room. They found the posters and a small booklet containing speeches of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The police team consisted of Norbu Dhondup, Lotse, Khao Te Jang, and Nyandak. Another Nyandak was the head of this police team. There was one driver with them also."

"I was taken to Lhoka Intermediate People's Court for trial. During the trial, I asserted that Tibetan people's standard of living was deplorable and that the authorities should lessen their restrictions. The judge slammed his fist on the table in anger and said that I was not speaking the truth."

"Lhoka Intermediate People's Court sentenced me to five years' prison term. In February 1994, I was transferred to rukhag (unit) 5 of Drapchi Prison. Upon completion of my prison term, I was released on 7 May 1998."

Tsering Nyima

Thirty-six-year old Tsering Nyima reported to TCHRD:

"I come from a farming family in Derong County (Ch: Derong xian), Karze 'TAP', Sichuan Province. I studied at a township primary school for three years. Afterwards, I did farming in my native place. I also worked as an electrician for sometime."

"I attempted escape to India once before in 1990. Chinese border police arrested me at Tingri County (Ch: Dingri xian), Shigatse Prefecture. After confiscating 350 yuan from me, I was detained for two days in Shigatse PSB Office. They put me in a vehicle that was to take me back to Lhasa. I somehow stayed back in Shigatse for two months and managed to escape until Tibet-Nepal border during my second attempt."

"At Tibet-Nepal border, Nepal police arrested me and confiscated 1,800 yuan

from me. I was detained for two days before being handed over to Chinese border police. There, I found six other Tibetans who were also arrested for attempted escape into exile. Our group was taken to Shigatse PSB Office located near Tashi Ling Monastery. One of the police officials recognised me and told others that this was my second arrest. Other people from my group were released after two weeks' detention whereas I was detained for one month."

"When I was released from detention, I did not have any money with me. I stayed in Shigatse for 15 more days. Then, I walked for 210 kms and also hitchhiked till Saga County (Ch: Saga xian). I walked and walked for 16 days and finally reached Mt. Kailash where I stayed for ten days. I assisted elderly people and small children who find it difficult to circumambulate Mt. Kailash. I charged 50 yuan each person for assisting these people. Within 20 days, I had earned 450 yuan."

"I reached Burang County (Ch: Pulan xian) and met a guide whom I paid 150 yuan. I was with a group of 12 people then. On reaching Nepal border, 10 people from our group went on their own way. I ended up with a heavily pregnant lady from Drayab County (Chaya xian), Chamdo 'TAP'. She had a very hard time when she gave birth to her child. I don't know the name of the place. We stayed in that place for a week and begged during daytime. After a week's time, we walked for a considerable distance and begged the whole time. Finally we came to this large city in Kathmandu and met few Tibetans. These Tibetans gave us clothes and money and took us till Boudha. Another Tibetan gave us shelter for the night and took us to the Tibetan Reception Centre, Kathmandu, the next day."

"After having sought an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, I became monk of Ganden Monastery in South India, and lived there for six months."

"In 1991, I returned to Tibet with seven big photographs of H H the Dalai Lama and two Tibetan national flags. I handed these items to my monastery. In 1992, I came to India with 15 monks. All these monks are now studying in Sera, Drepung

and Ganden Monasteries in South India."

"I went into Tibet once again after having worked in a Tibetan restaurant in Darjeeling in North East India for almost nine months. Till 1996, I was in Lhasa, got married and had children. The same year, I guided 18 Tibetans to India without any problems on the way. I charged 450 yuan to each person."

"On my return to Tibet, I had with me Tibetan national flags, precious Tibetan pills, and some documents. My wife and I were arrested by border police at Nyelam County (Neila xian), Shigatse 'TAP'. We succeeded in giving the items in the safe hands of a driver friend. From Shigatse PSB Detention Centre, we were transferred to Nyari PSB Detention Centre."

"My wife was released on medical grounds, as she was not feeling well. I was detained for six months and released. Most of the detainees in Nyari PSB Detention Centre were Tibetans arrested for attempted escape to India or entry into Tibet from India (mostly without proper travel documents)."

"In 1997, I came to India with seven Tibetans. I took copies of photographs of H H the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan lamas in exile. I also had approximately 500 photographs of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the XI Panchen Lama recognised by H H the Dalai Lama."

"On 10 June 1999, police from Gyabumgang (police station in Lhasa) ransacked my room and confiscated nearly 20,000 yuan. I was taken to Lhasa PSB Detention Centre. Besides interrogation sessions, I was tortured with whatever the police officers could lay their hands on. I was repeatedly asked about what all I had brought from India. I was detained for almost three weeks that time. Later, I was shifted to Gutsa PSB Detention Centre and detained for one week."

"A member from Lhasa Intermediate People's Court came to interrogate me at the detention centre. Besides the items that I brought from India, he wanted to know the details of my activities concerning guiding people illegally across Tibet. After two years and two months' detention at Gutsa Detention Centre, Lhasa Intermediate People's Court finally sentenced me to three years' prison term.

I was released on 11 June 2002. A month or so later, I came to India guiding seven Tibetans into exile." ♦

Additional information on Trulku Tenzin Delek's detention

In late September 2002, TCHRD interviewed Jamyang Dhondup (ordained name Lobsang Gelek), a 29-year-old cousin of Trulku Tenzin Delek. He escaped into exile in India from Lithang County. He provided TCHRD with more information on the events leading to Trulku's arrest and his current condition:

"In 2002 there was a bomb blast in Karze County that killed two people. In the same year, there was another bomb blast in Chengdu. Dhondup, a businessman from Chengdu, was arrested on suspicion of having masterminded the incident. His room was ransacked and police discovered a photo of Trulku Tenzin Delek in his room. Dhondup was interrogated about his relation with Trulku and his involvement and motives behind the blast."

"On learning that Dhondup is related to Trulku, the police immediately made allegations that Trulku had a hand in the bomb incident. Soon after, Trulku's monastery in Nyakchuka County (Yajiang xian) was searched thoroughly."

"After the search, a meeting was called whereby the attendance of other high lamas and Chinese officials was made mandatory. It was announced then that a search team discovered pornographic cassettes, a bag full of US dollars and a wig from the monastery. This baseless accusation was made with the primary intention of turning people against Trulku. However, this strategy backfired and no one believed the accusations. People turned out in large numbers in

support of Trulku and condemned the Chinese authorities for their false allegations."

"Various theories came up as to where Trulku was held. As far as I know, the fact remains unknown and uncertain. (In TCHRD August Human Rights Update, a source reported that Trulku is currently held in Dartsedo PSB Detention. But no one has seen him in person since his arrest).

"Four of his attendants were arrested with him - Tamding Tsering, Tsultrim, Asher Dhargyal and Tashi Phuntsok (in our earlier report, the person's name is reported as Dhondup. The Centre awaits further verification). According to my knowledge, their whereabouts are currently uncertain. Two people were arrested and later released following their involvement in fundraising activities for Trulku's court case."

"An elderly person named Tenzin Thinlay was staying with Trulku on the night of Trulku's arrest. The former wept when Trulku was being taken away by the police. Trulku told him not to be sad, for he was completely innocent. He further told Thinlay to urge the local people not to demonstrate but hire lawyers if ever a court trial takes place."

"So, it was my uncle Lonkga, his cousin De De, and Trulku's son-in-law, who hired a lawyer from Karze County. The lawyer asked for a remuneration of 10 lakh yuan and did not guarantee winning the case. Therefore, they were still in the process of hiring another lawyer from Ngaba County when I left Tibet. I don't know what happened thereafter."

"Trulku went into hiding when the Chinese authorities came to arrest him for the first time. Approximately 20,000 local Tibetans signed an appeal letter and submitted it to Beijing government. The authorities at that time issued a decree to the monastery whereby it was stated that Trulku would not be arrested if he would return and stay out of trouble. Following this assurance, Trulku returned to the monastery."

"The Chinese authorities started to look at Trulku with suspicion after he built six monasteries. He often spoke strongly against deforestation, lumbering and

hunting. He even advised local Tibetans not to fight over land disputes.

"The authorities did not like the fact that Trulku did not seek permission from the government to construct a big stupa in Nyakchuka County. During his teachings, he would always advise people not to engage in inter-racial marriage and to steadfastly follow the ideals of HH the Dalai Lama."

"Afterwards, Trulku set up an orphanage in Nagchu County. The orphanage was fully financed by him. Some part of the land was bought while the locals donated the other parts to build the orphanage. Around 300 inmates were taught mainly religion and Tibetan language. The Chinese authorities forced its closure in 1999 for lack of official permission. All wards of the school had to return to their respective homes."

Information on Trulku Tenzin Delek's detention was recorded in Human Rights Update April 2002 issue. According to report received that time, Trulku Tenzin Delek (alias Ah-nga Tashi), a highly respected lama in Lithang (Ch: Litang) County was arrested on the night of 7 April 2002 with four of his attendants. Sichuan Public Security Bureau Officers accused the arrestees of being involved in a bomb blast incident at Chengdu's main square (Tianfu Square) three days earlier. It was reported that Trulku was detained in a local PSB Detention Centre in Dartsedo (Ch: Kangding) County, Karze (Ch: Ganzi), 'TAP'; though no one has seen him in person.

For detailed information on Trulku Tenzin Delek, log onto www.tchrd.org/hrupdate2002/200204.htm ◆

Update on Tsangsul School closure

Closure of a private Tibetan school in Lhasa was already reported in August 2002 Human Rights Update. The rising popularity of the school and its alleged

affiliation with the "Dalai clique" resulted in Chinese authorities closing down Tsang-sul School in June/July 2002. Established in 1988, the student strength of the school rose from 120 in 1995 to 500 in 2002.

A 14-year-old former student Karma Yeshe narrated to TCHRD, "I was born in Lhasa. My parents originally hail from Dzogang County (Ch: Zuogang xian), Chamdo Prefecture. At the age of 10, I got admission in Tsang-sul School. We learnt Chinese, Tibetan and English language in the school. The average school fee charged was nominal. The poor and orphaned students were exempted from school fees and given financial assistance. We benefited a lot from this school. Since many students come from poor rural background, they get good opportunity to study in this school free of cost."

"As mentioned in the TCHRD Human Rights Update, several factors contributed to the closure of the school. One unknown factor is that there was a new four-storey building of Chinese business behind the school. The residents of this tall building made complaints to the concerned school authorities that the students make lots of noises and cause disturbance in the neighbourhood.

"In addition, a government-run Yethong Primary School has less student admission and attendance with more poor students choosing to attend Tsang-sul School. The school was also criticised of being overcrowded and unhygienic. It was also said there was the threat of students being run over by vehicles since they had to pass the main road to get to the school. The landlord was no longer permitted to rent the premise for schooling purpose following the government orders. These reasons were explained to our parents when they were called for meeting a day after the school was closed."

"Simultaneous to the closure, Yethong Primary School made an announcement that they would admit students and not require them to pay fees for one year. My parents do not trust that the school will impart good education. I left my family to come into exile for a better education." ◆



Briefing to Italian parliamentary group

On 27 September 2002, Ms. Tsewang Lhadon, the Executive Director, and Ms. Youdon Aukatsang, Senior Programme Officer, along with other Tibetan NGOs, met a visiting Italian Parliamentary Group.

Both the staff members briefed the group on the work and activities of TCHRD as well as the general human rights situation inside Tibet. The parliamentarians raised many pertinent questions with regard to the TCHRD programme and links with other international human rights NGOs. The group was presented with TCHRD's latest reports at the end of the briefing.

On 9 October 2002, the Italian Parliament passed a Tibet Resolution with 407 votes in favour, one against and one abstention. The Tibet Resolution strongly called upon China to fully recognise and respect the fundamental political, social and cultural rights of religious, ethnic and other minorities in China.

Orissa workshop on human rights and democracy

Ms Youdon Aukatsang and Ms Tenzin Chokey visited the Tibetan settlement in Orissa for a workshop on human rights and democracy from 14-16 September

2002. Regional Tibetan Women's Organisation invited the staff as resource person for their three-day programme.

The composition of participants was different each day thereby enabling the resource persons to reach the community widely. The participants included students, teachers, settlement officers and farmers. The participants greatly appreciated the workshop and expressed their views and discussed issues affecting them in an enthusiastic manner.

Asian human rights training in Bangkok

Mr. Ugyen Tsewang, Information Officer of TCHRD, participated in the 6th Annual Asian Human Rights Training and Study Session organised by Bangkok based Asian Forum for Human Rights (Forum Asia) at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, from 6-27 October 2002.

The participants were drawn from various human rights organisations and advocacy groups from sixteen different countries in South and South East Asia like India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Taiwan, Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, South Korea, Philippines and others.

The training courses included topics such as history and development of human rights norms; UN mechanisms;

universality and indivisibility of human rights and gender equality; reflections on global, regional, national and social context and their impact on human rights. The training dealt with skills on how to devise effective strategies to deal with human rights issues and concerns.

One of the most important aspects of the training was the sharing of country situations towards building increased solidarity and linkages among the human rights workers in the region. On two occasions, Mr. Tsewang gave presentations on the overall Tibetan situation and human rights violations in Tibet. Majority of the participants were unaware about Tibet and its current situation.

TCHRD briefing to CTA Trainees at Sara Institute

Upon invitation from Department of Public Service Commission of Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), Ms. Youdon Aukatsang addressed 15 member CTA Trainees at Sara Institute.

Ms. Aukatsang gave a brief overview of the Centre's activities and presented them with the current human rights situation in Tibet.

TCHRD also screened a 10 minute documentary on the destruction of Serthar Buddhist Institute in Sichuan Province in Tibet. The documentary screening was followed by a question-answer session.

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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.

TCHRD's publications:

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Tibetan prisoner of conscience dies in detention

According to a reliable information received from Tibet, Lobsang Dhargyal died Monday morning, 19 November 2002, in a "reform through labour" camp in Siling Town, Machen County (Ch:Maqin xian), Golog "Tibet Autonomous Prefecture" ("TAP"), Qinghai Province.

He was serving 16 years' prison term on alleged charges of espionage and "splittist activities. He had earlier served two and half years' sentence for advocating Tibet's independence.

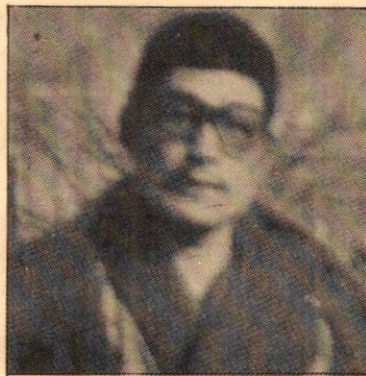
Although Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is yet to receive detailed information, it is almost certain that Lobsang Dhargyal's sudden demise is due to torture and maltreatment in the forced labour camp. It was reported that he suffered brain haemorrhage at the time of death.

The camp where Dhargyal was incarcerated is a Manufacturing Unit for Hydro-Electricity Power Plant. More updates on his death shall follow upon receiving further information.

The prevalence of torture as a reprisal for political activities is of great concern especially in light of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) obligations with regard to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT).

Although the PRC had ratified CAT in 1988, TCHRD records indicate total number of 79 known deaths both in custody and after release as a direct result of torture since 1986.

The continued abuse and torture of



Tibetans in Chinese administered prisons and detention centres in Tibet imply that the Chinese government is bent on suppressing nationalist sentiments of the Tibetan people. Individual rights and rule of law seem only to concur within that parameter.

The Chinese criminal system has traditionally laid a strong emphasis on 'Laogai' - 'reform through labour'. In 1994, the National People's Congress of the PRC promulgated a Prison Law that officially outlawed the 'Laogai' system. However, the system remains under the terminology of 'Prison'.

The basic aim of the 'laogai' system was not simply punishment but also 'reform and change for the better'. Inmates of both prisons and labour camps (which are now both classified as prisons) are subjected to intensive labour requirements and ideological training that are considered effective tools to diminish individual political zeal and to create business profits.

Brief background of Lobsang Dhargyal

Lobsang Dhargyal was a former monk of Rabgya Monastery in Machen County in Golog "TAP". Born to Shergyam and Tsodon in 1962, Dhargyal engaged in nomadic works and studied Tibetan language when he was young.

His father was a strong advocate of Tibet's independence and was involved in many "reactionary" activities following Communist China's annexation of Tibet in 1959. His father committed suicide in 1970 to evade arrest by Chinese authorities.

In the post 1987 pro-independence campaign, Dhargyal, with monk friends Lobsang Palden and Yeshe Gyaltsen, printed approximately 40,000 pro-independence leaflets of slogans such as "Free Tibet" and "China, Quit Tibet".

On 15 November 1992, a grand enthronement ceremony for the then 13-year-old Shingsang Tenzin Choekyi Gyaltsen Rinpoche was scheduled to be held at Rabgya Monastery. Shingsang Rinpoche, head of Rabgya Monastery and the 20th reincarnation of the mother of Jetsongkhapa, the founder of Gelug School of Tibetan Buddhism, is considered one of the leading lamas in Qinghai Province.

On the eve of the ceremony, Dhargyal and his companions pasted and distributed the leaflets in strategic places such as public roads; street, malls and

such as public roads; street, malls and circumambulation route around Rabgya Monastery. A Tibetan national flag was hoisted on the rooftop of the monastery's chapel and a small paper flag was pasted at the corner.

The next evening, Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers from Machen County and Golog "TAP" interrogated all the monks. Ten days later on 25 November 1992, Dhargyal was arrested. Wooden block prints used in printing the leaflets were discovered from his room. However, his friends managed to escape.

After a year's detention in Golog Prison, Golog Intermediate People's Court sentenced Dhargyal to three years' imprisonment with two year deprivation of political rights. During the entire period of his imprisonment, Dhargyal was handcuffed and his feet were manacled. He lost his two front teeth as a result of severe beatings. On 25 May 1995, Lobsang Dhargyal was released on medical grounds six months before his due date of release.

The Tibetan Youth Congress based in Dharamsala, conferred upon Lobsang Dhargyal, Lobsang Palden and Yeshe Gyaltsen the Martyr's Award in August 1995, in recognition of their courageous deeds and sacrifices for Tibet.

In early 1997, Rabgya Monastery had come under heavy restrictions and surveillance. Therefore, in April 1997, Dhargyal fled Tibet to escort Shingsang Rinpoche to Sera Monastery in South India.

In May 2001, while returning to Tibet to visit his ailing mother, Lobsang Dhargyal was arrested somewhere near Shigatse in "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"). He was subsequently handed over to Golog "TAP" authorities. In October of the same year, Golog Intermediate People's Court sentenced Lobsang Dhargyal to a 16-year prison term for allegedly engaging in espionage and splittist activities.

A recent escapee from Tibet, 29-year-old Lobsang Tsultrim, recalls, "In April 2001, I was returning to Tibet with Lobsang Dhargyal and Tashi Gyatso via Solukhumbu, Nepal-Tibet border, when the Chinese border police detained us.

When they began to hit us, we fought back and thus managed to escape. Unfamiliar with the routes, we ran to different directions."

"Dhargyal was arrested near old Tingri County (Dingri xian) in Shigatse 'TAP'; I was arrested in new Tingri County and Tashi Gyatso in Golog after he had returned home. After five days' detention in Nyari Detention Centre, three police officers escorted Dhargyal to Amdo Golog. That was the last time I saw him. He looked healthy at the time," continued Tsultrim.

Another escapee, Tenzin, from Rabgya Monastery went to visit Lobsang Dhargyal in early June 2002. He reported to TCHRD, "Since Dhargyal was my friend, I went to visit him in the detention centre. Though I don't know the name of the detention centre, I know that it is located between Siling and Dharthong County. I sent 500 yuan and some eatables for Dhargyal through a guard, as face-to-face meeting was not permitted. Later on, I received a note from Dhargyal stating that he had received the items. I recognised Dhargyal's signature on the note. I believe it had not been long since he was taken to the Manufacturing Unit of Hydro-Electricity Power Plant in Siling."

Lobsang Tsultrim, the former informant, is skeptical about the nature of Dhargyal's death. He told TCHRD, "I believe Dhargyal did not die naturally. I also think, since his arrest, his parents and relatives were not allowed to see him at all. It is inevitable that he suffered torture and maltreatment in the prison."

"Dhargyal was a very good man. He was sociable and got along with everyone. He was very well-educated and had a great sense of patriotism. I was shocked by the news of his untimely death. Every Tibetan should strive to live up to his role. His image comes to my mind even today."

In an earlier information received by TCHRD, four exile returnees - Mathok Damchoe (27), Sonam Gyatso (34), Kunchok Dhargyal (32) and Tsultrim Dhargyal (26) - all from Rabgya Monastery, were sentenced to six years' imprisonment.

The latest report says that the first three monks were sentenced to six years while

Tsultrim Dhargyal received five years' term. Chinese authorities view the act of visiting India for pilgrimage and study with suspicion of "splittist" activities. Speculation is also rife that these people are suspected to have had close associations with Lobsang Dhargyal.

Other arrests and detention

After his arrest at new Tingri County in May 2001, 29-year-old Lobsang Tsultrim was detained in Nyari Detention Centre in Shigatse "TAP" for almost two months.

Tsultrim was arrested for bringing politically significant materials into China; small information booklets by Tibetan Government-in-exile, photos of the Dalai Lama, and copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Tsultrim was later transferred to Golog Detention Centre and detained for two additional months. The prison authorities manacled his feet for over a month and shocked him with electric cattle prods during interrogations.

Around September 2001, Golog Intermediate People's Court sentenced Tsultrim to three years' prison term. He was released within 20 days of the sentence announcement. His family and relatives paid 15,000 yuan to secure his bail. He is originally from Amdo Golog.

Tashi Gyatso, a layperson from Dalang Township in Machen County is currently in Golog Prefecture Prison serving a total sentence of 12 years.

During their first encounter with the police in Solukhumbu, Gyatso had Tibetan national flags, an autobiography of the Dalai Lama, and other politically significant books. On account of possession of "political" items, he was arrested in Golog after his escape from the encounter. He is regarded as one of the political prisoner with the harshest sentence in the whole of Qinghai. ♦

Farmers incarcerated for peaceful independence demonstration

Lhundrup Dorjee, born in 1968, is a farmer from Dasher Village in Meldrogungkar County.

On 30 June 1992, Dorjee along with three other companions disrupted a political 're-education' meeting in the village of Meldro Gyama Trikhang in Meldrogungkar County. The other three companions were Sonam Dorjee, Sonam Rinchen and Konchok Lodroe. They are all farmers from Dasher Village and in their thirties.

The Chinese authorities organise meetings for the villagers and "educate" them about communist ideologies and propagate Chinese version of the Tibetan history.

The four farmers rushed on stage, seized the microphone, and wrestled with the officials. They shouted pro-independence slogans and anti-Chinese statements exhibiting a Tibetan national flag. Soon thereafter, People's

Armed Police (PAP) rushed to the scene to arrest the demonstrators.

After the four demonstrators had been dragged away and beaten by the PAP, approximately one hundred villagers began to shout pro-independence slogans.

Thupten Yeshi, a farmer from Meldrogungkar County, was formally arrested on 14 July 1992. Though Yeshi did not take part in the protest on 30 June 1992, he was suspected to be the "ringleader" of the protest. He was accused of other political activities as well.

On 20 October 1992, the five farmers faced trial in Lhasa Intermediate People's Court were sentenced.

Lhundrup Dorjee who was severely injured during the protest, and was sentenced to 15-year-prison term with five years' deprivation of political rights.

Thupten Yeshi was sentenced to 15 year's imprisonment and

five years' deprivation of political rights. Kunchok, Sonam Dorjee, and Sonam Rinchen were all sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment and four years' deprivation of political rights.

Sonam Rinchen died in January 2000 while still in prison, after falling sick for more than three years without receiving medical treatment.

Kunchok Dorjee was released on medical parole in 1996. Lhundrup Dorjee, Thupten Yeshi, and Sonam Dorjee are currently serving their sentences in Drapchi Prison. ♦

China thwarts Buddhist Lama's India visit

Tsewang Gyurmay, 24, originates from a family of pastoral nomad in Nyarong County (Xinlong xian), Karze "TAP", Sichuan Province.

Gyurmay told TCHRD, "Between 10 to 17 years of age, I had private tuition from my uncle on Tibetan language. Three years later, I joined Tsurphu Retreat Centre in Nyarong. I also got the opportunity to study in Serthar Buddhist Institute for three years."

Gyurmay reported that an influential Rinpoche was denied visa to travel to India for reasons known only to the officials. It is however widely speculated that Rinpoche's faith in the Dalai Lama could have evoked Chinese concern about "splittist" influences in India.

"Delong Rinpoche, a 70-year-old renowned religious practitioner from Nyarong, is a revered lama of Lhapo Monastery in Nyarong. Rinpoche was born to a Chinese couple in Jasang Khang area in China. Rinpoche began his religious studies in Kartop Monastery in Derge County (Dege xian) in Karze. The monastery follows Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism."

"I had his blessings and know that he is a close associate of Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, the chief abbot and founder of Serthar Buddhist Institute. Rinpoche always had a great desire to seek audience with and blessings from His Holiness the Dalai Lama."

"Delong Rinpoche left his monastery for Lhasa in August 2001 with a Chinese passport. Except for few close monks, no one knew about the trip. Somehow the news had leaked because Lhasa police were already tipped off about Rinpoche's arrival in Lhasa. It is believed that Karze County police force were behind the act."

"In Lhasa, Rinpoche stayed in a hotel with few of his attendants. A week later, Rinpoche was denied Chinese Visa to travel to India for pilgrimage and was ordered to return to his hometown. No

credible explanation was provided for the denial. Rinpoche had to fly back with his attendants to Nyarong."

"The local people were highly disappointed with the whole turn of events. They were saddened by the fact that Rinpoche's desire for an audience with HH the Dalai Lama remained unfulfilled. Though Rinpoche is of Chinese origin, his reverence for HH the Dalai Lama is strong. Chinese authorities fear that once Rinpoche leaves Tibet, he might not return. Moreover, Chinese government never appreciates anyone meeting HH the Dalai Lama whom they consider as an enemy of China," recalls Gyurmay. ♦

Political incident at a "patriotic education" session

A 30-year-old Dorjee reached Tibetan Reception Centre in Kathmandu on 15 September 2002. He is a farmer from Gormo Municipality in Amdo Ngaba.

Dorjee reported to TCHRD, "Chinese authorities have extended 'patriotic education' campaign into the lay community as well. During the yearly meeting that the authorities hold for the local populace, Chinese officials would call upon the masses to imbibe communist ideology and to discard 'splittist' ideas."

"In October 1999, more than 100 Chinese officials including the head of Gorma Municipality (Golmud shi) attended one such meeting. When a break was announced in between the meeting, I stood up to walk forward. The township head directly pointed at me and asked 'what do you want?' I responded 'I want Free Tibet'. I spoke it loud and clear. An elderly Tibetan told me to run but I did not."

"Within few minutes, a dozen armed police and soldiers dashed into the crowd and walked up to me. I always carried a small paper knife in my pocket. I took that out and the police were hesitant to come

close to me at first. But I was outnumbered and my knife was snatched away. My arms were twisted behind my back. All of a sudden, I was pulled down to the ground and all police and soldiers began to beat and kick me. From that day onwards, I have hearing problem."

"That evening, I was taken to the local PSB Detention Centre. As beating continued in the detention centre, I vomited blood. I became so sick that I could not eat and move around. My inmates called the police and reported my precarious condition. A doctor who checked me told that I needed immediate medical attention."

"After one month and 15 days's hospitalisation, the doctor still recommended complete bed rest. My family paid all the medical expenses. So, an agreement was reached with the police that my parents would take care of me. However, I had to report to the police station on a regular basis. In that way, I was allowed to return home."

"In 2001, I was having lunch in a restaurant with several other friends. Suddenly, few PSB officers barged into the restaurant and I was whisked away. I was interrogated about my activities and subsequently subjected to minor beatings."

"Then, one day, I was paraded around with several other criminal prisoners. I was detained for 15 days and released. I was told that my movements and activities would be monitored."

"Because of such restrictions, I escaped with my wife and four children to India. I also hope that my children will get better education in exile."

Exile Tibetan detained for entry into Tibet

In stark contradiction to Chinese government's claim of welcoming exile Tibetan brethrens into Tibet, TCHRD has received several cases of people being

arrested for attempting entry into Tibet. Tseten Dorjee, 28, born in India, faced detention when he recently tried to go to Tibet.

Dorjee related to TCHRD, "I was born to a seven-member family in Kollegal Tibetan Settlement in South India. I worked as a chef in several places in India. I was also at the Indian Army for seven years since 1992. In February 2002, I reached Nepal."

"After a few days in Nepal, I met several newcomers who were returning to Tibet. I took the opportunity to join the group. We walked via Mount Kailash and reached Ngari 'TAP'. We came across seven policemen and they detained us for 18 days in Ngari Detention Centre. Afterwards, we were transferred to a new detention centre in Shigatse, just opposite Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. There were more than 200 Tibetan prisoners who all were arrested for attempted escape from and entry into Tibet."

"I was interrogated mainly about the purpose of my trip and the exile Tibetan government based in North India. I was asked about the main contents of the talks given by the newly elected Prime Minister Samdhong Rinpoche; number of departments in the exile government; number of staff at the Tibetan Reception Centre and their activities. I was also questioned as to how many exile Tibetans schools have been set up. They have lots of photos from exile, mainly of schools and monasteries. I replied that I entered Tibet to meet my relatives, and pilgrimage."

"This new detention centre had a sign board 'Reception Center' (Tib: Nyelenkhang). According to information published in a newspaper, Nyelenkhang was reportedly meant to provide accommodation to exile Tibetans who return to Tibet. The rooms have decent facilities including nice and thick cushions and clean toilets. But the inmates have to follow strict rules and regulations such as complete restrictions on singing songs, prayers and outings. We were provided a cup of black tea and a little Tsampa (roasted barley) in the afternoon and mostly uncooked Tibetan noodles in the evening."

"As 'reception centre' was newly constructed, it has a new impressive look.

However, it is no different from a regular prison because restrictions are imposed on the inmates' freedom of movement and expression. The name is just a facade."

"During my detention, Taiwanese and Singaporean visitors from Lhasa visited the prison block. During their visit, we got good food but afterwards, the food would be just the same. When people fall sick, they don't get good medical treatment at the detention Centre. The medicine that I received for my lung disease there aggravated my sickness. They had to take me to Shigatse People's Hospital. I was detained for six months and 20 days. During that time, I was forced to work with other inmates in the construction of roads and buildings."

"Since I didn't have a travel permit, I was deported to Nepal via Shigatse and Dram (Tibet-Nepal border). I was not even allowed a pilgrimage. In Dram, the Chinese police facilitated my crossover into the Nepali area."

"I went to Tibet to see the true situation inside Tibet. On our outings for construction works, I saw that rural Tibet is still reeling under high poverty like in areas like Dingri and Shigatse. The so-called development is confined only to the metropolitan cities. I have found that even the roads in the rural areas are rugged compared to the cities. I felt sad to notice such poverty in Tibet. There were many Tibetan beggars as well."

"Once I arrived in Nepal, I feigned madness and the border police let me proceed to Kathmandu. I arrived at the Tibetan Reception Centre in Kathmandu on 23 November 2002." ♦

Escapee's experiences across the border

Twenty-two-year old Lobsang Sherab reported to TCHRD, "I was a herder before becoming a monk at 15 years in Sogtsang

Monastery. I am originally from Dzoge County, Ngaba "TAP", Sichuan Province."

"In April 2000, two monks from my monastery, Phegyal and Palden, wrote 'Free Tibet' on the windscreen of a private vehicle parked on the roadside. On that day itself, local police arrested both the monks. Later, Dzoge County Court sentenced the two monks to two years' prison term. Palden was released before the completion of his term but Phegyal passed away at the end of February 2002 after release. It is said that he suffered immense torture in the prison. I don't know the name of the prison. Both the monks are originally from my native place."

"In May 2001, I tried to escape Tibet with a group of five including a road guide. Before we managed to cross Solukhumbu, Chinese patrolling policemen arrested us. It was around midnight. After tying our shoelaces together, the police kicked us around. They hit shoes on our head and said it was symbolic of HH the Dalai Lama giving us blessings. They did all these in an apparent attempt to make a mockery out of our deep faith in HH the Dalai Lama. Our religious sentiments were deeply hurt by their callous behaviours."

"The following day, we were detained for a night in Tingri Detention Centre in Shigatse 'TAP'. We were later transferred to Nyari Prison (or Shigatse PSB Detention Centre) where we were detained for four months. There were five blocks in the prison and my group was put in block four. There were about 170 people in the block, most of whom were Tibetans returning from India. I saw Tenpa Dhargyal and Thinlay from Amdo Golog. They were detained because they had brought eight Tibetan national flags and other political documents from India. The two were interrogated for 15 days and they suffered tremendous beatings."

"In September 2001, 69 of us from Dzoge County were sent back to our place in a truck. There, we were detained for ten more days. After paying a fine of yuan 3,500 to the county police, I was released."

"Soon after we were in Dzoge County,

three Sogtsang Monastery monks pasted posters in Thango Township area. The posters called for 'unity amongst the Tibetans, and that the Tibetans should use Tibetan language and preserve Tibetan culture.' The three involved in the poster-pasting incident are Choephel, Wangden and Yibning. Dzoge police officers immediately arrested the three monks. Choephel, believed to be the instigator of the incident, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment while the other two were fined 4000 yuan each."

"I went with my group of five to Lhasa again in February 2002. We stayed in a hotel nearby Lhasa called Mentzekham. The Chinese police arrested us for no reason. They said we looked like murderers, and that we appeared to have plans to escape to exile. After being detained for five days, we were released. The rest of my companions were returned to Dzoge and I remained in Drepung Monastery in Lhasa. In September 2002, I escaped again with 28 others and reached Tibetan Reception Centre in Kathmandu on 30 September 2002." ♦

A prisoner flees from Drapchi Prison hospital

Karma Dawa alias Kadar fled from a hospital located near Drapchi Prison where he was recuperating after undergoing a major operation. He was serving a total sentence of 21 years.

Formerly booked under criminal offences of alleged robbery and gun pilfering from a police officer, Lhasa Intermediate Court sentenced Kadar to 13 years' term in Drapchi Prison. Kadar along with other co-prisoner Karma Sonam initiated the May 1998 Drapchi Prison protests during which they raised pro-independence slogans and threw leaflets into the air. This daring act within the prison compound earned them

sentence extension of eight and nine years respectively.

TCHRD held four interview sessions with Kadar. TCHRD produced below the translated version of his personal testimony written in Tibetan language:

"I am originally from Sershul County (Ch: shiqu xian). In 1994, I came to Lhasa with my companion Tsering Norbu for pilgrimage and business. Within four days, seven policemen arrested us near Ramochi Monastery and detained us in a police headquarter. We were accused of robbing people and stealing gun from a police officer. Both of us were beaten very badly."

"After one week, we were transferred to Gutsa Detention Centre where I was detained for a year and eight months. During interrogations, I was shocked with electric cattle prod and threatened with further assault to extort confession. The whole time I was detained, I did not confess to the charges."

"Finally, I was sentenced to 13 years' prison term after three court trials. I repeatedly stated my innocence and demanded the court to produce either evidence or witness of my alleged crimes. Upon being sentenced, I requested an appeal against the sentence. The court officials told me that I would have to complete my sentence before I was allowed to appeal."

"In 1996, I was shifted to Unit 6 of Drapchi Prison. I recounted my story to a Tibetan official in the prison who encouraged me to appeal. Therefore, I sent two appeals to Lhasa Intermediate People's Court. In the appeal letter, I wrote my experiences of being falsely charged, of my trial and innocence."

"Three months later, two Lhasa Intermediate Court officials arrived at Drapchi to meet me. Dekyi, a Tibetan woman official asked me why I wrote the appeal letter and said it was a useless exercise. She advised me against pursuing an appeal as that might possibly lead to sentence extension. I restated to the officials about my innocence and demanded that they provide proof of my crimes. The officials noted down all my comments but nothing happened thereafter."

"For three years, I worked in the sewing room of Drapchi. I used to secretly listen to (Tibetan broadcast of) Voice of America and Radio Free Asia. I became aware of the conditions of Tibetan political prisoners. During visits of the foreign delegations, the food in Drapchi would improve; otherwise the food was generally inadequate to meet the health needs of the prison inmates. During such visits, most of the Tibetan political prisoners were shifted to their cells to show that there were not many political prisoners."

"In the quiet of the prison cell, I would reflect on the sad tragedy of the Tibetan situation. Hence, I felt increasingly obliged to protest the conditions under which the Tibetans suffer under Communist China in general and the horrific conditions of political prisoners in particular. I held discussion with Karma Sonam, another prisoner, and we decided to protest whenever an appropriate opportunity presented itself; either a visit from a foreign delegation or on an important anniversary or any large public meeting. So, Sonam and I wrote "Free Tibet" and "Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama" on small sheets and had 15 each."

"On 1 May 1998, the prison authorities planned to celebrate the International Labour Day which was to have a flag raising ceremony, and demonstration of military drills by the inmates. All the prisoners, both criminal and political, were lined up for the occasion. Just before the flag was raised, Sonam and I stepped forward and shouted 'Free Tibet' and distributed leaflets. Other prisoners promptly joined in and shouted 'Free Tibet'. This caused total chaos for about twenty minutes in the prison compound. The Chinese army and police immediately responded by converging on the prisoners. Many prisoners were beaten and suffered serious injuries. This protest resulted in the consequent death of eight political prisoners and sentence extension of 27 political prisoners."

"I was badly beaten and placed in solitary confinement for three months and 28 days with hands cuffed and feet manacled. I was interrogated on a monthly basis and two prisoners were assigned to

continued on page 7



TCHRD briefs EU First Secretary in India

Mr. Francois Massouli, EU's First Secretary (Pol) in India was in Dharamsala for a two-day visit from 29 November to 1 December 2002.

During his short visit to TCHRD, the Executive Director and staff members briefed him on the current human rights situation in Tibet.

The First Secretary was also acquainted with the plight of Tibetans languishing in the Nepali Prison. TCHRD raised the issue of right to self-determination to be included in the China-EU dialogue on human rights. u

Orientation to TCHRD staff on refugee law

Mr. Deepak Kumar Thakur, a prominent Delhi based lawyer and refugee law expert, gave orientation to TCHRD staff members on refugee law and refugee rights on 30 November 2002.

The staff members raised many pertinent questions concerning the Indian laws guaranteeing refugee rights and freedom of movement. ♦

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monitor and report on all my activities. After this period, I was again taken to court to be re-sentenced. I received sentence extension of eight years and Karma Sonam got nine years' sentence. I again used the opportunity to protest my innocence and to denounce the unjust court procedures."

"At this time, the court agreed to investigate my previous trial. However, nothing came of it and I did not hear of any results of the investigations. During both trials, I was denied access to legal representation and only Karma Sonam, myself and Chinese court officials were present. Both of us were placed in Unit One of Drapchi Prison."

"I began to experience serious health problems, however, prison officials refused to believe that I was unwell and my health began to deteriorate. After repeated pleas for medical check-up, I was finally taken to Lhasa Military Hospital sometime in July 1999. During all this time, both my feet and wrists were chained. A doctor recommended that I required operation."

"I was told to sign a document claiming responsibility for my death in the event of a failed operation. A prison official asked me if I had any wish to be fulfilled before the operation. I requested them to let my mother visit me in the hospital but this was denied. I then asked them to remove the chains from my body but this too was denied. I was chained even while the operation was being performed."

"After one month in the hospital, my condition began to improve. I once again

requested for the chains to be removed but to no avail. Two army guards guarded all the political prisoners from Drapchi in the hospital. One day they decided that all the prisoners should wash and hence we were taken to the courtyard. I declined to go as I found it difficult to walk. Out of sympathy, the guards removed my chains. Soon, new guards arrived who did not insist on the chains to be put on. So, I hid the chains under the bed and was free to move about. The guards did not seem to know that I should be chained. So, I escaped this painful experience."

"After three days on 6 August 1999, I saw an opportunity to escape. At about one o'clock in the afternoon, I told the guards that I wanted to go to the bathroom. I wore my plain clothes inside my prisoner's uniform. The guards were watching television and did not pay much attention to me. When I saw the guards completely engrossed with a TV programme, I quietly slipped out of the bathroom and ran away."

"I ran for three days before I began to slow down to walk. I went to my uncle's place and stayed there for a month. I managed to escape before the police could arrive to arrest me. My uncle and his daughter faced intimidation by the police for not reporting about me immediately. I was in hiding for many months."

"In 2002, I managed to escape all the way to Tibetan Reception Centre in Nepal. I escaped mainly to avoid re-arrest and to serve as a voice for other imprisoned Tibetan political prisoners still languishing in Chinese jails." ♦

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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.

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update

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China sentenced two Tibetans to death

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) has received additional information on the execution orders issued on 2 December 2002 by Karze Intermediate People's Court in Sichuan Province.

Two Tibetans, Trulku Tenzin Delek (a.k.a A ngag Tashi) and his follower and a distant relative, Lobsang Dhondup (28), were sentenced to death on alleged involvement in a series of bomb blast incidents in Chengdu. Other charges labelled against them are, "illegal possession of arms" and "engaging in splittist activities".

According to sources within Tibet corroborated by Sichuan People's Daily (3 December 2002), Lobsang Dhondup was sentenced to immediate death penalty with a life-long deprivation of political rights. Trulku Tenzin Delek was given death with two years' reprieve and life long deprivation of political rights. China's Criminal Law grants defendants with a right to appeal within ten days of sentence but success of such appeals are almost non-existent.

According to our source, the execution has not taken place to date. Local Tibetans made an appeal for annulment of the death sentences. It is reported that the case is now referred to Sichuan Higher People's Court.

Information filtering from Tibet indicates that during the court proceedings on 2 December 2002 in Karze Intermediate People's Court, Lobsang Dhondup shouted, "Neither Trulku nor I am involved in any way with the bomb explosions. The



trial was unfair."

Reports indicate that Trulku accused the court of false allegations and unfair trial proceedings and shouted, "Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama." Security officials immediately rushed into the courtroom and gagged Trulku's mouth with a piece of cloth. He was dragged away into an inner room within the court.

Since the sentencing, Chinese authorities have ransacked several homes of local inhabitants to search for "political" evidences, and Lithang County has come under strict scrutiny.

Trulku Tenzin Delek, a highly respected senior teacher from Lithang County in Karze "TAP" ("Tibet Autonomous Prefecture") was taken into custody on the night of 7 April 2002. Some reports suggest that Lobsang Dhondup was arrested earlier than Trulku. Trulku was held completely incommunicado for eight months until the day of his trial.

The four attendants viz Tamding Tsering, Tsultrim, Asher Dhargyal and Tashi

Phuntsok were arrested with Trulku. The whereabouts of the four remain uncertain.

It is widely believed that religious leaders due to their ability to influence local people have in recent times become prime target for oppression. This pattern of perceiving religious leaders as threat has resulted in a series of arrests of revered lamas including Geshe Sonam Phunstok and Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok (returned to Serthar Institute in mid 2002 after a year-long incommunicado detention in Chinese custody).

This tightening of repression comes at a time when the Chinese government is hell bent on branding political activities with acts of terrorism following the September 11 incident. Amendments to the China's Criminal Law adopted in December 2001 places severe punishments for those who "organise or lead a terrorist organisation" from three years to ten years' imprisonment to between ten years and life (article 120 of the Criminal Law). The term "terrorist organisation" is not defined thereby allowing a broad and ambiguous range of interpretation including non-violent political activities.

TCHRD is gravely concerned for the fate of Lobsang Dhondup and Trulku Tenzin Delek and would like to seek immediate intervention by Special Rapporteur on Extra Judicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions, governments and the international community.

For more information on Trulku Tenzin Delek, log onto www.tchrd.org

Row erupted over reconstruction at Serthar Institute

According to confirmed reports received by TCHRD, a scuffle erupted between nuns of Serthar Buddhist Institute and PSB officers (Public Security Bureau) from Karze "TAP", Sichuan Province, on 25 December 2002.

The PSB officers attempted to destroy ongoing reconstruction works at the demolished site of the institute. One police suffered head injury when a stone hit him.

Additional police force converged the next day to continue demolition task. Over 200 monks and nuns assembled to halt the work resulting in yet another affray between the two parties. In the midst of it all, the police reportedly shot gunfire. It is unclear as yet whether anyone was hurt in the incident.

Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, abbot of Serthar Buddhist Institute, is currently undergoing medical treatment in a hospital in Barkham County in Sichuan Province. Members of Serthar's Managing Committee are trying to resolve the issue by peaceful means.

Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok was returned to Serthar Buddhist Institute after being held incommunicado for a year in Chengdu. Upon Khenpo's return in November 2002, religious discourse resumed within the institute under heavy surveillance. Severe restrictions were imposed on religious teachings and practices.

The burgeoning strength of the institute has fallen drastically and fences were built around the dismantled huts in order to prevent further construction and renovation. After two years of escalating restrictions and propaganda campaigns, the Chinese authorities in 2001 evicted thousands of monks and nuns, and destroyed over 1,000 hut dwellings. Serthar Institute is located in Serthar Town, Karze "TAP", Sichuan Province.

Updates shall follow upon receiving further information. For background information on Serthar Institute, visit our website www.tchrd.org ◆

Three more Tibetan refugees arrested in Nepal

According to reliable information from Kathmandu, Nepali Border Police recently arrested three Tibetans, two juveniles and an adult. The three; Tashi (30), male, Samdup (15) male and Yanglha Tso (15) female are from Amdo Labrang in Gansu Province.

The three had left Tibet with tong xin zhang, a travel document that enables asylum seekers to reach till Dram, Tibet's southern border region. In the first week of December 2002, they hired a Nepali guide for 2000 yuan each and left Dram for Nepal. At the Nepal border, the guide abandoned them robbing off all their belongings.

On 13 December 2002, as the three continued their way, Nepali border police stopped them at Barabise check post. After approximately two hours' detention, they managed to run away and board a local bus that took them to Kathmandu City. They then hired a taxi to go to Boudhanath and as they were getting down, two ordinary looking people caught them. They said something, which the three did not understand. Since they could not communicate a word in Nepali, the two men immediately handed them over to the Boudhanath Police.

No sooner did the news reach Tibetan Reception Centre (TRC) then the staff members there sought immediate intervention of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). For three days the matter could not be resolved as it fell on the weekend. On 16 December, Boudhanath police handed the three to the Nepali Immigration Department.

The case was again reported to the UNHCR to secure their release before any charge sheets were laid. Under normal circumstances, newly arrived refugees under the custody of the Immigration Department are easily released following the UNHCR's intervention. However, this was not to be the case for the three

Tibetans this time.

On 17 December 2002, the Immigration Department issued court paper where it was stated that the three detainees would remain in jail until further investigations "pursuant to the Immigration Act 2049 Chapter 8 (2), [their] imprisonment has been extended on 2059/9/2 (17th Dec 2002) with a provision of ration as per the law, according to the Civil Code, Rule of Judicial Proceeding no. 121."

The same day, Tashi and Samdup were transferred to Dilli Bazaar Jail. Yanglha Tso was detained in Central Jail in Kathmandu.

Updated information on other Tibetan detainees in Nepali Jail

In August 2001, 12 Tibetans were arrested in Nepal for lack of possession of legal documents to enter or reside in the country. They can buy their freedom for a staggering fine of USD 1,600 and USD 2,700.

To date, three women who were seriously ill secured their release upon payment of fine by a western group, including the one released today.

The current list of detainees in Dilli Bazaar Jail, Kathmandu:

1 Sonam Lama, male, 26 years

2 Sechya Lama, male, 24 years

3 Choeney Dorjee, male, 34 years

4 Palden Gyatso, male, 32 years

continued on page 3

This is a regular section profiling political prisoners currently imprisoned in Tibet

Nine years' sentence for instigating prison protest

Karma Sonam was born in Lithang County, Karze "TAP", Sichuan Province. He was initially a non-political prisoner who later got sentence extension for "political" activities within the prison.

Arrested in 1993 on alleged charges of criminal activities, Sonam was given 14 years' sentence. Subsequently, he was incarcerated in rukhag (unit) four of Drapchi Prison, and was assigned to weave carpets.

According to Karma Dawa, a former inmate of Drapchi Prison, who had escaped to India in 2002, "Karma Sonam has great love for Tibet. Many political prisoners suffer a great deal at the hands of prison officials in Drapchi Prison. There are cases where prisoners have committed suicide out of desperation. We used to feel very sad and angry at the same time."

Karma Sonam along with his co-prisoner Karma Dawa made plans to initiate pro-independence activities at an opportune time and wrote independent slogans on approximately 30 papers. They vowed to carry on the task even at the risk of their lives.

The opportunity presented itself when prison authorities

planned a celebration for International Labour Day on 1 May 1998. The ceremony involved flag-hoisting ceremony and demonstration of military style drills by inmates. At 10 a.m., every non-political prisoners, and over 60 female political prisoners from new rukhag 3 and 60 male political prisoners from rukhag 5 were assembled in the main prison courtyard. Prisoners from old rukhag 3 and 5 were excluded from partaking due to their previously demonstrated aptitude for political disturbances within the prison. Armed guards surrounded the prisoners with an especially heavy detail of extra PSB personnel for the female inmates. Heads of Chinese Prison system and of Drapchi Prison were present on the occasion.

When the Chinese flag was being raised and unfurled, Karma Sonam and Karma Dawa stepped forward and started shouting pro-independence slogans and decried raising Chinese flag on the Tibetan soil. The other prisoners promptly joined in and the two initiators threw independent leaflets into the air. For a short time, the scene was uncontrollable but

People's Armed Police (PAP) quickly moved in and beat the protesting prisoners. Warning shots were fired into the air.

Karma Sonam and Karma Dawa were severely beaten and placed in solitary confinement cells along with many other prisoners. Rest of the inmates were dispersed to their respective cells.

Three days later, the prison authorities attempted to stage another almost identical ceremony for International Youth Day on 4 May 1998. Once again during the ceremony, the prisoners raised pro-independence slogans, led by Lobsang Gelek, a monk from Khangmar Monastery.

Many prisoners were beaten and confined in solitary cells for days together. All the prisoners underwent individual interrogation sessions. Eight prisoners died in the aftermath of the incident, and 27 prisoners received sentence extension for their participation.

Three months later, Lhasa Intermediate People's Court gave its verdict on Karma Sonam. He was given a sentence extension of nine years. Currently he is serving a total sentence of 23 years in Drapchi Prison. ♦

continued from page 2

Sonam and Seycha Lama were arrested on 20 August 2001 for lack of residential papers. Chooney Dorjee and Palden Gyatso were arrested few days later.

5 Sangye Dhondup, male, 19 years
6 Lobsang Dorjee, male, 19 years
7 Dorjee Tashi, male, 21 years
8 Drukar, male, 26 years
9 Tsephel, female, 25 years

All these five students were arrested on their way back to Tibet on 22 August 2001.

Sheri Tso, 23 year-old female was released today following the payment of 109,000 Nepali Rupees. She is now under observation at the TRC clinic. While still imprisoned, she had to undergo colostomy surgery on 30 November 2002. She was ordered to return to prison before she had fully recovered. A Tibet Support Group raised the funds and secured her release.

10 Gendun Samten, male, 31 years

Gendun Samten, alias Heruka, a monk, was arrested just south of the Tibet border while attempting to return to Tibet in June 1999. He is currently serving a 10-year sentence in Bhadra Central Jail, Kathmandu.

To date, two appeals for Royal Clemency to the King of Nepal have failed. Legal proceedings were applied. On 10 December 2002, the court rejected the appeal against the sentences due to "delayed submission of appeal." Since then, the Supreme Court was approached but this process is expected to take up another twelve months.

It is possible to directly submit an appeal to the Home Ministry although the chances of receiving a pardon is bleak. So far, the only response received has been the claims that there is not sufficient justification to consider this case. The Cabinet has within its power to withdraw the convictions if they choose, but they must be approached through the Home Ministry, and as yet there has been no response.

TCHRD would like to point out that while it understands the plight of the Tibetans incarcerated, it fears that the payment of fines to secure release might set a precarious trend and impede the fleeing refugees who transit through Nepal every year. ♦

Appeal letter from a detainee in Nepal Bhadra Jail

TCHRD produced below the translated version of an appeal letter sent by Gendun Samten alias Heruka, who is currently serving 10 years sentence in Bhadra Central Jail in Nepal. He has already served two and half years in the jail since his arrest in 1999. The letter written on 5 December 2002 was addressed to "all the human rights defenders of the world."

"I am Gendun Samten alias Heruka from Rebkong County in Amdo. I am 31 years old. I came into exile in November 1993 and joined Drepung Monastery in South India. I undertook Buddhist studies for four years until my health failed. I then came to Nepal and joined Khunpo Monastery where I taught Tibetan language on a voluntary basis."

"On 19 June 1999, while attempting to return to Tibet I was arrested at Jiri [northwest of Kathmandu], and held in Dilli Bazaar Jail for one month. Later, I was detained for two and half years at Bhadra Jail where I am currently serving a lengthy term. Nepali authorities imposed a fine of 700,000 Nepali Currency for not possessing valid travel documents."

"Now, out of desperation, I am seeking assistance from all of you. At this point, I want to make two things clear. Does the Nepali Government recognize Tibetan people as a refugee? Nepal is the first transit place for fleeing refugees from Tibet. If we are recognized, then why are we arrested for lack of legal documents? Secondly, are we allowed to stay in Nepal if we possess Indian Registration Certificate (RC)? If so, then why is that even after

having RC, I am fined and given prison term? For the sake of truth and justice, it is paramount to bring the plight of Tibetans in Nepali jails to international media attention."

"We are making a sincere appeal for the intervention of sympathetic individuals, international organizations, and the United Nations to secure our release. Life is hard spending several years in jail. So, I would express my appreciation for all those who have assisted us in improving our food situation, and further appeal for that assistance to continue. Also, if I can get books and study materials to learn English, that will be of such great help - as I do not plan to waste my time in jail for nothing."

"I am totally against payment of hefty fines to the Nepali Government. Rather I would prefer your direct assistance in making our stay in prison much easier. If you pay the fines to get our release then it is an admission of guilt, and that we are not. More importantly, I have a feeling that such arrests and imprisonment of many innocent Tibetans will be repeated. So my suggestion for you is to continue the court case and to win justice"

"We place high hopes on the rights groups and the United Nations bodies to act on our behalf, and to get justice done for us - as our only fault was not possessing a valid travel document"

TCHRD has received a copy of Heruka's chargesheet for imprisonment signed on 11 June 2001 by a Nepali Immigration Officer. The letter stated "Regarding your illegal stay in Nepal without visa or passport from the date of your entry into Nepal on 22 June 1996 and taken into custody for investigation from 22 June 2000, you were demanded to submit the visa fee of USD94,000/- (NRs. 699,360) and a fine of NRs30,000/-, a sum of NRs 729,360/- as per the decision of this department made on 25 May 2001 (2058/2/12) and on your written refusal to submit the amount stating your inability, you are given this chargesheet as per the Rule of Judicial Proceeding No. 121 for imprisonment of 10 years from 22 June 2000 (2057/3/9) till 21 June 2010 (2067/3/8) pursuant to the Civil Code, Fine and Punishment No.38 (4)." ♦

A torture victim escapes after serving five years prison term

Dhak Lobsang was born in 1960 in Jheney Village, Jompa Township, Lithang County, Karze Prefecture. His parents, Wangdu and Kelsang Lhamo had six sons and two daughters including Lobsang. The family relied on farming for their livelihood.

Lobsang reported to TCHRD, "I have a maternal uncle named Tashi Phuntsok. He worked as an administrator in Lithang Monastery. He was very popular in the area because he was among the resistance group from Lithang who fought against the invading Chinese troops. In 1962, my uncle was arrested and subsequently executed in prison. Owing to his participation in the resistance movement, my family was labelled as 'oppressive' feudal lords. Chinese authorities confiscated all our belongings and properties, and we were denied schooling opportunities."

"At 23, I became a monk of Lithang Monastery, and successfully managed to complete study on dialectic course which took eight years. I also learnt lessons on Tantric study - one of the two fields of Buddhism, the first being Sutra - in the monastery. I also carried out important responsibilities within the monastery."

"In 1992, I was involved in pro-independence activities. I wrote independence slogans, distributed and pasted the leaflets in Lithang County."

"In the midnight of 19 August 1993, six PSB officers came to my residence to arrest me. One of the officers pointed a gun on my forehead, and warned me against making any move while others ransacked my room to search for political materials. I was then handcuffed and asked to follow them at gunpoint."

"After nearly half a kilometre's walk, a PSB jeep came to pick us up and took us to Lithang PSB Detention Centre, located only a kilometre away from Lithang Monastery. Upon reaching PSB

station, they put me in a dark room, which I later learnt was an interrogation room. Within few minutes, about seven PSB officers interrogated me. Initially, one officer questioned if I knew the reason why I was there at the police station. I replied I didn't know. They warned me not to be smart and said I clearly knew the reason. They ordered me to tell the truth so that they can reduce my punishment. I didn't say anything. After warning me for the third time, I was told that there were two paths ahead of me - one white, one black - and it was entirely up to me to choose. The officers told, 'It is in your hands'. When I refused to say anything, the officers said 'you are lying'. I was beaten and kicked. I was hit with stick, cattle prod, and other torture equipments. No part of my body was left without being hit or kicked. As a result of kicks and blows, I lost my two front teeth. I thought I would die. After nearly an hour of beating, I fell unconscious. When I regained my consciousness I realised that they had poured cold water to wake me up and the beating resumed. I lost my consciousness several times and the officers each time cold water was poured to wake me up. I was in no position to talk, stand or move. I could hardly open my eyes."

"Around 5 a.m in the morning, two officers held me from my arms and dragged me to a room where Mr. Passang, Head of the Lithang County, and Chakdrup, Head of Lithang PSB, were waiting for me. The moment I was placed in the room, Chakdrup slapped me hard on my cheek and said 'this guy is the troublemaker'. Then Passang told me 'not to invite death for myself' and said I still had the opportunity to choose the white path i.e. confession. When I did not respond, the officers flung me into the custody room. After two days, they took me to the torture room and started interrogation accompanied with beatings. They frequently asked questions like 'Who are your other friends?' 'What links do you have with those outside Tibet?' and, 'Who told you to write the slogans?'

They interrogated me more than 13 times within a period of three months.

"I was detained for three whole months at Lithang PSB Detention Centre. My handcuffs were unchained only for just five minutes during the two times my clothes were changed. I met my friends; Jamyang Dhondup, Choephel and Lhadar, who were all arrested before. I came to know that they were equally tortured."

"During one interrogation session, I was shown the pro-independence leaflets with my handwriting, which they probably found from my room. I finally confessed."

"One day, I heard Lhadar, one of our associates, suddenly died in the prison reportedly of ill-health. It came as a great shock to me. However, all of us, in the prison, know that he succumbed to excessive torture and beating by the authorities."

"On 16 November 1993, my case was taken over by Karze Prefecture PSB officers from Lithang PSB officers and I was re-interrogated. On 18 April 1994, I was transferred to Karze PSB Detention Centre along with my fellow accomplices from Lithang; Jamyang Dhondup, and Choephel. My handcuff was removed during the time. I was detained for more than four months."

"I was kept along with more than eleven people inside a small room. The place was so congested that there was hardly any place to move. Each of us had less than one-foot breadth of space to sleep. We could only sleep sideways. There were two open-ended buckets meant for toilet in that room. The foul smell of the toilet along with the congestion was unbearable and suffocating. But we had no other option. The food provided was not fit enough to eat. It was so bad and meagre that many of my fellow prisoners fell sick. Only pigs would be given such food."

"On 17 July 1994 I was taken along with Jamyang Dhondup and Choephel, for a closed trial at Karze Intermediate Peoples Court. On 17 August 1994, we were given sentences

on charges of involvement in 'counter revolutionary activities, incitement and propaganda', which were all evident in our sentence paper.

Chophel was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment with five years' deprivation of political rights; Jamyang Dhondup was sentenced to five years' imprisonment with three years' deprivation of political rights. I was given five years' prison term with subsequent three years' deprivation of political rights."

"In the first week of September 1994, I was taken to Ngaba Prison, located in Maowen County, Sichuan Province. During my imprisonment, I was beaten three times, though not so severe as before. I was assigned to work in an electric wire factory where I had to sort out zinc and aluminium out of old electric wires. I got my hands maimed several times."

"On 18 August 1998, I was released. I stayed in Tibet for nearly two years before escaping into exile in July 2002. ♦

Monk evades arrest for Dalai Lama's video screening

Tashi Delek, 24, is originally from Dartsedo County (Ch: kangding xian), Karze 'TAP', Sichuan Province. His personal testimony to TCHRD is as follows:

"I have six family members. My family survives on nomadic occupation. At 10, I became monk of Gyephak Monastery. Around 1997-1998, I got admission into Serthar Buddhist Institute founded by Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok."

"By the end of year 2000, a new video hall was set up in Tawu County (Ch: Daofu xian) in Karze 'TAP' where lots of action movies were screened.

Sometimes, movies depicting life history, public teachings and religious discourse of His Holiness the Dalai Lama were shown clandestinely to an audience that consisted mostly of the elderly lot."

"In the beginning of May 2002, inaugural function for a horse-racing event was organised at a place called Nyaktren in Menyak, Dartsedo County. As many as 500-600 people from nearby places congregated to participate, celebrate and watch the occasion. I made plans with my friend Tenzin to screen videos. On the first and second day of the event, we screened foreign movies. On the third day, we went to seek permission from a village head. He categorically stated that he was not saying yes or no to the permission sought and left the decision entirely at our discretion. Around 10 p.m. in the night, we screened His Holiness' video twice to an estimated 250 people."

"I know a policeman named Tsering (name changed to protect identity) who works in 110 section of the county police station. A month later in June 2002, Tsering told me that his office was informed about my video screening activities and advised me to escape to evade arrest. However, we did not heed to his advice."

"Around mid June of the same year, county police summoned me and my friend to the county police station. We both were questioned about which videos we had screened and what others we planned to screen in the future. I answered that our main motive was to make a living out of video screening. Every details of the question-answer were recorded. They let me out after confiscating my citizen permit."

"That night, my grandpa expressed grave concern about my safety since he had no information about the whereabouts of my other friend. He told me to run away. I borrowed 2,000 yuan and left for Lhasa. I stayed at my cousin's place in Lhasa for sometime. My cousin gave me money and I made good my escape from Lhasa. I reached TRC in Kathmandu in September 2002."

Delek also provided information on

another incident in his area. He said, "In Menyak, there is a monastery called Rabgang. Around 1999, Gyutul Stupa was constructed nearby the monastery. A huge religious gathering was organised to mark the occasion. Prior to that, the monastic authorities have already got permission from the county level authorities to allow the event to take place."

"On the D-Day, Chinese police ordered against people gathering in large numbers for religious discourse offered by several lamas. The disciplinarian-in-charge of Rabgang Monastery and few other monks demanded to know the reasons for restrictions as they already had permission for the event. Two people got slightly injured in a minor fight and religious teachings couldn't happen."

"The same evening, approximately 300 Chinese police surrounded Rabgang Monastery and threatened to destroy the monastery. They had brought tools with them. The police scoured every monks' quarter saying that the monastic complex was a robbers' den.

"In the course of time, 12 lay people were detained including two young girls aged 19 and 20 respectively. One year after their detention, the family members bailed the detainees on payment of 3,500 yuan each. No monks were arrested that time." ♦

TCHRD wishes all our Tibetan brethren in Tibet as well as in exile, our members and supporters, a very happy, successful and meaningful new year ahead. HAPPY NEW YEAR 2003!



TCHRD Executive Director attends ACSF in Bangkok

Mrs. Tsewang Lhadon, the Executive Director of TCHRD, attended the Asian Civil Society Forum (ACSF), a Conference of NGOs (CONGO), in Bangkok, Thailand from 9 to 13 December 2002.

ACSF was represented by over 200 local, national, regional and international NGOs from more than 33 countries on the theme "UN/NGO Partnerships for Democratic Governance: Building Capacities and Networks for Human Rights and Sustainable Development."

Mrs. Lhadon was invited to make a presentation on the Thematic Workshop on "Right to Self-Determination". In her presentation, she strongly emphasized the right of the Tibetan people to self-determination and called on the NGO community to support the Tibetan people's non-violent struggle to achieve this right.

Many agitated Chinese delegates threw questions at Mrs. Lhadon after the presentation. She was asked if she had ever visited Tibet to speak so much on Tibet at which she replied "I would be most happy to visit Tibet if you can guarantee my safety".

Mrs. Lhadon also made interventions at the plenary on the Human Rights Day on 10 December 2002, and raised the urgent issue of the death sentences on Trulku Tenzin Delek and Lobsang Dhondup as well as the general human rights situation inside Tibet.

Besides these, Mrs. Lhadon attended the thematic workshop on 'Human Rights Defenders' and intervened to speak of 'virtually non-existent human rights organizations in China'. She supported

the presenter, Nicholas Becquelin from Human Rights in China on the subject.

Outside the sessions, the Chinese delegates met Mrs. Lhadon and asked her not to make such interventions. She was told that she was their countryman and therefore, she must not embarrass China outside.

For further details or inquiries, contact tsewangl@tchrd.org ♦

Tibetans and foreign nationals willingly signed the petition.

TCHRD held a press conference in New Delhi on the same day. Jamyang Tenzin, Trulku Tenzin Delek's nephew based in Dharamsala, spoke to the media person while TCHRD staff Ms. Youdon Aukatsang and Ms. Tenzin Chokey acted as interpreters.

A simultaneous press conference was held by Mr. Jampa Monlam, Mr. Tenzin Norgay and Ms. Norzin Dolma for the local media in Dharamsala. Both the events received wide media coverages. ♦

TCHRD commemorates Human Rights Day

In commemoration of Human Rights Day on 10 December 2002, TCHRD issued a public statement (in English and Tibetan), urged the international community to be aware of the actual human rights situation inside Tibet.

Taking advantage of the huge public gathering at Tsuglakhang, main temple of the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, TCHRD extensively distributed its publications free of cost at a stall set up near the temple.

A massive signature campaign drive was also initiated for annulment of twin death sentences, and secondly to avail medical opportunity for released nun Ngawang Sandrol outside Tibet. Large number of

Welcome to new TCHRD staff



TCHRD staff members extend warm welcome to our new driver, Mr. Palden Tsering, who joined office on 1 December 2002. Mr. Tsering had completed 13 years' service of driving at Special Frontier Force (SFF) in Chakrata and Sikkim. ♦

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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.

TCHRD's publications:

1996 Annual Report: *Tibet: One More Year of Political Repression* (English and Tibetan editions) • 1997 Annual Report: *China in Tibet: Striking Hard Against Human Rights* (English and Tibetan editions) • The Next Generation: *The State of Education in Tibet Today* (1997) • *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • 1998 Annual Report: *Tibet: Crackdown on Humanity* • 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) • *South East Asia: Human Rights NGO Seminar on Tibet* (Proceedings) (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) • 1999 Annual Report: *Tibet: Tightening of Control* (2000) • *TCHRD Review* (2000) • *Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet* (2000) • *Racial Discrimination in Tibet* (2000) • *Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy* (2000) • *Prisoners of Tibet: Profiles of current political prisoners* (2000) • 2000 Annual Report: *Enforcing Loyalty* (2001) • *Annual Report 2001: Human Rights Situation inside Tibet* (2002) • *Destruction of Serthar Institute: A Special Report* (2002) • *Dispossessed: Land and Housing Rights in Tibet* (2002)

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