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Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy is a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in January 1996 with the mission to protect the human rights of Tibetans in Tibet and promote the principles of democracy in the exile community.

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Buddhist scholar serving 20-yr sentence remain 'missing' for four years

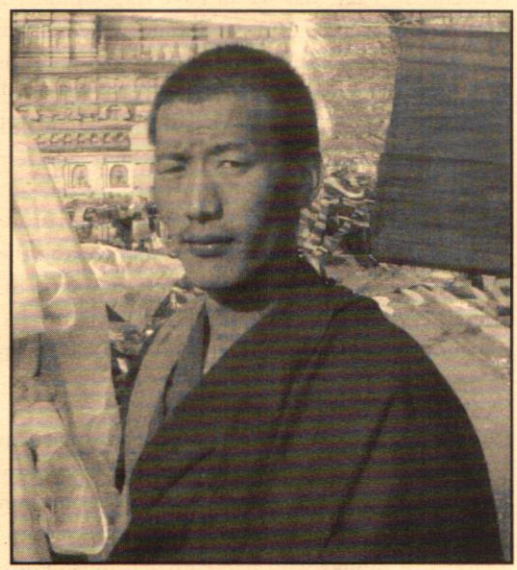


Venerable Kunchok Nyima is a well-respected Buddhist scholar at Drepung Monastic University. In April 2008, he was detained on charges of being the 'ring leader' and the main instigator of protests that rocked Lhasa in March of that year. For the next two years, he remained 'disappeared' and no one knew where he was detained. *(contd. on Pg 2)*

Monk escapes Tibet after friend dies of self-immolation protest

Jigme Gyaltsen, 21, was a monk at Rongwo Monastery in Rebkong (Ch: Tongren) County in Malho (Ch: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. He joined Rebkong Monastery at 14. He was born in Kangtsa Village in Yazi (Ch: Xunhua) County in Haidong Prefecture, Qinghai Province. Jigme Gyaltsen says he fled Tibet so that he could continue his religious studies in India, and to share the story of his friend and roommate Jamyang Palden, who passed away on 16 September 2012, six months after his self-immolation protest. Jigme Gyaltsen escaped Tibet in September 2012, travelling for one month and 22 days to reach India on 26 December 2012. He speaks to TCHRD. *(contd. on Pg 3)*

Labrang monk Jayang Jinpa reflects on his daring 2008 protest



Jayang Jinpa, 26, was among the 15 Tibetan monks who staged a daring protest in front of a group of international and Chinese journalists at Labrang Tashikyil Monastery in Sangchu County. On 9 April 2008, monks of Labrang Monastery interrupted the Chinese government-organized media visit that was carefully planned to show that Tibet was stable and that monks enjoyed freedom of religion and other human rights. The protest lasted for about 10 minutes but was quickly suppressed. And over a year, he spent time in the mountains trying to escape arrest. Jayang Jinpa who now lives in India tells his story. *(contd. on Pg 3)*

Buddhist scholar serving 20-yr sentence remain 'missing' for four years

(contd from Pg 1)

In April 2010, in a sudden turn of events, some Chinese government officials made an announcement at Drepung Monastery, admitting for the first time that they were holding Ven Nyima who the officials said was sentenced for 20 years in prison on charges of 'inciting' and 'abetting' protests among Drepung monks.

Around 2009, a group of officials visited Ven. Nyima's family in Thewo and showed them a CD recording that purportedly contained a message from Ven Nyima. In the film, Ven. Nyima told his family that he was well and friendly with his prison guards and soldiers. He also told his family not to worry about him and asked his brother and sister to take care of his parents. But the authenticity of the audio CD cannot be established so far.

Some time later, Chinese authorities called Ven Nyima's parents to Lhasa, asking them to visit their son in prison as well as to provide him "proper guidance and advice" on the merits of confessing his crimes. However, Ven. Nyima refused to meet his parents sending them a message instead that he was happy they had come but that he had nothing special to say. Tenpa Dhargye (name changed), a disciple of Ven. Nyima who now lives in exile in India says Ven. Nyima probably knew why his parents were allowed to visit him by the authorities. "So, rather than disappoint them by refusing their advice, he altogether refused to meet his parents."

To date, there has been no reliable information on the whereabouts and condition of Ven Kunchok Nyima.

On 10 March 2008, some Drepung monks participated in a protest march against Chinese government. The next day, Ven Nyima convened a meeting of resident monks where he said, "It is needless to say that we all have responsibility as Tibetans to preserve our identity, but one should avoid reacting out of anger as it would cause lives of the monks, and might lead to the destruction of the monastery risking more lives of the monks and irreparable loss of the ancient Tibetan religion and culture." His advices and suggestions were well received and respected. On 12 March, Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers and government officials called a meeting at Drepung and issued an order to Ven Nyima and other monastery staff to stop the monks from protesting. But monks at Drepung, outraged by the previous violent crackdown on peaceful Tibetan protesters, carried out a demonstration, which later ignited waves of protests all over Tibet.

On the morning of 11 April 2008, a group of armed police and some government officials entered the private quarter of Ven. Kunchok Nyima and conducted a two-hour search among his personal possessions. As the policemen took him away, he told a crowd of monks who had gathered outside his door, "Study well. Nothing will happen to me."

For the next two years, parents, relatives, and former friends and disciples have looked everywhere for Ven Nyima, approaching relevant government officials for information about his whereabouts and condition. But nothing has come of it.

Ven. Kunchok Nyima was born in 1969 in Bhochewa nomadic village in Thewo Saru Township, Zoege (Ch: Ru'ergai) County, Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in the Tibetan province of Amdo. As a child, he studied at local primary and middle school learning Tibetan and Chinese, both of which he mastered well. Later, in his early teens, he joined Shedrup Dhargyeling Monastery in Thewo. He received his ordination vows from the great master Kunchok Pelden Tsang of Taktsang Lhamo Monastery in Ngaba and was named Kunchok Nyima. After finishing his studies at Shedrup Dhargyeling, he moved to Taktsang Lhamo for further studies.

In 1989, Ven Nyima, along with some likeminded monks, went to Lhasa on foot for pilgrimage. When the tour ended, he decided to stay back and began attending classes at Drepung Monastery. He received teachings from great Buddhist scholars such as Gyen Lamrimpa Ngawang Phuntsok, Sokpo Gyen Tenzin, Tsoka Choephel Namgyal, Ngagchang Rinpoche, etc. Many Buddhist masters and scholars saw him as an able and accomplished future head of the great Drepung Monastery. In 2001, along with his studies, he began to teach scriptures to many junior monks at Drepung Gomang college. Within a short span of time, he had over 400 permanent students and began teaching monks from other colleges in Drepung. At the time of his arrest, he had over 600 to 700 disciples spanning all three provinces of Tibet. It was not an ordinary accomplishment for an ordinary, nomad boy from faraway Thewo in the Amdo, to be feared by the Chinese government who considered him an influential person with an abundance of moral authority not only among the three great monastic universities of Lhasa – Sera, Drepung and Ganden – but also among the general public in Lhasa.

In 2003, he was formally inducted into the Gomang college at Drepung Monastery. He was known for his warmth and hospitality for outside visitors at the monastery, offering them support and shelter. He was known for his skilled and peaceful ways of mediating disputes between the Tibetans and the law enforcement agencies of the Chinese government. In 2005, five of the best students of Drepung were expelled following an emergency 'patriotic education' campaign at the monastery. An open confrontation had broken out between the Tibetans and the Chinese officers. It was then that Ven Nyima intervened telling the Tibetans that the confrontation with Chinese officers and armed police would cause innumerable losses and damages to the monastery urging them to agree for a truce. The matter was settled peacefully. Later, he began to be viewed not only for his spiritual activities, but perceived political activities by the Chinese government.

In 2006, Ven. Nyima was selected among a group of monastic and lay Tibetans by the Chinese government to go on a tour of

Chinese and Tibetan cities. At the end of the tour, in response to a question from his Chinese guide about his thoughts on the tour, Ven Nyima said, "The opinions of individual Tibetans like some of us is not important. In my opinion, it is important to improve the condition of Tibetans in rural areas such as education, health and economic conditions." He also called on the Chinese government to protect and value Tibetan language, religious knowledge, freedom of mind and conscience. "It is equally important to ensure freedom of thought and environment in religious institutions, for they are the centres of living Tibetan culture," he added.

In 2007, on a brief visit to his native Thewo, Ven Nyima helped introduce new courses in his alma mater Shedrup Dhargyeling. Before returning to Lhasa, he gave teachings to monks and local residents on Tibetan Buddhism.

In exile, a former student of Ven. Nyima appeals for international action on his teacher's whereabouts and early release. Tenpa Dhargye (name changed) who studies Buddhism at a Tibetan monastery in India says, "The baseless allegations against our teacher and his unjust sentencing have caused severe mental pain and suffering on Ven Nyima's family members, friends, relatives and all those who believe in principles of justice, freedom and peace. More importantly, sentencing and disappearing Ven Nyima who was a highly accomplished Buddhist master with thousands of disciples, is an attack on the core of living Tibetan culture, religion, language and identity."

Monk escapes Tibet after friend dies of self-immolation protest

(contd. from Pg 1)

On 9 March 2012, Jamyang Palden, my roommate at Rongwo Monastery, set himself ablaze at Dolma Square near our monastery. Minutes after the self-immolation, monks took Jamyang Palden to a secure place in the monastery so that he would not get into the hands of the Chinese police. He was treated at the monastery for some months getting injections on his foot every month. There was not much hope for his survival as most of his body had burnt beyond treatment. Monks took turns to take care of him. He could not talk much and his voice was low. He could not eat much, just some diluted Tsampa porridge and kept saying, "My wishes are not fulfilled." Six months later, on 16 September 2012, he passed away. He was 31 years old at the time. He was a good student and kept himself informed about events outside his monastery. He took great interest and responsibility for the Tibetan cause.

I was also deeply saddened and heartbroken by the demise of Jinpa, 17, another monk from our monastery, who set himself on fire.

On 15 March 2008, I joined fellow monks from Rebkong Monastery to stage a protest march calling for the "return of the Dalai Lama" and "human rights in Tibet." But the Chinese sceurity forces suppressed the protest by detaining many monks. New of the monks' arrest angered local Tibetans who joined the protests with the monks calling for the release of the detained monks. Following sustained protest and appeals from the Tibetans, the monks were released. However, Rebkong Monastery came under heavy security scanner since then.

In March 2011, Tibetan school students in Rebkong rose up in protest against government attempts to marginalize Tibetan language and replace it with Chinese language in school curriculum. Hundreds of children from junior, middle and senior schools took to the street calling for "equal rights" and "language rights." Monks from Rebkong Monastery and lay Tibetans joined the student protest. After two days, the protest ended when the school officials and teachers requested the students to stop the protest and return to their classes. The school authorities then petitioned the concerned government officials that the new bilingual education system would provoke more protests among the students and appealed for the withdrawal of the new policy.

In 2011, the Chinese security forces increased its presence in Rebkong, building an army garrison near Rebkong Monastery. In 2012, the army garrison was completed and over 500 soldiers and security forces are stationed there.

Similarly, the situation inside Tibet is deteriorating with displacement of Tibetan nomads, mining, destruction of environment. There is no freedom of movement for the Tibetans inside Tibet.

Labrang monk Jayang Jinpa reflects on his daring 2008 protest

(contd. from Pg 1)

I was born in December 1986 in Sangkhog Village in Sangchu (Ch: Xiahe) County, located in Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province.

It is a nomadic village. My family is called Rilatsang. My father's name is Choepa and mother's name is Lhaye. I have four siblings - two older sisters and two younger ones. I will never forget the love and affection I have received in our family and the nomadic life that we lived.

When I was young, my grandmother and other elderly Tibetans often narrated me stories about the dark periods of the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution. [Listening to them] I came to know that China is totally different from Tibet and is someone who oppresses us.

At the age of eight, I began attending school. At twelve, after seeking permission from my parents, I joined on my own freewill the great Labrang Tashikyil Monastery in Sangchu.

However, unlike in the past, that is before the Chinese appeared [in Tibet], today one cannot attend studies immediately after becoming a monk. Therefore, I was able to attend studies only some years after joining the monastery.

What I recall vividly now is the fact that for almost ten days I could not go to my teachers' place to study; I was compelled to live in hiding in my own dwelling at the monastery.

At times when officials came to inspect [for unregistered monks], I hid myself in the basement of our monastery's kitchen, where I remained quietly taking deep breaths.

II On the day His Holiness was awarded the US Congressional Gold Medal

In our area, we generally celebrate the New Year according to Mongolian (Hor zla) calendar but since 2003, celebration of Tibetan New Year became very popular among young monks. To deal with such changes, the Chinese government had to organize a huge meeting in Kanlho area.

The first time I got involved seriously in the Tibetan movement was in 2007, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama was honored with the US Congressional Gold Medal award. Since the year was also celebrated as the soul-year of His Holiness, I gave up eating meat from Saga Dawa, the holy Buddhist month.

From a few days ahead, monks from our monastery made, on their own volition, preparations to celebrate the event. On the night of the Congressional Gold Medal Award ceremony, almost ten thousand Chinese yuan worth of firecrackers were burned.

[However this was not easy.] A day or two before, the Chinese government had ordered all the shops selling firecrackers in Sangchu County to close. Towns in Kanlho Prefecture were also ordered to close down their shops. We had to make a two-hour bus journey to Kachu, a [Hui] Muslim town, to buy the bulk of our firecrackers. Due to Chinese restrictions, however, the police seized two vehicles bearing our firecrackers.

On that day, on our initiatives, my friend and I [collected] one thousand Chinese yuan from ten monks. With help of that money, we bought firecrackers and prepared for the celebrations.

When darkness fell, we joined monks and lay people who were already celebrating the event with firecrackers, outside the monastery. Although there were many Chinese police nearby, they were not able to do anything because of the enormous crowd - around five hundred Tibetans had already gathered there.

Many activists shouted slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, an aspiration deeply repressed in their souls. During that night, severe military restrictions were placed everywhere. We heard about arrests of some Tibetans.

This great non-violent activism (celebrations of the Gold Medal with firecrackers) came to an end precisely when the Congressional Gold Medal award ceremony was being telecast live on Voice of America. We were all overjoyed to [watch it].

On that day, not just the monks of my monastery, but many Tibetans organized prayers for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

III When I first witnessed the demonstration in Labrang

The demonstrations in Labrang lasted for two days, from 14 to 15 March 2008. 14 March was the day when the Chinese started cracking down on Tibetan [protesters] in Lhasa. The events that occurred in our area appear vividly in my mind's eye.

On the afternoon of 14 March, at around 4.30 pm, I went into a two-storied restaurant. I heard many people shouting, so I walked through the door and went outside, where I saw around 20 monks; emotions running high, they were walking on the road, holding Tibetan flags in their hands. Raising their fists in the air, together with the flags, they were shouting all kinds of slogans.

I was totally taken aback, almost lost my breath, for having seen for the first time in my life such courage and willingness to sacrifice [lives]. Slowly, many people started joining the protest. Tibetan restaurants and shops on both sides of where I was standing started shutting down.

They started running towards where the cries of slogans were being raised. Stuffing my leftover food in my clothes, I joined this great demonstration.

At the time, the Chinese soldiers had already arrived [at the scene of the protest], but they were not able to launch a crackdown, because the crowd of protesters had gathered steam and become enormous.

On that day, around a few thousand Tibetans rose up in protest, and not a single glass was broken.

It was 7 February in accordance with the Tibetan calendar, the day when our monastery conducts the ritual to cast away glud or evil spirits. Thousands of Tibetans had gathered on that day.

At around 12 pm, the Chinese used force to confiscate all the materials for the glud ritual, put them in a few vehicles and threw them away into the river. For the Chinese, it was their most effective strategy to preempt any gathering or assembling of Tibetan people, so as to avoid any demonstration and ensure 'stability.' But it backfired, as the confiscation of the glud materials incensed the Tibetans, provoking them to join the protests.

On 15 March, around 12 pm, we again rose up and held a large protest. It was estimated that more than ten thousands Tibetans - comprising both clergy and lay people - joined the protest. Since the morning, nobody knew from where, a large number of gun-toting military soldiers had arrived. The fact that the Tibetans rose up in rebellion again on that day is something beyond logical comprehension. It was unbelievable.

Such depth of courage I witnessed among the Tibetans protesting

amidst the Chinese soldiers carrying guns with bayonets.

Around 12 noon, the demonstrations began. Like the one on 14 March, the protesters marched towards the gate of the government office shouting slogans. They threw stones on the window-panes of the office building, breaking a few glasses.

While returning from there, on the road between the monastery and the town, they burned lots of junipers (bsang bstang ba). Right then, I had my opportunity to participate in the demonstrations.

I told the demonstrators throwing stones not to do so.

Before I joined the protests, I saw a couple of demonstrators running towards the County Middle school, where they removed the Chinese flag and replaced it with the Tibetan flag. They also removed the portraits of Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders [from the walls] and burned them.

In the afternoon, when protesters gathered on the road where huge pile of junipers was being burned, suddenly people screamed 'Chinese soldiers, Chinese soldiers' and the crowd dispersed and ran away.

I saw a large contingent of soldiers, with armored vehicles amidst them, moving swiftly towards us from the main road.

The crowed of protesters stood still, helpless, for a while, but their courage rose once again, and they charged down towards the approaching contingent of armed Chinese security forces, shouting slogans.

A few people stood on our way, trying to prevent us from marching further. They said 'we should not do this, if we ran towards them, they would kill us.'

But they had no influence whatsoever.

As I ran towards the Chinese security forces, a young man grabbed me and said 'Akhu, don't do this, you should not charge towards them.'

Rather than listening to him, I snatched the stick from his hands, and yelled at him, 'folks like you can not do it, but you should not come in the way of those who are doing so.' Then I thought they were cowards, but when I now reflect on the incident, I feel embarrassment for what I said.

When the Tibetan protesters ran ahead, a few thoughtful people, fearing the monastery would be harmed, shouted 'don't run into the monastery, run into rgya bor (country side).

While we were at a distance of a hundred walking steps from the Chinese soldiers, a huge noise filled the sky. The crowd of protesters turned around and ran forward.

The Chinese soldiers threw tear gas [on the protesters]. [We heard] a huge noise, as if artillery shells were fired in the air, forcing the [crowd of] protesters to disperse.

We only came to know about these slowly and steadily, only later. [When we heard the noise], we thought the Chinese were firing live bullets and the fear was intense.

One of my friends later told me, 'I thought the artillery shells were being readied to fire, so I lied down on the ground, covered my ears with both my hands. I felt as if [we were in a war zone], it conjured up in my eyes images of war scenes that I watched in films.

As I was at the front of the group of people running towards the Chinese, when we turned around, I was struck powerfully by tear gas, which made me faint and nauseous. My eyes were hurting, and I was unable to run away, my lungs and throat started choking, so I started coughing. My eyes became wet, my mouth was filled with spit, and I had runny nose.

The poisonous gas entered into my throat. I had difficulties breathing then. I was gripped with intense fear, as if my lungs came into my mouth.

The protesters were still running around. I was unable to run, as I fell down from a motorbike. I heard shots of gunfire around me; I forced myself to raise my head up a little. Two men returned and dragged me into the crowd. The Chinese soldiers were closing in on us at the time. Those two men saved me. I feel immense gratitude to them. I was not able to make out who they were. Fortunately, the Chinese soldiers stopped chasing us, when we entered the monastery.

Many old aged people started sobbing. Tears flowing down their cheeks, they cried, 'the Cultural Revolution has returned from its tomb.'

A little later, the sky darkened and the earth was covered with dust. People were saying that more than sixty tear gas had been fired on that day. Many protesters suffered physical injuries due to the tear gas; they were unable to get medical treatment in hospitals.

The protesters who fell into the Chinese hands were arrested. Among them included one of the main leaders of the protest, Tenzin Lushod, who was eventually sentenced to jail for five years and one month.

Just before the darkness fell, the Chinese, with the help of a few logs, blocked the road between the monastery and the County town.

IV My initial motivation and decision for joining the protest

Gradually I began hearing news of Chinese security forces killing

protesters throughout the three provinces of Tibet. Every day, the official Chinese media revealed biased news about the protests, saying Tibetans were indulging in riots, in activities of "smashing, burning and looting."

The media also accused that the protests were instigated from outside and were denouncing and denigrating His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Under such circumstances, it was very difficult for me to concentrate on my [duties as a monk] to perform prayers and study the scriptures.

I thought about fully resisting the brutal Chinese repression and exploitation, always looking for a window of opportunity to do so. Because of the daily sad news that I heard and the fact that I was always thinking about activism, I had difficulties finding sleep.

Generally, the indomitable courage and heroism of martyrs such as Thupten Ngodup and others have inspired me not to give in to slavery and to fight for truth and justice. In the depth of my heart, I felt that Tibetan men and women had sacrificed their lives for their nation, religion and culture, and specifically to ensure the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

The responsibility for this cause lies on the shoulders of every Tibetan. So, I have had the desire to work for return of His Holiness to Tibet, Tibetan independence, release of all political prisoners, including the 11th Panchen Lama. Moreover, in the depth of my heart, I have the aspiration to propagate the sufferings of Tibetan people to the wider world and to continue resisting Chinese repression.

I therefore decided to at least protest once against the Chinese government's repressive policies. My friends also had the same wishes.

I also felt that the monk-students and the Geshes in our monastery are the hopes of the future [generation], so their lives and studies should not be exposed to risk.

No matter what political campaigns we pursue, the Tibetan National Flag, which represents the Tibetan identity, is very important. Therefore, we tried to make the Tibetan flag. To buy the materials we went to rgya srang (literally Chinese road/street), but not a single shop was open. A little later, the Chinese authorities forcibly ordered restaurants and shops to open.

But on both sides of the rgya srang, Chinese soldiers, carrying rifles and guns, were marching continuously, creating an atmosphere of intense fear. On the ground in front of a large restaurant owned by the monastery, everyday many gun-and-stick toting Chinese soldiers exercised in military drills, making loud and passionate cries.

Under such circumstances, preparing the Tibetan flag was not easy. This had to be kept secret even from fellow monks living in a same house. We could only make the flag late in the night.

It took more than two weeks' of labor before a magnificent Tibetan flag was prepared, which gave us lots of joy and pride.

During the night, we hung up the flag and enjoyed to its full magnificence and beauty. It was the only and greatest joy we experienced at a time when there was so much fear and danger.

The flag was enormous, weighing almost two kilos. As to the description of the flag, we referred to the text on political history of Tibet (bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs).

That historical text really moved me. Since the Chinese were barging in our rooms during the night, we had difficulties finding a secure place to hide the flag.

Amid chaos of rush and demonstration of military prowess, the Chinese had created an impression as if war was imminent. Needless to say that such demonstration left deep imprints on the psyche of the Tibetan people.

On the road between the monastery and the street, they laid barbed wires, thus not allowing a single Tibetan to move freely.

Whenever more than two Tibetans started walking on the street, the Chinese soldiers immediately stopped and interrogated them.

In the beginning, there were hardly any Tibetans walking on the street. The Chinese government pasted posters of around three hundred Tibetans on the walls, accusing them of participating in the protests and ordering for their arrest.

From the beginning of the first protests until we participated, that is for twenty four days, during the night, hundreds of gun-toting Chinese soldiers sneaked into the monastery, arresting and beating up monks.

Once a monk called Thupten was arrested, and according to his father, he died in prison.

Since I was in the monastery, I wrote everything [the incidents of Chinese arrests] in my diary.

There were also many monks and laypersons who were issued arrest warrants. For fear [of arrest], they fled everywhere.

Fortunately we heard a good news. In the afternoon of 8 April, my friend Kelsang Jinpa (who fled into exile with us) said that journalists would be visiting Labrang the next day.

He heard about this through a Radio Free Asia radio news broadcast. That night I deliberately listened to the radio broadcast (Amdo dialect) which said a group of foreign journalists were visiting Labrang Tashikyil Monastery.

The news made us overjoyed. We felt as if the day, which we

waited eagerly for many days and nights, had arrived finally. Even our thoughts and intellect became clearer.

Although no one could tell absolutely that the journalists would arrive the next day, we made every preparation to ensure that we were going to take the full opportunity presented to us.

V Leading the rebellion with friends willing to sacrifice

After we heard the news, two or three of [us] friends, who were willing to sacrifice, met voluntarily. During the meeting, we discussed and decided to stage a demonstration in front of the journalists.

Although we had the courage to rise up in front of the journalists, it was not easy to do so. Had we not succeeded, not only the outside world would be deprived of truth, but also we would be disappeared and more repression would result in our homeland.

On the other hand, if our campaign succeeded, we were hundred percent sure that it would render immense benefit to the cause.

We knew that, in Lhasa, in front of the journalists, monks in the past exposed the mask of the Chinese government and made it known to the world the truth of the issue.

The Chinese were also making attempts to wipe out the truth of sufferings [Tibetans were being subjected to] in many other areas, considering as if the problem is confined only to Lhasa or the areas in Tibet Autonomous Region.

Therefore, our protest was aimed to send out a message that the Tibetan cause concerns six million Tibetan people and that the protests beginning from March 2008 was held not just in Lhasa, but everywhere in Tibet.

We thought our rising up would bear a new witness to the merciless crackdown of the Chinese government. It was important to take this risk, because the press would relay our message to the wider world and, moreover, we felt, at a time when the Olympics was being held in China, it would help people of the world to know the reality inside Tibet.

The Chinese were interpreting the events in Tibet in full contradiction to the way His Holiness, the Central Tibetan Administration and Tibet support groups were describing the urgent situation inside Tibet. Under such circumstances, we realized that the need of the hour was to rise in rebellion in front of the journalists and sacrifice ourselves by making them understand the truth.

We were especially worried that we might not meet the journalists next day. It was an extra burden.

We never trusted the Chinese media. In the past, when the Chinese-approved Panchen Lama, Gyaltsen Norbu, visited Labrang, the whole monastery was surrounded with Chinese soldiers. As a result, monks faced difficulties in their studies. Learning lessons from such past experiences, we made our preparations.

What the Chinese government wanted was to create an impression that Tibet was stable. So, the government was not in a position to take the journalists everywhere. What the Chinese desperately needed then was to show an image, a facade, of monks holding their regular prayers. The reason is that at a time when people are clamoring outside that the Chinese are launching military crackdown [on the Tibetan people], an image or a facade of stability in Tibet would be a propaganda coup for the Chinese government.

Such machinations on the part of the Chinese explain why they brought the journalists to cover us when we were holding our regular afternoon prayers. That's how the Chinese try to blackmail us.

On our part, we thought if we did not attend the prayers, we would miss our interactions with the journalists. So, we decided to attend the prayers and made all the necessary preparations, including the pamphlets and a large banner which bore the following slogans:

Due to incessant Chinese oppression,
The Tibetan people have lost the capacity to endure the sufferings.

No matter how much [they] oppress
Our body,
[We] have conscience and memory
[Called] His Holiness the Dalai Lama!

For the sake of the Buddha Dharma
And the well being of all sentient beings
We, the people of Tibet,
Have risen up in peaceful protests!

Note: The latter part of Jayang Jinpa's testimony will be published in the next issue of this newsletter.

Amdo Ngaba monk sheds light on repression in Tibet

Lobsang Samphel, 25, was born in Tsoduk nomadic village in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) County in Ngaba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, in Amdo province. He became a monk at 13 and joined Gomang Monastery, which had over 900 monks prior to 2008. Lobsang Samphel saw first-hand the deaths of unarmed Tibetan protesters from police firing at a protest in Ngaba County town. He reached in exile in India in November 2012. He shares his story with TCHRD.

After the widespread protests in 2008 in Tibet, the Chinese authorities appointed 25 permanent staff at Gomang Monastery, to carry out 'patriotic education' and oversee the entire teachings and administration at the monastery. Restrictions on day-to-day affairs have since increased at the monastery, posing great obstacles to the monks.

Beginning 29 March 2008, the Chinese authorities launched an

intensified three-month 'patriotic education' campaign at Gomang Monastery. The objectives of the campaign were to oppose and condemn 'splittist cliques' and "Dalai clique." Monks undergoing political education classes had to sit for exams every ten days, finding the correct answer for sensitive political questions such as 'Is the Dalai clique responsible for 'splitting' the Chinese Motherland or not?' Such derogatory remarks and baseless allegations against our root spiritual teacher filled our hearts with anguish and we felt as if our hearts have been wounded.

Afterwards, the Chinese cadres felt that the political education campaign at Gomang was not achieving desired results. They summoned the head officials and chief instructors of the monastery for a meeting. Finally, the monastery heads were pressured into organizing another two-month intensive political education campaign. The frequency of 'patriotic education' campaigns depends on the events in the exile Tibetan community. For instance, whenever the exile Tibetans hold rallies or demonstrations, hold important meetings, or the exile Sikyong Lobsang Sangay attends public functions, the Chinese cadres and workers would hold political education sessions.

I have also heard about local Tibetans in Ngaba talking about Tapey, the 21-yr-old monk from Kirti Monastery, who self-immolated on 27 February 2009, that he was often tortured in Chinese custody. Whenever a self-immolation protest occurred, the police would pull Tapey's sore skin and blame him for being the first Tibetan to initiate such protests, which although the Chinese government would not admit publicly, was getting out of its control.

Two monks from Kirti Monastery who self-immolated on 26th September 2011, have not been heard or seen since they were taken to an undisclosed location by the Chinese security forces. The whereabouts of the monks' parents also remain unknown to this day. The parents were called by the Chinese authorities to look after their sons but they remain 'missing' since leaving for the undisclosed location.

On 16 June 2008, at around 12, about 20 police officers and government officials came to our monastery and attempted to mount a Chinese flag on the top of the monastery building. The monks rose in protest of the action, and broke the lock of the newly constructed police station in the monastery compound, and stopped the flag from being hoisted. By the time the flag was taken down, the police officers and government officials had left the monastery.

Soon, some monks received a call about a huge demonstration at the County town, which was led by about 800 County Middle School students, Kirti Monastery monks and lay Tibetans. Immediately, I joined over 500 Gomang monks and marched on foot to join the protest at County town which was about 13 kms away. When we reached there, the demonstration had already begun but shortly thereafter, Chinese security forces violently suppressed the protest provoking some protesters to set the County police station and the County court on fire.

I saw the Chinese security forces shooting dead a 21-yr-old Tibetan woman, Lhundup Tso, who at the time was hanging khataks on the entrance of Tibetan restaurants and shops so that these businesses would not be destroyed in the protest. Then I saw two Tibetan youths shot dead at the protest site.

In the evening, senior monks and elderly Tibetans from surrounding villages strongly appealed to stop the protest for fear of security crackdown and loss of lives. The protestors finally went back to their respective homes.

On 21 June 2008, a large number of security forces sent by provincial and prefectural authorities came and surrounded our monastery. They detained 18 monks who were taken to the County government office. The rest of the monks were put under house arrest at the monastery. To date, the whereabouts of these 18 monks remain unknown.

Furthermore, the County government office in a notice sent to the monastery, warned that the monastery would be destroyed and its classes cancelled if the monks who participated in the protest did not turn themselves in. Following the official intimidation and warning, monks from Gomang surrendered themselves merely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and assembly. Among them, two monks – Choekyong, 31, from Nashul Village (Ngaba County) and Dratse, 30, Adhue Village (Ngaba County) took the responsibility for dismounting and burning the Chinese flag, and breaking the lock of the police station in the monastery compound. Both monks were sentenced to three years in prison. They have been released after serving their sentence, however, the monks face immense hardship in leading a normal life. They have no freedom to leave their monastery without official permission. Gomang Monastery continues to retain a heavy security presence, with movements and activities of the monks systematically and intrusively controlled by the Chinese authorities.

Since July 2010, four officials from the State Security Bureau have been living permanently in Gomang Monastery. Since their arrival, monks who come under official suspicion are being detained for two to three months or for a few days of interrogation.

After the crackdown in 2008, the population of Gomang Monastery has been reduced to 370 from over 900. A new identity card has been introduced specially for monks. Without official registration and the new ID card, monks are not monks for the Chinese government. This would create many problems for the scores of unregistered monks in Tibet.

In September 2012, I was in Lhasa, on my way to India. The atmosphere was tense and heavily monitored. Life has become very difficult for local residents as well as those from the Tibetan provinces of Kham and Amdo, located outside the Tibet Autonomous Region. Kham and Amdo Tibetans need different documents issued by their respective Township and County PSB and government offices to travel to Lhasa. At the Lhasa railway sta-

tion, Tibetans without required official papers were arrested and detained at the PSB office in the railway station. I was detained for two days at the PSB office on my arrival at Lhasa railway station. Fortunately, I contacted my family and managed to secure a paper but I was ordered to leave for home within ten days. I did not go back, instead took the road through Shigatse and Dram reaching Indian through Nepal on 26 November 2012.

Tibetan farmer escapes imminent arrest for sharing religious texts

Ugyen Lhundup, 57, was a farmer at Thangka Township in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Township in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. In 1999, he came to India and lived for some time to study Buddhism. In 2001, after attending the Kalachakra teachings at Bodh Gaya in the north Indian state of Bihar, he returned to Tibet taking along some CDs and books containing religious teachings, which he shared with others on requests from friends and relatives. He also made free copies of the CDs and distributed them among his social circle. It was then that he became a prime target for supervision and surveillance. On 21 October 2012, to escape imminent arrest, he left his house and farm in the care of his neighbor, and secretly left Tibet and reached India on 15 December 2012. Ugyen Lhundup shares his ordeal.

In 2002, the head of County Public Security Bureau officer, Loga, summoned me at his office. At the PSB office, the officer confiscated my passport and threatened me with five to six months' detention, if I did not stop questioning the confiscation of my passport. I was let go but without my passport.

In 2004, I was again called at the County PSB office where I was told not to venture beyond Dzachuka in the north and Ngagri in the south. The officers told me that they were suspicious of me collecting outside information and my past India visit. Now I required official permission to leave my own hometown. Soon, I came under heavy surveillance. The authorities collected information from friends and neighbors about where I went, whom I met and what I did.

In 2008, a considerable number of Tibetans died during security crackdowns. Many were left scarred for life. For instance, nun Dhontse Wangmo was detained following her peaceful protest against the Chinese government. As a result of beatings and torture in detention, she has now lost her mental stability and needs constant care and attention. In 2010, two nuns, Namgyal Lhamo and Tashi Choedon, were detained after they staged a peaceful protest in Kardze County town. After five months in secret detention, both nuns were released when the prison officials noticed that the nuns had lost mental balance due to severe beatings and torture.

I remember a young woman in Kardze was imprisoned for two years after she copied a speech by exile Tibetan political leader, Sikyong Lobsang Sangay and shared it with others. After her release, she continued to face difficulties getting employment

In September 2011, many 'work teams' arrived in Kardze to spread socialism and Party propaganda among local Tibetans. Work team officials holding higher positions were sent to rich Tibetan families who were congratulated on their newfound wealth but at the same time to remember to be grateful to the Chinese government for the new prosperity. The lower-level 'work team' officials visited the poor Tibetan families burdening them with money and expensive gifts and telling them that Tibet and China are inseparable siblings. They also told the Tibetans to air their grievances but at the same time to listen and implement the orders of the Chinese government. Moreover, the 'work team' officials rigorously hold 'patriotic education' telling Tibetans not to follow the incitement of the 'Dalai clique'.

Furthermore, following the twin self-immolation protest in Lhasa, many Tibetans from Kham and Amdo provinces living in the city for many years were expelled and returned to their native villages. Tibetans living outside Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) have to seek permissions from different county authorities including County police station, County PSB office, to visit TAR. The process for procuring these permissions require a Tibetan to make a formal undertaking not to join any protest activities in Lhasa or elsewhere in TAR. Tibetans visiting Lhasa without government authoritisation are being detained, questioned and returned back to their home villages. Security presence has increased in and around Lhasa with countless cameras spying on the activities of local residents.

In areas where self-immolations and other protests have occurred, monks and nuns are not allowed to leave their monastic institutions without official permission. In case of emergencies, they are required not only to seek permission from local PSB office but also to leave someone as guarantee for their return.

Restriction on all communication channels such as the Internet and phone has increased in Kardze.

Tibetan woman detained on return to Tibet after Dalai Lama teachings

Khedup, 45, was among the first group of 80 Tibetans who were detained on their return to Tibet after attending the Kalachakra teachings given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama from December 2011 to January 2012 in Bihar state of northern India. Khedup is a native of Sangchu (Ch: Xiahe) County in Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, in Amdo province. Due to intense restrictions on Tibetans from Amdo and Kham provinces, Khedup found it impossible to continue her life as a businesswoman along the Tibet-Nepal border.

For over ten years, Khedup did small businesses at Dram and

along the Tibet-Nepal border. Alongside earning her livelihood, she used to help and support many fleeing Tibetans at the border. In 2012, on her return to Tibet after visiting the Kalachakra teachings in India, Khedup was detained along with 80 others at the border and held in Shigatse (Ch: Xigaze) detention centre. Their phones were confiscated. The border police then separated 25 young Tibetans from the group, who were told that they would be returned to respective authorities in their native towns. Khedup never learned what happened to the 25 young Tibetans or whether they were able to return to their families.

Khedup did not have to undergo political education classes as others had to, but the officers interrogated them for long hours about India. During the 2012 Losar (Tibetan New Year), Khedup joined her family in Sangchu. At the time, Sangchu was under intense restriction and surveillance, as Khedup remembers, "There were security forces everywhere and the streets were fitted with countless surveillance cameras and it seemed as if each movement was monitored." When Losar was over, Khedup decided to leave for Lhasa but found it very difficult to get the required official permissions. After approaching friends for help, she was able to convince the village leader to issue her a permission letter, which had to be duly stamped by the local police station, County government office, County Public Security Bureau office and two more stamps from other offices.

But the joy of getting permission to visit Lhasa evaporated soon after her arrival in the city. No one in Lhasa would rent her a place and she was told that a government order was issued to all in Lhasa not to rent hotel or guest house accommodation to Tibetans from Tibetan areas located outside Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). The new regulation also requires Tibetan visitors from outside TAR to provide an alibi during the entire duration of their stay in Lhasa. In the intensified climate of fear, no Lhasa resident was willing to let accommodation. This, according to Khedup, has created unnecessary suspicion and loss of trust among Tibetans. "In other words, the Chinese authorities are attempting to create disharmony and conflict among Tibetans by implementing this order. But there exists no such problem for Chinese tourists and other non-Tibetan visitors in Lhasa. This is discrimination and hurts the feelings of Tibetan people," says Khedup.

FROM THE PRESS

Tibetan businessman sentenced to 2 years' of hard labour

Chinese authorities have sentenced a Tibetan businessman to two years at Re-education Through Labour (RTL) camp hard after they found "illegal" objects in his possession of materials following his return from a religious gathering conducted by Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama in India.

Jigme Topgyal, 55, also known as Junggar, was punished after undergoing two months of political "re-education" with hundreds of other Tibetans who returned from the "Kalachakra" gathering in January 2012. Topgyal held for questioning and political education by police on his return to the Tibet Autonomous Region in March 2012. After completing two months of re-education, he returned to his home in Lhasa, where he remained for 15 days until he was again detained on 15 May. That evening, Lhasa police came to ransack his family's home and shop, and discovered 15 DVDs of the Dalai Lama's Kalachakra teachings along with photos of the Dalai Lama. All were confiscated, along with an old radio that the family owned.

According to an announcement posted outside the Gutsa detention center in Lhasa, Topgyal had been "charged with going to the Kalachakra in India and bringing back forbidden items." There was no trial and Topgyal was sentenced by the police.

On 15 December 2012, relatives visited Topgyal at Toelung detention center outside Lhasa. Topgyal had been severely beaten during the first 15 days of his detention, at times he also lost consciousness. Topgyal is scheduled for release on 15 May 2014. *Source: Radio Free Asia*

China relocates hundreds of thousands of Tibetan nomads in Amdo

30 November 2012: Over 737,000 Tibetan nomads have been resettled out of the headwaters region of the Machu River (Yellow River) over the past five years as "part of efforts to protect China's 'mother river' from over-grazing," reported the Chinese government-run *Global Times*.

About 1 million heads of cattle were moved away from the more than 774,600 hectares of grassland covered by the settlement scheme. The former nomads now live in new concrete settlements set up away from their grassland in the counties of Maqu (Ch: Machu) and Luchu (Ch: Luqu). Their herds were moved with them.

The nomad settlement was launched in this area in 2007. The program received further boost at the its recently closed national congress, where the Party advocated "ecological progress" as one of the country's top development priorities.

Restrictions have increased on herding as a key measure to preserve grassland. Herding was banned in areas affected by deteriorating ecology in a nation-wide policy issued last year. Herders received compensation from the state.

Wang said the government is now working to settle the rest of the prefecture's 19,000 nomads in the coming few years.

Tibetan language classes banned in Ngaba, Kardze

10 January 2013: Chinese authorities in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) and Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Prefectures in Sichuan province have enforced a ban on Tibetan language and culture classes taught informally by volunteers to Tibetan students during their winter break. The ban covers at least one township in Ngaba, with similar bans in place at monasteries in at least two counties in.

The ban in Ngaba was initiated last year in Muge Norwa township of Zungchu (Ch: Songpan) County. Even schools held at private homes were banned.

China has jailed scores of Tibetan writers, artists, singers, and educators for asserting national and cultural identity and civil rights since widespread protests swept Tibet and Tibetan-populated areas of China in 2008.

The language classes offered during winter in Muge Norwa had attracted over 100 students. Tibetan language classes organized by Beri monastery in Kardze prefecture and by monasteries in Dege County have also been banned.

Source: Radio Free Asia

TCHRD Activities

TCHRD 2012 Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Tibet

On 17 January 2013, TCHRD released its 2012 Annual Report on Human Rights situation inside Tibet, at a press conference held at TCV Day School in Mcleod Ganj, Dharamsala, India. The event also marked the release of TCHRD's special report on religious repression in Tibet and the launch of the centre's new website.

The special report on religious repression is an in-depth analysis of the internationally protected right to freedom of religion and belief, and the ways in which the government of the PRC is continuously and systematically violating it in the context of Tibetan Buddhism.

Earlier, on 14 January 2013, TCHRD submitted the special report on religious repression to the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Mr. Heiner Bielefeldt urging him to conduct an in-country visit of Tibet and publish a report of the findings. The Special Rapporteur was also urged to encourage the Chinese government to adhere to the international conventions to which China is already party, and sign and ratify those to which it is not.

The annual report records wide-ranging human rights violations in Tibet including arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, language rights and self-immolation protests.

In 2012, TCHRD confirmed the detention of 269 known Tibetans in Tibet. Out of them, 29 were sentenced without procedural guarantees and due legal process while the fate of 218 remains unknown. The total number of known political prisoners according to TCHRD database is 988.

The 2012 annual report, both in English and Tibetan, and the Special report on 'Religious Repression in Tibet' are available for download on our website.

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To

If undelivered, please return to:

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Partial list of TCHRD publications:

Religious Repression in Tibet (2012) • Into Thin Air (2012) • Democracy in Exile (2012) • The Plan That Never Was (2012) • Annual Report: Human Rights Situation in Tibet (1996-2012) • Prisoners of Tibet, Railway and China's Development Strategy in • Tibet: A tale of Two Economies, • TCHRD 1996-2006: A decade of Human Rights Research • International Bill of Human Rights (2005) • Death Penalty in China (2005) • Kuxing: Torture in Tibet (2005) • State of education in Tibet: A human rights perspective (2004) • Strike Hard Campaign: China's crackdown on political dissidence (2004) • Dispossessed: Land and Housing Rights in Tibet (2002) • Destruction of Serthar Institute: A Special Report (2002) • Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy (2000) • Racial Discrimination in Tibet (2000) • Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet (2000) • Tales of Terror: Torture in Tibet (1999) • Briefing paper for travelers to Tibet (1999) • A Guide to Democracy (1999) • A Guide to Human Rights (1999) • Human Rights: An Education Booklet (1998) • Fearless Voices: Accounts of Tibetan Former Political Prisoners (1998) • Democracy: An Education Booklet (1998) • Convention on the Rights of the Child (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • Closing the Doors: Religious Repression in Tibet (1998) • Behind Bars: Prison Conditions in Tibet (1998) • The Next Generation: The State of Education in Tibet Today (1997)

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- You will get a TCHRD Membership kit (cloth bag, badges and stickers)
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- All our publications will be sent for free upon request
- You can join our campaigns
- You will receive a membership card

Annual membership fee:
Rs. 200/- for members within India
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You may email us at office@tchrd.org for further information. Please do not forget to write 'Membership Request' in your email subject line.

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TCHRD is a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in January 1996 with the mission to protect the human rights of Tibetans in Tibet and promote the principles of democracy in the exile community.

For more, log onto www.tchrd.org

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Labrang monk Jayang Jinpa reflects on his daring 2008 protest

Jayang Jinpa, 26, was among the 15 Tibetan monks who led a daring protest in front of a group of international and Chinese journalists at Labrang Tashikyil Monastery in Sangchu County. On 9 April 2008, monks of Labrang Monastery interrupted the Chinese government-organized media visit that was carefully planned to show that Tibet was stable and that monks enjoyed freedom of religion and other human rights. The protest lasted for about 10 minutes but was quickly suppressed. And over a year, he spent time in the mountains trying to escape arrest. We present here the second and final part of Jayang Jinpa's story:

PART II

Moreover, my friends Lobsang and Jigme unleashed a banner that proclaimed 'we do not have freedom of speech' and 'we demand human rights.' On the night before the day of protest, we had many discussions as to the consequences of our acts. Probably, no one had a shadow of doubt that we would flee [from the scene of protest]. We said to each other that we were not going to be scared of the Chinese arrest and long-term imprisonment. What we were worried, however, was the torture we would be subjected to in prison that might cause serious physical and psychological injuries. This would be unbearable to our parents and relatives.

Since we also had to prepare two handles for the banner, we had to remain wide awake till four in the morning. We held prayers and rituals for more than one hour. After going through all the preparations, we went to attend the morning prayers of the monastery at ten. In front of the prayer hall, and everywhere, unlike in the past, we witnessed the presence of many Chinese tourists. Looking at the rosaries or cameras they were holding in their hands and the fact that their hair were not shaved, we knew that they were all laymen - of our age. They confirmed our speculation, further intensifying our suspicion.

While seeking the blessings [of deities] in the prayer hall, I took a few khataks from a monk friend. Then we took out two long sticks from the monastery's canteen. Hiding the sticks, we went ahead to participate in the morning prayers. The monks were telling each other that many journalists had arrived, so unless they left, we shouldn't leave the prayer hall. While we were conducting our prayers, a ball of paper, on which it was written that 'today we need to rise up in front of the journalists,' was being thrown everywhere.

When the prayer was finished, we walked outside. Suddenly some small vehicles arrived. We stood still and looked at them, although we were asked by a camera-holding Chinese to leave. For a moment we remained under shadow of doubt, thinking that we were trapped, because the people in the vehicles all looked like Chinese. Then a bus arrived. Many foreigners stepped out of it. We became overjoyed, and envious, thinking that these were the people who really enjoyed freedom. We immediately turned around and ran towards the canteen.

We took out the national flag attached to the two sticks. I was suddenly gripped with intense fear, something which I had never experienced before in my life. I felt as if I was entering into an altogether different world. I said some prayers and tried to control myself. Some monks who saw us from the canteen were in disbelief. Although there were no soldiers, we became so hot with fear as if the Chinese would appear [and arrest us]. We hid the flag in our clothes. The moment we came out of the canteen we unleashed our flag and ran towards the journalists.

First I shouted the slogan 'for the sake of Dharma and the sentient beings, Tibetans are rising up in protest.' While shouting my slogans, I had no fear and embarrassment. The journalists had assembled in the courtyard of the monastery. Hearing our slogans, they came out and walked swiftly towards us. We had more than thirty Tibetans participating in this protest, including Akhu Sangye.

For ten minutes we shouted our slogans and demands. There were a few among us who shouted slogans in Chinese and English. But I spoke out in Tibetan. What I said was all the suggestions that I previously noted down in a seven-page document. Initially, I wanted to have an interview with Radio Free Asia, but this was not possible. Although I burned the document while cleaning up my house, I vividly remembered what I noted down in the papers. What made me sad was what I found out when I came into exile in India. I found out that there was only a brief video of our protest. Even what we said in the video could have been misinterpreted.

As captured by the journalist, I did say that 'we are not opposing the Olympics; we support it.' But this needs to be put into the right perspective lest it convey a wrong message. I should have been quoted in full. So what I said, apart from my approval of the Olympics is that every human being, including the Chinese, desire happiness, not suffering. Our approval of the Olympics was to refute Chinese allegation that our goal had nothing to do with [freedom] but to disrupt the games. The fact of the matter is that the Chinese can not enjoy the fruits of the Olympic games while murdering the Tibetan people. China's proclamation that Tibet is stable was a lie.

We expressed our desire to see His Holiness the Dalai Lama back in Tibet, UN taking concrete actions on behalf of Tibet, release of political prisoners, including the young Panchen Lama, and the immediate resolution of Tibet issue for world peace. I remember what I said to the journalists - that when they leave us, there's no guarantee that [their report] could help secure our lives even for a few minutes.

I told them that they must know this reality.

Although there were many Chinese nearby, they were not able to do anything. Finally, they ordered the officials responsible for managing the monastery to stop us from shouting our slogans. Since we could not carry the flag with us, we dropped it into the bus, and told the journalists: 'we are not able to keep our flags, so we are leaving it in your care.' I don't know where the journalists had taken the flag. But I am proud that for the first time in history, a Tibetan flag was openly displayed at Labrang Tashi Kyil. Since we were not arrested, we returned to our prayer halls. We were overjoyed that our campaign turned out quite successful. In the prayer halls, we saw expression of sadness and mourning on the faces of monks.

Although we were happy and proud of our activism, we were also scared that we would be arrested anytime. In the restaurant, [monks] were talking about the rebellion/protest. I told some of my monk acquaintances that I was the one who led the protest. One of the monks said, 'if that is the case, then you should have informed me. I would have at least brought twenty monks, [who could be part of this protest].' He said this with a lot of passion, his body was trembling. Later he even said, 'you brave souls, you brave men, today you have really shown your bravery.'

When I saw such satisfaction and pride on his face, I was filled with pride too. As the prayers got over, I went back to my room, along with other monks. My Aku was so worried. He said we must make sure the Chinese did not arrest us. He felt our lives would be endangered if they caught us. However, the Chinese didn't arrive to arrest us immediately. Finally I understood the apprehension of my Akhu, so I took my first steps to escape. An hour after finishing the prayers, [they] were able to hide me and my two other friends in another room. We then saw gun-toting Chinese soldiers surrounding our monastery.

We heard that the journalists had a meeting on that day after their interactions with us, because of which the Chinese were not able to immediately act on our arrest. However, we heard the laymen who participated with us in the protest were immediately arrested.

VI Escape to the mountains

We tried to sleep for a while in the small room we were hiding in. We were fully exhausted. However, we could not sleep. Fear and apprehension gripped us, to the extent that tears started streaming down my cheeks. Fortunately, we heard about our protest on Radio Free Asia. On that night, we also heard that the Chinese soldiers were breaking into the homes of monks. It was not safe to continue remaining in our hiding place. On the other hand, it was not possible to flee, [given the Chinese security forces around]. We decided to seek divination, and then came to the conclusion that it would be appropriate to flee on the night of 10 April.

Although we knew that the Chinese security forces were surrounding the monastery and could arrest us any time, we had no choice but to flee. Fortunately, there was no one walking on the road [that night]. So we were able to climb the mountains [without any danger of being caught].

When I reached the mountain behind the monastery, I straighten myself up and looked ahead. There was no one around. Perhaps

the Chinese retreated lest there would be rainfall, because on that night we had a huge thunder and lightning. It was on the night of 10 April. Thanks to the waxing moon, the night was very bright. So we were very scared that we would be arrested. We were so relieved when we finally crossed the mountains. We felt as if a huge burden had been lifted from our shoulders.

Had [some one] taken a picture then, we would appear as fully drenched in sweat, but smiles on our faces. Around two in the midnight, we saw a few people riding bikes. In order to avoid them we had to change our routes. As a result, we sort of lost our ways, so there was no option but to sleep on the mountain. After staying there for two hours, the dawn finally broke. We were shivering - our bodies became ice-cold. We did not wear enough clothes. Our boots were filled with mud.

The place where we slept on that night was very close to a nomadic family. [On the morning], a nomad, a woman, herding animals saw us. We told them the truth - that we were monks from the Labrang Monastery and on the run from the Chinese security forces because we were involved in protest. She was filled with compassion after hearing our story. She invited us into her house/tent, feeding us with food. Overcoming our hunger and cold finally, we were able to sleep for a few hours. On that day, we crossed a huge mountain pass and reached another nomadic family.

VII Labrang Monastery Turned Upside Down

After a few days, we heard that Chinese security officers were carrying out searched in the monastery. This occured on the night of 14 April, five days after our protest. We heard that thousands of Chinese security forces first surrounded the monastery. Not only they started peeing everywhere, but they also threw their cigarette butts in and around the monastery. The streets of the monastery were kept under security lockdown. Late in the night, ten soldiers started barging in to each house of the monastery. They smashed all the TV equipments, confiscated the pictures of the Dalai Lama and CDs featuring his speeches and teachings.

Precious statues and other belongings were also stolen. Even cooking utensils were not spared. They also took away all the logs, meant for repairing the monastery, and used them as fire woods to warm themselves up. Normally, we Tibetans look down upon the soldiers as tools of oppression. Roughly, two hundred million Chinese yuan worth of belongings were looted from the monastery. The soldiers were, moreover, rude and barbaric. Slapping on the cheeks of the monks, breaking the doors and windowpanes and so on were routine practices.

For instance, one of my friends was arrested. While stepping down from the vehicle, he was hit with rifle butt and fell unconscious. They searched the monastery till dawn. In the process they arrested 180 monks. Of them some were as old as 70 years of age and some as young as 14 years old. They were taken to a huge ground; hands tied behind their backs, they were forced to stand up for [hours]. When the monks tried to move a little, they were beaten up.

Some of the elderly and teenage monks, because of having been forced to stand up for so long, [later] had great difficulties to pee. Leave alone other human rights, under the Chinese occupation, we are even denied our right to pee. The next day, when the monks from the monastery threatened to protest and march towards the government offices, the Chinese officials promised to release the arrested monks. Of the 180 arrested monks, however, 15 were kept in custody for another few months. The rest were released as the Chinese promised.

While they were in custody, the 15 monks were severely tortured. Heads covered with black hoods, they were hit with plastic rods. At times group of Chinese beat them up with sticks. There were other cruel methods of torture. For instance, they were forced to sit in a chair called 'Tiger's chair.' Then their two hands and two legs were inserted into a hole on the walls. Then the Chinese took away the chair and left the prisoners stuck to the walls.

People say such methods are meant to ensure that no traces of torture remain on the bodies of prisoners. Prisoners who have undergone such forms of torture suffered from severe physical injuries; they have had to receive medical care for a long time. Their hands started trembling. As a result they were unable to write. Our hero, the late Jamyang Jinpa, was arrested at that time. While in prison, the Chinese place an electronic baton inside his mouth. As a result his brain nerves got damaged. They broke his limbs, damaged his liver, and then finally handed him over to his family. [On 3 April 2011, Jamyang Jinpa died after he failed to recover from the injuries he suffered due to beatings and torture in detention.]

VIII. How We Became Thorn in the Eyes of the Chinese and Our Final Escape

On [Chinese] state TV, everyday, our pictures were shown, accusing us as the 'ring leaders' of the rebellion. Cash rewards were promised to those who could help arrest us. However, the state media said that those who aided us would be regarded as 'criminals.' Spies were also stationed in the monasteries. Monks who hold the same names as mine were especially targeted and interrogated. They sent security forces in nomadic areas to hunt us.

They also went to Sankhog and arrested Tsultrim Gyatso who had earlier participated in protest. He had been sentenced to life in prison. Although we remained on high alert, we also faced many dangers. We dug a trench and remained in it for some time. To avoid the rain that fell every night, we carried blankets with us. The nights were extremely cold. While on the run, I saw ten wolves, which became further cause of concern and fear.

I don't know if it was due to my excessive fear, but in the first few months when we were on the run, I suffered from nightmares. For instance, I had nightmares of Chinese security forces chasing us or of battlefields. While on the run, leave alone attempting to

meet people on the mountains, I had to be on alert all the time, making sure that no one spotted us. As a result, I had suffered from both physical and mental despair.

The reason I avoided the nomads is not because I distrusted them. I simply wanted to make sure that no one had a clue of my escape. It took me almost a year to overcome the trauma of my escape. Everyday I do hundred prostrations and recite prayers, which help me to overcome my mental trauma. One of the biggest problems faced by escapees was that of health. Since we were labeled 'criminals', we could not attend the hospitals to seek medical help.

Because of such problems, one of our friends who participated in the protest, Akhu Lha, succumbed to his injuries. I too suffered from many diseases, such as pain in the chest. I was unable to walk for a few days, because of the injuries I suffered after having bitten by a dog. I could not go to hospital. Despite all the danger, I secretly went to see a doctor. I have still not recovered from the disease. Since we were to used to live in warm and cozy dwellings, we faced many difficulties, having been subjected to many cold-related diseases, when we were on the run in the mountains. As we were denied on-the-spot medications, our diseases had gotten worse.

At the end of summer, we moved to a huge rock-mountain. It was very cold and the wind was harsh too. It did not feel like summer at all. Although we did not have any radio equipment, we did come to know about the status of Sino-Tibetan dialogue [from the nomads]. We did not hear any positive news about the dialogue as we had expected. So that made us really sad. Despite the summer, there was a huge snowfall. At one point of time, we were woken out of our deep slumber, when the tent in which we were sleeping suddenly fell on our heads. Due to heavy snowfall, the tent was not able to hold on its legs.

While on the rock-mountain, we at times worked as shepherds [for the nomads]; at times we read books and hung around idly, doing nothing. The area was very remote, but many Chinese arrived there. Nobody could say if they were Chinese soldiers [in plain clothes] or spies. In the previous year, no Chinese had passed through this area. We were so worried as a result, and on the same night we decided to move to another area. Fifteen days later, we went back to the same place. However we found more Chinese walking up the mountain. We also found a small red flag planted in the trees, nearby a river. We got more scared. There was no option but to flee to a more secure place.

Generally, during summer, the nomads live in scattered zones, in their tents. So the situation is ideal for us to hide [in their tents]. During winter, we hid ourselves for a couple of days in a nomad's who was from our country. When we sensed danger, we got ourselves shifted to a more secure location, as we did before. Then one day, we heard that there were people who were going to help escape Tibetans to India after the Tibetan New Year. We got so happy to hear this news. We waited eagerly for the day when we would escape to India. We were so eager that we counted days on our fingers, and we made preparation every morning by running up and down the hills.

We were like birds suffering from intense thirst, eagerly waiting for raindrops. It was decided that a week later we would escape to India. But the guides, who were supposed to help us escape to India, changed their plan. As a result we were forced to wait for some time. I realized acutely how painful an experience it must be for jobless people waiting for employment and for insomniacs deprived of sleep. At this time another sad news struck me. I heard that my Aku's hair had started turning grey because of worrying too much about my fate.

However, I do cherish the fact that I was able to escape, and did not have to suffer Chinese arrest and torture. During our escape, many nomads gave us protection and refuge [in their tents]. Needless to say that we put them under a lot of trouble and difficulties. Although the Chinese declared that any Tibetan helping the 'fugitives and criminals' [escape] would be punished severely, they gave us every possible help and support.

For instance, when we were in their tents, they made sure that their visitors were kept under control. If the nomads found any visitors willing to spend the night in their tents, they informed us beforehand and helped us move to other secure places. So, here, I would especially like to express my deep gratitude to all the nomads who helped us in our ordeal.

IX Escape into Exile

Escaping into exile was just a rash thought, a passionate desire. The truth was that severe restrictions had been placed everywhere. Chinese security forces were stationed at the Labrang; security check points had been planted on the roads. We almost lost our hope to escape. Fortunately, we received a message from our friend, Lobsang, whose untiring efforts helped secure one agent/guide who could help us escape to India. We received the message in April 2009.

This was the time when the Chinese government lifted the ban on foreign tourists visiting Tibet. Because of this policy, some of the security forces stationed on the roads had been withdrawn. Therefore, my friends, Lobsang and Jigme, and I did not face much trouble when we 'travelled' to Lhasa. Gendun and Kelsang Jinpa too did not face much difficulties going to Lhasa.

When we regrouped in Lhasa, we spent two days in the Tibetan capital. However, due to fear, we could not visit the Jokhang Temple. At the time we heard about a large protest at a Tibetan middle school in our hometown Labrang. Then with the help of the guide/agent, overcoming many difficulties on the way, we finally reached the Tibetan Reception Center in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Needless to say we were all overjoyed; however, the political situation in Nepal was volatile. So, during our ten-day stay in Kathmandu, we were constantly worried. The officials of the Recep-

tion Centre told us not to go outside. During this time another sad news struck us. Before we fled into exile in India, the Chinese security forces arrested our good friend Kelsang Gyalsten Tsayul. He was sentenced to ten years in prison.

On 8 May 2009, we arrived at the Reception Centre in Delhi. It was very hot and I still remember vividly my experience in the Indian capital. For the first time in my life I experienced what it means to be a free person. I could look at any one; I could go to any places I liked. I felt as if I removed a dirt-filled leather hat from my head. These experiences filled me with so much joy that I was compelled to look up into the sky over and again. On 9 May, we left Delhi for Dharamsala, arriving at the headquarters of Tibetan exile administration on 10 May 2009.

We had a chance to speak to the Tibetan public at a gathering organized by the Tibetan Youth Congress. The next day, on 11 May, we had the great fortune of seeking a private audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his residence. I participated in many press conferences during which I was able to narrate the real situation inside Tibet to both Tibetan and non-Tibetan journalists. I felt that there was enough interest in the issue of Tibet.

I escaped into exile in India, because it was unbearable to live under the Chinese occupation. Now I have received a precious opportunity to engage in studies. I believe it is very important for me to study seriously. I thought as a Tibetan first of all I need to get myself educated in Tibetan grammar, poetry and history before learning other world literature and cultures. So I got myself enrolled in a Tibetan institution. In July 2009, I was able to get admission at the Tibetan college in Sarha, as an informal student. Lobsang and I are now at this institute. In 2010, we were able to clear the entrance test for Bachelor's Degree in Arts course. Today both of us are in the final year.

I have given here an honest account of how I protested in front of the journalists. Due to security reasons, I could not mention the names of certain places and persons.

FROM THE PRESS

400 Tibetan families moved to make way for mining

17 January 2013: Over 400 Tibetan families were forcibly moved from their grassland for mining purposes in Lhundup (Ch: Linzhou) County in Lhasa Prefecture in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

The mine located near Dun Village in Khartse Township began operating in 2005. Some 10,000 miners are said to be working at the mine, among them only three are believed to be Tibetans and rest are Chinese workers brought in from the Chinese mainland. *Source: Tibet Express, Radio Free Asia*

Imprisoned Tibetan filmmaker moved to women's prison

21 January 2013: Tibetan documentary filmmaker Dhondup Wangchen who has been serving a six-year sentence in Xichuan labour camp has been transferred to Qinghai Provincial Women's Prison, the main prison for women in China's Qinghai province.

Following a visit to Dhondup Wangchen by close family members on 15 January 2013, Dhondup Wangchen spoke of previous harsh treatment at Xichuan labour camp, including several months of solitary confinement that started in March 2012. Although being held in improved conditions, Dhondup Wangchen and his family are unaware of the reasons for his transfer, particularly to a women's prison with no other Tibetan inmates or political prisoners.

"There is still well over a year until Dhondup Wangchen will have served his 6 year sentence for making 'Leaving Fear Behind', it is our wish that in this time Dhondup Wangchen suffer no maltreatment and be granted access to books so that he can study, something he has repeatedly requested but has been forbidden from doing," said Gyaljong Tsetrin, cousin of Dhondup Wangchen and President of "Filming for Tibet." *Source: Filming for Tibet*

China appoints new governor for Tibet Autonomous Region

On 29 January, China appointed a new governor for Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) at the close of the first session of the 10th TAR People's Congress, a largely rubber stamp regional legislature.

Lobsang Gyaltsen, 55, became the governor of Tibet Autonomous Region, a largely subservient post when compared to the powerful Party secretary of TAR. The outgoing TAR governor Pema Thinley was appointed chairman of the standing committee of the TAR People's Congress.

From his first press statements, the new governor has indicated that hardline policies in Tibet will remain. According to Chinese government-owned news agency Xinhua, the new TAR governor "urged maintaining vigilance in times of peace as well as taking a firm political stand and acting consistently to resolutely battling against the 14th Dalai Lama clique and unswervingly safeguarding the unification of the motherland and national unity."

The new governor has held various Party and government posts such as mayor of the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, deputy secretary of the Chinese Communist Party Lhasa municipal committee, vice governor of TAR, and deputy secretary of the TAR Party committee.

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- You will get a TCHRD Membership kit (cloth bag, badges and stickers)
- You will receive our Bi-Weekly Human Rights Newsletter
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Annual membership fee:
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BI-WEEKLY HUMAN RIGHTS UPDATE

Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy

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Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy is a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in January 1996 with the mission to protect the human rights of Tibetans in Tibet and promote the principles of democracy in the exile community.

For more, log onto www.tchrd.org

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China arrests five Tibetans on uprising anniversary

11 March 2013 : Chinese authorities arrested five Tibetans in Sershul (Ch: Serxu) County in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, on the 54th anniversary of the Tibetan national uprising day on 10 March 2013.

According to information received by TCHRD, at around 11 am (local time) on 10 March 2013, three Tibetan monks from Ganden Samten Dhargyeling Monastery in Dzachuka area in Sershul County staged a protest march in the County town and got arrested along with two other lay Tibetan men who tried to persuade the monks from protesting for fear of arrest. **(contd. on Pg 2)**

Theurang: Fighting for universal human rights is an act of seeking truth

14 March 2013: Tashi Rabten (pen name: Theurang) is a Tibetan writer, poet and editor who is serving a four-year sentence in Mianyang Prison, Sichuan Province. He graduated from North-West University for Nationalities and edited the now-banned Tibetan language journal "Shar Dungri" and also published "Written in Blood", a compilation of his poems, notes and writings on the situation in Tibet following the 2008 protests.

On the fifth anniversary of 14 March 2008 protest in Lhasa, TCHRD has translated and edited one of Theurang's essays written before his arrest and subsequent imprisonment in 2009. The essay was republished in exile in the book "Reflections on 2008 Protests: a Collection of Essays by Tibetan Intellectuals in Tibet", by Domey Editorial Committee, Dharamsala, India.

Freedom and democracy belong to those who fight for them

Freedom and democracy are fundamental aspirations of human beings. Every human being and nation on this earth is heading towards democracy, equality and freedom, leaving behind oppression and exploitation of dictatorship and slavery. For the values of democracy and equality, many great men and women gave up their lives. On this earth beneath the vast sky, although freedom and democracy belong to the entire humanity, they will never belong to those who oppress by practicing dictatorship. Be it individuals, organisations, governments or nations, it is a universal truth that those who oppress by practicing dictatorship, their hands and legs will be crushed under the rolling boulder called freedom, equality and democracy. For many years, we have been fighting for our rights—for the values of equality, freedom and democracy. We have been raising slogans and banners for them. Fighting for universal values of human rights is an act of seeking truth. We are not afraid of any one. No one can stop us.

Since 2008, Tibetans inside and outside Tibet have pursued many campaigns such as protests, fasts, peaceful marches and other commemorative events. These non-violent campaigns reflect the agonising thirst of the Tibetan people for freedom and democracy. They expose the political system and policies of the People's Republic of China under which we are living. Our campaigns are not to secure freedom and democracy for Tibetan people only. They reflect the growing aspirations and hopes of peoples and nations who yearn for freedom and democracy. Many nations and peoples on this earth support our struggle.

Any nation or people aspiring for democracy must respect the life of every individual citizen without any discrimination. Amid our non-violent struggle, however, we witnessed 'some ugly incidents of looting, burning, smashing and killing.' Such incidents violate human rights and sacredness of human lives and thus pollute, and are a blot on, the non-violent struggle of our people. Moreover, these horrible incidents tarnish our movement in the eyes of other peoples and nations, contradict the vision of peace espoused by the noble Gyalwa Rinpoche and negate a people fighting for truth and justice.

Since we do not have military might, we cannot pursue an armed struggle. The only solution we have is non-violent protests that express our opposition to lies and oppression of Chinese government. It is extremely important that such non-violent protests are organised in countries and among nationalities that cherish democracy and freedom. While campaigning for freedom, many of our brave fellow Tibetans lost their lives to guns while many underwent enormous suffering walking thousands of miles on peaceful marches. If you are a Tibetan nurtured on milk and tsampa, if Tibetan blood is running into your veins, you have to speak up and campaign for Tibetan freedom. You cannot support dictatorship and slavery. I have heard that some Tibetan leaders [working for Chinese government] are criticising our freedom struggle. In Chinese newspapers and televisions, some Tibetans are condemning it. The Tibetan nation cannot be represented simply by Tibetans living under Chinese rule, leave alone by a few Tibetan residents of Lhasa. Moreover, those reactionaries who have become tools of Chinese oppression cannot represent the Tibetan people. This truth should be made clear to the world. In our campaign for freedom, many Tibetans have lost their lives. Rather than accepting this truth, China is attempting to hijack our non-violent struggle. We must send true information and pictures of our protests to the outside world. We must mention the number of Tibetans killed and arrested, slogans raised by protestors and places where protests were held.

"A true and verified picture of an injured Tibetan is more valuable than [poorly-verified and thus hard to prove] information about the death of a hundred Tibetans," a friend once told me. This is true. No matter what campaign we pursue, we must not pursue them in haste—that is without any strategic planning. Nor should we resort to violence. Moreover, our educated folks must write appeal letters on behalf of Tibetans who were arrested and disappeared in some places. All these information must be propagated throughout the world. In short, freedom and democracy belong to those who fight for them. They will never belong to those who murder democracy and freedom by practicing dictatorship and slavery. If we do not lose our pride and determination, Tibetan people will have a chance to taste democracy and freedom one day.

China arrests five Tibetans on uprising anniversary

(contd. from Pg 1)

The source told TCHRD that the monks shouted slogans for "freedom, democracy, and the need for a Middle Way approach to solve the Tibet issue." They carried a huge flag emblazoned with a portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The three detained monks were identified as Lobsang Samten, 31, son of father Kardey and mother Tashi Dolma; Sonam Namgyal, 26, son of Lonpa and Gyagyong; and Thupten Gelek, 29, son of Tsering Soede and Lhadon.

Along with the monks, two lay Tibetans were also arrested for merely trying to peacefully solve the crisis.

The two were identified as Ngawang Gyatso, 41, son of Soekyap and Tsewang Lhamo; and Lobsang Kelsang, 17, son of Jamyang Tsering and Jamyang Dolma from Bumnying Village.

Citing local contacts, sources told TCHRD that this is the first time that a protest like this happened in the area on 10 March anniversary. Dzachuka is now under intense surveillance with the arrival of armed police.

The whereabouts of the five remain unknown.

Two Tibetans, monk and singer, sentenced to prison

13 March 2013 : A monk and a singer had been sentenced to five years and six years respectively by a Chinese court in Siling (Ch: Xining), capital of Qinghai Province.

On 23 February 2013, Lobsang Jinpa, 31, a monk from

Nyatso Zilkar Monastery was sentenced to five years in prison, according to reliable information received by TCHRD. The monastery is located in Tridu (Ch: Chenduo) County in Kyegudo (Ch: Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.

On the same day, Lolo, 30, a popular Tibetan singer was given six years in prison, sources told TCHRD. Lolo was first detained on 19 April 2012 for releasing a music album that contained songs with politically-charged lyrics such as the well-known "Raise the Tibetan flag, Children of Snowland" (click here for English translation of the lyrics). After a brief detention, he was released but was detained again and sentenced on 23 February this year.

Lobsang Jinpa was detained on 1 September 2012, along with four other monks during a massive raid on Nyatso Zilkar Monastery by Chinese security forces. During the surprise raid, many monks were beaten and personal possessions of the five detained monks were confiscated. Sources told TCHRD that the September 2012 raid and subsequent detention of the monks were related to the 8 February 2012 peaceful protest staged by the monks.

Two of the five monks, Sonam Sherab, 41, and Sonam Yignyen, 45, were sentenced to two years in prison by a court in Siling (Ch: Xining) city, capital of Qinghai. The charges against the two remain unknown. Ngawang Monlam, 31, a disabled monk with leg problem, was detained for a month and released. Tsultrim Kalsang, 26, has spent the last few months recovering in a hospital from injuries sustained during his detention. Sources told TCHRD that Tsultrim Kalsang was severely beaten and tortured owing to which he had to be hospitalised. It is likely that he would be sentenced like fellow monk Lobsang Jinpa after he recovers from his illness. Lobsang Jinpa was released briefly due to medical reasons but was detained again and sentenced after his recovery.

Kirti monk detained for second time in two years

13 March 2013 : Chinese authorities have detained a monk from Kirti Monastery on the eve of the 54th anniversary of Tibetan uprising day in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.

According to reliable information received by TCHRD, Tsepak, 29, was detained at around midnight on 9 March from his aunt's home in the eastern part of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County. Tsepak had been staying there for some time taking care of his sick aunt.

Tsepak's sudden detention for the second time has caused anxiety and shock among his family members and friends who have no idea why he was detained in the first place. Nor do they have any information about the place of his detention.

Tsepak was detained earlier in 2011 when he was a student at Beijing Nationalities University. Tsepak was detained at around 6 pm on 25 March 2011 from the university and was held for some months. The authorities provided no explanation for detaining him but it later emerged that Tsepak was suspected contacting outsiders, sources told TCHRD.

Tsepak is son of Dhondup and Dhondey. As a child, he became a monk at Kirti Monastery. Before his detention, he was in the third-year Uma class (equivalent to Master's Degree course in Tibetan Buddhism) at his monastery.

China launches crackdown on personal cellphones in Lhasa

11 March 2013 : After setting satellites dishes and broadcast equipment on fire, Chinese authorities in the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, have now begun implementing a campaign to search personal cellphones owned by Tibetans, particularly those in monastic institutions.

According to information received by TCHRD, the crackdown on personal cellphones was launched on 10 March 2013, which is also the 54th anniversary of Tibetan uprising day in Lhasa. On 7 March this year, sources said a group of special team dealing with cellphone security arrived in Lhasa. Everyone in the special team from Beijing is expert on cellphone technology.

The next day on 8 March, the special cellphone inspection 'work team' visited Drepung Monastery where they have now begun security screenings of cellphones owned by the monks. The cellphone crackdown at Drepung is expected to last for four days beginning 8 March.

Cellphone crackdowns will be carried out in Sera and Ganden monasteries, followed by Ramoche & Tsuglakhang (Jokhang) temples. Other smaller monastic institutions will be covered by this campaign in the coming months, according to decisions taken by the local government.

The special 'work team' from Beijing will stay for about four to five days at each monastery.

Sources with contacts in the area said the latest move is targeted at Tibetans who share information about Tibet with those in foreign countries. Local authorities have vowed to undertake severe measures including detention &

imprisonment against attempts to share information about Tibet.

Information is almost routinely censored in Tibet. Moreover, Chinese authorities make liberal use of its 'State Secrets Law' to prosecute and criminalize legitimate Tibetan dissent and resistance. According to Chinese government, one is a criminal if one tries to share information about human rights abuses in one's country or community. When in reality, without these brave and conscientious individuals who put their life on fire to retrieve information, the world outside Tibet would never know. Tibet continues to remain locked to independent fact-finding delegations even after a total of 107 confirmed self-immolation protests took place in about two years.

Uncle of Tibetan self-immolator sentenced to prison

4 March 2013 : A senior monk who is also an uncle of a Tibetan self-immolator was sentenced to prison early this month on charges that he carried the ashes of his nephew from Rongwo Monastery to his nephew's home during a procession last year in Rebkong (Ch: Tongren) County in Malho (Ch: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.

According to information received by TCHRD, Yarphel, 42, a monk from Yershong Monastery was sentenced to one year and three months in prison. Recent propaganda documents distributed by Chinese authorities had criminalised any kind of processions or rallies that pay tribute to the memory of those who died of self-immolations. According to these documents, taking out public processions and carrying bodies of self-immolators and obstructing the traffic and disrupting public order are liable to be charged under articles 290 and 291 of Criminal Law. Click here for full report]

Sources told TCHRD that the sentence was passed around evening on 1 March 2013. Until Sunday, Yarphel was held at a detention centre in Dagmar area; he was expected to be moved to a prison facility on Monday, 4 March 2013. There are no details yet on how the trial was conducted or whether the confessions were obtained using legal methods.

TCHRD had earlier reported on the detention and arrest of Yarphel, along with fellow monk, Rabyang, on 2 February 2013. Rabyang was released after hours of interrogation as he is chronically sick and apparently the prison authorities were apprehensive he might die in prison. As death in detention due to torture and beatings is not uncommon in Tibet, the authorities have been careful to avoid circumstances that they could control.

During a peaceful procession held to mark the self-immolation of Yarphel's nephew Dorjee Lhundup last year, Yarphel carried a photograph of Dorjee Lhundup and Rabyang carried a portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Yarphel hails from Dagkar Village and his father's name is Lubum Gyal.

Yarphel's nephew, Dorjee Lhundup, a farmer in his 20s and a father of two children, died of self-immolation in Rebkong on 4 November 2012, days before the Chinese Communist Party held its 18th Party Congress to appoint China's new leadership.

China calls for bilingual policy, crackdown on immolations

15 March 2013 : A special team of Chinese officials recently visited four different schools in Tsolho (Ch: Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, to carry out propaganda activity on "anti-immolation special struggle" including campaigns to "instill respect for constitutional provisions on bilingual education policy", an official Chinese daily reported.

The propaganda campaign was aimed at snuffing out self-immolation protests and shoring up compliance for the controversial bilingual education policy. According to the report, cadres and work teams from Provincial Education Committee and Provincial Department of Education visited Tsolho from 6 to 7 January to implement anti-immolation campaign and guide the masses on bilingual education policy.

The campaign also focused on the theme "cherish life, abide by law"[ii] and the special "anti-immolation" work teams held meetings where over 250 teachers and student representatives attended the propaganda lectures. At the meetings, the work team members asked teachers and students to "resolutely fight against all hostile forces, further strengthening propaganda and education learning activities against the "three evils, the top three or four love, and consciously safeguard national unity and social stability".

Professor Niang Wu Jia of Police Academy was one of the propaganda officials running the campaign. At Hainan No. 2 High School, Propaganda meeting in progress at Hainan No. 2 High School in Tsolho Prefecture, he lectured the students on the theme of the campaign: "three evils" and "cherishing threes" and "four loves". He said education and propaganda on anti-self-immolation and

good results of bilingual education should be emphasised and the nation's law and regulations should be followed. Niang also called for "in-depth" efforts in "exposing and criticising the behaviour of self-immolation anti-religious, anti-humanity, the nature of the anti-social."

Ignoring popular resentment against bilingual policy, Chinese government enforced the new law. Moreover, China's Constitution emphasises "duty" of the citizens to receive education before the "right" to receive education. Article 46 states, "Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the duty as well as the right to receive education. The state promotes the all-round moral, intellectual and physical development of children and young people."

Although article 4 of the Chinese Constitution states that "people of all nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and to preserve or reform their own ways and customs", article 19 outlines the state's role in the development of "socialist educational undertakings", as the Constitution further proclaims that "The state promotes the nationwide use of Putonghua (common speech based on Beijing pronunciation)."

In Tibetan areas in Qinghai where the medium of instruction is Mandarin, a student needs a mere five per cent in Tibetan but 60 per cent in Mandarin to graduate to higher classes.[iii] That is to say, Mandarin Chinese, as the primary language of instruction, becomes the language that determines academic and professional success.

Bilingual education policy has sparked popular protests particularly those led by middle and high school students in Tibet. In 2010, hundred of Tibetans in Rebkong (Ch: Tongren) rose up in protest against the implementation of the so-called two-language policy. In many of the protests involving young people, Tibetans have called for "language rights" or "language freedom".

The new language policy although trumpeted as accommodating of two languages, on implementation and in law, it has favored the superiority and primacy of Chinese language, particularly Mandarin.

On 29 October 2010, following the protest in Rebkong, the Qinghai government responded that "as the state is promoting Standard Mandarin and Commonly Used Characters, the rights of using local minority languages by minority peoples is fully respected and guaranteed".

Last year, protests calling for language rights broke out in Malho Prefecture and Rebkong County.[iv] Major student protests erupted in November last year in Chabcha (Ch: Gonghe) town of Serchen County in Tsolho Prefecture. The protests were sparked by a government-issued booklet that contained vilification of the Dalai Lama and propaganda spiel on the benefits of bilingual education policy.

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Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy is a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in January 1996 with the mission to protect the human rights of Tibetans in Tibet and promote the principles of democracy in the exile community.

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China uses religious propaganda to counter Tibetan self-immolations

20 March 2013 : In a rare departure from its usual propaganda narrative on Tibetan self-immolations, the Chinese authorities called His Holiness the Dalai Lama, along with His Eminence Kirti Rinpoche "the root cause" of self-immolations in Tibet. In earlier statements, the Chinese leadership had been careful to directly blame Dalai Lama, instead blaming the so-called 'Dalai clique' or 'separatist forces' for self-immolations.

On 7 March 2013, Chinese state media quoted Wu Zegang, governor of Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province as saying, "We oppose the self-immolation … first of all, [we should find out] the root cause of the [self-immolation] problem, the root cause is the 14th Dalai Lama, and Kirti Rinpoche, who live outside [Tibet]."[i] But the fact that there had been no credible evidence to prove this reckless claim is beside the point for the Chinese authorities whose fanatical drive to stamp out popular Tibetan protests and criminalize the so-called instigators, inciters and abettors of immolations have only increased repression, instability and violence in Tibet.

The first wave of self-immolation protests witnessed in Ngaba Prefecture (Sichuan province) was the precursor to the continuing self-immolations in other parts of Tibet. Out of confirmed 109 self-immolations in Tibet, 39 took place in Ngaba Prefecture. The official Chinese diatribe against Kirti Rinpoche coincided with a successful overseas tour of Kirti Rinpoche, during which he spoke of repression and violence in Tibet.[ii] Last year, Ngaba authorities organized firefighting lessons in Tibetan monasteries, political education campaigns and implemented widespread, systematic crackdown on self-immolation protests. Communication lines and channels remained under effective lockdown making it difficult to obtain fuller information about the situation in Ngaba. The Ngaba region continues to remain under effective lockdown.

Chinese authorities are well aware of deep resentment and grievances among Tibetans over Chinese misrule, although it has not been explicitly clear for fear of inadvertently exposing the regime's massive policy fiasco that had now resulted in the current crisis in Tibet. But its actions in recent months have sought to highlight the fear and mistrust with which Chinese government controls Tibet, particularly the monastic institutions.

Political education campaign in Nagchu, TAR

In the middle of January this year, Chinese authorities in the Tibetan capital Lhasa summoned a group of senior Tibetan monks from the three great monastic universities of Sera, Drepung, Gaden, as well as Jokhang Temple, on the pretext of a meeting. For weeks, their whereabouts remained unknown until news emerged that they were giving 'patriotic education' campaigns in villages and monasteries in Nagchu (Ch: Naqu) Prefecture in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), as part of the 'Anti-immolation Special Struggle', a new government campaign against self-immolations.

The monks including geshes, abbots, chant masters and teachers were reportedly staying at Bekar Monastery in Diru (Ch: Biru) County in Nagchu Prefecture. Following the revelation by exile Tibetan sources about the sudden

'disappearance' of high-ranking monks in Lhasa, official Chinese media reported on 7 March 2013 that a group of 30 senior monks from Sera, Drepung, Gaden, Tsuglakhang, Ramoche, Tsurphu Monastery and Drikung Thil Monastery gave 'religious teachings' including lessons on 'suicide-related sins' in Buddhism from 14 to 31 January in villages and monasteries in Nagchu particularly Diru County.[iii] The political education sessions given in the guise of Buddhist teachings were led and organized by TAR Branch of Buddhist Association of China (BAC), a party body that monitors and manages Tibetan Buddhism in TAR.

Padma Choling & the amnesia of TAR immolations

Last year, TCHRD confirmed at least four known Tibetan self-immolations from Diru (Ch: Biru) County in TAR. On 29 September 2012, Yungdrung, 27, from Chamdo (Ch: Changdu) County self-immolated at Dzatoe town in Yushu Prefecture, Qinghai Province. Gudrup, a Tibetan writer and poet, was the first Tibetan from Diru County to self-immolate. On 25 October 2012, two self-immolation protests were reported from Diru County, by Tsepo, 20, and Tenzin, 25, from Nagro Phampa Village. On 7 November 2012, Tsegyal, 27, set himself on fire in Bankar village in Diru County and died after 11 days in police custody on 18 November. Sources told TCHRD that he received inadequate medical treatment for his burns.

On 7 July 2012, over two months after the first self-immolations in Lhasa (TAR), Tsewang Dorje, 22, self-immolated at the main market of Damshung County near Lhasa.

In May 2012, following the first joint self-immolation protests staged by Dorje Tsetan and Dhargye in the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, hundreds of Tibetans were arbitrarily detained. Jokhang Temple, in front of which the immolations took place, was sealed off indefinitely. The temple is now under heavy surveillance, with separate security checkpoints for Tibetans, according to information received by TCHRD from foreign tourists of Chinese origin. Tibetans are singled out for searches especially those visiting from Amdo and Kham provinces located outside TAR. A special police station at Lhasa Railway station ensures Tibetans from Kham and Amdo provinces do not visit Lhasa without official documents thus severely restricting their freedom of movement. Moreover, Tibetans wishing to travel for religious, educational, business and cultural purposes are facing enormous hurdles in visiting and living in Lhasa.

The first Tibetan to protest by self-burning in TAR was Tenzin Phuntsok, 46, a former monk of Karma Monastery in Chamdo Prefecture. He shouted slogans for religious freedom and distributed leaflets before setting himself afire on 1 December 2011. He died on 6 December in a government hospital. He was born in Jingdhung Village in Chamdo County. He also became the first Tibetan to self-immolate after the first wave of self-immolation in Sichuan Province spearheaded by monks in Ngaba.

Given the unresolved tension in Nagchu and the intrusive surveillance and security build-up in Lhasa, it is suspiciously surprising that Padma Choling, the chairman of the standing committee of TAR People's Congress, deputy secretary of TAR Communist Party of China (CPC), and the only Tibetan in the elite 205-member Central Committee of CPC, denied any self-immolations occurred in TAR. Quoted by official media on the sidelines of the National People's Congress meeting, he said no local residents, monks or nuns in TAR had self-immolated in TAR.[iv]

Forked approach to Tibetan Buddhism

The two-tongued approach of Chinese government in managing and controlling Tibetan Buddhism has served to exacerbate an already volatile situation, let alone create an atmosphere of stability and harmony touted by the Chinese leadership. On the one hand, Chinese authorities make repeated attempts to demonise and discredit the globally-revered and respected Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. But on the other, they exhort and mobilise religious personalities and official religious bodies to implement political education campaigns including and increasingly now the Chinese government's 'special struggle' against self-immolation. Aware of the moral legitimacy wielded by many Tibetan lamas among the local populace, and aware also that in the eyes of many Tibetans, the Chinese government lacks legitimacy, religious personalities such as geshes, abbots and reincarnated lamas are forcibly taken to remote rural Tibetan areas to run political education sessions, particularly in monastic institutions. It seems only the Chinese government knows how it is going to reconcile the polar opposites of discrediting Tibetan spiritual leaders and using religion to further its political objectives in Tibet. Plain eyes could see with little effort China's shortsighted and unsustainable ways of dealing with the Tibet crisis.

As far as self-immolation crackdown is concerned, Buddhist lessons seem to have struck a peculiar chord among avowed atheists like the deputy chairman of Sichuan People's Congress Zhang Dongsheng and TAR governor Lobsang Gyaltsen. In recent weeks, Chinese leaders have evoked Buddhist teachings on suicide as sin to condemn self-immolations. Responding to media questions, Zhang said, "Self-immolation is not advocated, nor in fact permitted, according to Buddhist teaching," before adding, "Self-immolation is a sin."[v] On 8 March 2013, Lobsang Gyaltsen, the recently-appointed governor of TAR was quoted as saying, "self-immolation is immoral, inhuman behavior," and "instigated by the Dalai clique." The dyed-in-the-wool Party apparatchik said stability maintenance is the "first responsible and hard task," and called for "resolute struggle against the Dalai clique, infiltration of sabotage activities and resolutely crack down on various secessionist forces, and resolutely safeguard social stability in Tibet."[vi]

The theme of 'cherishing life' and condemning immolations is part of government attempts to bring in Buddhist logic using Buddhist personalities to tackle the self-immolators and their so-called instigators.

On 6 March 2013, in Qinghai Province, Party and government officials from Provincial Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress (CPPCC) and United Front Work Department organized a 'religious debate' meeting in the provincial capital of Siling (Ch: Xining) where over 30 Tibetan abbots, reincarnated lamas and other religious workers representing various monasteries in the province read out speeches on the need to "combat self-immolations, cherish life and protect stability".[vii] At the meeting, a letter issued by Qinghai Province branch of Buddhist Association in China (BAC) called for the establishment of BAC branches in all areas of the province and these BAC branches are expected to carry out anti-immolation campaign of 'cherishing life' and opposing self-immolations.

In a familiar attempt to discredit and delegitimize self-immolation protests, Zhang Dongsheng, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of (Sichuan) Provincial People's Congress said, "Self-immolation incidents are not an ethnic problem, nor a religious issue but a political and criminal issue, and we should resolutely strike down hard on those inciting self-immolations."[viii] He was speaking on the sidelines of the annual session of NPC in Beijing.

'Striking hard' on immolation-related 'crimes'

'Striking hard' on immolation-related 'crimes' had begun long before local governments in self-immolation-affected areas began issuing notices to criminalize self-immolations last year. The notices announced rewards for cooperation and punishments for opposition to the "anti-immolation special struggle" campaign.[ix] For instance, in June 2012, a prominent senior monk, Yonten Gyatso, was sentenced to seven years for sending out photographs and information about the self-immolation of nun Tenzin Wangmo. He was a popular social activist and educator as well as the chief disciplinarian, chant master (Tibetan: Umze) and former member and director of the Monastery Management Committee at Khashi Gyephel Samtenling Monastery in Ngaba County.

Back in August 2011, in a controversial verdict by the Barkham (Ch: Ma'erkang) Intermediate People's Court in Ngaba Prefecture, three Tibetan monks were charged with "intentional homicide" and received prison terms ranging from 10 to 13 years.[x] The monks were accused of assisting the self-immolation of Phuntsok Jarutsang, 19, who set himself on fire on 16 March 2011 and died the next day. At the time, there was no publicly issued guidance from central authorities to pass these heavy sentences, such as the ordinance issued by Central government authorities in December 2012[xi] which is clearly the source of a sudden spike in self-immolation related detention, arrest and imprisonment.

There is now a long and growing list of "crimes" related to self-immolation: holding prayer ceremonies and funeral rites for Tibetans who had died of self-immolation; visiting families and relatives of self-immolators to offer condolences and donations; holding peaceful processions in memory of self-immolators; carrying photographs of Dalai Lama and self-immolators in public or on personal phones; sending information and photographs of human rights violations and self-immolation protests to outsiders; and so on and so forth. Clearly in such cases, religious rights and liberties are denied to Tibetans in the name of 'national security crimes'. Chinese authorities have maintained that all acts related to self-immolation, in one way or the other, show an intent or motive to 'split' the Chinese state and cause instability using the support of 'hostile foreign forces'.

Arbitrary use of Criminal Law provisions

Many Tibetans detained over self-immolations had been charged with "intentional homicide" under Chinese Criminal Law. Yet there is no basis in Chinese law for prosecuting someone for self-immolation. No such known legal precedent exists in China for punishing someone for perceived connections to self-immolation protests, despite the fact that there had been 41 cases of Chinese self-immolations against forced evictions in China from 2009 to 2011.[xii] At least the Criminal Law does not mention 'self-immolation'. Even the charges of 'incitement' or 'abetment' have not been proved with legitimate evidences owing to the incommunicado nature of detentions, interrogations and arrests followed by controversial trials and sentences.

In Chinese law, there is no basis for prosecuting someone for holding prayers and offering condolences. These acts are arbitrarily (and therefore, extrajudicial) charged under 'national security' crimes such as 'endangering state security' and 'state secrets' law, two vague and overbroad laws that justify official misuse of power to further political objectives.

Even before the issuance of the central ordinance in December 2012, the law enforcement agencies in conjunction with local governments and Party authorities had implemented severe punitive measures against self-immolations with administrative permission from the local government. In October 2012, police in Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Prefecture in Gansu province issued a notice asking local residents to provide information about self-immolations in return for cash rewards of 50,000 yuan (U.S. $7,913). In November 2012, Malho (Ch: Gannan) Prefectural government announced collective punishment for individual acts of self-immolation protests. Authorities in Malho Prefecture said government aid to families of self-immolators as well as development projects in villages where Tibetans had carried out protest self-immolations would be cancelled in the next three years.

The truth is the ordinance issued by the central authorities in Beijing to criminalise self-immolation related acts was announced publicly for the first time in December 2012 in an editorial in the official Gannan Daily. The ordinance only codified, albeit arbitrarily, a practice that was already in use. Even before the ordinance was issued, Chinese law enforcement agencies had carried out arbitrary crackdowns using local administrative measures. Ngawang Topden, 20, aTibetan artist was sentenced to two years in a reeducation-

through-labor (Ch: Laojiao) facility for carrying photos on his mobile phone, photos of two of his friends who self-immolated in protest against Chinese rule.[xiii] It took four months for his family and relatives to know that he was first detained in October 2012 in Lhasa and then sentenced for "subversion".

'Anti-immolation special struggle' launched

According to local authorities in Malho Prefecture, crackdown on self-immolation will continue until 15 April 2013. This was announced in December 2012 at a 'mobilisation' meeting where the 'anti-immolation special struggle' was formally launched in the region.[xiv] The 'anti-immolation special struggle' includes propaganda programs on 'guiding ideology' or political education under the guise of 'legal education', 'providing proper guidance to the local populace on establishing a correct concept of right and wrong' and anti-secessionist activities to protect 'China's core national interests', and are being implemented in schools, monasteries, and farming and nomadic communities.

On 7 February 2013, Chinese state media reported the arrest of 70 "criminal suspects captured" by police in Malho Prefecture in Qinghai Province, in connection with a string of self-immolations that occurred since November 2012. Quoting Lyu Benqian, deputy chief of Qinghai Provincial Public Security Department, the report said 12 of the 70 suspects were officially arrested, meaning they will be sentenced soon. Lyu indicated that many arrests were related to sharing information with outsiders. He said, "personal information of self-immolators, such as photos were sent overseas to promote the self-immolations."[xv]

Qinghai party secretary bans "illegal" activity related to immolations

On an inspection tour on 1 March 2013 in Chafu Tibetan Ethnic Township, the Qinghai provincial party secretary, Qiang Wei, visited village households, grassroots cadres, masses, school teachers and students, police officers implementing the special struggle against self-immolation and lectured them on creating a "good social environment in the maintenance of stability".[xvi] Chafu Township is located in Bayan Khar (Ch: Hualong Hui) County in Tsoshar (Ch: Haidong) Prefecture in Qinghai Province.

Also chairman of the Provincial People's Congress, Qiang Wei called for a ban on events or rituals related to self-immolation such as offering of condolences and donations, or organizing prayers, funeral rites, and "other illegal activities". At the Township school, he called on students and teachers to educate and guide the students on "strengthening national unity to establish a sense of national unity and law-abiding citizens."

Qiang Wei's inspection tour was not accidental. It came after four days of Phagmo Dhondup's self-immolation protest at Jhakyung Monastery in Bayan Khar Village in Tsoshar Prefecture. Phagmo Dhondup, a Tibetan farmer in his early 20s, set himself alight on 24 February 2013 and died the next day in a government hospital in Siling (Ch: Xining) city. It was the first immolation reported from Chafu Township.

During the inspection tour, Qiang Wei also visited Jhakyung Monastery where he exhorted the monks to "promote patriotism, strengthen temple management and [hold] legal education, in line with the work of the Party and the government, and to maintain social harmony and stability." He also greeted police officers on duty and encouraged them to make "greater contribution in maintaining social stability."

Special anti-immolation team appointed in Kanlho

On 7 March 2013, the official Gansu Daily reported the appointment of a 26-member anti-immolation team to carry out anti-self immolation campaign in 26 administrative villages and other 95 villages in Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Prefecture, Gansu Province.[xvii] Patriotism, gratitude for the Party, cherishing life, opposing immolations, etc., are some of the curriculum in the campaign. The campaign would be carried out in farming and nomadic communities, schools, monasteries in Kanlho Prefecture. The objectives of the campaign are, according to the report, to make the masses learn and believe that "Tibet is an inalienable part of China", to "uphold the leadership of the Communist Party of China and protect social stability and economic development".

On 28 February 2013, a Chinese court sentenced three Tibetans from 10 to 15 years in prison on "intentional homicide" charges allegedly linked to the 29 November self-immolation of Tsering Namgyal in Luchu (Ch: Luqu) County in Kanlho Prefecture. The three were among six other Tibetans detained in connection the self-immolation. Lhamo Dorje was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment, followed by a deprivation of political rights for three years, and Kalsang Sonam received an 11-year term followed by three years' deprivation of political rights, while Tsesung Kyap received a 10-year term with political rights deprived for a year. The fate of six others – Kalsang Samdrub, Kalsang Kyap, Dorjee Dhondup, Kalsang Namdren, Sonam Kyi, and Nyima – is unknown.

To console is to incite

Interestingly, on 8 February 2013, Chinese authorities sentenced Gyadehor, 60, a Tibetan nomad to four years in prison for "inciting secession". Chinese authorities said Gyadehor offered condolences and donations to families affected by self-immolation, thereby 'spreading secessionist opinions'.[xviii] More curiously, on the same day, another Tibetan, Phagpa, 27, was charged of "intentional homicide" for "encouraging a monk to self-immolate". The monk did not self-immolate after a female cousin dissuaded him, according to Chinese state media, but Phagpa was sentenced to 13 years.

Endnotes:

[i] Tibetan representatives: Self-immolation incidents instigated by the Dalai clique http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2013/03-07/4624582.shtml
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[iii] Tibet branch of Buddhist Association in China holds religious teachings, http://news.china.com.cn/live/2013-02/07/content_18601681.htm
[iv] NPC deputy: Tibet sees regional development as top priority, http://english.cntv.cn/20130304/105694.shtml
[v] Chinese govt criticise the Dalai Lama, http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2013/s3710540.htm
[vi] Lobsang Gyaincain: To fight resolutely with the 14th Dalai Group http://www.tibetinfor.com/news/xzxw/szfl/201303/t20130308_1868034.htm
[vii] Qinghai Province holds Buddhist Forum, http://www.qhsmzw.gov.cn/E_ReadNews.asp?NewsId=1825
[viii] ibid.
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[xii] China: Rise in forced evictions fuelling discontent, http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/china-rise-forced-evictions-fuelling-discontent-2012-10-11
[xiii] Tibetan jailed for having photos of self-immolators, http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/photos-02232013143634.html
[xiv] Huangnan started a special struggle against the self-immolation, 18 December 2012, http://www.qh.xinhuanet.com/qhpeace/2012-12/18/c_114067473.htm
[xv] 70 held over string of self-immolations http://www.china.org.cn/china/2013-02/08/content_27920970.htm
[xvi] Qiang Wei on inspection tour in Tsoshar Prefecture http://qh.people.com.cn/n/2013/0302/c346767-18235868.html
[xvii] Patriotic education campaign in Luchu http://gn.gansudaily.com.cn/system/2013/03/07/013739286.shtml
[xviii] China sentences man to 13 years, says he incited Tibetan monk to set himself on fire http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/02/08/3223438/tibetan-man-sentenced-for-inciting.html#storylink=cpy

Pressure mounts on Labrang Monastery after expulsion order

20 March 2013 : Chinese authorities in Gansu Province last year issued an order to expel monks who had come from Tibetan areas outside Gansu to pursue their religious studies in monasteries (including the famed Labrang Tashikyil Monastery) located in the province.

This was revealed by Samten Jigme (name changed), a former Labrang monk, in his testimony to TCHRD. Samten Jigme fled Tibet and arrived in India this month.

The order is now being implemented at Rongwo Monastery in Rebkong (Ch: Tongren) County in Malho (Ch: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province, according to Samten Jigme. (For more on Rongwo, please see here, here, and here)

Samten Jigme said there are about 1,300 monks at Labrang Monastery but the number may be reduced to 999, which is the limit set by Chinese authorities. The monastery is not allowed to exceed its total monk population beyond 1,000.

So far, the expulsion order has not been implemented in full at Labrang as the monastery's abbot, a member of the Buddhist Association of China (BAC), had repeatedly petitioned Chinese government. (BAC is a party body that controls and manages Buddhism in People's Republic of China.) Even otherwise, implementing this order has created a number of practical hurdles. Many senior monks at Labrang such as geshes, scripture teachers, disciplinarians, etc., hail from areas outside Gansu. Their expulsion would directly affect the normal functioning of the monastery particularly Buddhist learning and scholarship, leaving monks without teachers. Beginning this year, these senior monks have been ordered to apply for residential permits (Tib: themtho) to continue living and working at Labrang.

However, this option is not available to other ordinary monks at Labrang who are likely to be expelled soon.

Moreover, there are 270 monks who have waited for the past three-four years to sit for entrance exams that would decide their admission into Labrang. Chinese authorities have still not granted them permission to sit for the exams. There is little doubt that the authorities are purposely postponing the entrance exams.

The sprawling Labrang Monastery in Sangchu (Ch: Xiahe) County in Kanlho Prefecture, Gansu Province. (Photo credit: Diego Torres on Demotix)

Labrang Monastery is a popular choice for many Tibetan monks as a seat of higher Buddhist learning. The monastery has attracted monks from all over the Tibetan plateau. In recent years, requests for enrolment at Labrang have grown

following widespread expulsion drives carried out in the larger monasteries in Lhasa (TAR) and other monasteries in Tibetan areas outside TAR.

In the aftermath of the 2008 protests in Tibet, Chinese authorities in Lhasa issued a similar order that led to severe crackdown and expulsion of monks in major monasteries located in the Tibetan capital Lhasa. Monks hailing from Tibetan areas outside Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) were expelled or returned to their home villages.

At Kumbum Monastery in Qinghai Province, another historic monastery in the Tibetan province of Amdo, there are about 700 monks with a relatively lenient admission process. But unrestricted commercialization of Kumbum for quick tourist cash has further affected the standards of religious education, thus driving many serious monks to seek admission in neighboring Labrang. Kumbum Monastery has now become a top tourist destination in Qinghai after Chinese government spent millions to beautify its physical structures for tourist consumption, but Kumbum's beautification has failed to attract serious Dharma students.

In turn, Chinese government has begun striking the whip on Labrang, restricting monks to their domicile provinces, or in this case, monks from Qinghai studying in Gansu face imminent expulsion.

Samten Jigme further said that the frequency and severity of political education classes at Labrang have increased in recent months, with classes being held two to three times a month. Usually, 'work team committee' members come to monastery to run the classes. However, after facing stiff opposition and non-cooperation from the monks, Chinese authorities have devised another strategy. Nowadays, they are forcing the monastery's senior monks and staff to give political education to the monks. The strategy of using senior monks to politically indoctrinate younger monks is now being applied in many other areas in Tibet. For instance, in January this year, a group 30 senior Tibetan monks from major monasteries in TAR were taken to Nagchu Prefecture by TAR branch of BAC to give political education in the guise of 'religious teachings' in monasteries such as Bekar Monastery in Diru (Ch: Biru) County in Nagchu, TAR.

Recalling a somewhat apologetic speech given by Labrang's abbot in 2009, Samten Jigme said the abbot told a gathering of the monks that his sincere wish to save Labrang from meeting the fate of many other major monasteries forced him to do Chinese government's bidding. Many major Tibetan monasteries such as Sera, Drepung and Gaden in Lhasa and Kirti Monastery in Ngaba continue to suffer frequent crackdowns resulting in disruption of normal religious classes and increased cases of detentions, disappearances, torture and imprisonment.

The abbot was referring to the distribution of anti-Dalai Lama propaganda literature (in which he took active part, albeit involuntarily) by Chinese authorities at Labrang following the 2008 protest. The propaganda literature blamed the Dalai Lama and the "Dalai clique' for causing the 2008 protest. The involvement of the monastery's abbot in running the anti-Dalai Lama campaign had alienated and hurt the sentiments of many monks, and at the time, some Tibetan writers had openly expressed their opposition through their writings.

Longlife prayers for Dalai Lama removed, ban on phonecalls with outsiders

19 March 2013 : Chinese officials scraped off a longlife prayer for Dalai Lama carved on a rockface near the besieged Nyatso Zilkar Monastery in Tridu (Ch: Chenduo) County in Kyegudo (Ch: Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.

According to information received by TCHRD, the incident happened soon after the 54th anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan national uprising on 10 March when monks carved on the nearby rockface a prayer that Tibetan Buddhists recite for the long life of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

Prayers erased on the rockface (with blue smudges on top) near Nyatso Zilkar Monastery.

Below is the prayer in Tibetan along with English translation:

gangri rawei korwei shingkham su,

Circled by ramparts of snow-mountains – this sacred realm,

phen dhang dewa malue jhungwei ney,

This wellspring of all sustenance and happiness.

chenresig wang Tenzin Gyatso yi,

Boddhisattava of compassion, Tenzin Gyatso

Shapey sitey bhar dhu tenpar shok

May his reign endure till the end of existence

In a related development, at a meeting called by Chinese government officials in Tridu County, local Tibetans were ordered not to use their cellphones for contacting people outside Tibet. Any attempts to communicate with outsiders would be immediately apprehended as the government is monitoring all phone conversations, the officials said.

Sources with contacts in the area told TCHRD that the warning issued against cellphone use has deterred many

local Tibetans from speaking out for fear of official retribution.

Details are still emerging on the current situation at Nyatso Zilkar Monastery which has been under surveillance since the past year. Recently, popular singer Lolo and Lobsang Jinpa, a monk from Nyatso Zilkar were each sentenced to five and six years in prison

Three Tibetans sentenced to prison for 'inciting separatism'

20 March 2013 : China has sentenced three Tibetans to prison on charges of 'incitement to split the country', reported the official Qinghai People's Daily. (Click here for the full report in Chinese)

On 18 March 2013, the Intermediate People's Court in Tsoshar (Ch: Haidong) Prefecture sentenced Jigme Thabkey to five years imprisonment and three years' deprivation of political rights, while Kalsang Dhondup was sentenced to 6 years with four years' deprivation of political rights. The court, located in Ping'an County, also sentenced Lobsang to four years in prison with two years' deprivation of political rights.

The court said the three Tibetans used self-immolation incidents in sending out and distributing texts and photographs related to Tibetan separatist activities and thus, inciting to split the country.

The court invoked article 103 of the Chinese Criminal Law to punish the so-called offenders. The said provision deals with those who "organize, plot or carry out the scheme of splitting the State or undermining unity of the country."

There are no other details available on those sentenced.

Monastery under siege as monks face expulsion while another detained for writing book on immolations

19 March 2013 : A monk from Tongkyap Monastery has gone 'missing' since his arbitrary detention earlier this month by People's Armed Police in Gade (Ch: Gande) County in Golok (Ch: Guolo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.

According to information received by TCHRD, on 11 March, the day after the 54th anniversary of Tibetan national uprising, Tritsun (pen name: Tri Bhoe Trak), 26, a monk from Tongkyap Monastery was detained on unknown charges. Police detaining the monk gave no explanation for the sudden detention. Tritsun's incommunicado detention has severely affected his aged mother, Phagmo, who is the only member in his family.

Although the Chinese authorities have yet to disclose the charges against Tritsun, sources with contacts in the area told TCHRD that he was probably detained in connection with a book he authored and published in March 2013. The book titled "Denpai Khalang" (Eng: Breath of Truth") was released and distributed on 8 March at Tongkyap Monastery. The book contains essays on fiery sacrifices made by Tibetans in a series of self-immolation protests; in particular, it features a biography on Lama Soeba, a reincarnated lama from Tongkyap Monastery who died of self-immolation protest last year.

On 8 January 2012, Lama Soeba died of self-immolation protest in Darlag County in Golok Prefecture. In his audio testimony recorded before his death, he said, among others, "I am giving away my body as an offering of light to chase away the darkness, to free all beings from suffering."

Tritsun's detention took place when he was visiting his aged mother who lives near Tongkyap Monastery. Although a monk at Tongkyap, Tritsun had been pursuing further studies at Lungyon Monastery in Gade County before his sudden detention from the County town.

Tongkyap Monastery is under severe security blanket with the recent spike in armed police presence after monks of the monastery held a prayer ceremony on 14 March, the 2008 protest anniversary, to mourn the loss of lives in self-immolation protests. The prayer ceremony was held to observe the 54th anniversary of Tibetan national uprising and the fifth anniversary of the 2008 protest. The ceremony, held at a sacred rock cairn located near the monastery, saw monks offering butter lamps, doing prostrations and circumambulating around the cairn, covered in Buddhist teachings carved on stones.

Chinese officials set up a stage for holding political meeting on the doorsteps of the monastery's main prayer hall

On 17 March, a group of local officials, after getting wind of the prayer ceremony, arrived at the monastery and immediately called a meeting with the monks. In a strong indication that Tritsun's detention was related to the views he expressed in his book, the officials pressed upon the monks to voluntarily turn themselves in if they had, in any way, morally or materially, supported or aided the publication of the book.

The local officials were followed by 10 Audi SUVs loaded with security officials from the County government. TCHRD sources estimate that the total number of government and security personnel currently stationed at Tongkyap is around 100. Sources said the security officials have decided to extend their visit for a month and had even asked the monastery to let them stay (apparently without charge) in a nearby guesthouse owned and run by the monastery. But the monks appealed that this would severely affect their main income source to feed, shelter and educate the monks. In retaliation, the County officials have now put up tents on the monastery campus demonstrating their

intention to stay at the monastery for longer period.

Moreover, facing opposition from the monks against holding 'political education' meetings in the monastery's main prayer hall, the officials have set up their meeting stage on the prayer hall's doorsteps. Sources said on the first day of the meeting on 17 March, officials again asked the monks about Tritsun's book and issued stern warnings against the holding of prayer ceremonies such as the one organized by monks of Tongkyap Monastery on 14 March saying it was against the law. They further warned that going against the law would result in the confiscation of IDs of registered monks. The fate of unregistered monks at the monastery remains unknown at the moment.

Tongkyap Monastery has about 200 monks, half of whom are officially registered, that is, the Chinese government approves and recognises them with special ID cards. Non-possession of these state-issued IDs means a monk is not a monk, however sincere or serious a monk is about his education. Laws barring those below 18 years of age from joining a monastery have been in place for decades and have severely affected normal religious teachings at the monastery.

Tritsun hails from Gyagor Mema nomadic camp of Dokha Village in Gade County.

Monk dies of self-immolation on protest anniversary

18 March 2013 : A Tibetan monk from the besieged Kirti Monastery died of self-immolation protest on 16 March in Ngaba County in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.

16 March 2013 was the fifth anniversary of the 2008 protest in Ngaba in which many local people were killed by security forces, and the date has been marked by Ngaba people in various ways every year since. Notably, Lobsang Phuntsok committed self immolation on this day in 2011, and Losang Tsultrim in 2012.

According to reliable sources, Lobsang Thokmey, 28, set himself on fire at about 2.40 pm on 16 March and died soon after in a hospital. Citing contacts in the area, sources said Lobsang Thokmey covered himself in petrol outside the door of his room on the west side of the monastery compound, and once aflame, ran towards the western gate of the compound holding a Khata scarf. Before reaching the gate, he fell to the ground. By that time, many monks and laypeople reached the spot, and he was taken to the county hospital, but passed away soon after.

It is not known what he shouted during his protest. On arrival at the hospital, a large force of police and soldiers came there and forcibly took possession of his remains, which they then took to the prefectural headquarters at Barkham.

Lobsang Thokmey belongs to the Roktruktsang household in Division 2 of the Chukle Gongma pastoral area in Trinkon Village of Ngaba county. He joined Kirti monastery at a young age, and was studying in the Prajnaparamita class. He was known as a diligent and well-behaved student. He is survived by his parents and four brothers and sisters.

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BI-WEEKLY HUMAN RIGHTS UPDATE

Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy

Vol. 1 Issue 7 **1-15 April 2013**

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Prominent political prisoner in critical condition on release after 17 years



Jigme Gyatso

3 APRIL 2013: A prominent Tibetan political prisoner, Jigme Gyatso, 52, was released recently after completing his 17 years' prison term, according to exile Tibetan sources.

After his release, he is said to be in poor health struggling with multiple medical problems including weak eyesight, heart complications, kidney disorder and difficulty walking: all unmistakable signs that he had undergone years of torture, mistreatment and beatings during his imprisonment.

In April 2009, TCHRD issued an urgent statement calling for Jigme Gyatso's release on medical grounds, after learning that Gyatso was seriously ill.[i] TCHRD's concerns were based on the long history of Gyatso's mistreatment and torture in detention centres and prisons in Tibet. Moreover, in February 2009, when relatives met Gyatso at Drapchi Prison Hospital, he appeared very frail and was suffering from a kidney problem. He could only walk with his back bended. **(Contd on Pg 2)**

Political prisoner's early release seen as attempt to avoid detention-related death

4 APRIL 2013: A long-serving Tibetan political prisoner, Dawa Gyaltsen, now about 47, was released two years earlier than the expected date for exhibiting "good behaviour", according to information received by TCHRD from exile Tibetan sources having local contacts in Tibet.

He was serving an 18-year prison term when he was released sometime last month. The exact release date cannot be ascertained immediately. The former bank accountant was first detained for distributing and pasting Tibetan independence leaflets.

There has been no statement yet from Chinese authorities regarding Dawa Gyaltsen's release two years before the expected date. However, Tibetan sources say Dawa Gyaltsen (Ch: Dawa Jianzan) is in poor health, with the limp in one of his legs having worsened over the years due to ill-treatment and torture in prison for 17 years.
It is not uncommon in Tibet for Tibetan political prisoners to die shortly after their release. Many Tibetan political prisoners have died at the hands of prison authorities after succumbing to torture-related injuries.

A former prison mate of Dawa Gyaltsen in Chushul (Ch: Qushui) Prison (and who now lives in India) said it is highly probable that he might have been released due to his poor health. "Ten years ago when I was with him in the prison, I always saw him sick and confined to his cell."

Dawa Gyaltsen's condition is said to be critical. His wife, with whom he had two children, had apparently left him during his years of incarceration and moved somewhere else, according to a former Tibetan prisoner (name withheld) who was a cellmate of Dawa Gyaltsen in Chushul Prison. Friends and former prison mates in exile are concerned that Dawa Gyaltsen have few family members and relatives left to take care of him.

In 1995, Dawa Gyaltsen, along with his younger brother, Nyima Dhondup, a monk at Nagchu Shapten Monastery and two more monks, Mazo and Agya, from the same monastery, were detained for distributing "political documents". They were arrested on charges of "inciting counter-revolutionary propaganda" by Lhasa Public Security Bureau (PSB) personnel.

Dawa Gyaltsen was labeled as the "ringleader" and in May 1997, sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment. His brother, Nyima Dhondup, was sentenced to 13 years in prison. Mazo and Agya each received eight years' imprisonment.

Initially, all four of them were held in Drapchi Prison but were later transferred to the newly-renovated and expanded Chushul Prison in the outskirts of Lhasa.

Dawa Gyaltsen spent major part of his sentence in Chushul Prison, where incarceration means brutal mistreatment and torture of political prisoners. During his imprisonment, prison authorities particularly targeted Dawa Gyaltsen for extra supervision and surveillance.

During the 2008 uprising in Tibet, Dawa Gyaltsen was kept in solitary confinement for about six months, as were other Tibetan political prisoners such as Dolma Kyap and Tsering Wangchuk in Chushul.

Prior to the sentencing, Dawa Gyatsen was held in Seitru Detention Centre (Lhasa) for 14 months undergoing intense interrogation, beatings and torture. Sources say his 14-month detention was not included in his 18-year sentence. In February 2005, the Tibet Information Network reported that in 2002, Dawa Gyaltsen's 18-year sentence had been reduced by one year and three months and again in 2004, he received a nine-month sentence reduction.

In 1997, Tenzin Tsundue, a well-known Tibetan activist and writer in India, met Dawa Gyaltsen, who was then 28, in Seitru Detention Centre. Tsundue was detained in March 1997 for "illegally" entering Tibet. According to Tenzin Tsundue, Dawa Gyaltsen was mistreated by prison authorities, who often deprived him of food, and the daily 15-minute morning break outside prison cells.

In his deposition filed on 3 July 2006 in the Spanish national court[i], Tsundue wrote:

Once he showed me his wrists. There were clear scars of torture- a ring of white scar tissue ran around his wrists. He told me that when he was first arrested he was handcuffed and thrown into a dark room without food for ten days. To keep him alive, the jailors would splash water on him once a day. The handcuffs tightened around his wrists. They ate into his flesh, forming sores, and puss. After 10 days when they unlocked the shackles, the metal rings ripped off skin from his wrist. He said he was not given medical attention and it took many months for the sores to heal.

Tsundue, who was detained for about three months in Seitru, said prisoners were not allowed to speak to each other, and if caught in the act, prison guards beat them up.

Dawa Gyaltsen was born in Shentsa (Ch: Shenzha) County in Nagchu (Ch: Naqu) Prefecture in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), in central Tibet.

Dawa Gyaltsen attended primary and middle school in Nagchu Prefecture, later pursuing further education in Beijing, where he specialised in banking and accountancy. After finishing his studies, he worked as a clerk-cum-accountant at a bank in Nagchu. He was married with two children.

Prominent political prisoner in critical condition on release after 17 years

(Contd from Pg 1)

Gyatso was detained on 30 March 1996 in front of the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa. On 25 November 1996, he was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment and 5 years

deprivation of political rights by the Lhasa Municipal Intermediate People's Court on charges of 'endangering national security' in connection with establishing an illegal organisation and "incitement". He was detained in Gutsa Public Security Bureau Detention Centre for one year and a month, where he was severely tortured and beaten. Gyatso described the treatment at Gutsa 'the worst' during his brief meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Dr. Manfred Nowak, who visited China, Xinjiang and Tibet in late 2005.

In April 1997, Jigme was shifted to Drapchi Prison where he served most of his prison term before his transfer to and incarceration in Chushul Prison in April 2005. Despite being seriously ill, he continued to serve his sentence in Chushul Prison. In May 1998, along with fellow inmates at Drapchi, Gyatso protested against Chinese authorities, prior to the visit of a troika of European Union Ambassadors. These protests were brutally suppressed and resulted in the death of eight prisoners, and sentences of at least 27 prisoners were increased.

In March 2004, Gyatso again protested shouting slogans such as "Long Live the Dalai Lama," for which he was kicked and beaten, electric batons were used on his back and chest. His sentence was extended for two years, according to UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Dr Manfred Nowak, who met Jigme Gyatso on 27 November 2005 in Chushul Prison. Gyatso told Special Rapporteur Nowak that he had received a two-year sentence extension in May 2004 after shouting pro-Dalai Lama slogans.

Contrary to some reports saying that Jigme Gyatso was released one year earlier than expected, it appears that he was released because he completed his 17 years' term.

The confusion surrounding Gyatso' exact prison term apparently stems from the fact that the San Francisco-based Dui Hua human rights group in October 2009 announced that Gyatso's sentence was extended by three years as punishment for shouting pro-Dalai Lama slogans in March 2004. In his testimony to the Congressional-Executive Committee on China, John Kamm, executive director of The Dui Hua Foundation said that Jigme Gyatso's sentence "for setting up a pro-independence party is due to expire on March 30, 2014, and his health is said to be poor."[ii] Mr Kamm added that Gyatso' sentence was extended by three years.

TCHRD urges the Chinese authorities to ensure that Jigme Gyatso receives full medical treatment now that he has completed his prison term. Jigme Gyatso's right to be accompanied by his surviving family members and relatives during the course of treatment should be respected. The Chinese authorities should refrain from its common practice of putting even released political prisoners under intrusive surveillance and monitoring. At the moment, Jigme Gyatso's health and well-being are major concerns for many around the globe including human rights groups, activists and Tibetans alike. The Chinese government should release an honest statement providing latest information on Jigme Gyatso's health condition and the circumstances under which he was released.

Background information

Jigme Gyatso was born in 1961 at Bartha Village in Sangchu (Ch: Xiahe) County in Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Gansu Province), in the Tibetan province of Amdo. Jigme travelled to India in 1985 to receive a religious initiation. He stayed at Drepung Gomang Monastery in south India for a year and then returned to Tibet where he joined Gaden Monastery. In 1991 he became involved in pro-independence activities. He distributed independence leaflets and pasted posters on the walls around Gaden Monastery and nearby Lhasa City. Between 1988 and 1989, Gyatso was the leader of a secret youth organization called the "Association of Tibetan Freedom Movement." In 1992, he organized one of the demonstrations that took place in Lhasa. Many of the demonstrators were arrested and detained by the Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers and officials from the anti-riot department. He was not arrested at that time although PSB suspected he was involved and kept him under strict surveillance.

Finally, on 30 March 1996, Gyatso was detained in front of the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa. He was subsequently sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment and 5 years' deprivation of political rights.

After his visit to Tibet in 2005, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Dr. Manfred Nowak made a strong recommendation for Jigme Gyatso's release. "Since he has been convicted of a political crime, possibly on the basis of information extracted by torture, the Special Rapporteur appeals to the government that he be released," Dr Nowak wrote in his report.

In 2000, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that "the deprivation of liberty of Jigme Gyatso is arbitrary, being in contravention of articles 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and articles 19 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)."[iii] The working group further stressed that Jigme Gyatso's actions never "advocated violence, war, national, racial or religious hatred, or any behaviour or practices" prohibited under

the ICCPR and that he was "merely exercising the right to freedom of peaceful assembly with others in order to express opinions, a right guaranteed under articles 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration."

Monk hospitalized, another has lost mental stability on release from prison

15 APRIL 2013: Two Tibetan monks have been released after they completed their five-year prison terms in Chushul (Ch: Qushui) Prison located in the outskirts of the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, in Tibet Autonomous Region.



Lobsang Ngodup



Soepa

Lobsang Ngodup, 34, and Soepa, 35, were released on 10 March 2013, which was also the 54th anniversary of Tibetan national uprising day, reported Tibet Express, the exile Tibetan language newspaper last week citing local Tibetan sources.

After his release, Lobsang Ngodup is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Siling (Ch: Xining), capital of Qinghai Province. Soepa is said to have lost his mental balance, the exile newspaper reported, adding he has been behaving strangely since his release. Curiously, no injuries are visible on his body but the state of Soepa's mental health indicates that he had endured severe torture at the hands of prison authorities in Chushul.

Exile Tibetan sources said after his release, Soepa was first taken to Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province, where the security personnel detained him for seven days. This was followed by additional four days' detention at Sershul County. It was only after five Tibetans agreed to sign a bond pledging to take responsibility that Soepa was released. He has now returned to Mange Monastery but security personnel permanently stationed there are keeping a close watch on his movements. He is required to report to the local Public Security Bureau office fro an indefinite period.

Soepa was born in Mange Village and became a monk at a young age at Mange Monastery in Sershul County in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. He was a good student and took special interest in writing and literature. At the time of his arrest, he was a visiting student at Sera Monastery (in Lhasa) where he completed his Uma class (equivalent to a Master's degree) in Tibetan Buddhism.

Lobsang Ngodup was a monk from Onpo Monastery in Sershul County.

Both were among the 15 monks arrested by Chinese security forces on 10 March 2008 in Lhasa. TCHRD first reported their detention and 'disappearance' on 14 March 2008. (See here and here) The monks, joined by two laypersons, whose identities are still unknown, staged a peaceful protest in front of the Jokhang Temple on Barkhor street shouting pro-independence slogans, distributing pamphlets and raising the banned Tibetan national flags. Most of the monks, originally from Kham and Amdo region of Tibet, were visiting students at Sera Monastery and belonged to the monastery's Jadrel Khangtsen (Jadrel college). Following a brief protest march on Barkhor street, the monks were arrested by the Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials, beaten severely and manhandled. Moreover, the shops and vendors around the busy Barkhor Street were ordered to close. Additional contingents of armed forces were then deployed in the area.

It has now emerged that Lodoe, 30, a monk from Onpo Monastery who was among the 15 arrested had been sentenced to 10 years in Chushul Prison.

China confirms sentencing four Tibetans for "inciting separatism"

15 APRIL 2013: A Chinese court in Malho (Ch: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, has sentenced four Tibetans to varying prison terms for "inciting separatism".

The Malho Intermediate People's Court in Thunding and Tsekhog County sentenced Choepa Gyal, Chagthar, Namkha Jam and Gonbey (probably Gonpo or Konbey) on an unspecified date, according to a report published by the official Qinghai Daily News on 12 April 2013. (Please click here for the report in Chinese)

The report said Choepa Gyal was sentenced to six years in prison and three years' deprivation of political rights for sending photographs and information related to Tibetan "separatism" to outsiders through QQ (Chinese internet chat service) and for discussing "separatist-related" subjects on the internet chat site, and thus "inciting secession".

Namkha Jam received six years' imprisonment and two years' deprivation of political rights for taking photographs of self-immolators and sending them

through internet to members of Tibetan "separatist" organisations outside Tibet and also inside Tibet, the report said.

Another Tibetan, Chagthar was handed four years' imprisonment with two years' deprivation of political rights. According to the court that gave the judgement, Chagthar knew about self-immolations; on three occasions, he produced and edited photographs and texts about self-immolators which were later distributed.

Gonbey was sentenced to three years in prison with one-year deprivation of political rights for sending and distributing photographs and "separatist" contents.

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Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy

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Tibet's Stolen Spiritual Leader Turns 24: China must end enforced disappearance of Tibet's Panchen Lama



25 April 2013: Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, Tibet's XIth Panchen Lama, one of the most important Tibetan spiritual leaders, turns 24 today under house arrest. Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was born on 25 April 1989 in Lhari County in Nagchu, Tibet. It is his 18th year in Chinese custody at an undisclosed location after he and his parents disappeared in 1995. He was only six years old when he was disappeared by the Chinese authorities.

For about 18 years, the Chinese authorities have wilfully misled the international community on the actual whereabouts and wellbeing of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family members, almost always sticking to the standard, unverifiable response that the "perfectly ordinary boy" is in "protective custody", growing up in "excellent state of health" and that his parents "did not want to be disturbed". But the Chinese government has failed to substantiate such hollow reassurances with concrete evidences, and has continued to rebuff any requests from UN human rights mechanisms and other international bodies to allow an independent expert to visit and confirm the wellbeing of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima.

The ongoing enforced disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family has further tainted China's abysmal human rights record. Enforced disappearance is a crime. Every enforced disappearance violates a range of human rights including the right to security and dignity of person; the right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to humane conditions of detention; the right to a legal personality; right to a fair trial; right to a family life and the right to life.

The forced disappearance of Panchen Lama violates Tibetan people's collective right to freedom of religion and belief. The spiritual void China

created by Panchen Lama's disappearance cannot be filled by political replacement; the void has only contributed to the weakening of the social, moral and spiritual fabric of Tibetan life. Faith should not be politicised by a spiritually ignorant regime.

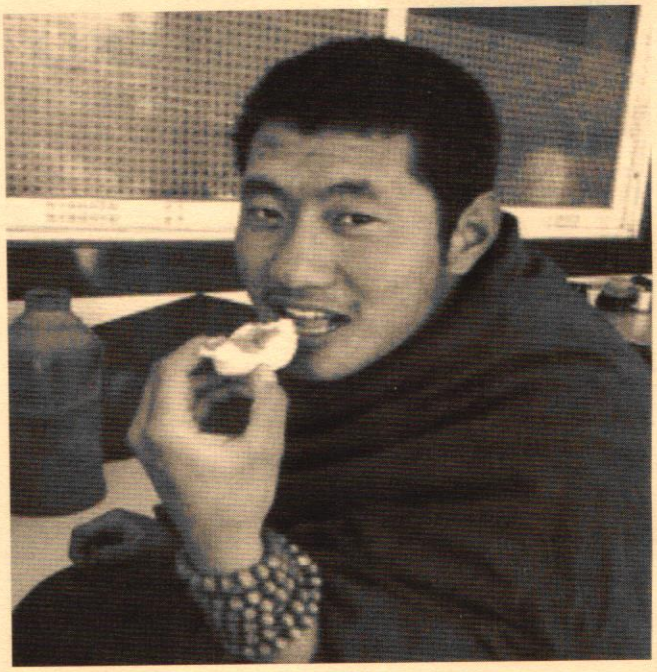
It begs explanation why the Chinese government would go to such lengths to provide 'security' for a child who they consider to be just 'ordinary' boy. Article 34 of the Chinese Constitution stipulates that any person who has reached the age of 18 is entitled to fundamental rights such as the right to religious belief, education and occupation. Therefore, the continuing Chinese custody of Panchen Lama also violates the fundamental rights enshrined in the Chinese Constitution.

Gedhun Choekyi Nyima is now 24 years old, no longer a minor to be kept under "protective custody", according to both Chinese and International Law. He has a right to live as a normal citizen under the Chinese Constitution. Since Gedhun Choekyi Nyima is widely regarded by many Tibetans as the true incarnation of the Xth Panchen Lama, the Chinese government should allow him to be who he is and what Tibetan people think of him. China's continuing incommunicado detention of Panchen Lama is the most explicit proof of its government undermining and violating the freedom of religious worship and practice in Tibet.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) calls on China to release Gedhun Choekyi Nyima immediately and unconditionally; this could become one of the most convincing reassurances China could ever provide to demonstrate that it respects religious rights of the Tibetan people. TCHRD reiterates its call to the PRC to allow an independent figure to visit Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and verify his health and living conditions. TCHRD urges the international community to put strong, sustained pressure on the Chinese government to account for the disappeared and to uphold the rights and liberties of the Tibetan people.

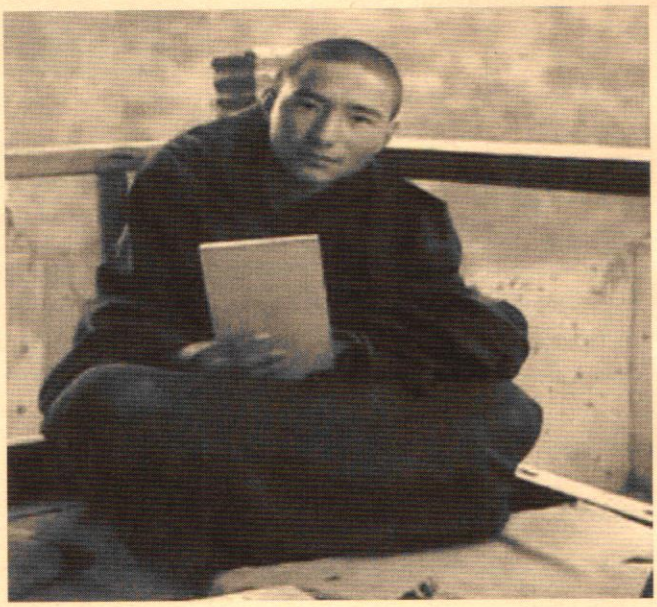
Two Tibetan monks die of self-immolation protest

25 April 2013: Despite extreme measures implemented by the Chinese authorities to crack down on self-immolation protests, burning protests in Tibet continue unabated as two more Tibetans died yesterday after setting themselves on fire on the eve of the 24th birthday of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, Tibet's XIth Panchen Lama, one of the most important Tibetan spiritual leaders who was disappeared along with his parents by the Chinese authorities almost 18 years ago.



Konchok Woeser

According to confirmed information received by TCHRD, at around 6.40 pm on 24 April 2013, two monks of Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery set themselves on fire and died in Dzoege (Ch: Ruergai) County in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.
Lobsang Dawa, 20, also died of self-immolation protest in Dzoege County in Tibet.



Lobsang Dawa

The monks, Lobsang Dawa, 20, and Konchok Woeser, 23, set themselves on fire at the right hand corner of the monastery's assembly hall. They shouted slogans of protest against the Chinese government and its policies in Tibet, and died immediately, on the site of their protest.

Fellow monks took their bodies to their monastic quarters and said prayers for them.

Local authorities have issued orders that the remains of the monks must be cremated the next morning, that is, on 25 April.

Losang Dawa is from the 'lower' Zaru nomadic community in the Zaru area of Dzoege. His father Dorje Khandro, 62, has seven children by two wives, and he is the youngest. His mother is deceased.

Konchok Woeser is from the Tsako Ruwa nomadic community in the Mechu area of Dzoege. His father is is Tsering Norbu and mother Samdrup Drolma. He is the middle of the three sons.
Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery, founded by the fifth Kirti Rinpoche Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltsen in 18th century in Dzoege

Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery, founded by the fifth Kirti Rinpoche Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltsen in 18th century in Dzoege

Both had joined Taktsang Lhamo Kirti at a young age. Losang Dawa was attending the 'Du-chen' philosophy class, and Konchok Woeser was studying in the Tantric college of the monastery. Both were model students, in their behaviour and in their studies.

Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery is nearly 150 km from the Dzoege County seat, on the border with Gansu Province. The monastery was founded by the fifth Kirti Rinpoche Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltsen in 1748. At present, the monastery has four colleges on Philosophy, Tantric, Kalachakra and Medicine, with around 700 monks.

Tibetan mother dies of self-immolation, denied proper cremation by Chinese authorities

17 APRIL 2013: A Tibetan mother of one has died after setting herself on fire in protest against Chinese rule in Dzamthang (Ch: Rangtang) County in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.

According to information received by TCHRD, Chuktso, 20, died after her self-immolation protest on 16 April near Jonang Monastery in Dzamthang County in the Tibetan province of Amdo. Sources said the burning protest took place at around 3 pm (local time).

Shortly after the self-immolation, local Tibetans took Chuktso's body to Jonang Monastery where the monks held prayers and conducted religious rituals for the deceased. The body was later taken to the deceased's home.

Family members of Chuktso were forced to cremate the body in haste that same night after orders came from County government and Public Security Bureau(PSB) office asking for an immediate cremation or allow confiscation of the body.

A large number of Tibetans who died of self-immolation protests had been denied their right to practise their own faith including something as basic as the right to a dignified and culturally appropriate cremation after one passes away on to the next lifetime. Family members, relatives and friends of those who died in self-immolation protests had been harassed and pressured into following arbitrary orders from the Chinese authorities on disposing off bodies.

On 24 March this year, when another Tibetan woman, Kalkyi, 24, died of self-immolation protest, local authorities issued stern orders telling the deceased's family members to cremate her body immediately. Kalkyi was cremated the same night of her self-immolation protest.

In recent years in Ngaba, Chinese authorities have confiscated bodies of self-immolation protesters, whose family members were later handed ashes, believed to be the remains of their loved ones. These families have no way of knowing the truth about their loved ones' death and the legitimacy of the ashes.

Security forces have been increased in and around Jonang Monastery and the village following the latest self-immolation, sources told TCHRD.

Chuktso was born in Bharma Village in Dzamthang County. Her father's name is Tenkho and mother's Donkyi. Chuktso was also a mother to a three-year-old child.

Bharma Village, located near Jonang Monastery, is a farming and nomadic village in Dzamthang County.

Chuktso is the sixth Tibetan to self-immolate in protest against Chinese rule in Dzamthang. The total confirmed number of self-immolation protests in Tibet has now reached 115.

Chabcha student protesters sentenced up to four years

17 APRIL 2013: Eight Tibetan students have been sentenced to varying prison terms for "illegally holding demonstration" on 26 November 2012 by the Chabcha (Ch: Gonghe) County People's Court in Chabcha County



Kunsang Bum

in Tsolho (Ch: Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, according to a report published today on the official Chinese website.

According to the report, the county court passed the judgement on 10 April 2013 at around 10 am (local time), sentencing eight Tibetan youths from Tsolho Vocational School in Gonghe County. They were charged of "causing harm to social stability".

Sangye Bum was sentenced to four years in prison, while Kunsang Bum, Lhaten and Jampa Tsering each received three years and six months of imprisonment. Both Wangyal Tsering and Choekyong Kyap were handed three years and three months in prison. The identity of the other two Tibetans who had also been sentenced was not revealed in the report. However, it appears that they were sentenced to three years and six months in prison.

A partial view of the Chabcha student protest on 26 November 2012

The report said over a hundred students, teachers and representatives of various schools in Tsolho Prefecture and Gonghe County attended the court hearing.

The student demonstration in Gonghe County on 26 November last year witnessed an unprecedented number of protesters from local Tibetan schools in the area. The immediate cause of the protest was the distribution of political questionnaires and propaganda booklets containing vilification of the Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and propaganda attacks against self-immolation protests among Tibetan students in Tsolho Prefecture.

The protest lasted for nearly two hours before its suppression by armed police. Many students were injured in the protest as local armed police forces engaged in indiscriminate beatings. There were also unconfirmed reports of police using tear gas shell and gunshots to break up crowds of protesters. An unspecified number of students were detained, with whereabouts of some still unknown.

For more information and background on the Chabcha student protest, please visit the News section of our website: http://www.tchrd.org/category/latest-news/

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Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy

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Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy is a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in January 1996 with the mission to protect the human rights of Tibetans in Tibet and promote the principles of democracy in the exile community.

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'Weakness of the Oppressor': Leaked document exposes psychological traumas faced by Chinese armed police in Tibet

13 May 2013: TCHRD has received a Chinese language copy of a manual published by the Sichuan Provincial Political Department of the People's Armed Police Force (PAPF, also called PAP), titled "Guide on Psychiatric Wellbeing While Maintaining Stability" that was circulated among different contingents, detachments and squadrons located at the province, prefecture, and county levels of Sichuan. The manual contains issues raised during a videoconference meeting held by Sichuan Province People's Armed Police Force regarding the psychological and moral issues arising from stability maintenance work in Tibetan areas. Although the manual was drafted before Xi Jinping's appointment earlier this year, there is no sign that he will change any of his predecessor's policies regarding Tibet.

Experts in psychiatric health departments of armed police hospitals and other relevant organs jointly drafted the 29 questions and answers on how to cope with the violent nature of the PAPF's work in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan Province. **(Contd on Pg 3)**

Freedom at last? : Released from 25 years' imprisonment, former longest-serving Tibetan political prisoner under surveillance

3 May 2013: Tibet's longest-serving known political prisoner, Lobsang Tenzin, was released last month after completing his 18-yr term in Chushul Prison in the outskirts of the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, in Tibet Autonomous Region.

Lobsang Tenzin was the longest-serving political prisoner among a new generation of Tibetans born after the 10 March Tibetan uprising in 1959. Lobsang Tenzin was arrested on 5 March 1988 during a demonstration against Chinese rule in Lhasa. He was then about 24 and a student of Tibet University (Lhasa).

According to information received by TCHRD, Lobsang Tenzin was released on Wednesday, 24 April 2013, the day his 18-yr prison term ended. TCHRD had earlier reported in late 2012 about the possibility of his release in 2013 (Click here for the full report.) However, it appears that his release has done little to gain him any measure of freedom even at his home, which is located at Bhanak Shol in Lhasa city. Sources told TCHRD that Lobsang Tenzin's home is heavily guarded and monitored by security personnel and other government officials who continue to turn away visitors, among them Lobsang Tenzin's relatives and neighbors.

After spending 25 years in the notoriously famed Drapchi, Powo Tramo and Chushul prisons, Lobsang Tenzin has suffered brutal mistreatment and torture at the hands of prison guards, resulting in numerous health complications. Over the years, TCHRD has intermittently received reports of Lobsang Tenzin's worsening health. Years ago, he suffered damaged kidney, causing numbness and extreme difficulty in standing. In the past, he was also said to be suffering from liver disease, possibly hepatitis. In 2011, TCHRD received information about further health complications, particularly advanced stage of diabetes, which continue to cause him momentary blindness.

Background

Lobsang Tenzin was arrested on 5 March 1988 during a demonstration against Chinese rule in Lhasa. He was charged of killing a policeman on duty. The policeman had actually fallen from a window and died. In the past, analysts have highlighted the disproportionate use of force by security forces against unarmed Tibetan demonstrators during the March 1988 demonstration. Following the arrest, Lobsang Tenzin was sentenced to death with two years' reprieve.

In 1991, the death sentence was commuted to life after a strong and sustained pressure from the international community. By then, Lobsang Tenzin had spent three years in Drapchi Prison.

On 31 March 1991, prison guards caught Lobsang Tenzin and a fellow inmate, Tenpa Wangdrak, a monk from Gaden Monastic University in Lhasa, handing a letter to the then US ambassador to China, Mr James R. Lilley, who was on a visit to Drapchi. The letter contained a list of prisoners who had been tortured and information on torture methods used in the prison. Both were brutally beaten and locked up solitary confinement for about three weeks. Later they were secretly transferred to the remote and high-security Powo Tramo Prison, located in Kongpo area in eastern Tibet. Along with them, other political prisoners Gyen Tenpa Phuljung, Gaden Gyaldhar, and Lhasawa Penpa were also secretly transferred to Powo Tramo.

TCHRD calls on the Chinese government to guarantee, with immediate effect, that Lobsang Tenzin is a free man, having completed his term despite the illegality of his 25 years' imprisonment. The Chinese government should end immediately the unreasonable practice of putting Lobsang Tenzin under 'house arrest'. TCHRD demands that Lobsang Tenzin receive full medical treatment in the care of his family members and relatives. With respect to the principle of accountability, the Chinese government should provide full medical support to Lobsang Tenzin, who was robbed of 25 years of his life for merely exercising his right to freedom of expression, opinion and belief.

"They treat us like animals"

7 May 2013: Tashi Rabten (pen name: Theurang) is a Tibetan writer, poet and editor who is serving a four-year sentence in Mianyang Prison, Sichuan Province. He graduated from North-West University for Nationalities and edited the now-banned Tibetan language journal "Shar Dungri" and also published "Written in Blood", a compilation of his poems, notes and writings on the situation in Tibet following the 2008 protests.

In this essay, translated by TCHRD, the writer condemns the cultural insensitivity of Chinese tourists and the commercialization of Tibetan culture as the number of Chinese tourists continues to rise, exerting immense pressure on the fragile ecology and landscape of the Tibetan Plateau.

They treat us like animals
by Theurang

During the summer, my homeland is filled with swarms of Chinese tourists. The rush of tourists means that elderly Tibetans are having difficulties circumambulating the monasteries. Covering their heads in robes, monks and nuns stand by gaping at the tourists in silence. When I see these images, when I think about them, I suffer from intense pain and despair. Anger and resentment boil in my heart. Today, under the crushing boots of foreigners, my homeland is suffering from degeneration and decay.

Like swarms of ants unleashed by anthills, these increasing number of tourists are making preparations to settle themselves permanently on our lands. What makes me laugh and cry at the same time is to witness the smiling faces of the Tibetan masses lured by hard cash. Even the leaders of the nomadic villages have signed contracts to sell their lands. In the next two to three years, these visitors who call themselves tourists will settle permanently on our lands.

When tourist vehicles arrive, ruddy-faced Tibetan

women and snot-nosed Tibetan boys rush into action with their horses. Holding their breath, desperation in their eyes, they carry Chinese tourists on their horses and walk up the mountains. Holding fifty-Yuan notes in their hands, smiles written all over their faces, they kill their time waiting for the arrival of other tourists. When I see them, I wonder how a race that once conquered two-thirds of the world's territory has now been turned into a bunch of soul-less slaves serving other people. My dear fellow-countrymen, if we cannot paint the bones of our ancestors in gold, the least we could do is not to throw their gray hair in the wind.

Tourists visiting from surrounding areas carry cameras of different sizes in their hands. Crowds of monks, elderly folks and 'servicemen' bearing horses gape at the tourists when the latter take pictures of nomadic villages and rivers. One of the tourists pointed his camera at the strange-looking eyes of these Tibetans and took their pictures. When I saw this, I wondered: 'When the tourist returns to his place, where would he advertize this picture and what sort of caption would he give it?' These thoughts gave me intense pain and despair.

Why do these tourists point their cameras on the faces of elderly Tibetans and take their pictures? Do these tourists not have a sense of ethics and morality? If we turn around and point the camera on their faces and take their pictures, wouldn't they run away from us saying we are violating their rights? The fact that they keep taking pictures of our people, our mountains and our villages—despite knowing that such actions are unethical, immoral and illegal—clearly shows what kind of status our people enjoy. They treat us like animals lacking the ability of speech. They treat us as wage laborers who could be swayed in any direction by the lure of hard cash. They treat us as a race of ignorant barbarians. My dear fellow countrymen, as the saying goes, if sons fail to inherit the legacy of forefathers or if the thread fails to inherit the legacy of needles, others would keep trampling on our heads.

What would happen if you visit a Chinese city and randomly point your camera on the face of a Chinese and take his picture? What consequences would you have to bear if you selfishly take pictures of homes, belongings and other precious objects of a city? How would the whip of laws chase you away if you trample upon the rights and liberties of people living in a city? Why can't the standards of law and ethics of the cities be applied equally in our nomadic grasslands? Why can't camera-holding tourists riding in cars and masses on horses enjoy equal status if human rights have a universal resonance? Like in the cities, why can't we put up signboards in nomadic grasslands declaring, 'Taking pictures, peeing and spitting are strictly prohibited here!'

'Weakness of the Oppressor': Leaked document exposes psychological traumas faced by Chinese armed police in Tibet

(Contd from Pg 1)

The 29 questions and answers focus "on providing guidance to some PAP officers on effectively deal with the common psychological traumas" caused by the horrors of their job in Tibet, and to "further improve the quality of capability of stability-maintenance work in Tibetan areas, particularly the PAP officers and other armed forces who need thorough educational and ideological guidance on their work."

Edited and approved by Fu Wan Xuan, the director of the Sichuan Political Department of PAP and his deputy, Chen li Xue, the manual was drafted by Wang Jun Xiang, Cheng Jian Wei, Xie Lei, Wang Bin , and Zhang Wen Chun, all mental health experts working in military and armed hospitals.

In a broader sense, the manual starkly exposes the falsity of the Chinese government's claim that Chinese rule has 'liberated' and brought happiness to Tibet. Repression and violence not only take a toll on the lives of the repressed but also those who perpetrate it. The casualties of China's "life and death struggle" in Tibet, as exposed by this manual, are the victims and perpetrators alike. Those assigned with stability maintenance work in Tibet struggle with psychological problems as their most fundamental beliefs in right and wrong are twisted, violated and made irrelevant. Scientific studies have pointed out that these psychological symptoms are not limited only to first time officers but also the veterans. In this manual, China speaks mainly of some first time officers who are psychologically traumatized by their experience of implementing repressive policies sanctioned and supported by the Chinese central government in Beijing.

The manual provides guidance on maintaining the psychological health of PAP forces in Tibetan areas while simultaneously providing instructions for the same PAP forces on how to effectively maintain stability, utilizing the tactics that cause the

psychological problems, such as police violence against protestors. Some PAP officers, unable to cope with changed conditions in Tibet, leave or become afflicted with psychological illnesses. The 25-page manual offers advices on the difficulties and doubts harbored by armed police officers in Tibet.

Point 11 in the manual talks about the psychiatric issues faced by some PAP officers who find it impossible to block from their minds images of an armed crackdown. The manual mentioned the "3/16" incident in Ngaba when Phuntsok, a Tibetan monk, became the second Tibetan to self-immolate and the "3/18 incident of beating, smashing, burning and looting" in Serta (Ch: Seda) and Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) counties. In both these cases, PAP forces flagrantly abused their power and fired indiscriminately into huge crowds of peaceful protesters in Tibet. The level of repression in these areas has only increased since then as Tibetan areas in Sichuan Province remain under rigorous surveillance and blocked to outsiders. Not surprisingly, the manual states that PAP officers who had participated in the "3/16" and "3/18" incidents as well as the violent crackdowns may suffer from nightmares or insomnia as they are reminded of their involvement in such incidents. The small saving grace of the ongoing tragedy in Tibet in this context is that there are some armed Chinese officers whose conscience are pricked and morally outraged by the inhumane consequences of their actions.

On the psychological crises suffered by some armed officers when faced with defiant Tibetan protesters, point 16 says:

> Some comrades when they see troublemakers challenging them with Tibetan swords and stones lose their composure and become confused and discouraged, while some, when they see [protesting] maroon-robed monks, become uncomfortable and confused. [Some comrades] even fear to react when faced with such situations. Such reactions diminish the strength of armed forces' valour and resolve in punishing [the troublemakers]. This situation is taken very seriously by the armed forces and efforts are made to complete the work successfully.

In this context, it is useful to remember that since 2008, the Chinese government has unleashed the scourge of domestic Chinese nationalism to justify its violent rule in Tibet and thus widening the ethnic hostility between Tibetans and Chinese. Official Chinese media has labeled Tibetans as ungrateful, uncivilized and wild people. Point 16 is an example of the Chinese attempts to instill enmity in the PAP so they will not hesitate to attack Tibetan protestors. This is in stark contrast to the Chinese singing paeans to ethnic unity.

Rather than speaking of ethnic unity, the manual reinforces the myth of wild, fearful Tibetan barbarians in the eyes of the Chinese saying:

> No matter how [physically] strong or intimidating the Tibetan separatists may look, we [the armed forces] fulfill the needs of the masses. Under the leadership and support of the Chinese Communist Party, Central Military Commission, and president Hu Jintao, as well as support from the masses, we can fight the battle of maintaining long-term stability in Tibet.

It should be noted that the increased security build-up and repressive measures in Tibet are implemented with active support from the central government authorities including the Chinese president.

The manual describes the conflicts faced by some PAP officers about the choice of their career after experiencing the "dangerous and complex" work of stability maintenance in Tibet. It says:

> The duty of maintaining stability in Tibet is tough, ridden with dangers, full of conflicts, [daily struggle] between death and life in the hailstorm of swords and guns

In the section dealing with the issue of emotional breakdowns and other psychological symptoms suffered by some first-time Chinese officers in Tibet, the manual says:

> Many armed officers and soldiers posted for the first time in Tibet to work in stability maintenance become indisposed with psychological problems, including difficulty managing tempers and becoming scared to the point of losing confidence. Particularly during tense standoffs and unexpected incidents, a handful of officers become frozen with fear and paranoia unable to respond in timely fashion.

It further adds:

> By clearly recognizing the political strategy [and context] of the stability maintenance work in Tibetan areas, we must ensure the victory of Chinese government and the Chinese state by following the 'three principles', the 'three principles of caution', and the 'six mindsets required during PAP actions'.

However, this rallying call cannot hide the consequences of China's Tibetan policy, which has not only damaged Tibetans but also caused a moral crisis among the very people China relies on to execute their inhumane strategy.

Notes:

1. 'Weakness of the Oppressor' From Jean-Paul Satre's preface to Franz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth
2. The People's Armed Police Force, China Daily (US Edition), 2009 http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/60th/2009-08/26/content_8619526.htm; From Chinese White Paperhttp://www.china.org.cn/english/features/book/194480.htm
3. For a scanned copy of the manual in Chinese language, please contact tnyinjey@gmail.com

Nyatso Zilkar monk in poor health after imprisonment

8 May 2013: An imprisoned monk from the restive Nyatso Zilkar Monastery in Trindu (Ch: Chenduo) County, Jyekundo (Ch: Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Qinghai Province) was released on an unknown date last month before the expiration of his prison term due to medical emergency.

According to information received by TCHRD, Sonam Yingyen, 44, became seriously ill soon after he was sentenced to two-year imprisonment in October 2012 in Siling (Ch: Xining) city, capital of Qinghai Province.

Sonam Yingyen was among the five monks of Nyatso Zilkar Monastery arrested on 1 September 2012 in a surprise police raid on the monastery. The other four monks were Lobsang Jinpa, 30, Tsultrim Kalsang, 25, Ngawang Monlam, 30, and Sonam Sherab, 45.

Sources told TCHRD that Sonam Yingyen's health had deteriorated during his detention and by the time he was sentenced, his medical condition had worsened leading to over a month's hospitalization in an army hospital in Siling.

When family members and friends learned that Sonam Yingyen was being held secretly in the army hospital – considered to be the largest hospital in Siling – they visited the hospital, only to be turned away by local security officials who said the army and police were there to do the job. Since then, fears for his life have grown among his family members and friends.

Long before this revelation, family members and friends had suspected that something was amiss, as they never got to meet with Sonam Yingyen at the prison in Siling. Sources said soon after the sentences were passed, other monks were able to meet with their relatives and friends every month for about 30 minutes but no one saw Sonam Yingyen. It later turned out that he had been taken to the army hospital. Relatives and friends who tried to visit Sonam Yingyen in prison were given no explanation when they inquired prison officials about his whereabouts.

In April this year, authorities decided to send Sonam Yingyen back to Yushu where he will be referred to another hospital for further treatment. There is no information on specific ailments he suffers from. Sources who talked to TCHRD are not sure if the monk was released on medical parole as his family members have not been given any visitation rights since his imprisonment or during his hospitalization in Siling. There is no information on the possibility of the family getting visitation rights now that Sonam Yingyen is believed to be in Yushu.

It has now emerged that another Nyatso Zilkar monk, Lobsang Samten, who was sentenced to one year and nine months in prison last year has now been transferred to Thang Karmo (Ch: Tanggemu) Prison near Chabcha (Ch: Gonghe) in Qinghai Province. Lobsang Samten was detained along with fellow monks, Sonam Gewa and Lobsang Nyima, on the evening of 15 February 2012. It is suspected that they were arrested in connection with the 8 February 2012 protest march led lay people and monks in Dzatoe (Ch: Zaduo) and Trindu (Ch: Chenduo) counties in Yushu.

Situation in Trindu County, where Nyatso Zilkar Monastery is located, is said to be tense, following the February 2012 protest march and the June 2012 twin self-immolation of two Tibetan youths. Sources told TCHRD that areas around Trindu County remain the most restricted in Jyekundo Prefecture.

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BI-WEEKLY HUMAN RIGHTS UPDATE

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Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy is a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in January 1996 with the mission to protect the human rights of Tibetans in Tibet and promote the principles of democracy in the exile community.

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Tibetan writer sentenced to 5 yrs in prison for writing book on self-immolation

21 May 2013: On 14 May 2013, two days before the launch of Chinese state television broadcaster *CCTV*'s fifth propaganda film on self-immolations, a Tibetan writer was quietly sentenced to five years in prison for writing a book on the issue of Tibet issue including self-immolation protests.

According to exile Tibetan sources, Gartse Jigme, 36, a writer and monk, was sentenced to prison on 14 May 2013 for authoring a book with political contents by Tsekhog (Ch: Zekog) County People's Court in Malho (Ch: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. **(Contd on Pg 3)**

China rejects universality of human rights in latest white paper

21 May 2013: Last week, the Information Office of the State Council, or China's Cabinet, issued a white paper on "Progress in China's Human Rights in 2012"[i] as a part of its propaganda activity for the upcoming Universal Periodic Review later this year. Unsurprisingly, the white paper praised Chinese progress in human rights—pointing almost exclusively to the benefits of China's continued economic development. However, behind the self-congratulatory praise and statistics lie China's underlying philosophy of human rights, which fundamentally misunderstands the international human rights system. China's white paper is oblivious to the indivisible and universal nature of human rights, and that guaranteeing human rights requires action and not just mere hollow proclamations.

According to the white paper, human rights are divisible and unrelated by treating economic development and the corresponding rights as supreme. The first section of the white paper concerns "Human Rights in Economic Construction" and states that, "it would be impossible to protect people's rights and interests without first developing the economy to feed and clothe the people." Rhetoric from China concerning the importance of economic development before even addressing civil and political rights is not new. During the Cold War both capitalist and communist states frequently advocated for either civil and political right or economic, social and cultural rights and ignored the other. This division was a political tool and never accurately described the international human rights system or the philosophy of human rights.

By stating that sustenance is necessary before any other rights can be addressed only recognises half of the human rights system and falls into the false choice of Cold War rhetoric. It is true that the right to sustenance is necessary for the enjoyment of other human rights—but that is not unique to economic rights, as China claims. If people are tortured or killed it does not make much difference if their stomachs were full at the time their rights were violated. It is likewise impossible for them to exercise other human rights if they are arbitrarily arrested or beaten.[ii] Despite the fact that majority of 117 self-immolation occurred in 2012, the white paper maintains a stony silence on the issue, as Chinese authorities continue to publicly and secretly detain, arrest, torture and sentence Tibetans over alleged connections to the instigation and incitement of self-immolation. Failing to recognise that non-economic rights are necessary to the achievement of all human rights ignores the indivisibility of human rights upon which the international human rights system is based. A state may not pick and choose which human rights to address and which to ignore, yet the white paper appears to suggest that China may do exactly that. This is particularly disturbing, as China is the primary human rights defender for 1.3 billion people who literally live and die by how the Chinese government views and applies human rights.

Furthermore, the white paper takes the concept of economic development to extreme well beyond merely feeding and clothing the people. The international human rights documents list the rights that are necessary for people to live with dignity. People who lack sustenance or personal security must assert their rights whereas one who has sustenance and personal security rarely needs to think about the rights they objectively enjoy. Despite this, the white paper uses examples of people who objectively enjoy their rights and ignores those who actively assert their rights. For examples of economic and cultural progress the white paper mentions good things that are not human rights such as private international travel abroad, car ownership, disposable income, online gaming, and sports facilities. In contrast, there is no mention of the needs of the most vulnerable, such as the growing debt burden for resettled Tibetan Nomads, Tibetans receiving less pay for the same work as Chinese, or the prevalent abuse of prisoners. The white paper implies that in China, human rights exist only for the wealthy, who can use their money to travel abroad and buy cars, and not for the poor and vulnerable in society. China fails to recognise that human rights are universal and must apply to all people, regardless of their wealth or political influence.

The white paper treats human rights as abstractions without any real substance by equating proclamations supporting human rights with progress. However, human rights are not implemented through abstract values, aspirations, or proclamations. Human rights are implemented through specific practices that actually work to guarantee the rights provided for in the human rights conventions. Therefore, the statistics of the number of schools built throughout China provided by the white paper are meaningless without knowing how many children are actually attending school. Similarly, the number of laws and administrative regulations China has passed is meaningless if the laws are not enforced. In China, there are two different types of Chinese law: the law-in-the-books and the law-in-action.[iii] The white paper only focuses on the law-in-the-books and accordingly fails to actually discuss human rights issues. For example, Chinese law prohibits torture yet Chinese guards routinely torture prisoners and face no consequences for violating Chinese law, as demonstrated by the fact that there is no effort to hide bruises or broken bones caused by torture. The Chinese law in the book supports human rights but without action, it is just as meaningless as any other Chinese law or proclamation. If China were serious about addressing human rights, the white paper would have included instances of torturers being punished. At the very least, China could allow independent bodies, such as the International Commission for the Red Cross, to visit prisons. Instead, the white paper equates progress with promises.

Even when China passes laws related to human rights, it is unclear whether they actually improve human rights. For example, the white paper proudly proclaims that China proactively administers the religious sector. When the State attempts to control religion by approving certain religions and religious practices, it is little consolation that the restriction was done through the law.

The most troubling aspect of the white paper its the underlying philosophy. The white paper operates on the assumption that human rights are divisible and more important for the wealthy than the poor and

marginalized. It further attempts to obscure the fact that human rights are practical and require effective implementation not just on the books but in action as well. The understanding of human rights that the white paper presents is not only dated, but also incompatible with the human rights system. Until China is able to address this issue, any changes in its actual human rights performance will be primarily superficial. In the upcoming periodic review, states should address China's fundamental misunderstanding of the human rights system and demand actual reform in how China understands and applies human rights.

Notes:

[i] Full Text: Progress in China's Human Rights in 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-05/14/c_132380706.htm

[ii] 2012 Annual Report: Human Rights Situation in Tibet, http://www.tchrd.org/2013/01/tchrd-releases-2012-annual-report-on-human-rights-situation-in-tibet/

[iii] See for example Albert HY Chen, An introduction to the Legal System of the People's Republic of China (3rd ed. 2004)

Tibetan writer sentenced to 5 yrs in prison for writing book on self-immolation

(Contd from Pg 1)

The book in question is the second volume of Tsenpoi Nyintop [Eng: Tsenpo's Valour], which contains the writer's reflections and opinions on wide ranging subjects including Dalai Lama, Panchen Lama, self-immolation, language, education, protests, environment, etc. At the time of his arrest, on 1 January 2013, Gartse Jigme had finished writing the book and was planning to publish it.

After his arrest, Gartse Jigme was held in the provincial capital of Xining for sometime, followed by several months' detention in Rebkong (Ch: Tongren) County in Malho Prefecture. The first volume of Tsenpoi Nyingtop was released in 2008. In April 2011, the local Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers briefly detained him for his views published in the book.

Gartse Jigme, a monk from Gartse Monastery, was born in Garwa nomadic village of Gartse Township in Rebkong County. He has been writing since 1999 and had won several local literary prizes. His first book, 'Musings on My Reflections' received favorable reviews from friends and others in the community. He was also a Buddhist scholar having studied and successfully passed major Buddhist courses at his monastery in 2003.

The second volume of 'Tsenpoi Nyingtop' could not be published in Tibet as planned by its author. However, exile Tibetans who hail from Rebkong County have published the book in India. The book was published soon after Gartse Jigme's sentencing.

TCHRD has translated and edited the first chapter of the book titled, 'Chinese government and self-immolations', as it addresses many of the absurd, unsubstantiated allegations raised by the Chinese government over Tibetan self-immolations, be it short propaganda articles in state-owned newspapers or more recently, propaganda documentaries blaming the nebulous and all-encompassing "Dalai clique" for instigating and inciting self-immolations in Tibet.

Note: Gartse Jigme finished writing the book some time in early December 2012 when about 90 Tibetans had died of self-immolation protests in Tibet. As of now, the total number of self-immolation protests in Tibet has reached 117.

Chinese Government and Tibetan Self-immolations
by Gartse Jigme

To protest against Chinese rule in Tibet, Thubten Ngodup, a Tibetan exile, committed self-immolation in 1998 [in India]. Eleven years later, in 2009, Tapey became the first Tibetan from within Tibet to commit self-immolation. As of now, more than ninety Tibetans have committed self-immolation. Unfortunately, the leaders of the Chinese government haven't paid any attention to these [drastic] acts of protests. Rather than showing concern, Chinese leaders, including Hu Jintao, attacked the Dalai Lama [for being the primary cause of self-immolations.] The government forced some tulkus [reincarnated lamas] in Tibet to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama; they dispatched military soldiers armed with machine guns and armored vehicles into Tibetan areas. Their only response has been repression, rather than showing an attitude of leniency and concern.

If one reflects seriously on this issue, [one would come to realize that] it is an extremely painful issue. Despite Chinese government's repeated claims of democracy, it has failed to give any consideration to the demands raised by more than 90 Tibetan self-immolators. [The Chinese leaders'] only concern is to protect their position – a clear manifestation of their dictatorial ways of [functioning]. [The seriousness of] these demands can be gauged by the fact that they are made through acts of self-immolation, rather than through [conventional means] of writing.

What are the aspirations of the Tibetan self-immolators? More than 90 self-immolators have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom in Tibet. One self-immolator called for Tibet's independence. If I speak out a karmic truth, it is that Beijing government is not in a position to grant Tibetan independence. But Beijing government does have the power to invite His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and grant legitimate rights and freedoms to the Tibetan people. Instead of exercising this power, Beijing is implementing dictatorship. [On the one hand] it dispatches soldiers armed with guns and armored vehicles to repress Tibetan people, [on the other hand] it brands His Holiness the Dalai Lama as an 'enemy,' and calls for the need to fight 'separatists.' The demands of the self-immolators are neglected. Not a single thought is given to the future happiness of billions of people. The truth is that no particular organization or lama instigated the martyrs to commit self-immolations. They were motivated by the sufferings and aspirations of their fellow six million Tibetans. As such they are heroes.

Because of these reasons, Chinese leaders consider His Holiness the Dalai Lama as their enemy and neglect the demands of the self-immolators. By branding His Holiness as their enemy and neglecting the demands of self-immolators, they have shown that they consider more than 99% of the Tibetan population as their enemies. They have clearly shown that the aspiration of 99% of Tibetan population means nothing to them.

I

Chinese government, particularly leaders like Wen Jiabao, declared the self-immolators as 'terrorists.' Such accusations demonstrate the evil nature of the Chinese government and ruthlessness of their leaders. The United Nations, leaders of France, Germany, Italy, UK, Spain, US, South Africa, India, Japan, Australia, Indonesia and other supporters of democracy have asserted that self-immolations are desperate acts of peaceful protests. Despite such assertions, why do the Chinese leaders consider self-immolations as terrorist acts?

Tibetan intellectuals have analysed why the Chinese government brands self-immolators as 'terrorists.' According to them, the Chinese government has sent a clear warning to suppress the peaceful Tibetan protestors, as they suppressed the students of Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. One thing that needs to be clarified is the fact that the decision of Wen Jiabao to declare self-immolators as terrorists reflects the decision of the whole Chinese leadership. It is not just his personal opinion. The truth is that millions of lives have been sacrificed for the interest of Chinese people and Chinese nation. Would Beijing regard these sacrifices as acts of terrorism? The Chinese revolutionaries had murdered Japanese colonisers and millions of others who

opposed communism, but Tibetan self-immolators fighting for their people's rights have not harmed a single member of other nationality or organisation. They only burned themselves, demanding for the Tibetan people's religious and cultural rights. Only an evil and a blind government or leadership would regard such acts of protests as terrorism or violence. A sane person would never make such accusations.

II

Chinese government's accusation that self-immolators have acted against principles of Buddhism is nothing but an evil talk. According to Tibetan Buddhism, sacrificing one's life for the benefit of others is considered an act of Bodhisattva. This fact will become clear if one reads the life story of Buddha. In one of his many lifetimes, Buddha sacrifices his body to save a tigress and her cubs from dying of extreme hunger. This famous story, retold through generations and is widely known [among the faithful], is titled 'the story of Buddha sacrificing his life for the Tigress.' If one is practicing the Mayahana form of Buddhism, one should be willing to sacrifice everything for the wellbeing of sentient beings. For instance, one should be willing to suffer billions of years in a hell of fire for the wellbeing of a sentient being. In the words of the Great Panchen Chogyan, 'one should be willing to remain in hell of fire for eons for the wellbeing of each and every sentient being.' Therefore, sacrificing one's life for the wellbeing of sentient beings and fellow countrymen are not only acts in accord with Buddhism, but also with the higher forms of Mahayana Buddhist teachings. Only an evil regime or its running dogs would consider them as acts of 'terrorism.'

III

Chinese government is of the view that the self-immolation protests are carried out by a few monks on the order of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Such a view reflects its evil nature. So far more than 95 Tibetans have committed self-immolations. Of them 5 are from outside Tibet. More than 80 of them died, whereas 10 of them survived. Of 5 self-immolators from outside Tibet, two of them suffered severe injuries. Although both of them survived, they are suffering from many legal ramifications. Every time a Tibetan committed a self-immolation, thousands of Tibetans from that area gathered themselves to express their solidarity. They gave away lots of donations to conduct prayers and rituals for the self-immolator. For example, in Rebkong, when Jamyang Palden, Sonam Darge, Tamdin Thar, Dorje Lhundup, Tamdin Tso, Kelsang Jinpa, Nyingkar Tashi, Nyingchak Bum, Sangdak Tsering, Lubum Tsering, Tamdin Dorje, Sangye Dolma and others committed self-immolation, the local Tibetans gathered and expressed their solidarity. They raised money, organised prayers and rituals, some even wrote poems in their honor and memory. In short, I have personally witnessed how tens of thousands of local Tibetans expressed their solidarity through various ways.

All of these incidents reflect clearly that although the former are the only people in Rebkong who committed self-immolations, there are tens of thousands of Tibetans who share their aspirations and sentiments. Similarly, we heard through telephonic conversations and saw video footages of many Tibetans in Kham attending the funeral of one of the self-immolators. Even the funeral of a great Lama wouldn't witness such large gathering of people expressing their respect and solidarity. Therefore, we can clearly assert that more than 80% of Tibet's six million people are backing the self-immolators and share with their aspirations and demands. Chinese government's claim that [aspirations] of the self-immolators are shared by a few monks, as a result, is nothing but evil talk.

IV

Chinese government's accusation that the Dalai Lama has instigated the self-immolations is again nothing but evil talk. Usually, His Holiness the Dalai Lama advocates, not just to his own people but also to his non-Tibetan followers, that all conflicts should be resolved through peaceful dialogue. He would never call for Tibetans to burn themselves to register their protests. In fact, he keeps on advocating the need to resolve Sino-Tibetan

conflict through Middle-Way approach, which he says would bring benefits to both sides. However, instead of weighing its worth in gold, the Chinese government keeps on demonising His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his efforts. This is one of the main reasons why patriotic Tibetans are committing self-immolations.

If the Chinese government has evidence of His Holiness provoking his people to burn themselves for their country, it would definitely present them to the Tibetan people. But the Chinese government hasn't presented any evidence. This shows that even the Chinese government has come to realize that the self-immolations are the direct result of its repressive policies. But the Chinese government pretends as if it doesn't know anything, as it keeps on demonising His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This is a clear manifestation of an evil regime showing its evil character.

V

Through its official media, and in the eyes of the people, the Chinese government condemns the self-immolators as conspirators who want to destroy the country. This too is an evil talk, because the aspiration of more than 90 self-immolators is to see His Holiness back to Tibet and to restore Tibetan people's legitimate rights to pursue their own language, culture and religion. However, the Chinese government keeps holding its hard line stance, not paying an inch of attention and value to the demands and sacrifice of the self-immolators. Rather the Chinese government responds with severe repression, as it uses guns, authority, law and torture to suppress the demands of the self-immolators. Aren't these proofs of the evil nature of the Chinese government?

VI

Through its official media, the Chinese government condemns the Tibetan self-immolators as being young ignorant minds manipulated and fooled by the propaganda emanating from outside [Tibet]. Such an accusation is nothing but evil talk. Among the more than 90 Tibetans who have committed self-immolations so far, there are mothers and fathers having children, tulkus, monks, nuns, laymen, students and so on and so forth. Some of the self-immolators were more than 60 years old; even the youngest among them, sixteen year olds, were mature enough in their thoughts and courage. They were way past the time when they could fall prey to propaganda and manipulation. Therefore, Chinese government's accusation is nothing but evil talk, lacking in depth examination and analysis.

In short, more than 95 Tibetans from the three provinces of Tibet have committed self-immolations in protest against Chinese government's repressive policies, their aspiration being the return of the Dalai Lama and freedom in Tibet. Such protests have never occurred on this earth in the last hundred thousand years. It is a great peaceful protest –unprecedented in world history. However, the Chinese government has given more importance to money and status than to human lives. During the 18th session of the Chinese Communist party meeting, the delegates were talking only about money matters and leadership positions. They failed to give an iota of attention to the demands raised by sacrificing precious lives. This proves clearly that the Chinese government has no respect whatsoever to the fate of the Tibetan people and the way they violate basic human rights.

Finally, in connection with this serious matter, I would like to make a few suggestions to the Chinese government. Instead of demonising the self-immolations, indulging in accusations lacking serious analyses, telling lies befitting dictatorial regimes, the Chinese government should examine closely this great act of peaceful protest, which remains unprecedented in world history. It would be helpful if the Chinese government finds a viable solution to ensure that such protests do not happen again. Another clarification I want to make is that the self-immolators want His Holiness the Dalai Lama back in Tibet so that they could seek his blessings. Moreover, they are fighting for small freedoms that Tibetan people are entitled to. I appeal the Chinese government that rather than making the matters worse, it should make efforts to resolve it.

Three Lives and A Song: Disappearance of Panchen Lama

17 May 2013: Today marks the 18th year of Tibet's XIth Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's disappearance into Chinese custody. One of the most important spiritual leaders of Tibet, the then six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family members were 'disappeared' by the Chinese authorities on 17 May 1995, just three days after His Holiness the Dalai Lama recognized him as the reincarnation of the previous Xth Panchen Lama.

TCHRD has translated the lyrics of a song, "Dear Panchen Lama", sung by the imprisoned Tibetan singer Lolo about the previous Xth Panchen Lama and his 'disappeared' reincarnation.

On 23 February this year, Lolo, 30, was sentenced to six years in prison for singing songs containing politically-charged lyrics.

Lobsang Jinpa, 31, a monk from the besieged Nyatso Zilkar Monastery penned the lyrics of the song. Lobsang Jinpa was also sentenced, along with Lolo, to five years in prison.

And the subject of the song, Tibet's Panchen Lama, remains 'disappeared'.

Click here for the video of the song on Youtube: http://youtu.be/JXMmFCFFgSY

'Dear Panchen Lama'

The majestic serene snow mountains

From the edge of the erected pillars of history

The warm love for Tibet mustn't disappear

Victory to Panchen Lama — the hero of Tibet

From beneath the all-pervasive brute force

From the rock-inflicted wounds on spirituality and temporality

Raise the melodious slogans of patriotism in the sky

The Bodhisattva

Who opposed the backwardness

The gang of bandits who turn [the meaning of] Karma upside down

Amid the battle of lies, deception and oppression

[You] sacrificed your life to [rescue] truth from lies

Who else but you, is the messenger of the 21st century?

Even if the sad, departing moon-face crosses the western hills

Amid the flood of tears [we] wait for your reincarnation

The dawn of the new day is arrested by the enemy's darkness

The soul of the Snowlanders has never been colder

Former longest-serving political prisoner still under house arrest after release

25 May 2013: Almost a month after his release from prison on 24 April 2013, Lobsang Tenzin was finally allowed to see his extended family members and relatives. However, he still remains under house arrest and constant police supervision. He cannot meet non-family members and may only leave his house to go to the hospital with a police escort.

Lobsang Tenzin spent half of his life in Chinese prisons before his release. After initially being sentenced to death Lobsang Tenzin's sentence was eventually reduced to 18 years in addition to the six he already served.

Lobsang Tenzin was arrested and sentenced to death for the murder of a police officer who fell from a window during protests in 1988. However, Lobsang Tenzin was not involved in the police officer's death. The injustice of Lobsang Tenzin's sentence gained international attention and in 1991 his death

sentence was changed to life in prison. In 1994, Lobsang Tenzin's sentence was reduced to 18 years plus the six years he had already served.

In 1991 Lobsang Tenzin tried to raise awareness of the abhorrent prison conditions including torture by attempting to give a letter to the United States Ambassador James Lilley detailing the abuse. The prison authorities caught Lobsang Tenzin and his fellow inmate Tenpa Wangdrak before they could deliver the note. Both were secretly transferred and placed in solitary confinement for 3 weeks.

When Lobsang Tenzin was released from prison in April-end 2013 he had the unfortunate distinction of being the longest serving political prisoner in Tibet. Despite being a healthy 24 year-old university student when he was arrested, Lobsang Tenzin left prison 25 years later with numerous serious health problems. He currently suffers from back problems that make it difficult for him to stand and diabetes that damaged his kidneys and eyes and caused temporary blindness.

After spending more than half his life in prison where he lost his youth and health the Chinese insist on imposing strict limitations on his "freedom" outside of prison. It was almost three weeks before the Chinese police allowed Lobsang Tenzin's family to see him and his friends are still prohibited from visiting him. Considering Lobsang Tenzin's poor health and that he is more familiar with life inside prison than outside the house arrest and visitation limits are inexplicable. That Lobsang Tenzin is still being punished for a crime he did not commit is inexcusable.

Accordingly, TCHRD urges the Chinese government to free Lobsang Tenzin from the restrictive house arrest and provide Lobsang Tenzin with medical treatment in the care of his family and relatives so that he may live in Tibet as a freeman. Twenty-five years ago, Lobsang Tenzin was imprisoned for a crime he did not commit, he should not still be suffering for that same crime today.

For more on Lobsang Tenzin, please see http://www.tchrd.org/2013/05/freedom-at-last-released-from-25-years-imprisonment-longest-serving-tibetan-political-prisoner-under-surveillance-2/

My words are not tainted by lies and deception: Gartse Jigme

30 May 2013: Imprisoned Tibetan monk and writer Gartse Jigme in a heartfelt appeal calls on the Chinese government to reach out to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to listen to the demands articulated by self-immolation protesters, as a first step towards creating a truly harmonious and stable Tibet where respect for Tibetan rights and freedoms would replace oppression and suffering.

This essay appears at the end of the second volume of his book, "Tsenpoi Nyingtop" (The King's Valour) which was published this month in India after the author was sentenced to five years imprisonment. He is being imprisoned at an undisclosed location.

About the book, Gartse Jigme writes:

While publishing this book, I endured loads of pain. Tears drenched my heart. For the true values of truth, justice, rights, equality, peace and harmony, I sacrificed everything and wrote this book. This [book] is a source of joy to me. It is my hope for the future. The book is not at all meant to prove my heroism. This book is a way out for me to shed tears once for the suffering of my ancestors. The book is not written to prove my scholarly credentials. It is a way out for me to shed tears for the pain and suffering endured by my fellow-countrymen. To be honest, I am not a hero. I am not a scholar. I am not wealthy. I am nothing. Amid the waves of truth and justice, I cried once with the suffering of my fellow countrymen.

Below is the full essay translated and edited by TCHRD from the original Tibetan version:

My heartfelt Appeal to the Chinese Government
by Gartse Jigme

If I do not have the right to express my views, then there's no purpose for me to exist as a human being. So I am going to express my opinion, [of what I believe as] the ultimate truth, until I die. With all the abilities that I have, I am going to speak out the truth of Tibetan people's suffering to the Chinese government. Since the Chinese government is responsible for the Tibetan people's suffering, it alone can help end this suffering. With tears in my eyes, I earnestly appeal the Chinese government to end the suffering it has inflicted upon the Tibetan people.

Let me explain the truth of the issue [in a different way]. The famous Chinese scholar, Jei Xin Ling, said that in order to create a harmonious society, one must create a harmonious spirit. Similarly, in order to create peace and harmony between nations, nationalities, states and between government and citizens, there has to have mutual trust, mutual respect, mutual solidarity and so on. Oppressing each other, cursing each other and ridiculing each other will never create genuine harmony. Such a situation is like [the conflict] between fire and water.

Merely asserting that the resentment and conflict between nations, nationalities, states, between government and citizens, should be resolved peacefully is not enough. [One has to work on this]. Therefore, instead of always demonizing His Holiness the Dalai Lama by calling him 'the Dalai bandit and separatist,' Beijing should find out multiple ways to resolve the Sino-Tibetan conflict – to the satisfaction [of both parties]. Like spark, every conflict should be nipped in the bud before it gets out of control and [burns everything]. I am expressing this sentiment out of genuine concern.

No matter how much one tries to conceal the historical facts, they are going to surface one day. In this era of 21st century, the consciousness of the Tibetan people is being awakened, as the months and years pass by. Opportunities to manipulate and fool each other are getting slighter and slighter. Therefore, only by being truthful to each other rather than indulging in manipulative acts, nations, leaders, governments and citizens can have trust and unity. If one engages in truthful reflection, one would realize that there is a valid historical justification behind the resentment of the Tibetan people. Lies and deception, as such, cannot subjugate millions of people all the time.

During 1950s and the Cultural Revolution, tens of thousands of Tibetans were murdered and jailed. Many died of hunger. These are historical facts. No one can wipe them out. Even in the 21st century, Tibetan people have not gained equal rights to purse their own language, commerce, politics and environmental work. Such [inequalities] are clearly visible to the naked eye and have caused much resentment in the hearts of Tibetan people. Therefore, since 2008, a series of non-violent protests have rocked the Tibetan plateau. In fact more than 90 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in an act of tragic protest. For these reasons, the Chinese government must find out a viable solution to assuage the resentment of the Tibetan people. Guns and armored vehicles, imprisonment and torture, demonization and curses will never succeed in pacifying the Tibetan people. Predicting these incidents, and in an apparent wish to overcome them, Bapa Phunstok Wangyal submitted a good petition to the [then] Chinese President Hu Jintao. The latter, however, did not pay any attention. As a result, we all have to bear the consequences today.

There is not a single person who does not think about the [importance of] life and livelihood. That some one is able to sacrifice his or her life and livelihood means that he or she is clearly going through unendurable pain. For any kind of pain, there's always medicine that can relieve it. It would be wise if we find out the medicine. As a Tibetan, who happens to be a citizen of the People's Republic of China, I have expressed the real pain and suffering of my people to the Chinese government. However, those people who curry favor with the higher authorities through their deceptive talk, but manipulate the masses below by constantly telling lies, I consider such people a pack of wolves and demons filled

with lies and deception. Such people can devour government's money and swallow the blood and sweat of the masses. They never do any welfare work benefiting people, but spend all their efforts and time to achieve personal gains. Among these people, we have Tibetan tulkus (reincarnated lamas) and Tibetan cadres as well. They never petition the higher authorities to [alleviate] the suffering of the Tibetan people. Such circumstance is responsible for the fact that the real policies from the above are not manifested among the masses.

It is my hope that, rather than misleading the higher authorities by sweet talk and oppressing the public below, they must sincerely bring to the attention of the higher authorities the real issues confronting the masses. They must speak out the true hopes and aspirations [of the masses] and implement the provisions of the Constitution [sincerely]. I think taking such measures will be helpful in easing out the tensions.

In the hearts of more than ninety nine percent of the Tibetan population, His Holiness the Dalai Lama dwells like a ray of sun. Therefore, no Tibetan will accept the constant demonization of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Such a demonization is unbearable to the Tibetans. They will make every effort to resist it. If democracy truly exists, then the Chinese government must seriously take into account the wishes and yearning of more than ninety nine percent of the Tibetan population. They must conduct negotiations with either His Holiness the Dalai Lama or with his representatives, so that His Holiness could return to his homeland. Such an effort will reduce the conflict.

As a Tibetan, more especially as a monk, I have expressed my heartfelt views to the Chinese government. I have expressed them honestly. My words are not tainted by lies and deception. I have expressed the suffering of my people honestly. I have penned a few essays demonstrating the pain that lies in the heart of more than ninety nine percent of the Tibetan population. I have spent my own money to have some of my essays printed and published. The fact that I have not succumbed to the fear of getting imprisoned and tortured by a dark regime that does not see reality, the purpose [for my speaking out the truth] is to hope for real peace and real harmony – bereft of bloody conflicts. While publishing this book, I endured loads of pain. Tears drenched my heart. For the true values of truth, justice, rights, equality, peace and harmony, I sacrificed everything and wrote this book. This [book] is a source of joy to me. It is my hope for the future. The book is not at all meant to prove my heroism. This book is a way out for me to shed tears once for the suffering of my ancestors. The book is not written to prove my scholarly credentials. It is a way out for me to shed tears for the pain and suffering endured by my fellow-countrymen. To be honest, I am not a hero. I am not a scholar. I am not wealthy. I am nothing. Amid the waves of truth and justice, I cried once with the suffering of my fellow countrymen.

In short, the Chinese government, instead of ridiculing and denouncing the unbearable and tragic suffering of the Tibetan people, must make efforts to find out the root cause [of the tragedy] taking into account the truthful and just laws of Karma. With an open and liberal [mind], it should conduct negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, so that the two demands of the self-immolating Tibetans [could be fulfilled]: 1) return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet 2) genuine autonomous rights for the whole Tibetan population. I have a firm faith that if Beijing fulfills these two demands, the painful and tragic issue of Tibet would be resolved. However, if the Chinese government continues to dictate through violent repression, while the masses continue to pursue the [path] of rebellion and vociferous protests, then the situation might get out of control, leading possibly to more violent and bloody conflicts [in future]. In order to prevent [such an eventuality], tears in my eyes, I have sent this appeal through wind to Beijing.

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BI-WEEKLY HUMAN RIGHTS UPDATE

Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy

Vol. 1 Issue 10 **1-15 June 2013**

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Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy is a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in January 1996 with the mission to protect the human rights of Tibetans in Tibet and promote the principles of democracy in the exile community.

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Two Tibetan singers secretly sentenced but whereabouts unknown

13 JUNE 2013: Two Tibetan singers who were detained last year for releasing a music album titled "Agony of Unhealed Wounds" had been secretly sentenced to two years in prison in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) County in Ngaba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.

According to reliable information received by TCHRD, singers PemaTrinley, 22, and Chakdor, 32, both hailing from Meuruma nomadic village, had recorded and distributed a music DVD containing songs about current situation in Tibet including self-immolation protests, as well as songs in praise of the Dalai Lama, Panchen Lama, Kirti Rinpoche (exiled head of the Kirti monastery) and LobsangSangay (exiled Tibetan political leader). In July 2012, days after the release of the music album, both singers were arrested in theneighbouring Machu (Ch: Maqu) County in Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province. For over six months, they were detained in Ngaba County, sources told TCHRD, before their secret sentencing in February this year.

Despite confirmed information about their sentencing, it is still unknown where they are imprisoned. Sources said family members of both singers were notified by local authorities through a letter stating that PemaTrinley and Chakdor were being imprisoned at Mianyang Prison in Sichuan Province. However, family members and relatives of the singers travelled to Mianyang at least two times but were turned away by prison officials who claimed that the two singers are not in that prison. The confusion and secrecy surrounding the whereabouts of the singers have added to the suffering of their loved ones who have apparently not seen them since their arbitrary detention.

Furthermore, two other Tibetans who collaborated with the sentenced singers on the music album have also gone missing. The whereabouts and wellbeing of musician Khenrap and lyricist Nyagdompo remain unknown.

PemaTrinley is the son of late Mr. Zamlha and Mrs. Tserima. He is also related to Chakdor, whose father's name is Chokden Dowa. Chakdor is also a close cousin of Choepa who died of self-immolation protest on 10 August 2012 inNgaba County.

TCHRD has received a copy of the album, "Agony of Unhealed Wounds." The centre will soon release English translations of some of the songs.

A translation of the song "This is How It Is" is available on the website of highpeakespureearth.com.

"This Is How It Is"

Our precious minerals
Being deceptively destroyed by authorities
Making this sacred land hollow
It is a force against our will

The accomplishments of our past scholars
The five major and minor supreme sciences
Using all means to destroy them
It is a force against our will

The inheritors of the Snowland
The heroic male and female youths
Being murdered by authorities
It is a force against our will

The protector of sentient beings
His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso
Cut off from us by authorities
This is our fate

This is our fate

[Translation by High Peaks Pure Earth]

Two monks sentenced to 3 yrs in prison for holding prayers for self-immolator

5 JUNE 2013: The relentless crackdown on self-immolation protests in Tibet continued when Chinese authorities sentenced two Tibetan monks to three years in prison for holding religious rituals and prayer services for a Tibetan man who died of self-immolation protest in November last year in Kangtsa Township in Yazi (Ch: Xunhua) Salar Autonomous County in Tsoshar (Ch: Haidong) Prefecture, Qinghai Province. The Chinese authorities deemed this exercise of the monks' fundamental rights criminal pursuant to a 2012 guideline on handling self-immolations.

WangchenNorbu, 25, died during a self-immolation protest on 19 November last year. As he burned, WangchenNorbu called for an end to Chinese repression and demanded the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, freedom in Tibet, and the release of the 11th Panchen Lama, and all the Tibetan political prisoners.

On 19 November 2012, the day WangchenNorbu died of self-immolation protest, monks from Beudo Monastery held prayers and necessary religious rituals for the deceased.

According to information received by TCHRD, on 18 April 2013, the Yazi (Ch: Xunhua) County People's Court sentenced Tsondue, about 27, and GedunTsultrim, about 30, both monks from Beudo Monastery located in Beudo (Ch: Wendu) Township, to three years in prison.

Two days after the self-immolation, on 21 November 2012, the County Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers detained Tsondue and GedunTsultrim during a standoff between police and local Tibetans including monks from Beudo and surrounding monasteries at SegyeNyaga, a place near Kangtsa Township. The standoff was provoked by a group of County government officials and PSB officers who stopped the local Tibetans from visiting WangchenNorbu's house after the self-immolation to offer condolences and prayers. Unable to move forward, the monks stayed put at SergyeNagya and began a prayer service there despite opposition from the government and police officials. At the time, Tsondue led the prayers as the chief chant master (Tib: Umze). The police then arrested and interrogated Tsondue and GedunTsultrim along with an unknown number of monks and lay people at the scene.

For the next five months, both monks were secretly detained and their family members were denied any information about their whereabouts or wellbeing. Sources told TCHRD that family members of the monks, accompanied by lamas of Beudo Monastery and other local community leaders approached the County government office at least five times to enquire about the monks' whereabouts and condition. During these visits, family members of both monks urged the authorities to release them as they had committed no crime, save for holding prayers for the deceased as is expected of monks. In response to repeated requests, the government officials had said that the monks were being held in Yazi County but they refused to allow any meetings with the detained monks.

Sources told TCHRD that Tsondue who hails from ChukyelGongma Village in Beudo Township was charged with being the main organiser of prayer services at Beudo Monastery on 19 November and for acting as the chief chantmaster during a prayer service held in defiance of law enforcement agencies on 21 November.

GedunTsultrim, of Shongyul Village in Beudo Township, was charged with helping monks and lay Tibetans organize their visit to WangchenNorbu's house on 21 November to offer condolences and prayers. His charges included collecting donations on behalf of the deceased's family members and for arranging vehicles for local Tibetans who attempted to visit the deceased's home.

After about five months of secret detention, both monks were sentenced on 18 April at a trial attended by some family members and relatives. Apparently the authorities had sent a notice to both families informing them about the trial date. As word spread, many local Tibetans both monks and lay came out in droves to the County courthouse but only some immediate family members and relatives were permitted to observe the trial.

Beudo Monastery, one of the largest monasteries in the region, is situated just 4 km off the highway stretching from Yazi County to Rebkong (Ch: Tongren) County, and about 25 km from Yazi town.

In December 2012, China's top judicial and law-enforcement authorities issued a guideline called "Opinion on Handling Self-Immolation Cases in Tibetan Areas in Accordance with the Law," which is aimed directly at criminalizing a wide variety of activities related to the self-immolation protests. This guideline has now become a source of many arbitrary arrests and detention as well as illegal sentencing linked to self-immolation protests. According to the controversial guideline, illegal criminal activities include gathering together to hold prayer services or cremation rituals for those who died in self-immolation protests. Likewise, it is illegal and criminal to "summon a group to mourn or collect funds for a self-immolator." According to the logic of the guideline, these activities "disrupt social order, public order, or traffic order" and therefore, "shall be held criminally liable in accordance with the law."

Such farcical law, which criminalises such acts as holding prayer services in monasteries and temples, and offering condolences to a deceased's family members, clearly demonstrates the situation of religious freedom in Tibet. It also reveals China's 'rule by law' where the country's legal system is used as a tool to further the one-party state's political objectives. Let alone international human rights law, this kind of action violates China's Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom to its citizens.

Note:
Dui Hua Human Rights Journal, China Outlines Criminal Punishments for Tibetan Self-Immolations, 5 December 2012, available at http://www.duihuahrjournal.org/2012/12/china-outlines-criminal-punishments-for.html

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BI-WEEKLY HUMAN RIGHTS UPDATE

Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy

Vol. 1 Issue 11 **16-30 June 2013**

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TCHRD remembers torture victims, calls on China to eradicate torture

26 JUNE 2013: On 3 April 2013, after 17 years Jigme Gyatso was released from prison. He entered prison a strong and healthy 35 year-old and left with weak eyesight, heart complications and kidney damage that kept him from walking upright. Eight years before his release Jigme Gyatso met the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, who strongly recommended Jigme Gyatso be released because his conviction for "endangering state security" by creating an illegal organization was based on information extracted by torture. During his 17 years imprisonment, he was electrocuted with electric batons and brutally beaten. Today, three months after Jigme Gyatso's long-awaited release from prison, is the International Day in Support of Torture Victims as Jigme Gyatso struggles with his broken body to live again. *(contd. on Page 2)*

Nun dies of self-immolation, family placed under house arrest

18 JUNE 2013: According to sources inside Tibet, on 11 June, Wangchen Dolma, a nun from Tawu (Ch: Daofu) County in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture self-immolated in protest against Chinese rule.

Wangchen Dolma, 31, committed her self-immolation near Nyatso Monastery Tawu County in the Tibetan province of Kham. She hailed from Dragthog Village in Tawu County and her father's name is Tenzin and mother's Youdon.

The Chinese police immediately arrived at the scene of the self-immolation and took her to a local hospital in Dartsedo (Ch: Kangding) in Kardze Prefecture. *(contd. on Page 3)*

Guest Post: Placing psychiatric health manual of Chinese armed police in Tibet in context

18 JUNE 2013: The Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) recently received and published a summary of a manual it published by the Sichuan Provincial Political Department of the People's Armed Police Force. The manual consists of 29 questions and answers on how the People's Armed Police Force can cope with the psychological trauma caused by the violent nature of the People's Armed Police Force in Tibetan areas of Sichuan. TCHRD presents an analysis of the manual by Matthew Akester. *(contd. on Page 4)*

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TCHRD remembers torture victims, calls on China to eradicate torture

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International Day in Support of Torture Victims commemorates the entry into force of the Convention Against Torture, Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment (or Convention Against Torture) on 26 June 1987 with the goal of eradicating torture.

No act, except for slavery, has been prohibited as unanimously and repeatedly as torture. The international community recognizes that the prohibition of torture, like genocide and slavery, is a jus cogens norm, a preemptory norm of international law from which no derogation is permitted. The universal rejection of torture forces torturers to deny its existence and hide their victims from the world by placing them in "black sites" and secret detention facilities or denying their existence.

China, as a state party to Convention Against Torture, is obliged to prevent torture and punish torturers. China's implementation of the Convention Against Torture is superficial and torture remains unchecked. Article 2 of the Convention Against Torture requires that all states take effective measures to prevent torture. This includes not only having laws that prohibit torture but also ensuring that the laws effectively prevent torture. Chinese laws do not prevent torture.

The Convention Against Torture contains optional provisions designed to help states eliminate torture. The Committee against Torture works with states to investigate allegations of torture (Article 20). With a state's consent, the Committee against Torture may also hear allegations of torture from other states (Article 21) and individuals (Article 22). States can accept visits, advice, and assistance from the Sub-committee on the Prevention of Torture by acceding to the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture that created the sub-committee.

China has to categorically rejected any mechanism in the Convention Against Torture that would facilitate international cooperation on preventing torture. China refuses to work with or even recognize the competence of the Committee against Torture. This rejection includes the optional measures related to the Committee against Torture. China refused to agree to the expansion on the Committee against Torture (Articles 21 and 22) and refused to work with the Sub-committee on Prevention. This is a total refusal to work with the international community to eradicate torture in China. Instead, China offers denials and vague promises. The value of China's promises is indelibly written on the bodies and seared into the minds of its torture victims.

Beyond the definition in the Convention Against Torture, torture is the brutal and barbaric assertion of the state's raw, unrestrained power. In the torture chamber, the victims are completely helpless and the state exploits this helplessness to humiliate and dehumanize them.

In Tibet, this brutal attack on helpless victims is frequent. Chinese military and paramilitary forces in Tibet "disappear" Tibetans who demand freedom and human rights. They are taken to secret detention facilities and hidden from their family, friends and human rights monitors. Family and friends are detained for simply trying to learn more than they are told.

Jigme Gyatso's mistreatment during interrogation and detention is not unique. Routinely, Tibetans are beaten with rifles and electric batons. They are kept awake for days on end. Their back, limbs, mouths, and genitals are electrocuted. They are shackled and suspended upside down from the ceiling. They are hung from the ceiling by their hands. Their joints swell and become extremely sensitive to subsequent beatings. They are kept in solitary confinement for months. For days they are hogtied to the "Tiger Chair," a chair that makes it impossible to move their arms or legs. For weeks, they are shackled naked to the "Death Bed" unable to move. They are held in solitary confinement for months.

After detention, Tibetans are left battered, bruised and broken. The tiger bench leaves their entire body covered with bruises. The death bed causes their muscles to atrophy. Suspending them from the ceiling dislocates their joints and breaks bones. The beatings and electrocutions cause permanent damage or loss of their kidneys. The lack of medical care exposes the victims to communicable diseases like tuberculosis and hepatitis. Many simply do not survive.

For the living, the psychological impact of torture is

debilitating. This is the goal of torture. The brutal infliction of pain cripples the mind and crushes the spirit. Torture makes its victims too terrified to think or hope. The barbaric demonstration of China's brutality has left Tibetans broken and unbalanced.

The brutality of the Chinese government has not diminished the determination of Tibetans to fight for their human rights. After two years in prison, Jigme Gyatso joined a prison protest against Chinese authorities. In the subsequent crackdown, 8 prisoners died and at least 27 had their sentences increased. Six years later, Jigme Gyatso and his fellow prisoners again stood up to their torturers and shouted slogans in supporting His Holiness the Dalai Lama. They were beaten and left bloodied but unbowed.

The barbaric and brutal Chinese response to the Tibetan non-violent movement demonstrates China's weakness, not its strength. When the whisper of human rights or a photo of the Dalai Lama results in torture, the weakness of the Chinese in Tibet is exposed.

Today on the International Day in Support of Torture Victims, the international community must send a message that even though torture victims like Jigme Gyatso may be electrocuted, shackled, and beaten in secret confinement, they are not forgotten.

The eradication of torture is the goal of the Convention Against Torture and International Day in Support of Torture Victims. More importantly, it is what the torture of Jigme Gyatso and other victims demands. To eradicate torture in China, the international community must pressure China, both independently and at its upcoming Universal Periodic Review in October at the UN, to meet its international obligations and abolish torture in all its forms, abolish extra-judicial detention, close its black sites, and allow international observers to ensure that torture has truly been abolished in Tibet and throughout the People's Republic of China.

Nun dies of self-immolation, family placed under house arrest

(contd. from Page 1)

Three days later on 14 June around 8 am, she succumbed to her injuries and died.

Wangchen Dolma became the 119th Tibetan and the third from Tawu region to self-immolate in protest of China's repressive policies.

Sources said the Chinese police refused to give Wangchen Dolma's body to her family and cremated it.

Following the news of her self-immolation, the local Tibetans started visiting her house to pay their last respects.

However, on the day Wangchen Dolma died Chinese officials prevented local lamas, monks, nuns, relatives and friends from visiting her house to pay their respects to the deceased.

Officials even placed the family members under house arrest, preventing them from having any contact with other Tibetans.

Sources inside Tibet said that Wangchen Dolma was studying with a Buddhist Nyingmapa master named Chokyi Nyima on a mountain retreat called Barshap Dakar in Tawu, where she spent four months meditating before her self-immolation.

Recently she came down from her retreat centre to attend a prayer ceremony at the Nyatso monastery. On 10 June, a day before her self-immolation, she addressed a group of students at a local Tibetan school in Tawu.

She advised the students to "learn Tibetan language, religion, culture," and to become "good Tibetans."

Immediately after her self-immolation on 11 June, the Chinese police stopped all means of communication to prevent news of her self-immolation from spreading outside Tibet and to the outside world. This restriction was not lifted until 15 June, one day after Wangchen Dolma died.

The village of Dragthog lies 63 km east of Tawu. The residents of Tawu mostly earn their livelihood from farming. According to the fifth population census of the Chinese government, there are 1,178 people in the village.

Sources say in recent years Chinese officials have been making plans to construct electric power plants in the area. They have also made official announcements to relocate the local Tibetans to other areas.

Guest Post: Placing psychiatric health manual of Chinese armed police in Tibet in context

(contd. from Page 1)

Matthew Akester is a translator of classical and modern literary Tibetan with 25 years of experience as an independent researcher throughout the Tibetan world. He has worked as a consultant and contributor for the Tibet Information Network, Human Rights Watch, Tibet Heritage Fund, and Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center. He is an advisor, editor, and translator for countless publications on Tibet in English, French, and Tibetan. He is also a lecturer on contemporary Tibet for student programs including SIT in Nepal and India.

An Analysis of Chinese PAP Handbook
By Matthew Akester

Internal documents dealing with the conduct of China's security forces, particularly in sensitive regions like Tibet, are not easily available. This handbook of 'psychiatric guidance' for troops serving on the Tibetan plateau was stolen from a prison office and eventually smuggled out of the country by one of the hundreds of ordinary Tibetans who still manage, despite intense security measures, to flee the country every year.

It is composed in a question and answer format by mental health consultants at the People's Armed Police (PAP) hospital in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, following a videoconference on the topic held by the Sichuan PAP command, and published in October 2008. The date is significant; PAP troops played a leading role in suppressing the mass protests against Chinese rule that swept across Tibet in March 2008, and the majority of reported atrocities committed by armed security forces against unarmed protesters at that time took place in the two Tibetan prefectures (Kardze and Ngaba) of Sichuan Province.

The impact of those events on the Tibetan population is more or less known to have involved dozens of casualties, thousands of arrests, the subjection of detainees to torture and other forms of extreme brutality, terms of imprisonment for many, and the intensification of surveillance, intimidation, and martial-style controls on movement and communication in all Tibetan areas. Five years on, this handbook provides an insight into the impact of the protests on the security forces, because it was evidently commissioned to address the occurrence of psychological trauma among the troops.

The single most significant passage of the document is question 11: "How to handle recurrent images of merciless cruelty from the time of the crackdown?" The answer states:

Soldiers who participated in the process of dealing with incidents of beating, smashing, looting and burning, such as in Aba on 3/16 and Serta and Ganzi on 3/18 may suffer recurrent flashbacks of the merciless response [by security forces], which give them bad dreams or even prevent them from sleeping...This can cause long-term mental disturbance and negatively influence an individual's mental state and life.

This amounts to an admission that security forces did indeed use firearms against protesters on those occasions, as alleged by Tibetan eyewitnesses at the time but denied by the authorities. As well as firing on unarmed crowds, Tibetan accounts described hellish conditions in crowded detention cells, inhuman beatings, denial of medical care to the seriously wounded, and so on. Such scenes apparently also left painful scars in the minds of the perpetrators.

In the case of the 16 March protest in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) when cellphone photographs of slaughtered protesters reached the outside world the authorities retracted their initial denial, claiming (according to Xinhua on 20 March 2008) that security forces were obliged to open fire when they came under attack by a mob.

The handbook further tends to confirm that China's security forces are deployed in Tibet to wage a political struggle, rather than simply to maintain public order. Soldiers are advised to exercise restraint and not act

impulsively, but also not to shrink from punishing opponents of the state, even if they are unarmed Buddhist monks. The answer to question 6, "How to handle the shock of Tibet separatists arrogantly confronting us?", says:

Earlier, during the crisis period, some soldiers looked for opportunities to fight with Tibet independence protesters, wishing to avenge their wounded comrades. This is normal and understandable, but as Tibet security is a special political struggle, individuals must make the effort to restrain normal impulses and exercise restraint...It is victory in the broadest sense, for the objectives of the Party and State must be assured.

Firing on protesters is acknowledged as a problem, as in the answer to question 9 ("During Tibet security duty, why is there constant fear of coming under attack?"):

If we lose control and panic, because of "mistaking a piece of rope for a snake", and use firearms, there is sure to be a bloody incident, and innocent members of the public wounded.

(It is also noted that the 'Six Regulations' on using firearms must be strictly observed: this refers to Public Security ministry guidelines, which allow the use of firearms to disperse a protest in certain circumstances).

On the other hand, it admonishes those who waver when faced with Tibetan protests:

Some comrades, confronted by the scary image of insurgents holding Tibetan swords and rocks, lose their composure and become discouraged, and some feel confused when they see [protesting] monks and nuns dressed in red robes. Since this feeling inhibits the fighting spirit of the troops, and their resolve to punish the opposition [protesters], it seriously detracts from the dignity and efficiency of the force. To counter this

Raise your level of understanding [...] Tibet separatists look very strong and brave. But we have the firm leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the Central Military Commission and President Hu Jintao behind us, and the support of the whole nation. Right is on our side, so we are up to the task of building long-term stability in Tibet.

The PAP deployed to crush mass protest in Tibetan areas of Sichuan in 2008 thus appear through the pages of this handbook as a somewhat unprofessional and demoralised force, prone to both vindictive violence and lapses of confidence. Apparently well-equipped and adequately trained, they struggle to cope with a popular rebellion in a bleak and unfamiliar environment. They are faced with the implacable hostility of the natives, who they are told represent a serious threat to national security yet oppose their arms with nothing more than stoic determination. It is arguably typical of colonial situations worldwide for well-armed security forces to experience confusion and self-doubt over fighting an "enemy" of powerless villagers. In this sense, the writers of this manual are dealing with a challenge familiar to occupying armies of the late 20th century from Algeria, Vietnam, and Afghanistan.

There has not been open warfare in occupied Tibet since the early 1960s, and the regime consistently denies that there is any "Tibet issue", yet this handbook warns its foot-soldiers that:

Tibet security work is conducted in a highly complex and difficult environment, in which everyone must constantly face life and death, the stench of blood, and conflict.

Since the events of 2008, most Tibetan areas have remained in a state of undeclared martial law requiring the large-scale deployment of security forces to maintain the status quo and prevent signs of dissent from reaching the outside world. In this climate mass protest have been replaced by individual acts of self-immolation. This document provides rarely seen low-level testimony that China's security forces see themselves as engaged in a taxing counter-insurgency in Tibet, despite the absence of armed opposition, or indeed any substantial threat to their personnel.

Below is a selective translation of the manual by TCHRD:

Psychological Counseling and Protection handbook during Stability Maintenance Work in Tibetan Areas
(Internal Document)
Published by Sichuan People's Armed Police Corps of the Political Department
October 2008

Preface

This Handbook on Psychological Counseling and Protection During Stability Maintenance Work in Tibetan Areas was prepared in accordance with the spirit of the videoconference held on stability maintenance work in Tibetan areas by the Sichuan People's Armed Police department, in addition to the decisions taken at the meeting. Taking into consideration the work of maintaining stability in Tibetan areas and the psychological health of the armed police, the mental health department of [provincial] armed forces' hospital with substantial assistance from various branch hospitals [of the armed forces] authored this handbook.

The purpose of this handbook is to create awareness on common psychological problems [faced by PAP soldiers] in stability maintenance in Tibetan areas. and to identify common psychological problems to strengthen the ways and means to handle such problems while carrying out stability maintenance tasks. This will further lead to the stepping forward [advancement] of psychiatric wellbeing needed to maintain stability. In order for the successful fulfilling of the responsibility of maintaining security and stability and for the soldiers to read and study, we prepared and published this handbook.

Question 1. How to ease mental stress faced by stability maintenance troops in Tibetan areas?

Answer: Ever since the soldiers began their responsibility of maintaining stability in Tibetan areas, despite all the risks and dangers, on the whole they have kept a determined mind, without succumbing to fear, and made lots of efforts bearing all hardships. They have maintained a strong character, a fierce and proud mind to struggle and to bear and overcome all the hardships. However, the environment of Tibetan areas is very unique and special, and carrying out activities there entails lots of complexities. Because of the enormous time required for the training and the difficulties involved, it is an unavoidable reality that soldiers are being subjected to psychological traumas.

According to psychiatrists, trauma [pressure] is [experienced] when a [sudden] change is viewed [occurred] in a long drawn out habit of a human personality. All the psychological pressures faced by private individuals have no benefits whatsoever. There is an ancient proverb, which says, 'without pressure on the well, water will not sprout out. Without pressure on humans, responsibilities cannot be fulfilled.'

Therefore, exerting certain amount of pressure is [required], as it strengthens the ability to carry out the works successfully. Generally, while facing the enormous challenges in carrying out the responsibilities of maintaining stability in Tibetan areas, [one being subjected to] a certain psychological pressure is quite normal. However, one should prevent oneself from being subjected to unlimited psychological pressure [trauma]. If you face unbearable [experiences] such as insomnia, it would have extremely negative impact on your responsibility to carry out work successfully. Furthermore, people's [soldiers'] physical/health conditions would be severely impacted. If such incidents occur, we must make efforts to balance them out by resolving the unnecessary psychological pressures [traumas] on appropriate time.

Ways of balancing out [how to resolve the psychological traumas arriving out of contradictions]

a) To strengthen one's acceptance [one's belief]: Whether [one] is strong-willed or not is deeply connected with one's acceptance [belief]. In real circumstances, people experience many difficulties and worries with regard to many issues. This occurs not because of the one who creates the issues, but due to not having proper acceptance [understanding] of the issues involved. A proper acknowledgment [acceptance, understanding] of the issues entails a proper way of looking at things – a proper outlook. Not having a proper acknowledgment is the cause of

not having a proper attitude and character.

In the process of carrying out responsibility to maintain stability in Tibetan areas, thoughts and attitudes not suitable to oneself such as 'I must surely triumph over other people' needs to be reformed. Furthermore, thoughts such as 'gratitude must extend to sacrifices made', or not having proper attitude to other people, should be reformed, thus developing oneself a habitual nature to adapt to the atmosphere of the roof of the world.

Question 2. Are health complications experienced at high altitude signs of some diseases?

Answer: Environmental conditions on the Tibetan plateau is difficult due to which it is common to experience shortness of breath, insomnia, headache, and other physical discomfort often associated with altitude sickness. After a period of adaptation, most symptoms will disappear own their own without leaving any lingering or longterm affects.

If you always feel unwell, and even after medical check-up, you are unable to explain the symptoms of physical illness, and yet they significantly affect your work-life, then this is a case of what psychologists call "somatoform disorders."

Question 3. How to overcome mental tensions experienced during the implementation of stability maintenance work in Tibetan areas?

Answer: Many officers, posted for the first time in stability maintenance work in Tibetan areas, are prone to palpitation, anxiety, nervousness, irritability, etc. Especially during tense confrontation between the two sides and other unexpected situations, some soldiers tend to panic, unable to react in timely fashion. It is normal to feel some kind of mental tension, particularly in the face of strong pressure from the emergence of some physiological and psychological changes. Generally speaking, it is necessary to feel a reasonable level of mental tension. But excessive mental tension is harmful.

Question 6. How to handle the shock of Tibetan separatists arrogantly confronting us?

Answer: Earlier, during the crisis period, some soldiers looked for opportunities to fight with Tibet independence protesters, wishing to avenge their wounded comrades. It shows a determined attitude to carry out forward the fight. This is normal and understandable, but as Tibet security is a special political struggle, individuals must make the effort to control normal impulses and exercise restraint.

a) Uphold correct attitude: One should clearly recognize the political aspect of maintaining stability in Tibetan areas. If one is afflicted by excessive mental stress when resolving crisis, even small matters can become big and normal issues might turn political. Even a harm done to one individual could cause social chaos. Therefore, it is important to raise high the banner of "three viewpoints" and vigorously implement 'three principles', the 'three principles of caution', and the 'six regulations' [during PAP actions] to ensure the victory of the CCP and the Chinese state.

Question 8. How to face baseless accusations from the masses during Tibet stability maintenance work?

Answer: Our opponent in Tibet stability maintenance work is special. [Tibet] is a region where the sense of nationality and religious beliefs is deep. [Therefore] incidents of masses hurling accusations [against the army] cannot be avoided. This is a normal psychological reaction. But do not ignore it and avoid taking excessive stress, or it will produce a variety of negative emotions and unexpected mistakes, even cause other negative mental emotions such as anxiety and impulsivity. When such situations arise, you should differentiate between troublemakers and the masses. Even with the troublemakers, you should intervene to minimize tension and open confrontation so that [the protest] would not spread.

Question 9. During Tibet stability maintenance duty, why is there constant fear of coming under attack?

Answer: This is a sign of highly vigilant mind, but too much concern and worry will distort your sense of judgment. You may view even normal actions by others as aggressive behavior. If you panic and lose control, because of "mistaking rope for the snake", it will cause bloody incidents of using firearms and injuring innocent masses. To improve your psychological quality in such situations, you should:

(a) Fully understand the situation: Along with other fellow soldiers, analyse the situation and environment of stability maintenance duty to foresee potential locations of trouble. We should] must take necessary precautions.

(b) Strengthen self-confidence to achieve complete victory: If you successfully figure out potential causes of trouble and take decisions accordingly, then you can avoid highly stressful traumatic experience. [If we do that] then we can greatly reduce the highly stressful psychological response by dealing with emergency situations based on the usual standards of armed training.

(c) Take self-initiative to seek psychological support: Find more comrades, leaders to communicate with. If you get their support and trust, you will not feel lonely when doing your duty. When unexpected events occur, we can find faith in our friends to support us from time to time.

d) Do more physical exercises: A strong and powerful body is the main basis for overcoming fear. You should do daily physical exercises to improve physical prowess and maintain a solid and strong body so that even in serious conflicts and emergencies, you will not be afraid.

Question 10. Why does one feel unhappy after longterm Tibet stability maintenance work?

Answer: It is difficult to know the exact causes of unhappiness during longterm Tibet stability maintenance work. But if you feel depressed, suffer from insomnia and eating problem, [in addition to] losing interest and confidence, decreased ability to work and even thoughts of suicide could possibly be psychological problems. Leaving such symptoms untreated for more than two weeks could cause serious mental health complications. You should report to your superiors and receive psychological counseling and medical treatment.

Question 11. How to handle recurrent images of merciless cruelty from the time of the crackdown?

Answer: Soldiers who participated in the process of dealing with incidents of beating, smashing, looting and burning, such as in Aba on 3/16 and Serta and Ganzi on 3/18 may suffer recurrent flashbacks of the merciless response [by security forces], which give them bad dreams or even prevent them from sleeping. These are called flashbacks, a symptom of PTSD. This can cause longterm mental disturbance and negatively influence an individual's mental state and life.

Question 12. Why does one lose interest and feel indifferent to people and events during stability maintenance work?

Answer: Due to longterm stability maintenance work, you may get accustomed to the monotony of the duty and lose interest and enthusiasm to work. And you may also not feel like talking with others or feel no joy and happiness in any achievement. In fact, these mood changes are a concrete manifestation of psychological stress response. This is not a disease, nor is it lack of intelligence or emotional numbness.

Gradually due to time and psychological adaptation, this mental numbness will disappear. If you suffer from such conditions, you should self-adapt and strive to revive psychological health.

Question 16. Why does it happen that in stability maintenance work, when troublemakers display open defiance,

[PAP soldiers lose confidence] and question themselves whether they had committed a mistake?

Answer: Some comrades, confronted by the scary image of insurgents holding Tibetan swords and stones, lose their composure and become discouraged, and some feel confused when they see [protesting] monks and nuns dressed in red robes. Since this feeling inhibits the fighting spirit of the troops, and their resolve to punish the opposition [protesters], it seriously detracts from the dignity and efficiency of the force. To counter this

a) Raise your level of understanding: Tibet separatists may look very strong and brave. But we have the firm leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the Central Military Commission and President Hu Jintao behind us, and the support of the whole nation. Right is on our side, so we are up to the task of building longterm stability in Tibet.

Question 17. Why does one get the constant illusion of being called for emergency roll call during Tibet stability maintenance work?

Answer: This could be a case of auditory hallucinations. Hallucination is a sensorial reaction stimulated by one kind of external perceptual experience. For instance, during hallucinations, one sees things that do not exist in reality and hears imaginary voices.

Question 18. How to handle loneliness and anxiety during longterm Tibet stability maintenance work?

Answer: The Tibetan plateau is a high altitude area surrounded by snow mountains with sparse population and poor livelihood conditions, in addition to being far away from one's loved ones. Due to these reasons, some people feel lonely and depressed. This happens due to lack of interaction with friends and colleagues. There are three reasons to lack of [social interaction]: unfamiliar environment, lack of self-confidence, and natural inclination towards depression.

Question 20. After witnessing the risks involved in Tibet stability maintenance, should one continue working?

Answer: The duty of maintaining stability in Tibet is tough, ridden with dangers, full of conflicts, [daily struggle] between death and life in the hailstorm of swords and guns. In such circumstances, some soldiers may change their attitude; even those who were formerly hoping to get military promotion also change their attitude and no longer desire promotion. The fact that soldiers face problems in carrying out orders of stability maintenance is caused by two factors. One is lack of emotional spirit and motivation, which gets undermined under high-pressure situations. This can be resolved by taking a good rest, and eating proper and regular diet. Another reason is succumbing to fear during stability maintenance. This situation is understandable, because when people are faced with dangerous conflict, it is normal to or retreat behavior is normal.

Question 22. How to institute a proper system of rewards and punishments in Tibet stability maintenance work?

Answer: Since March, majority of [soldiers] has been maintaining stability and resolutely implementing the directives of the Party Central Committee and the Central Military Commission and Chairman Hu Jintao to carry forward the special ability to fight the separatists and endure hardship with a firm determination.

In the Tibetan highlands, through frequent maneuvers we have effectively dealt with emergency situations to safeguard political and social stability in Tibetan areas. Towards this end, we have received support and praise from the Party and the masses.

Question 25. How to seek help in handling psychological problems through self-adjustment?
Answer: First, talk to relevant staff and consult resident psychologists and mental health experts. Based on their diagnosis, understand where to seek treatment. In less serious cases, the patient should be given local psychological counseling and guidance. But in serious cases when symptoms undergo drastic changes, the

patient should be taken to provincial hospital for treatment.

Second, call the reception desk of the provincial hospital at 0833 2452776 and seek psychological help from experts. Three, those posted in remote areas such Aba and Gansu, one can email and phone they can contact mental health experts of the provincial hospital and seek their help.

PS: This handbook was jointly drafted by comrades Wang Jun Xiang, Cheng Jian Wei, Xie Lei, Wang Bin , and Zhang Wen Chun. It was compiled comrade Mao Se Xiang and proofread by comrades Zhao Xiao Bin and Zhe Zhi Yong. The handbook was edited and approved by Fu Wan Xuan, the director of the Sichuan Political Department of PAP and his deputy, Chen li Xue.

'So many myriad hellish sufferings': Persecution of Tibetan artists

17 JUNE 2013: TCHRD has translated some of the songs from the album, 'Agony of Unhealed Wounds', to highlight the secret imprisonment of Tibetan musicians Chakdor and Pema Trinley in Ngaba County in the Tibetan province of Amdo. The release and distribution of the album in July last year led to the detention and imprisonment of Chakdor and Pema Trinley, and the disappearance of musician Khenrap and songwriter Nyagdompo.
Chakdor and Pema Trinley each received two years' prison sentence in February this year. After being informed officially about the sentencing, family members of both the musicians made at least two unsuccessful attempts to visit them in Mianyang Prison. The Mianyang prison officials apparently had no knowledge about the musicians' whereabouts.

However, family members and relatives of the musicians believe that they are being imprisoned at Mianyang Prison, which is about 127 km from the provincial capital of Chengdu. Individuals or groups wishing to help the families locate the imprisoned musicians can make a direct call to Mianyang Prison at (0086) 8162890762 and enquire about their actual whereabouts. On 15 June, TCHRD staff called this number asking to speak with the Party Head of Mianyang Prison, Mr Xie Ping but the call was abruptly cut short.

Many sentenced Tibetans in Sichuan Province are being imprisoned at Mianyang Prison, which also runs Re-education Through (RTL) Labour camps. The official website of Mianyang Prison features some interesting pictures of prisoners getting what the prison authorities call 'help' during 'political education' classes and 'legal education' trainings.

There is no information on the status and whereabouts of Khenrap and Nyagdompo.

Below is the translation of six of the total 12 songs from the album, 'Agony of Unhealed Wounds':

1. The Protector of Snow Land

Martyr Lobsang Phunstok
You are the protector of the Land of Snows
You show the great path of victory
For freedom you burned

Martyr Lobsang Tashi
You are the protector of the Land of Snows
From the boundless sky enveloped in dark clouds
Your roar has tamed the three worlds
For freedom you sacrificed your life

Martyr Lobsang Phunstok
You are the protector of the Land of Snows
From the deep lush forest engulfed in windstorms
The lion roared for truth and justice
Bearing witness for freedom you sacrificed your life

Male and Female martyrs of the Land of Snows
You all are the protectors of the Tibetan people
Male and Female martyrs of the Land of Snows
You all are the protectors of the Tibetan people

2. Lamentation

Alas
The white snow mountains are engulfed in darkness
Talented cubs of the snow lion are exiled
In the cold boundless desert
Alone and unprotected

Alas
Soldiers surround the monasteries
Patriots are put in prison
From the land of death devoid of karmic law
Tibetans are defenseless and powerless

Alas
The heroism of the martyrs is seen as ignorance
Unity and solidarity seen as enemies
In the times of the ruthless Chinese Communist Party
How can there be a future for the Land of Snows?
In the times of the ruthless Chinese Communist Party
How can there be a future for the Land of Snows?

3. The Flag of Truth and Blood

The precious lives of thousand ancestors
The wounds of the past decade
Inflicted by the poisoned arrows
Can they be wiped out from [our] hearts?

The flow of red-blood
Floods the four sources of nature
The agonized cry of torture
Will it stop echoing in [our] ears?

Yeshin Norbu
Who sees the three times
Is exiled to the ends of the earth
Can [we] forget it from our hearts?

On the summit of the red mountain
The face of snow lion flag
Is engulfed in the darkness
Does that appear in [your] mind's eye?

4. The Unbearable Suffering

At the centre of the universe in the south
Under the illegitimate Chinese laws
If you look with a truthful eye
So many images of torn karmic laws

In the land surrounded by the snow mountains
Under the red Chinese colonial laws
If [you] observe with an open mind
So many myriad hellish sufferings

In a land bereft of protectors and kinship
No life and happiness exist in Tibet
If seen by countries on all sides
So many martyrs burning up in flames

5. Dark Boundless Barren Desert

The edge of the barren desert
The incomparable wings of intelligence
The flight of the deft little bird
Hard to know where it is heading

The oppressive and cruel tyrant
Although they lack the willingness
The humble submissive masses of the desert
Who can estimate their unwilling losses?

The white-colored flag of truth
Although painted by charcoal
The true nature of a compassionate mind
Can't be wiped out by cruel intentions and tricks

The gracious tent of peace
The felicitous livelihood of the beings
The descendants of the powerful red-faced Tibetans
Never lose unity and solidarity in the depth of your heart

If there's an independent path of truth
None will be trapped in the web of trickery
The pride of the three provinces
Let it fly from the summit of the snow mountains

6. Despair

Pallid plain bereft of natural beauty
Sour pain Inflicted by history's darkness
My frozen homeland lacking civilization
I am despaired by you

The pack of deer chased by the tribes of huntsmen
Wolves putting on benevolent veneer lacking thread of love
Your life and death struggle lacking love
I am despaired by it

Peacocks on pulpits bereft of compassion
The baggage of an unharmonious community
Foolish ox-like masses lacking patriotism
I am despaired by you

Cash-loving Lamas corrupted from within and outside
Monks begging for money in the streets
Monasteries fight for supremacy of their sects
I am despaired by you

I am a dog-thief from upper Tibet
You are a bandit from lower Tibet
He is fox-wolf from middle Tibet
We are criminals who have sold our nation's soul

Note on translation:

In the song, 'Protector of the Snow Land', Lobsang Tashi aka Tapey and Lobsang Phuntsok are monks from Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County who respectively became the first and second Tibetan to self-immolate in Tibet. Lobsang Tashi self-immolated on 27 February 2009 and Lobsang Phuntsok on 19 March 2011. In 'The Flag of Truth and Blood', Yeshin Norbu refers to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

BI-WEEKLY HUMAN RIGHTS UPDATE

Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy

Vol. 1 Issue 12 **1-15 July 2013**

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Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy is a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in January 1996 with the mission to protect the human rights of Tibetans in Tibet and promote the principles of democracy in the exile community.

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Eight losses faced by Tibetan *drogpas* due to China's resettlement policy

15 JULY 2013: One of the most urgent issues affecting Tibetans inside Tibet today is the massive displacement induced by China's development projects. Last month, Human Rights Watch reported that almost two million Tibetans, predominately nomads, have been displaced from their ancestral lands over the past seven years to make way for Chinese development in Tibet. Resettled in concrete houses in urban areas, displaced Tibetans suffer from innumerable problems such as the loss of their traditional economic livelihood and cultural dislocation. *(contd. on Page 2)*

China appropriates Tibetan farmland in the name of hydropower projects

12 JULY 2013: A major land grab by Chinese authorities is being reported by local sources in Muge area in Sungchu (Ch: Songpan) County in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, in the Tibetan province of Amdo.

According to local accounts along with some photographs received by TCHRD, the Chinese authorities have appropriated all farmlands in Achu nomadic camp (Tib: dewa) in lower Muge area in the name of hydropower projects to generate electricity. (A dewa or rural nomadic camp at its smallest generally consists of about 30 to 40 families and over 100 to 200 families in bigger ones.)

Traditional grasslands in Achu camp used by local herds for grazing in autumn were also appropriated. *(contd. on Page 4)*

Senior monk among the latest identified in Tawu shootings

11 JULY 2013: Tsewang Choephel, a senior monk and administrative staff (Tib: chanzoe) at Nyatso Monastery, is the latest Tibetan to be identified among those injured in Chinese People's Armed Police (PAP) firing on 6 July.

According to information and photographs received by TCHRD, senior monk Tsewang Choephel was shot at multiple times on his hands and legs. His condition is critical. With Tsewang Choephel's identification, the number of the injured in PAP firing has increased to ten, including a layman Ugyen Tashi who was shot with eight bullets. *(contd. on Page 5)*

Eight losses faced by Tibetan *drogpas* due to China's resettlement policy

(contd. from Page 1)

The Chinese government argues that resettlement of Tibetan nomads is an economic necessity ostensibly to protect fragile Tibetan grasslands from what it calls "livestock overgrazing". Behind such a rationale, however, is the implied accusation that nomads are unproductive people – economic liabilities – who stand in the way of China's modernisation programs in Tibet.

TCHRD has translated and edited an essay by a Tibetan writer living inside Tibet who eloquently refutes Chinese assertions. The writer informs us that nomads are a proud, compassionate, honest, cultured and productive people who crafted their own independent source of living for centuries. The writer, born to nomadic parents, laments the losses nomads are currently suffering, including the loss of precious folk culture, because of their resettlement in urban areas.

He writes, "With the resettlement of *drogpas* in urban areas, they have given up the rich tradition of singing folk songs during festivals. All they do now is just eat and drink. Their children abhor folk stories too. They just idle away watching cartoons and other programs on state television. They are getting alienated from their rich *drogpa* folk culture."

Written in a simple nomadic style the critical issues raised in the essay have struck a deep sympathetic chord with readers in Tibet. One of the readers said: "The issues raised in the essay are all related to the survival of nomads. We must seriously reflect on them."

Echoing the same sentiments another wrote: "This noble author has spoken out the truth. I express my gratefulness to him. He is politically and economically very conscious. Everyone should read the essay and reflect on it."

The article was carried on na shon sar pa (New Tibetan Youth), a popular website run from within Tibet. Click here for the original piece in Tibetan.

The author writes under the pseudonym bong tag ri lu (Bongtak Rilu)

Eight losses drogpas suffer because of resettlement in urban areas

by Bongtak Rilu

1. Loss of independent livelihood

Since ancient times, drogpas (nomads) have depended on livestock for their living. They have been used to eating dried meat, butter, cheese, milk, yoghurt and tsampa. These have become their staple diets. Moreover they survive on animal produces such as sheep wool, yak skin, cow dung and so on. They make tents, quilts and mattresses out of yak hide. Milk and yoghurt gave them a robust health. Yak and sheep dung fuel their hearths. With resettlement in urban areas, drogpas have been deprived of their traditional sources of living and staple diets. Now drogpas have to visit Chinese streets (gya sang) to buy milk, yoghurt, cheese and firewood. The prices of these foods, which drogpas are used to eating, have skyrocketed. They have to pay six to eight renminbi for one gyama* of milk and thirteen to fifteen renminbi for one gyama of meat. Drogpas have no choice but to wait – their throats dry and hands empty – for the compensation money the state provides them. Their previous independent source of living has now disappeared.

2. Loss of unity and solidarity

It is generally said that Tibetan people are kind and compassionate. Tibetan drogpas, in particular, have developed a harmonious relation with their surrounding environment, including the snow-mountains. Because of difficult travel and communication systems and other environmental hazards on the roof of the world, drogpas have had to settle in particular areas. In some places, only one or two families can be found. Cities with vast population have never existed. Drogpas are divided into different villages. When they migrate to greener pastures, treat animals infected with diseases and shear them for wool, drogpas seek the help of fellow drogpas from other villages. As a result, they get plenty of opportunities to mingle and cooperate with each other. Their experience of helping each other means drogpas have developed a culture of unity and solidarity among themselves. With the resettlement in urban areas, drogpas have been deprived of work requiring collective efforts. They now abhor helping each other. Because of atomised lives, drogpa culture

of unity and solidarity is disappearing. Without any cooperative interaction among themselves, drogpas remain isolated in their [concrete houses] staring blankly at each other.

3. Loss of culture of decency and respect

Tibetans are known to be decent people. To elders we accord the respect generally due to our parents. Those who are younger than us we shower them with love and kindness as if they are our real siblings. More admirable than this is the kind of hospitality given to guests visiting our homes. Even beggars who possess nothing would be showered with clothes to wear and food to eat when they arrive in nomadic areas. When guests leave our homes, we have a beautiful culture of not walking in front or behind them. With the resettlement of dropgas in urban areas – in concrete houses – the culture of decency and respect among drogpas is disappearing. Drogpas now avoid visiting their neighbours. When they leave their houses, they put huge locks on their doors. They live their lives suspecting about anything that they see and touch. Their previous culture of hospitality, of inviting guests to their homes, has disappeared.

4. Loss of a unique livelihood

In the course of their long history, nations have developed their own unique source of livelihood. Tibetans are no exception. Drogpas have developed their own four-squared black tents to live in, three-headed hearths to light their homes, ropes to tie animals – thus crafting a livelihood autonomous and self-sufficient. Because of the creative genius of our ancestors, we have a unique dwelling called nomadic tent. These tents are constructed in such a way that they can absorb fresh air from outside, while getting rid of the damp air inside. The tents have the ability to keep dwellers within warm during winter and cool during summer. Yak dung can easily catch fire in the three-headed hearths, causing no serious problems to nomads and their animals. Moreover, the art of weaving clothes give drogpas a good physical exercise. Whether milking their animals or churning out butter and cheese, such activities give them a good source of living and strong physique. Drogpa livelihood is thus unique and productive. With the resettlement of drogpas in urban areas, this unique livelihood is now disappearing. Unlike their drogpa ancestors, the coming generation shall be deprived of [the joy] of erecting tents, building hearths, milking animals and churning out butter and cheese.

5. Loss of ancestral homelands

Since ancient times, drogpas and their ancestors have been dwelling on high mountains blessed with pure rivers. Our ancestors have been performing the ritual of burning incense (sang) on mountains, throwing blessed mani stones (deu bum) into rivers, putting up prayer flags on the hills and hanging cotton on trees in forests. All these rituals, conducted for thousands of years, are meant to protect rivers, forests and mountains from pollution. We believe that digging out the earth will invite the wrath of nyens (evil spirits), polluting waters that of lu (nagas) and destroying mountains would alienate ancestral gods dwelling in them. Such myths and beliefs have served to protect Tibet's environment. Resettling the nomads haphazardly in urban areas by forcing them to sell their animals, all in the name of grassland protection, means they will be displaced from their ancestral homelands. This will not work. An example could be given of Australia, a nation that relies heavily on animal husbandry. Australian government tried to increase the population of livestock by hunting down foxes. This, however, had a devastating impact on the population of livestock. In the end, the government was forced to bring foxes from other countries and released them on the grasslands. Similarly, there has to have an interdependent existence between livestock and grasslands of Tibet. Simply dispensing with the animals cannot save Tibetan grasslands.

6. Loss of drogpa folk culture

Even before they attend schools, drogpa children receive plenty of folk wisdom from their parents. Drogpa children have a tradition of visiting their neighbors' tents and spending nights therein. While herding animals on the mountains, they sing folk songs and narrate folk stories and sayings to each other. Children learn counting by playing with sheep droppings – they keep the droppings in their palms and ask their friends to count them. During festivals like the Tibetan New Year, drogpas sing songs and narrate satires. Drogpas thus have a rich folk culture. To give my own example: I never went to a university, but when I was a child my drogpa parents narrated me the epics of Gesar and other folk stories. Because of such experience, I have been able to gain some wisdom. With the resettlement of drogpas in urban areas, they have given up the rich tradition of singing

folk songs during festivals. All they do now is just eat and drink. Their children abhor folk stories too. They just idle away watching cartoons and other programs on state television. They are getting alienated from their rich drogpa folk culture.

7. Loss of culture of shame and modesty

Tibetans are a people who value human traits such as shame and modesty. On surface such culture of shame and modesty might appear backward, but if observed closely one would realize that it demonstrates our deep faith in karma. Drogpas will never use objects of other people. They will use their own objects. They are not freeloaders. Drogpas are honest people. If they found out an object, they will make sure it is returned to the rightful owner. Their modesty surprises me. During seasonal migrations, even if they leave behind their precious belongings in their tents, no one will steal them. I have never heard of thieves and bandits among drogpas. With the resettlement in urban areas, drogpas are now facing livelihood crisis. Young men are jobless. To pass out their time, they visit Chinese streets and play snooker. Increasing number of them also resort to thieving and robbery during night.

8. Loss of drogpa humanity

"The character of drogpas is as pure-white as cotton; their soul as pure-white as cotton; their words as soft as cotton." This is excerpted from the lyrics of a song I penned for a Tibetan musician. After I returned from my visit to a couple of Chinese cities, a strong realization dawned on me: that our homeland is pure and our people honest. During my association and interaction with many a different people in big cities, I missed my drogpa brothers and sisters, especially their honesty. Since ancient times, virtues such as not harming and manipulating people are inherent in drogpa souls. With the resettlement in urban areas, this profound drogpa humanity is gradually being eroded—thanks to their interaction with all sorts of vain people. This loss of drogpa humanity pains me to the bone. It robs my sleep.

*Gyama (Tib): Unit of measurement equivalent to 500 grams.

China appropriates Tibetan farmland in the name of hydropower projects

(contd. from Page 1)

More farmlands have also been confiscated in neighbouring A-ngag and Agon camps for 'development' projects.

The Chinese authorities gave no explanation for the large scale land-grab. They were not consulted before, during or after the execution of the so-called development projects. Their participation and agency in shaping policies conducive to local conditions were denied.

Alongside the increased land-grab, the security situation has also gained added momentum with new police stations being built in both upper and lower areas of Muge. Sources say each of the three townships in Muge now has at least 3 police stations as opposed to at least 2 in the past.

At the time of reporting, a new police station being built near Muge Monastery. The initial plan was to build the police station within the monastery. But the plan was changed when the authorities met with stiff resistance from the senior monastic staff.

The birthplace of scholar Muge Samten, now a famed pilgrimage site, is located just about half a kilometre away from Muge Monastery.

The upcoming police station near Muge Monastery has heightened concerns and tension among local Tibetans in Muge.

There is no report available immediately on whether any displacement has occurred during confiscation of farmlands, particularly in Achu camp, which lost all farmland. No information is available on official compensation given to the aggrieved families.

Local accounts report that local Tibetans are facing enormous challenges in freely expressing their grievances given the violent official reprisals. Addressing these legitimate grievances peacefully should be the priority of to ensure true harmony and stability in Tibet.

Senior monk among the latest identified in Tawu shootings

(contd. from Page 1)

The beatings, shootings and teargassing in Tawu led to the violent disruption of an otherwise peaceful religious ceremony observed to celebrate the 78th birthday of the Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The scale and extent of the Tawu shootings appear to overshadow another brutal shootings in January 2012 in Drango (Ch: Luhuo) County.

The PAP-led crackdown in Tawu is clearly aimed at suppressing the faith and respect shown by local Tibetans for the Dalai Lama on his birthday. The venue of the ceremony, the home of the popular mountain deity Machen Pomra, is a local landmark where Tibetans usually pray and make offerings. Last year on 6 July, armed police ringed the venue and put blockades long before the Tibetans arrived to hold the ceremony.

Sources informed TCHRD with more information on circumstances leading to the release of 14 detained Tibetans on the night of 7 July. On 6 July, following the bloody confrontation and detention, local Tibetans gathered at the courtyard of Nyatso Monastery and held a vociferous protest condemning the shootings and beatings, and calling for the immediate release of the 14 Tibetans who were savagely beaten and detained.

According to TCHRD sources, one unconfirmed eyewitness account claims that PAP soldiers not only addressed but also kowtowed before the courtyard protesters asking apology for their excesses. TCHRD reported earlier that PAP soldiers issued a verbal apology in their address to protesters in the courtyard of Nyatso Monastery.

The courtyard protest at Nyatso Monastery led to an emergency meeting on 7 July in Tawu County, attended by the governor of Sichuan Province, county government staff and representatives from Nyatso Monastery. A decision was reached at the meeting to release the detained Tibetans. Sources say monastic representatives played an important role in mediating and averting an escalating conflict.

On 7 July, between 10 and 11 pm, the detained Tibetans were released and hospitalised for medical treatment. Local eyewitnesses say many are unable to walk due to unrestrained beatings and needed constant support during hospitalisation. The injured endured one day and one night in detention without any medical help.

Environmental activist suffers broken ribs after savage beatings in Tawu

10 JULY 2013: A Tibetan environmental activist has his ribs broken after enduring savage beatings at the hands of China's People's Armed Police forces on 6 July when local Tibetans in Tawu (Ch: Daofu/Dawu) County gathered to celebrate His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 78th birthday in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.

According to information received by TCHRD, Gyaltsen, a Tibetan layman and environmental activist from Dunkye camp, was among a group of Tibetans who were savagely beaten at a bridge near Machen Pomra mountain. Gyaltsen suffered two broken ribs and many others in the group also sustained serious injuries. After the beatings, armed police detained 14 known Tibetans including Gyaltsen but they were released on the night of 7 July following protests from local Tibetans who had gathered at the courtyard of Nyatso Monastery to protest the detention.

Armed police engaged in brutal and indiscriminate beatings when Gyaltsen and others in the group began questioning the actions of the armed police. "They wanted to know why the armed police were stopping them from observing religious ceremony on the mountain," a source told TCHRD quoting local eyewitnesses. "The brutal beatings were in response to mere questionings and resistance by Gyaltsen and others in the group." Many of those released after detention had to be hospitalised due to severe injuries. Their whereabouts and condition remain unknown.

Gyatsen is a member of Tawu Environmental Protection Association which was formed in 2011 to preserve local environment. The association was started through a joint initiative by monastic and lay communities in Tawu County. It has 50 members with a representative each from local Tibetan families and villages in Tawu County. Last year, TCHRD reported the arbitrary detention of four members of the

association in mid February 2012. The association has initiated various activities to protect the environment by campaigning against rampant mining, deforestation, and smuggling of wildlife products. In some cases, local Tibetans had fined Chinese fishermen for fishing in sacred rivers. All the members are well-educated with considerable standing and respect in the local community.

Tibetans in critical condition after Chinese armed police shoot into crowd celebrating Dalai Lama's birthday

9 JULY 2013: Several known Tibetans are in critical condition and many more injured after Chinese armed police fired into a crowd of Tibetans gathered to celebrate the 78th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 6 July in Tawu (Ch: Daofu) County in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.

According to information received by TCHRD, at least nine Tibetans have sustained serious gunshot wounds and are believed to be in critical condition. Many others, both monastic and lay Tibetans, whose exact numbers cannot be determined immediately, have been injured after paramilitary forces from People's Armed Police (PAP) lobbed teargas shells and beat them. The injured are mostly monks from Nyatso Monastery, nuns from Geden Choeling Nunnery and a considerable number of lay Tibetans in Tawu County.

Gyen Tashi Sonam, a monk and teacher at Nyatso Monastery, who was shot in his head, is being treated along with others at a hospital in Dartsedo (Ch: Kangding) County. Graphic photographs show the bullet wound on Gyen Tashi Sonam's head, a gaping hole on the front left part of his head. The condition of Ugyen Tashi, a layman, is said to be serious with hopes of his survival receding fast given his severe injuries. According to latest information, Ugyen Tashi was shot at with at least eight bullets. He was first taken to County hospital where doctors, failing to handle the case, referred him to a provincial hospital in Chengdu where he is now being treated.

Gyamtso, a monk disciplinarian (Tib: Gekyo) at Nyatso Monastery was injured along with fellow monks, Jangchup Dorjee and Lobsang. Jangchup Dorjee is a brother of Palden Choetso, a nun from Dakar Choeling Nunnery who died of self-immolation protest on 3 November 2011 in Tawu. Laymen injured by gunshot wounds included Tashi from Khoro nomadic camp, Nyendak from Dukya nomadic camp, Sangpo from Kyasor nomadic camp. Dolma is the only injured nun identified so far. She hails from Dunkye nomadic camp.

Local Tibetans in Tawu County including monks and nuns from Nyatso Monastery and Geden Choeling Nunnery had gathered on the morning of 6 July 2013 to celebrate the 78th birthday of the Dalai Lama. As Tibetans stood on the hillside – worshipped by Tibetans as the home of Machen Pomra, one of the most popular mountain gods in Kham – burning incense, hanging prayer flags and making offerings in front of the Dalai Lama's portrait, vehicle loads of armed police arrived at the scene and attempted to cut short the birthday celebration. Armed police then surrounded the hill.

This provoked the crowd as Tibetans objected and questioned the armed police about the legality of their actions. "They asked why it was illegal to conduct religious rituals and under what national laws it was illegal to hold rituals," a source told TCHRD quoting local eyewitnesses in Tawu. A former administrative staff (Tib: chanzoe) of Nyatso Monastery (name withheld) who participated in the celebration later recalled that the monks tried to negotiate with the armed police to avert bloody confrontation but were rebuffed. "They [armed police] didn't listen to us at all. They just started beating and shooting," a source quoted the monk as saying.

The same source said armed police stoned the vehicle of Jangchup Dorjee as he attempted to drive up the hillside to reach the celebration venue. Armed police also used teargas shells to break up the crowd and beat the Tibetans. Sources say hundreds of Tibetans in Tawu attended the celebration although it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of those injured in armed police excesses.

Many Tibetans were detained the same day but were released after lay Tibetans and monks gathered at the courtyard of Nyatso Monastery and called for their immediate release. When armed police reached the courtyard full of local Tibetans at Nyatso Monastery, they expressed their apology and promised to bear

responsibility if anyone died or sustained life-threatening injuries. But according to a source, local Tibetans believe that the armed police were just executing orders from above and that the apology must come from the prefectural government of Kardze.

So far Nyatso Monastery has borne all costs associated with the treatment of injured Tibetans, the source told TCHRD.

The situation has eased a little after staff and monks at Nyatso Monastery mediated with the security forces, who no longer surround the monastery as they did since 6 July. But local Tibetans continue to face restrictions on their movement and the situation is said to be tense.

Last year on 6 July, armed police stopped local Tibetans from celebrating the Dalai Lama's birthday on the same spot, a source with contacts in Tawu told TCHRD.

China implements measures to appoint political monks in guise of spiritual teachers

5 JULY 2013: In the past weeks, there has been persistent speculation on 'experimental' moves by the Chinese authorities to overturn some of its decades-old vilification campaign against the Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. A handful of Tibetan monasteries in the Tibetan provinces of Amdo and Kham, located respectively in present-day Qinghai and Sichuan provinces, were given verbal permission to display portraits of the Dalai Lama and worship him as a religious, and not as a political figure. According to these verbal orders, monks and nuns are no longer required to denounce the Dalai Lama, which is an essential component in political education classes in Tibet's monastic institutions. Major international media outlets heralded this as a change in China's Tibet policy.

Only a few days later on 28 June 2013, China's State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), the highest official body that regulates all recognised religions in the People's Republic of China, denied any reversal of its long-standing policy on the Dalai Lama.

According to information received by TCHRD, some monasteries in Qinghai, particularly in Tsolho (Ch: Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture indeed were told to worship the Dalai Lama and display his portraits. Sources also told TCHRD that the caretakers at the home monastery of an imprisoned reincarnated lama (name withheld) in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) County had recently been told by County government officials to display the imprisoned lama's portraits in the monastery. However, in all these cases, no written permission in the form of documents endorsing a policy change was distributed among these monasteries indicating that the authorities are unsure of how the trial measures on the Dalai Lama will play out over time. Mindful of the role of new media in spreading information quickly and widely, the authorities have carefully avoided putting their directives in writing.

Generally, authorities in Tibetan areas outside Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) have been relatively lenient regarding the display and worship of Dalai Lama's portrait. That changed after widespread protests occurred on the Tibetan plateau, in particular protests continued unabated in Tibetan areas in Qinghai, Sichuan and Gansu provinces. Moreover, the Fifth Tibet Work Forum convened in January 2010 in Beijing to review Tibet policy announced the adoption of a uniform policy for for TAR as well as Tibetan areas in Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces – an important departure from the official practice of considering 'Tibet' as composing only TAR. In September 2012, a public notice issued by Rebkong (Ch: Tongren) County authorities in Malho (Ch: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu openly called for a strict ban on the sale of Dalai Lama's photos.

The continued restrictions placed on foreign journalists and other fact-finding delegations visiting Tibet make it difficult to gauge the real situation and to construct an accurate picture of changed practices and attitudes of local Chinese authorities vis-a-vis the Dalai Lama's portraits in Tibetan areas outside TAR. The possible change in policy regarding the Dalai Lama's portrait is the only positive change regarding religious freedom in Tibet. Over the years, religious freedom in Tibet has changed for the worse, particularly in recent years after the implementation of a systematic, widespread campaign to eliminate any signs of opposition against the party and the government. Since the end of 2011, Tibetan monastic institutions have been brought under the direct

control of the Chinese government and party cadres, ending the nominal autonomy enjoyed by Tibetan Buddhist institutions for decades.

New measures to appoint politico-religious instructors

To further tighten the noose around Tibetan monasteries and nunneries, the Chinese government has implemented a new regulation that gives the government and Party organs at multiple levels the authority and power to appoint Buddhist religious instructors. The regulation called "Measures to Determine Qualification and Employment of Religious Instructors in Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries" was published on 3 December 2012 after its approval during the second session of the eighth council of Buddhist Association of China held on 25 November 2012. The new regulation has been implemented from the day of its publication.

Under this regulation, all religious instructors at Tibetan Buddhist monasteries must be legally registered to continue teaching Buddhist scriptures (Article 2). Further the regulation states that to qualify as a religious instructor, a candidate must meet mandatory credentials, including support for the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist system, patriotism, discipline, uphold the dignity of law, safeguard the people's interests, safeguard national unity, and uphold religious and social harmony [Article 4 (ii)].

A candidate must not engage in activities organised at the behest of private individuals or overseas outfits [Article 4 (vi)] and must obey the Monastery Management Committees. Monks and nuns as well as lay believers must accept the guidance and supervision of the local people's government and relevant departments of Buddhist religious affairs [Article 4 (iii)].

Article 5 of the regulation requires that candidates be nominated and recommended by Monastery Management Committees. Then the candidates' credentials will be assessed and reviewed first at the county level BAC office. This is followed by another assessment and screening at the prefecture level of BAC. Shortlisted candidates must sit for an examination administered by prefectural branch of BAC.

In an interesting exception, Buddhist teachers who are over 50 years old and have been teaching for a considerable time, may be exempted from this examination provided they satisfy all the credentials listed in article 4 [Article 4 (iii)]. This exemption is likely aimed at avoiding potential conflicts in monastic institutions following the firing of senior religious teachers. As TCHRD reported in March 2013, senior religious teachers were removed at Rongwo Monastery and Labrang Tashikyil Monastery located respectively in Qinghai and Gansu provinces.

Religious instructor candidates who pass the examination will have their credentials reviewed and assessed by the province and autonomous region level of the Buddhist Association of China (BAC), an organ of the Communist Party. BAC will then issue a certificate to endorse the qualifications of a religious instructor [Article 4 (iv)].

This regulation affects all monastic institutions in TAR and the Tibetan areas outside TAR. In the areas where there are no BAC branch offices, applications must be made to prefectural or provincial BAC branches [Article 4 (v)].

Article 10 of the regulation stipulates that religious instructs appointment can last no more than five years after which they must apply for renewed employment. Those seeking re-appointment should undergo the same process of getting clearance and approval from the relevant BAC offices and local religious affairs departments.

The duties of religious instructors are listed in the regulation. It says qualified religious instructors should assist the Monastery Management Committees in the management work of education and guidance of monks and nuns, patriotism, unity and progress, maintaining "normal order" in monasteries, promotion of religious harmony and social harmony [Article 11 (iii)]. The religious instructors are also required to promote national policies and regulations to guide the masses of believers, consciously safeguard national unification, ethnic unity and social stability, and oppose separation [Article 11 (iv)].

Chapter four of the regulation is titled "Penalties". This chapter addresses the punishments for religious instructors "who violate the employment agreement or do not perform their duties". Depending on the severity of the case punishments may include verbal

exhortation [or political education classes], suspension of employment, dismissal, and withdrawal of all rights and privileges of a religious instructor (Article 15).

Following are some of the activities that may merit immediate dismissal or suspension from employment as enumerated in article 15:

- Failure to follow orders of monastery management committees;

- Acting on the instigation of overseas outfits and private individuals;

- Spreading separatist ideas and inciting the monks and nuns, as well as lay believers promoting illegal criminal behavior;

- Engaging in activities to destroy ethnic unity and social stability; and for splitting the Chinese motherland.

Through attrition, this policy will ultimately decrease the number of truly qualified Buddhist teachers and diminishes the transmission of Tibetan Buddhist culture, and language throughout Tibet. In the past China has defended its persecution of Tibetan Buddhism by saying that it is provided for by Chinese law. However, it is little consolation that the government is exercising control over control religious practices and teachings by passing and implementing laws.

A host of regulations to restrict religious freedom are now being implemented in Tibet at all levels of government. These regulations subvert the Chinese Constitution's theoretical guarantee of 'freedom of religious belief'. What little freedom in words given at the highest document of law is taken away in practice by multiple local levels by tight government and party control.

The restrictions of freedom of religion in China date back to the founding of the BAC. The BAC was founded in 1953 to place Buddhism under the leadership of the Communist Party. The BAC strictly limits Buddhist activity and controls the monastic institutions. The BAC is an organ of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, which regulates all recognized religions in PRC. It exercises its jurisdiction over all Buddhists in the PRC by working closely with the United Front Work Department.

In recent years the BAC has stepped up its efforts to promote its form of Buddhism while stifling and demonizing other perspectives. In 2009 at the Second World Buddhist Forum in the eastern Chinese city of Wuxi, the BAC's vice president, Ming Sheng, said the association would have considered extending invitation to His Holiness the Dalai Lama had the Tibetan spiritual leader abandoned his 'separatist activities'.

Harmonious Model Monasteries, Advanced law-abiding monks and nuns

Over a week ago, on 29 June 2013, during the second ceremony to award 'harmonious model monasteries' and 'advanced law-abiding monks and nuns' in Lhasa, the Lhasa City Communist Party chief Qi Zhala, thanked the gathering of 'advanced, law-abiding monks and nuns,' 'advanced Monastery Management Committees', and 'outstanding cadres stationed in monasteries' for their continued support to the implementation of TAR stability maintenance policy. Qi encouraged the attendees to "make persistent efforts to contribute to future work in stability maintenance and create a new result out of a new system."

In April 2012, in his address during the first award ceremony for 'harmonious model' monasteries and nunneries and 'advanced law-abiding monks and nuns', TAR Party secretary Chen Quanguo said that monks and nuns should "effectively recognize the politics of the Dalai Clique's reactionary religious hypocrisy, deceptive means" and separate themselves from separatist activities by "draw[ing] a line with the Dalai Clique" and not participating in separatist activities to "disrupt social order."

'No free meal charity'

The government's claims of regulating religion in the name of providing social services to monks and nuns is difficult to believe given its political motivation. On 12 November 2011 at a high-level meeting in Lhasa, the TAR Party chief Chen Quanguo introduced plans to provide "universal social welfare" to monks and nuns in return for political allegiance to the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese state, before issuing a warning to the Dalai Lama not to interfere with the reincarnation of "living Buddhas". Chen also

proposed to "establish a model of temples in Tibet with patriotic, law-abiding monks being praised and honored, and with more efforts being made by monks in their religious and legal studies."

The establishment of harmonious monasteries and cultivating law-abiding monks and nuns is part of a larger proposal to introduce highly restrictive and invasive control over monastic institutions in Tibet. Indeed, it is impossible for critics of Chinese policy to receive any state benefits. Under this uneasy bargain, the government promises "universal social welfare" in return for 'maintaining social stability'. This policy is the monastic equivalent of "Solidify the Foundations, Benefit the Masses" (Ch: qiangji huimin).

A 'special' group of population will not qualify for "universal social welfare', such as former political prisoners, monks and nuns who participated in 2008 protests. This biased approach in providing basic welfare services was articulated by Xu Guangzhi, a professor with Tibet University in a November 2011 interview with the Global Times, a sister publication of the party's flagship newspaper, People's Daily. Xu said the social welfare program "should not be a free meal charity mission" and that the "monks covered by the welfare mechanism should at least protect the unity of the country and local stability." Xu said, "separatists should not be included in the program."

Since late 2011, the Monastery Management Committee – unelected "monastic government work-unit" (Ch: zhusi danwei) – has been established in every monastery, with up to 30 lay officials stationed in each monastery, depending on the size of the institution. The establishment of MMCs has taken away nominal autonomy enjoyed by the erstwhile "Democratic Management Committee," which although controlled by government and party officials, comprised of monks elected by their own community. By February 2012, the Chinese government had established Monastery Management Committees in 1,787 monasteries in TAR.

The new regulations controlling who may be a religious instructor at Buddhist monasteries in Tibet is a continuation of the Chinese policy of curtailing freedom of religion in Tibet. The new regulations are a dramatic escalation because they are designed to undermine the ability of monasteries to pass on to younger generations thousands of years of Tibetan Buddhist teachings that have not been politicised and manipulated by the Chinese government. China's verbal commitments to permit His Holiness the Dalai Lama's portraits to be displayed and worshipped is a step forward but was preceded by countless steps backward. China must not only honor its verbal commitments but also uphold the principle of freedom of religion enshrined in their constitution.

Endnotes:

Full text of the regulation available in Chinese on the website of SARA. http://www.sara.gov.cn/zcfg/qgxzjttxgjgzd/18114.htm [TCHRD referred to Tibetan language version of the regulation to write this report.]

China denies lifting ban on Dalai Lama worship. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-23094994

A public notice from Amdo banning photos of Dalai Lama. http://highpeakspureearth.com/2012/a-public-notice-from-amdo-banning-photos-of-the-dalai-lama/

Pressure mounts on Labrang Monastery after expulsion order. http://www.tchrd.org/2013/03/pressure-mounts-on-labrang-monastery-after-expulsion-order/

Dalai Lama not invited to World Buddhist Forum in eastern Chinese city. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/27/content_11082595.htm

Lhasa City first half of 2013 temple-cum-patriotic law-abiding harmony exemplary awards ceremony held. http://www.chinatibetnews.com/xizang/2013-06/30/content_1241887.htm

TAR Authorities issue the first awards for 'Harmonious Model Monasteries' and 'Law-abiding Monks and Nuns'. http://www.tchrd.org/2012/04/tar-authorities issue-the-first-awards-for-harmonious-model-monasteries-and-law-abiding-monks-and-nuns/

Tibet monks to receive universal benefits. http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/683726/Tibet-monks-to-receive-universal-benefits.aspx

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China.
http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/china/111114/tibetan-monks-receive-welfare-benefits-china
China: Tibetan Monasteries Placed Under Direct Rule.
http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/16/china-tibetan-monasteries-placed-under-direct-rule

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